

# The Globalizing Arab World:

## Impacts on Consumers' Level of Materialism and Vanity.

Dr. Hélène Cherrier, Kaleel Rahman, Tarek Mady and Dennis Lee

*Prompted largely by the globalization of Arab world, our research aims to appreciate the differences and similarities, if any, between Arab and non-Arab consumers evolving together in a globalizing landscape. Specifically, this study addresses the concepts of materialism and vanity in the globalizing Emirate of Dubai, UAE and asks: do Arab consumers living in a globalizing Arab world express a different level of materialism and vanity than non-Arab consumers? Are religions and gender important drivers for such difference? Our findings suggest that Arab consumers living in the globalizing environment tend to express a higher level of vanity (physical appearance and concern for achievement) than non-Arab. Interestingly, Arab consumers did not demonstrate a different level of materialism than non-Arab consumers. Efforts to understand the effects of global consumer culture on consumers level of materialism and vanity are vital for corporation wishing to expend globally and to develop effective international brand positioning strategies. In addition, this research adds to the growing call for research on the contemporary Arab consumers.*

**Field: Marketing, Consumer Behavior – Globalization – Arab consumer**

### 1. Introduction

Prompted largely by the shift from a self-evident Arab landscape embedded in traditional values to a global looking environment inscribed in multiculturalism, our research aims to appreciate the differences and similarities, if any, between Arab and non-Arab consumers. Specifically, this study addresses the concepts of materialism and vanity in the globalizing Emirate of Dubai, UAE and asks: do Arab consumers living in a globalizing Arab world express a different level of materialism and vanity than non-Arab consumers? Are religions and gender important drivers for such difference? Contradictory to the notion that acculturation to global consumer culture blur distinction between consumers, this study shows that the social and economic changes that accompany the opening of the Arab world to a free market are shaping Arab individuals into consumers who express a strong interest in their physical appearance and show concerns for personal achievement.

---

\*Dr. Hélène Cherrier School of Business Administration, The American University in Dubai, P.O. Box 28282, Dubai, U.A.E. Tel: +971 4 399 9000 Ext. 337, Email: [hcherrier@aud.edu](mailto:hcherrier@aud.edu)

\*\*Dr. Kaleel Rahman, School of Business Administration, The American University in Dubai,

\*\*\*Dr. Tarek Mady, School of Business Administration, The American University in Dubai,

\*\*\*\*Dr. Dennis Lee, School of Business Administration, The American University in Dubai

This study also notes that the globalization of the Arab world does not veil the impacts of religion and gender role on consumer values. The analysis of the data clearly emphasizes religion and the role of women in the Arab world as distinctive cultural traits that endure over time and continue to shape distinctive consumers living in a globalizing Arab world. With this paper, the authors hope to emphasize that the process of consumer acculturation to global consumer culture does not homogenize the population. Instead of homogeneity, this study finds a diversity of customers living and interacting together in a global landscape.

The first section of this manuscript briefly describes the evolution of the Arab consumers. The second section builds on literature of consumer acculturation, materialism and vanity. The analysis of 387 surveys distributed in various shopping centers in Dubai demonstrates the particularities of the Arab consumers living in a Westernized Arab environment. Implications for marketing and the limitations of this study conclude the manuscript.

## **2. The Arab Consumers in a Globalizing Environment**

Arabs are the individuals who speak Arabic as their native tongue and who identify themselves as Arabs. Arabic is spoken in countries such as Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Palestine, Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Kuwait, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, and the United Arab Emirates. Of the countries mentioned, the United Arab Emirates has undergone a phenomenal rising level of international activities in the last fifty years and is home to a growing number of successful companies. Most particularly, Dubai, Emirate of the UAE is inscribed as a global city where different ethnic groups are presented: Arabs, Asians, Western, and Africans. In fact the local population in Dubai is a minority; representing only 10% of the estimated 1.5 million Dubai inhabitants.

