PARENTING FASHION: AN EXPLORATION OF INFANT CHILDREN'S WARDROBE

by

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ABSTRACT

This research examined factors that influence parents while building their infant children's wardrobe. The inquiry centred on a wardrobe study divided into four stages: (a) an interview, (b) inventory documentation, (c) fieldwork, and (d) photographs. Parents build their children's wardrobe by making clothing selection decisions based on concepts of comfort and design. Gender representation, acquisition habits, and sustainability are other factors that influence clothing choices. Findings revealed problems in fit, sizing, and materials (mostly with pants, socks, mittens, fabrics, garment construction) as well as the incongruence between the child's anatomy and the clothing silhouette. Parents need practical, functional clothing that provides ease in donning and doffing. The colour pink was controversial, as were design details. Cost and convenience of shopping are key factors in parents' choice of retailers. Sustainability related to care, purchasing less, and hand-me-downs are the most preferred acquisition methods.

Acknowledgements

Dedication

To my dear father, João Gomes Filho.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Although children's clothing is a significant retail market, with sales of approximately $122 million in Canada for girls', boys', and infants' clothing and accessories as of January 2019 (Statista, 2019), scant research on children's clothing extends beyond shopping to focus on the materiality and experience of dress. According to Euromonitor International (2019), the Canadian domestic market is maintaining a slow growth year on year, with trends influencing sales due to parents' increasing interest in children's fashion. Martens, Southerton, and Scott (2004) suggest that studies on the sociology of consumption neglect children's social relationships, other than the one with the apparel market, and the symbolic meanings children and parents have with the objects they consume (p.158). Increasing disruptors in the children's apparel sector, such as the growing popularity of gender-neutral clothing and expansion of the sharing economy (Petersen & Riisberg, 2017), support the research initiative of my study. Thinking beyond children's apparel consumption to better understand how clothing is used inside the home by the parent(s) on behalf of their infant children contributes to knowledge in the field.

The wardrobe of an infant is dynamic, changing often in response to the child's rapid growth over a short period of time. Therefore, parents' engagement with the act of dressing makes fashion part of the household routine. The speed of transformation of an infant's wardrobe also poses challenges regarding the clothing choices parents have to make, as style, quantity, and acquisition methods are modified continuously. There is also a manipulation of clothing that must concede to the child's developing body. Parents are in constant contact with their infant child's body, dressing and caring for them, paying attention to every change. It was imperative to bring parents' opinions and ideas into the debate over clothing design and dressing practice.

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Skjold (2017) discusses the current research on fashion and advocates for wardrobe studies that include a "bottom-up approach," re-directing the focus of research from the "leaders of fashion" to people from other age groups, such as children, from parts of the world other than the West, in order to put people as "co-creators" of fashion instead of mere followers (p. 25). Therefore, I use a constructivist perspective as one of the theoretical frameworks for this study. Collecting multiple meanings from people who understand the social context in which they are immersed creates knowledge combined with "their own personal histories" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 40). In this sense, the constructivist meanings from the parent–child "reciprocal process of influence" (De Mol & Buysse, 2008, pp. 166-167) will be generated from dressing practices. This concept can be applicable to infants as the way they behave while wearing uncomfortable clothing, for example, could potentially change decisions to purchase certain styles of clothing.

This study would not be complete if only the social aspects of dressing were considered. Although culture determines and mediates our dress practice through social interactions, as Entwistle (2015) explains, sociologists have neglected the body as part of the process; thus, her proposition to examine "fashion/dress as situated bodily practice" (p. 5) that merges body and social contexts is pertinent. Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology is relevant for fashion to provide another view to understand the body; that is to say, the mind is embodied and cannot be separated from our experience of the world (Negrin, 2016, p. 116), and the visual and the tactile are always part of each other enabling our communication with the world (Negrin, 2016, p. 117).

Merleau-Ponty (1962) argues that although our bodies are already developing a visual image since childhood, the "body schema" is a perception of the body and we must feel our

world using other sensors in conjunction with our sight to rediscover our self (p. 184). The body

is always being re-made, so the parents interfering/manipulating with the visual, the child's

image, and with the child's haptic sensations, creates for them an experience of the world

through clothes. That is not to say that parents should disregard the cultural position a child has

in society. The mediation between the physical experiences infant children will develop with

the world around them through clothing must also consider the social expectations that parents

must navigate. Bourdieu's conceptualization of capital, *habitus*, and taste, helps to explain the

rationale behind parents' ideas about fashion and clothing. *Habitus* is "a system of durable,

transposable dispositions" produced by the particular conditions of a class grouping (as cited

in Entwistle, 2015, p. 36) and embodied into a person by the cultural capital acquired. The

family in this sense transposes its cultural, economic, and social capitals into *habitus*. Taste is

another concept that it is the "obvious manifestation" of *habitus* and "it provides a link between

the individual and the social" expectations (Entwistle, 2015, p. 36) in the process of choosing

clothing to wear.

My research approach was therefore designed to investigate the extent to which parents

project concerns, taste, and capital, and how they make sense of clothing that will be experienced

by a person who so far is unable to provide comment on how they feel while wearing them. Apart

from those concerns, this study also aimed to better understand influences regarding clothing

acquisition, wardrobe composition, clothing choices to create an image and, consequently,

introducing an identity for infant children. I agree with Skjold (2017) that the fashion sector needs

to evolve to be inclusive of more people, to move away from standards, especially concerning

diverse bodies and grounding knowledge on "user orientated logics" (p. 25). Exploring and

investigating what is inside a child's collection of clothes by talking directly with parents provides understanding about the negotiation parents make on behalf of their infant children.

In this study I examined the ways that parents build their infant children's wardrobe, here defined simply as a collection of clothes (Klepp & Bjerck, 2014, p. 375). Clothing and accessories may be purchased, acquired as gifts, or received as hand-me-downs from others. Multiple approaches of inquiry were used to better understand this phenomenon. Specifically, this research was set up to explore how parents manipulate the clothing they have on hand to dress their infant children and how they perceive this practice as an embodied experience related to representation of their child's appearance. The findings of this study provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence parents as they build their infant child's wardrobe, and this information is valuable to fashion stakeholders, including childrenswear designers, fashion buyers, and retailers.

This research is structured in five additional chapters following this introduction. Chapter 2 presents a literature review that examines research pertaining to identity, gender, parental behaviour, and clothing consumption and selection. Chapter 3 describes the methodological approach and methods utilized in this study. Chapter 4 presents findings from the demographic survey, interviews, fieldwork, and inventory documentation. Chapter 5 provides a summary of the study and analysis of results. Chapter 6 discusses implications for practice, recommendations for future research, and conclusions.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Parents undergoing the process of building the first wardrobe for their infant children must consider multiple factors that influence clothing selection. These include considering acquisition, the amount of clothing and accessories needed, replacement frequency of outgrown clothes, and deciding who is responsible for maintaining the wardrobe and the design choices. Few studies have been conducted examining children and fashion in the context of wear. Pole, Pitcher, and Boden (2004) researched the wardrobes of children between 6 and 11 years of age, focusing on consumption habits that explore the ways children construct their gender identities through clothing. Consumption of fashion is also the main inquiry in studies about the mother–child or mother–infant relationship (Afflerback, Anthony, Carter, & Grauerholz, 2014; Andersen, Sorensen, & Kjaer, 2007; Heath, O'Malley, Heath, & Story, 2016; Horan, Houser, & Cowan, 2007; McNeill & Graham, 2014). Martens et al. (2004) had alerted that studies on the sociology of consumption neglected researching children or understanding the symbolic meanings parents give to the objects they consume (p. 158).

In the following literature review I examine applicable theory and similar studies that relate to my research. In the first section, concepts regarding identity, representation, and gender are defined and discussed in relation to infant children. The second section addresses parental behaviour and examines their influences on clothing consumption, shopping behaviour, and alternative modes of acquisition that are surging in the market for children's wear. The last section considers motives for clothing selection and wardrobe planning.

Identity and Gender

Dressing practice requires mediation between identity, the self, and gender. Identity formation as discussed by Somers (1994) is a conflation of single identities (gender, race, sex, and

so on). A person's identity is the product of a narrative from the story of different identities leaving in the same unified self (Somers, 1994, p. 605). Therefore, in this study I use the term identity to encompass the general approach to the self as a whole. As parents choose clothing for their infants, the latter's not-yet-developed identity of self and of multiple other individual identities start to take shape mediated by the parents' choices and their taste and ideas about fashion and clothing the body. According to Rawlins (2006), "Fashion provides the perfect opportunity to display aspects of one's identity and, more importantly, it is easily changed as one's non-fixed identity shifts and changes through space and time" (p. 375). Gender identity is also relevant, as parents dress the child according to their sex at birth to match with social expectations. However, gender is a complex subject, so I draw from Paoletti's (2012) definition of gender as a term that identifies cultural (role, appearance, and behaviour) differences rooted in biological differences between men and women but not exhausted by the binary female/male (p. 1). Butler (1999) argues that the construction of sex as binary is also cultural, whereby the "natural" or biological sex designations can occur outside distinctions about what is male and female. Gender identity, therefore, is the conformity or challenge with the norm (Paoletti, 2012) and is as variable as the notion of identity itself. Fashion theorists, driving from Marxist and psychoanalytic domains, have placed identity as a social creation (see Marx, Engels, Mandel, Fowkes, & Fernbach, 1990; Sim, 1999), being flexible and mutable whereby the practices of dressing and clothing the body have enabled the individual to transform their identity (Rocamora & Smelik, 2016, p. 11).

Studies have shown differences in childhood rearing between boys and girls. There is a tendency to stereotypical gender treatment of children, through for example the use of the colour pink (for girls) and blue (for boys) as well as teaching personality traits (mothers communicating

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femininity and fathers masculinity), mediated by the parents' own gender and sex (Cohen, 2013; Horan et al., 2007). The use of masculine themes (e.g., such as the colour blue, dark shades, and prints for things like vehicles) is considered appropriate for any child, whereas the themes associated with femininity (such as princesses, flowers, and hearts) are only acceptable for girls (Afflerback et al., 2014, pp. 17-18). Paoletti (2012) suggests this happens because male "rules" are default, but the opposite never occurs, due to the "girls' rules" being stated in negative terms, as in "not pink" for example (p. 12).

Children develop an awareness of their self and body at around 12 months of age, by noticing the extremities (hands and fingers) first, followed by feet, hair, nose, and so on; as Lynch and Strauss (2007) note, "the self … is a slowly developed sense of who and what we are both externally and internally, with the process beginning in early childhood and continuing to develop throughout the life span" (p. 13). Children will evolve their identity after negotiating with their parents' ideas for identity construction, reflected on the clothing choices they make on behalf of their children (Martens et al., 2004, p. 168).

Castañeda (2009) explains there is a power balance in the parent–child relationship that positions the child's body and subjectivity under the adult privilege of caring and knowing the child. Therefore, the child's formation is subject of the adult perspective and ideas about the self. "Even a newborn infant, from this point of view, is necessarily a natural-cultural body, always already formed through the culturally and materially specific processes of birthing and the body of the mother" (Castañeda, 2009, p. 48). Parents help and influence their child's identity formation, in a first moment, by merging their identities to the child's by means of manipulating the child's image to conform to their own (Martens et al., 2004). Mothers specifically will see

the child as an extension of their selves and will select objects (clothing, nursery items) that reflect their identities, creating "a sense of control" of the act of raising a child (Afflerback et al., 2014). Clothing choices parents make on behalf of their child are delicately balanced between an identity the adults have and one they will help develop for a person, an infant child, that is still being aware of their own existence. Studying this phenomenon give insight into the processes parents undergo while using clothing as props for discussing identities.

Parental Influences and Consumption

Parents act as arbiters, selecting and later teaching their children to navigate social expectations related to their clothing choices. As the child ages, other sources of style influence are exerted, although most evident during the transition period from childhood to adolescence (König, 2008). There is evidence that the parent–child influence is mutual, occurring "intentionally and unintentionally" (De Mol & Buysse, 2008, p. 189) and within this context, the mother–daughter relationship is the most striking one (Woodward, 2007). However, while the influence parents and children have over each other's identity cannot be discounted, especially between mothers and daughters, fashion opinions can veer in different ways in the process of "(dis)identification the child will have with parents" (Rawlins, 2006, p. 375). Fathers on the other hand have to forge a bond with their children and are assuming more responsibility in sharing child caring tasks (Doucet & Merla, 2007). Doucet (2009) summarizes research that points to increased involvement of fathers during pregnancy and after birth; fathers are shaping new embodied experiences with their children physically and emotionally (p. 85).

Consumption rituals practiced by parents also influence children's identity formation. For example, parents, or other adults (e.g., grandmothers, friends) purchase clothing on behalf

of their children, instilling in them a sense of consumerism tied with feelings of anxiety towards

being the best parent possible (Martens et al., 2004; Paoletti, 2012). The consumption of clothing

is further mediated by parents and may be adopted by the child who participates actively in

shopping for clothing with their parents, continuing their parent's practices (Martens et al., 2004;

Pilcher, 2011). Therefore, children may be able to form shopping habits that consciously follow

their parents' behaviour.

Sustainable Practices Within the Fashion Industry

Sustainable development was defined by the World Commission on Environment and

Development's (WCED, 1987) *Our Common Future* report as "development that meets the

needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own

needs" (p. 41). Lorek and Spangenberg (2014) had noted that the concept weakened in the years

that followed the WCED document release, suffering from a reliance on "growth, innovation

and technological solutions" (p. 34); they further argue that a sustainable economy must be

based on sustainable consumption. On the other hand, fashion has contributed to a worsening

of sustainable consumption by the increased production and consumption accompanied by

a "throwaway culture" (Birtwistle & Moore, 2007, p. 211). However, the fashion industry

has over the last decade or so, showing signs of change, experimented with new methods of

consumption such as the slow fashion concept of producing small quantities and consumers

buying less (Niinimäki, 2013). McNeill and Moore (2015) discovered that although the focus on

sustainable practices of producing and selling fashion has become a major concern, consumers

still are not fully engaged in supporting sustainability as their behaviour is inconsistent with their

environmental and social responsibility claims.

New modes of clothing acquisition are starting to appear in the childrenswear marketplace. Systems like the Vigga subscription (Petersen & Riisberg, 2017) provide a method for decreasing consumption and over stressing the resources for producing new clothing. Vigga's model is a combination of rental with clothing libraries (Pedersen & Netter, 2013, p. 259) that permits parents to make the bulk of the constant changing infant's wardrobe relying mostly on "collaborative consumption" (Pedersen & Netter, 2013, p. 258) of clothing with other parents. Clothing swaps could potentially be another model for clothing consumption that does not involve buying new products, is a socializing activity that provides benefits for everyone involved (Matthew & Hodges, 2016). Hand-me-downs is one way for swapping clothes that has become part of parents' shopping habits. Consumers wish to engage in sustainable practices, but when convenient and affordable (Ritch & Schroder, 2012, p. 208) and to use second-hand clothing (Reiley & DeLong, 2015, p. 80).

