Attitudinal change towards traditional attire among Qatari women over one generation

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By

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Committee

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Abstract

In recent years, an increase of prejudice against Islam has brought attention as well as biases against Gulf women wearing traditional attire. In particular, Qatari women have been a focus of this attention due to Qatar’s economic prosperity and prominence in the world and regional affairs. Some outsiders still think Qatar is undeveloped and that people continue to live in a nomadic lifestyle which is a reflection of an inherited orientalist assumption. Moreover, perhaps due to Qatar’s conservative society, particularly in terms of the highly restricted sphere women have within the society, not much sociological or anthropological research has been conducted on Qatari women and their traditional dress. With the objective of contributing to the academic discourse in this regard, this thesis aims to clarify the relationship between the rapid social changes in Qatar and the significance of the traditional female attire in order to both gain a greater insight into Qatari women’s lives and to prevent misconceptions about them.

Thus, this study discusses the differences in use of traditional attire and explores Qatari women’s perceptions and perspectives towards it by focusing on differences between generations. The results extracted from in-depth interviews with 80 Qatari women (40 of young women and 40 of their mothers) are discussed widely from social, religious, and political viewpoints, and taking into account the main theoretical approaches about functions and developments of dress and cloth. Through the examination of these differences and changes concerning traditional attire, this research demonstrates
implications of regional events and of the development of women’s status and roles as well as the limitations in Qatari society. More importantly, it explains how traditional attire has evolved from a means of concealing women’s identity and visibility to a form of personal expression and a way of imparting information about the wearers’ social position vis-à-vis class, ethnicity, and degree of conservativeness. Finally, it reveals perceptions of the two generations towards the differences and changes in the traditional attire.
Acknowledgement

This thesis is not a just simple research paper, but it is a result of my entire academic history and a witness of the path that I wish to follow as a specialist in Khaleeji women.

Who could imagine that I would travel to a world where I was a stranger and had no connection with but would conduct successful study using their local dialect.

This highly secretive world, which many people are interested in, welcomed me with open-arms and a loving heart. They showed me beauty of cultures and traditions, and taught me my responsibility and duty.

Every single person whom I have met has contributed to the life I have now.

The friends in my country who molded my personality and waited for me whenever I decided to come back,

The brothers who introduced me to Khaleeji cultures and Islamic values,

The professors who were always there to respond to my needs and learning issues, and sacrificed their time and energy to make me a better student,

The colleagues who went through difficult times together and encouraged my motivation to seek knowledge,

The soul mates who came from all over the world and helped me to reach my goal,

Khaleeji women who treated me as their daughter and sister, and gave me passion, confidence, and a reason to pursue my goal,

My family who maximized my potential despite their concerns and opposition in their hearts, but urged me to continue with all means of support,

All of them will remain in my heart forever with great appreciation and love.

Nothing can repay what you have done for me, but if this study can make you feel proud of having me in your life, and your culture, tradition, history, people, and identity,

it will be my greatest honor.
Dedication

To whom took part in my life

To whom shares my love and passion

To whom respects others

To whom I truly love
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## Abbreviations

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<td>GCC</td>
<td>Gulf Cooperation Council</td>
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<td>MB</td>
<td>Muslim Brotherhood</td>
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<td>OPEC</td>
<td>Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries</td>
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<td>QR</td>
<td>Qatar Riyal</td>
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<td>UAE</td>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Qatar is a small country which is located in the Eastern part of the Arabian Peninsula and, as reported by Qatar’s Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics, currently only 12% of its population is made up of Qataris (Snoj, 2014). The changes that have taken place in Qatari society since the independence of the state in 1971 are tremendous due to its wealth from natural gas and oil, and a unique foreign policy which allows Qatar to act as a regional mediator; thus having gained great attention from the world in the last decade. At the same time, Qatar is seen as a state close to Saudi Arabia since they both follow the Hanbali school of thought, which is considered—the most conservative interpretation of Islamic jurisprudence (Hamzeh, 1994)—and is often considered to limit women’s rights.

One of the manifestations of this strict religious ideology is the daffa or the ‘abāyah (abaya), a gown that most of the women in the Gulf wear daily; in Qatar, the word, the daffa, is mostly used by people whose age is over 60 and but Qatari people in general call the type of clothing the abaya although people understand that the daffa means the abaya. In addition, for some women, the niqab, a black face cover with the eye area open, is also a manifestation of this ideology (Janmohamed, 2014). In the past, the traditional face covering called the batūllah (batullah) was commonly used among older Qatari women and long dresses such as the abaya were used as a form of protection for women. Hence, the abaya in some instances provides wider
scope of freedom because of its protection in such a conservative society (S. Karimi, personal communication, June 2, 2015). By covering their faces and bodies, women could avoid attracting men who were not their immediate family members. The face covering and abaya also gave women anonymity as they went about their daily lives shopping, traveling, visiting relatives and the like. Moreover, in the hot desert climate, the abaya protected ladies from the burning sun (Kayed, 2014), although some scholars argue that this statement is irrational as black color draws more heat. Karimi also stated that some scholars observe that dress cannot always be interpreted on the bases of its functionality as dress has symbolic and hermeneutic contents (personal communication, June 2, 2015).

However, in recent years, the abaya has become not just a simple loose black gown, but a made-to-order, fashionably-designed garment that draws people’s attention. The development of the gas and oil industry has meant huge increases in household spending among Qataris, and this includes the kinds of garments ladies wear. At the same time, the abaya has also become a tool which Qatari women use to identify themselves not only as Khaleeji (Gulf) women of wealth and status, but also to distinguish themselves as members of a particular nationality or group. It is worth mentioning that the efforts of the former Emir of Qatar, Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, who came into power in 1995, are behind this development (Hall, 2013; Zahran, 1998). In fact, to a large extent, it began with his second wife, Sheikha Moza bint Nasser Al Missned, who was the first royal female member to appear in public with modest Western attire and to speak about social issues since 2003
(CelestialNM, 2007); hence, introducing different perspectives and attitudes towards Qatari women’s statuses and roles in society.

Thus, since there are close relations between Qatari women’s traditional dress and their statuses and roles, it is important to identify the generational changes of traditional dress such as the face and head coverings and the abaya, focusing on both its style and color, and to explore its social implications on the Qatari community along with its acting as a political statement. This will help people understand the current changes in Qatari culture regarding women’s traditional dress and the influence of globalization on fashion.

A lot of research has been conducted regarding Muslim women’s dress code and the religious understanding of it; however, few studies have been done on Gulf women’s traditional attire and its social implications especially in Qatar. Moreover, these studies tend to be descriptive rather than in-depth anthropological field research. To address this issue, this research looks into the following two questions: in what ways have the traditional attire of Qatari women changed over one generation, and what are the attitudes of Qatari women towards the changes in traditional attire of Qatari women. Through these questions, this research presents new insight about Qatari women’s traditional attire and changes in attitudes between mother and daughter’s generations towards it. In addition, it uncovers the secretive customs and traditions of Qatari women and aims to ease the biases and prejudices against these women.
**Conceptual Framework**

It is important to first define the word ‘generation’ to clarify the objective of this research. According to Oxford dictionary (2015), the term ‘generation’ is defined as “[a]ll of the people born and living at about the same time, regarded collectively”. Moreover, McCrindle (2009) contributes to the analysis of the definition and states that the definition of generation in biology was first understood as a group whose members had age differences within 20 to 25 years; however, due to the introduction of technology and fast pace of development, a generation is better understood in a shorter period and social norms are taken into great consideration. McCrindle (2009) further states that generations can now be divided “through global, cultural and socioeconomic boundaries” (p.2). The objective of this research is to compare generational differences between daughters and mothers; thus, daughters aged between 20 and 30 are grouped as one generation and their mothers are grouped as another generation.

The term ‘tradition’ is also a key word for this paper as it attempts to identify differences in traditional attire of Qatari women between daughters and mothers. Graburn (2001) explains that historically the term ‘tradition’ has been perceived as a contrast to ‘innovation’, but since both may possibly exist at the same time, he agrees more with Horner’s definition of tradition which in the sense that processes and things pass through generations regardless of people’s intentions. He also states that the word ‘tradition’ originated in Latin
and it refers to “something handed over” (p.6) and this is because the word was introduced and often used in Catholic documents (Johnstone, 2005).

However, since an affiliation or sense of tradition occurs in the process of passing down, a notion of tradition could be understood as something which represents or identifies a majority of a certain group or its practice. Moreover, as a break of a generation has become shorter, a tradition can be constituted in a very short term. Like Qatar, despite its mere 44 years of existence, Qatari people have defined customs, practices, and tools as Qatari traditions, although they have many similarities with other Gulf states’ traditions.

Thus, although tradition arises from long periods of time which can span over multiple generations, when the term ‘tradition’ is defined in a Qatari context, Qatar’s rapid development and changing society in the last decades have given new meaning to the process of forming tradition; Qatar has formed traditions at an astounding rate within one generation.

**Limitations and Delimitations**

Considering Qatar is indeed a strongly religious and social community, there is a limitation of sampling. Socially, it is not recommendable for women in Qatar to make public appearances such as on media or meeting with strangers—namely foreigners—who may not understand cultural limitations and social taboos. Since personal information related to women tends to be very confidential, women avoid taking risks which may lead to identifying themselves. Thus, conducting interviews with Qatari women is not easy work to do.
Moreover, getting older generations (in this case, mothers) to participate in research is challenging because they are still living in a small, highly private sphere and are not in favor of communicating with strangers. Besides, older generations tend to prefer staying at home rather than going out; hence, interviews with the mother’s generation need to take place at home. Participants most likely needed to invite the researcher to their private family space to talk about their own ideas and views. For these reasons, options of data sampling were limited and the results cannot be generalized to reflect the attitude of all Qatari women.

In regards to language barriers, as the researcher has lived in the Gulf region for the last four years and studied Arabic for about two years, the researcher can speak and understand Arabic quite well. However, to eliminate the language barrier as much as possible and to maintain the accuracy of the data, interviews in Arabic were conducted and coded with the confidential help of female Qatari native speakers functioning as translators.

Furthermore, due to time constraints and the fact that it takes time for the researcher to read and comprehend academic articles and books in Arabic, most of the references that were used for this paper were based on English materials. Thus, this can be considered a limitation to some extent for the discussion of the topic at hand.

**Theoretical Framework**

Theoretical framework relies on several articles about functions and developments of dress and cloth have been looked at. Rouse (1989) observes
different reasons human beings started to wear clothes. The mainstream idea is that it serves as a means of protection for maintaining body temperature or conserving skin from harsh environments, but with the development of technology and the increase in variety of materials available, more people started to seek efficiency in dress with regards to aspects such as texture, conformability, and ease of movement (Rouse, 1989). Moreover, by time, designs, and fashion trends were applied to clothes as a way of expression and self-representation based on socioeconomic status, age and gender, but Rouse (1989) argues “it is not merely a matter of looking good but also looking ‘right’, socially correct and proper” (p.4). The expectation of society does play a great role and sometimes it even enforces people to wear certain clothes or look a certain way.

Meanwhile, Vablen (1894) applies an economic theory to the development of functions of dress, and he observes that clothing indicates a level of wealth of the wearer; in a patriarchal society a woman’s dress represents the richness of her household which can be recognized through materials and designs, in short, the amount of excess in time, money, effort spent in accumulating her wardrobe.

When clothing is specified by the term ‘traditional’, there are other characteristics that define the clothes. In Filippou, Ivonni, Christos, and Maria’s (2003) article on dance and costume, they refer to two people’s definitions of traditional costume, one is written by Vrelli-Zaxou in 1994 and another one is written by Giselis in 1974. While Vrelli-Zaxou acknowledges a
traditional costume designates the identity of a society to and links the wearer to this identity, Giselis states that a traditional costume serves as an emblem of society and not a reflection of an individual. Consequently, traditional attire is made and expressed within certain limitations which the majority of a society agrees with and accepts. Moreover, traditional functions of cultural attire differ based on the purpose of the use. For instance, for daily use attire tends to be darker with little to no decorations, and for special occasions it tends to include more colors and embellishments (Filippou et al., 2003).

Moreover, Hannover and Kuhnen’s (2002) study results demonstrate that a way of dressing can also indicate the wearer’s views and self-descriptions. Therefore, although traditional dress is produced through generations and consists of a majority of society’s consensus it has developed as a tool of communication and representation of both the household and the individual wearer.

Interestingly, Lurie (1981) applied Thorstein Veblen’s leisure class theory (2008) which she explains as ‘Conspicuous Consumption, Conspicuous Waste and Conspicuous Leisure’ to a relation between dress and status of people. Although she uses European and American cases as examples, her arguments can be partially adopted in Qatari case as well. As Lurie emphasizes, dress has become a status of the wearer but its relative importance has shifted to comfort and practicality; at the same time, appropriateness of dress in order to integrate into society is one of aspects which can be said in the case of Qatari society. Furthermore, as for women, quantity of attire is
treated as an indication of wealth and a tendency of ‘quantity rather than quality’ is much stronger among younger generations because they are too young to judge the value of dress but it is easy for them to count the pieces of clothing (Lurie, 1981). However, her argument that the number of pieces of clothing matters only in a big city because a small community allows people to get the wearer’s personal information so that people concentrate less on what the wearer wears every day does not apply everywhere. Her argument lacks consideration of other societies in which knowing a wearer’s socioeconomic status encourages the wearer to be seen a certain way and requires the wearer to change dresses daily.

Given these points, it can be concluded that functions of dress advance from being a mere physical protection to becoming an instrument for expressing individuality, a way to label a wearer’s socioeconomic status, and a means of representing identity. With regards to traditional attire, it is shaped through generations by the acceptance of the majority. Traditional attire is, hence, a characteristic of a particular society but it also reflects individual’s ideas and messages. However, these general frameworks in functions of dress and traditional attire lack regional and religious perceptions particular to the Gulf region. Lindisfarne-Tapper and Ingham (1997) problematize this issue because traditional dress and the way of dressing in the Middle East region have been sexualized and treated metaphorically by orientalists; Karimi (2003) also analyzes that material culture especially traditional dress has been overlooked and its uniqueness has been ignored by researchers. Thus, the
collective theories of general changes and development of functions in women’s traditional attire needs to be examined in the Gulf context.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

History of Dress and the Impact of Islam on Dress in the Arabian Peninsula

Throughout its history, styles of dress in the Arabian Gulf have been influenced by performing the religious pilgrimage to Mecca, which became more important after the birth of Islam in the 7th century, and the Silk Road. The Silk Road connected East Asia with the Middle East and Europe in terms of goods, cultures and dress just as pilgrimage to Mecca did.

The style of dress in the jahiliyya period, meaning the time before Islam, is currently no longer in use. However, one exception to this is the burqa, a whole-face covering which was worn by women well before the coming of Islam, and is still used in the Middle East today (Chatty, 1995). Originally, the culture of face covering came from Persia to the Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula and at that time face covering was used only by honorable women while female slaves were uncovered (Abu Saud, 1984), although Leila Ahmed argues in her book, Women and Gender in Islam, that a hijab and face coverings came from Mesopotamia (S. Karimi, personal communication, June 2, 2015).

