

# Deep roots: the inextricable mesh of dress and identity and its persistence into later life. An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis study

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## ABSTRACT

By using dress as a lens and method this paper will investigate the notion of identity amongst older people from the global majority communities living with dementia in care homes in London. Through exploring 'textile stuff' (Hunt, 2014), the resulting dress narratives shed light on their perception of belonging, community, in-betweenness (Bhabha 1994) and home.

Gadamer's notion of horizons (1975) and more importantly overlapped horizons was useful here. My horizon and that of the research participants overlapped in part, that is, collectively we were a group of black and brown immigrants living in London. This shared aspect of our horizons created an environment of trust from the outset and therefore provided greater access to their dress narratives.

Given the increasing numbers of people living with dementia from global majority communities, this research is timely. The forecasted growth for this cohort is staggering; in 2011, in England and Wales there were 25,000 older people from the global majority communities living with dementia, by 2026, this is expected to double to 50,000. Additionally, the forecast for 2051, of 172,000, shows an incredible close to seven-fold increase, in a period of forty years. Which when compared to just a two-fold increase for the general UK population, within the same time frame, provides a sufficient reason to be duly concerned about the relative dearth of research into the experiences and needs of this overlooked population ([www.alzheimers.org.uk](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk)).

This study aims to significantly widen the repertoire of meaning attributed to textiles, objects and photographs. This will result in the development of tactile interventions that can be adopted in practice to enhance the well-being of people living with dementia.

**Keywords:** Global majority communities, material culture, identity, dementia, dress narratives

## INTRODUCTION

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By using dress as a lens and method this paper will investigate the notion of identity amongst older people from the global majority communities living with dementia in care homes in London. Through exploring 'textile stuff' (Hunt, 2014), the resulting dress narratives shed light on their perception of belonging, community, in-betweenness (Bhabha 1994) and home. This study aims to significantly widen the repertoire of meaning attributed to textiles, objects and photographs. This will result in the future development of tactile interventions that can be adopted in practice to enhance the well-being of people living with dementia.

This research is concerned with how to better support people from the global majority communities living with dementia in the UK to form future equitable citizenship. This paper argues that dress could be a valid tool to facilitate and improve support. The concern is not without cause, for as dementia figures continue to rise in the UK with the ageing population, the forecasted statistics for the global majority communities stand out as a disproportionate anomaly.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review is comprised of four distinct disciplines: post-colonial theory, dress studies, dementia studies and design and object literature. The interdisciplinary literature illuminates the gaps in knowledge that this paper attempts to address, thus providing a theoretical framework for this study.

### **The Big Thinkers: Liminality within postcolonial discourse**

The anthropologist Arnold Van Gennep, coined the term liminality in his 1909 ethnography, *The Rites of Passage* (Gennep *et al.*, 2019). This term describes a space of ambiguity – a disorientating space of being in-between two statuses. The following concepts fall within this space of in-betweenness and are relevant to the participants in this study: Du Bois' 'double consciousness', ([1903] 1965 ed.), Homi Bhabha's 'third space' (Bhabha, 1994), Said's 'out of place' (Said, 2000), Gilroy's 'the changing same' (Gilroy, 1993), Hall's 'translated societies' (Hall, 2000), 'creolization' (Hall, 2015) and 'diasporic migration as a rupture' (Hall, 1990). In these writings these authors have

identified shared characteristics of diasporic migration (Kaczynski, 2023).

Dress is efficacious within this liminal space, adding further insights to debates on identity. There is a growing number of scholars who have investigated the intersection of post-colonial theory, dress and identity. For example, drawing from Gilroy (1993), Bhabha (1994) and Hall (2000) Christine Checinska, investigates the links between dress, identity and the African diaspora in (Re)-fashioning identities, in *I am Black / White / Yellow: An Introduction to the black body in Europe* (2007). Checinska argues that 'in these moments of migration that identities are *re-fashioned* out of the subconscious interweaving of cultures and performed through the manipulation of dress. In this instance, metaphorical and physical borders are seen as sites of transformation and spaces of innovation.' (Checinska, 2007:56).