Caring for clothing is another aspect of sustainable practices (Fletcher & Grose, 2012) that can be observed in the treatment of infant clothing carried on by parents. Clothing designed to reduce the impact of washing and drying has the potential to bring benefits to the environment and care labels function as a tool for providing this information to consumers (Fletcher & Grose, 2012, p. 60). Kate Fletcher (a professor at the University of the Arts London) created the *Craft of Use* website in order to teach and discuss the daily practices of using objects, and proposes that caring and tending for clothes involves "taking care of fashion garments as a new type of fashion experience" (Fletcher, 2019, para. 2). In this sense, the changing behaviour of mothers and fathers, and their consumption and clothing use habits of infant children's clothing is of special interest for this study as there are many options to acquire clothes which can influence choices to dress a child.

Clothing Selection

Parents' decisions while purchasing children's clothing are influenced by sizing, price, quality, ease of shopping, and payment options (Haluk Köksal, 2007, p. 79). Price tops quality for families with young children due to the constant need for updating the wardrobe with the correct clothing size (De Kervenoael, Canning, Palmer, & Hallsworth, 2011; Haluk Köksal, 2007). According to the current literature, studies of specific clothing items selected to the wardrobe are lacking. Petersen and Riisberg's (2017) examination of the Vigga subscription model, whereby pre-packaged infant clothing is sent to customers as a rental, hints on the rationale for selecting an infant wardrobe. Vigga's wardrobe in a box is composed of "subdued colours, toned-down style, and textures such as cat's ears and embroidery" (Petersen & Riisberg, 2017, p. 221) to appeal to a wide demographic; the selection was "curated" (Petersen & Riisberg, 2017, p. 222) so the items could be combined between each other in the right size for the child. Thus, the minimalist style is considered the universal standard for parents. Blending preferences each family may have, the wardrobe has an acceptable style that spans different people with different visions towards fashion.

Planning a wardrobe depends on lifestyles, financial resources, and intended wear (basic and special occasion) of clothes (Marshall, 2004). Mothers' impact on wardrobe planning is pervasive in detriment of fathers' participation, as they are constructing their motherhood through clothing consumption (Andersen et al., 2007, p. 80). So, because mothers are the principal shopper for their children's clothing, they may apply the same rationale for planning hers and her child's wardrobe. As Woodward (2007) declares, women compose the wardrobe as a comprehensive set of clothes that will serve for multiple functions such as social and functional; the items will embrace a varied range of colours, styles, and designs, enabling combinations between items.

Motives for choosing clothing to complete a wardrobe are varied and cannot be generalized, but they often match parents' values and concerns (De Kervenoael et al., 2011, p. 480). Clothing is used as a means for displaying traditional gendered identities, whereas perceived by parents, the child and the industry, clothing is bound to the notion of appropriate childhood (Pole et al., 2004). Selection of clothing for a child's wardrobe is also bound by romantic ideas of the perfect child and childhood innocence; "in its esthetically fossilized state, the clothing of childhood innocence has become a symbol of class status" (Higonnet & Albinson, 1997, p. 122). Selecting the pieces for a wardrobe is a task that demands choosing clothing and accessories that will be both functional and aesthetically pleasing. But this process is mediated by questions of identity and gender representation, and is also influenced by the acquisition methods and division of responsibilities each parent carries in the household. As the process is complex and involves multiple factors, my research aims to investigate how parents build the first wardrobe for their infant children.

Chapter Summary

This literature review has delineated theory and concepts regarding children's and parents' relationship towards gender, identity, and influences they exert over each other. It pointed to the lack of research about clothing use and inquiries that go beyond consumption practices for infant clothing. However, wardrobe studies conducted with adults fill this gap. Consumption practices for infant children were discussed and new models for clothing acquisition were briefly laid out. The planning, selection, and motives for building a wardrobe were analyzed and related to the child's wardrobe specifically. As Martens et al. (2004) had alerted 15 years ago, studies around children's consumption have not included meanings, and

there is still a need for this type of investigation. While current research is concerned with issues such as gender in relation to colour and communication, acquisition models that do not involve purchases or relationship between parents and child, no research has included infant children and parents mediating fashion choices. Due to the lack of studies about wardrobe development for infant children, and studies that take the parents' perspectives for representing a child through clothing, I investigate the reasons, motives, and factors that will influence parents while building the wardrobe for their infant children.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

In this research, I examined the ways that parents build their infant children's wardrobe, here defined as a collection of clothes (Klepp & Bjerck, 2012, p. 375). Clothing and accessories may be purchased, acquired as gifts, or received as a hand-me-down from others. Multiple approaches were used to research this phenomenon to better understand the multiple variables that are part of this process. The inquiry centred on a wardrobe study (Woodward, 2007) divided into four stages: (a) an interview to discuss clothing and dressing practices; (b) inventory documentation of the infant child's clothes and accessories; (c) fieldwork, encompassing notes and a survey of storage furniture for the wardrobe; and (d) photographs of the space and parents' favourite outfits. In addition, participants completed a demographic survey to provide descriptive statistics of the sample.

Research Design

This research was designed using a mixed methods approach; the combination of quantitative and qualitative data yielded a broader understanding (Creswell, 2003, p. 18) of clothing habits. The research relied mostly on wardrobe interviews for the qualitative data collection, supported by closet inventories, a quantitative method. Additionally, this research was set up to better understand how parents manipulate the clothing they have on hand to dress their infant children and how they perceive this practice as an embodied experience related to identity representation, managed on their infants' behalf.

Combining different research methods is a way to avoid biases that may arise from utilizing just one approach. In mixed methods, "results from one method can help develop or inform the other method" (Creswell, 2003, p. 16). Although grounded in post-positivism

"reflect[ing] a deterministic philosophy in which causes probably determine effects or outcomes" (Creswell, 2003, p. 7) and by which knowledge is achieved by a fixed set of ideas that can be measured, quantitative methods have evolved to "complex experiments with many variables and treatments" (Creswell, 2003, p.13). For this research, quantitative methods were especially helpful to catalogue the child's wardrobe content. The qualitative portion was based on constructivism, socially constructed knowledge based on multiple truths derived from culture, context, history, and reality (Creswell, 2003, p. 8). Accordingly, a set of assumptions about gender representation and sustainable practices were used to inquire parents about their choices. "The researcher's intent, then, is to make sense of (or interpret) the meanings others have about the world" (Creswell, 2003, p. 8). Therefore, I relied on participants' perspectives, focusing on cultural norms that are current, and how they construct meaning surrounding their infant children's clothing. I believe it was crucial to give a voice to research participants who are both the subject of the study and the people affected by its results. For guidance, I used Creswell's general strategy for mixing methods, the concurrent procedure "in which the researcher converges quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research" (p. 16).

Wardrobe Study

The wardrobe study formed the primary methodology for this research as it involves multiple methods to analyze a collection of clothing. Klepp and Bjerck (2014) define this study as a methodology of material culture because it blends quantitative and qualitative approaches and allows for a combination of various methods such as interview, fieldwork, and inventory record (p. 375). The wardrobe method was used by Pole (2007) to study children's clothing and by Barry (2018) to explore men's masculine identities. Banim and Guy (2001) included

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wardrobe interviews as part of a three-method research study examining women's relationship with their clothes. As Woodward (2007) explains, "in order to understand *why* women wear particular outfits, it is necessary to look at *how* they make selections; in considering what they reject as much as what they select" (p. 9; emphasis added). In this sense, the clothing was important to prompt conversations because as objects, they carry "multi-layered and complex dimensions" including haptic and construction qualities, as well as "traces of the person that used and wore the garments" (Mida & Kim, 2015, p. 22). Given the diverse use of wardrobe studies, I chose this method to utilize the materiality of the clothing to enable parents to remember and engage in conversations about clothing choices, acquisition means and motives to tell stories about clothes that are part of their infant child's wardrobe.

This same rationale may be applied to infant clothing whereas parents moderate selections and choices on children's behalf. Klepp and Bjerck (2012) indicate another advantage of the wardrobe study: it enables the researcher "to combine questions with a registration process and therefore link between the material and the explanation" (p. 381). This connection was crucial to the scope of this research to determine decisions that underpin connections between the material (clothing items) with reasons for why these items are worn. Klepp and Bjerck (2012) also mention that within wardrobe studies it is possible to gain knowledge of how people from different ages and genders "actually dress and why" (p. 382); to help answer questions that have not been explained before by traditional research methodologies. This in turn, provides a broad understanding of "how people think, talk and write about clothes" (p. 382). One of the challenges with the wardrobe study was to adapt the steps and the data collection to suit the participant's routine. Thus, some data (photographs and

inventory chart) were collected days after the interview took place. The analysis of results was delayed but in no way compromised.

Inspired by Woodward's work (2007), ethnographic and phenomenological methodologies were integrated into the research, whereby I positioned myself inside a family's home and private spaces, the bedrooms, to observe how they store, sort, and choose clothes to dress their infant children. Methods of documentation included photographs, audio recordings of interviews, and observation field notes.

Data Collection

Participants completed a demographic survey, answering questions about their age, income, and education, as well as how they identify themselves in terms of ethnicity and gender, including the age, gender, and birth order of their children. Thus the survey provided descriptive statistics of the research sample. The survey variables helped me interpret data collected regarding issues that appeared during the interview and gathered from the inventory charts.

The wardrobe study was divided into four stages: first, an interview to discuss clothing and dressing practices used by parents, followed by inventory documentation of the infant child's clothes and accessories. The third stage, fieldwork, was a survey of any storage furniture such as closets and chest of drawers the family uses to store clothing and accessories belonging to the infant child paired with observation notes. To complete the study, families gave permission to photograph the space where they kept their infant child's apparel and accessories, and also their favourite or most commonly used apparel items. Photographs were necessary as an additional form of data collection, as support for findings from the interviews. Visual representation also leads to insights regarding parents' ideas towards infant clothing and into their daily routines

when dressing their child. The photographs do not show any identifiable features such as faces, the participant's home, or other people; they focused instead on details of clothes and accessories, specifically fabrics, decorative elements, patterns, and prints.

Recruitment and Selection

Participants were recruited using convenience sampling. People chosen were "readily available" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013, p. 214) from my group of friends; however, there was still a need for more participants. Therefore, snowball sampling allowed my acquaintances to recruit others to participate in the study (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008, p. 176). It was essential to ensure participants were comfortable with my presence inside their homes to create a relationship based on trust. A simple digital poster (see Appendix A) was sent to each prospective participant by email, with additional information describing the research, explaining the wardrobe interview and all other relevant information needed to make an informed decision about participation.

Inclusion Criteria

In order to be selected for this study, families were defined as including one or two parents and an infant child, newborn up to 24 months old. The age cap was used to restrict the conversation to parents only, as children older than 2 years begin to demonstrate opinions about their wardrobe (McNeill & Graham, 2014, p. 405). At this stage, parents are still developing a system for apparel acquisition, and there is a range of themes to be explored concerning gender representation and identity, sustainable practices and consumption habits. In interviews with four families, both parents were present, while the other two interviews were conducted with the mothers only. The study took place inside the participant's home, in the child's bedroom.
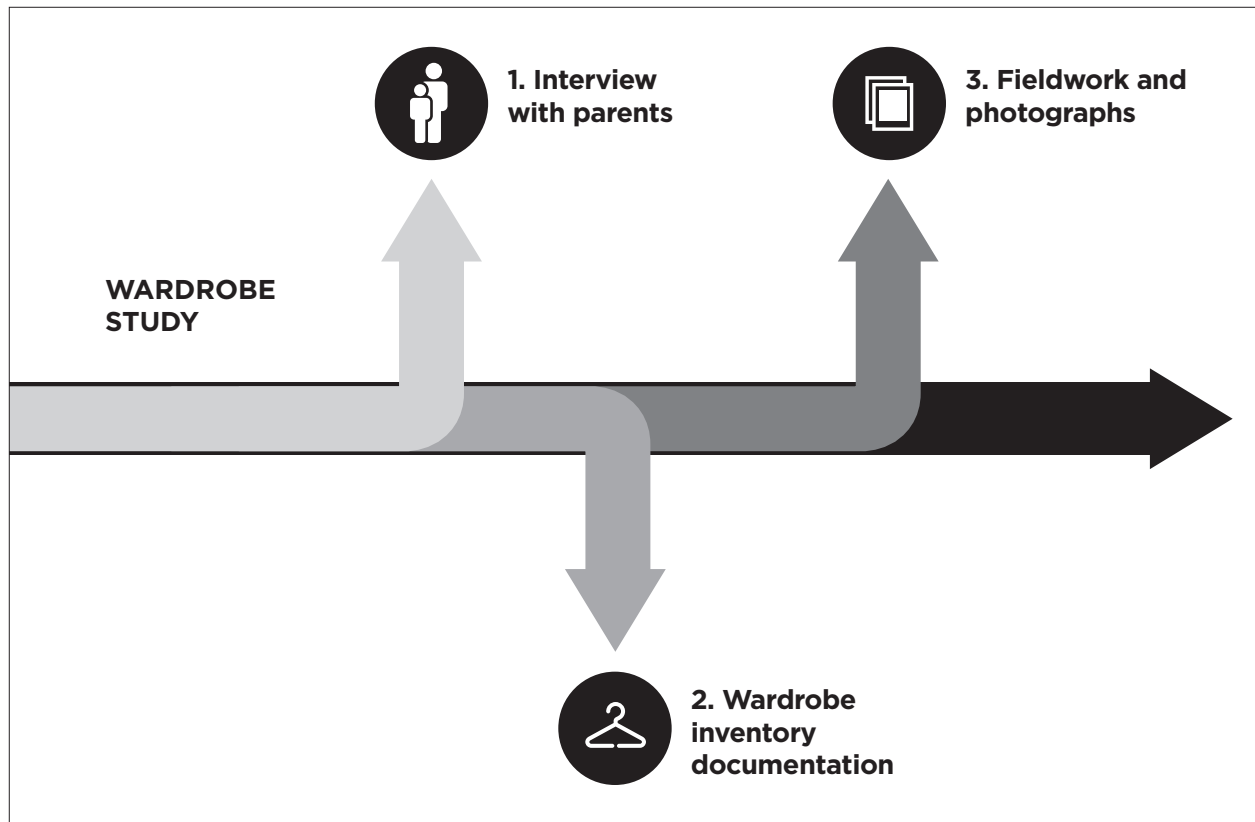
Figure 3.1. Data collection framework diagram.

