

# DRESSCODES, FASHION AND IDENTITY IN MODERN IRAN

Julia Sautter – jusautter@gmail.com - M.A. Anthropology



**Example for Designers:**  
Tachar Clothing  
Source: Instagram



**Fashion Store in Mashhad**  
Picture: Julia Sautter



**Sign at the Beach in Khazar Abad, Mazandaran**  
**Translation:** "Hijab means watching the personality, not the person."  
Picture: Julia Sautter

**Background: Tomb of Ferdowsi**  
Context: Ferdowsi is one of the most famous Iranian poets  
Picture: Julia Sautter

## Research:

### Topic:

- Different dress codes for men and women (and how they are enforced)
- Differences between public and private spheres
- Mix of Islamic dress codes and Persian culture
- Influences through import (e.g. clothes from Turkey/Europe, Satellite-TV and movies etc.)
- Handmade by tailors vs. off the rack clothes

### Methods:

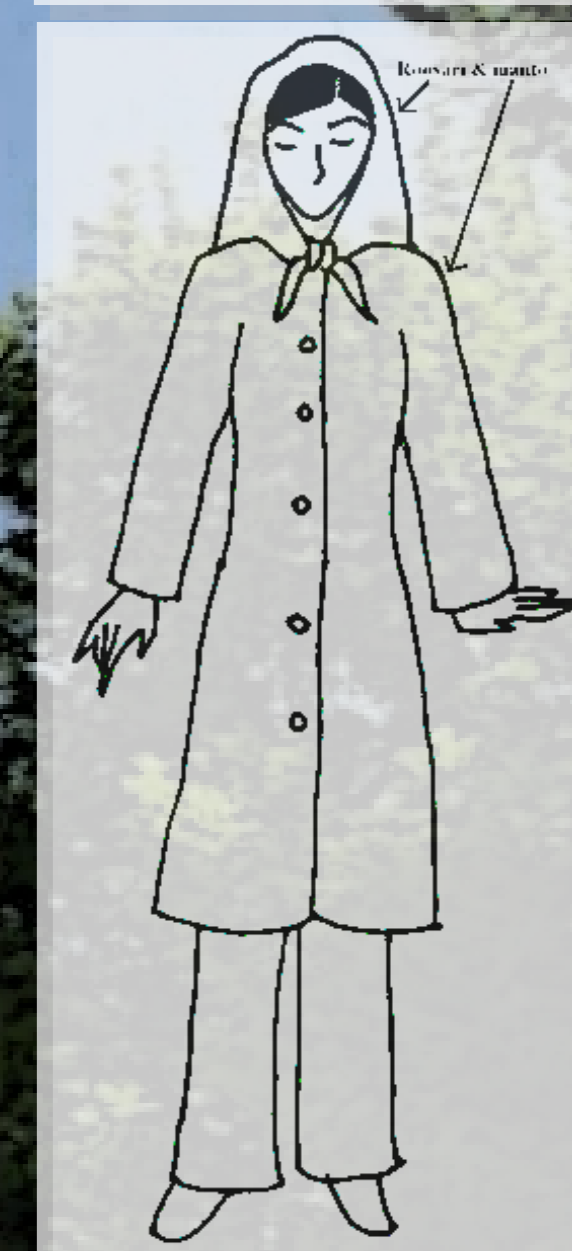
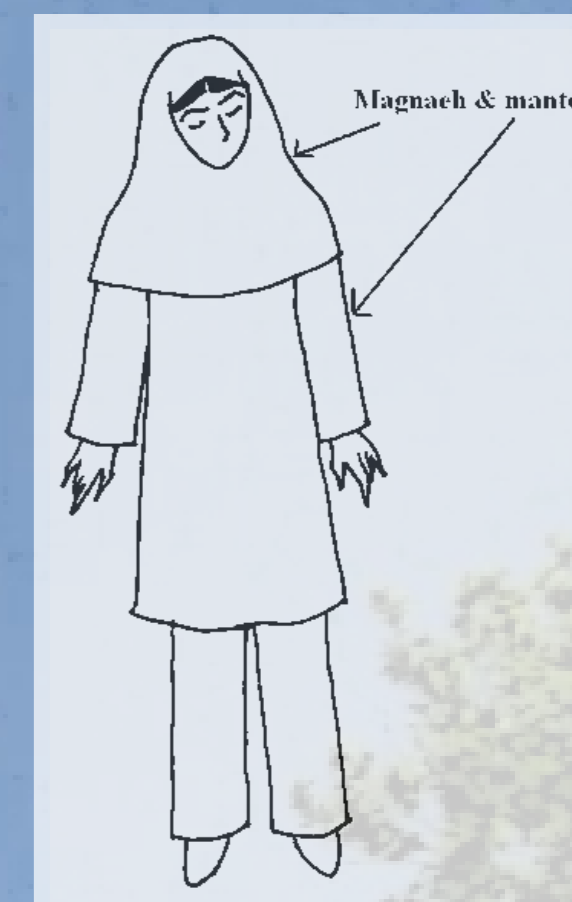
- Observation, Interviews, Expert Interviews

### Places of Research:

- Homes of interview partners, friends and host family (including family gatherings)
- Parks, Coffee Shops, Restaurants, Popular Destinations etc.

## Results:

- Dress codes differ heavily (conservative areas of the city / places for leisure and gatherings / workplace / university)
- Fashion also reflects the Persian identity and is used in differentiation e.g. of Arabic hijab styles
- Dress codes are not mainly enforced by police, but by society in general through comments or reproaching glances
- It is a myth that most Iranians follow the dress code in public only because they are forced by law
- The differences between dress codes at home and in public are more complicated than it is shown in the media discourse
- The middle class prefers tailors to off-the-rack clothes, because it is important to have clothes that fit the body perfectly



**Examples for Iranian Hijab-Styles**  
Source: Azadeh Fatehrad

## Mobility Semester:

**Where:** Mashhad, Iran

**When:** April – October 2016

**How:** Attending Ferdowsi University & Staying at a Host Family

**What:** Language Course and Field Research

During my stay in Mashhad, I had the opportunity to live with an Iranian family. I experienced what it's like to follow the dress codes outside as well as at home (because of male family members, hijab was mandatory). During summer and especially Ramadan it was more complicated to manage everyday life – the lack of privacy made it more complicated for me to find places where I could be comfortable. After three months my feeling for my new social reality changed. I was less stressed and could enjoy the experience. I also took a language course at Ferdowsi University, through which I gained access to other students. Because it is a public university in a religious city, the dress code was thoroughly enforced. I needed some time to accept the authority of the guards over my body.

