

Article

Dressed to Marry: Islam, Fashion, and the Making of Muslim Brides in Brazil

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Abstract: This article explores the dress practices of Muslim women in Brazil, focusing on the ways through which they choose, prepare, use, and talk about their wedding garments. The aim is to understand how religiously oriented women interpret the Islamic normative codes concerning the coverage of the female body when managing their appearance, particularly when “special celebrations” such as wedding rituals are involved. How do they combine bridal fashion trends with religious orientations? Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork and personal interviews, this analysis stresses that the desired aesthetic of Muslim women’s marital garments unfolds a search for a *modest authenticity* through which “Brazilian culture”, “female beauty”, and Islam are mobilized. In conclusion, the study points to the dynamic ways through which this specific encounter of religion and fashion produce an aesthetic based on a degree of improvisation and creativity, since the Islamic fashion industry is absent in the Brazilian market.

Keywords: Muslim wedding garments; Muslim bride; fashion modest; modest authenticity; Muslim women; Brazil

1. Introduction

Marriage plays a special role in Islamic traditions. Religiously oriented Muslims commonly refer to marriage as “half of the religion”, arguing that it is in accordance with some *hadiths* (sayings and teachings) attributed to Prophet Muhammad. As a rite of passage (Van Genep 1960), the social meanings and practices connected to Muslim marital forms and wedding celebrations have varied across time, religious interpretations, and cultural contexts. In this article, our aim is to explore Muslim wedding celebrations as rituals that are *good to think* regarding the complex interconnections between religion and fashion in clothing by analyzing the bridal garments of Muslim women in Brazil.

Muslim communities in Brazil are not expressive in the national religious context. Although the number of Brazilian converts to Islam has increased in recent decades, the 2010 national census indicated a total of 35,167 Muslims living in the country¹. This number is contested by various local religious leaders, which estimates between 200,000 to 1,000,000 Muslims. Apart from the controversy involving these numbers, it is important to highlight that the Muslim communities in Brazil are very diverse in relation to their ethnic, national, and theological orientations and institutional organization. The majority of communities are located in cities such as São Paulo, Curitiba, and Foz do Iguaçu, which are composed mainly of Arab immigrants and their descendants.

¹ According to the National Census of 2010, the Brazilian population is around 210 million people. For more detail, see IBGE (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística): <https://censo2010.ibge.gov.br/sinopse/index.php?dados=4&uf=00> and projections for 2019 in: <https://www.ibge.gov.br/apps/populacao/projecao/>.

Amid this context, marriage assumes a central point of concern for Brazilian Muslim women living in Brazil, particularly for those who have converted to Islam. The dynamics of the matrimonial market involving these women and their spouse choices follow the distinct sociological composition of each local Muslim community's members (born Muslim/converts and nationality/ethnicity, for example). It also has a transnational dimension, since many Brazilian Muslim women converts marry foreign Muslim men from countries such as Pakistan, Egypt, Morocco, India, and Senegal, among other nationalities. Indeed, some convert to Islam only after meeting their Muslim husband (Dumovich 2016; Pasqualin 2018).

The internet and social media have created an opportunity for this kind of romantic encounter, and some of our interlocutors met their non-Brazilian Muslim husbands on internet chat websites. Among them, some did not know how to communicate in English; therefore, the conversations between them and their *habibis* (beloved ones) happened through online translation programs (Dumovich 2016). In general, the foreign men mostly traveled to Brazil to marry, but some women also traveled to their future husband's country in order to get married.

In the last decade, wedding festivities have gained a renewed role in Brazilian society, regardless of the social class and religious affiliations of the grooms. However, this phenomenon is mainly connected to the middle class, who invest a lot of money, time, and emotion into planning the ceremonies. Some ethnographic works on the theme have pointed out that for many middle-class Brazilian brides, a wedding party is a dream to be fulfilled, so there is "no price to do it" (Pinho 2017, p. 384), or even that "the sky is the limit" for the amount of money spent in order to have a memorable wedding celebration (Marins 2016, n.pag.). According to statistics from local research institutes, the wedding industry in Brazil earned about 5 billion US dollars in 2016, despite the country's economic crisis (Pinho 2017, p. 141).