Data Sources

Data were collected from a demographic survey; audio recordings of interviews; interview transcripts; clothing inventory charts; photographs of clothing and storage furniture; field notes documenting non-verbal information, as well as observations and insights that occurred to me during the interview, and some statements parents made after the recording had finished. A survey of demographic information was necessary to position participants' cultural background and income level that may influence the decision-making process while purchasing and choosing items for their infant child's wardrobe. Transcribed audio recordings were essential to document relevant information gathered during the interviews and to analyze the results.

Wardrobe Inventory Chart

The clothing inventory chart (see Figure 3.2) was designed to itemize the content of the infant child's wardrobe. Information gathered on the charts included clothing and accessory type; quantity; gender; design features such as colour, prints, motif, and pattern; methods of acquisition; and any other information specific to the item. It was also essential to capture a descriptive picture of the wardrobe, to give insights regarding clothing assortment. Clothing purchasing and acquisition methods also highlighted important themes concerning consumption habits and sustainability issues raised by parents. A side note about the surveyed items: shoes were not included because some of the infant children in the study were walking and others were not, therefore data from shoe possession would be incomplete and not able to be generalized.

Figure 3.2. Wardrobe inventory chart

Interviews

Klepp and Bjerck (2012) used interviews in their wardrobe studies as "a supplement and as an integrated part of the method" (p. 377). I used a semi-structured interview guide designed to encourage conversation (see Appendix B) while still allowing parents the opportunity to add other themes they considered relevant to the discussion but not included on my questionnaire. Concepts from one interview informed the next, so as to "not miss anything that may be salient. ... All seemingly relevant issues must be incorporated into the next set of interviews and observations (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 6).

The interview began with a question about clothing acquisition followed by others related to wear and use, parents' preferences, responsibilities, styling, storage, care and maintenance, and purchasing habits. During the interview, some parents grabbed clothes to exemplify what they were talking. The gesture of picking up an article of clothing led us to discuss other themes that were not covered by the interview guideline and to transition the conversation into the completion of the wardrobe inventory chart. Only one family did not fill in the inventory chart with me during the interview, sending it afterwards.

Data Analysis

Data were collected in paper and digital forms. Although consent forms and demographic surveys were emailed to participants, on the day of the interview I brought hard copies (one family and a mother from another family filled out those documents digitally and sent them back by email prior to the meeting). I also brought a copy of the wardrobe inventory chart to fill in together with the families. Data collected digitally, such as photographs, audio recordings, and transcripts, were stored in a password secured folder on my laptop and on a memory card.

A folder was created for each participant family, and a number was assigned to them chronologically from the first family interviewed and so on. The family folders included the audio files of the interview, the transcript, photographs, field notes, and inventory, demographic, and consent forms (digital and scanned copies, where applicable). All hard copy data were stored in an expandable file, separated per pocket, in this way: one per family, for the consent and demographic forms; interview protocol and guideline; transcripts; inventory charts; field notes. This distribution helped visualization of all data types and sources for analysis, summarized in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Type of Data Collected

Data sources	Quantity
Demographic survey	8 pages
Audio recordings	196 minutes
Interview transcripts	58 pages
Photographs	199
Wardrobe inventory chart	42 pages
Field notes	6 pages

Audio recordings were transcribed using the voice-recognition online software Trint (www.trint.com), which enables revision and editing to ensure a-ccuracy of the final transcript. Incomprehensible sounds, conversations between parents and children, and repetitive words and sounds such as "like" or "yeah" were removed to ease reading and analysis of transcripts. After downloading the transcript file, a second revision, in print, was necessary to proofread for grammatical and orthographic errors not caught during the first reading and to prepare the

transcript for analysis. I conducted all revisions to guarantee participant's privacy. Transcripts

were laid out on legal size paper, landscape orientation, formatted in two columns for text and

an additional column for annotations and observations. Upon review of the first transcript, I

developed a list of thematic codes that were applied to all the other interviews, adding more

themes as they appeared. The final theme codebook was used for all six transcripts. My

supervisor also coded themes, and as per the intercoder agreement, we compared our work

and devised a theme codebook to achieve an index of categories that were used to analyze and

interpret the data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 212).

Most of the data for analysis were gathered from the interview, while the inventory

chart, demographic survey, field notes, and photographs were treated as supporting information.

Therefore, data analysis involved an iterative process to break down concepts from the interview

transcripts in a process divided into five steps, as follows:

1. Familiarization: verification of transcript accuracy; editing and proofreading

2. Review of transcripts:

   a) write open code according to key ideas

   b) assign categories and subcategories

3. Second review of transcripts:

   a) compare and verify theme codes

   b) complete a one-page summary for each participant's interview

   c) write a memo for each participant

4. Create charts of relevant quotes, grouped into categories

5. Index of themes and subthemes

The constant comparison between theme codes enabled a final list of categories, which appeared in all interviews and indicated the issues worth examining in the Discussion chapter. According to Corbin and Strauss (1990, p. 7), concepts that are "significantly absent (i.e., it should be present, but isn't, so that questions must be asked)" were also briefly incorporated into the discussion. Field notes were used in step 3 of the iteration process, to add information not collected from the interview but important for the summary and memos, as additional observational data. Information from the wardrobe inventory charts was plotted into an Excel spreadsheet. Categories related to quantity were summed up; others were converted into graphs for comparison and discussion in relation to the themes from the interview. For example, the colour graph was contrasted with gender concepts that appeared in the interviews. Photographs were used to illustrate and reinforce or contradict topics discussed with parents.

<p align="center">**Validity and Research Limitations**</p>

According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), validity in qualitative research relates to the accuracy of the collected data, suggesting that data be triangulated from multiple sources. So, for mixed methods research, those strategies must assure the validity, by using one method of data collection to inform the other set in all stages of the research: collection, analysis and interpretation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 239). Another approach for determining the validity in this research was to triangulate data from multiple sources and "build evidence" for themes; also, the use of intercoder agreement approach provided additional accuracy from the data collected as it was analyzed by two different people: "reliability plays a minor role in [the study's portion of] qualitative research and relates primarily to the reliability of multiple coders" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 211).

Utilizing a mixed methods approach, with the wardrobe study as the primary method

for this project, asserted reliability of the data collected from multiple sources and helped

triangulation of information to achieve a particular set of findings. An interview alone is

subject to memory that does not include a careful object observation; thus it can provide less

information. Inspecting an object during a conversation was proven to be advantageous to

show its materiality. Data from the inventory were used to confirm or challenge findings from

the interviews.

One disadvantage of the mixed methods approach was the collection time and amount of

data to analyze and interpret, which could easily lead to errors or misunderstandings (Creswell

& Plano Clark, 2011, p. 17). My presence in the participant's home could also interfere with

the types of responses participants would give, due to a need for them to feel comfortable in my

presence. Additionally, as much as my small sample was diverse, it could not represent the entire

population. Although it is not possible to generalize findings from this research, data were rich

enough to establish knowledge that gave insight into a group of people; thus, it can inform other

studies utilizing a broader demographic. Aspects out of my control during the research process

were interference from the children during the interview; some children were napping in the

bedroom, therefore access to clothes was compromised for part of the conversation, making the

conversation somewhat incomplete without clothing to probe more ideas and further discussions.

Ethical Considerations

In order to partake in this research, each prospective participant was contacted by email

and provided a copy of the consent form, demographic survey, and wardrobe inventory chart to

allow for reflection and to ask questions prior to consenting to the study. Upon agreement, one

member of each family was contacted to finalize details about scheduling the interview. Due to the nature of the chosen method, wardrobe study, data could not be collected or anonymized. The protection of participants' privacy was paramount: no information, visual or textual, was shared or used in the study without prior consent and permission. Real names are used; however, two families requested identification by a given pseudonym, and thus their names were removed and replaced in the interview transcripts. All data collected were stored in secured physical and digital folders; files with sensitive information are password protected. After 1 year from the completion of this research, raw data will be destroyed.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has outlined the methods used in this study. The research was designed using a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches for data collection that informed and provided validity to one another. The utilization of a mixed methods approach was also important to avoid biases and to establish a broader understanding of the subject matter being researched—the infant children's wardrobe built by their parents. A demographic survey provided a descriptive sample of the six participant families with children up until 24 months old. This study collected data from the survey mentioned above, interview transcripts and audio recordings, inventory charts of each wardrobe, photographs, and field notes. The data analysis process began by reviewing interview transcripts to define themes that were later triangulated with the charts, photos, and field notes for interpretation and discussion of findings. Limitations and disadvantages of the method were reported and ethical considerations were accounted for concerning the protection and privacy of participants.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This study examined how parents build their infant's wardrobe. The information presented in this chapter is the result of a wardrobe study conducted in the participant's home. Data were collected in four stages, beginning with an interview, followed by an inventory of the child's clothing and accessories. Photographs of favourite outfits and storage furniture as well as field notes, demographic surveys, and interview transcripts supported data that complements analysis of the results. The purpose of the study was to better understand how parents create an identity for their child by the clothing choices they make for the wardrobe on behalf of their sons and daughters. Below, results are laid out according to the two methods used for data collection. I will discuss the qualitative results from the interview data and photographs followed by the quantitative data determined from the wardrobe inventory.

Participant Sample

The participant sample included six families with infants (three girls and three boys) aged 4, 6, 9, 18, 20, and 22 months. All families had two parents: five with a mother and a father, and one family with two fathers. Therefore, 10 parents (in two families only the mothers were interviewed) participated in the study and completed the demographic survey. Most of the participants were between ages 30 to 49, five females and five males, most earning a household income between $86,000 and $150,000. The group was as diverse as it could be for a small sample; participants self-identified as White, Chinese, Latin American, Black, First Nations, and Southeast Asian. Although diverse in ethnic background, parents shared similar opinions about common issues. Opinions and behaviours illustrated in this study hint on trends towards change in discourse as participants are at the same educational and economic levels. Most of the

participants had a bachelor's degree (n=6), some had a graduate degree (n=3), and one person had a high school diploma.

Wardrobe Interview

Time spent in the field for the wardrobe interviews averaged 30 minutes, with an additional 30 minutes approximately to complete the inventory chart. A number of themes emerged through analysis of the wardrobe interviews, including clothing selection, comfort and garment design, gender, acquisition habits, and issues related to sustainability. Dressing choices were influenced by perceptions of clothing comfort and garment design, dependent upon style preferences, modes of acquisition, and division of responsibilities between the parents. Gender and sustainability were concepts that were found to inform choices and are discussed separately from the selection process due to its relevance for parent's dressing practices.

Selection

Clothing selection involves decisions and choices regarding what to wear. Parents discussed comfort and design as the primary criteria that influenced clothing selection. Below, each of these categories were subdivided into themes to further unpack parents' perceptions of comfort and the specific design features that concern parents when dressing their infant children.

Comfort

Overall, comfort was a priority for participant families when selecting clothing to dress their children. To contextualize parents' comments about comfort it is important to understand the term. Kaldoph and Marcketti (2016) define comfort as "the way a textile product affects heat, air, and moisture transfer and the way the body interacts with the textile product" (p. 605). One

of the participants, Fernanda*, the mother of a 4-month-old boy, described her understanding of comfort as a garment's construction (seams and label placement) and fibre type. Thus, I defined the theme of comfort in this study to include concerns discussed by parents: fabric and fibre type, fit/sizing issues, clothing functionality (cut, fasteners), thermal protection, parents' psychological comfort, and child's physical comfort. Comfort is a concept comprised of multiple dimensions, including psychological aspects, defined by Kamalha, Zeng, Mwasiagi, and Kyatuheire (2013) as related to the person's body, personality, values and beliefs; clothing properties (fit, style and textile characteristics); and, social and environmental attributes (p. 426). Furthermore, comfort relates to the "physical stimulus, the social and cultural environment, emotion, cognition and state of mind, among others are some factors that influence the psychological property of comfort" (Kamalha et al., 2013, p. 427).

Fabric and fibre type were factors considered by parents when choosing clothing. Most parents like to touch clothing to feel and assess texture and fabric-hand (the way it feels next to skin), preferring softer materials. Only participants Marina and John* identified 100% cotton fibre as the ideal fabric. Marina also reflected on the difference between cotton and polyester, or polyester blends, in terms of quality and durability, stating that synthetics age faster and are not as comfortable as natural fibres (which are more expensive). For Fernanda, the ideal fabric for comfort is one that provides warmth and enables the body to breathe, so she favours clothing made from sweatshirt fleece for colder days.

Whether parents dress their child with loose or tighter clothes, they all agreed there are fit issues regarding sizing across a variety of brands. Participant Elaine* commented that she is not

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* Fernanda, John and Elaine are pseudonyms.

able to determine what size her daughter wears because she grows fast and each store has a sizing system that is based on age but does not fit her child. The confusion increases as the child ages. Marina, for example, tries to make sense of the size her 18-month-old son is wearing and what still fits him: "I think because he's now wearing 18 to 24 [size] pants but the 12 to 18 months still fit. Whereas these 12 to 18 months [tops] … are tighter. So I don't know." Lorena and Andre noticed a sizing and fit problem that makes it difficult shopping for the correct size, especially bottoms. They try to buy a size bigger than the one suggested on the garment label for the child's age group but, because their daughter is tall, they think it is difficult to still make a size up fit properly.

Participants Troy and El-Farouk have being purchasing clothing a size larger than needed for their 20-month-old boy since he was 12 months old. Troy points out that tops with a loose silhouette in the 12 to 18 months size range still fit comfortably, but the boy wears them mostly at home. Loose fitting garments are Fernanda's way to make sure clothing will not be tight to her 4-month-old son. To elaborate, she pulled clothing out from the wardrobe that had begun to fit snugly around legs or crotch line. The observation this mother makes between comfort and fit around the thighs and crotch line can be a design problem (discussed in the following section) and was also perceived by Michelle, one of the participants in this study who utilizes cloth diapers on her child. She explains that pants (see Figure 4.1) designed to accommodate cloth diapers have more stretch than conventional bottoms. The crotch line is constructed with a circular seam instead of a straight line, creating more room in the seat/bum area; pants also have larger waistband and cuffs that can be folded and unfolded as the child grows, thus enabling longer use in the wardrobe. Michelle does not buy pants for cloth diapers often because they are expensive.

Figure 4.1. Michelle's daughter's cloth diaper pants, with circular seam detail.