Inline with the recent diffusion of global consumer culture in the UAE marketplace, the Arab consumers can no longer be seen as a traditional family unit shopping in small boutiques, souqs and local shops. The sudden development of large-scale shopping malls with the extreme offerings of themed ambiance, multi-cultural restaurants, luxurious Western brands and multiplex cinemas are re-shaping the traditional Arab consumers. The development of global consumer culture in the UAE has given rise to two different schools of thoughts. First, one school predicts that these intercultural contacts and globalizing city will gradually eradicate national or regional affiliation to the benefit of homogenized global consumers (Bell 1973; Inglehart 1990; Inglehart 1997). For example, Fukuyama contends that with the universalizing capitalism, the world has reached the end of history (Fukuyama 1993). In the UAE, Simadi's recent research shows that the most important factors influencing the evolving values of the university students in the UAE were gender, income levels, family size and father's occupation (Simadi 2006). In his research, nationality does not play a role in students' value system. In other words, Simadi's research supports that the economic, political, and social development in the UAE contributes to the reshaping of UAE consumer values independent from their national origin.

The second school of thoughts views that the development of global consumer culture and increasing cultural interactions in the UAE does not indicate the loss of national forces. The importance of national origins in the face of globalizing forces is explicit in Wee's research on the 'global teens segment'. In a study on Asian Teens, Wee argue that teenagers do not represent an homogenous global market segment (Wee 1999). The analysis shows that Asian teenagers practice different consumption lifestyles than American teenagers and that the diffusion of Western themes and values through mass media is not blindly embraced by all teenagers around the globe. Similarly, Kjeldgaard and Askegaard emphasize the structural differences and localized meanings in the youth culture (Kjeldgaard and Askegaard 2006).

Although teenagers are highly sensitive to the diffusion of the global youth culture, they also construct their individualized identity and lifestyle in search for common differences. From this school's perspective, the changes occurring in the UAE leads to a re-negotiation of consumer goals, motivations, values, attitudes and behavior within the flows of a local – global dynamics without veiling cultural origins. In support of the statement, El-Adly's study notes that the recent development of shopping malls with their Western brands in the UAE plays a major role in shaping the shopping patterns of Arab consumers but does not erase the importance of national origins. In a study performed on 404 informants in the UAE, El-Adly points to three types of consumers (El-Adly 2007). First, the relaxed shoppers are mostly Arab customers. They tend to be young and prefer to do their shopping on week-end. This segment values comfort (security, cleanliness, parking, and width), mall essence (store variety, product's quality, after-sale services and appropriate price) and convenience (supermarket in the mall and ease of reaching the mall) in the shopping center. The second segment represents that the demanding shoppers. They tend to be young, mostly Arabs, and put much emphasis on entertainment, diversity and luxury in the shopping center. Finally, the third segment reflects the pragmatic shopping. El-Adly finds that the Western consumers mostly belong to this third segment. As pragmatic shoppers, the price and the quality of the offering is an important criterion for evaluating the attractiveness of a shopping center. Although El-Adly's research does not particularly focus in the Arab versus Western value system, it nevertheless informs on subtle differences between the two groups.

As Arab consumers' expectations and preferences oscillate within the flows of a traditional/local – modern/global dynamics, this study tries to identify whether the Arab consumers express different value systems than the non-arab consumers. Specifically, this study addresses the concepts of materialism and vanity in face of the current globalization of the Arab world and asks: do Arab consumers living in a globalizing Arab world express a different level of materialism and vanity than non-Arab consumers? Are religions and gender important drivers for such difference? The concept of materialism and vanity are of particular importance as they have historically been affiliated to Western values (Burroughs and Aric 2002; Lerman and Maxwell 2006; Mick 1996; Rose and DeJesus 2007).

### **3. Acculturation, Materialism and Vanity**

The concept of consumer acculturation is defined as “the acquisition of skills and knowledge relevant to engaging in consumer behaviour in one culture by members of another culture” (Penaloza 1989). Through processes of acculturation, consumers learn and adopt to the norms and values of a culture that is different from the one in which they grew up (Askegaard et al. 2005; Cleveland and Laroche 2007).