At the same time, head coverings (and in some cases face coverings) were culturally worn by Arabs as a form of respect and modesty. Furthermore, head covering was common for both men and women due to the extremely hot weather in the peninsula. Before the time of the prophet Mohamed, it was
common for women in villages and among Bedouins to cover their faces and most of their bodies but not for women in urban areas (Vogelsang-Eastwood, 2010). Vogelsanf-Eastwood's (2010) research shows that both head and face covers were used by some women prior to the arrival of Islam, but that they were more widely used after the 7th century as Islam added more details to people’s dress code as a result of its teachings. In this early age, there were different kinds of face covers such as the *qina*, *burqa* and *lithmah* (Vogelsanf-Eastwood, 2010). However, the Quran and the hadith (the records of the prophet’s sayings and actions) do not require women to wear them. Over time, though, this cultural element, combined with religious norms which exclusively focused on modesty, inspired women to cover their faces in public. Despite the widespread misconceptions about Islamic dress code being restrictive to women, it is worth mentioning that the Quran and the Hadiths actually limit men’s dress by forbidding certain materials and colors whereas women have more flexibility in this aspect.

Women were not required to wear certain materials although Islam asked women to bear in mind that their dress and behavior should be modest, specifically in verses 30-33 of *sura* 24 in the Quran¹. At the same time, Islam asked people to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts. That is purer for them. Indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what they do. And tell the believing women to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts and not expose their adornment except that which necessarily appears there of and to wrap [a portion of] their headcovers over their chests and not expose their adornment except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands' fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers, their brothers' sons, their sisters' sons, their women, that which their right hands possess, or those male attendants having no physical desire, or children who are not yet aware of the private aspects of women. And let them not stamp their feet to make known what they conceal of their adornment. And turn to Allah in repentance, all of you, O believers, that you might succeed. And marry the unmarried among you and the righteous among your male slaves and female slaves. If they should be poor, Allah will enrich them from His bounty, and Allah is all-Encompassing and

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¹ Tell the believing men to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts. That is purer for them. Indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what they do. And tell the believing women to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts and not expose their adornment except that which necessarily appears there of and to wrap [a portion of] their headcovers over their chests and not expose their adornment except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands' fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers, their brothers' sons, their sisters' sons, their women, that which their right hands possess, or those male attendants having no physical desire, or children who are not yet aware of the private aspects of women. And let them not stamp their feet to make known what they conceal of their adornment. And turn to Allah in repentance, all of you, O believers, that you might succeed. And marry the unmarried among you and the righteous among your male slaves and female slaves. If they should be poor, Allah will enrich them from His bounty, and Allah is all-Encompassing and
defined what parts of the body were considered sensual. Later, the religious clerics in the Gulf referred to verse 73 in *sura* 33\(^2\) to justify the legitimacy of the abaya as the best model of interpretation even though there is no ‘correct uniform’ for Muslim women (Shimek, 2012). Finally, attire and its materials were ordained by sumptuary laws in Islamic countries like Saudi Arabia (Vogelsang, 2010). Arabic clothing which has been interpreted as Islamic clothing in Saudi Arabia has become adopted by Muslims all over the world as the only correct way of dress. This has increased the standard for women not to show their body shapes, thus women’s dresses have become less fitted. The materials used for their attire are cotton, wool, and silk; these are based on women’s socioeconomic statuses (Volgelsang-Eastwood, 2010).

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, westernization in dress has spread among the region. The great regional powers of Turkey and Iran enforced the western way of dress on people with laws not only to further their states’ modernization process in the early twentieth century but also to create a national connection among different ethnicities in their countries.

In recent years, lifestyles and dresses in the Arabian Gulf region have been influenced by economic development, technology, and

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\(^{2}\) [It was] so that Allah may punish the hypocrite men and hypocrite women and the men and women who associate others with Him and that Allah may accept repentance from the believing men and believing women. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful (Quran 73:33, Quran.com).

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telecommunications both culturally and ideologically. Moreover, since the establishment of independent nation states in the region, the political leaders began to use the dresses as a tool to form national identities and unite their people; hence, state policies included citizens’ dress code (Vogelsang-Eastwood, 2010). In a more recent example, the Omani government clearly stated its citizens’ dress code in law to stipulate what is considered ‘Omani national dress’ for male citizens, perhaps in an attempt to distinguish them from non-Omanis and to maintain Omani identity while the country continues to receive a great number of foreign workers from South East Asia (Vogelsang, 2010). There are some Gulf citizens who support this idea of politicizing the national dress. Correspondingly, the dress code was even discussed in meetings of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), where four of its members also hold membership in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) (OPEC, 2015).

Moreover, nationalist and Islamist movements originating from Saudi Arabia have influenced the wider Muslim world (Rooijakkers, 2010). These resulted in a common understanding of the necessity of hejab for Muslim women as well as a loose type of cloth, namely the abaya. Rooijakkers (2010) analyzed that since the rise of these movements, the face veil has been used as a tool to refer to Islam whereas the head cover could be an indication of individual fashion. However, the abaya was also seen as a symbol of separating women from public interaction and oppression by some women in Kuwait and Bahrain. For instance, Kuwaiti women burned the abaya during the demonstrations in 1963. These women then put the abaya back on during
the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait for protection and as a means of resistance (Badran, 1998). According to Prof. Alnajjar, a sociologist at the University of Bahrain, women in Kuwait and Bahrain were the first ones who started traveling outside the Gulf and stopped wearing the abaya in public in the 1940s (personal communication, April 1, 2015; Badran, 1998; S. Karimi, personal communication, June 2, 2015). In September, 2014, the female culture minister of Bahrain, Sheikha Mai Bint Mohammad Al Khalifa, banned the abaya in her office in order to maintain a “civilized image” (n.p.) although it was soon called off by the Prime Minister (Toumi, 2014). These events show that the regional so-called Islamic dress, especially the abaya, has become an issue of public debate, and a part of national identity in the Gulf region as well as a sign of Islamization or backwardness of the society.

Qatari Women’s Dress Code in Modern Qatari Society

According to El Guindi and al-Othman (2010), there are shared similarities among Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in terms of dress. The two essential characteristics these countries’ dresses have in common are that they are relaxed fit and gender-based. In the Arabian Peninsula, people lived a nomadic lifestyle without foreign occupation for a long time so their dress was basically made for desert life, with the exception of the people who had lived in large cities which often had mixed cultural influences. Colors clearly differ between men and women, and their dresses are never the same for both genders. Women in the Arabian Peninsula usually wear three different articles of clothing; the “underpants” (sirwal), some type of dress (thob, fustan, dura’ah, or dishdasha), and a head
veil (\textit{tarhah}, \textit{shaylah}, or \textit{mahanna}), sometimes combined with a face veil such as a burqa or \textit{niqab}” (Rooijakkers, 2010, p.216). Moreover, Prof. Alnajjar explains that the \textit{boushiya} or \textit{gashwa} (See Image 1), a thin fabric face covering, was used among urban women together with a head-to-toe black coat (personal communication, April 1, 2015); it covers a wearer’s face completely but since its material is translucent, a wearer can see outside (‘Diversity’, n.d.). In details, the \textit{boushiya} tends to be a very dark color that it is hard for people to recognize a wearer’s face whereas the \textit{gashwa} tends to be lighter so people can sometimes see her face through the veil (B. Alnajjar, personal communication, June 18, 2015). The word, \textit{Ghatwah (ghotwa)}, is not used commonly among Qatari people, but it is a black face covering which hides an entire face and wearer’s eyes are not shown. The niqab is a black piece of rectangular cloth with the eye area open that is attached to a ribbon which is tied around the forehead (See Image 2). The burqa, in the Gulf regional sense of the term, is the same shape as the niqab, but there is a thin vertical string between the eyes (See Image 3) (El Guindi & al-Othman, 2010). These face coverings are commonly worn in Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait, as well as Bahrain and Oman to some extent. Some European countries have gone as far as applying laws against the niqab since 2011, and in August 2014, a Qatari princess who was wearing the niqab illegally had it forcibly removed by a diplomat in Belgium (Trenwith, 2014). \textit{Sirwal}, colorful pants with some decorations on the bottom, used to be worn more often among Gulf women (Image 4 & 5); however, it has been replaced by western clothes and the abaya (Leech & Zacharias, 2014).
Image 1: Woman with a *boushtiya* or *gashwa* (Ola, 2012).

Image 2: Woman with a *niqab* (Blanchfield, 2012).

Image 3: Woman with a *burqa* (Houghton, 2010).
Image 4: Sirwal

*Note.* Photo taken by the researcher at the Mal Lawal exhibition in Doha, January 4, 2015.
Image 5: A *dirra’ah* and *sirwal* for a special occasion

*Note.* Photo taken by the researcher at the Mal Lawal exhibition in Doha, January 4, 2015.
As mentioned above, historically Qataris lived a nomadic desert life and the community was based on family kinship so women did not need to cover their faces since they did not encounter strangers (Abu Saud, 1984). However, after Qatar became one of the famous ports for pearl trading in the 19th century, traders and merchants arrived in Qatar, from Iran in particular. At the time, women adopted some kinds of face covering to avoid strangers’ eyes such as the *batullah*, a kind of face mask which covers “the eyebrows, nose, and cheeks, with two wide opening for the eyes” and has been used in the Iranian coast (El Guindi & al-Othman, 2010, p.248). The *batullah* in Qatar, Bahrain, and UAE is gold-colored whereas in Oman it is usually black. This demonstrates a strong historical connection between the Iranian coast, namely the Bandar Abbas area, and the Eastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula, through which products, people, and cultures were exchanged (Vogelsang, 2010).

Dr. Bristol-Rhys, an associate professor of anthropology at Zayed University, interviewed an old Emirati woman who stated that the abaya and niqab were imported recently, and this can be said for Qatar as well. Hilal (2011) argues that a conservative version of Islamization of society started around the mid-80s due to the end of Soviet era in West Asia. During Islamic movements such as the Iranian Revolution, the first Palestinian Intifadah, and the emergence of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, women used veils to show they were against westernization (Patel, 2010). This inclination has been accelerated after the September 11th attack in 2001 with more men wearing
long beards and women covering their faces to show “self-righteousness” (Hilal, 2011, n.p.).

In terms of color, many Muslim countries have adopted the traditional garments from Saudi Arabia (seen a center of Islam) as the correct way of dressing for Muslims especially after the increase of Islamization; thus men prefer to wear white while the color black is considered appropriate for women’s attire (Vogelsang, 2010). Prof. Leila al-Bassam, while working in Riyadh, reported that the black abaya was imported from Iraq and Syria through trade prior to the establishment of the third Saudi state in 1932, and the Eastern part of Saudi Arabia was the first place to adopt this dress. The abaya has now spread to other prefectures (Al-Qasimi, 2010; Ambah, 2007). In addition, according to Prof. Mussaed, black abayas were given as gifts to those who contributed to the independence of Saudi Arabia by King Abdul-Aziz. The enforcement of the abaya on women started in Saudi Arabia in 1955 due to the opening of schools for girls by the Commission for the Promoting of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice, and this action enforced the abayas the regional and national attire for women (Ambah, 2007). Prof. Muhammad al-Mussaedd also acknowledged that a woman with a black abaya was in fact cited in the Hadith by saying that women who went for prayer at the time of sunrise were described as ‘crows’. However, this Hadith did not clarify whether these women were actually wearing black or were simply obscured from view due to the time of day. Hence, idea that women should wear black does not have a solid basis in Islam.
Changing Functions of the Abaya in Qatari Society

In Qatar, older women tend to wear the abaya from the head called *r’as abaya* (*abaya al-ra’s*) which covers the entire body with a single piece of fabric without much tailoring and requires women to hold the fabric by their hands in front. Under the abaya, these old women wear the *dirra’ah* (what the younger generation calls the *jalabiya*) which is a colorful cotton or silk made one-piece dress (El Guindi & al-Othman, 2010). Moreover, Lindholm (2010) observed the abaya was not widely worn over western clothes by Qatari women until the end of the 1980s, but with the rise of Islamization, women started to wear it in their daily lives with a modern style that is a black-loose gown, a T-shape, which can open in the middle and be closed by buttons or hands along with the *sheila*, a black head covering. Ambah (2007) argued that after the 9/11 attacks, some people started to doubt the strict interpretations of Wahhabism of Islam that regulated their daily lives, and women were not an exception.

In Qatar, the phenomenon of women working is also a recent change in the society. Women used to stay at home to engage in domestic work. As more women started to leave their homes to work or go to public spaces where gender segregation did not always apply, more women tended to cover themselves in more conservative ways in order to avoid harassment or harm to their family honor and reputation. This tendency has, indeed, happened in Egypt and other countries in the Middle East (Patel, 2010). In addition, as women stay outside home for longer hours and work, their dress requires ease
of use. Hence, it can be understood why the design of the abaya has evolved into a long-sleeved style as opposed to the previous wrapping mantle style.

Oil and natural gas which were found in the 1940s (Sorkhabi, 2010) have also become factors which affected the trends in the dress code of Qatar. Since people have gained great wealth, the quality of the dress materials have become much better. Following the first mall opening in Qatar, The Mall, in 1997 (The Mall, 2008), western clothing brands started setting up branches in Qatar and influenced the designs and styles of attire of Qatari women. Some famous fashion designers from the Gulf such as Nawal bint Hamed bin Hamid AlHooti, an Omani national, and Abeer Al Suwaidi, an Emirati national, have also delivered dresses which combine both traditional and modern elements (McLaughlin-Duane, 2014; Vogelsang, 2010).

These trends can be seen within the rapid influence of modernization and globalization as a means of access to international information which is currently reflected in Qatar. Gulf women, including Qatari women, seek to preserve their traditions and beauty of their past while at the same time maintaining a leading edge in fashion. Therefore, Qatari women wear abayas as a form of showing national and cultural pride, but with a fashionable twist using various materials, colors, and designs as well as appliques and crystals, although there is no law requiring this for the Qatari national dress. This change can also be understood because within this conservative society with strict Islamic values, young Qatari women are struggling to break through the
patriarchal expectations on how Qatari women should appear. Shimek (2012) called this change “the female-driven abaya revolution” (p. 14).

These social changes in the discourse of traditional abaya have not been limited to Qatari citizens. Harrods, a Qatari owned luxury department store in the center of London, set up the famous Emirati designer abaya shop, DAS Collection, in London in 2010 and even though one abaya can cost approximately 5,000 US dollars, some rich Khaleeji (Gulf) women including female royal family members purchase it (Couch & Mayer, 2010). In 2011, the biannual HYA Abaya Exhibition took place in Doha supported by the Qatar Tourism Authority which displayed original abayas that were produced by Khaleeji women designers (Shimek, 2012); the same type of fashion exhibition entitled ‘HEYA Arabian Fashion Exhibition’ was held in Qatar in June 2015 (See Image 6, 7, 8, and 9).

Moreover, TV and the internet have introduced different fashions and cultures from all over the world to the Gulf, and some Qatari women have borrowed these fashions and made them a part of their daily wardrobe (Lindholm, 2010; Vogelsang, 2010). It is much easier for women to purchase their favorite brand of abaya through the internet and even through social media like WhatsApp, Instagram, and Twitter (Radcliffe, 2014). At the same time, this ease of access encourages women to create their own items and brands without having to go through a long process of getting a business license.
However, in the case of Qatar, the most decisive factor in the change in Qatari woman’s dress code is in fact Sheikha Moza, who is the mother of the current Emir of Qatar and the former Emir’s first lady. She was the first female member of the Qatari royal family who appeared in public and in western, albeit modest, dresses. She wears different dresses for different occasions and places; in the Gulf, she usually wears fashionable abayas and outside of the region, she tends to wear fancy but modest western-style dresses. She believes that women should choose their dresses by themselves and people often see her as a role model for this reason (Lindholm, 2010). Wearing the abaya for women has always been a passive practice historically, but it has now become a tool to identify women as Khaleeji and Qatari by allowing them the freedom of designing and personalizing their own abayas. In other words, the abaya reflects the artistic, political, and social expressions of the current generation of Qatari as well as Khaleeji women.