Marina's son is comfortable wearing jeans and khakis because the mother believes he has slim legs and the pants fit nicely, enabling movement. Conversely, Lorena does not mind dressing her child in clothing that does not fit perfectly. For example as the child grows out of clothes and they become a little tighter or shorter on the sleeves, they are then used as sleepwear "The things that we use for pyjamas are old clothes, clothes a little bit shorter or you know tighter and those things here that she doesn't use anymore because it's too short." One of the reasons Lorena and Andre dress their child in ill-fitting clothing for sleeping is because the child does not feel cold and for the same reason, the child prefers to not wear many layers of clothing in the winter. Participants Angelo and Marina were the only parents that said the weather is one of the factors that influence clothing choice when dressing their child. Overall, parents dress the child with layers for the winter and as lightly as possible in the summer. During the cold months, Michelle's daughter wears fleece sweaters to go into the car seat;

the mother avoids covering the infant child with a thick layer. There are differences in winter dressing habits between each family. Depending on the child's thermal comfort, some will be dressed in many layers while others will only wear the necessary winter jacket and mittens to block cold air, thus protecting the body. As mentioned above, psychological comfort can also be translated into the feelings, parents displayed during dressing or wearing practices. Andre suggested he feels terrible when sees daughter wearing a garment that is so small, her bare belly is showing; Marina said that she tries "to get everything that I've looked that I think it's going to be comfortable." She also can tell when her son is frustrated while wearing mittens that do not fit. On the other hand, Fernanda positions herself in the child's place to assess her son's physical comfort: "I try to imagine that I am wearing it, I want something to be soft on my body, that's what I do. ... Something I would wear."

Figure 4.2. Marina's son comfortable pants.

Design

Design is another crucial factor that influences the selection of clothing. Factors within this theme include functionality (how the clothing works for a specific end use) and construction (how it is made), clothing design details (how it looks) that include fabric colour and print, as well as cultural aspects. However, challenges in design styling pose problems for many of the families interviewed in the study. Most parents demonstrated some level of attention to design styling, and offered a number of insights. Parents revealed clear opinions about what works best for their children and family routine, what kinds of design features are practical, which motifs and colours match their taste in clothing and where problems occur.

Most parents preferred onesie style sleepers and jumpsuits for the newborn phase, because they are a one-piece garment that makes it easy and quick to dress and undress the child. Marina comments that onesies, instead of shirts, are better in the winter to avoid skin exposure as they are closed securely and will not ride up when she is picking the child up from the floor. Troy agrees and mentions that for summer it is fine to leave the onesie unbuttoned at the crotch, wearing it as a tunic. For summer wear, half of the participants commented that rompers are ideal (these garment styles feature shorts attached to a sleeveless or short sleeve top). Michelle says that the clothe is a ready outfit, no need to complement with any other piece: "it's airy, and it's nice." In terms of functionality, the choice of fasteners would be mentioned as one of the main reasons for selecting clothing to dress the child. There was some contention surrounding which type of fastener makes dressing the child an easier task. Some participants think zippers are faster to close than snaps. Conversely, other parents chose snaps over zippers because, as Michelle defined, they are easier for doing a diaper change, just opening the garment at the hip,

avoiding the need to strip the infant child entirely (see Figure 4.3). Troy also mentioned that snaps at onesies' hems, if left open, are suitable for pulling the garment off faster if the child makes a mess, for example, while eating; and, for the child to move better without constriction around the thighs. Fernanda likes snaps at the collar to make the neck opening larger for the head to pass and pointing that buttons may fall off easier, making them more dangerous to be placed in an area closer to the mouth and posing a risk for the infant child to swallow them and choke.

Figure 4.3. Example of onesie with snaps placed strategically.

Everyone had some problem with one or two types of apparel. The most problematic accessories were mittens and socks. Marina argues that children's hands are little and the mittens she buys never fit well because they are too bulky; her son's cold hands are never warm enough and he becomes frustrated, so the mittens "fly away just like ... I never found. ... It's difficult for them to grip on stuff ... I think that's why he gets frustrated." Despite being 6 months old, Michelle's daughter removes mittens with her mouth, so she has to tuck her in with a blanket when they are travelling in the car; if they are staying longer outside, in the winter, she will dress her daughter with a snowsuit that has mittens attached.

Socks present problems regarding fit, but Fernanda raises another important issue; the ones that have motifs and prints made from different colours tend to have long float yarns on the inside resulting in entanglement of toes. As for the fit, Michelle likes footed sleepers because socks never stay on her daughter's feet, Marina liked the footed pants, but cannot find them any longer for the size her son is currently wearing. On the contrary, Elaine's daughter has a bigger foot, so footed clothing is not an option for her, because she consistently has to cut off that part of the garment for the child to continue wearing jumpsuits and sleeper that still fits the body.

Winter coats for Lorena and Andre's daughter never fit properly, when closed are either tight around the belly, or the sleeves are too long. Andre comments that

The sleeves are longer than it should be and than the belly is too tight always, always. It doesn't matter if we buy at Carter's, Gap, Walmart, doesn't matter where, it's always like this, I don't know if it's because she's too tall or I'm buying wrong.

Fernanda made an interesting comment about patches' finishing inside the garment. She said that in some clothes the patches have loose yarns that can scratch the skin (see Figure 4.4). El-Farouk argues the reason the area around the bum and legs in a snapped onesie is too narrow for his son's thick thighs is an issue related to ethnicity:

And he's got booty, a big bum. So we need to have like extra room for stuff. ... And he's got nice, juicy thighs. So a lot of the clothes which are you know sort of I guess designed for more sort of White European sort of style bodies and his body is a little bit more African ... sometimes it feels like it's a little bit snug. ... That sort of snaps under the crotch. So we just gonna leave them unsnapped and sort of like as a tunic rather than as a onesie.

Figure 4.4. Example of a patch.

In all families, parents share a similar design taste regarding how to dress their infant children. In families composed of a mother and a father, all mothers declared they often do not like or agree with the clothing combination made by the father when they are dressing the child. Mothers shared these insights about fathers' attitudes toward dressing children: "He's a pick off the top of the pile person" (Michelle); "He will just make her wear whatever" (Elaine); "He would grab whatever is in front of him: clothes? check!" (Fernanda). Marina and Lorena also comment that their husbands do not think about clothing coordination, but the fathers replied saying they have difficulty deciding how to dress themselves, consequently, they do not think about the choices they make for the child's clothing. Marina will mention to her husband when something is not matching. Lorena on the other hand, will choose an outfit for her daughter on the rare occasion when her husband handles dress duties, as she most often is the one who is responsible for dressing the child. Among the participants in this study, mothers coordinate pieces and fathers do not. John says that his son is a child, so he dresses him in a more fun way, while Fernanda provides reasoning to justify proper colour coordination: "for example, the red t-shirt with the blue sweater is hurting me, the yellow

pants! I would put like a cream shirt and then the yellow pants and then brown socks" (see

Figure 4.5). As for coordination of style or prints, Michelle says it is the mixtures of different

patterns, for example, for her daughter the father once did a whale print top in teal and orange

pair with paisley pants in different colours.

Figure 4.5. John's clothing combination.

In the family with two fathers, there is no disagreement about dressing the child; the

fathers have similar taste. When they spot a style they like, they typically buy it even if it is in

a size bigger than the one their son currently wears. Troy and El-Farouk also comment on age

appropriate designs and quotes, such as one that read "Little Man"—as Troy explains, "he's not

a little man, he's a little boy, right? [laughs]"—so they avoid motif slogans that age the child.

Marina and Michelle dislike quotes, while Fernanda and John prefer the ones that make funny

statements. All families agreed any colour is welcome with the exception of pink for John and

Fernanda (more on that ahead). Michelle also knows which colours go well with daughter's skin

tone (mostly shades of green), but her older daughter sometimes wants sister's outfit to match

with hers, so at the present time there are purple pieces in the same clothing styles but different

sizes so that both girls may dress in the same outfits and wear them together.

I inquired about the proportion of basics and party wear to assess styling preferences and how parents negotiate the child's image presentation for formal occasions. Infant girls had more clothing for parties than boys, Lorena says that her daughter had even more formal wear when she was born, received mostly as gifts. At the time of the study, the girl was 22 months old, almost a toddler, and had fewer party dresses, all from the summer season. Parents do not believe she needs that many clothes and the ones in the wardrobe can be dressed up during winter months.

Michelle tends to acquire special clothing for events like Christmas, Easter and family photo days. Most of her cute girl outfits are some sort of a dress set, not appropriate for winter's coldest days because they are not warm enough. To curb the problem, she pairs up dresses with infant tights, which have a sizing system that is problematic because it is too broad (i.e., 0 to 6 or 0 to 9 months) to fit properly. Elaine's 9-month-old daughter has a lot of fancy clothing, mostly hand sewn by her grandmother in Pakistan and sent as gifts. As for the boys, Marina uses clothing with more interesting design features and comments they are not many choices available for boy's party outfits. Fernanda interprets party clothes as the cute versions in the wardrobe, like the jumpsuit shown in Figure 4.6.

Figure 4.6. Fernanda's option for a party outfit.

Troy and El-Farouk see the "ethnic clothing" (quotation marks are theirs) from different places their son has as being distinctive from traditional Western style clothing, thus using them as the choice for special occasion clothing. With reference to clothing from other cultures, three families stated that they make a concerted effort to include them in the wardrobe. Lorena and Andre's daughter has Brazilian clothing with prints and styles they could not find similar versions in Canada or the United States. Elaine praises her Pakistani culture by dressing her children in traditional clothing (see Figure 4.7): "so, it depends where we're going. If it's to one of our family members' or something I will focus on something that is from our culture."

Figure 4.7. Pakistani clothing set.

El-Farouk and Troy count on family, friends, and personal travels to bring non-western

clothing to their son's wardrobe (see Figure 4.8), as El-Farouk describes:

The two piece is like this shirt with Mandarin collars and white pants. My friend Fanta

just came back from Mali and she brought back ... it's little pants with the top and then

the cape on top of that. And it's in an orange with yellow gold embroidery on it. I went

to Tunisia and I bought him an outfit that has a little vest and pants. My aunt sent a

couple of outfits in kitenge, an African fabric from Kenya. So he's got all of this sort of

... but that tends to be also lighter weight. So you can't actually wear it in this weather.

... So I would say comparatively speaking, I'd say actually 50/50 but that doesn't really

get worn. It's mostly the casual stuff that gets worn daily. When we go to people's

houses or maybe we take him to some local event or whatever. That's when we put him

in nicer clothing.

Two of the children from families who participated in this study had begun to express their taste for clothing. Troys and El-Farouk's son will describe something as "beautiful" and sometimes chooses clothes for his fathers to wear. When dressing the child, they also like to offer their son a choice of outfit, to allow him the autonomy to pick what he would prefer to wear. Andre and Lorena's daughter has begun to ask to be dressed in clothing with prints she likes that feature motifs like butterflies, unicorns or a TV show character.

Figure 4.8. Coordinated set from Mali: pants, top, and cap.

Comfort and design are the main factors for clothing selection. The concept of comfort relates to physical properties of fabrics, garment construction, thermal protection, parent and children psychological aspects. The type of seams, the silhouette, and fit of clothes affect parents' selection decisions and the child's physical well-being. As for design, functionality, cultural elements, colours and prints, and problematic styles were pointed as the most relevant aspects that concern parents. Differences or agreements in the overall look of an outfit for the child was shown to be a point of contention between each parent within a family.

Gender

Colour with reference to gender perception was a theme discussed by all participants. Many debated the use of pink and this stimulated a number of opinions about colour in the infant child's wardrobe. Gendered clothing, with reference to garment style, construction, fit, and appearance, was also discussed and flagged as an issue by some parents. Fernanda and John, parents of a boy, affirmed that pink and versions like salmon or peach are avoided in the clothing selected for the son's wardrobe. They do not comment further, but do say that purple would be a fine colour if they could find clothing for boys in that shade. Marina agrees that it is difficult to find purple and pink clothing for boys, so far she was able to find those colours in shirts made from stripe or plaid fabrics. El-Farouk and Troy purchased pink clothing because they shop in the girls' section. Despite having clothing in "hot pink," as they described the item in the child's wardrobe, they avoid the colour giving preference to lighter shades of pink. A quick search on the websites from the retailers mentioned by parents show a selection of boy's onesies in light pink (Walmart, Gap, Old Navy, and Carter's), although only a couple of pieces in comparison to the variety of other colours.

Two mothers asserted they like to dress their daughters in clothing with "girly" styles and prints, which for Lorena includes motifs like flowers and hearts. Elaine explained that clothing from her culture is also gendered, meaning that male garments are simpler and less decorated than females', which also have more style variation. For her daughter's wardrobe she uses her son's clothing, and does not mind if there is a masculine element on them, such as a slogan or the colour blue.

Three other participants demonstrated different ideas and relationships with garment styles when it comes to gender appearance. As mentioned above, Troy and El-Farouk tend to habitually, in their own words, "cross-gender shop" in the girl's section, mostly sweaters and boots, because the designs are more aligned with their personal taste for clothing (see Figure 4.9).

Figure 4.9. Fuzzy sweater with heart, purchased from the girl's section.

Despite being considered "fun" by the fathers, the preferred design style is often associated with girls and in their opinion, it should not be gendered in the first place. They provided examples such as animal prints, fur, hearts, glitter, rainbows, and shoes with colourful flashing lights. The fathers reflect they would not dress their child any different if she was a girl, but point out that typical girl styles such as dresses, frills, and pastel pink are not part of son's wardrobe. El-Farouk mentions their inability to find garments marked as gender neutral in the market. Troy observes,

> If there was an equivalent on the boys' side it would be fine. But you don't find stuff like that on the boys' side. Is the same with the shoes. We get him shoes that have lights and glitter and stuff and it's very difficult to find boys shoes that have [those].

Figure 4.10. Another example of girl's clothing for Troy's son to wear.

Following the same principle, clothes with slogans or quotes that gender the child are avoided, which for them is problematic because they "hyper-genderize" [sic] the person. Quotes and drawings that reinforce masculine stereotypes are disliked by Marina as well "But then again it bothers me as it has motorcycles and all boy-ish crap. Dinosaurs. Is very hard to run away from these things." Michelle is another parent who makes an effort to avoid slogans, preferring a cute phrase that would not gender the child:

Some of them are cute but I don't like the ones that really say princess. The one thing for sure is princess, those ones I don't like. We keep a couple [of garments with quotes]. I prefer plain or like just having a picture or something. ... Handsome dude or daddy's like whatever, that stuff [is] just sorted out."

Angelo and Marina during the first daughter's pregnancy did not know her gender, so they bought gender-neutral clothing that later on would be worn by the second child, whose gender was not revealed to them before birth. Despite wearing clothes that belonged to his sister (see Figure

4.11), his mother does not shop in the girl's section for him, because of design styles she considers too girly, for example, adorned with trims, embroidery and frills. Michelle also did not know her daughters' gender before birth, so for the first one the parents bought brown, beige, green, and yellow clothes. Once that girl was born, they complemented the wardrobe with gendered gifts from friends and family and those clothes were kept for the second child's wardrobe.

Figure 4.11. Marina's son's pink sweater.