In *The Birth of Cool: Style Narratives of the African Diaspora (Materializing Culture)* (2016) Carol Tulloch warns against the trivializing of objects, such as her late mother's handbag. At face-value, this was a receptacle to house other smaller objects, yet this approach presented a missed opportunity to use the handbag (the object) as a lens to view a much larger phenomenon. As Tulloch explains, 'my mother's handbag is a significant marker of her desire for adventure and agency; she travelled alone to England, and the accessory acts as a hinge between her past and future' (Tulloch 2016: 3).

### **Dress and the performance of British Identity**

Dress has had a significant role to play in the performance and the concept of British identity amongst the migrant community. Relevant to the study and the demographic being investigated, are the first-generation migrants of the post-war era who accepted the invitation by Her Majesty's Government to join the workforce in the UK. The significance of the role of dress in identity formation to this generation during this time in history is relevant. As Humphries suggests, 'the relationship between the body and clothes [demonstrates] that cultural understandings of race are part of the basis for meaningful communication in dress' (Humphries 2012). This is a salient point and will be discussed shortly. The Empire Windrush's 1948 voyage from the Caribbean to Tilbury (Mead, 2009), (Lowe, 2018) (Lunn, 1989), (Kushner, 2017) and the Commonwealth Acts of 1968 and 1972 (McIntyre, 2002), (Hansen, 1999), (Murphy, 2018) that resulted in a significant number of Asian migrants from East Africa and Uganda settling in the UK, are a few of the key migration moments in recent history. Enoch Powell's 1968 'Rivers of Blood' speech undoubtedly created an unfavourable backdrop for migrants arriving in Britain at this time, who were already feeling marginalized and not fully accepted in their new home. The unwelcoming environment created a sense of contested territories and contested identities amongst the global majority communities (Esteves and Porion, 2019), (Parker and Hirschler, 2022), (Peele, 2018).

The notion of the importance of dress in creating an understanding of race and thus making 'the body culturally intelligible' (Humphries 2012: 1) and consequently, how definitions of race provide the framework within which the everyday is experienced, has been explored by Emma Tarlo (1996), Monica Miller (2009) and Shane & Graham White (1998), and is germane to this study. For first generation Black and Asian migrants dress can be of particular importance, embedded in complex identities and, possibly, providing a sense of continuity with the place of origin. Investigating how dress transforms the body into a 'racial subject' and how marginal groups who actively negotiate this transformation explore the many overlapping and contradictory states that their bodies can exist within. Also, how dress is used by them as a means to make sense of and adapt the self to accommodate different times and purposes (Humphries 2012) is pertinent to this study as it helps to achieve an understanding of the creation of complex and contested identities. 'The body as culture' (Bordo 2001) and scholarship on the inscription of difference on the body (Butler 1993) provides insights into modes of communication through dress when the raced body is contextualised against the structures that underpin society. Bordo asserts that, 'we don't just see biological nature at work, but values and ideals, differences and similarities that *culture* has 'written' so to speak, on those bodies. What this means is that the body doesn't carry only DNA, it also carries a human history with it' (Bordo 2001: 26).

### **Fashion and dress**

This study uses dress as both 'phenomenon and method' (Weber and Mitchell 2004), a trigger for story elicitation as well as the part dress plays in memory making and identity construction (Buse *et al.* 2017). The lived experience of dress is the phenomenon and the efficacy of dress to elicit stories is the method. The role of dress with respect to the life story is less about 'living in the past' or representative of a particular demographic and more about providing a back story to assist and contextualise an individual – creating dress narratives, and in so doing so, making sense of the present, making sense of the self and perhaps making sense of the future – forming futures.

This study uses the materiality of dress as a lens to explore notions of identity, this includes personhood, embodiment and agency in persons with dementia from the global majority communities. The discipline of Fashion Studies (incorporating both theoretical and empirical study of all aspects of fashion, dress and bodily appearance, in the past and present) has grown enormously since the 1980s, expanding from curatorial analysis of museum collections, from economic and cultural history, and from sociological/anthropological roots. Ground-breaking studies such as Gilles Lipovetsky's *Empire of Fashion: dressing modern democracy* (1994) and Ulrich Lehmann's *Tigersprung: fashion in modernity* (2001) have demonstrated how fashion is both a symptom and a driver of modernity, and accounts such as Ruth Barnes and Joanne B. Eicher, *Dress and Gender: making and meaning* (1993), Dick Hebdige *Subculture: the meaning of style* (1979) and Sophie Woodward *Why Women Wear*

*What They Wear* (2007) have shown in sophisticated ways how dress provides an eloquent medium for the expression of the self, within and beyond a range of categories that include gender, sexuality, nationality, ethnicity and generation.

