An Investigation into Cultural Influences on Consumer Behavior with regards to Propaganda Textiles during World War II

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of the requirements for the degree
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This thesis titled
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Propaganda Textiles during World War II

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Abstract

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An Investigation into Cultural Influences on Consumer Behavior with regards to Propaganda Textiles during World War II

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The purpose of this paper was to understand the nature, or the mindset, pertaining to women that were the leading consumer base during World War II regarding the years between 1935 to 1945. The theoretical framework in the research is used to illustrate the motives behind female consumer behavior during this time period; one of the theories included Harry Triandis’s theory of interpersonal behavior which is comprised of social behavior relations involving the consumer field. Solomon Asch’s theory of conformity is also utilized in this study to demonstrate the context of cultural influences among the participants. The focus of the research was on the purchases of propaganda textiles which consist of any clothing item or cloth that adorned the body that had political or military inspiration.

This study included a mixed methods analysis containing a holistic view that encompassed past and present explanations that surround cultural influence pertaining to consumerism, then subsequently relating these theories and ideas to a past cultural experiences concentrating on World War II. It was found that the participants did support propaganda textiles on a small scale; for example, buying USO scarves, even though the women did not refer to these items as propaganda textiles. Fashion choices relating to conformity of what their peers were wearing, such as the use of leg paint, as well as
certain items being rationed during the war were significant themes that emerged from
the respondents interviewed.

This research provides further comprehension into future studies relating to
fashion and times of conflict or war pertaining to women. This study was limited to
women living mostly in the South-East Ohio region. Further study would include women
from more geographical diverse areas as well as researching different generations of
women during times of conflict.

Approved: _____________________________________________________________

Schuyler Cone

Assistant Professor of Human and Consumer Science Education
This research is dedicated to all the women that were kind enough to be participants in this study, as well as all the rest of the women belonging to Jo and Kate’s generation.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

The study of available products that are produced for the purpose of consumption in a particular culture at any given moment in time offers a unique perspective into the predominant cultural ideals of that period (Solomon & Rabolt, 2009). The purpose of this paper is to investigate the nature, or the mindset, of women who were the consumer base in America during World War II. The value it adds to the field of consumer behavior pertaining to women during World War II and the lack of current information thereof is an important aspect of this research. It is a holistic view encompassing the current explanations surrounding cultural influence and consumerism and then relating these theories and ideas to past cultural experiences focusing on World War II using both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Culture can be seen as the accumulation of shared rituals, meanings, and traditions within the members of a society; culture can also be viewed as a lens through which consumers observe products they wish to buy (Solomon & Rabolt, 2009). Propaganda textiles are important not only for their design value but also for their part in reflecting the political and popular culture of their time (Atkins, 2004). For the purpose of this study propaganda textiles refer to any article of clothing that was worn on the body that was militaristic in silhouette or supported American involvement in the war. Some examples would include handkerchiefs with American images on them, women’s suits that included the Eisenhower-style jacket, or the large military overcoats for females. In America the textiles were seen as part of the Home front material culture of wartime and were often referred to as Home front textiles; presently,
these particular textiles are referred to as propaganda textiles (Atkins, 2004). In this paper the terms Home front textiles and propaganda textiles may be used interchangeably. The American Home front textiles and fabrics were produced from about 1935 until 1945 (Atkins, 2004).

Presently, consumption can be interpreted as an important cultural and social practice throughout time with consumers looked upon as autonomous complex beings who are capable of making their decisions (Crane, 2010). However, studies have shown that the behavior of an individual can be swayed by group culture, shared norms, or social controversies; subsequently, these influences of consumer thought can influence decision making with regards to the individual (Crane, 2010).

Given the opportunity to conduct research on consumer behavior pertaining to an older generation who had their own culture, as every generation before and after, the following research questions were identified:

- How will this provide insight into World War II culture and the role of propaganda textiles among young women of the time?
- What role did propaganda textiles play within the American culture during World War II?
- Is there a correlation between fashion choices and times of conflict?
- Was rationing of various goods and textiles during the war a factor in consumer behavior of young women during the time of World War II?
- Did women see propaganda textiles as a type of status symbol?
Definition of terms

*Propaganda.* Any form of persuasion to action (Asch, 1952).

*Propaganda textiles.* Any article of clothing that was worn on the body that was militaristic in design or supported American involvement in the war (i.e. a scarf with the national emblem on it).

*Culture.* The accumulation of shared rituals, meanings, and traditions within the members of a society (Solomon & Rabolt, 2009).

*Consumer behavior.* Reflects decisions with respect to the procurement of goods by an individual over a particular period of time (Hoyer & Macinnis, 2009).
Chapter 2: Review of Literature

A consumer’s culture has substantial influence on his or her lifestyle choices. Learning as much as possible about differences in cultural norms and preferences from all cultures, past and present, provides insight into motives for behavior (Solomon & Rabolt, 2009). Investigating the material goods that women bought for public display and personal decoration during 1935 to 1945 reflects Thorstein Veblen’s conspicuous consumption theory to address the research objective pertaining to fashion choices of women and times of conflict; in this case, World War II. The two theoretical frameworks that will be used in the research consist of Solomon Asch’s theory of conformity and Harry Triandis’s theory of interpersonal behavior (Asch, 1955; Triandis, 1979). Foundation theories are presented in the review of literature that follows.