In general, the place where the marriage ceremony occurs, the groom's garments, and all the material culture involved in its production, such as food and decoration, are planned in order to be harmonic—an idea that can be better described as the "Diderot effect", which was pointed out by Grant McCracken (2003) in reference to the philosopher Denis Diderot (18th century), who changed his furniture in order to harmonize it with his new dressing gown. In this sense, the bride is commonly perceived as the main character of the party, as are her clothes, hair, and makeup. Indeed, some beauty parlors offer "bride's day" services, in order to provide aesthetic care (special baths, massages, body relaxation therapies, coiffeur) for the "special day". She *needs* to be beautiful and in harmony with *her* wedding party.

Many of the Muslim women we worked with see Muslim wedding celebrations in Brazil (and throughout the Muslim world) as very diverse and more connected to local cultural traditions than to the Islamic codes. In their explanations, the Islamic norms for wedding rituals are simple and require only a few rules. Empirical observations and personal interviews with our interlocutors demonstrated a non-consensual opinion about excessive spending on wedding parties in the Brazilian context.

Rosana, a 37-year-old Brazilian woman who converted to Islam 12 years ago, told us that her wedding took place in Rio de Janeiro's mosque after the Friday prayer. According to her, the couple's efforts were focused on the marriage's responsibilities, not on the party. In her words, "the simpler the wedding, the more blessed it will be". Therefore, Rosana and her husband decided to have only the religious ceremony—the ritual where they accepted each other as spouses and signed the marriage contract (*nikah*). They did not invite guests to the occasion.

Another Brazilian Muslim woman informed us that although a wedding party is not an Islamic norm, it can be desirable for many couples, mainly the young ones. She and her husband, also a Brazilian convert to Islam, married in their twenties and had a wedding party in a party hall with guests,

food², and dancing (*dabke*) (organized by her husband's Syrian descendant friends). Her husband's family paid for the party. For her, this was notable because in Brazilian wedding party traditions, the bride's family generally pays for the event. Notwithstanding that the opinions and the personal desire for wedding celebrations vary widely among our interlocutors, for all of them, the grooms were dressed in suitable modest garments for the occasion. They emphasized that the rules of covering the body in modest ways do not change in celebrations such as weddings. What can change is the style through which modesty is shown.

Much has been written in the academic literature regarding the diverse cultural contexts, religious interpretations, gender configurations, and political meanings of Islamic dress codes throughout the Muslim world (Mahmood 2005; Moors 2011; Tarlo 2010). The Muslim veil and the distinct practices and social nuances connected to it are at the core of this debate. If the initial analysis was marked by an assumption that Muslim women's styles of clothing were overwhelmed by religious prescriptions, in recent decades, studies have highlighted the fascinating way through which religious senses, fashion, and politics are closely related and expressed through clothing (Tarlo and Moors 2007; Almila and Inglis 2018).

Following Reina Lewis's definition of "modest fashion as a catch-all classification to describe the many different ways in which women dress in relation to concepts of modest body management and behavior" (Lewis 2018, p. 144), we stress that Muslim women's modest fashion gains meaning, reasoning, criticism, and constraints in the distinct cultural contexts in which the clothes are publicly used and valued. Thus, our goal is to examine the forms in which religiously oriented Brazilian Muslim women put together notions of modest fashion, personal preferences, and Islamic norms when they reflect and talk about their bridal garments.

2. Methods

The data analyzed in this article is based on ethnographic fieldwork and personal interviews with Brazilian Muslim women living in Brazil and abroad (London and the USA) in short periods from 2017 to 2019. The main part of our ethnographic fieldwork was done in Mesquita da Luz (Light's Mosque), in Rio de Janeiro, where we attended religious rituals such as Friday prayers and wedding ceremonies. Most of our interlocutors for this research were composed of Brazilian converts, who were the main female presence at the mosque's rituals. The questions that were asked of them addressed the meaning of marriage in their lives, Islamic precepts on marriage, and, above all, the way these women choose their garments and present themselves on the day of their marriage by conciliating modesty—a religious requirement—with personal taste and even with fashion trends. Special attention was given to the description of the clothes; colors, embellishments, prints, fabrics, and other elements that composed the garments for the wedding occasion were all noted. We also visited some online homepages and social media (Facebook and Instagram) in order to research Muslim wedding garments. Finally, we interviewed Edna, who is a Brazilian specialist in organizing wedding parties. She provided us with information about the elements that make up traditional wedding parties in Brazil.