At the same time, to counteract current changes of style in abaya, conservative scholars have tried to regulate the women’s gowns by issuing fatwas, legal opinions of Islamic scholars, according to which they should be “dark, loose and shapeless” (Al-Qasimi, 2010; Ambah, 2007). At Qatar University, posters that have appeared throughout the campus urge students to preserve modesty by showing examples of modest clothing. Covering body and hair is considered a religious obligation among many Muslims, and this somehow leads to the idea that women who wear an ‘Islamic dress’ are faithful and can be good wives and mothers (Patel, 2010). This social
impression restricts women’s freedom of expression in dress code to some extent.

In the end, Qatar is a conservative society both religiously and culturally. Although the abaya is neither a national dress under the law nor a style of dress enforced on both nationals and non-nationals, even Qatari locals who are religiously in a neutral position feel uncomfortable as a result of western-influenced style of dress. Hand in hand with the government’s policy of attracting foreign tourists and workers, many of expatriates come to Qatar with their western dresses that sometimes leave parts of their bodies almost completely exposed. The state of Qatar does not require a certain dress code but the Qatar Criminal Act article 398 asserts that “one can be fined 300 Qatari riyals (about $82) for acts of public indecency equivalent to urinating or bathing in public” and article 58 in its constitution states that “respect of the Constitution, compliance with the laws issued by Public Authority, abiding by public order and morality, observing national traditions and established customs is a duty of all who reside in the State of Qatar or enter its territory” (Fenton, 2012, n.p.). Since 2010, some locals have started campaigns such as ‘One of Us’ and ‘Reflect Your Respect’ to remind those foreigners via social media and distributing flyers to maintain modest dress and be aware of the fact that Qatar is an Islamic country (Batrawy, 2014). This action has sent out a message not only towards foreigners but also towards Qatari locals whose way of dress has become more revealing in order to promote awareness regarding what is considered inappropriate to wear in public.
Summery

Social changes in Qatar have taken place very rapidly although Qatar only has 44 years of official history since its independence. However, even before the arrival of Islam, the Arabian Gulf was historically an important stopping point on trade and pilgrimage routes. Its conservative culture has formed the local people’s dress but Islam was also one of the main influential sources which impacted the dress code in the region. Islam stipulated clear rules on which parts of the body needed to be covered for both men and women but did not specify a style or design of dress for Muslims. At the same time, traditional dresses were made for the region’s harsh climate and desert lifestyle.

The regional conservativeness in terms of religion and culture directly affected women’s dress code in the Arabian Peninsula through the different forms of covering parts of their bodies: burqa, niqab, hejab, and abaya. Since the 19th century, the region has been influenced by foreign powers and regional movements. During the period of modernization led by regional powers such as the Ottoman Empire and Iran, women in urban areas tended to wear western attire and sometimes cover their faces to preserve their honor while Bedouin women wore colorful dresses and did not use face coverings since they did not have any occasion to meet strangers. However, these secular policies and initiatives by the governments produced a backlash of nationalism and Islamization in the 80s, which reached Qatar as well. Women’s attire changed distinctly from colorful loose dresses to traditional simple black outer garments.
Moreover, since the first opening of the mall in Qatar and the 9/11 attacks, young Qataris have started wearing a T-shape black abaya with fashionable styles and fancy decorations. Islamization brought the black abaya to the region including Qatar, but the high standards of living and education that resulted from the oil and natural gas encouraged women to bring their ideas and fashion sense into practice in their dresses. Keeping within the framework of the traditional Hanbali restrictions, young Qatari women encouraged by Sheikha Moza are creating their own national dresses attached to their history.

This can be seen through the changing functions of the abaya. The abaya is no longer just a traditional national dress, but it is also an individual statement and a way for women to signify their identity as Khaleeji women. Therefore, traditional attire like the abaya has become a reflection of Qatari women’s struggles, socioeconomic status, and participation in public affairs.

However, these changes in functions of the traditional attire need to be looked at more closely in order to identify relationships between social changes in Qatar and developments in traditional attire of Qatari women.
Image 6: The venue of HEYA Arabian Fashion Exhibition in Doha

Image 7: One of the showcases of various jalabiyas at HEYA Exhibition
Image 8: Women shopping at HEYA Exhibition
Image 9: Fashion show at HEYA Arabian Fashion Exhibition
Chapter 3

Methodology

Research Design

This study is primarily designed to find out attitudinal changes towards traditional attire of Qatar women between young Qatari women and their mothers. Social changes among Qatari women were carefully looked at and freedom of ideas and new perspectives are of great value to this study. As such, the research method is qualitative and the study design is a case study. Two research questions were asked:

- In what ways has the traditional attire of Qatari women changed over one generation,
- What are the attitudes of Qatari women toward these changes?

In-depth data for the case study was collected through semi-structured interviews either face-to-face or via phone and Skype calls with voluntary participants.

In this study, the two generation groups, mothers and daughters were categorized. To identify the participants and provide the data for them, frequency of distribution of personal attributes such as age, educational level, socioeconomic status, and frequency of international travel was examined. Thus, closed-ended and closed categorical questions were asked to participants in order to analyze the data. In addition, for more in-depth analysis of the relationships between the two generations and traditional attire, open-ended questionnaires were used to bring out the respondents’ personal views and
opinions. The questionnaires were prepared both in English and Arabic, and they are carefully reviewed for grammar correction and appropriateness of the content by two native English teaching specialists and two Arabic language professors at Qatar University.

After obtaining research ethics approval from Qatar University Institutional Review Board and before actual data collection started, the researcher conducted a pre-testing of the research instrument with three Qatari daughter-mother groups to ensure respondents understood the meaning of the survey questions and the smoothness of the order of the questionnaires.

Although it is difficult to establish validity and reliability in qualitative research, Kumar (2011) suggests that for issues of validity, since the respondent is the only one who can judge the validity of his or her opinions towards questions the researcher needs to double check their answers. For issues of reliability, the solution is to explain the methods and process of the study in detail.

The languages used in the interviews were both English and Arabic, and in case the respondents did not understand the meaning of the questions that the researcher asked, Arabic native speakers who were present were asked to help with translating.

In order to make a safe and comfortable environment for respondents, interviews were only conducted between the researcher and the respondent; however, in a case of need for a translator during interviews in Arabic and at the request of a respondent, a third person was present who was most likely a daughter or mother of the respondent.
An interview lasted for approximately half an hour to one hour depending on the respondent’s answers. Interviews were recorded with respondents’ permission by the researcher’s personal recorder.

**Ethical Issues**

Before a respondent takes part in this study, the respondent is provided an informed consent form which includes the title of the research, introduction and purpose, procedures, time element, benefits, risk and discomforts, cost compensation, information of further use, confidentiality, and rights of respondents, and contact details of the researcher. There are no possible risks, harms and benefits to the subject.

The study data is handled as confidentially as possible and all information collected during the study period is kept strictly confidential until such time as the respondent signs a release waiver. The respondent’s name and identifying information is not associated with any part of the written report of the research; thus, the respondent’s name and generation, either daughter or mother, is replaced by an alphabet like ‘daughter A’. The researcher does not share the participants’ individual responses with anyone other than the research advisor and Qatari female translators in the case that interviews are conducted in Arabic without the participant’s permission.

Participation in this research is completely voluntary. The respondents are free to decline participation in the project. The respondents can also decline to answer any questions and are free to stop the interview at any time. There is no penalty or loss of benefit to the participant due to her discontinuance of the project.
This study is financially supported by a student grant from Qatar University; however, freedom of research activity is guaranteed and there is no self-interest of a third party.

Since the results of the interviews are included in the researcher’s graduate thesis, it will be provided to the respondents upon their request following university approval. The results may be used for the researcher’s further research, such as PhD research, with respondents’ permission.

**Sampling**

This qualitative research used non-random/non-probability sampling designs. Considering the fact that Qatari society is indeed conservative and it is hard for some women to talk about their personal lives freely, quota sampling and snowball sampling were utilized for this research, in which the researcher conducted interviews with target Qatari women to whom she was introduced by her Qatari friends. As the researcher herself has already spent three years in Qatar, the researcher asked her Qatari female friends if their mothers were still alive in Qatar and if they were comfortable having interviews with the researcher. In addition, the researcher asked random Qatari women, seemingly aged between 20 and 30, at Qatar University, Qatar Foundation, or in various events to participate in the research with their mothers or to introduce some of their friends who might be interested to partake in the study. The number of total participants was not set in the sampling stage as the researcher interviewed them until the answers reached a data saturation point.
Data Analysis

After collecting data, some Qatari women whose native language was Arabic and whose English was near native level were asked to translate the interviews from Arabic to English in order to state the exact words of the respondents. However, each interview was assigned a letter in the alphabet, in a way that the translators could not identify the participants. The translation work took place when the researcher was on site and all the data was under the control of the researcher. The interviews that were conducted in English were written down and analyzed by the researcher only. As for the interviews that were conducted in Arabic, the translators first wrote down the interview conversations either in English or Arabic while they were on site or listened to the recorded interviews. After the translators were done with the translation, the researcher compared her notes and translators’ English transcripts. Regarding the results of the closed questionnaires, the researcher reported the participants’ personal attributes such as age, educational level, and travel frequency divided by the two generations in cross-tabulation graphs by using IBM SPSS Statistics Program.

Regarding the results of the open-ended questionnaires, the researcher employed a coding method specifically to observe the data which consists of interview transcripts as it is “essence-capturing and essential elements of the research story” (Saldana, 2009, p.8). Specific codes that were used in the analysis process were both ‘In Vivo Code’, which is based on a direct word from a respondent’s answer and ‘Initial Coding’, which is a short summery of the answer, i.e. encoding (Saldana, 2009). Through several cycles of coding,
the researcher divided the raw data, the respondents’ transcribed answers, into 34 common or similar sets, preliminary codes, then grouped these sets under 10 overarching themes, final codes, using Microsoft Word. The results of the data are displayed through figures, and were discussed in relation to other existing literature and data.
Chapter 4

Results and Discussion

Participant

The study has been carried out in Qatar on more than 100 women between December 2014 and April 2015. However, because some of them did not obtain the Qatari nationality as a child, their ages were not between 20 and 30, or their mothers or daughters could not agree on having an interview, the total number of participants whose data was analyzed is 80. There were 40 Qatari daughters aged between 20 and 30, and 40 mothers. The researcher interviewed most of the Qatari female participants in person or via phone and video calling, but due to the lack of time and scheduling difficulties, some participating mothers were interviewed by their participating daughters and written English transcripts of their answers were sent to the researcher.
The average age of the participating daughters was 24 whereas that of the mothers was 50. As Figure 1 shows, the youngest participant was a 20 year-old and the oldest participant was about 65. Some older participants were not sure about their ages since their birth was before the establishment of the state of Qatar; there was neither a registration system nor birth records to identify their birth dates. They even stated that their birthdays on their identity card were approximate and therefore not accurate. Hence, the attitudinal changes of traditional dress that this study can mainly show are changes that had taken place between the 1960s and 2015.

Besides the age distribution, Figure 2 illustrates the socioeconomic status of the participants. Conforming to the data which a Qatar-based news agency, The Peninsula (2014), reported 66 % of Qatari families’ average
income per month in 2007 was 30,000 Qatar Riyals (QR) which is equivalent in amount to 8,218 US dollars; the average of 99% of Qatari households’ monthly income exceeded 10,000 QR. Therefore, in order to identify which socioeconomic group the participants’ family belongs to, the category of 30,000–50,000 QR was set in the middle. A household income for the purposes of this study was defined as the combined income of all the individuals living under the same roof; thus, if a daughter was married and lived apart from her mother, her income and her mother’s income were not included in the same household income. As Figure 2 shows, the household income per month is between 30,000 and 50,000 QR for 37 of the participants, and over 50,000 QR for 35 of the participants; thus, it can be said that most of the respondents belong to the upper-middle and upper classes of Qatari society.

Along with age and socioeconomic status, educational level of the participants is also one of the most important indications to consider. Judging from the data illustrated in Figure 3, the educational level of both the mothers and daughters are collectively high considering the fact that governmental education for women in Qatar was instituted in 1956 (Brewer et al., 2006). Moreover, the daughters’ level of education is higher than that of the mothers.
Figure 2: Monthly household income of participants
- Below QR 30,000
- Between QR 30,000 and 50,000
- Above QR 50,000

Figure 3: Highest level of education among participants
- Mother
- Daughter
Traditional attire of Qatari Women: Mothers and Daughters

The first open-ended question is “Tell me about the traditional attire of Qatari women in your generation?” and this question aims to see the differences between Qatari mothers and daughters in terms of their traditional attire. Before the data is analyzed and presented, it is important to state that Qatari women’s attire differ between the public and private spheres although Karimi argues that the public versus private dichotomy is another orientalist assumption which has been generalized and applied to the study of the Middle Eastern societies (personal communication, June 2, 2015). In order to understand this basic division, an understanding of Qatari social perceptions and the different spheres must be reached. In general, once women pass puberty they can only wear the so-called ‘housedress’ which is less modest compared to the past and exposes their hair in front of their direct family circle which includes their fathers and brothers. According to this Islamic understanding, the definition of the private sphere depends on the presence of males who are either non-related or non-immediate family members. Accordingly, if there are no men in public places like schools, they can be considered private, whereas even inside a house, if there are unrelated men, it is considered a public space. Therefore, the divisions that Karimi (2003) made to introduce different types of dresses, indoor and outdoor, are not reliable because women’s way of dressing depends on the people with whom the wearer shares space. However, as she explains, the number of layers of a dress can indicate a relation between a wearer and space or a person at the site. For instance, in the private sphere where only close family members are present, a
dress can be the *dirra’ah* or *jalabiya*, which is a first layer. During events and on occasions when visitors are around, a wearer can put a second layer, the *thoub*, over the first layer of the dress. In outdoor or public spaces, a woman wears the *daffa* or *abaya* which is a third layer of a dress.

The differences and developments of traditional attire between mothers and daughters and between the public and private space are compared in the following manner.

Traditional attire of the mother’s generation in the public sphere is the abaya according to more than a half of the participating mothers. However, the type of the abaya that they refer to is different depending on their age as younger mothers indicated the abaya as that which is put on the shoulders with the head covering worn separately whereas older mothers specified it as ‘*abaya ala alra’s*, also referred to as ‘*abayah alra’s* or *abaya alra’s* (Image 10), which is worn from the head and covers the entire body with a cloak-like cloth. Mother B who is 56 years old said, “We wore the abaya and *sheila* at the age of 10 because of modesty and shyness.” In parallel, Mother E who is a 49 year-old also stated, “I started wearing the abaya and *sheila* in my 5th or 6th grade. My mother had a role of making me wear the abaya. Now I wear the abaya and *sheila* even I travel outside of the country.” As for Mother D who is 50 years old, she asserted, “Wearing the abaya is a part of the tradition and culture and I want to keep my reputation among people’s talks. Before, there was not *sheila* but only the abaya from the head.” In the same fashion, Mothers Z, L, and O, who are 65, 60, and 50 years old respectively, proved the view that there was only *abaya alra’s* before and the shoulder abaya was
introduced in the recent decades. Al-Wahabi (2003) explains the two main recent developments in the abaya (or the *daffa*). According to her, until the 1960s the daffa was made from wool that requires great care but owing to the growth of trade, the silk fabric, which is tough and long-lasting, became available in the market. In addition, since the 1990s more varieties in styles and embroiders have been added into the *daffa* even though black remained as the base color.
Moreover, 10 participating mothers concluded that trousers, skirts, and blouses were attire that they used to wear every day in schools and private places outside the home. Mother L whose age is 60 said:

Image 10: Woman in traditional attire
(*Abaya alra's, milfa'a, jalabiya, and the batullah*)

*Note.* Picture drawn for researcher by Nusrat Chaumun.
The government started educating people and we were the first ones to go to schools like university level although some people dropped because of marriage. At the university, we wore tanoura, a long skirt, and blouse without a hejab because there was no man on campus.