Cultural influence on consumer behavior

Consumer behavior, in general, pertains to consumer buying decisions, as well as the aspects that affect the choices consumers make (Rowley, 1999). A mixture of factors can influence the behavior of consumers; examples can include subjective factors which pertain to personal values, environments that people live in, or social status (Crane, 2010). Therefore, it can be argued that a consumer’s personality can be defined through what products he or she chooses to use in his/her respective environments (Sirgy, 1982). Culture can then be approached from the perspective of a person’s experience where a researcher can take the view that nothing exists except that particular experience, therefore, one cannot know culture without knowing how the contemporaries of any particular culture experienced and interpreted their respective culture (Graebner, 1998).
Public self-consciousness can be seen as a cultural trait since it refers to an awareness of oneself as a social object, represented by concern over appearance and social interaction within the person’s respective environment (Schroeder, 1996). Many consumers are likely to involve themselves with a consumption pattern that is in conformity with their ideals or their mental identities; these identities refer to groups of mindsets that the individual creates in order to fit into his/her particular social environments (Crane, 2010). In other words, a person’s disposition towards his or her social environment can only be understood in relation to other types of attitudes; research has pointed out that individuals can have multiple identities when it pertains to buying behavior, and Crane tends to define the social environment identity as “the set of meanings attached to the self as the person interacts with the natural environment” (Crane, 2010, p. 378).

There are two concepts with regards to this research concerning consumer social influence research: (a) reference group influence, where scholars have focused on creating a classification of a brand or the product decisions that differ in their receptiveness to social influence; (b) individual differences, used for finding individual or group differences in consumer interpersonal influence (Schroeder, 1996). Within this context, normative influence refers to the group’s power to affect behavior of the individual by setting norms of conduct for the consumer – formal and informal; normative influence can be applied to fashion where, for the most part, normative influence refers to following the norm to fit in (Schroeder, 1996).
Veblen, Asch and conformity

Sociologist Thorstein Veblen became famous for his research focusing on possessions of consumers at the turn of the twentieth century (Sandine, 2010). According to Veblen’s concept of conspicuous consumption, the belongings we possess inform others where we are positioned in the social hierarchy (Sandine, 2010). With regards to individual appearance, Veblen had cited clothing as a good example of conspicuous consumption: he stated that “the function of dress [is to provide] evidence of the ability to pay.” (Sandine, 2010). Theorist Herbert Blumer suggested something similar in that consumer choices are most likely not about status improvement within a particular society but about conformity; everyone wants the latest thing in order to feel like a part of something bigger than himself or herself (Sandine, 2010). This led to Asch’s theory of conformity which states that an individual can be swayed by the majority whether the direction is right or wrong, in most cases (Bond & Smith, 1996).

Humans possess the capacity to understand something of the character of another person and to form an idea of him/her as a human being which makes him/her feel connected to that person, which is a precondition of belonging to a group within the socially structured life (Asch, 1943). There is the belief that life in any particular society requires consensus as an essential condition for survival; but for consensus to be productive within a particular society, it needs each person to contribute independently out of his/her own experience and insight (Asch, 1955). However, when consensus falls under the dominance of conformity, such as a time of conflict, the social process can
become distorted and that same person yields the powers on which his/her functioning as a feeling and thinking being depends on the group norm (Asch, 1955).

When consumer behavior pertains to World War II and the related cultural influences, the role of the political consumer, as she will be called in this paper, buying some types of products rather than others creates a statement about her political viewpoints and choices (Crane, 2010). Consumers exercise control over the manufacture of goods in two ways: 1) acting communally as members of social movements, in relation with non-governmental organizations, 2) acting as individuals in the practice of making individualized shopping choices (Crane, 2010). The idea was that the public will not only view the act of consumption merely for personal fulfillment, but also identify politically with certain products made during the war that signaled support for a specific way of life (Soper, 2008).

Triandis’ model

New research has developed a framework for the examination of cultural influences on consumer buying behavior by investigating the psychological processes that may intervene (Lee, 2000). Triandís’s theory of interpersonal behavior involves observing responses of individuals pertaining to: the intention of the consumption, habitual responses of the individual, and daily conditions that the individual finds himself/herself living in (Triandis, 1979). Harry Triandis developed a model that consists of subjective culture and social behavior relations that has now been adapted to be used in the consumer behavior field (Lee, 2000). This model creates a link between culture and social behavior through the psychological processes that are involved in order to make a
decision (Lee, 2000). It focuses on the relationship between attitudes, values, and other socially learned behavioral characteristics (Triandis, 1979). Triandis identified three factors, or variables, that can affect social behavior: subjective culture, behavioral situation, and past experiences (Lee, 2000).

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 1.** An adaption of Triandis model from Lee’s research.