3. Brazilian Muslim Brides and the Search for Modest Authenticity

In many cultures, wedding garments are of a major concern to the bride, as are the celebrations and the religious rite. Schneider (1987) pointed out that the wedding clothes play a special role in some contexts through consolidating social bonds, such as the one connecting the bride to her birth family in the activities of preparing and funding the wedding dress and trousseau.

² There is a practice in the Islamic tradition in offering a meal (*walima*) for the guests in special celebrations, such as weddings, and when pilgrims return from *hajj*, for example. In Brazil, this also happens, varying from small, domestic ones to larger ones with many guests. In the case of wedding celebrations, our ethnographic data shows that the practice of offering *walima* is not always previously organized, opening up room for improvisation. At one wedding, for example, cakes and soft drinks were bought at a nearby bakery. The authors thank the reviewers for the information on *walima* practices.

Since Ancient Rome, the veil was a symbol associated with femininity, being used as an important piece of matrimonial dress in line with different cultural traditions. In his classical book *La Cité Antique*, edited for the first time in 1864, Fustel de Coulanges highlighted the usage of the white color in wedding clothes (Coulanges 1961). This practice changed throughout Western history, opening up new possibilities for women to get married using colorful dresses. This change was captured by the painter Jan Van Eick, whose famous painting “The Arnolfini Couple” depicted the marriage between two bourgeois families in fifteenth-century Italy. On the canvas, the moss green bridal dress was accompanied by a discreet veil of light color.

In *The wedding dress: 300 years of bridal fashions*, Ehrman (2011) argued that female aristocratic women had their wedding dresses made out of white silk fabric, which is a difficult material to keep clean. For this reason, this kind of cloth was rarely used and was considered a luxurious piece. Gradually, fashion began to incorporate other elements into the bridal gown. According to Ehrman (2011), at the end of the eighteenth century, embroidery ornaments and precious stones were added to wedding garments, reflecting a luxurious choice only possible for a few brides.

It took a long time, until the marriage of Queen Victoria in 1840, for white to become the preferable and sophisticated color for the wedding dress. In the twentieth century, the Catholic Church transformed the white color into a symbol of purity and chastity connected to the ideals of the desirable Christian bride’s virtues. Although we cannot claim that this is a universal norm, it is well known that in most monotheistic religions, brides generally choose to wear white dresses. In the Brazilian context, the references above of the white dress as a symbol of purity are still present in the majority of local Christian collective imagination, mainly for families who marry their young and virgin daughters.

Thus, a white dress and matching white veil with an orange blossom bouquet became indispensable pieces for Western traditional brides and weddings. Ehrman (2011) noted the role of Queen Victoria in consolidating this tradition, which was possible because of the use of photographic registers—an 1840s innovation. Indeed, it was the use of visual records of weddings that provided an image of how the grooms should look on their wedding day. In an analysis of wedding photo albums in Brazil, Santos (2009) drew attention to the fact that when a groom posed for a photograph without the bride by his side, he looked displaced from the meaning of the nuptial ceremony. In this way, the bride was represented as the main visual symbol of the wedding party.

However, this assumption was not easily found in the discourses of the Muslim women interlocutors we interviewed. For some of them, the wedding dress was not even taken into consideration when they chose what clothes to wear on their “special day”. Rosana, for example, told us that her wedding ceremony was very simple, following what she called “the Islamic way” of marriage. She married at Rio de Janeiro’s mosque, after the collective mandatory prayer. She met her Pakistani husband through the internet, and he travelled to Brazil to marry. For the ceremony, Rosana opted for cream-colored tailored pants, a tunic with fine ivory and brown stripes, and a white veil, which she customized with some pebble beads. The veil was purchased at a popular market in downtown Rio de Janeiro, customized, and was turned into a wedding *hijab*. She keeps this *hijab* in her wardrobe and uses it on other occasions, combined with different everyday clothes.