Whilst initial acculturation studies note that immigrants assimilate the host culture while gradually losing aspects of the home/heritage culture, recent studies emphasize the complexity and multi-dimensionality of acculturation processes. For example, Penaloza's (1989) study on Mexican immigrants into the United States shows processes of negotiation between the host and home culture. In her study, immigrants mix aspects of diverse cultures and become bricoleur of new subjective cultural identities. Similarly, Askegaard et al. (2005) observe how host culture (Danish), home culture (Greenlandic), and global consumer culture influence the construction and negotiation of four different identity positions: hyperculture, assimilation, integration, and pendulism. Hyperculture represents the strengthening and the idealization of the cultural origin in the host country. Assimilation characterizes the complete immersion and acceptance of the host culture and ways of behaving. Integration denotes the unification of both cultures into one that combines “the best-of-both-worlds.” Finally, the pendulism symbolizes a split identity between loving and hating the host culture. As

consumers immigrate to a host culture, they “use products and consumption practices to negotiate differences between cultures while forging contingent identities derived from the differences” (Askegaard et al. 2005, p.169).

For this paper, we argue that, in order to understand how “global and local cultural forces are constantly felt in the lives of those trying to get from one day to another” (Cleveland and Laroche 2007, p. 257), we need to understand the way consumer values evolve. Toward this aim, we concentrate on the concept of materialism and vanity, two values that are prominent in Western culture (Burroughs and Aric 2002; Lerman and Maxwell 2006; Mick 1996; Rose and DeJesus 2007).

### ***3.1. Materialism***

The concept of materialism has long been studied in the field of marketing (Richins and Dawson 1992). In 1992, Richins and Dowson (1992) define materialism as a value, as “a mind-set or constellation of attitudes regarding the relative importance of acquisition and possession of objects in one’s life” (p. 307). As a value, materialism can be learned through socialization or acculturation process. Under this perspective, consumers can learn to become more or less materialistic according to their environment. For example, Roberts, Manolis and Tanner show that the family structure has a strong impact on consumers’ level of material values (Rakow 1992; Roberts et al. 2006; Roberts et al. 2003). Specifically, they note that experiencing a divorce during childhood influences adolescent’s future level of materialism. Further research on materialism shows the impact of marketing strategies on material values. Particularly, the socialization process toward materialism concentrates on whether the development of visual media, television and digitalization extend materialism to become a part of our humanity. For example, the development of television has had a strong impact on the cultivation of material values (Samuels J 2002). In term of religion and acculturation to materialistic values, Lindridge notes that Indians living in India express a lower level of materialism than Indians living in England (Lindridge 2005). For our research, we measure materialism in the UAE using the 6-item scale developed by Richins in 1987 (Richins 1987).

### ***3.2. Vanity***

As a consumer value-orientation, vanity refers to a person’s concern with and the perception of social achievements and physical appearances (Durvasula and Lysonski 2001). Durvasula and his colleagues (2001) point out that there are two schools of thought in regards to the forces generating vanity. On the one hand, vanity is a primary biogenic drive, and that it is a personality trait influenced by genes and early socialization. On the other hand, according to Mason’s (1981) view, vanity is a secondary psychogenic trait like conspicuous consumption, and hence is largely influenced by one’s environment including social and economic conditions prevailing in that environment (Mason 1981). For this study we use the Netemeyer et al. (1995) vanity scale that includes (a) an excessive concern for physical appearance (five-item scale), (b) a positive (often inflated) view of one’s personal physical appearance (six-item scale), (c) an excessive concern for personal achievements (five-item scale), and (d) a positive (often excessive) view of one’s personal achievements (five-item scale) (Netemeyer et al. 1995). For all the constructs, items that required negatively worded were re-coded so that higher scores reflected more positive scores.