The first, subjective culture can be calculated through conglomeration of an individual consumer’s norms, associations, roles, and values; in other words, it is a person’s point of view (Triandis, 1979). Next there is the past experience variable, which represents an individual’s habits through customs; in consumer behavior, it has to do with product familiarity or prior knowledge of the product that is going to be purchased (Lee, 2000). Lastly, situation represents the consumers’ observations of the availability of
resources, such as time or disposable income; this is expected to influence the purchase intentions of the product (Lee, 2000).

The first three variables are linked to a consumer’s attitude toward the purchase of a product through the next six variables, which do not necessarily have to follow the same order all the time (Lee, 2000). The first factor is habits which represent the behaviors that have become nearly automatic with little thought from the consumer (Lee, 2000). Purchase affect is the second factor, this has to do with the emotional response in the consumer at the moment of purchase; the consumer’s attitude toward the product represents the importance of the characteristics of that product (Lee, 2000). Following that is usually the perceived purchase consequences which refers to the outcome of actions if the product was purchased; the fifth factor is self-definitions which is the way the individual sees himself/herself pertaining to the buying of the product (Lee, 2000). Lastly the consumer might worry about the referent expectations which represents the alleged expectations of the in-group the consumer considers himself/herself to be a part of (Lee, 2000).

**World War II culture & consumer behavior**

American media was focused on promoting wartime efforts through use of propaganda resulting in uniting the country (Horten, 1996). Widespread consumer use of radios and newsreels that were shown in movie theaters increased people’s access to information about war related activities in the Far East and Europe (Buljung, 2010). The Office of War Information authorized photos from manufacturing plants that were similar to fashion magazine spreads as part of its propaganda campaign to show women that they
could accomplish their patriotic duty without having to surrender their femininity (Get a War Job!). Also, sympathy for China was strong in America, they had been fighting a civil war between the Communists and the Nationalists as well as an external war against the Japanese for quite a few years by 1935 (Atkins, 2004).

The classic image of North American women during World War II consisted of a good-looking, smiling, and confident woman wearing overalls, with a blowtorch or wrench in her hand. This archetype - most often referred to as Rosie the Riveter in America or the Bren Gun Girl in Canada, who manufactured lightweight machine guns in Toronto - was shaped and used by the media throughout the war to facilitate recruitment of women in large numbers into the labor-starved war factories and industries (Scheinberg, 1994; Fonow, 2003). The booming war economy but lack of man power available meant women were offered job positions formerly only available to men, this included jobs in accounting or banks, auditing, bookkeeping, or even supervisors of other women (England & Boyer, 2009).

In 1942 the quantity of economic activity allocated to war production grew from 15 to 33 percent and by the end of 1944 federal spending for goods and services surpassed the total product of the U.S. economy in 1933 (Blum, 1976). Also during this time period, Women’s Land Armies (WLA) were established in the United States, Canada, Britain, and New Zealand; their primary function was to ensure the sustained production of essential food product while male farmers were deployed into the armed services (De La Haye, 2008). By 1943 those involved in the WLA in the United States
numbered 75,884 and of these were 49,510 women who worked in agriculture (De La Haye, 2008).

By the end of 1945 more than eighteen million women, a quarter of them married, held jobs in various lines of work (Whitman, 1993). These jobs included work in automotive factories, work in electrical manufacturing plants, clerical and bookkeeping activities in offices, as well as teaching (Milkman, 1987; Burstein, 1994). Wage-earning mothers constituted 36 percent of the labor force by the end of the war (Boris & Orleck, 2011). As a result of this, work and family balance became a labor issue; double day with publicly supported child care and flexible hours for working women were implemented to give women more freedom to earn money (Boris & Orleck, 2011).

The notion that the war liberated women was argued by some, stating instead that the recruitment of women to work outside their house was to be only for the extent of the war and was not a concession to the idea of a woman’s right to work (Scheinberg, 1994). It was an economic necessity, instead of a change in outlooks or domestic ideology at the state level, that decided the occupational choices of most women who worked for a living during this period of time (Scheinberg, 1994). At first, women’s pay in the labor force was usually one-third to one-half less than it was for men doing the same job; but in 1942 the National War Labor Board, answering to years of lobbying by labor feminist groups, created a policy of equal pay for men and women performing the same jobs during the war (Boris & Orleck, 2011).

The ration of textiles and clothing, along with commonplace items such as food, were reminders of the sacrifices made during the war. In America, guidelines called the
L-85 Regulations restricted the amount of cloth that could be used in an article of clothing, eliminating items such as extra pockets and vests in clothing during this time period (Atkins, 2004; Tortora & Eubank, 2002). The War Production Board, concerned about wool supplies early in March 1942, issued this order prohibiting men’s suits from including such things as an extra pair of trousers, a vest or cuffs, and calling for the manufacturers to only make single-breasted jackets with narrow lapels (Blum, 1976).

Most American Home front textiles were made into dress goods and women’s accessories such as handkerchiefs and scarves, the latter being popular during the war years; these textiles provided a fashionable and sensible way to protect a woman’s hair from dirt and danger (like moving parts) in factory settings (Atkins, 2004). Designing of fabrics was an integral part of most Home front propaganda, and it was especially important in textiles if the intended audience was to be influenced to buy and wear them (Atkins, 2004).