We found other converted women narrating similar wedding stories; they married at the mosque, after the Friday prayer, and did not choose a wedding dress to marry. Some of them offered their Muslim friends present at the ceremony some food (sweets, cake, juice, or soft drinks), but it was not a practice followed by all. One of them, Tania, bought a new light blue blouse and a long skirt with colorful delicate prints to use in the ritual. Her *hijab* was also blue, in order to be in harmony with the colors of her clothes, and because she “loves blue”. Tania also married a foreign Muslim man whom she met through the internet. This was her second marriage and she was 42 years old at that time. Tania had been married for 15 years to her first husband, a Brazilian, non-Muslim man. Some months after divorcing from her first Brazilian husband, Tania embraced Islam. In her opinion, the conversion provoked a reconfiguration of herself, and the second marriage was a result of her new way of thinking. In Tania’s opinion, the expectation of having a white wedding dress, a wedding party,

and honeymoon is a young girl's dream. "Islam", she said, "has taught me that all this stuff (wedding dress and celebrations) is dispensable". Nevertheless, she told us in a personal interview that she wore a white wedding dress in her first marriage ceremony. "It was a beautiful dress, with a long veil. I was young, romantic, and full of dreams at that time", Tania added.

The description Tania gave us about her first wedding dress is connected to what [Buratto and Fornasier \(2015\)](#) noted in their study on "the traditional Brazilian bride", highlighting that the style of the Brazilian wedding dress replicated the Victorian dress style, which became a reference. Although there are exceptions, this image was consolidated in the imagination of the traditional Brazilian bride. Lace and embroidery, for example, are considered to be indispensable items. Colors such as white and pearl remain the norm, classifying other colors as exceptions. Wide skirts and bodices also characterize this style of wedding dress. According to the authors, this style can be found in both modest and extravagant ceremonies, and although there is an expectation regarding the uniqueness of the bride's clothing, in essence, the style reference is based on Queen Victoria.

Muslim dress codes are a key question for Brazilian converts. Since an organized commercial market in modest fashion ([Lewis 2018](#); [Gökarıksel and Secor 2010](#)) is not consolidated in Brazil³, many of the women we worked with had to improvise in order to comply with Islamic modest norms as well as to construct an appearance that is aesthetically pleasing to them ([Chagas and Mezabarba 2018](#)). Michelle, for example, told us in a personal interview that she buys colorful scarves in different department stores or in "Indian clothes stores"⁴ in downtown Rio de Janeiro and turns them into hijabs by folding them around her head and neck. When asked how she dressed in daily life, Michele told us that she prefers a "basic look", in which she feels "good"; jeans, long blouses, and hijabs in neutral tones or with delicate and small prints. Sometimes, she added, "I match a knee-length dress with jeans or a long baggy dress with long sleeves". For her, it is a continuous exercise of matching pieces of clothes that are not totally modest without combination.

The improvisations of Brazilian Muslim women in the practices of modest dress in daily life also affect the ways in which some of them make choices regarding their clothing on their wedding day. Marcia married a Moroccan man fifteen years ago at the mosque, but she also threw a wedding party. For both celebrations, she used different wedding clothes. For the religious ritual at the mosque, she dressed in a white *abaya* with a white *hijab*. The *abaya* was borrowed from a Muslim Syrian friend and the *hijab* was a gift from her mother-in-law. She preferred to use her friend's *abaya* bought in Syria, which she considered to be "very beautiful", over improvising a stylish modest garment. However, for the party, she rented a cream-toned wedding dress from a store that specialized in wedding clothes and did not wear a *hijab*, since by the time she got married, she was not a *hijabi* yet. She told us in an interview that she chose a "beautiful and modest dress, without cleavage or transparency. The dress had long sleeves".