Similarly, Mother H aged 42 also stated, “We wore a type of skirt that matches with a blouse. It was somehow a kind of uniform.” In addition, one mother said that this kind of dress did not exist in her mother’s generation, and this came with Arab migrants from countries like Egypt during the 1960s and, as most of those migrants engaged in education, their clothes were introduced sometimes through dress code and sometimes through unintentional influence.

Five participating mothers also mentioned the niqab and burqa and it seems that not only was it introduced relatively recently in Qatar but it has also been used among Bedouin women. Mother L confirmed this idea by stating, “Niqab was for Bedouin women. But when we go to crowded places or places where many men can be found, we cover our faces with sheila.” In addition, Mother X, who considered herself Bedouin, explained her experience as:

We cover our faces and we call that ghotwa or tarha similar to niqab but the difference is that niqab shows their eyes while ghotwa covers the face entirely. Covering the face is just a tradition in the family, and most of my friends didn’t cover their faces.

Furthermore, Mother H noted, “I didn’t wear niqab or burqa when I was young because they were only for those who were married and had kids.”

Mother P whose age is 43 also described her experience as “I started wearing
niqab after I got married because I was asked by my husband. In the first year, I didn’t like wearing it, but by time I got used to it.”

Although face coverings such as niqab and burqa are well-known as Bedouin women’s dresses, some Qatari women who are Hadhar have adopted them as per their husbands’ requests or due to the frequency in their public appearances especially with the presence of non-relative men. At the same time, younger generations tend not to cover their faces; however, when they go to malls and events where there is a high possibility to meet someone who knows them or their family members, they use the edge of the head covering, sheila, to cover their faces in what is called ‘gashwa’ or ‘ghatwah’ (Image 1).

The face covering that was used among women in Qatar in the past was called the batullah, a black or golden face covering which covers the nose and cheeks, sometimes chin, and this habit was practiced prior to the mother’s generation. Image 10 shows how women wear the batullah with abaya alra’s. To clarify, Mother L explained, “In my mother’s generation, women after the marriage wore the batullah or even before the marriage. But since then, younger generation including me stopped wearing it due to education. The government started education and this made differences” Likewise, Mother L expressed her opinion in the way that old women used to wear the batullah because of their lack of education, and, through education, women in Qatar started to realize that the batullah was unnecessary and not a religious obligation. At the same time, Mother X mentioned the batullah by saying:

   My mother wore a head abaya which old people wear these days.

   Ours was a shoulder abaya, and my mother used to wear a “batullah”
similar to niqab which was a traditional thing to wear to cover a face when you get old, but my mother does not wear it now because she simply did not like it or that she did not want to feel old.

It seems that there is a common understanding among Qatari women that the batullah belongs to the old generation and is out of fashion these days. Yet, some old women wear the batullah only in special occasions like engagement parties or weddings or in their home and when they go out, they wear niqab or burqa. Because the batullah does not cover a wearer’s entire face, they prefer other face coverings which satisfy their needs.
In private sphere, most mentioned traditional attire by the participating mothers was the *dirra’ah* or *jalabiya* (See Image 11). Mother H explained, “We wear *dirra’ah* for formal visits while we wear *jalabiya* for informal visits and at home.” Equally, Mother P aged 43 also explained as “We wear *jalabiya* in the house and *dirra’ah* when I was in elementary school.” Moreover, Mother K aged 49 said:
Women in my generation used to wear dirra’ah which is called nowadays jalabiya in the house. When we left the house, we used to wear the abaya over dirra’ah. In my mother’s generation, they used to wear thoub al-nashal over their dirra’ah with the batullah on their face. Thus, the dirra’ah is used to describe a traditional Qatari long one-piece dress whereas jalabiya is a common word to refer to a modern type of the dirra’ah or a one-piece dress. Moreover, according to Karimi’s (2003) field research in Bahrain, thoub al-nashal is a second layer of clothing which is worn by women only during festivals, and this custom is almost similar to that of Qatar as thoub al-nashal is not for daily use. For everyday use, women particularly Hadhar women used to wear and still elderly ones wear thoub al-korar which is also a second layer slipping on over the jalabiya; unlike thoub al-nashal, it has less embroideries (Almuhajir, 2009; Al-Wahabi, 2003) (See Image 33 and 34).

In addition, as Mother K noted, there are some traditional clothes mainly for the private sphere or for pre-pubescent girls referred to by the mothers such as bukhnaq (Image 12), thoub al-nashal (Image 13), sirwal, milfa’a, and gashwa.

Mother P aged 43 said, “We wore bukhnaq during the qarge’an (Gerga’oon). My mother used to wear thoub al-nashal until my 5th grade (1983).” The qarge’an (Gerga’oon) is an annual festival for children during Ramadan month which is seen in the eastern Arabian Peninsula, and its way of celebration is very similar to Halloween. Other mothers also states that women and girls tend to dress in traditional attire in that event.
Mother NN aged 50 gave her general insight about the traditional attire of Qatari women in her generation by stating:

Traditional clothes are considered as reflection of someone’s identity. The traditional clothes in Qatar are based on the notion of modesty in Islam and the origin of Arabs. It stems from their respect to Islam and pride for being Arab. They are characterized to be one main piece, foot long, wide, loose and do not show the details of the body. They are usually defined with golden threads taking the shape of tree leaves, flowers, little birds and geometric forms like circles and vertical lines.
On the contrary, 30 participating daughters out of the total of 40 stated that the abaya is traditional attire for Qatari women in their generation. However, they distinguished their abaya from that of mothers by saying that their abaya is more modern in style and very trendy. For instance, Daughter C whose age is 25 said:

Women in my generation think of the abaya as the traditional attire, but the abaya is more fashionable and it is not used in a proper way in terms of modesty. In old time, women wore it for modesty but now it is
because of our culture and fashion. In fact, wearing the abaya attracts Qatari guys.

Daughter C was not the only respondent who claimed Qatari men’s enthusiasm for women in the abaya, as other respondents insisted on the effect of the abaya on bringing out women’s sexiness and femininity. Even though it is still too weak to draw a conclusion towards a relation between the abaya and men’s intentions based on such statements, this statement can lead to further research including reasons why foreign women adopt the abaya in Qatar. The details of the differences in the abaya are also discussed in the next section.

Despite the abaya being accepted, there were few respondents who did not recognize the abaya as the traditional attire of Qatari women. Daughter BB aged 29 expressed her opinion against the majority of women’s ideas by saying, “I don’t think the abaya and sheila became neither our national identity nor traditional attire. But thoub and bukhnaq are the national traditional attire. The black abaya doesn’t become a part of our culture and doesn’t represent Qatar.” Daughter W whose age is 20 also stated that there is no traditional attire in her generation. Moreover, there was only one daughter who considered niqab as part of the traditional attire.

For traditional attire in the private sphere, 6 participating daughters stated that they consider jalabiya as the traditional attire but they usually do not wear them except for special occasions such as at Friday gatherings and during Ramadan, and that their jalabiyas are more fashionable compared to that of mothers (See Image 37, 38, 39, and 40).
Surprisingly, 15 participating daughters answered this open-ended interview question by saying that they only wear western clothes at home. Daughter H said:

We wear jeans, leggings, short dresses, and updated dresses like Hollywood style. In my age, we can wear anything we want when close people [relatives] are not around. We must wear something traditional and conservative when they are around because people talk about how women dress. I mean dresses which are not showing off much and should be long as around knees and elegant.

Daughter AA whose age is 30 stated “We wear only western dresses and we rarely wear traditional clothes.” Daughter LL aged 27 also expressed her opinion by saying, “I wear leggings, jeans, shirts, summer dresses under the open type abaya. Western clothes are more casual and I like them. But I feel the old fashion is coming back and personally I like vintage dresses and styles.” Some participating daughters told the researcher that young women even go to schools with pajamas and just put the abaya on over them.

Consequently, women from the mother’s generation tended to have more varieties of traditional attire which is unique to their region or state whereas women from the daughter’s generation basically consider the modern abaya as their traditional dress and the jalabiya as something that is almost completely eliminated from daily use (Figure 4). The so-called ‘modern abaya’ which is shoulder type and ready-made came from Saudi Arabia during early 1980s due to introduction of machine-made dresses tailored by Indian and Pakistani men (Karimi, 2003). Figure 4 reports each generation’s traditional
attire based on the study, and the category filled in color indicates the indoor attire whereas the non-filled category indicates the outdoor attire of Qatari women. As Figure 1 shows, the generational time span among the daughters is much shorter than that of the mothers because changes taking place among the daughters are vast. While the daughters’ age range is between 20 and 30, the mother’s age range is between 38 and 65; thus, the mother’s generational age range is about twice that of the daughter’s generation. Even so, there are major changes in terms of Qatari women’s traditional attire, so the next section focuses more on the differences of traditional attire between the mothers and daughters in further detail.

**Figure 4:**
Traditional attire of Qatari women between mothers and daughters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Daughter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abaya alra’s</td>
<td>The abaya and sheila</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long trousers, skirts, and blouses</td>
<td>Jalabiya/Dirra’ah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niqab/ Burqa</td>
<td>The abaya (Stylish, colorful, modern)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jalabiya (Colorful, short)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Western clothes (Leggings, jeans, short dresses)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Differences in the Traditional Attire: Mothers and Daughters

In this section, the answers corresponding to the second open-ended question, “How is it [the traditional attire] different from that of your mother/daughter?” are displayed and analyzed. The most mentioned differences among the participating mothers and daughters were regarding the abaya. The differences are mainly in terms of style, design, color, quantity, frequency, function, price, and place to buy, and these differences are similar to that for the jalabiya. Firstly, the differences in the abaya are compared, followed by the differences in the jalabiya.

Abaya

As it was described in the previous section, the style of the abaya has changed from an over-the-head abaya to a shoulder-type abaya. Mother H whose age is 42 explained the differences as:

The abaya is even different. Their abayas are more fashionable and contain a lot of detailed ornaments while ours used to be very light, and the type of the abaya was one that we put over our heads and hold it in front, so that our boys could see what is underneath which we used to call “Beirut breeze”. The abaya was so light and see-through which had a common feature with Beirut people who were known as very soft.

Mother P aged 43 analyzed, “The abaya used to be from the head, black, looser and closed. Now the abaya is colorful, shorter, tighter, and open.” The 30 year-old Daughter JJ also stated:
From the time of *abaya alra’s* to the introducing the new abaya, the transaction was so quick. The abaya was forced to integrate in the society in my mother’s generation and now young girls wear the abaya when they are 13 year-old or even 10-11 year-old.

Daughter S whose age is 26 responded, “Mother used to wear *abaya alra’s* but she thinks it is not practical anymore, so she wears a shoulder abaya.”

Furthermore, in the daughter’s generation, the style of the abaya changes within a short period of time and this shows the quick transition of fashion trends. Daughter LL who is a 27 year-old described the transition as “The pattern of the abaya has changed as first it was shell style then *thoub* style after that batman style like a squire abaya came and since last year open abaya is common.” Correspondingly, Daughter DD aged 23 said:

The taste of the abaya is different as the abaya became open-style before it was closed. They [mothers] like flower designs. I think it was a trend in their generation and they are stuck [in the past].

Some of the participating daughters emphasized how the style of the abaya can even speak volumes about a person’s characteristics such as personal tendency. For instance, the ‘*boyat*’ phenomenon in Qatar as well as the Gulf states has an intimate relation in the society. *Boyat* is a combination of words, ‘boy’ in English and ‘at’ which is the suffix for plural feminine words in Arabic; in other words, girls with male attitudes. This phenomenon has been a topic of discussion for some years and, according to Dr. Fadwa Al Mughairbi, a psychology professor at the United Arab Emirates University, this is different from homosexuality but it is caused by family upbringing and an imbalance of
testosterone in the infancy period (Naidoo, 2011). Boyats tend to act more like men by their way of speaking, hairstyle, way of dress, and behavior. Since Qatar and the Gulf countries where homosexuality is an object of legal offence are based on conservative Islamic values and teaching, boyat are seen as unfaithful and forbidden beings in the society.

Considering women are not allowed to wear male clothes and vis-à-vis based on Article 57 of the Qatari constitution, which states “abiding by public order and morality, observing national tradition and established customs is a duty of all who reside in the State of Qatar or enter its territory” (Saudi Gazette, 2015), the participating daughters said boyats usually can be distinguished through their ways of wearing the abaya. They specified that bisht style of the abaya (Image 17) is used commonly among boyats because bisht is a traditional attire in Qatar and other Gulf states an effectively hides the body shape of women which is a symbol of femininity. Moreover, a recent trend of the abaya which is the front open-type (Image 19, 23, and 24) requires women to hold the edges of the front of the abaya closed, but boyats are likely to keep it open because holding the cloth is considered as showing feminine attitude.

Beside that, as the styles of the abaya advanced, the design of the abaya has also diversified over a generation (See Image 21). The abaya has become lighter, tighter, shorter, more decorative, and more colorful. The 42 years old Mother X stated:

My daughters wear abayas with different colors and shapes, and the most recent trend is the abaya that you wrap it up around your body
and hold it instead of abaya with buttons which I don’t wear since it’s obviously for young girls and it will be funny for a mother to wear that kind of abayas.

In like manner, Mother L whose age is 60 stated, “In our generation, the abaya was simple black and closed in the middle with buttons, and some designs could be applied only in the bottoms. Later on, some women started to put some golden designs on their sheila.” Mother N aged 48 also said:

Women started to design their abayas and insert colors and models in them as they cannot remove the abaya. I haven’t changed my style in clothes or the abaya but I have changed some models as I inserted new ones.

As Mother N claimed, not only has the abaya for young people changed but so has the abaya for the older generation has changed. Daughter G who is 24 years old commented:

There is no difference in terms of the fact that my mother’s and my generation use the abaya. But designs of the abaya became more modern, and styles have changed. Now it reflects international fashion and suites to our generation. The abaya before was not so short, now it is much shorter and cut is different. Mother’s generation was more conservative.

Daughter AA aged 30 described her observation of changes in the abaya and told the researcher:
My mother wears the abaya which is the black, simple, and closed with buttons. I wear the abaya which is open and full of designs. We still love our culture so we still wear the abaya but we put our designs. Traditionally, the abaya was simply black without any decorations or variations in color or design, and it was also made from one fabric. Nowadays, abayas entirely made without any black material can be found. Mother O aged 50 reported, “The abaya has changed especially color. We have more choices now and decorations became more special and their quality is higher.” Mother X aged 42 also explained, “In my generation we used to wear plain abayas which had nothing special on it or colored because back then colored abayas was something that people would judge you about it.”

In addition, Daughter BB who is a 29 year-old stated:

The black abaya came from Iran and it was just straight cut, only black and no design. Also there was no trend of the abaya. We wore the abaya and sheila daily. It was shameful and forbidden to wear trousers under the abaya. Now women need to wear the abaya but colored abayas are accepted now like beige or dark green.