**World War II fashion and cultural influences**

Dominant fashions during the war years symbolized a woman’s increased mobility and departure from old-fashioned roles; she had more freedom to express herself as well as a disposable income to buy material goods (Hartman, 1982).

Although not normally thought of as instruments of propaganda, clothing items can become ideal public and personal instruments used to express patriotic viewpoints, serving as indicators of conformity to the national agenda and offering support for military and political goals (Atkins, 2004). Images of real people such as Winston Churchill, Franklin Roosevelt, and General MacArthur, as well as national symbols, such
as Uncle Sam for America and John Bull for Britain, were everywhere (Akins, 2004). It is important to point out that these textiles were seen as morale builders that encouraged citizens to participate fully in the ‘total war’ effort; these messages delivered through their captivating graphics were in every way as important as aesthetics and design (Atkins, 2004).

**Figure 2.** Author’s contextual application of Lee’s model with regards to how a consumer might have gone about purchasing propaganda textiles during World War II.

In America, wartime suits for women might have included an Eisenhower jacket, which was based on military jackets in cut and style and named after the Supreme Allied Commander (Tortora & Eubank, 2002). Also, in America, Belding Fabrics created a series of women’s dress textiles with Chinese motifs that printed in its selvedges that five percent of all sales would be donated for ‘China relief’ (Atkins, 2004).
Most examples of the American fabrics were mass produced and were, with exception of a few woven textiles, printed (Atkins, 2004). American Home front textiles were mostly sold through department stores and mail order catalogues (Atkins, 2004).

During World War II the use of propaganda was one of the nation’s most valuable motivational tools, particularly with regards to Home front activities (Atkins, 2004). The government began to use any and all probable avenues in the popular and material culture – cinema, radio, the press, children’s literature, commercial art, as well as textiles (Atkins, 2004). Such textiles served as influential but mute records of patriotic and nationalistic commitment, and so it is equally suitable to refer to these fabrics as propaganda textiles; the number of designs created indicates that patriotism was not the only motivation but that public demand also promoted their production (Atkins, 2004). These textiles were neither made by nor mandated by the government; they were made by leading manufacturers as specialty fabrics of their broader textile lines, intended to attract the individual’s patriotic impulses of consumerism (Atkins, 2004). In consumerism, especially during this time period, there was an attempt to accommodate symbolic dimensions of human need by physically purchasing an item in hopes that it would help whatever cause the individual believed in (Soper, 2008).
Chapter 3: Methodology

To investigate the cultural influences on consumer behavior during World War II, a mixed method was applied. The data will also be evaluated quantitatively through an analysis of data. The data for the research was analyzed qualitatively through content analysis to determine noticeable themes and prominent trends. The methodology used in this study is encapsulated in the subsequent sections.

Pilot study

To construct an efficient survey and to cultivate particular questions to investigate for this research, a pilot study was completed in the form of a case study on one woman; this study was named Case Study on Cultural Influences on World War II. The purpose of the case study was to refine what questions generated the most expressive answer from the participant with regards to fashion and World War II. Because the study involves a ‘new’ term associated with clothing and textiles from the WW II era – propaganda – some of the questions had to be worded in such a way that the participant would explain what she wore instead of answering a specific question about propaganda clothing and textiles.

After obtaining approval (Appendix A) from the Ohio University Institutional Review Board (IRB), a participant was recruited through a family member. One interview session was held. The case study generated ideas that were then implemented in the current study. The participant, Eve*, was given a survey that consisted of qualitative components (Appendix B). Eve expressed great interest in her country and was very patriotic. Eve had volunteered as a flight nurse in England during World War II which led

*Name changed to protect anonymity
to questions about militaristic clothing having more relevance in the current research than originally planned. Previous to the pilot study, the researcher had not taken into consideration the variety of jobs available to women and how drastically that could affect clothing choices during this era. It has been inferred, from this case study that clothing seemed to be seen as more of a utilitarian necessity to women in some instances, pertaining to jobs, than before World War II had begun or after it had ended.

Current study

Following the clarification of importance to the questions in the pilot study, the survey was refined to include explanations of some of the questions asked to the participants. Due to the investigative characteristics of this research, the survey is designed to produce both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative part of the survey was intended to corroborate the questions given in the qualitative section of the survey. As stated above, the research involves a ‘new’ term associated with clothing and textiles from the WW II era – propaganda – that was given to describe certain features of some clothing and textiles post WWII. Some of the questions had to be worded in such a way that the participant would illustrate what she wore during that era instead of answering an explicit question about propaganda clothing and textiles. The current definition of the term propaganda textiles was given in the consent form that is reviewed before the survey takes place.

The questions in the quantitative section were scored on a five point Likert scale. The questions were based on agreement scales with choices ranging from one to five (1 = strongly agree; 5 = strongly disagree). The study is measuring attitude and behavior along
with the participant’s view of patriotism with regards to World War II. A low score appears to equate to high patriotism and a high score seems to equate to a less patriotic behavior or attitude.