³ There is not a mature market for Muslim fashion in Brazil. Even in clothing shops owned by Muslims, the pieces sold are more in accordance with Brazilian clothing codes than with the Islamic ones. However, some sell styles of female clothing that can be interpreted as "modest" by Muslims, such as loose-fitting pants and long-sleeved blouses. In cities like Rio de Janeiro, for example, one cannot find shops selling *hijabs* or other pieces of clothing strongly connected to "Muslim fashion". In this context, it is possible to find some isolated efforts, such as Muslim women who work as seamstresses and produce and sell clothes locally considered to be "Islamic" by Muslim women. Also, some of them sell clothes imported from countries such as Egypt and Dubai, for example. This kind of market exists mainly through internet blogs and homepages (see [Chagas and Mezabarba 2012](#) and [2018](#)). Because it is not possible to find a Muslim clothing market in Rio de Janeiro like the large, specialized ones found in London or Paris, Brazilian Muslim women look for local alternatives to customize their *hijabs* and other kinds of clothing which they interpret as appropriate and modest according to Islamic principles.

⁴ This is a local and native "umbrella" category to designate shops that sell colorful and diversified clothes and accessories (oriental fans, bags, bijouteries, etc.) attributed to Asian and African countries as their main products. In general, the clothes are produced and imported from China. This kind of shop has a very diverse clientele, including Brazilian Muslim women, yoga practitioners, Brazilians who define themselves as wearers of "alternative clothes", and so on.

When Marcia went to Morocco for the first time after being married, her husband's family threw another party for the couple. There, the cultural elements of a Moroccan Muslim wedding celebration were observed. Marcia used different and colorful dresses, put on a *hijab*, and drew henna tattoos on her hands. This event opened up to her the various ways in which Islam norms and morals are embedded in cultural dynamics.

Marcia's choice of distinct modest garments for both wedding ceremonies in Brazil was made based on her interpretation of the values and expectations embedded in those specific social situations (Goffman 1985). At the mosque, the veil was an important symbol of her religious commitment, and the *abaya* fit well for that space. She matched her appearance with the idea of simplicity in Islam. For the party, although everything was made according to Islamic values, her garments were chosen based on Brazilian wedding traditions, since she had Brazilian non-Muslim family and friends as guests. This ethnographic example shows us how religious conceptions and uses of modest dress are distinctly connected to situations and spaces of social life.

Nair, another convert in her fifties, married a Muslim man from India. She travelled to his family's country to get married. The ceremony was simple and occurred at the family home. The local religious leader was there and all close family participated in it. According to her, it was a different way of celebrating the wedding in that context, because the wedding celebrations in that context generally take a few days, and the bride changes her clothes many times. For her intimate and domestic wedding, Nair decided to use new clothes at the celebration, but she never even thought about wearing a wedding dress. She also considered a wedding dress to be a "piece of clothing for young women". Therefore, she took two new *shalwar kamiz*⁵ (one pearl-colored and one black) as possible clothing to wear at the ceremony. She chose to dress in the black one, which she liked the most. However, her sister-in-law told her not to use it, because black would not be an appropriate color to wear at a wedding. Nair argued with her saying that Islam does not establish specific colors or styles of dress for wedding garments. Nevertheless, she complied with her husband family's will and did not wear the black *shalwar kamiz*. The family lent Nair a traditional local garment named a *pheran*. According to Nair, a *pheran* is a long tunic, generally used in winter. It is so traditional that there is a *pheran* specifically for brides. Therefore, she got married using a bride's *pheran* owned by her husband's cousin. It was in a dark brown color with white and gold detail.

In her narrative, Nair emphasized that the conflicts around the choice of her wedding clothes indicated different views on what Islam is and what it requires from Muslims. She tried to separate Islam as a bounded religious system from the cultural arenas in which it is experienced as a living practice. In her interpretation, Islam has no normative prohibitions about using black as the color of wedding garments, although she recognized cultural negative responses that the use of a black wedding garment can provoke, either in a Muslim or Christian sense. In many Muslim societies, black can be socially considered as a color of mourning and death. Pastoreau (2011) argued that questions regarding color choices and uses are questions of society, since it is "society that 'makes' color, which gives it definitions and meanings, builds its codes and values, organizes its practices and determines its implications" (pp. 14–15). An analysis on the history of the social use of black as a color confers not only elegance and sensuality, as in the latest fashion codes, but also austerity and modesty, as in the fifteenth century (Europe) when it became the religious color of the Christian monks. Darkness and death are among the symbolic meanings attributed to the black color. The color of mourning, which has turned into the dismal color of sadness, according to Pastoreau (2011) is also the color of the earth, and therefore, of fecundity and rebirth. Interpretations around the black color, therefore, vary and may be conflicting even within an individual society.