Within dress studies a social anthropological perspective emphasises 'the lived experience of dress, and the ways in which individuals construct their identities through every day, embodied practices of selecting, managing, and wearing clothes, contextualising them within their lives, and specific interactional contexts' (Twigg and Buse, 2013: 328). The perspective of embodiment and self-construction through dress is of particular interest to this study, as is the notion of agency alluded to by the act of 'selecting and managing'.

Dress is frequently theorised in terms of semiotics, agency, choice, social meaning, performativity, image construction and identity – essentially, representation. However, in binary opposition and distinct from representation is the embodied experience. The latter is evident when exploring the link between the object and subject. Interestingly, identity sits on both sides of the opposition. In Daniel Miller's *Theory of stuff* (2010) this distinction is part of the dialectic of the book. Miller suggests that 'a theory of representation ... tells us little about the actual relationship between persons and things; it tends always to reduce the latter to the former.' (Miller, 2010: 49). So, if clothes as objects do not represent us, what do they do? What is the best way to articulate the relationship of persons and dress? What does dress say to the social world about us? Miller argues that 'in many respects stuff actually creates us in the first place' (Miller, 2010: 10). This is an interesting proposition and investigated in the specific context of dementia.

### **Dementia and dress**

Dress is heavily layered with meaning; it demonstrates agency that is given to it by a person and has an innate ability to act as a prompt for memory. The touch of cloth has the possibility to release a lifetime of memories, 'tiny snapshots of our joys and disappointments, our entrances and our exits, triumphant and tragic' (Gibson 2015: xiv) – 'anecdotal dress narratives, woven into [the] fabric are traces of past experiences. Stitched into [the] seams are links to people we have loved and lost' (Gibson 2015: xv).

Textiles is ubiquitous and inescapable, impacting lives by its very presence and absence, demonstrating ephemerality, permanence, materiality and immateriality, that are temporally and spatially- bound. Textiles is meaning-making, embodied and exists through a duality embedded in the cloth in its basic state and in the everyday objects such as clothing (Hunt, 2004).

There is existent literature that illuminates the value of personal possessions in the care home environment – this has built a momentum over the last few decades.

Viewing possessions as an aspect of the 'extended self' (Belk, 1988), was a concept developed by Russel W Belk, in his article, 'Possessions and the extended self', for the *Journal of Consumer Research*. Essentially, concluding that '[the possessions] help older people achieve a sense of continuity and preparation for death (Blackler et al., 2023: 2). Continuity is salient, as 'at times, objects [are] symbolic reminders of facets of lives and relationships' (Blackler et al., 2023: 7).

For people living with dementia material objects including dress can act as a conduit to past lives and identities, but equally are the repository for memories that 'provide metaphorical resources for people to talk about their present situation in a way they can handle' (Kitwood, 1997: 56). Research that addresses both dementia and dress is relatively new, however Julia Twigg (2010, 2013, 2014), Christina Buse (2013, 2014) and Richard Ward (2013, 2014, 2015, 2016) and Rebecka Fleetwood-Smith (2022) have undertaken studies on the subject.

This study continues the exploration into this area with a stronger emphasis on the significance of dress to persons with dementia from the global majority communities within the care-home setting. The continuity of individualised dress within the care environment could have an important part to play in supporting identity, helping to create 'a benign interactional environment that supports embodied personhood' (Twigg and Buse, 2013: 330).

The Literature Review summarises the rich and varied literature that I draw on. Perspectives from postcolonial theory, dementia studies, dress studies and design and object literature all help me to explore the complex relationship between dress and identity in people from the global majority in care homes living with dementia. It has shown the relevance of considering dress as a means of better understanding lives being lived by people with dementia in care home environments, the extent to which dress is reflective of identity for global majority communities (it has historically been a means of both assimilation and subversion) and in general the role of dress as a means of identity construction.

However, it also highlights the dearth of literature and scholarship that links the notion of identity, and dress to persons living with dementia especially from global majority communities. This sheds light on both historical and contemporaneous omissions - a deficit, where the global majority communities have been absent from research data that makes claims for the general population – a population that they are part of.

