

## **Motivation in Clothing Choices**

Throughout history, a variety of outside influences and internal preferences have motivated women across the globe concerning their choices in clothing. While obvious factors, such as protection and warmth are some of the reasons why a woman puts on the attire she chooses in the morning, clothing also serves as a powerful way to express and communicate identity. Below you will find some of the reasoning behind today's clothing selections and fashion pertaining to women.

### **Modesty**

While the concept of modesty is different for each and every place in time, over the years it has played an important role in women's fashion. In various parts of the world and time periods, it was frowned upon or forbidden for a woman to show off her legs, shoulders, back, and cleavage. While the United States no longer enforces strict social policies on women and the clothes they wear, some cultures still uphold the aspect of modesty in women's fashion.

For instance, Muslim cultures expect women to cover most of their body while in public. This has created a wide-ranging market of lengthy and concealing garments in cotton, wool, polyester, silk, rayon, and denim. Common attire includes Hijab underscarves, long lycra gloves, abayas (long cloak-like garments); and jilbabs (outer- and over garments including long robes and coats).

### **Beauty and Seduction**

One of the main reasons a woman slips into the sultry black dress for a cocktail party or chooses a pants suit that matches her eye color is to create an attractive appearance. Over time, the ideal of beauty has changed within different cultures, where cleavage-bearing blouses, tight skirts, and high hems no longer bind women's fashion. The perception of beauty is different for all, where an increasing amount of women forego dressing to impress others, and now choose their clothing according to what makes them feel attractive and alluring.

Depending on the wearer, a clean black business suit with a crisp white collared shirt is just as appealing as a full-length formal gown. Sometimes, just the right accessories add a seductive finishing touch, such as a pair of dangling earrings or eye-catching open-toe shoes. Attitude and self-confidence also helps to heighten a wardrobe, which is very beautiful and seductive in its own right.

## **Status**

Women's clothing choices are also motivated by their status or position within a social group, as some pieces call attention to a specific affiliation. This is seen in the skirts worn by a college tennis team or the elaborate robes worn by members of African tribal royalty. In the United States, corporate executives, lawyers, and other high-income career positions are often identified by the type of clothes worn.

## **Ceremonies**

Various forms of women's fashion are set aside for specific ceremonies and occasions that mark significant moments in her life. This is seen in the common attire for weddings; the gowns of a debutante ball society; or the quincereana evening dresses for 15-year-old Latina girls. These dresses are often elaborate, flashy, classic, or once-in-a-lifetime garments that hold special meaning.

## **Current Fashion Trends**

In the United States, women often follow the latest fashion trends, whether it is cutting their hair like a celebrity (ie. Halle Berry or Jennifer Aniston); choosing a designer purse (ie. the patchwork Coach bag or the Birken); or selecting clothing that matches the newest "color of the season."