## 4. The Study

### 4.1. Context of the Study: Dubai

In Dubai, thinking of a fixed, single and uncontaminated culture has become an absurd notion. Dubai's new economic system, with its emphasis on the free flow of products, investments and people has led to what international marketers call cultural contamination, cultural pluralism, cultural interpenetration and hybridation (Craig and Douglas 2005). These concepts articulate to variant degrees how cultures are permeated by other cultures. Dubai no longer represents a distinct and absolute local culture; but combines myriads of cultures interconnected across diverse groupings (Alden et al. 1999). Concrete manifestations of this cultural fusion are the thousands of international companies in technology, banking, fashion, construction and the media (among others) that move to Dubai every year. Such inflow of global corporate power inscribes Dubai as a 'global city' where one can experience a global consumer culture.

The term global consumer culture broadly defines a "cultural entity not associated with a single country, but rather a larger group generally recognized as international and transcending individual national culture" (Alden et al. 1999, p. 80). In global marketing literature, the global consumer culture is affiliated to the West and more specifically to the historical economic and political domination of the United States (Oppenheim 2003). McLuhan speaks of a 'global village' where one can find an homogenized cultural landscape featuring McDonald, Starbuck, and Coca-Cola (Bauman 1998).

The globalization of Dubai featuring multi-cultural restaurants and global brands and hosting an astonishing 80% of non-nationals offers the perfect context to question the potential similarities and differences between Arab versus non-Arab consumers.

### 4.2. Survey and Procedure

The survey collects data using the materialism and vanity scale and questions on gender, nationalities, religions, and number of years living in Dubai. Surveys were administered via a typical mall-intercept process. In an effort to preempt potential respondent unwillingness to participate, all participants were offered a small monetary incentive in the form of a gift card at a mall retailer. Respondents' willingness to participate was noticeably positive. However, because the questionnaire was administered in person, response rate and non-response bias were impossible to assess. Potential respondents were not told the purpose of the study but a brief introduction was given about confidentiality matters and scoring anchors. The three major constructs, as indicated by the original scale developers, were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*. The initial sample was 387 mall patrons.

### 4.3. Measures

Materialism was measured based on the 6-item scale developed by Richins (1987). Previous work on this scale indicated that materialism was in fact based on two distinct dimensions of *Personal* materialism (four-item scale) and *General* materialism (two-item scale). Such dimensions we found to hold true during our preliminary analyses assessing construct validity. In this study, we adopted the *Vanity* construct as measured by Netemeyer *et al.* (1995). "Vanity", as delineated and operationalized by these authors, has four distinct trait aspects and four distinct dimensions: (a) an excessive concern for physical appearance (five-item scale), (b) a positive (often inflated) view of one's personal physical appearance (six-item scale), (c) an excessive concern for personal achievements (five-item scale), and (d) a positive (often excessive) view of one's personal achievements (five-item scale). For all the

constructs, items that required negatively worded were re-coded so that higher scores reflected more positive scores. The scales used and the corresponding reliability assessments are indicated in Table 1.

Data on our categorical variables were also collected – gender, nationality, religion, and years living in Dubai. Nationality was post-coded into Arab vs. Non-Arab based on careful examination of respondents’ nationality by one of the authors coming from the Arab world. We used years living in Dubai as a proxy for acculturation. Data on years living in Dubai was collected in an open-ended format but it was post-coded based on the mean number of years living in Dubai. Those living above and below the mean were divided into two groups of respondents as being those living longer and those living shorter period of time in Dubai.