Her historical recognition in terms of the origin of the black abaya is not necessarily true, but more importantly, regardless of Qatari people’s perceptions towards the colored abaya, it is true that the young generation attempts to break from the stereotypical black abaya (See Image 20, 26, and 27). Many Gulf women go to Saudi Arabia for shopping and the abaya is one of the top items on their shopping lists because things in Saudi Arabia are much cheaper than in other Gulf states, and more variations in styles and
designs are available there. In this case, of course, Qatari women are no exception. However, in November last year, the University of Dammam officially announced the dress code rule on campus against colored abayas (Saudi Gazette, 2014). The report also stated that the Ministry of Labor and the Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Saudi Arabia, which is an agency promoting and monitoring the reinforcement of Islamic law in the state through religious police, introduced new laws against shops and designers who were making the colored abaya; this is to ensure that all dresses are in accordance with the Islamic understanding. Currently, Qatar has not imposed any laws regarding colored abayas but this can be debatable among Qataris.

As the frequency of wearing the abaya has increased, so has the quantity of abayas each Qatari woman owns. Mother L in her 60s said:

We had only two abayas for whole year and one sheila which was used for all the abayas. One abaya was for spring and another one was for winter, and they were enough because we used them to cover our bodies when we go outside. At work, we took off our abayas and women could wear anything they wanted but now my daughters can’t do that and they need to wear the abaya all the time like at a place for work and study, and everywhere. For example, Qatar University had a uniform before like a brown skirt. When we visited some family members and friends in Qatar, we kept our abayas on because men might pass by although we may take the abaya off when we visit
people in other GCC states. Now what they look for is all different models.

The 50 year-old Mother BB also stated, “Before we had only two abayas, and even for occasions, we wore the same abaya like a wedding party and Ramadan. But now they have more than 30 abayas.” Prof. Alnajjar also analyzed the reason why women started to wear the abaya more often was because the abaya had lost its original function and developed a modern one (personal communication, May 13, 2015). In other words, the abaya is not used to cover but to make them enjoy their looks as fashionable. Thus, the abaya established a new category of dress; hence, Qatari as well as non-Qatari women now tend to have more abayas than they did before.

Many respondents extensively expressed their opinions about differences in the abaya in terms of its function. Mother J whose age is 51 said, “We used to wear the abaya as a cultural reason but now it became more due to modesty and a way to cover the body.” By the same token, Daughter O who is a 24 year-old reported:

The abaya is important for women as Qatar is an Islamic country, and women need to cover. But now the abaya became a cultural symbol as well as religious obligation. Women are competing with each other through the abaya against other women. The abaya became more fashionable due to modernity. The abaya is more cultural influenced than religion one even though religion talks about only covering no matter the color.

Furthermore, Daughter Q provided her insight by saying:
The purpose of wearing the abaya is not to show the figure of women. But now some abayas are too colorful. There are appropriate ways of dress for each generation. Even though we wear the abaya, there are appropriate styles among my mother, me and sister. We should not move away from roots but just improve it.

The 25 years old Daughter KK conveyed:

Mothers wore a simple black abaya not to attract men, but now women wear the abaya which has many designs and it is open or sometimes with a belt. Now it is for fashion and model. It does not serve the real meaning of the abaya. The new abayas are shorter in order to show their shoes and accessories in order to get attention. Also they make their abayas as unusual or unique as possible to be proud of themselves. They do something that they don’t want to do but to show people that they can follow the fashion and do certain things. In my opinion, if it does not serve the meaning of the abaya, we don’t need to wear it. Although we want to follow the fashion, we should think about the meaning of the abaya. I am not saying the color, but for instance the tightness.

As a consequence, changes are not limited to the abaya itself, but also include the things they wear under the abaya. Due to the rapid financial growth of Qatari people, women now can afford to buy expensive brand-name products and they are very keen on following modern fashion’s latest trends. They even travel to Europe to get their hands on the newest luxury items as soon as they are introduced to the market (Ebrahimi, 2012; Neville, 2013). Currently, the
well-known UK department store, Harrods, is owned by a Qatari since 2010 (Sunderland, 2010). Traditionally wearing jewelry, especially gold, is a must for Qatari women (Alobaidy, 2014), but the latest collections of luxury shops attract many young Qatari women and this leads to the formation of new styles of the abaya which allow them to flaunt their shoes, bracelets, rings, and watches. In addition, fashion items like belts are not out of range as trimming on a dress; it is a way to show off the figure of the wearer.

More revealing styles or materials of dresses may be linked to unhealthy diets among young women via cause-and-effect (Donnelly et al., 2011). Undoubtedly, these changes do not apply to all Qatari women; however, it is crucial to look at the changes which did not exist in the mother’s generation and are unique to the daughter’s generation.

Daughter LL shared her own reason to wear traditional attire, “For me wearing sheila and abaya is not religious reason. I don’t even know how to wear sheila properly, but I just got used to it. Now I don’t think myself without the abaya.” Daughter JJ also considered the abaya a part of her identity as a Qatari woman, saying:

I might be seen as a conservative person but I am in the middle as I don’t have a problem talking with a man. Covering my head is not cultural but religious. As being a Muslim woman, it is out of question. The abaya with sheila became my identity although the type of the abaya has changed from abaya alra’s to a coat type due to its ease of movement.

She continued to state her historical perspectives as:
In the 1970s majority of women at Qatar University didn’t wear the abaya and some female students and their clothes were colorful and stylish. From 1985-2004 when some women started going to a university, women would take off their abayas and give them to nanny at the main gate of the university. But since 2002 the abaya became a dress code for women among men. My aunt told me that professors didn’t wear the abaya, and they wore Islamic dresses like long skirts and a head covering. Now you see the abaya even in female schools. In the past, even though there were men at school, people did not care about it. The abaya became like our fingerprints.

This can be seen in Image 30 which is a picture of three Qatari girls without the abaya or sheila introduced in a Qatar’s guide book in 1983 (Whelan, 1983). Although the abaya is now seen as a symbol of being a Qatari woman or a Gulf (Khaleeji) woman, there is no legal enforcement of the abaya in Qatar on women regardless of their nationality. However, there are doubts as to whether Qatari women have the freedom not to wear the abaya socially and culturally.

Mother N whose age is 48 said, “For me, wearing the abaya gives me a kind of freedom. I don’t judge Qatari women who don’t wear the abaya, but wearing the abaya is like an unwritten rule in Qatar.” Additionally, Daughter Q told the researcher “In Qatar, I prefer wearing the abaya to cover up and it is easier, but when I go to outside of GCC like Egypt and Lebanon, I don’t wear it because I get more attention [by wearing the abaya].”

Daughter S whose age is 26 explained her expression as:
When I looked at old private pictures and compared my mother’s dressing and that of mine in the same age, it seems that when she was in my age, it was not important for women to wear the abaya nor it was expected by people although she was wearing a head garment every time she left the home.

Daughter X, age 20, also supported this idea by stating:

Now abaya became more fashionable and expensive, and its quality is better. It is now treated like Louis Vuitton. In my mother’s generation before, it was not mandatory to wear the abaya and it was seen as a tradition so my mother did not wear the abaya and she wore a colorful hejab but simple.

Interestingly, some respondents observed foreigners wearing the abaya in Qatar and expressed changes in functions of the abaya. For example, Daughter BB aged 29 said:

I notice that some foreigners wear the abaya but I don’t know why they wear it maybe just to show because the abaya became a symbol and a way to gain respect from people. Women with the abaya are put in a certain category to be respected. Qatari men are more attracted to women in the abaya. In abroad, the abaya is used as a symbol of modesty but now it became something [else].

As it is discussed previously, the abaya has become one of the categories of recognized international dresses so some expatriates wear it as taste in fashion although it is also true that some foreigners see great degree of discrimination based on people’s ways of dress in Qatar (Eipe, 2013).
A famous young Qatari female designer, Waad Ali, who has her own shop called WAAD Designs talked about the current trend of the abaya in a media interview (Boyajian, 2013) in 2013 following:

Here in Doha, and in the Gulf generally, we wear abayas now as the main piece; we tend to dress up with the abaya. So the change that has happened over time, it’s people’s perception of abayas, and the way designers shape the abayas and make them look like dresses, so that now people ignore dresses and just focus on abayas. So I guess all together designers, people’s taste, and also the need for an abaya that is glamorous and matches the European style, this is what has changed the perception of abayas. (n.p.).

In her shop website (Waad Design, 2012), she also explains her concept of dresses as:

[C]lassy designs of Khaleeji abayas and contemporary jalabiyas that distinct the Arab Women with elegance and beauty and those seekers to highlight their attractiveness in a modest way. (n.p.).

It is important to acknowledge that the differences in traditional attire have not arisen out of nowhere, nor from people’s unconscious impressions, but that there are most likely leading players behind the scenes influencing these changes. As traditional attire has become heavily-designed and more high-fashion, it no longer represents a symbol of elimination of women in the public sphere; rather, it is a way to show off and enhance women’s presence within the bounds of modesty.
Correspondingly, as a result of elaborate patterns and decorations on the abaya, the price of the abaya has also risen. Mother II whose age is 52 answered:

Price of a simple abaya can vary from 250 to 1000 QR. If you buy the abaya from a shop in a mall like Sayydati Al-Jamilah, it will cost more than 1000 QR. Usually my abaya costs from 350 to 400 QR. Since I like designs of Saudi abayas, I usually buy from Saudi Arabia and it costs me 250 QR and good quality. Also a Bahraini abaya is famous.

In the case of Mother N aged 48, she said, “I usually buy the abaya without models with 350 QR, and with designs with from 1000 to 2000 QR.”

Among Qatari women in the younger generation, they seek the abaya which is unique and the leading-edge of fashion but they are also critical about the prices. Daughter EE who is a 25 year-old mentioned, “The abayas which are designed by Qatars can cost 3000 to 15000 QR. They think their brands are like Valentino.” Daughter BB also expressed her opinion, saying “I don’t even know how much money women spend on their abayas. Men even make jokes about these abayas.”

While branding and industrializing the abaya have proceeded without pause, places to purchase the abaya and forms of the abaya have changed. In the mother’s generation, ready-made dresses were hard to find and women needed to go to markets to find fabric first and then either find a tailor or sew the clothes by themselves. Mother L aged 60 stated:

Daughters wear pants or western clothes which are ready-made. In my time, we needed to choose fabric and tailor them in order to wear, so
there was not a ready-made clothing. Everything needed tailoring and this was also women’s work and this was a source of income for women.

For this reason, women were even given sewing lessons in school. However, with the introduction of malls and a shift of the abaya market to a more global scale, many international as well as local designers have become involved in the abaya industry and have started mass-producing readymade abayas. Moreover, the Saudi abaya shop, Sayydati Al-Jamilah, and the Qatari traditional attire shop, Almotahajiba, have introduced the modern style of abaya and have become very popular in Qatar and elsewhere in the Gulf.

However, in the last few years, young Qatari women no longer view these brands as attractive as they tend to consider them more old-fashioned. This change in perspective may be traced back to the time when social media was introduced and spread across the Gulf region, and many young entrepreneurs joined the abaya market by using Facebook, Instagram, and Whatsapp. For instance, 220 abaya designers from the Gulf states participated in the sixth Heya Women Fashion Exhibition last year in Doha (Aguilar, 2014). Moreover, HEYA Arabian Fashion Exhibition which was the seventh edition took place between June 10th and 15th, 2015 at Doha Exhibition Center (Qatar Tourism, 2015). During the exhibition, abayas, jalabiyas, and evening dresses for spring and summer collections by GCC designers were sold. Spouses’ entry was permitted only one day and children were not allowed in the event; each shop was given its own booth to display its original dresses. Moreover, some designers hired models mostly non-Khaleeji Arab
women to wear their most recent collections and walk around the hall – off-stage (See Image 6, 7, 8, 9, 25, 36, 38, 39, and 40). Every night, a fashion show was held and a shop could participate to attract more customers (See Image 9 and 27). Daughter AA aged 30 explained her way of shopping in details as:

Actually I design my abaya and sometimes I buy the abaya and jalabiya from Qatari designers like N&M, Kay’s World, WAAD designs via Instagram. I check trend and design at fashion show and see other people wearing nice abayas and check their logos so that I can identify which shop she bought the abaya. There was a fashion show for a new brand which Sheikha Moza established, called QELA.

To sum up, since the transition from abaya alra’s to a shoulder-type of the abaya took place, a pace of producing new styles and varieties of the abaya has been accelerated. Abaya designers and shops also create and sell abayas depending on seasons and international fashion, and they repeatedly announce new collections of cutting-edge of different abayas. Furthermore, in the views of the respondents, particularly the daughters, a widely recognized general trend of the abaya can be identified in Qatar.

The first shoulder-type abaya after abaya alra’s is the jilbab style shown in Image 14 which is basically a single-breasted coat type with buttons that is tight in the sleeve area. This type of dress is widely worn by women in Egypt and other Levant states like Syria and Palestine; hence, this was introduced to Qatari women during the 1960s when there was a large influx of
Arab migrants due to the Qatari government hiring a number of them to work in the newly expanding field of education.

The second style of the abaya is known as ‘batman’ style which has very loose sleeves under the arms and it collectively covers the figure. After that, the ‘butterfly’ abaya was introduced and this shares a lot of similarities with the batman style. However, as Image 15 displays, the shape of the sleeves tends to be straighter cut and when one stretches her arms out, the whole shape of the abaya becomes square.

Shortly after that, a style similar to the abaya in Image 16 was introduced to the market; this abaya is decorated with belts, shoulder pads with distinctive embellishments, and a latticework/translucent designed fabric. Evidently, the functions of the abaya evolved from a tool to conceal one’s identity to an instrument to disclose individual inspiration, status, and personality.

Since approximately three years ago, the *bisht* style abaya presented in Image 17 was started by the former first lady of Qatar, Sheikha Moza, and became a huge hit among young Qatari women. As *bisht* already carries status for men in the Khaleeji tradition, it grew in popularity among Qatari women namely amongst the boyats.

Moreover, it is important to remark upon the implications of the attire Sheikha Moza wore for occasional visits and participations. For instance, when she had a one-day visit to Kuwait in March 2015, she chose to wear a *bisht* abaya (Tumblr, 2015) (Image 28). This can be interpreted as showing not only her respect and pride towards the Khaleeji tradition and history, but also
her views towards status and roles of women in the patriarchal Khaleeji society and her attempts to break the traditional stereotypes against Qatari women. Conversely, this can even be understood as a challenge to the wife of the Emir of Kuwait, Kuwaiti women who are historically famous for being active in promoting women’s rights and equality, and fashion leaders in the Gulf.