The questions that requested responses on a scale of one to five were:

- I supported the United States joining the Allies in 1941 to fight against the Axis powers.
- I supported Franklin Roosevelt in the 1940 presidential election.
- I would have considered myself a fashionable and trendy young woman during the war in the 1940s.
- I bought what I considered the latest fashion when I had the opportunity to do so during the war.
- I would pay attention to the fashion that my friends would wear and try to imitate it.
- If I had the chance I would buy clothing items or accessories that clearly stated support for U.S. involvement in World War II (i.e. A scarf with our national emblem on it).
- I wore a coat or bought one similar to the white one in the picture:
Figure 3. Picture for statement, “I wore a coat or bought one similar to the white one in the picture.”

- I wore or bought an outfit similar to the one in the picture:

Figure 4. Picture for statement, “I wore or bought an outfit similar to the one in the picture.”

- I wore or bought a scarf similar to the one in the picture:
Figure 5. Picture for statement, “I wore or bought a scarf similar to the one in the picture.”

- I wore or bought a dress similar to the one in the picture:

Figure 6. Picture for statement, “I wore or bought a dress similar to the one in the picture.”

The qualitative portion of the investigation included demographic questions based on age, geographic location, and marriage status during World War II, which were included for evaluation reasons:
• What year were you born?

• Where did you live during World War II?

• Were you married or single during WWII? If married, what was your husband’s occupation?

The following open-ended questions were also developed in the qualitative portion in order to garner informative or illustrative answers from the respondents:

• Did you have a job in or outside the home during World War II? What was your job?

• What were the names of some of the stores that you would shop at? What type of stores were they? (department stores, five-and-dime stores, etc)

• What was acceptable for women to wear during this time, in your opinion?

• Did you mostly buy clothing or make your own clothing during WWII?

• If you made your own clothing, did you buy fabric that had an American theme (i.e. flags, stripes) or did you recycle old clothes into new ones?

• Did you ever buy anything that had a political/patriotic image on it? (examples would include stars & stripes, General Patton on a handkerchief, etc.) If so, could you describe it please? How often did you wear this item?

• Did you ever buy items that you thought represented a militaristic silhouette? (broad shoulders, the Eisenhower jacket look, etc.) If so, could you describe it please? How often did you wear this item?

• What were your clothing needs during World War II? Did you buy shirts and skirts and coats?
• Describe your level of patriotism during World War II? Did you buy clothing that reflected your level of patriotism?

• How did clothing rations affect your consumption behaviors during the war?

• Have you ever heard of/did you use the term Home front Textiles/clothing? If so, what does that term mean to you, or what did it mean to you then?

• The L 85 Regulation Act restricted the use of excess materials or eliminated the use of certain materials in women’s dress/accessories starting in 1942. Were you aware of this act? If so, how did you feel about it with regards to your fashion decisions?

• Do you have any distinct memories of clothing or fashion trends during WWII?
  Could you describe the item?

Recruiting and consent

Preceding the procurement of participants, approval was granted through the Ohio University Institutional Review Board (IRB) (Appendix C). Women of a mature age were the target participants for this research; this includes any woman that was born in 1929 or before. The reason for this is so the women interviewed had reached the age of sixteen by the year 1945 and can remember the fashion choices they had made as teenagers. Therefore, a convenient sample was taken from various sources including social events involving the target group of women, personal introductions done by researcher, and recommendations for possible participants through people known by researcher for enlisting participants. The researcher also made flyers (Appendix D) to distribute to local churches, retirements homes, as well as the local senior citizens community center.
Consent was addressed before the interview took place; each participant was given a written consent form that attended to the purpose of the study, definitions that the participant would encounter in the questionnaire, as well as contact information of the researcher. There were no risks or benefits that were anticipated during the survey. All participants were informed that their personal information would be kept confidential.

Credibility measures in current research

In order to substantiate the present study, a series of credibility measures were utilized. The first was the use of several viewpoints, including Asch and Triandis, through theory triangulation (Brantlinger, Jimenez, Klingner, Pugach, & Richardson, 2005). The second measure involved first level member checks where three participants were shown their transcribed interviews in order to authenticate the transcriptions (Brantlinger, et. al., 2005). Thick detailed description was the third credibility measure used in the research that entailed adequate use of quotes to elucidate the explanations and conclusions within the study (Davis, 1991).

Data evaluation

The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS to determine frequency of answers as well as other descriptive statistics including the mode of each quantitative answer. However, due to the exploratory nature of the research, content analysis of the data were the primary evaluation method employed. The qualitative data were analyzed using a phenomenological approach (Best & Kahn, 2003). Portions of the participants’ narrative were divided into meaning unit indicators in order to develop emergent themes (Wertz, 2011). Indicators for coding consisted of viewpoints held by participants,
participants’ perception about objects, activities, and social structures (Creswell, 2009). Asch’s theory of conformity and the variables of Triandis’s theory of interpersonal behavior served as references for the participants’ responses being classified.
Chapter 4: Results

Demographics of participants

As described in Chapter 3, data were analyzed with accordance to the research questions. Twenty-three women agreed to participate in the current research study in which the data were derived. All survey participants in the research were age eighteen or older. In order to present the respondents’ answers, and where they lived, in context to World War II, their age was calculated to what it was in 1945 and is presented below. The average age of the participants by the end of the war in 1945 was 20.5. Table 1 presents a summary of the participants’ demographic profiles.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name*</th>
<th>Age spring 1945</th>
<th>Residence during WW II (1935-45)</th>
<th>Marital status During WW II</th>
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<tr>
<td>Annabelle</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Burlington, IA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Betsy</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Hazel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ida</td>
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<td>Joan</td>
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</tr>
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Table 1: Continued

Demographics of participants

<table>
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<th>Name</th>
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<td>Olivia</td>
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</table>

*Names have been changed for anonymity purposes

Table 2 represents the ages of the women as of February 2012. The average age of the women interviewed for this study was 87.5. Table 2 is presented below.
Table 2

Current ages of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<th>Name</th>
<th>Current age (as of Feb. 2012)</th>
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<td>Fae</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lara</td>
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</table>

Were women politically aware during World War II?