## **PRELIMINARY STUDY**

The design of the research protocol for this study included a Preliminary and Main Study. The fieldwork for the Preliminary Study took place at a care home that I had previously worked at as a volunteer Activities Co-ordinator's assistant. The field site

was home to 40 residents and four members staff who lived on the premises. Non-residential agency day and night staff were also employed.

### **Methods**

Participant observation was the chosen method. It is historically rooted in ethnographic research. It is a qualitative research method that aims to gain an insider's perspective – the perspective of the study population. The efficacy of the method is that it gains 'an understanding of the physical, social, cultural, and economic contexts in which study participants live; the relationships among and between people, contexts, ideas, norms, and events; and people's behaviours and activities – what they do, how frequently, and with whom' (Mack et al 2005:14).

### **Data collection**

The participant observation aimed to provide an insight into the lived experience of dress for the participants living with dementia, the meaning-making created from those experiences and the extent to which it supported people's identity. A total of six residents gave consent to participate in my study (Figure 1). In my role as a novice participant observer, six people to observe in the working environment of a care home that consisted of different spaces with embedded scheduled day-to-day activities was sufficient and based on current literature deemed adequate (Glasdam *et al.*, 2013) (Roberts *et al.*, 2015) (Leverton *et al.*, 2019). The data highlighted the importance of clothing, objects and the sensory – areas that were investigated further in the Main Study.

Moreover, the Preliminary Study confirmed the efficacy of my chosen methodology for the Main Study, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). As a participant observer I witnessed the lived experience of the research participants, I saw the particular in action – the idiographic and I came to understand the significant role that hermeneutics would play in the Main Study.

The findings from the Preliminary Study also confirmed the way I might expand upon a chosen research method for the Main Study. The semi-structured interviews - a preferred method for IPA, was modified with the integration of objects. It was evident from the fieldwork, that a mixed-methods approach that interwove objects into conversational-style interviews would be beneficial for the Main Study.

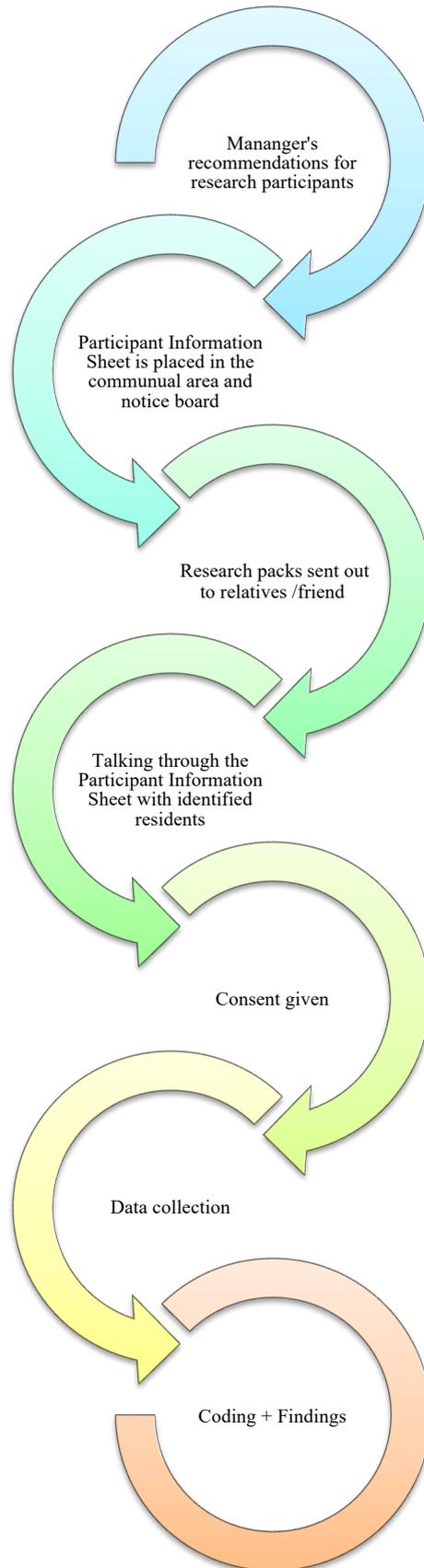
### **MAIN STUDY: METHODOLOGY**

IPA was chosen as the most appropriate methodology for this in-depth, small scale qualitative study that focused on the lived experiences of 5 participants across two additional field sites. One of the reasons that I considered IPA as a methodology was that it is reliant on small sample sizes – typically five to eight participants. In fact, Smith et al recommend a sample size 'between three and six participants [as] a reasonable

sample size for a student using IPA' (Smith et al 2009: 51). Smith argues that conducting IPA with large sample sizes can prove to be problematic due to the amount of data collection based on detailed in-depth personal accounts needed to successfully fulfil IPA's commitments. Deploying IPA as a methodology meant that considerations that aligned with the methodology were integrated into the design of the study – from the research questions to the data analysis.