On top of that, hand-me-downs from a friend, who is the mother of a boy, are part of the wardrobe. Michelle asserts that should she and her husband have a third child and it is a boy, he would probably wear almost all sisters' clothing, except for the ones with ruffles and bows. More than one parent, as shown by these examples, makes these associations with design features and girl's garments. Marina reflects that because her son likes to try on clothes, he would probably like to wear dresses, and perhaps she should give him one to see if he would put on, as an experiment. She also comments that denim pants worn by her daughter, when she was an infant child, were stiffer than the ones acquired for son that have more stretch. Michelle examines in detail the differences in style and cut between girls' and boys' garments in the size range from the same brand (see Figure 4.12). For instance, girls' tops do not have pockets and boys' pants are roomier and fit better over the cloth diapers she uses. Michelle comments that cute girls' clothing has a slimmer fit that does

not accommodate cloth diapers, which are bulkier than disposable ones. Because of this she feels frustrated at not being able to fully embrace cloth diapering. Girls' pants, specially leggings, are more difficult when dressing the child, because they have a slim cut. She mentioned that the pants she had on hand from her older daughter (from when she was an infant 3 years ago), had a more generous cut than the ones she purchased recently: "there was a difference, it wasn't as spandex or as tight, they were looser but they were still the cute girls pants, but I haven't found many of those yet." Boys' jogging pants are also preferred because they are slim fit but looser than girls' leggings, look more comfortable and have elastic at the ankle while the girls' version does not have elastic.

The gender of the child is still being associated with colours pink and blue, however there were families subverting the binary, using pink and purchasing girl's clothes for boys. Clothes characteristics such as frills and ruffles are perceived as exclusive female, while typically male prints and colour (i.e. vehicles; blue) are acceptable for anyone. Gender difference also appears in pants silhouette, for instance, girl's are slimmer than boys' versions. Gender neutral garments were first introduced for parents that during pregnancy did not know the child's sex. Hand-me-downs occur often and blur the fixed gendered clothing use, boys and girls wear each other's clothes.

Figure 4.12. Pants in size 6-months, different cut: Girls'
on top are slimmer than the boys' version underneath.

Clothing Acquisition

Wardrobe development includes multiple modes of acquisition, new purchases, gifts, and hand-me-downs, all of which have evolved in unique ways for each family. All families reported receiving hand-me-downs, from an older child, from a friend, or other people close to a family member. The practice works as a two-way process: The families receive clothing and when child outgrows garments, parents give them away to someone they know, or store the nicer ones for a possible next child to wear. Michelle has devised a system for keeping hand-me-downs and outgrown clothing in boxes, divided by size and stored in the children's bedroom closet (see Figure 4.13).

Figure 4.13. Child's closet with boxes for hand-me-downs.

She and her husband have not decided yet if they will have a third child. Lorena and Andre too have sufficient closet space in the child's bedroom to accommodate seasonal clothing and to store what is not going to be used at the moment; there's also space for storing the nicer clothing they still keep, for a possible second child. They used to have a lot of hand-me-downs given from the daughter of a friend, but at the time of the interview both children were the same height, so parents could not rely on the hand-me-downs anymore and were purchasing most of the items for their daughter's wardrobe. According to El-Farouk, "we received a bunch of clothing from people who've got kids a little bit older ... which is amazing. I love that!" Fernanda claims that hand-me-downs only covered the clothing needs right after birth, so purchasing had become the norm. She is the only parent who has not continued with the practice, citing that hand-me-downs makes sense for her only when comes from someone known and has a story, for this reason she does not buy used clothing from a store. While for Michelle, hand-me-downs are still a big part of the infant child's wardrobe:

> I love the hand-me-downs and I didn't have as many before she was one year [talking about older daughter]. It was lots of gifts and things that we purchased before she was one year, because my friend had already given away that stuff by the time I had her. So once I started getting the hand-me-downs it totally dictated I would just buy to fill in [the gaps].

Troy and El-Farouk also buy clothing to fill gaps, but in their case, is because gifts are still coming in, mostly from the child's grandmothers. El-Farouk mentions that if the child will need something new soon, if they voice this need out loud to someone, a few weeks later the item will appear in the house. Grandmothers shop more than the two fathers, but they had to set rules

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regarding what their mothers can buy. Lorena comments that gifts faded away as her child grew older. In Elaine's case, gifts are present because her daughter "is the first girl in my husband's family. My husband doesn't have any sisters or ... they never had a girl in their family."

Most parents prefer shopping in-store rather than online, to make sure the fabric and clothing size are correct. Nearly all parents check care labels for washing instructions, to decide purchasing an item based on how easy it is to clean. Half of them include used clothing stores on their shopping trips, citing diverse reasons including price, good condition and often damage free, and, finding unique styles not commonly carried at current retail locations. Everyone buys new clothing; some prefer to buy as the child grows. Michelle also purchases clothing, new or used, so her second child can have something that was not passed down from her sister or a family friend.

Almost every parent has a reason for shopping at different types of retailers. Some mothers like to buy clothing in stores close to home or at grocery stores. Walmart is a store that perceived by some parents as having quality items, yet not for others, and in terms of pricing, is the same as Carter's. Four families have preference for the retailers Old Navy, Gap, and Carter's, the favoured brand because of price, easy access, store organization, and availability of basics for every age, despite complaints by the parents regarding sizing and fit (previously mentioned). Parents who shop at Gap do so for their more elaborate styling. Two families disclosed they shop everywhere. Fernanda, despite of having a fondness for Winners, developed a habit for browsing retailers: "Here's the thing. If I need something I'll go to every single one. I like to do this. I go to every single one of them if it's in the mall. And then I go back buying." Clothing on sale dictates purchases of a size bigger, for a few families. Half

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of parents purchase clothing items, either new or used, according to children's need, to save money. Cost determines purchasing of specialty clothing and it can restrict the total amount necessary some families will acquire.

Hand-me-downs are the most liked acquisition method but purchases of new clothing are made for accompanying child growth. Most parents prefer to shop in-store to inspect clothing quality. Price and facility to wash are factors that have a smaller contribution towards purchasing decisions.

Sustainability

The concept of sustainability appeared integrated into the clothing care habits, as in washing and caring for damaged garments, and in selected disposal methods. Only two families cited environmental responsibility as part of some sort of daily habit. El-Farouk said he and his husband value ethical production standards for food but points that for clothing, especially children's, is difficult to find out if it was made sustainably. Michelle prefers to buy used clothing because it has been worn before, is environmentally responsible plus saves money. Marina and Lorena noticed they purchase less and keep a smaller wardrobe, one because with the second child she already knows what kind and how often a garment will be worn; the other, because daughter will only need enough clothing to fill up laundry basket every 15 days.

Most parents wash infant child's clothing separately, but not everyone uses a special laundry detergent. John uses a coconut soap bar, common in Brazil, to remove stains because it does not have harmful chemicals. Likewise, El-Farouk makes his own laundry detergent to avoid chemicals and to not contribute to more plastic waste packaging. Some mothers hand wash delicate garments, and use stain removers, but all of them state that if stains are stubborn

they will remove as much as possible, not minding if something is left behind however, some mentioned disliking stained clothes. Parents declare being aware of the "mess" children will make while eating, painting, or playing. Two mothers use damaged, unsalvageable clothes as rags around the house. Other two families would dispose "end-of-life" clothing in the garbage. Most families donate unwanted clothes each one in a different way, by sending overseas, in donation bins or to associations that do home pick-ups. Mending is an option if parents have time and the damage is small and would not take up too much of their time to fix. Only Elaine mentions transforming clothing with significant damage: "if my mother was here she might be able to do something with it." Her daughter has a set that was made, by grandmother, from a repurposed skirt that belonged to the chid's aunt.

Parents apply sustainable practices in the care and washing habits; some of them are consciously trying to be responsible to the environment. Almost everyone wants to buy less and only the necessary items for the child to wear. Damaged clothes are worn as long as they are still presentable. Donations and hand-me-downs are the main disposable methods, but some participants still throw unsalvageable clothes in the garbage.

Wardrobe Inventory Chart

The analysis of the items in each child's wardrobe included garments and accessories in use by the children at the time of the interview. Although the study took place in the winter, some summer items were counted because parents often dress the child at home with light clothing. In total, 805 items of clothing were mapped, as shown in Table 4.1.

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Table 4.1

Total Number of Items in the Wardrobe, per Family

Family	Total no. of items
1: Marina & Angelo	132
2: John & Fernanda	107
3: Lorena & Andre	157
4: Michelle	86
5: Troy & El-Farouk	200
6: Elaine	123
Total:	805

The large amount of clothing items is due mostly after adding pairs of socks: three families had on average 26 pairs against 10 pairs for the other two families. Onesies and pants score the second and third highest number of separates. One family had more jumpsuits, a one-piece garment, than any top or bottom; another family had more tops than pants. Table 4.2 summarizes the garment types most common in the wardrobe.

Table 4.2

Most Common Items in the Wardrobe, per Family

Garment type	Family					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Onesie: short sleeve			12			12
Onesie: long sleeve	16	14				
T-shirt: short sleeve					22	15
Pants		14	27		28	
Leggings	10					
Jumpsuit				11	25	

Conversely, Table 4.3 shows the least used articles, including clothing and accessories, with only one item in each family.

Table 4.3

Least Found Items in the Wardrobe, per Family

Family	Clothing/accessories
1	Vest, jacket, pyjamas, swimwear, toque
2	T-shirt: short sleeve, footed pants, bib, bandana
3	Leggings, overall, vest, skirt, snowsuit, snowsuit: 2-piece, swimwear
4	T-shirt: short sleeve, T-shirt: long sleeve, overall, cardigan, winter bunting bag, swimwear, hat
5	Snowsuit, 2-piece snowsuit, scarf
6	Sleeveless top, vest, coat, snowsuit, tights, Pakistani: palazzo pants & Anarkali

The quantity of clothing each family has in the wardrobe is compatible to their claims of trying to buy only the necessary amount for the child to wear as much as possible. Almost half of the clothing were purchased new, hand-me downs comprises a quarter of the acquired items, despite parents' claims this is the preferred method (see Figure 4.14).

ACQUISITION METHODS

45%
purchased new

25%
hand-me-down

20%
gift

10%
bought used
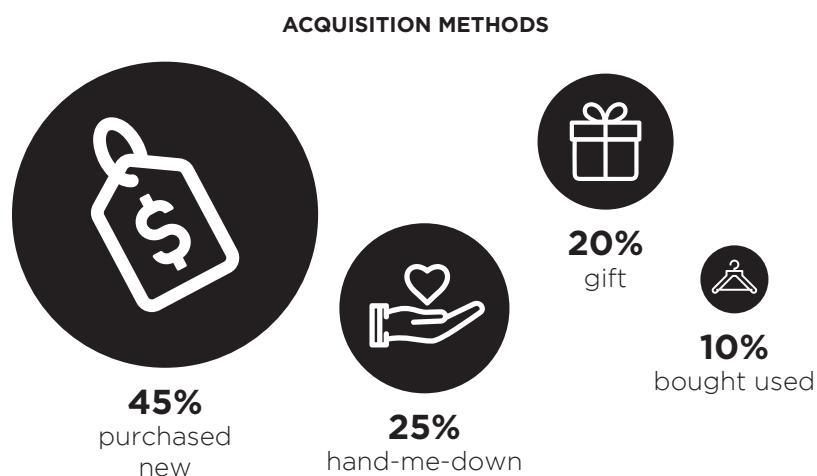
Figure 4.14. Total acquisition methods.

Families had colourful wardrobes; purple and pink were not present in only one family while blue was significant in all wardrobes. Families had unique distribution of colours in the wardrobes (see Appendix C); as shown in Figure 4.15, the total colours of the combined six inventory charts shows that blue, grey, pink and white form the bulk of colour options. Figure 4.16 shows the gendered clothing distribution in each family's wardrobe.

TOTAL NUMBER OF COLOURS
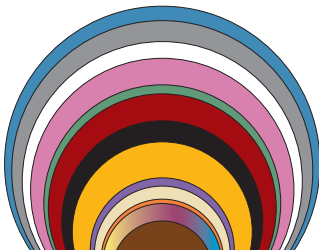
Figure 4.15. Total number of clothing colours.

GENDER CLOTHING DISTRIBUTION
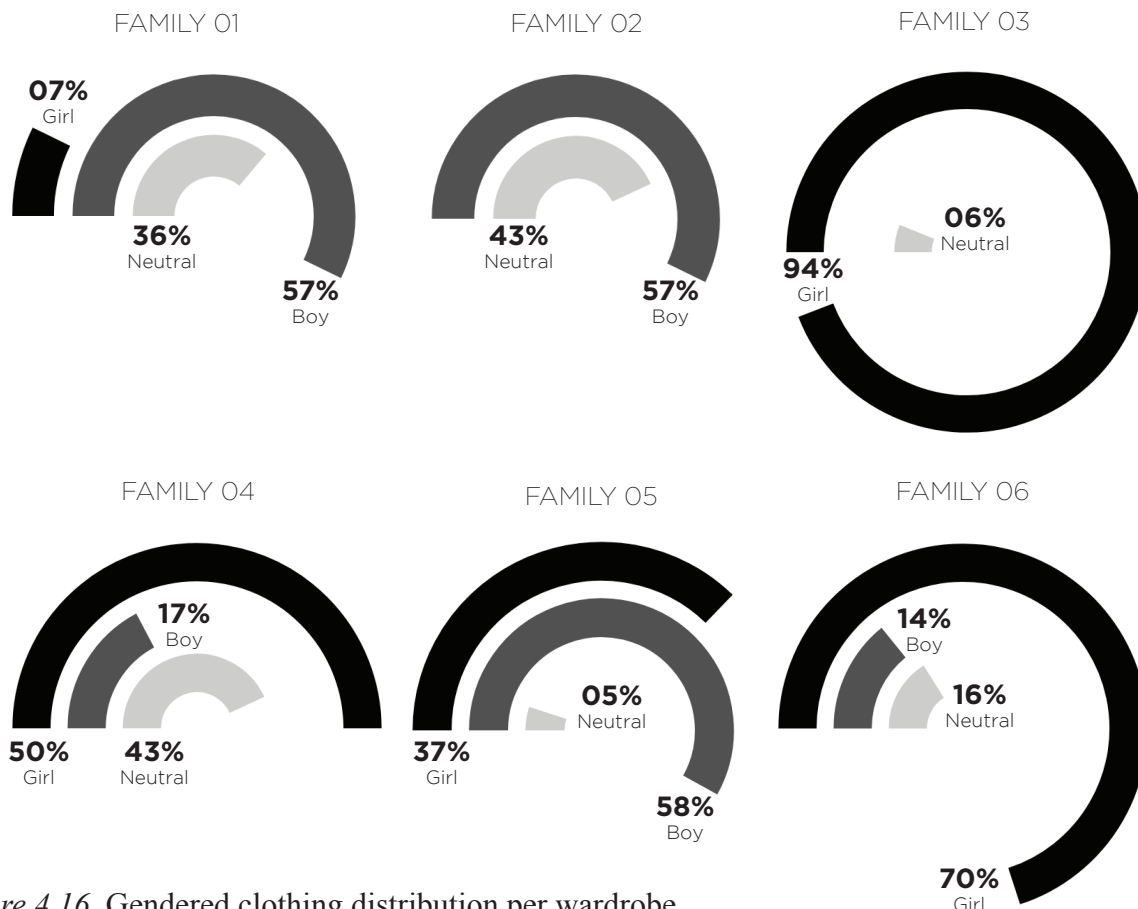
Figure 4.16. Gendered clothing distribution per wardrobe.