**Table 1**  
**Scale Items and Reliability**

		Cronbach Alpha
	<b>Personal Materialism (Richins 1987)</b>	<b>.656</b>
X6	It is important for me to have really nice things.	
X7	I would like to be rich enough to buy anything I want.	
X8	I'd be happier if I could afford to buy more things.	
X9	It sometimes bothers me quite a bit that I can't afford to buy all the things I want.	
	<b>General Materialism (Richins 1987)</b>	<b>.538</b>
X10	People place too much emphasis on material things.*	
X11	It's really true that money can buy happiness	
	<b>Concern for Physical Appearance (Netemeyer, Burton, and Lichtenstein 1995)</b>	<b>.827</b>
X12	The way I look is extremely important to me.	
X13	I am very concerned about my appearance.	
X14	I would feel embarrassed if I was around people and did not look my best.	
X15	Looking my best is worth the effort.	
X16	It is important that I always look good.	
	<b>View of Physical Appearance (Netemeyer, Burton, and Lichtenstein 1995)</b>	<b>.897</b>
X17	People notice how attractive I am.	
X18	My looks are very appealing to others.	
X19	People are envious of my good looks.	
X20	I am a very good-looking individual.	
X21	My body is sexually appealing.	
X22	I have the type of body that people want to look at.	
	<b>Concern for Achievement (Netemeyer, Burton, and Lichtenstein 1995)</b>	<b>.761</b>
X23	Professional achievements are an obsession with me.	
X24	I want others to look up to me for my accomplishments.	
X25	I am more concerned with professional success than most people I know.	
X26	Achieving greater success than my peers is important to me.	
X27	I want my achievement to be recognized by others.	
	<b>View of Achievement (Netemeyer, Burton, and Lichtenstein 1995)</b>	<b>.774</b>
X28	In a professional sense, I am a very successful person.	
X29	My achievements are highly recognized by others.	
X30	I am an accomplished person.	
X31	I am a good example of professional success.	
X32	Others wish they were as successful as me.	

Notes: \* denotes item required reverse coding.

## 5. Analysis and Results

Prior to carrying out the data analysis, an inspection of the responses was conducted to check for missing data. Of the 387 responses obtained, 22 questionnaires were discarded because they contained excessive missing data. Thus, the results of this present study are based on 365 responses. We analyzed the data using SPSS software version 15. Although the constructs we used have been rigorously tested for validity and reliability by the original authors, we assessed for reliability of these constructs as we used them in a different country market. The scale items and reliability is presented in Table 1. We found the materialism and vanity constructs are reliable at acceptable levels (Cronbach's alphas ranged from .53 to .89). Hence, we averaged the items under each construct to form a single item measure (e.g., all four items under *personal materialism* were averaged to form a single item measure "*personal materialism*"). Then, in order to assess the effects of categorical variables on these constructs, we used independent sample t-test procedure in SPSS. We present the results in Table 2 and describe these results in the following sections.

**Table 2**  
**Mean Evaluations**

		<i>Personal materialism</i>	<i>General materialism</i>	<i>Concern for physical appearance</i>	<i>View of physical appearance</i>	<i>Concern for achievement</i>	<i>View of achievement</i>
<i>Gender</i>	Male (n=209)	4.95 (1.14)	2.88 (1.21)	4.94** (1.15)	4.48*** (1.06)	4.76*** (1.06)	5.04* (0.87)
	Female (n=146)	5.02 (1.14)	2.60 (1.16)	4.95 (1.15)	4.26 (1.19)	4.54 (1.18)	4.67 (1.01)
<i>Nationality</i>	Arab (n=83)	5.05 (1.09)	2.68 (1.06)	5.12*** (1.11)	4.72* (0.94)	4.92** (0.94)	5.09** (0.92)
	Non-Arab (n=240)	4.98 (1.16)	2.68 (1.16)	4.86 (1.16)	4.32 (1.17)	4.32 (1.17)	4.82 (0.95)
<i>Religion</i>	Muslim (n=120)	5.12*** (1.10)	2.85 (1.25)	5.11 (1.13)	4.49*** (1.06)	5.02* (1.09)	5.00** (0.92)
	Christian (n=110)	4.83 (1.17)	2.64 (1.12)	4.96 (1.13)	4.22 (1.24)	4.46 (1.14)	4.75 (0.98)
<i>Years in Dubai</i>	> = 7 (n=90)	4.93 (1.12)	2.78 (1.16)	5.01 (1.17)	4.33 (0.97)	4.91** (1.11)	4.89 (0.96)
	< 7 (n=184)	5.03 (1.11)	2.62 (1.07)	5.02 (1.10)	4.38 (1.11)	4.60 (1.08)	4.86 (0.94)