⁵ A style of clothing generally used in South Asia, which combines baggy pants with a long tunic. Our Brazilian interlocutor bought hers in London.

In the same way, another Brazilian woman convert in her twenties, Suzana, said that she did not organize her wedding party and that her husband, a Brazilian convert, did most of the work. However, she planned her wedding dress style carefully. In her opinion, the wedding dress is not an Islamic norm, but she dreamed of marrying while wearing one. She looked for inspiration in many fashion-oriented homepages and Instagram accounts of Muslim wedding dresses. However, she found many dresses in which the bride's neck was visible, and she elaborated a style of a modest dress in which this did not occur. In a quick investigation on Instagram pages dedicated to Muslim brides, we observed that there was diversity regarding color and style, although images of a white wedding dress accompanied by a long veil and adornments prevailed.

Suzana hired a seamstress to make the dress and was present throughout the whole process. The chosen color was a clear silver, because she wanted to "shine" in the dress, making it distinct from the traditional white wedding dress. Her dress was long and had an improvised, second-skin, long-sleeve blouse, which was covered by lace. Suzana and her mother-in-law sewed a long veil and decorated it with lace, small shiny stones, and fake pearls, a task that took three days to complete. The cap Suzana used under the veil was borrowed from Muna, a Muslim friend, who also married using the same cap. Through her wedding dress, Suzana wanted to express her Brazilian Muslim identity in an authentic way, since she tried to combine Brazilian wedding dress fashion with Muslim modesty, covering her entire body. At the same time, she used a cap with a long veil, which she customized. According to Suzana, the cap is a Muslim wedding dress piece that is culturally linked to Arab women, and that she used it in a personal "Brazilian style", as she explained to us.

Muna, by her side, was born into a Muslim Arab family and married a Brazilian convert. She rented her white wedding dress from a specialized store. In her narrative, her choice of a white dress was based on Brazilian cultural traditions, as well as on Syrian and Lebanese traditions, the countries where her parents born. Muna's dress had a long skirt and sleeves, covering her entire body. The lace and the tulle were harmoniously combined. Both Muna and Suzana stressed that they wanted to be beautiful and fashionable at their wedding, but they carefully chose the wedding dress style in order to comply with Islamic modesty.

This ethnographic approach helped us to understand how clothing, modest fashion, and personal aesthetic tastes matter when religious values and norms are complied with and mobilized by social actors in the arenas of daily life. The women we worked with emphasized their efforts to construct a pleasant personal Muslim appearance in the context of their improvisations on dress practices, not for the sake of beauty, but because of their religious commitment. Many of them evoked *hadiths* attributed to Prophet Muhammad, which stressed the obligations of a Muslim's clean, calm, pleasant appearance. In their wedding celebrations, although the stories behind the chosen garments were very diverse, all of the women brought together ideas of being beautiful and modest in their personal style.

Bellow, a photo of a converted Brazilian woman in her wedding garment (Figures 1 and 2). She chose a white dress with broided details.



Figure 1. A Brazilian Muslim bride. Photography courtesy of Petra Duarte.



Figure 2. Details of the wedding dress. Photography courtesy of Petra Duarte.

4. Conclusions

Marriages as rites of passage have always inspired ceremonies and feasts with specific material culture in various societies. There is no consensus on the origin of the set of objects that characterize the material culture that is part of this rite, especially in the West. The recent history of traditional marriages (which have a strong reference in the English aristocracy) accounts for variations that have become symbolic elements of sophistication—the white color due to the difficulty of preservation, and later, adornments such as stones and lace marking marriages in higher social classes. Edna, a specialist in wedding etiquette, claims the role of the veil in a traditional Western marriage is to act as a demarcator of social borders. Longer veils require more manual work and reveal a higher social background of the Western bride. What role, if any, does the hijab, which is part of the everyday clothing worn by Muslim women, play in the wedding ceremony?