Figure 4.17 shows the features that are common in the clothing inventories, these include zippers and snaps, as mentioned previously, there are more patches and screen printed drawings than other design elements; figure 4.18 shows the total proportion of prints and motifs, wardrobes combined:
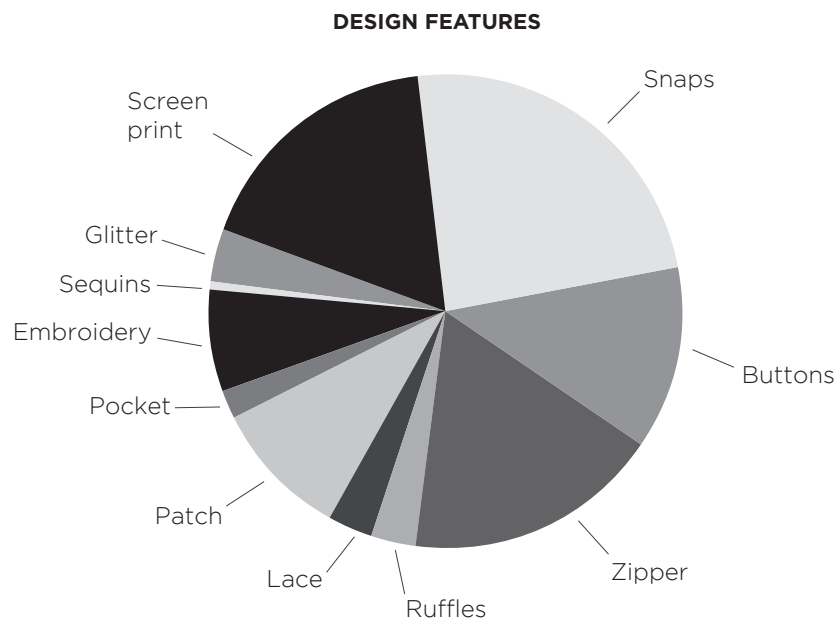
Figure 4.17. Total occurrence of design features.
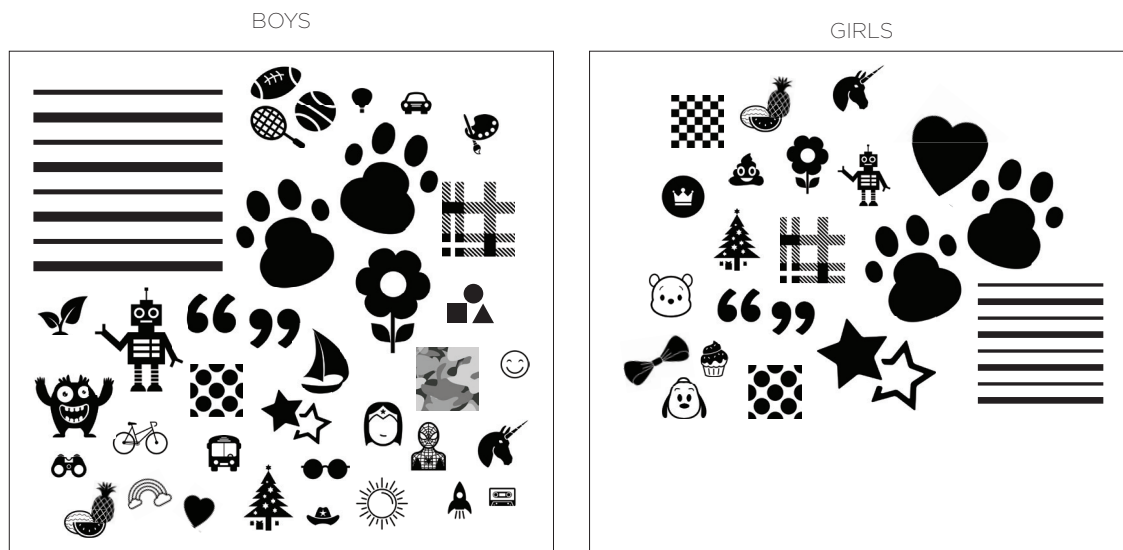
Figure 4.18. Prints and motifs per gender.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the results from a demographic survey were given before the analyzed results as an overview of the participants and to help represent the themes and issues discussed in each interview. Results from the qualitative portion followed, divided into themes extracted from each interview. Comfort and design, as principal selection factors, informed by questions of gender, acquisition, and sustainability were the relevant topics found to influence parents' processes for developing the wardrobe for their infant children. Results from the quantitative portion, inventory chart, provide a visual representation of the wardrobe, reinforce or challenge some assumptions and affirmations parents made during the interview. The relation between these two sets of data will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Building a wardrobe for an infant child is a process that involves selecting clothing, splitting responsibilities, and negotiating style preferences; parents settle into routines that work for the child and the family. Acquisition habits influence the frequency of clothing and accessories that are added to the wardrobe by purchasing new or used items, receiving gifts and hand-me-downs. Clothing selection is determined by perceptions of comfort related to garment design and fabric type. Dressing the child is considered a pragmatic task, to protect and provide comfort to the body, combined with styling the appearance using colours, prints, and types of clothes that will create an image for the child. Ultimately, these factors influence parents' views about fashion, and their clothing choices as they create their child's appearance. In this section, I interpret the results from the wardrobe study, clustering themes while applicable to show the relationship between clothing selection, comfort, design, and acquisition habits (see Figure 5.1). I will also demonstrate how gender, sustainability concerns, and parents' style preferences are topics that inform the wardrobe creation process.

THEMES
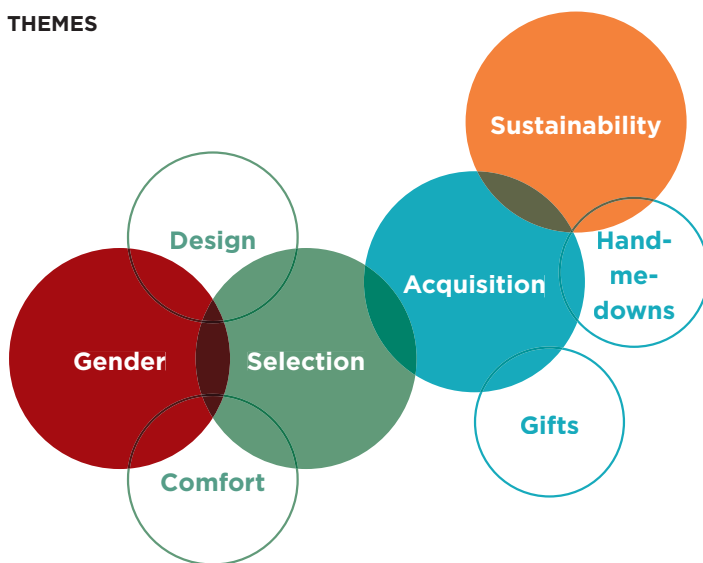
Figure 5.1. Connection of findings from this research.

Comfort, Design, and Problematic Clothing

Comfort was an issue mentioned by all parents in this study. Some participants saw

their role as a mediator of the child's comfort, through clothing. Either on psychological or

physical dimensions, comfort was a concern that arose from all interviews with different

meanings for each parent. Liu (as cited in Kamalha et al., 2013, p. 424) also found that comfort

is the main reason for purchasing clothing. Fabric softness was the first thought that came to

the parents' minds when selecting clothing. Few people were able to associate fibre type with

fabric construction. According to Gam, Cao, Farr, and Kang (2010) and Ritch (2015), there is

a persistent lack of information about fashion production that could help explain why parents

seemed unaware of the difference between fibre and fabric. Kamalha et al. (2013) further suggest

that enhanced "knowledge of textile materials" (p. 439) can enhance better clothing choices.

Choosing a garment based on material fabrication is mostly related to the haptic sensations the

materials provide, rather than the fibre content and the performance attributes of the actual fibre,

as there is, for instance, polyester fabrics that simulate cotton. In line with Gam et al.'s (2010)

findings, fabric softness was one of the most predominant reasons for mothers selecting clothes

for their children. Natural fibres in opposition to synthetics were barely discussed and only one

mother commented about the difference in fabric-hand the two fibres provide, also mentioning

not buying organic cotton because is more expensive.

Parents also inspect seams, stitching, and placement of fasteners to determine the

highest quality on clothing they acquire or choose for dressing the child. I would suggest the

act of touching the material and inspecting clothing construction to determine use and purchase,

happens because parents cannot perceive comfort attributes of infant's clothing otherwise, as

they are unable to try on the garments. Parents attempt as much as possible to conduct a full

assessment of how the garment would feel on their child's body, but the embodied experience is

left incomplete for them. The psychological dimension of comfort is important in this process

as parents indicate feeling uneasy toward clothing that snuggles, fits too tightly or that might

irritate the skin. As Entwistle (2015) proposes, "bodies are socially constituted, always situated

in culture and the outcome of individual practices … 'dress' is the result of 'dressing' or

'getting dressed'" (p. 11). So parents transposes their "getting dressed" habits for their children.

For example, Fernanda revealed that she tries to imagine her child wearing the clothes, for

comfort, but we could infer that she would also visualize the child as an extension of herself

(McNeill & Graham, 2014).

Thermal and psychological comfort are two concepts directly influenced by clothing

and accessories design and fabrication materials. Feelings of frustration with clothing were

mentioned by parents, either when talking about themselves or their infant children. Parents

demonstrated a level of awareness about their child that corresponds to being their advocates

regarding dressing practices; according to Blakemore, Berenbaum, and Liben (2009), "Infants

are highly dependent on their caretakers [who] must be able to interpret the infant's signals (e.g.,

crying, fussing, turning away, smiling) and respond appropriately to meet the infant's needs" (p.

276). This level of intimacy between parents and children could be noted when some parents

positioned themselves in the child's place by referring to the act of dressing the child in the first

person "we wore" instead of something along the lines of "I dressed my child."

Despite their young age, some infant children demonstrated the ability to remove

mittens with their mouth or by shaking their hands. Children almost 2 years of age could take

off bulky winter jackets and socks and demonstrate feelings of discomfort while wearing those items. Not all parents dress their child in a complete layered outfit for the winter. Some preferred to decrease thickness by using fleece clothing or a blanket to wrap children under a year old; for the children who were already walking, parents use a winter jacket and accessories for thermal protection. According to Kamalha et al. (2013), "physical body shape and size does affect thermal comfort through the surface area" (p. 432). Additionally, children present "unusual tolerance" to temperature changes (Kamalha et al., 2013, p. 433). In my study, parents commented about the different levels of thermal comfort, reporting that the majority of children did not feel much cold in the winter. Thus, for particular styles of winter clothing, designers might choose materials that protect from the cold, block the wind, and are also thin to enable movement and comfort for the children.

It was clear from the interviews that design and comfort influence each other. Decisions designers made while creating clothing patterns for infant children can have implications on physical comfort regarding fibre attributes, yarn and fabric construction, and thermal and tactile sensations (Kamalha et al., 2013). The difficulty of dressing young infant children is not having their input as to where the garment is uncomfortable. Parents observe the infant child's body often because they have to take care of cleaning procedures, donning and doffing, feeding and so on. They are able to understand if the child is physically comfortable based on observations of how the child react to the clothing and accessories they are wearing. In the following section, I discuss further the design issues identified by parents and alternative solutions they created to curb problems.

Design Problems

Sizing and fit issues are so pervasive that parents have developed alternative strategies to select clothing for their children. Some participants mentioned the use of loose-fitting clothing, so the child's body can move freely and not experience restricted body mobility that tight clothing might induce. In general, parents do not trust the age designation on the size label because it does not accurately correlate to their child's body dimensions. Every child grows at different rates, but before 1 year of age, size will increase as the child gains weight and when children become mobile on their own, height becomes the main consideration (Aldrich, 2009, p. 8). Parents know how their child grows, which part of their bodies is developing faster; thus, they have to update the wardrobe often, in some cases more quickly than they could expect. There is an incongruence between garment silhouette and the sizing system currently used by manufacturers (Aldrich, 2009, p. 8). Design issues have also changed shopping behaviour for parents searching for better fitting garments, especially for parents of girls. The majority of participants shop at the same stores, purchase the same brands, and although accustomed to each brand sizing system, they still prefer to shop in-store, rather than online, to ensure clothing size matches the children's body measurements.

For this reason, some parents said not minding dressing children in looser garments (that become old and looser with time and wear) or even using clothing shorter at the sleeves and hemlines as long as they are not compressing the children's belly. In general, clothing bottoms garnered the majority of complaints, these were focused specifically on one-piece garments or pants and leggings. These garments present fit and design issues that prevent movement, proper diaper cover and comfort in the leg area.

Two major problems with pants are the leg and hip circumference and these factors correspond to the gender classification of the clothes. Most mothers described the attention they paid to clothing design, style, and construction, but Michelle provided detailed criticism, giving explanations of elements that work and do not work for her daughter's pants. She highlighted on the different silhouettes between the girls' and boys' pants. She uses cloth diapers, which are bulkier than disposables, and this requires more room around the hip area to accommodate extra volume. Pants for cloth diapers are more expensive but have design elements to extend use in the wardrobe. So, she has been shopping for boys' pants and using the boys' pants received as hand-me-downs from a friend. Other mothers of infant girls discussed their strategy of dressing their daughters in boy's sweatpants and leggings. Gender differentiation influences design choices that pose problems related to clothing fit and level of comfort. This relationship will be discussed further in the next section.

There was also commentary about pants and onesies designed for infant children not considering differences in body shape, size and ethnicity. The complaint voiced from a family who self-identified as of African/Southeast Asian background regarding fit around the hip and thigh area was that it was not a problem for the families who self-identified as White, for example. Those two children are similar in age and weight, but the body dimensions in the leg and lower torso were different. Thus, clothing for the African/Southeast Asian child fits tighter, and parents have to leave onesies open at the crotch area because the garment is too snug. One of the fathers suggested that this happens because clothing is designed with Caucasian bodies in mind. I could not find information in the literature to justify his argument. However, the issue is relevant, as the family self-identified as White did not mention issues regarding poor fit in this area of the body.