Investigating the experiences and perspectives of persons living with dementia is important - it helps to position the person in front of the disease – person first, disease second. These precedents: (Gill, 2014), (Desai et al, 2015), (Witt, 2011), (Ellis, 2009), (Lim *et al.*, 2022), (Johnson, 2016), (Danivas *et al.*, 2016), (McIntosh, 2020), (Sharp, 2019), (Clare *et al.*, 2008), (Aldridge *et al.*, 2019), (Rana and Smith, 2020), guided my use of IPA. IPA demonstrated a particular efficacy in the gathering of the type of qualitative research data required to expose identity, personhood, embodiment and agency in persons with dementia.

Reflexivity is an essential component of IPA and can be described as, 'a concept, [that] aids [a] dual perspective of being both inside and outside the research by informing self-awareness and analysis with the inclusion of the "other." In this situation, the other presents opportunity to consciously compare, contrast, and connect the researcher-self to the research other and inform researcher-led decisions' (Goldspink and Engward, 2019: 291). I can never escape my social situatedness (Shaw, 2010), it is my filter – my lens. However, it is important to be aware of its impact – both positive and negative and the possible effects on the research project. Engagement with the concept of the hermeneutic circle is essential here (Figure 2).

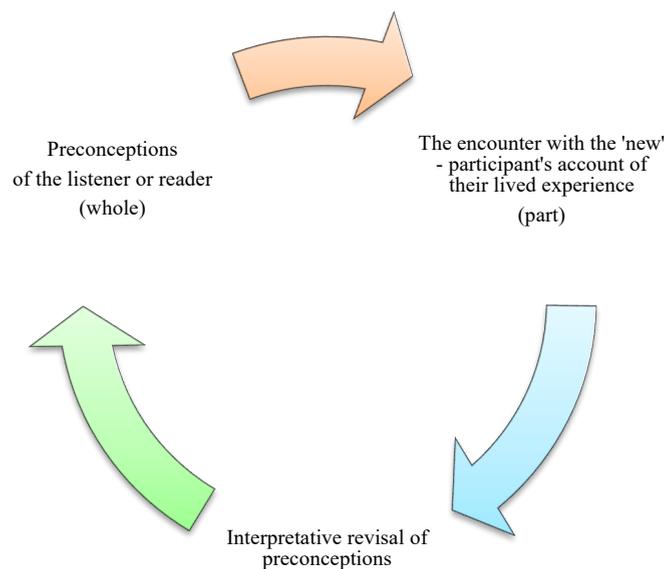


**Fig. 1:** Stages of the Preliminary Study

## Methods

The findings from the Preliminary Study led me to consider and adopt a more conversational style for my semi-structured interviews. Also, weaving in object handling and photo elicitation – the objects and photos were the infrastructure, and the semi-structured interviews were the structure.

An interview, arguably is ‘a conversation with a purpose’ (Webb and Webb 1932: 30 (1975) (2010)) quoted in *Interviewing people living with dementia in social care research: Methods Review*, 2020). Interviewing people with dementia encompasses a range of considerations that include observing very specific ethical guidelines, the challenges inherent in the adoption of a suitable methodology as well as practical aspects, such as, acquiring informed consent, further training if deemed necessary, negotiations with a range of gatekeepers at various key stages, mindfulness of the different types and stages of dementia and data analysis.