Presently, the cape and open-type abayas are the main styles of the abaya in the last year. The cape abaya exhibited in Image 18 and 22 can expose half of the wearer’s arms as well as accessories around wrists. Likewise, the open abaya allows the wearer to show off her clothes under the abaya (Image 19, 22, 23, and 24). Accordingly, Qatar University created an animated flyer on appropriate dress code, strictly urging female students to close their open abaya (Image 29).
Image 14: Woman in a *jilbab* style abaya

Image 15: Woman in a butterfly abaya
Image 16: Woman in an abaya with a belt, spikes, and a latticework/translucent designed fabric

Image 17: Woman in a *bisht* style abaya
Image 18: Woman in a cape abaya

Image 19: Woman in an open style abaya
Note. Photo taken by the researcher at a Qatari house in Al Wakrah, June 16, 2015.
Image 21: Qatari woman in a black abaya with flower patterns

*Note.* Photo taken by the researcher at a Qatari house in Al Wakrah, June 16, 2015.
Image 22: Woman in an open style cape abaya

Note. Photo taken by the researcher at HEYA Arabian Fashion Exhibition in Doha, June 15, 2015.
Image 23: Qatari woman in an open abaya

Image 24: Qatari woman in an open abaya
Image 25: Woman in an abaya designed by a Qatari female designer

*Note.* Photo taken by the researcher at HEYA Arabian Fashion Exhibition in Doha, June 15, 2015.
Image 26 (above): Abayas with translucent materials for occasions

Image 27 (left): A cape abaya with various designs and prints for occasions
Image 28: Sheikha Moza in a *bisht* abaya (Royalfashion, n.d.).
Note. Photo taken by the researcher at Qatar University, June 17, 2015.
While the changing needs of the abaya were altering the style of the abaya, the *sheila*, a head covering which is a thin black cloth worn along with the shoulder abaya, was introduced to women in Qatar. It was not only to promote ease of movement (as the shoulder abaya was held closed with buttons so women did not need to hold the cloth of the abaya over their heads), but a religious teaching that raised awareness of covering hair for women. The changes in the *sheila* can be seen as an indication of growth in religious conservativeness of Qatari society.

**Sheila**

In the mother’s generation, a head covering was called the *milfa’a*, a black translucent cloth that is used to cover wearer’s hair but in fact due to a high degree of transparency and thinness, people could see the hair (Image 31, 32, and 35). The same type of head covering but which is darker and thicker, which does not show wearer’s hear is called ‘*sheila*’. Regarding the two, Karimi (2003) says, “*[t]he milfa’ is more commonly known as a shaila among the young generation*” (p. 164).

Mother N aged 48 said, “When *sheila* was introduced in Qatar, people started wearing it but the *sheila* used to be light and transparent as you could see women’s hair. I started covering my hair when I was 14 years old.”

Mother CC who is a 55 year-old also informed:

Each generation is different but my mother used to wear fashionable dresses and she didn’t wear hijab. After she gave birth and around 80s, people started wearing modest clothes and more religious way. Her generation is more conservative because of time and religious teaching.
These comments show that the society was already culturally conservative before the mother’s generation, but through a revival in Islamic teachings the society started becoming religiously conservative as well. Moreover, Mother BB aged 50 shared her experience:

When I was teenager, I didn’t wear *shaila* or even hijab but *abaya alra’s*. Before, we didn’t cover the hair although there was Islam.

When I got married I started wearing *sheila*. Under the abaya, we needed to wear dresses with long sleeves.

It seems that the more the foundation of Islamic education became stronger, the more people enforced women to wear the *sheila* in Qatar. Daughter EE whose age is 25 told:

When I go abroad, I even take off *sheila* along with the abaya. People in Qatar judge you based on how much you cover especially hair, but I don’t think hair matters that much. It’s not an indication of how religious you are although I don’t get unwanted attention when I wear a scarf.

Besides, the *sheila*, as the results of the first open-ended question showed, the number of women who use a face covering such as niqab and burqa as well as the *batullah* has decreased over the last generation. It is important to look at 15 respondents who stated the practice of a face covering as one of the key differences over the last generation.
Image 30: Qatari girls without the abaya and a head covering (Whelan, 1983).
Image 31 (above): Woman in a milfa’a or sheila, bisht, and a dirra’ah

Image 32 (below): Milfa’a or sheila (closeup)
A Face Covering

Mother N whose age is 48 observed a historical shift of the face covering as well as her perception towards it. She stated:

I just started wearing niqab 20 years ago. Before then there was not religious knowledge among people in Qatar. Personally, I don’t see people based on their clothes and hejabs, but I respect women with niqab. The number of women who wear niqab was higher in 80s and the early 90s but in the late 90s and the beginning of 2000, the number started to decrease because of the modern concept of dressing.

Other participating mothers supported the idea that the niqab and burqa that are considered as Bedouin women’s tradition emerged in last two decades in Qatar. Mother O whose age is 50 examined, “The face was open before while old women wore the batullah. But if there are men, women covered their faces. In fact, niqab started 20 years ago.” Mother BB aged 50 also remarked, “The niqab didn’t exist at all in Qatar even ritham during 60s to 90s but because more Bedouins immigrated to Qatar from Saudi Arabia and they brought their culture of dress with them.” Moreover, a 52 year-old Bedouin mother stated:

Although the niqab is part of tradition and religion, only about 30 % of Qatari women wear it. I was asked to wear niqab by mother even though I didn’t want to wear it in the beginning. Niqab belongs to Bedouin women so when we go out, we wear it.

Some of the participating daughters confessed not only their views on the face covering but also their real discussions with their parents over it. Daughter JJ expressed her opinion as:
My mother used to wear the niqab but the world has changed and now she doesn’t cover her face anymore because she traveled a lot and became old. Also she doesn’t wear makeup so she thinks she reached the age that she doesn’t attract men. I wear niqab sometimes because of the nature of society and people look at my face so I feel uncomfortable. According to the Maliki school of thought which my family follows, not wearing a face covering is fine. I think it depends on the family because covering the face is not from the Quran, but from understanding of the Arabic culture. In a small place like Qatar, people talk and gossip about other people [which] cause many problems. So to save a family and own reputation, it is sometimes better or no choice but to follow the culture.

Daughter H also shared her experience:

My mother wears a niqab and she is nagging me to wear it although I don’t wear it usually but I do sometimes just to please her because she thinks that people don’t respect me if I don’t wear a niqab. Both of my parents think that uncovering a face is a big taboo. When I go out with my family I cover my face either by wearing a niqab or just by using a *sheila*, but behind my family I uncover my face.

Daughter II who is a 24 years old Bedouin expressed her feeling of isolation by wearing the niqab. She said, “Now most of the Qatari girls don’t wear niqab. Although I wear it, I am a minority in the classroom because the community has changed.”
Since the face covering is used not to show a woman’s beauty and to guard her privacy, despite the fact that less women use niqab or burqa, many women tend to cover their faces when they put on makeup or go to places full of men and strangers. In addition, marriage is oftentimes a motive to use a face covering. Mother T reported, “I started to wear niqab after the marriage although I didn’t like it in the beginning. Because he [my husband] thinks that I get attention by showing my face in public and it is forbidden in Islam.”

In the case of the batullah, the respondents commented that it was introduced by Persians and commonly used among Qatari women during the 1950s (See Image 33, 34, and 35). Most of the responding mothers have not worn it before and it can be seen only among older women aged over 60 years old. The 49 year-old Mother K analyzed, “Regarding batullah, mothers don’t wear it on their faces since the generation of women has changed due to modernity and the society has become opener and freer than before.” Some respondents also told the researcher that women who wear the batullah get attention and it indeed makes women attractive. Additionally, it does not really cover the whole face, so even elderly women who prefer wearing the batullah at home, wear niqab or burqa when they go to public spaces.

While Qatari women cover themselves with the abaya and sheila, sometimes with a face covering, the traditional housedress, jalabiya (dirra’ah), (See Image 11, 31, 33, 34, 35, and 36) has changed as well. The differences in the jalabiya are very similar to that of the abaya which was previously discussed. However, there are some specific differences and changes that took place in the jalabiya over one generation.
Image 33: Woman in a *dirra’ah*, *thoub al-korar*, and a *batullah*

*Note.* Photo taken by the researcher at Qatar University, June 17, 2015.
Image 34: Old Qatari woman in a dirra ‘ah and thoub al-korar with a batullah (Mr. Q, 2011).
**Jalabiya**

*Jalabiya* is the Egyptian word for *thoub* that is always used to refer to men’s dress; thus, men wear the *jalabiya* in Egypt and in neighboring regions (B. Alnajjar, personal communication, May 13, 2015). The dress as well as its name, *jalabiya*, brought into the Gulf society including Qatar when students from the Gulf states started to pursue their education in Egypt and adopt Egyptian clothing and way of dressing; around the same time, Egyptian movies and soap-operas which displayed Egyptian traditional dress also impacted on Qatari people’s attire (Karimi, 2003). Previously, a long-sleeved and a keen-length dress was called the ‘*dirra’ah*’ and it was often worn with the *sirwal*, embroidered pants (See Image 4 and 5).

Both mothers and daughters mentioned changes in styles and designs of the *jalabiya* between them, but the biggest difference is the frequency of wearing the *jalabiya*. Mother K aged 49 told the researcher, “Before, girls and mothers always wore traditional *jalabiya*, but now we can see that both girls and mothers wear more fashionable clothes than their grandmothers.” Meanwhile, her daughter whose age is 25 answered:

Inside of a house, our grandmothers have worn *jalabiya* all the time. When our mothers were young, they wore a *dirra’ah* or *jalabiya* which doesn’t have big differences in Qatar, and I wear a fashionable *jalabiya* only when I visit my grandmother and old uncle, because their mentality is old they don’t like me not wearing the traditional dress although they don’t have any problem with my younger sisters without the *jalabiya*.
Mother DD aged 41 also commented, “In gatherings, we used to show up with our jalabiyas and gold. Today’s generation, they come with tight and short dresses or jeans and leggings which were taboo to wear in my generation.” Likewise, Mother BB narrated Qatari women’s traditions in the jalabiya, exclaiming, “We needed to prepare six different jalabiyas for E’id [Islamic festival] and changed the dress every day.” Comparatively, Daughter AA said:

I wear the jalabiya (dirra’ah) which has more decorations only for Friday’s lunch which is a family gathering but not for dinner, but my mother wears a jalabiya all the time. In the past she used to sometimes wear similar dress like us but when she became 45 years old, she changed how she dresses and she wears something looser and more comfortable.

Daughter FF whose age is 27 also mentioned the jalabiya:

We wear the jalabiya only for occasions namely Ramadan, a henna party [a girl’s party which usually takes place on the eve or few days prior to the wedding], and Gerga’oon. And we wear modern jalabiyas which have traditional looks but with gold designs and shorter, and sometimes Indian style.

Some daughters also stated that their styles of jalabiyas are influenced by Chinese and Moroccan traditional dresses and patterns.

Originally, the jalabiya (dirra’ah) was colorful and had printed designs on the surface; the differences are, thus not as remarkable as that of the abaya. However, the participating daughters and mothers acknowledged that the
modern type of the jalabiya has more decorations and embroidery and has become much tighter and shorter.

Despite the fact that the jalabiya is still considered a Qatari traditional dress, it has gone from a daily housedress to occasional special attire for young women. Over time, western clothes have replaced traditional attire like the jalabiya and even some mothers wear western clothes. Thus, the jalabiya is now only worn under the abaya and in the private sphere by young women and some older women. In the next section, a shift towards western clothes among Qatari women is looked at and analyzed.
Image 35: Woman in a *dirra’ah*, *milfa’a*, and a *batullah*

*Note.* Photo taken by the researcher at HEYA Arabian Fashion Exhibition in Doha, June 15, 2015.
Image 36: Girl in a *dirra'ah*, *bukhnaq*, and an *abaya alra's* Note. Photo taken by the researcher at HEYA Arabian Fashion Exhibition in Doha, June 15, 2015.
Image 37:
Modern jalabiya

Image 38:
Modern jalabiya
Image 39: Modern jalabiya

Note. Photo taken by the researcher at HEYA Arabian Fashion Exhibition in Doha, June 15, 2015.
Image 40: Modern jalabiya

Note. Photo taken by the researcher at HEYA Arabian Fashion Exhibition in Doha, June 15, 2015.
Western Clothes

Some women started wearing western clothes including short skirts a long time ago, but they used to wear them only in front of a close group of women (B. Alnajjar, personal communication, May 13, 2015). Mother P aged 43 explained, “Daughters wear pants and pajamas. They also wear short dresses in weddings which are taboo in my generation. Their way of dressing doesn’t represent our tradition nor culture.” Mother BB also supported the idea that trousers and pajamas were taboo to wear when she was young. Mother M aged 38 described her daughter’s attitude towards traditional attire as “My daughter wears western clothes and follows fashion, and she doesn’t like to wear traditional clothes except in some traditional events. I usually wear more modest and traditional clothes”. Her 22 years old daughter did not see a big difference in their way of dress and she commented:

There is not a big difference between my mother and me since she is 38 years old and the age gap is small. But there is a huge difference between my mother and grandmother. Grandmother’s abaya had no other color at all than black and they were more conservative.

Moreover, Mother NN felt the same way and she commented, “Nowadays young girls refuse to wear the original traditional clothes and they tend to wear western-style dresses.”

In the meantime, Daughter S, a 26 year-old, said, “We see a lot of women wearing western clothes under the abayamas whereas the mother’s generation women used to wear the jalabiya under.” Moreover, Daughter H whose age is 25 disclosed her life regarding attire:
We wear something more westernized dress. Actually I wear a skirt and leggings behind my mother. My father is kind of westernized as he was educated in the west and watches English TVs and news. So in order for my mother to attract my father, she wears western clothes and expensive western brands’ accessories such as Chanel and Cartier. Also leggings or jeans are not allowed outside of the house, and we should wear skirts that do not show our body shapes. In fact I and my sister wear these clothes behind my parents and I have spare skirts in my car just in case. Especially when my mother is in bad mood or busy with her work, we dress properly with niqab, then we take it off whenever we get into a car. We are having a double life!

When the participants were asked their opinions about differences in traditional attire of Qatari women compared to that of the participating mothers or daughters, many of them mentioned social changes of Qatar towards attire in general. Qatari society has been conservative; however, Qatari people’s perspectives and views towards women’s way of dress have changed based on cultural and religious understandings. Thus, wider views towards the changes in traditional attire and way of dress among Qatari women need to be taken into consideration.

**General Changes in Attire**

Mother K whose age is 49 responded:

Nowadays, girls are wearing trendy and modern clothes which we did not have in the past such as trousers and fashionable dresses from different shops and designers. And the style of dresses has completely
changed. 20 years ago, if a girl wore the same style of dress like nowadays, her parents would have made big problems for her because of their tradition.

Mother BB also talked about her experience as:

Before women are not allowed to wear short dresses. The family from my father side traveled a lot so they were open-minded. Grandfather was a merchant and he spent time in Egypt and Lebanon. The family from my mother’s side is more conservative although they are Hadhar as well.

While the mothers think that young women wear more revealing dresses nowadays, and that many of them repeatedly exhibit a lack of modesty, some young women think that women in the mother’s generation had more freedom in terms of ‘social dress code’. Daughter A who is 22 years old reported, “Freedom of clothing is limited compared to before. Now our way of dressing represents reputation of a family and our tradition and culture.”

In contrast, Mother N aged 48 explained the role of religion in current women’s way of dress, “Before, the concept of religion was limited to prayer and fast but not related to clothing and covering hair. But after the education was introduced, people started to understand the real rules of religion like covering hair.” Mother O who is 50 years old also thought that the influence of tradition was much stronger than that of religion in the past although Islam did exist in Qatar. Daughter S who is a 26 year-old stated, “The level of conservativeness in the society seems to have increased compared to that of my mother’s generation.”
According to the participating daughters, the overall changes in dress between mother and daughter’s generation were mothers wear longer and looser clothes compared to younger women. Daughter LL aged 27 said, “In my mother’s generation, people used to wear more conservative clothes like 70s dress style. Now girls wear short skirts and no sleeves for weddings.” In addition, Daughter KK who is a 25 year-old remarked, “New generation wants to be different and they don’t care about the tradition, nor culture comparing to their mothers and grandmothers. They want to be seen as open-minded people.” This sense of self-expression is reflecting more showy patterns and exclusive designs of attire that young women tend to wear. As some women strongly remarked, there are young women who prefer wearing traditional dresses and follow their family customs. However, in accordance with the responses which are summarized and demonstrated in Figure 5, it can be concluded that the predominance of cultural modesty in way of dress has decreased in the community.