Accessories like mittens and socks, although less troublesome, are worth commenting on. Fit incompatibility of these two items is prominent as everyone made comments about the fit of these accessories. As mentioned previously, children could remove uncomfortable items, whether mittens and socks being too big, too bulky or not matching the dimensions for feet in relation to the rest of the garment in jumpsuits and onesies. Design of accessories have a problem with the sizing or grading that seems to make them not match with the child's hands and feet proportions. For younger infant children that do not walk, it was easier for parents to make use of alternatives to ensure thermal comfort for hands and feet, as tucking in a blanket. Having mittens and socks with a slimmer fit and a thinner fabric would be preferred and would provide some level of thermal protection and more physical comfort, preventing removal of the item.

Gender, Identity, and Dressing Practices

Design style preferences influenced the ideas parents have about gender and the child's image. Mothers and fathers share responsibilities for dressing the child. Although most of the couples have similar preferences for colours, prints, and style, mothers typically choose an outfit and are responsible for the child's appearance. Children dressed by fathers wore more vibrant colours and prints combinatons, resulting in a more fun appearance. Interestingly, the family with two fathers had no problem in agreeing with each other's style preferences, as one of the fathers said, they dress their son in the same colourful style choice they themselves wear. Even though he does not choose the clothing his daughter will wear, Andre demonstrated knowledge about purchasing clothes for her. He knows where to shop, pays attention to fit and design, and due to his active engagement in the acquisition process, he was the only father, aside from Troy and El-Farouk, able to pick his favourite outfit to be photographed and included in this research (see

Figure 5.2). Few parents also hinted on letting the child choose their own clothing, or demonstrated a willingness to do so once the child is old enough to express their design preferences.

The female effect on the wardrobe was very present and seemed to dominate the ultimate choices for clothing selected based on colour, print, and style. Interestingly, the family with two fathers, who have similar taste, reported the bulk of clothing purchases are done by son's grandmothers, who abide by rules established by the fathers toward appropriateness of clothes. In this situation, the fathers purchase cute garments to fill gaps in the wardrobe. Overall, all fathers reported not investing much thought about their child's image; their main goal was to complete the dressing task while being practical and preparing the child for their daily activities.

Figure 5.2. Andre's favourite outfit: Flower jumpsuit.

All families separate clothing according to daily use and special occasions. If children dressed by their fathers are going to the daycare, the mothers reported not minding which clothing combination was chosen, even if unusual, because the child's comfort was the main concern. However, if the family was going to a special event, mothers take charge and decide

on the child's outfit. Mothers put effort to create a presentable image for their children affecting their identity. As McNeill and Graham (2014) determined, mothers are "highly sensitized" by the societal interpretation and responses they will receive surrounding the clothing choices they make for their children (p. 409). Fathers, as one of the mothers observed, are more concerned with childishly dressing the child because they think children should not be concerned with fashion or clothing. Troy and El-Farouk said they like fun styles and their child had the boldest clothes of all participants (see Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3. Example of "fun style": Animal print outfit.

The Pink Issue

Gender was not a term used in the interview questions because I wanted to know if it would appear as a relevant factor in building the child's wardrobe. Indeed, gender is a consideration for all parents and half of participant families were found to be making a concerted effort to consider gender for the clothing they select and use to dress their infant children. Gender

for this study followed definition as cultural differences based on biological differences between men and women but that are fluid and mutable (Butler, 1999; Paoletti, 2012). Gendered clothing is worn in two different instances: to confirm the birth sex of the child and place them in the expected cultural gender position or to defy the notion of gender differentiation, making use of colours and prints associated with the opposing gender.

The colour pink is still associated with the feminine gender; most parents of girls count heavily on the colour as a mark of femininity. Two of the participant families with infant girls have a significant presence of pink in the wardrobe, and one of the mothers commented that is the colour she likes the most for her daughter because she wanted to give birth to a girl. Parents of one of the three boys in this study did not make any comments regarding gendered clothing, aside from the explicit banning of pink and its shades such as peach and salmon, from the wardrobe. Although not elaborating on the motives to exclude the colour, it was evident by the way they talked about it that the colour pink is exclusively for a girl's wardrobe, and thus not suitable for their infant boy.

As a girl's mother, Michelle declared herself to be "anti-pink" but as shown in her inventory colour graph (see Appendix C), the colour appears almost as much as green and blue, suggesting it is difficult to avoid pink when building her daughter's wardrobe. She prefers to embrace other hues that better suit her daughter's skin tone, like green, demonstrating a certain detachment from her personal opinions in favour of helping her daughter create an appealing image for herself. Being "anti-pink" aligns with a trend, found in families of infant boys, to subvert the "gender coding" (Paoletti, 2012, p. 89) associated with the colour. Two families with infant boys made deliberate efforts to insert shades of pink into their son's

wardrobe. Although there is still an exclusion of the colour for boys' clothing in one family, the association that pink is a colour only for girls is slowly declining from parent's repertoire, and they are not afraid of the possible mistake of gender associate that people may make if they see the infant boys wearing pink.

The introduction of the colour in prints and screen printed drawings into the selection of clothing for boys is a way to break the stereotype. Aside from pink, there was no reference to other colours as being feminine, or exclusively masculine. Even purple that tends to be more associated with girls' products would be accepted into the wardrobe for boys, if there were clothes in the market in that shade. Some parents associated greys and white as neutral, suitable for either girls or boys and those were the colours most found on all wardrobes (as shown previously in Figure 4.15).

On the other hand, everyone agreed that dresses and embellishments like frills and ruffles belong only in the female wardrobe. This was a line parents of boys would not cross regarding breaking norms around gender: while parents that reported instances of using girl's clothing to dress sons, even in one case shopping in the girl's section, they would not use dresses or other clothing with overtly feminine elements. As Paoletti (2012) claims, "girls can wear any shade of blue, as long as it is sufficiently modified with flowers, ruffles and other feminine touches. But pink clothing for boys has grown increasingly rare since the 1940s" (pp. 85-86). In this sense, gender was a theme that also surfaced from conversations with families about hand-me-down clothing. Parents of girls did not have any problems using clothing that was designed for boys to dress their daughters, confirming Paoletti's (2012) position that it is still acceptable to dress girls in boys' clothes but not vice-versa.

Gender influences design choices that pose problems related to clothing fit and the level of comfort as mentioned prior regarding leggings and pant silhouettes. However, Aldrich (2009) asserts that "there appears to be little difference between boys and girls in the speed which they grow" (p. 8) that would justify the substantial difference in clothing measurements. The boys' pants are designed to be secure in place with elastic on the hems, have more stretch, provide better leg mobility and are larger, while the girls' do not accommodate diapers, are shorter, and do not have the added features. Aldrich (2009) also points out that differences between the sexes start to appear after age 4 (p. 8). So, there are no significant differences in anatomy at this age to justify such a considerable difference in clothing size.

Special Occasion, Basics, and Culture

Parents feel that it is important to value their ethnic background through the clothing the child wears. Parents from Latin America and Southeast Asia have straight ties with family members leaving overseas, who often send gifts, especially dresses for infant girls. Parents are opened to the influence elders have on the child's wardrobe. Grandparents send clothes, or make in Elaine's case, as a form of care and emotional attachment with grandchildren. Troy and El-Farouk not only appreciates clothes from their ethnic background, but also from other non-western countries, such as China. The uniqueness of these clothes lies on prints, silhouettes and colour combinations such as black with red, yellow and green (see Figure 5.4). Children wear those clothes for special occasions. Western styles are considered daily basics including onesies, jumpsuits, pants, and t-shirts, and are worn for activities such as going to the daycare, to eat, and to play.

Parents also separate special clothing from the daily use ones by type of event they attend. Occasions marked by religious dates such as Christmas and Easter are the times when

parents will look for a nicer outfit to dress the child. Family photos and informal parties could

also require more put together outfits but some parents hinted that as the child grows they are not

too keen in dressing the child with nicer clothes.

Figure 5.4. Elaine's Pakistani outfit.

Functionality, Buying Less, and Clothing Care

Besides comfort and design, practicality is another important consideration parents

make for choosing clothing for their infant children, and they do not want to waste time

and money while shopping. Dressing the child is a practical activity done by either parent,

depending on convenience. The functionality of garments is translated to clothes that are easy

and fast to don and doff. Clothing styles that are one-piece, with fasteners placed in strategic

locations that ease dressing are preferred. Participants also discussed their preferences for

fastener types as this influenced a parent's ability to complete dressing tasks in a timely

manner. Parents mentioned time as an important factor when selecting clothing, and the significant number of one-piece garments in the wardrobe provides evidence to support this claim (see Table 4.2). Clothes with feet attached serve two purposes, curb the use of ill-fitting socks and cut down the number of pieces the child needs to wear. Clothing acquisition habits are also influenced and decided depending on the characteristics parents look for in a specific garment. Either because they cannot find the colour or type of print they want or the cut that would suit best their child's body. Therefore, parents' shopping behaviour is shaped by the need of supplying new clothes as the child grows.

The quantity of clothing each family has in the wardrobe is compatible with their claims of trying to buy only the necessary amount needed for the child to wear. Parents rely heavily on hand-me-downs. The reasons for utilizing this method of clothing acquisition is varied, relating to cost-saving, convenience (reduced shopping trips) and extending the lifetime of clothing in the wardrobe to cut expenses with buying new clothing. Ha-Brookshire and Norum (2011) found that people would be willing to pay more for clothing in organic cotton to buy fewer pieces of clothing, but in my research, this correlation does not hold the same result. Low pricing, ethical production, and quality clothing are necessary intrinsic to the purchase behaviour surrounding a clothing item. Probably because parents understand it is important to maintain comfort while extending the lifespan of a garment as many times before the child grows and can no longer wear the clothing (see Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5. An example of onesie extension to prolong clothing wear.

Hand-me-downs were also effective as a means to preserve clothing from one child to another. Parents are aware of the fickle characteristic infant clothing poses as the rate of child growth is fast and they want to avoid having too much items on the wardrobe they could risk not use. So, many participants declared using clothes with minor damage, such as stains and little holes and supporting the rotation of clothes between family and friends. Parent's treatment of clothing suggests a shift from the gendered care and maintenance being done more for girls' clothes than boys' (Blakemore et al., 2008) to a concern related to providing prolonged use. Environmental responsibility was briefly mentioned by two participants when explaining the reasons for preferring secondhand clothing and making their laundry detergent. Although most parents did not explicitly comment about being concerned with environmental issues, sustainable practices were incorporated to some of the daily routines. The level of care applied to infant clothing is conditioned more by the time spent on caring and maintenance than to abide by sustainable responsibility regarding use of all-natural products, avoiding using the dryer and active mending garments with too much damage. However, some participants claimed using natural soap for washing clothing. Disposable in the majority of the cases is made through donations or handing down outgrown items. However, some people still throw very damaged clothes into the garbage or use them as rags in the home.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

Dressing an infant child is a task that involves planning, division of responsibilities, and selecting appropriate clothes for different occasions. Previous research about children and fashion focused on historical depictions of childhood (Higonnet & Albinson, 1997; Paoletti, 2012); evaluation of child–parent relationships under subjects related to identity (Cohen, 2013; Doucet, 2009; De Mol & Buysse, 2008; König, 2008; Rawlins, 2006), consumerism and consumption (Afflerback, 2014; Andersen et al., 2007; De Kervenoael et al., 2011; Heath et al., 2016; Horan et al., 2007; Koksal, 2007; Martens et al., 2004; McNeill & Graham, 2014; Petersen & Riisberg, 2017; Ritch & Schroder, 2012). Research inquiry often focuses on the mother–daughter (or mother–infant child) dyad, overlooking the father's role. In this study, both fathers with mothers were considered in order to better understand their relationship with the clothing worn by their infant children. Six families opened their homes for my investigation into clothing selection and dressing routines for their infant children.

My research inquiry began with a broad question to parents to determine the factors that influence wardrobe building for their infant children. Indeed, as the findings suggest, numerous elements influenced the choices parents made. This investigation revealed that comfort and design are dependent on each other and form the bulk of parent's concerns about clothing. Parents understand the power clothes have on channeling expressions of self. In the case of the infant children in this study, gender identity was the most pervasive theme in reference to clothing colour, styling, and design details. Families expressed resistance against gender stereotyping, with criticism over prohibited shades of specific colours and the low availability of certain prints such as hearts in the boys' department as well as the perceived differences in fit between boys' and girls' clothes.

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Gendered care responsibilities among mothers and fathers were found to be changing, contrary to previous research that stated: "fathers are especially committed to their families when they have sons" (Blakemore et al., 2009, p. 303). My study indicates the division of tasks is becoming more balanced; fathers are shopping for clothes, dressing and taking care of the children, especially in households where one or more children are girls. Mothers continue to exert influence over their child's image, making decisions regarding the selection of appropriate clothing, especially for special occasions. Cultural appreciation is present in clothing with unique features and is valued for parents with family ties overseas.

In terms of consumption, this study has identified the different methods parents use to acquire clothing for their child's wardrobe. Although hand-me-downs have a significant presence, new clothing (purchased of received as gifts) makes up the majority of the clothing in the wardrobe. Findings also highlighted a desire for consuming less, parents' value saving money and also want to reduce unnecessary purchases. Parents in this study shared their sustainable practices, such as avoiding harmful chemicals and clothing waste. Although some disposed of torn clothes in the garbage, everyone mentioned donation as the preferred means for passing on clothes their child had outgrown. When the need for new clothing is necessary, parents prefer to shop in-store to inspect garment quality and assess comfort level. Although, McNeill and Graham (2014) found mothers like to purchase for pleasure rather than for need, my research illustrated that is not the case. Mothers, and fathers within some families, buy new clothing to fill gaps as needed, most often to accommodate children's growth, prioritizing convenient and effortless modes of shopping.

Implications for Practice

The findings from this study suggest that fashion design needs to account for the diversity in children. Recommendations on sizing and design for fashion industry stakeholders are summarized below, with suggestions for fashion designers and product developers, retailers and marketers, and media.

Sizing

Problematic designs identified from conversations with parents imply children's clothing needs adjustments to fit better on body, hands and feet. Growth patterns among infant children are diverse, this expands when comparing body dimensions of children from different ethnicities, therefore, it is crucial to consider this. As Aldrich (2009) recommends, size labels should drop the age mark. Instead, clothing that includes a ratio using actual measurements would be more suited to determine correct fit. Aldrich's (2009) book was made for the UK, developing size measurements to fit a population of approximately 75% of infant children. If Canadian sizing charts also use only a fraction of the population, not all children's bodies measurement possibilities will be considered, opening a market opportunity to address a population that does not conform with the current system. Thus, modifications to the size label should consider other alternative information for fit identification rather than the weight and age range (e.g., 0-3 months). For children above 1 year old, labels might also include height and more detailed measurements in the case of problematic one-piece and footed garments as discussed by the participants in this study. It is also worth considering body scanning technology to improve the design of infant clothing with more accurate and comprehensive measurements and for devising a new kind of sizing system.