**Fig. 2:** The Hermeneutic Circle

## Creative Methods

The methods chosen in this study to collect data focused on supporting the research participants through the exploration of creative methods in accessing their subjective experience. This was particularly appropriate for people with dementia for whom language is sometimes difficult. A pop-up display of photographs and objects was installed in the care home to facilitate this. The objects featured in the pop-up display were selected after a lengthy process which started with pictorial research from online visual databases, books, photo albums; as well as informal conversations with older people (not living with dementia). The participants and I chose from the selection of

photographs. My photograph selection when not used as an ‘ice-breaker activity’ (Epstein *et al.*, 2006) was often guided by the direction of the conversational-style interview. I selected photographs for the purposes of achieving greater depth and as a response to the participant showing interest in the content of the photograph. Objects have the capacity to engage all the senses – unimodally and multimodally. ‘Object handling’ can be described as the ‘offering or choosing [of a] material object, and participants having the opportunity to explore, reflect, and respond to it’ as suggested in *Object Handling for People with Dementia: A Scoping Review and the Development of Intervention Guidance*, (D’Andrea *et al.*, 2022).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To analyse the data from the five research participants: Reena, Monica, Comfort, Theophilus and Wilfred, (these are pseudonyms), I followed the seven-stages detailed by Smith *et al.*, in their outline of the IPA method. The analysis of the data, led to the formulation of a Master Table of four Group Experiential Themes (GETs), illustrated and discussed below (Figure. 3).



**Fig. 3:** Master Group Experiential Themes

### **Dress as the cultural underpinning of the embodied self**

The objects on the pop-up display helped each participant create a dress narrative during the interviews. These accounts highlighted their lived experience of dress that revealed aspects of their identity and worldview. Reena, of Indian heritage, born in India, spent her formative years in Port of Spain, Trinidad, with her birth family, before immigrating to the United Kingdom and taking up residence. Small in frame and stature, but bold, talkative and outspoken with a thick Trinidadian accent, Reena was the only participant to have had a double migrant experience.

*Well, when you wear the sari, you are an Indian, a right Indian - a downright Indian!*

Reena was drawn to the sari length of cerise georgette, heavily embellished with a combination of gold and silver metallic threads and sequins. As a result, it was chosen as the first object during the semi-structured interview. The experience of handling cloth was an undeniable “down-right” provocation for Reena, the sari length was an affirmation of her identity. She knew which way up the length should be, she knew how much to wrap and pleat into her waist – she knew what to do, as it was ingrained in her South-Asian heritage, and her ability to manipulate the length of cloth confirmed this.

### **Respectability through dress**

With the fixed stare of someone who could not be more serious, Monica metaphorically drew a line in the sand, “I have never worn a [sic] trousers in all my life” – you were either on her side of the line – respectable, or not. And if you were not on her side – you were on the wrong side. Monica elucidates,

*We were brought up like that, skirts is [sic] girls, trousers is [sic] masculine and that's for men. Ladies and girls don't go to church, don't go to worship in trousers. We couldn't think of wearing trousers to church.*

Monica was born in Jamaica and worked as a registered nurse before she became a mid-wife in the United Kingdom. Monica's sense of good citizenship was being obedient and abiding by the rules – rules that were laid down in the home, at church and society at large. The rules followed were pervasive and dictated how Monica should clothe her body and conduct herself both at home and in public. Some of these rules policed Monica's body with her agreement, as being conservative aligned with being obedient in her eyes and most importantly those of her parents.

“Life is but a walking shadow...”, a line from Shakespeare's Macbeth, Act 5, was frequently quoted by Theophilus in his accounts. Why this quote? At face value, it could be read as an acknowledgement of the fleeting nature of life – an acceptance of mortality, however, arguably it is more layered than that. In using this quote, Theophilus was positioning himself as an intellectual, a well-educated man; having previously worked as a journalist, posted frequently between the United Kingdom and Nigeria. Like Monica, for Theophilus deportment and dress were inextricably linked to respectability, however, in his case, respectability also involved education. If you were educated, you exuded status and respectability. Studio portraiture encapsulated these aspects – both real and imagined, documented within the four corners of a photograph. Theophilus was drawn initially to the clothing featured in the studio photographs included in the pop-up display, as shown below,

*Very important from what he's wearing. You see that straight away, these are the real, how? ...Very nearly a leader.*

For many post-colonial communities in the Global South and for the first generation of immigrants into the UK, education was perceived as essential for social mobility. How you dressed revealed your aspirations with respect to education, class, status and respectability. The studio portrait provided the perfect opportunity to bring these aspects of the desired self together, whether at home or in the 'Mother Country'.