On a scale of one (strongly agree) to five (strongly disagree), participants were asked whether they agreed with the statement, “I supported the United States joining The Allies in 1941 to fight against the Axis powers.” The mode was one, strongly agree; thirteen women represented this strong agreement. Figure 7 demonstrates this distribution. As Joan stated, “everybody strongly agreed; there wasn’t even any thought any other way.” Annabelle concurred with the perceived zeitgeist of the time for a much more personal reason: “Yes, I agreed because my husband was at Pearl Harbor [when it was attacked] and so we felt we had to do something.” There was little talk of dissent among the women interviewed, though Hazel pointed out that she agreed at the time “but sometimes I wonder why,” referring in hindsight to her thoughts at the time and of the subsequent loss of her own brother during World War II.
Figure 7. Agreement frequencies regarding the statement, “I supported the United States joining The Allies in 1941 to fight against the Axis powers.”

On a scale of one (strongly agree) to five (strongly disagree), participants were asked the extent to which they agreed with the statement, “I supported Franklin Roosevelt in the 1940 presidential election.” The mode was zero, not applicable; nine participants did not believe that this statement was relevant to them, either because the participants were too young or did not vote. These women, therefore, did not answer the question. Six participants either stated that they were neutral or disagree, but few explained further. Edna did give some insight into her response by saying, “I probably wouldn’t have anyway because my people were Republicans.” Figure 8 shows this distribution.
Figure 8. Agreement frequencies regarding the statement, “I supported Franklin Roosevelt in the 1940 presidential election.”

Did these women conform to the theories of Asch or Triandis?

On a scale of one (strongly agree) to five (strongly disagree), participants were asked their reaction to the statement, “I would have considered myself a fashionable and trendy young woman during the war in the 1940s.” The mode was two, agree; eleven of the women agreed with the statement which indicates that most of the women did not believe that they were unfashionable. Figure 9 demonstrates this distribution. “Oh goodness knows we all tried,” Natalie pointed out. At the same time, these women did not spend the time or energy keeping up with the latest fashions. “Well, I’d never consider myself a fashionable [girl], but I didn’t consider myself unfashionable,” notes Lara. Five of the women answered disagree or strongly disagree; most stated that this was because some considered themselves “tomboys” when younger or, as Gale pointed out, “No, I was a country girl; you made your own clothes.”
Figure 9. Agreement frequencies regarding the statement, “I would have considered myself a fashionable and trendy young woman during the war in the 1940s.”

On a scale of one (strongly agree) to five (strongly disagree), participants were asked their reaction to the statement, “I bought what I considered the latest fashion when I had the opportunity to do so during the war.” The mode was two, agree; ten women had agreed with this statement. Figure 10 reveals this distribution. One woman did not feel that the question was applicable to her. Eight of the women answered disagree or strongly disagree, which might have indicated that these women did not consider fashion trends a high priority during World War II. As Marcy stated, “We didn’t do a lot of buying during the war.” On the other hand, thirteen of the women agreed or strongly agreed, which indicated that, despite rationing, these women still viewed trends in fashion an important part of their young lives.
Figure 10. Agreement frequencies regarding the statement, “I bought what I considered the latest fashion when I had the opportunity to do so during the war.”

On a scale of one (strongly agree) to five (strongly disagree), participants were asked their response to the statement, “I would pay attention to the fashion that my friends would wear and try to imitate it.” The mode was two, agree; eight women had agreed with this statement. Figure 11 shows the distribution. Five women disagreed; Betsy gives a good reason for this response, “I never was an imitator.” Five participants did not believe that their friends would affect what was worn either way. In contrast, eight women agreed and five women strongly agreed. Joan agreed too and took it one step further, discussing how she and a friend would listen to “Our Gal Sunday” radio shows and design clothes. “When it was summer, and this was during the war, my best friend and I sat for hours, day after day, and designed clothes for dolls.”
On a scale of one (strongly agree) to five (strongly disagree), participants were asked to react to the statement, “If I had the chance I would buy clothing items or accessories that clearly stated support for U.S. involvement in World War II (i.e. A scarf with our national emblem on it).” The mode was three, neutral; eleven out of the twenty-three women surveyed answered neutral, which indicated that almost half the women were possibly indifferent to wearing items that supported the war effort. Figure 12 demonstrates this distribution. The five that agreed and two that strongly agreed stated how the item mostly worn was some type of insignia pin that had been given to them. Quinn, though, had a vivid memory of a jacket she used to have: “We wore jean jackets and we painted POW on the back of it, prisoners of war; we thought we were so cool.” However, Natalie, who did wear a scarf with a Marine Corps emblem because her father was in the Marines, gave insight into why people would disagree with this statement: “There was not the mania for wearing stars and stripes then; that really would have been regarded as desecrating the flag.”
Figure 12. Agreement frequencies regarding the statement, “If I had the chance I would buy clothing items or accessories that clearly stated support for U.S. involvement in World War II (i.e. A scarf with our national emblem on it).”