Design

Patterns and growth. Changing the size system and labelling of clothes and accessories is one of the measures that could be taken to curb the problem of fit. Another suggestion is to rethink the design of clothing styles to integrate adaptations for growth into the garment. Parents commented on the need to have to acquire new clothing constantly as the child grew. The features included in the cloth diaper pants (Figure 4.1), larger waistband, and cuffs that can be folded down and then extended as the child grows might be also incorporated on long-sleeve t-shirts and regular pants. Fabrics such as a ribbed jersey have more inherent stretch and thus may be used for a longer time as there is an accommodating the growing torso. One-piece outfits could also benefit from crotch extenders, like the one shown on Figure 5.4. This piece was sold separately, but could be included in matching fabric with the original garment. Crotch extenders also provide flexibility in fit, especially with the use of bulky cloth diapers. Any design ideas that aim to prolong the lifespan of clothes are welcome as parents have also mentioned they would like to buy less and be more environmental responsible.

Jumpsuits, onesies, rompers, and other one-piece clothes alike might incorporate a wrap style or kimono structure to facilitate donning and doffing. Parents said they used those one-piece clothes frequently, especially for the infants' first months. Incorporating more of those outfit styles into collections is recommended, for ease in selecting, dressing and wearing as they are practical and help parents with their clothing routines for the child.

Colours and prints. Pink and purple are colours that parents would like to add to boys' wardrobes not only on motifs and textile prints but also for the entire garment. Purple is considered more neutral as it is a strong shade, close to blue. Pink on the other hand is more

difficult to insert in the market for boys as it is associated exclusively with girls' wardrobes. Light or bold shades of pink are both part of the female repertoire, however, retailers are slowly introducing clothes in pink for infants and boys. Of the brands mentioned in this study, Carter's, Walmart, Old Navy, and Gap are including one or two pieces in pink for the infant boys' collections.

Overall, infant clothing might expand gender inclusivity as the evidence from this study show that parents pick and choose the pieces that are in line with their style preferences that fit their infant's bodies. Textile prints and motifs should not be considered an exclusivity of one gender. The constant change of clothes, the hand-me-downs from whoever can send clothing, and the rapid child growth make dressing the child an act of experimentation with different colours, designs, and prints.

Fabric technology. Many parents alluded to the fact that clothes are bulky and prevent movement. Ease of mobility is linked with perceived comfort. Materials used for winter clothing, especially snowsuits were discussed by families as being problematic. Some parents avoid dressing their child in those clothes because they are either too warm or too thick. Fleece and wool are the preferred materials, so collections might incorporate more clothes made of these materials. As an alternative to ribbed jersey fabrics, cotton fabrics with a higher count of elastane fibre (spandex or Lycra) provides comfort for the child, allowing body growth and helping parents on the dressing action as the fabric stretches more than conventional cotton.

Retailers. Brands and retailers would be encouraged to try a new approach for selling baby/infant clothes without gender categorization. Both in-store and online, parents look for functional clothes and easy to shop experiences. There is a lack of information about textiles,

how the fibre behave, the benefits and drawbacks for each type of fibre. Therefore, it would be advisable to have this type of information more explicit on the garment description page of the website or at the store, using drawings (or videos) and a simple language for fast comprehension. Replacing the female/male classification, retailers could design the floor separating the clothes per size; per colours and motifs; or style and then further down per size. A re-design of the retail space would enhance parents' perceptions of the offerings and increase browsing, as parents can look for what they want throughout the store. Additionally, it de-stigmatize the need to "cross-gender shop", making parents more comfortable shopping for children's clothes.

Communication. Despite not being the focus of this study, fashion communication made me consider educating families. Specific information about fashion terms and correct definitions are deficient, as per the references parents alluded, such as confusion between fibre content versus fabric construction. The fact that parents claimed is difficult to find pink clothes on the market but not knowing their favourite retailers already are selling such clothes, shows fashion information is not reaching parents. The parents interviewed are invested enough in knowing about their children's clothing design, care and purchase that would be worth pursuing ways for spreading useful information. Although no one mentioned active searching for this type of content, there is an opportunity for the media to explore this segment of the market.

<div align="center">Limitations and Future Research</div>

The objective of this study was to make an open inquiry to determine the factors that influence wardrobe building. I did not ask about the materiality of clothes because I was expecting parents to raise the topic, which never happened. The importance of clothes as objects of sentimental value, worth keeping and storing for years to come would be of value for

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future research in the context of an infant wardrobe as clothing are material objects and there

is an "emotional practice tied up with feelings of nostalgia and the wish to keep garments as

memories" (Petersen & Riisberg, 2017, p. 229). Thus, additional questions as the reasons behind

people not preserving worn clothes, or choosing not to talk about the subject are worth inquiring.

It could also be that people forgot to talk about some piece of clothing they had kept, but this

is odd as we were surveying all storage furniture and items kept for sentimental reasons were

absent. However, discussions about the clothes that were stored where kept for practical reasons,

to dress another child. Again, the materiality of the worn clothes, the generational transitions and

the implications for the future consumption would be worth investigating in a longitudinal study.

In the field of fashion studies that take a social sciences approach, similar studies might

delve further into the father-child relationship with clothing. Another suggestion is to conduct

a related research with children in the next age group, toddlers, would improve understanding

of clothing choices, once the child starts to negotiate with their parents. Other aspects worth

probing might also include how parents' methods of acquisition change or maintain over time?

Would the child continue to dress in second-hand clothing? When do children develop colour

preferences, or become aware of gendered garments and choose to avoid them?

In conclusion, my research set out to discover the processes and ideas parents negotiate

between themselves and their children's needs to build a wardrobe. The findings from this study

have made recommendations regarding fabric selection and the use of natural fibres and the

need for stretch, gender neutral colour choices and print motifs, especially incorporating shades

of pink that might be considered more masculine and thus acceptable to the market, the design

of one-piece outfits with design features to accommodate growth, as well as the need for more

accurate size standards, education about fashion terms, and retail space layout. Comfort, design,

gender norm subversion, parents' preferences, new methods of clothing acquisition, and the

slow implementation of sustainable practices are all factors influencing the child's wardrobe

development. It was surprising to find how much has changed in the fashion landscape with

the incorporation of more sustainable practices, such as second-hand clothing and the idea of

consuming less. Likewise, I did not anticipate to encounter so many parents devoted to breaking

gender stereotypes through the use of clothing. The findings from this research provides valuable

information relevant to the fashion industry, designers, and retailers, while also contributing to

parents' and caregivers' understanding of dressing and fashion.

Appendix A: Recruitment Poster

Ryerson University

image: pexels.com

**Study _ Parenting fashion:
an exploration of infant's wardrobes**

Are you a parent of an infant (newborn up to 24 months-old)?

**Would you be interested in participating in a research study to share
your unique ideas about baby's fashion dressing practices?**

The purpose of this study is to investigate how parents use the clothing and accessories on hand to dress their infants.

You will be asked to give me access to your home to show me your child's wardrobe. You will complete a brief demographic survey, interview and an inventory documentation. The total expected time commitment to participate in the wardrobe study is about two (2) hours. Number of participants are 3 to 5 families, minimum 3 parents and maximum 10 parents.

Participation in this study is voluntary
This research is being conducted as part of my graduate studies for the partial completion of my Master of Arts Fashion degree.

For further information, please contact
Cecilia Martins Gomes: cecilia.martins@ryerson.ca – Master of Arts Fashion Graduate Student
School of Fashion at Ryerson University

"This research study has been reviewed by the Ryerson Research Ethics Board and note the REB protocol number REB 2018-342"

Appendix B: Wardrobe Interview—Semi-Structured Guide

Ryerson University

WARDROBE INTERVIEW: SEMI-STRUCTURED GUIDE

Parenting fashion: an exploration of infant's wardrobes

Participants: **Date:**

Introduction

Thank you for welcoming me in your home. As discussed previously, I am investigating how parents use the clothing and accessories on hand to dress their infants. There are different ways of acquisition of clothing, through gifts, purchasing and hand-me-downs to develop a child's wardrobe. Dressing a baby may sometimes be a hectic task.

I am a designer and the purpose of this interview and survey is to better understand your experience with children's clothing. The information collected will support my Major Research Paper in the Master of Arts Fashion program at Ryerson University.

Could we move to the room where your child's clothes are stored? I would like to begin with an inventory of all your child's clothing and accessories, (check about laundry). After the inventory is finished we will complete the interview. The interview will be audio recorded on my recorder so I can listen to our discussion in more detail later. You can choose which questions you do and do not want to answer. You also have the option to go off the record and I will turn off my recorder. Remember thay you may choose to withdraw your participation at any time.

Shall we start? If you need to stop for any reason, just let me know. Move to closet and dresser to complete inventory.
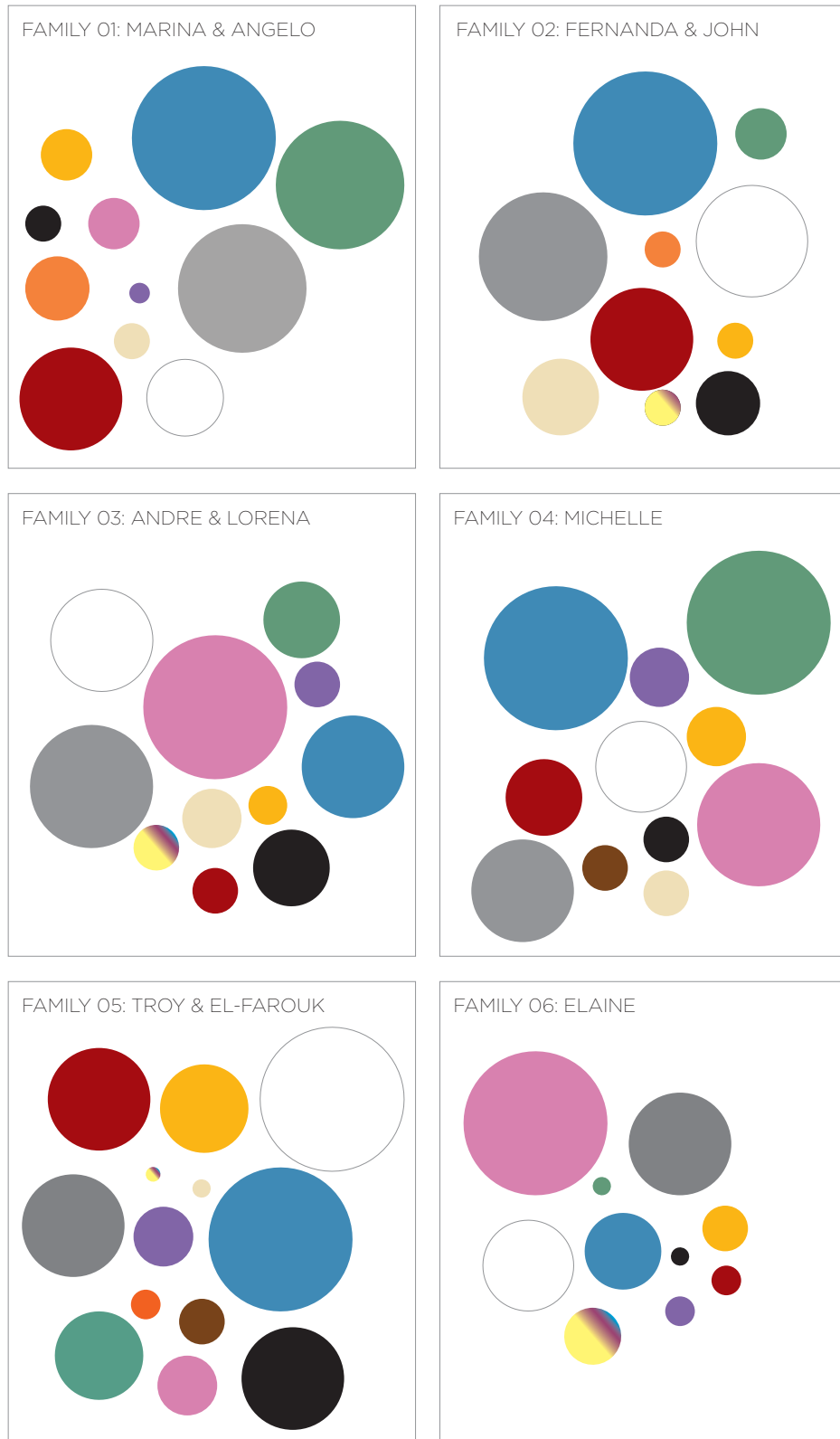
[start audio recorder]

1. How did you acquire the clothes in this wardrobe?
2. What are your favourite colours to dress your baby?
3. How do you coordinate the pieces your child will wear?
4. Do you mind if the garments and accessories have defects like stains, holes? Does it matter if it is on basics or party clothing?
5. Who has the main responsibilities for:
    5.1 Purchasing clothing?
    5.2 Laundering the clothing?
    5.3 Dressing the baby?
    5.4 Choosing what the baby will wear?
    5.5 How do you negotiate these responsibilities between both of you?
6. Describe your laundry routine for your baby's clothing. (probe for repair, stain removal, special laundry detergent).
7. How important is information on the care/fibre content label to you? Do you have preferences? (i.e., will not purchase something that is dry clean only)
8. Do you look for pieces that are easy to dress your child?
9. What top three labels do you purchase your baby's clothing from? Why?
10. What types of design features do you search with regards to your baby's clothing? Such as embroidery, snaps, buttons, prints, localized drawings, necklines and so on?
11. What is the proportion of basics and party pieces?
12. Show me the three favourite outfits for your child. How did you acquire this? Why is your favourite? Tell me if there is any particular story behind this outfit.
13. How long do you use the pieces your child wear? Until it does not fit anymore or longer?
14. Once your baby has outgrown their clothing, what do you do with garments and accessories that no longer fit?

(Ask if there is anything else they would like to discuss)
Thank you for taking the time to meet with me.

[turn off audio recorder]

Appendix C: Distribution of Colours in the Wardrobes

FAMILY 01: MARINA & ANGELO

FAMILY 02: FERNANDA & JOHN

FAMILY 03: ANDRE & LORENA

FAMILY 04: MICHELLE

FAMILY 05: TROY & EL-FAROUK

FAMILY 06: ELAINE

Each circle indicates the amount of colours, big circles more occurences and so on

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