For Brazilian Muslim women living in Brazil, the cultural references of their wedding celebrations are still strongly rooted in Brazilian traditions of Christianity. In this way, their choices for wedding garments are made based on a partial adoption or rejection of the traditional norms. An ethnographic example of the rejection of Christian traditions is shown by women who choose to marry wearing modest clothing and not a white wedding dress, such as our friends Rosana and Nair. Nair sees no incompatibility in the use of black as a color for a Muslim bride, but, in her particular case, tension was raised between she, a Brazilian convert, and her husband's Indian Muslim family. This is because marriage as a ceremony generates an expectation (Goffman 1985) built on beliefs that have been established over time.

According to observations in other surveys on clothing, the bride's clothing in the Brazilian middle class has become the target of speculations but, until very recently, the dress was an object of affection (after the ceremony) that was carefully kept in the wardrobe and celebrated. However, the ethnography of Pinho (2017), reveals that the dress is no longer a major concern of the party. Among some of the Muslims interviewed, it does not seem to be expected that the spotlight will be on the dress. However, for some of our interlocutors, such as Suzana and Muna, the wedding dress was a planned and desirable special garment. As highlighted in many ethnographic passages of this article, the question of the bride's life cycle and generation influences her choice of wedding dress and expectations. This provides a possible direction for future research, since the intersection of religion, youth, and fashion is rarely studied.

The Muslim women we worked with pointed out to us that there are no definitive religious guidelines regarding the Muslim bride's wedding dress. Different cultures can overlap with what could be considered a "Muslim standard". Even though the Quran's words may be interpreted differently with regard to religious dress codes, modesty must be observed because this is a common feature among religiously oriented Muslims. We verified that among Brazilian converts who married foreign Muslim men, their individual tastes and husband's culture of origin influence the choice of their wedding garments. Therefore, the wedding garments, even though they are more sophisticated than everyday clothes, are not necessarily in accordance with the classic style of Western brides. A *hijab* bought in a popular store, for example, can be customized and used initially as a wedding piece and afterward in day-to-day life, undoing the idea of a sacralization of the clothes worn in a marriage ceremony.

It is important, however, to stick to a strongly observed element between Muslims and non-Muslims regarding wedding parties in Brazil. The dress and the party tend to be in harmony. Regarding this harmonious conception of objects, MacCracken named it the "Diderot Effect", suggesting that a dress considered sumptuous by coercive forces of culture will only fit in an equally sumptuous party. If there are plans for a larger party with a large number of guests, the dress will be more sophisticated. If there is no reception, the dress will be more modest. There are many ways to celebrate marriage, which is related to the economic power of the bride, groom, and their families, as well as traditions. In this case, Muslim wedding festivities in Brazil do not differ from local traditional Christian wedding celebrations. The party can be memorable, or the ceremony can happen regardless of the presence

of a party. The bride's modesty and the style through which it is present in the garment are the main differences.

Another relevant aspect of this work is the way in which the Muslim bride's families (some of them non-Muslims) develop different expectations about the long-awaited "wedding day". Goffman's (1985) dramaturgical approach stated that socially, we act according to the expectations of the "audience". In this sense, the marriage of a convert Brazilian woman whose family does not belong to the Muslim community creates a dilemma in the search for wedding garments, since the bride has to consider the Brazilian traditional wedding dress style as well her religious modesty. Our ethnographic data shows that the use of long trousers and black color by the bride, for example, could also generate conflict with her Brazilian non-Muslim relatives.

In this article, our aim was to understand how religiously oriented Brazilian Muslim women interpret the Islamic normative codes concerning the coverage of the female body on the management of their appearance, taking the wedding garments as an ethnographic point of study. We hope to contribute to the literature on fashion and religion by ethnographically exploring the different ways through which Muslim women in Brazil choose, use, and talk about religious norms and personal aesthetic in their interpretation of Muslim brides. Further research could consider investigating the arenas in which different interpretations of modest fashion are mobilized, considering the life cycles and generation of brides. This could disclose a new path for studying the notions of creativity and authenticity that play a special role in the modest dressing of Brazilian Muslim women.

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