Did these women buy propaganda clothing items?

On a scale of one (strongly agree) to five (strongly disagree), participants were asked to respond to the statement, “I wore a coat or bought one similar to the white one in the picture.” The mode was two, agree; ten women had agreed with the statement. Figure 13 demonstrates this distribution. One woman did not remember what style coat she had during this time and did not answer the question. The one woman that strongly disagreed grew up in Charlotte, North Carolina, and had no need for a heavy coat. Of the ten women that agreed and the five women that strongly agreed, a few had names for the coat. Betsy was the first, but not the last, to call it a “Chesterfield coat,” and Ida called it a “Reefer coat.”
Figure 13. Agreement frequencies regarding the statement, “I wore a coat or bought one similar to the white one in the picture.”

On a scale of one (strongly agree) to five (strongly disagree), participants were asked to respond to the statement, “I wore or bought an outfit similar to the one in the picture.” The mode was four, disagree; eight women had disagreed. One person did not feel that the question was relevant and did not answer this question. Lara, who was one of the women that agreed, said, “I had a green suit that looked very much like that.” Of the eleven that disagreed and strongly disagreed, Marcy might have pointed out a good reason for her response: “Everything was rationed.” Figure 14 reveals this distribution.
Figure 14. Agreement frequencies regarding the statement, “I wore or bought an outfit similar to the one in the picture.”

On a scale of one (strongly agree) to five (strongly disagree), participants were asked to respond to the statement, “I wore or bought a scarf similar to the one in the picture.” The mode was four, disagree; fifteen women had not agreed with the statement. Figure 15 demonstrates this distribution. One of the women did not think that the question was relevant to her and did not answer. Of the women that disagreed with this statement, no one gave a specific reason why, but Edna said, “I certainly recognize having seen those.” She then went on to say, “I don’t know that I had one, no.”
Figure 15. Agreement frequencies regarding the statement, “I wore or bought a scarf similar to the one in the picture.”

On a scale of one (strongly agree) to five (strongly disagree), participants were asked to respond to the statement, “I wore or bought a dress similar to the one in the picture.” The mode was four, disagree; fourteen women disagreed to the statement.

Figure 16 shows this distribution. Gale, who disagreed with this statement, pointed out that the dress looked like an issued uniform: “That’s maybe a WAC’s dress or something like that, that was during [that] time.” Another woman that agreed with this statement, Natalie, lived on a Marine base during part of World War II: “There were things that were parts of uniforms that we could buy at the PX (post exchange) even though we were not Marines...like beautiful heavy wool slacks, navy wool slacks that were for WAVES but civilians could buy them too.” She went on, referring directly to the dress in the survey, “My mother made some dresses that had epaulets and button pockets sort of like that one.”
Figure 16. Agreement frequencies regarding the statement, “I wore or bought a dress similar to the one in the picture.”

Qualitative results

“Did you have a job in or outside the home during World War II? What was your job?”

The majority of women interviewed did have some type of job during World War II. Of the twenty-three women, seventeen worked at some point and only six did not formally work. Of the six that did not work, two were stay-at-home mothers; the other four gave no reason. The seventeen that did work at some point during the war had jobs that ranged from babysitting to working in a bakery office to working in department stores. Fae talked about how she “entered into Cadet Nurse training in 1944 to 1947 since the government would pay for the training and it was the only way to get an education ‘on the cheap.’” Taryn, who worked at AT&T, had an interesting story: “I started as a messenger girl and then I went into what we used to call the computer department, which is nothing like computers now, and I worked on the machines that would print out the reports.” Rose had a different experience working at Western Union at the time:
In those days you would see so much of the boys and you would hear [stories]… I was chief operator [at Western Union] and when you would hear the six dings you know that meant a death [of a serviceman] and we had to take that out to the homes; it was horrible.

Some of the women who were teenagers during the war also had jobs, albeit, part-time or during the summer months. Wynne talked about how she worked on the weekends during high school:

My dad was a buyer for children’s shoes at O’Neil’s…on Saturdays [I worked] in his department but I didn’t sell anything. We were ‘tinge’ girls; the shoe fitters would fit the kids but then we would come in and write out the sales [slip] so they [the shoe fitters] could go on with another kid.

Even though it was not a question asked, six of the women made a point of saying they had gone to college at some point, and two of those women had gone into early childhood education. Vera was a general education teacher for grades one through three, and Kelly was a nursery school teacher.