On the other hand, as education grew in the country, people deepened their knowledge of Islam and interpreted views towards so-called ‘proper dress code for Muslims’; for instance, covering hair became a significant sign of piety as a Muslim woman in Qatari society. In the next part, attitudes of Qatari mothers and daughters towards changes of traditional attire are discussed.
**Figure 5: Major differences in traditional attire between mothers and daughters**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social perspective</th>
<th>The abaya</th>
<th>Jalabiya</th>
<th>Other type of traditional attire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Way of dress was more decent and modest.</td>
<td>• Style: From the head (<em>Abaya alra’s</em>).</td>
<td>• Color: Colorful</td>
<td>• <strong>Bukhnaq</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Every dress needed to be long and well-covered.</td>
<td>• Color: Only black.</td>
<td>• Style: Long and loose.</td>
<td>• <strong>Thoub al-nashal</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Family and society put pressure not to wear short clothes based on traditional understanding.</td>
<td>• Design: Nothing or some decorations in the bottom.</td>
<td>• Quantity: Many. (During Ramadan, everyday different one).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Quantity: Two (One for summer and one for winter).</td>
<td>• Frequency: Everyday and everywhere.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Frequency: Only between home and another place. University and work place without the abaya.</td>
<td>• Price: Cheap</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Function: religious practice, reputation, culture.</td>
<td>• Shopping: Not-ready-made. Either by tailors or themselves.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Price: Cheaper.</td>
<td>• Shopping: Not-ready-made. Either by tailors or themselves.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Social Perspective
- Way of dress is more based on self-assertion and fashion.
- Revealing attire is still inappropriate but it tends to be shorter and tighter.
- Less family pressure towards the way of dressing in cultural way.
- Religious perspectives towards women's attire became stronger.

The abaya
- Style: Tighter and shorter which can show body shapes.
- Design: More colorful, fashionable, decorative, originative.
- Material: Better.
- Price: More Expensive.
- Quantity: Many-every season and various fashion trends.
- Frequency: Everyday outside the home.
- Purpose: Work, school, daily use, special occasion.
- Function: Self-assertion, identity, reputation, respect to culture and tradition.

Jalabiya
- Style: Shorter. Influence of other national costumes (India, China, and Morocco).
- Design: More colorful, fashionable, decorative.
- Price: More expensive.
- Frequency: Only for occasions like family gathering on Friday, henna night, wedding, and Gerga’oon.

Western clothes
- They became usual clothes at home and under the abaya.
- Types: Leggings, T-shirts, jeans, pajamas, short dresses.
- Fashionable dresses from international shops and designers.

Figure 5: Major differences in traditional attire between mothers and daughters
Attitude towards Traditional Attire: Mothers and Daughters

In an attempt to observe attitudes toward the changes in traditional attire of Qatari women between mothers and daughters among the participants, the following open-ended question was asked: If there are differences, how do you feel about these differences? As a consequence, the answers are roughly divided into three categories: positive, negative, and neutral as Figure 6 presents. Furthermore, while more participating mothers tend to perceive the differences in a negative way, the number of the participating daughters who support the changes outnumbers the number of those who were against. For the sake of clarity of the analysis, the responses of the mother and daughter are examined respectively.

Interestingly, way of dress comes up for debate in many of the participating families, and it is sometimes a subject that mothers and daughters argue over. For instance, Mother E said, “I face difficulties to convince my daughters in terms of dressing.” This may be because in such a conservative, gender-segregated society, people still think that women carry honor and reputation of the family. Moreover, in Qatar having a relationship with the opposite sex before marriage is taboo, and a way of finding a prospective marriage partner is greatly dependent upon the reputation of the family and the girl. Arranged marriages through the great involvement of the parents are very much common in Qatar even today. Regardless of whether it is right or wrong, a woman’s way of dress is, hence, one of the aspects of her character people place great importance on in order to know more about her or judge her. In
other words, it is not too much to say that appearance represents a woman’s personality and how she wants people to understand her in a Qatari context.

Daughter H aged 25 indeed explained this case by providing her own experience:

My younger sister got a marriage proposal and my mother was so upset at me because she thinks that I am not behaving well and that is why men don’t come to propose me. Dressing is seen as one of the causes of this!

Consequently, people care about ways of dress very much and have opinions about it.

Mother

On the other hand, Mother BB aged 50 criticized, “I don’t like what girls wear now. In parties and weddings, they dress like they wear nothing. In my opinion, a woman’s body is only for her husband not to show in front of people.” Mother II who is a 52 year-old also stated:

There is a border in religion and women should not wear something which exposes them because a woman is like a treasure or sweet. If you expose it, people will come to take advantage of it. And woman should be only for her husband.

Another mother, P, stemmed the on-going change in the abaya as “The abaya is for modesty. I don’t like the current abaya. Daughters should not wear colorful ones. They should not wear the same thing as I do, but there should be a limit.” Moreover, Mother DD aged 41 felt a great loss of the culture in
traditional attire and stated, “I wish it has not changed and everything remained simple as before.”

At the same time, there were mothers who were not in favor of the current changes in attire but showed sympathy, or at least acceptance as it was simply due to the current fad of the times. Mother X whose age is 42 claimed:

Those differences are not entirely bad and it gives the girls these days a confidence in their appearance, and makes them creative with the shapes and the colors of their abayas. When you walk in malls, it’s like an abaya competition. But some get carried away and wears a very short abaya showing their ankles and forgets the real purpose of abaya which is to cover the body.

In addition, Mother NN who is 50 years of age admitted, “Young girls should live their lives accordance with their time but they should also keep being decent and maintain their identity by wearing the modernized traditional clothes.” Besides, 51 years old Mother J expressed, “Actually I like modern styles of the abaya. It is not hard to accept different concepts of daughters but these differences can be negative.”

Mothers who saw the changes in a positive way were minorities; however, they had their own point of view. Mother F whose age is 56 said:

It is positive. Although daughters have more options to go outside and do many things which I didn’t have when I was in their age. It is not difficult for me to accept these differences and different ideas. I even learn from them.
Moreover, Mother L who is a 60 year-old even showed her appreciation of young women’s attitudes towards traditional attire:

I feel good that young women still wear the traditional clothes like the *jalabiya* during the henna night and *Qarqe’an* (Eastern Arabian-style Halloween). These changes are also good and positive as new designs are good and not limited. And we have more options. Now people have money and if these changes are within our tradition, then there is no problem.

Now how the daughters perceived the changes that they are partaking in is reviewed.

**Daughter**

As it was stated in the beginning, there were only 3 participating daughters who regarded the differences in traditional attire as negative while 9 said they were positive and 7 gave neutral answers. A 25 year-old Daughter EE evaluated, “It is a positive change. Some people say covering head, face, and body with the abaya, is our tradition, but I am against the idea. I think it is a personal choice.” In a like manner, Daughter O aged 24 said, “I don’t see it as a big problem. In the end, it is my decision to wear what I want to wear and a mother decides by herself. How we wear the abaya is up to us.” Daughter HH also supported the changes:

I like it [the difference] because you like the tradition and you don’t want to lose it but you can still add your own taste and view on your tradition in it. Also people don’t need to feel old by keeping their traditional dress but making it fashionable.
Similarly, Daughter Y, one of the young women who prefer wearing western clothes, stated, “I feel that we have developed. We don’t live in the 90s anymore and new clothes are more comfortable.” At the same time, Daughter G accepted the differences but was concerned about a dress, “I like it [the difference] because it suits our taste, but there are certain limitations regarding dressing which depend on girls, and they can be from their family.” Moreover, Daughter X believed that the young women’s attitude towards a traditional dress would reduce the biases against Qatari women, “Through this way, we can show the world that we are fashionable.”

Meanwhile, the participating daughters who took up a neutral position followed the on-going changes, yet, imposed limits on the changes in traditional attire. Daughter NN who is 25 years of age pointed out, “Each generation has to live in their time. But the identity and modesty should be protected throughout generations and passed down. Modernizing the traditional dresses is an advantage to keep them alive.” Likewise, Daughter AA agreed that the way young women wear the traditional attire adds more value to it, “I like the traditional attire but I prefer that just only for special occasions because it is more meaningful to wear.” In the same fashion, Daughter B who is 22 in her age shared her opinion, “It [the difference] can be seen as positive as it is a natural generational change but at the same time, it is bad in a way that some dresses attract guys.”

In reality, these changes and differences are inevitable as the world has become more globalized which accelerates the speed of change. Daughter FF aged 27 declared, “It is a natural generational change although it’s kind of
shame that all traditions are lost now.” To clarify this point, Daughters R and S stated, “It’s sad that we are losing our tradition. But globalization is necessary and changing of the society is natural as these changes are also necessary,” and:

This is life. And this kind of change or difference is a result of many things and can be witnessed all over the world. You know, like India and Japan. Women don’t wear their traditional dresses every day anymore. We are the same.

In contrast, three young women were against the shift and change that took place in traditional attire. For instance, one of them stated:

The difference is massive especially between my mother and grandmother. And I see these changes as negative. Although I am not a religious person and I don’t want to refer a way of dress to religion, the purpose of the abaya is to cover but now people wear it to show to other people and get attention. The purpose of the abaya has changed.

Daughter K suggested that people need to teach their children Islamic values and understanding of dress code for Muslims so that women dress within the Islamic limitations. Moreover, Daughter L aged 28 described her struggles between traditional and modern attire:

I sometimes feel sad that we lost our old designs and styles of the dress. Now dresses are made for practicality although people may want to wear proper traditional dresses like the jalabiya. During Ramadan, people wear traditional jalabiyas and it makes me happy, but it is hard in these days to wear a traditional dress in daily life because modern
clothes are cute and people see them on TV. And it is easier to wear pants which do not show legs for the purpose of movement.

In addition, Daughter O shared her own perspective, saying “When I wear a colorful abaya, my mother gets angry and tells me how I can go out. But now she gets used to it. People get used to the changes.”

Therefore, the mothers are concerned that young women are becoming less and less fond of the traditional attire and moving away from a modest way of dressing in both socially and religiously. Whereas, the younger generations enjoy new fashion trends and designs within the social limitations and try to seek their originality in their traditional attire. At the same time, regardless of the age, there are women who urge others to remember their modesty and the importance of a social dress code for Qatari women.
Figure 6: Perspectives towards the changes in traditional attire

Positive

- More options (designs, styles, and prices).
- Changes are taking place within our transition.

Negative

- The way of dressing is not understood in a context of modesty. (The Islamic teaching).
- Losing the tradition.

Neutral

- It is acceptable because new generations are exposed to new civilizations.

Positive

- Even though there are differences, we can find common understandings and values.
- New trend suits younger generation's taste.
- It indicates more freedom of choice for each girl.

Negative

- Some dresses attract men.
- Losing the tradition.

Neutral

- The generational differences are natural.
- Women should enjoy new fashion within the Islamic and cultural restrictions.
Reasons for the Changes in Traditional Attire

In previous sections, the outfits that the participating mothers and daughters considered as traditional attire of Qatari women, the differences in traditional attire between the mother and daughter’s generation, and their perceptions towards these differences and changes were observed based on the collected data. As a result, there are many differences and changes that took place over one generation and the results also demonstrated how social changes had impacted the traditional attire and peoples’ perspectives towards women’s way of dress. However, what are the factors of these changes? How did Qatari women identify the factors? In this section, the responses that were received through the open-ended question, ‘In your opinion, what are the factors for these differences?’ are analyzed.

All 80 respondents freely talked about their insights regarding the factors driving the changes in traditional attire of Qatari women. Since the responses covered a wide field, the five most discussed factors which are illustrated in Figure 7.
Figure 7: Factors of the differences in traditional attire

Mother

Generational difference
(Time & age)

Globalization (Westernization)

Travel experience/
Development of the state

Women's outside activity (Work)

Education

Daughter

Generational difference

Globalization

Media

Education/ Environment of the society

Emergence of international shops & malls
Both mothers and daughters anticipated that the most influential factor in the changes is a natural trend of generational gaps. In like manner, they also mentioned globalization as a main factor as Qatar is no longer an isolated nation so whatever happens in the international sphere will have effects in Qatar. Mother X who is 42 years old stated:

The major factor in my opinion is that people started to open up to the world and started to see different cultures. And even the country started to develop, and the people wanted to update their clothes so that the world can see that they can be fashionable and still hold their traditions.

Daughter M who is 22 years of age also agreed, “Qatar became more open to other countries. Globalization impacted in the Gulf in general.”

While some of the mothers believed that an increase of travel experiences including study abroad among Qatari women as well as the development of state brought changes in traditional attire, the daughters recognized the role of media more in bringing about these changes. In fact, as figure 8 shows, the frequency of travel among the respondents is quite high and this is not exceptional compared to other Qatari women in general. Not only do daughters travel outside of Qatar but so do mothers; they tend to accompany their daughters since young women traveling alone or without her guardians is not preferable in Qatari society. There are also some cases where mothers travel more than their daughters. At the same time, owing to the cultural expectations of people, Qatari women tend to remain in the country
for their higher studies whereas Qatari men have a higher tendency of studying abroad (Clerk, 2013; ICED Monitor, 2014). Mother K aged 49 expressed:

Before, there were very few girls who could travel and study abroad. Not all the girls were allowed to complete their higher education because their mothers believed that girls cannot travel alone or study, as it may cause delay in their marriage.

Opportunities for Qatari women to experience foreign cultures and civilizations came not only through traveling or studying abroad, but also through media. The spread of technology and internet maximized the influence of media on women’s attitudes on dress and fashion. Daughter O commented:

Models wearing the beautiful abayas encourage other women to be more fashionable. Instagram, Twitter, [and] Facebook are not only for political use. It is a fashionista. They try to make themselves [a] business. And it shows what the society wants and needs.

Additionally, Daughter V told:

I can see new designs and other friends’ clothing through social media. Also, some women try to imitate actors, singers, and celebrities’ way of dress. For example, I like Lana Dal Rey who is American and famous in a movie called ‘The Great Gatsby’. I like to keep following her dress, hairstyle, and makeup. Girls follow Lebanese singers like Haifa Wahbi.

Similarly, Daughter NN observed, “Western influence through media shows images of beauty in their own context.”
Moreover, acquiring foreign language skills, especially in English, encourages Qatari women to follow and adopt foreign cultures. According to Figure 9, which presents the skill level of English among the participants, the majority of young women understand and communicate primarily in English. In addition, an inflow of expatriate workers into a country due to the vast amount of revenue from oil and gas, as well as the standard of housemaid and foreign drivers in the house, have resulted in more opportunities for Qatari women to have direct contact with other cultures and customs.

By the same token, media also contributes to bringing different religious perspectives from outside. People in Qatar can now listen to imams’ sermons regardless of the location, and this seems to encourage people to have more conservative religious understanding and education inside Qatar. Daughter CC supports this idea by saying, “TV exploited us to the world and enabled us to access to other people’s religious speeches which made people more conservative.” Daughter K also claims, “Communication tool which is available to us enables us to contact other people outside of the country.”
Figure 8: Frequency of international travel among participants

Figure 9: Level of English among participants
The participating mothers also referred to more active women’s engagement in the public sphere compared to the past as a main factor for the observed changes in dress. As women started working outside the home and spending more time in public spaces, the needs in attire changed and developed. Mother E aged 49 recalled the difference between the old days and today, saying “Our generation used to stay at home most of the time, but nowadays girls want to go outside of houses.” Correspondingly, Mother K who is the same age as Mother E described:

Another factor is a working woman. Our mothers used to stay at home doing house work like cleaning and cooking, and waiting for their husband and children to come back. However, nowadays mothers can go to work outside, earn their own money, and leave their house work to house maids who do all the house work. If women and girls go back to the old days, they would not be able to live like how our grandmothers used to live.