\*Significantly higher at the p-value of 0.01 level

\*\*Significantly higher at the p-value of 0.05 level

\*\*\*Significantly higher at the p-value of 0.1 level

Note: Mean evaluations are based on a 7-point scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. Standard deviations in parentheses

### 5.1. Effects of Arab vs. Non-Arab Nationalities on materialism and vanity

The results indicate that there is no statistically reliable difference between Arabs and Non-Arabs in regards to materialism. However, in terms of vanity, Arabs tend to demonstrate more vanity orientation than non-Arabs across all subscales of vanity and the results are statistically significant. The biggest difference is in terms of *view of physical appearance* where Arabs rated at 4.72 while non-Arabs rated at 4.32 ( $p < 0.01$ ). These results are discussed in the discussion section. An interesting observation we made in regards to Arab vs. Non-Arab taxonomy is that the standard deviation for non-Arabs are consistently higher than that of Arabs across all six constructs we examined. We attribute this observation to the fact that

non-Arabs come from a range of different backgrounds including Asian, Europe, and South America, who might have collectively disagreed amongst themselves as to their responses. This also enhances the reliability and validity of the data we collected from a non-technical, substantive point of view.

### ***5.2. Effects of gender on materialism and vanity***

As presented in Table 2, the results indicate that there is no gender difference when it comes to materialism neither *personal* nor *general*. However, both males and females have higher levels of *personal materialism* (m 4.95 and 5.02) than *general materialism* (m 2.88 and 2.60). When it comes to *vanity*, interestingly, males demonstrate more *vanity* orientation than females across all four subscales and these results are statistically significant. We discuss the implications of these findings in the discussion section.

### ***5.3. Effects of religion on materialism and vanity***

As presented in Table 2, even though there is no gender or nationality effect on materialism, religion has an effect on *personal materialism* ( $p < 0.1$ ) where Muslims tend to demonstrate more personal materialism than Christians do. This is an interesting finding since teachings of Islam emphasizes eternal pleasures of afterlife for sacrificing the abundance worldly possessions (reference needed). There is no difference between the Muslims and Christians in regards to general materialism and concern for physical appearance. However, along with personal materialism, Muslims also demonstrate more view of physical appearance ( $p < 0.1$ ), more concern for achievement ( $p < 0.01$ ), and more view of achievement ( $p < 0.05$ ) than Christians do. These findings are interesting and quite contrary to what the Western world believe about the Muslim world. Hence, these results are discussed in detail in the discussion section.

### ***5.4. Effects of acculturation on materialism and vanity***

Finally, we wanted to examine whether the level of acculturation is associated to materialism and vanity. Although acculturation is typically analyzed using qualitative approaches (reference), we used the number of years living in Dubai as a proxy for acculturation. Interestingly, as presented in Table 2, only *concern for achievements* is associated to acculturation ( $p < 0.05$ ) while other measures are statistically not significant. What this means is that those who have lived longer period in Dubai may tend to agree with statements like “I want others to look up to me for my accomplishments” more than those who have lived in Dubai relatively shorter period of time. This maybe attributable to “growth”, “success” and “accomplishments” oriented nature of Dubai. Having presented these results, now we move to discuss these findings in detail next.

## **6. Discussion**

This research notes a difference between non-Arab and Arab consumers in terms of vanity but not in terms of materialism. Although Muslim consumers express a higher level of personal materialism and men in general show a higher level of general materialism, this does not follow on the general Arab population. The Arab consumers do not express a different level of material values that the non-Arab consumers.