### **Positive engagement with dress through making**

The rag doll took Monica back to childhood memories in Jamaica, from "when I was young", she dressed like the doll; to her mother, "yes, my mother used to make them...she knew what she was doing"; to her skills, "Once you get the middle bit...I couldn't go by pattern... No, I just do it by, I look at it, just look at the thing, I go and make it."

The GET of positive engagement with dress through making, that I have developed from the data is concerned with the positive benefits of dress. Benefits that include made-to-measure clothing – clothing that always fits and as a result you feel good; clothing that builds community in the form of production, distribution, or in the case of Monica's mother, gifting – whether gifting to the neighbours or gifting her skills to the next generation – her daughter.

This sense of pride inherent in the positive engagement with dress through making, was additionally strong in Theophilus' account. Like Monica, his mother, Ruby had a significant role to play in this positivity. Theophilus positions his mother at the heart of the cottage industry that he grew up within. Theophilus' mother used to make her own clothes. She was very proficient on the sewing machine and led a group of seamstresses - she was well respected in the community. She bought cloth for family and friends. Theophilus's mother taught his sisters, their children and family friends to sew. The sewing played a significant part of the day-to-day life in the household, and it was more than a hobby – it was a business. His mother was a firm but fair manager and built a reputation for herself.

### **Dress as a sanctuary of representation**

Dress provided access to the participants' narratives pivoted around representation, immersed in a sense of 'home'; what felt like 'home', or welcoming – a sanctuary, but also - its absence. Looking at the people in the photographs, that looked like them, wearing familiar clothing, as well as engaging with the garments and cloth on display through touch, facilitated a connection to and an awareness of representation.

Both Comfort's and Theophilus' accounts were interspersed by the recognition of

people in the photographs. “Like somebody I know. Not quite, I don’t know her, I don’t know him,” remarked Comfort about the solitary man in a photograph. In another photograph, a black and white photo of a couple in their twenties was reviewed by Theophilus who was confused by the face featured in the photograph - he recognised the featured man but had forgotten his name.

It was highly unlikely that Theophilus knew the couple, nonetheless, they looked familiar, or perhaps, he assumed that was my expectation – that he might know them, so, obliged. He commented frequently on how familiar the men and women captured in the black & white photographs were to him – that he knew them. Initially this was taken at face value and literally, however on the continual repetition of his statement, it was clear that the men and women were familiar not because they were known to Theophilus but because the images were of black people (West Africans) sitting with poise for the studio photographer. These men and women had stature - the types of people he would have mingled with – well-dressed, decorated, respected, demonstrable status and reverence – of course he would have known them and they in turn, him - a renowned journalist.

A 1960s chrome plated cigarette case with an engraved map of the Caribbean facilitated a discussion about the notion of home. Wilfred expressed that if he was to do it all again, he would do it differently, by saving money and returning home. “Oh, it’s all to do about sentimentality, where you’re born, grew up, where you’re familiar with, that it’s sort of natural to be sentimental about it”. The notion of ‘back home’ or ‘home’ is quite an interesting one, especially in the context of a black or brown resident in a care home in London, far away from the place of his or her birth. The sense of hybridity and in-betweenness (Bhabha, 1994) is felt strongly by first-generation immigrants, such as the research participants in my study, however, can still have an impact in the understanding of identity for later generations. The notion of home can take on a different significance, nonetheless, I suggest that it is always based on a sense of belonging, representation and sanctuary. As Wilfred comments,

*But I don’t know why they used to call it that, that’s the only place I ever hear called mother country, funny, they never called it the father country. (laughter) ... I’ll tell you something, men use the term more than women, the mother country... Belonging... Not me, I am not one of them.*

Woven into Wilfred’s account is an awareness of the inherent close relationship that mothers have with their sons (Morman and Whitely, 2012). He didn’t feel this bond with the ‘Mother country’ – it did not provide him with the sanctuary he had hoped for.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the findings demonstrate the inextricable mesh of dress and identity for

older people with dementia from the global majority communities. Highlighting the potential for dress to provide a sense of belonging and community. There is extant research that investigates dress within dementia studies, however, my study goes further by interrogating this relationship within an under-represented population. This study has provided useful data, highlighting the scope for creative interventions that could be adopted to better support this population within the care environment. This new knowledge is critical and timely. By drawing awareness to the deficit in current research, this study advocates for forming futures of equitable citizenship.

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