These responses indicate how women’s range of daily activity was limited in the past. Furthermore, Mother Z who is 65 years old portrayed women’s status in the older era:

Before, everything was forbidden for women and there was no freedom of dressing or role for women in education and work but now my daughter holds a lot of roles as she works and she has a big role in the house as well.

In parallel, Daughter X stated, “I take advantage of wearing the abaya as it is comfortable and easy to move [in].” The link between freedom of women’s
movement and their engagement in the public sphere, and the popularization of the abaya among Qatari women in recent years can explain the differences and developments of the abaya which were discussed in Section 4 of Chapter 4.

In addition to the aforementioned factors, education was perceived as one of the main reasons for the differences in traditional attire. For instance, Mother O described how education became the core of women’s career, “There was no education before in Qatar, and when education was introduced, they taught us how to do domestic work at house. But now degree is important. House work is not important anymore. Everything is about degree.”

It is worth mentioning that there is also a religious component to the introduction of education, as Daughter CC states, “Muslim Brotherhooods’ religious education was brought into Qatar’s educational system.” Qatar, like other Gulf states, has given refuge to members of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) including prominent members who were exiled from their countries due to their ideological values since the early 1960s (Haykel, 2013). Roberts (2014) demonstrated in his article “Qatar and the Muslim Brotherhood: Pragmatism or Preference?” that Qatar allowed MB members to have a great influence on Qatari society. Such people included Abdul-Badi Saqr, the director of the Qatar National Library, Abdullah bin Tukri al-Subai, the head of Islamic sciences at the educational department and who invited Yusuf al-Qaradawi to Qatar, Ahmed al-Assal, a teacher in schools and mosques, Abdel-Moaz al-Sattar, the director of Islamic Sciences in the Ministry of Education, and Kamal Naji, the director of education and the foreign culture relations adviser.
in the Ministry of Education. Above all, the most influential MB member has been Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who came to Qatar in 1961 and obtained Qatari nationality. According to al-Buluwi (2014) and Azem (2012), Qatar has not had any confrontations with MB members working with and influencing Qatari youth and society when the organization was voluntarily closed down in 1999 (Bryant, 2014). Religious perspectives towards dress codes for Muslim women were introduced and partially enforced through the growth of MB power in Qatari society.

It was equally important for the participating daughters to consider the change in environment of the state as a factor of the changes. This can be counted as part of globalization. However, the uniqueness of Qatar regarding the rapid change of the society needs to be taken into consideration. As the respondents mentioned, Qatar had initially accepted foreign laborers in the country to build a modern state and tried to attract foreign tourists. As reported by De Bel-Air (2014), at the time of the establishment of the state in 1970, Qatar’s population was only 111,113 and approximately 40.5% of it were mostly foreigners from neighboring states; however, in 2013 the number of the population reached more than 2,003,700 which consisted of 85.7% foreigners primarily from Asian countries like India, the Philippines, and Nepal. In addition, the opening of the new international airport as a hub of international transport and trade, hosting many international conferences and events, as well as the upcoming 2022 FIFA World Cup have brought many expatriates into the country and has created a highly cosmopolitan society.
Last but not least, the emergence of international shops and malls was discussed as a motive of changing women’s way of dress and their perspectives towards traditional attire. Daughter O remarked, “When you see something new in shops and malls, people tend to follow the fashion.” Besides, during one of the interviews with a mother in a mall, she criticized, “Look around the shops here. There is no shop selling our traditional attire. Everything is western clothing! This is where we go shopping, we don’t have an option!” Similarly, Mother R who is 40 years old also claimed, “We used to go to markets and there were places to shop. But now the malls where people go shopping don’t sell traditional clothes so they don’t have choices.”

Some points that the respondents raised were indeed important and gave new perspectives towards the generational changes in traditional attire such as the rapid economic growth, industrialization of traditional attire, politics, lack of trust among Qatari, and modern childcare although their opinions were in the minority. To illustrate of these ideas, it is crucial to examine these points of view. Mother L shared her financial perspective:

Before, there was not a lot of money and the life was much simpler which was suitable for that period. Because there was no electricity, clothes needed to be light and thin. Also, fabric needed to be durable and based on strong material because we used to wash the clothes with sea water. By the time, cottons were introduced to Qatar by India through pearl trading.

As for industrialization of traditional attire, Daughter KK analyzed:
There are many abaya designers so they create different models every time in order to earn money. It is a cycle that designers want to make money so they make new designs. There are always new designs so that people buy new ones all the time.

Moreover, regarding politics, Daughter CC saw the influence of political Islam of Saudi Arabia in Qatar. Meanwhile, Daughter X assumed that the abaya can be used as a tool to change the biases against Qatari women:

People outside think that we are not civilized, so now we want to show them that we are educated and fashionable. The abaya became our identity. So when we travel, we still keep the abaya on to show that we are proud of our identity.

One of the participating daughters stressed the hidden social issues of Qatari community:

In the past, people did not judge other people based on what you wear and how you look. They had a clean heart. When my mother was young, my grandfather asked her kindly to wear *abaya alra’s* but nobody forced her to wear anything. But now we don’t have a choice other than wearing the abaya and *sheila* in the society. It is a social rule to wear them and our culture is ruined. Our society now doesn’t let children do something new or make any mistakes. How can we learn what is right and wrong without making mistakes!

Similarly, Daughter MM was concerned that many people spoiled their children, “I think it is how children are raised and taught attitudes. In the past, mothers were so strict that nobody could go against them.”
Many of the mother and daughter respondents perceived that the differences and changes in the traditional attire were caused by a natural generational difference. However, as it is mentioned previously, these differences over one generation have never been vast as no such precedent took place before in the Qatari history. Thus, the wealth that the state has received, and its social and political impacts, in fact, needs to be seen as a main influential cause of the differences in the traditional attire of Qatari women.

Theory Implication

Seeing the differences and changes in traditional attire of Qatari women along with the social changes which were promoted by several religious, political, and cultural events indeed provided new insights of Qatari women and society. As discussed in the theory, women’s attire plays a role in showing the wearer’s wealth and socioeconomic status as well as her social value based on her community. Moreover, due to women’s active engagement in the public sphere, attire has developed in pursuing better ease of movement.

However, the most important point is that the role of traditional attire is a tool for communication, a medium of non-verbal communication. Traditional attire reflects many aspects of Qatari women’s individual perceptions towards themselves. For instance, the main function of the abaya used to be to just cover a woman’s body for the sake of religious and cultural modesty, but now the abaya expresses her fashion sense, mood, identity, and stance on social perspectives toward women. The results of the interviews show young Qatari women’s attitude to push the limitations of Qatari people’s
consensus towards traditional attire. Although leisure class theory (Veblen, 2008) can explain the shift of Qatari women’s traditional attire to adoption of western clothing because of its comfort and ease of movement, his general statement which is ‘value functionality over design’ does not apply to Qatari women’s case.

Furthermore, Lurie’s (1981) argument that the smaller the community is the less concern it will have for dress fails in the Qatari case. The conservative and close society allows locals to know everyone’s social life and attire, and a way of dressing are one of the main matters that people gossip about because they are considered as the reflection of goodness of a wearer’s family and personality.
Chapter 5

Conclusion

This research was conducted to discover attitudinal change towards traditional attire among Qatari women over one generation through two main research questions: in what ways has the traditional attire of Qatari women changed over one generation? And what are the attitudes of Qatari women towards the changes in their traditional attire? These questions were answered based on the data that was collected through interviews with 80 Qatari women, 40 of them were between the ages of 20 and 30 and their mothers, during the period between December 2014 and April 2015. Moreover, the theoretical framework (Filippou et al., 2003; Giselis, 1974; Hannover & Kuhnen, 2002; Lindisfarne-Tapper & Ingham, 1997; Lurie, 1981; Rouse, 1989; Vablen, 1894; Vrelli-Zaxou, 1994), which focuses on functions of traditional attire was later applied to the research result and discussed.

Although Muslim women’s dress code and interpretations of the Quran regarding it have been discussed and examined, there is a lack of academic research based on sociological and anthropological analysis. Moreover, in comparison with other Middle Eastern and Gulf states, research on Qatari women and society lags far behind in spite of Qatar’s active role in the international community. This is not only due to a historical lack of interest in Qatar in general, but conservativeness of the society and difficulties of accessing Qatari women. Thus, the significance of this study is to contribute to
the academic field by bringing new perspectives and findings of traditional attire of Qatari women as well as its social implications.

The voluntary participants were collected through quota and snowballing sampling methods. The quota sampling was carried out mainly at Qatar University, Qatar Foundation, and several international conferences and forums in Qatar, and the snowballing sample was used using the researcher’s personal contacts and any person who made contact with her. As a result, more than 100 women were interviewed in Arabic and English either in person, phone, or by proxy through their daughters. However, the data of only 80 of the participants were used in this study due to the conditions of the research such as the requirements that both mother and daughter need to participate, that both mother and daughters need to be ethnically Qatari, and that they need to fit in the prescribed age category. The data was analyzed with both quantitative and qualitative analytical methods including SPSS and coding depending on the nature of the data. According to the statistics withdraw by SPSS, the average age of the daughters was 24 whereas that of mother was 50. Moreover, most of the participants belonged to either upper-middle or upper classes in terms of socioeconomic status.

With the aim of obtaining as wide and as in-depth perspectives as possible towards traditional attire of Qatari women and being able to answer the research questions in a better manner, four open-ended questions were used. The first question intended to classify traditional attire in the participants’ generations and the second question was to identify differences and changes in traditional attire between the mother and daughter’s generations in details. The
third question was intended to observe the perceptions of the participants towards the differences and changes in traditional attire; finally, the fourth question attempted to recognize factors of these differences and changes.

The data collected through the interviews showed that *abaya alra’s* which is a simple black head-to-toe fabric was the common dress for going out, and the *dirra’ah* and *jalabiya* are used in the private sphere in the mother’s generation whereas the daughters prefer using more modern shoulder-type abayas with decorations and colors as their traditional attire. Moreover, the frequency of use of face coverings and *jalabiyas* has decreased, and the traditional attire used by the mothers has been replaced by western clothes in the younger generation.

Looking more closely at these differences, the biggest changes in traditional attire which were mentioned by the respondents were regarding the abaya and *jalabiya*. In the case of the abaya, its style, color, design, quantity, frequency, function, price, and selling places has significantly changed within a generation, and these changes were similar to that of the *jalabiya* except for frequency of use. Additionally, people’s perceptions along with social restrictions towards Qatari women’s way of dress have shifted from cultural and social perspectives to more religious perspectives. In the past, a lack of educational institutions and less diversity in the community contributed to stricter social rules towards women’s attire and way of dress. However, due to spread of education and technology which enables people to access and learn different Islamic values and interpretations, people’s criterion to judge women’s dress code now place more emphasis on religious understanding.
In regards to these differences and changes, the mothers tended to perceive them as negative while the daughters regard them as positive. At the same time, more than half of them believe that developments and changes of traditional attire need to take place within religious limitations while respecting Qatari tradition and culture.

In the final analysis concerning the factors determining these differences and changes, the mothers defined them as natural generational difference, globalization and westernization to some extent, increase of travel experience and development of the state, more active women engagement in the public sphere, and education by order of importance. On the other hand, the daughters agreed that it has to do with a natural generational difference, and globalization, but also with the role of media, education and a more open environment of the society, as well as the emergence of international shops and malls. It is interesting to see different points of view between the mothers and daughters and how the recognized factors impacted traditional attire. At the same time, the increase of financial capacity of Qatari people—namely women—is noteworthy; regional politics and industrialization of the traditional attire are indeed equally important for exploring the attitudinal changes among one generation.

It is also true that this study contributes to analyze the tendency of social change in traditional attire of Qatari women, and presents new and original findings in this field of study. Furthermore, the functions of traditional attire which were primarily to maintain modesty in a cultural context and to physically cover women’s individuality and identity has evolved into a means
of self-assertion and identity as Qatari or Khaleeji women. For instance, the abaya is no longer a means of subtracting women physically and mentally from the public sphere and providing protection from men’s gaze. To a large extent, the current commercialized abaya represents cutting-edge fashion from a Khaleeji standpoint.

Traditionally, women represent family and tribal honor and pride, and practices such as arranged marriage have enhanced people’s interest and attention paid to women’s way of dress and attire itself. As varieties and styles of traditional attire have increased and developed in the last decades, they have also become a source of personal information such as age, socioeconomic status, religious and political views, in addition to ethnic and tribal identity, openness of family, and personality. These are evidence of the role of dress as a non-verbal communication.

This is, in fact, deeply connected with social phenomena and women’s attitudes such as the issue of the boyat and the significance and interpretation of outfits of celebrities and political figures like Sheikha Moza. Thus, traditional attire is a reflection of Qatari history and social changes. Furthermore, the changes in the traditional attire of Qatari women and adoption of western clothing can be seen as symbolic of transitions and developments in modern society as well as the role and status of women within the Qatari community.

Overall, the conclusion reached in this study on the generational change in Qatari women’s traditional attire also provides evidence and motive to conduct further research on Qatari women and Qatari social issues which
need to be taken into consideration in order to fully appreciate the social history and developments in Qatar.
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Appendix

Appendix: Interview Questionnaires

Questionnaires: English

1. How old are you?

2. What is your highest level of education?

3. What school did you go to for your primary and secondary education?
   (If applicable)
   Governmental/ Private/ International

4. Tell me the countries where your education was received.

5. What is the monthly household income?
   Below QR 30,000/ Between QR 30,000 and 50,000/ Above QR 50,000

6. What is your level of English?
   Fluent/ intermediate/ Elementary

7. What is your occupation?

8. Have you ever traveled abroad? If so, how often?
   Frequently/ Sometimes/ Rarely

9. Tell me about the traditional attire of Qatari women in your generation.

10. How is it different from that of your mother/daughter?

11. If there are differences, how do you feel about these differences?

12. In your opinion, what are the factors for these differences?
Questionnaires: Arabic

استبيان باللغة العربية

1. كم عمرك؟

2. ما هو أعلى مستوى تعليمي لديك؟

3. ما هي المدرسة الإبتدائية والإعدادية التي ذهبت إليها؟

4. في أي الدولة حصلت على التعليم؟

5. ما هو الدخل الشهري للأسرة؟

أقل من 30,000 ريال/ بين 30,000 و 50,000 ريال/ أكثر من 50,000 ريال

6. كيف هو مستوىك في اللغة الإنجليزية؟

فصيح/ متوسط/ ابتدائي

7. ما هي ميتك؟

8. هل سبق لك أن سافرت للخارج؟ إذا نعم، كم مرة؟

دائمًا / أحيانًا / قليلا

9. تكلفي عن الملابس التقليدية للمرأة القطرية في جيلك؟

10. ما وجه الاختلاف بينك وبين أملك/ ابنتك؟

11. إذا كان هناك اختلاف، كيف تشعرين بهذا الاختلاف؟

12. في رأيك، ما هي العوامل التي أدت إلى هذه الاختلافات؟