Our research also emphasizes that Arab consumers’ values toward vanity are similar to consumers who affiliate with the faith of Islam. Indeed, Muslim consumers as well as Arab consumers were found to express similar care for their physical appearance, concern for achievement and view of achievement. Such finding contributes to the growing literature on

religion and consumer behavior. In consumer behavior studies, religion is an essential element of social behavior. Religion is part of consumer culture and affects purchasing behavior. According to Bailey and Sood, the religious influence on consumption behavior is evident when we consider “the importance of fasting and feasting to patterns of food purchases, belief in taboos on clothing styles and activities of women, practices of personal hygiene related to purchases of toiletries and cosmetics, and influences on housing and entertainment patterns” (Bailey and Sood 1993, p. 328). The adherence to a particular religious group and its impact on consumer behavior has mainly been studied in North America looking at the dominant religion of Judaism, Catholicism and Protestantism (Hirschman 1983). Few researches have considered the impact of Islam on consumer behavior. Among the studies on the religion of Islam and its impact on shopping behavior, Bailey and Sood note that Islamic consumers tends to be less informed consumers (Bailey and Sood 1993). In a subsequent research, Bailey and Sood note that Islamic consumers are practical and innovative. In their research, Muslim consumers were found to give great importance to price deals, promotions and store credit facilities. In addition, Muslim consumers were found to try any new products once, they did not favor any particular brand and would not wait for other consumers to try a product themselves (Bailey and Sood 1993). In addition to these studies, our research demonstrates that Muslim consumers express a strong interest in their physical appearance, concern for achievement and view of achievement. From our analysis, the Muslim consumers scored higher than the Christian in the vanity scale.

## **7. Conclusion and Future Research**

During a 2004 ACR roundtable, numerous researchers raised the issue of scarcity of multi-cultural research in the marketing literature (Henderson and Motley 2004). The roundtable discussion mainly evolved around the difficulties of understanding global consumer culture and global consumer segments. Our research notes that the diffusion of global consumer culture in Dubai does not create an homogenous global consumer segment. Rather, global consumer culture offers a blueprint from which consumers can choose and bricole personalized cultural identities (Kjeldgaard and Askegaard 2006).

In regards to future research on the Arab world, the importance of tribalism and the diversity of religion should be addressed using the different perspectives of several subgroups of Islam, Christianity and Jewish. In addition, approaching the reality of women consumption behavior in the Arab world should be discussed both within and outside of the Islamic value system so that the Islamic perspective does not obscure the rich diversity in women’s lives in the Arab world. Finally, the Arab world offers a co-existence of affluence and poverty. The concept of inequality should be approached with regards to its sources and consequences on consumption behavior.

Another avenue for research would be to consider the influence of cross-cultural awareness on the process of acculturation to global consumer culture. According to McGregor, consuming from a global perspective means: ‘people become concerned with the impact of consumption and production on the environment’ (McGregor 1999, p. 39). In future studies, authors can question whether cross-national experiences in dominating global consumer culture will, in the long run, impact our informants’ appreciation to conservations, respect for tradition and indigenous knowledge. Under this view, cross-national experiences would gradually lead to becoming consumer-citizens (McGregor 1999) rather than global consumers.

## REFERENCE

- Alden, D.L., J. Steenkamp, and R. Batra (1999), "Brand Positioning Through Advertising in Asia, North America and Europe: The Role of Global Consumer Culture," *Journal of Marketing*, 63 (1), 75-87.
- Askegaard, Soren, Eric Arnould, and Dannie Kjeldgaard (2005), "Postassimilationist Ethnic Consumer Research: Qualifications and Extensions," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 32 (1), 160-70.
- Bailey, J.M. and J. Sood (1993), "The Effects of Religious Affiliation on Consumer Behavior: A Preliminary Investigation," *Journal of Managerial Issues*, 5 (3), 328-52.
- Bauman, Zygmunt (1998), *Globalization : The Human Consequences*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Bell, D. (1973), *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Burroughs, J.E. and Rindfleisch Aric (2002), "Materialism and Well-being: a conflicting values perspective," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 29 (3), 348-70.
- Cleveland, Mark and Michel Laroche (2007), "Acculturation to the Global Consumer Culture: Scape Development and Research Paradigm," *Journal of Business Research*, 60, 249-59.
- Craig, Samuel C. and Susan P. Douglas (2005), "Beyond National Culture: Implications of Cultural Dynamics for Consumer Research," *International Marketing Review*, 23 (3), 322-40.
- Durvasula, Srinivas and Steven Lysonski (2001), "Does Vanity describe other Cultures? A Cross cultural Examination of the Vanity Scale.," *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 35 (1), 180-99.
- El-Adly, Mohammed Isnail (2007), "Shopping Malls Attractiveness: A segmentation approach," *International Journal of Retailing and Distribution Management*, 35 (11), 936-50.
- Fukuyama, Francis (1993), *The end of history and the last man*. New York: Avon Books.
- Henderson, Geraldine R. and Carol M. Motley (2004), "Is it Worth It? If So, Research it: Exploring the Place of Diversity Research in Marketing," *Advances in Consumer Research*, 31 (1), 225.
- Hirschman, Elizabeth C (1983), "Religious Affiliation and Consumption Processes," *Research in Marketing*, 6, 131-70.
- Inglehart, Ronald (1990), *Culture shift in advanced industrial society*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- (1997), *Modernization and postmodernization : cultural, economic, and political change in 43 societies*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Kjeldgaard, Dannie and Soren Askegaard (2006), "The Glocalization of Youth Culture: The Global Youth Segment as Structures of Common Differences," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 33 (September), 231-47.

Lerman, Dawn and Sarah Maxwell (2006), "Joining a consumer society: Russian immigrant versus American materialism," *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 5 (6), 479-90.

Lindridge, A. (2005), "Religiosity and the Construction of a Cultural-Consumption Identity," *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 22 (3), 142-51.

Mason, R.S. (1981), *Conspicuous Consumption*. New York, NY: St Martin's Press.

McGregor, S.L.T. (1999), "Consumers and the Global Marketplace," *Journal of Consumer Studies and Home Economics*, 23 (1), 37-45.

Mick, David G. (1996), "Are Studies of Dark Side Variables Confounded by Socially Desirable Responding: The Case of Materialism," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 23 (September), 106-99.

Netemeyer, R., Scott Burton, and D.R. Lichtenstein (1995), "Trait Aspects of Vanity: Measurement and Relevance to Consumer Behavior," *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 21 (March), 612-25.

Oppenheim, Lois Hecht (2003), "Latin America and the Cultural Consequences and Contradiction of Globalization," *Perspectives on Global Development and Technology*, 2 (1), 54-77.

Penaloza, Lisa (1989), "Immigrant Consumer Acculturation," *Advances in Consumer Research*, 16, 110.

Rakow, Lana (1992), *Women making meaning : new feminist directions in communication*. New York: Routledge.

Richins, M. L. (1987), "Media, Materialism, and Human Happiness," *Advances in Consumer Research*, 11, 291-97.

Richins, M. L. and S. Dawson (1992), "A Consumer Values Orientation for Materialism and Its Measurement: Scale Development and Validation," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 19, 303-15.

Roberts, James A., Chris Manolis, and John F. Jeff Jr. Tanner (2006), "Adolescent autonomy and the impact of family structure on materialism and compulsive buying," *Journal of marketing theory and practice*, 14 (4), 301-14.

---- (2003), "Family structure, materialism, and compulsive buying: a re-inquiry of Rindfleisch et al. (1997)," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 31 (3), 300-11.

Rose, Paul and Stephanie P. DeJesus (2007), "A Model of motivated cognition to account for the link between self-monitoring and materialism," *Psychology & Marketing*, 24 (2), 93-115.

Samuels J, Bienvenu OJ, III, Riddle MA (2002), "Hoarding in obsessive compulsive disorder: results from a case-control study. ," *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 40, 517–28.

Simadi, Faye A. (2006), "The United Arab Emirates youths (UAEU) Between Modernity and Traditionalism," *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 26 (3/4), 172-84.

Wee, Thomas Tan Tsu (1999), "An Exploration of a Global Teenage Lifestyle in Asian Society," *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 16 (4), 365-75.