“What were the names of some of the stores that you would shop at? What type of stores were they? (Department stores, five-and-dime stores, etc)”

One of the twenty-three women did not remember where she shopped during World War II. The various department stores listed by the other participants include JC Penney’s, Feinberg’s, Zenner’s, Stewart Dried Good Co., The Union, Lazarus, Elder’s (now Elder Beerman), Polsky’s, Woolworth’s, and Sears. Specific clothing stores listed by the women were Luckoff’s and Morehouse Fashion. Only Gale spoke about how she
shopped at the local general store: “It was out in the country on a hilltop and we shopped there.” Marcy and her family would take shopping excursions: “We would go to Shreveport twice a year to shop.” One of the reasons Marcy needed to go to Shreveport was to buy a fur coat as part of her uniform for higher academia:

I went to girls school and you can imagine how warm it is in south Arkansas…I was supposed have a fur coat for school. My mother would not let me go to the university [it was co-ed]; that was unseemly. So I spent two years at a girls school.

Some of the women shopped at certain stores because of the convenience of working there. “JC Penney’s…I’d mostly shop where I worked because I got a discount,” stated Annabelle. Joan, who worked at Lazarus, also shopped where she worked: “They would give you a discount of 10% and so I only bought [there], but because my mother made my clothes, I would only buy accessories.”

“What was acceptable for women to wear during this time, in your opinion?”

Some of the participants spoke about what was thought of as unacceptable for women to wear during this time. Of the twenty-three women, seven thought it was unacceptable to wear pants out in public unless a woman was camping or picnicking. As Quinn pointed out, “Well, women never wore pants…maybe Betty Grable wore them in the movies.” Taryn concurred with not wearing pants in public, lest she make her mother angry: “We certainly did not appear in jeans; my mother would’ve had a fit…We always kind of dressed for work.” Edna’s mother apparently felt the same way: “Women didn't wear pants very often, especially older women; my mother would not have been caught
dead in long pants out of her house!" Dorothy, who lived in a larger city during World War II and might have been more accustomed to seeing women in the service, said that "women wore pants among other things." Polly pointed out, “I think that some of the women [that you would see] had war jobs; they wore pants. That’s what I saw in the newspapers and pictures but not on any of the people I knew.” Ulla also agreed with that assessment: “We never wore slacks, and if they [women] did, it would be if they were in uniform or something. But mostly women wore suits.” A few of the women were more direct about what was deemed inappropriate at that time: “Well, we did not go around showing our boobs, and I don't know how to explain it; you just knew when it was unacceptable…When you saw someone that was dressed inappropriately, you knew,” stated Olivia. Joan added to that by saying, “You certainly wouldn't wear something that was considered outrageous…no boobies showing - now you did in the thirties - everybody did that then, but no cleavage during the war.”

Of the participants who spoke of what was deemed acceptable, skirts/dresses, hats and gloves were at the top of the list. Kelly’s statement echoed that of the other women interviewed: “I think decent length skirts and shoes that were modest, not real high heeled - not spikes, hats were pretty popular when you went out, hats and gloves in fact.” Ida, who lived in Kentucky, talked about when her mother would go shopping how she “always wore gloves, summer or winter.” Rose had the idea of the ideal acceptable outfit: “To go downtown you had to have shoes that matched your purse and your outfit - if you were fortunate enough to have shoes that matched your outfit then it was like dying and going to heaven!”
“Did you mostly buy clothing or make your own clothing during WWII?”

Out of the twenty-three women interviewed, thirteen women bought their clothes during this time. “At that time I mostly bought clothing; later on after I was married I made clothing. It was just me then and I was working and so I bought [clothes],” Annabelle stated. Wynne talked about how both of her parents worked as well: “My mom worked at BF Goodrich in the offices and my dad was down at O’Neil’s and she didn’t have a sewing machine.” Rose noted that she would sew drapes and other household items but bought her clothes because she did not trust her sewing skills: “I wouldn’t do the clothes because I did not want them to look home-made.”

Six of the other woman had clothes made for them by their mothers, and three others made their own clothes. Polly, who had a clothing allowance from her parents during the war, bought her clothes but also made some too: “I made my first, a blouse, in Home Ec. in eighth grade, then a dress in ninth grade and for ninth grade, I made a fair amount of my clothes.” She went on:

Since I had a clothing allowance, the only reason to save money would be to make it go farther, but it was more that I was interested in it… I bought most of my clothes, but I was making a fair amount of them too; the clothing selection was not as good during that period and fabric was not in good supply.

“If you made your own clothing, did you buy fabric that had an American theme (i.e. flags, stripes) or did you recycle old clothes into new ones?”

This question was asked of the nine women that either had clothes made for them or made their own. Of those nine respondents, only two remember items that had an
American theme; Natalie had a dress made “that was actually a Vogue pattern that had the epaulets and stuff.” Polly talked about a garment she made:

Well, I made a pinafore that was a red, white, and blue check that was in the magazines at that time. My mother was getting *American Home* [magazine] and they had women doing war things in the yard and a lot of times they were wearing pinafores and the high school students all…there were other high school students wearing pinafores.

When asked if she bought the fabric specifically because it was patriotic, Polly stated, “Well it’s not that I went out of my way. I just liked it. It might have been there because it was patriotic, but I liked it.”

Three of the nine women had, at some time, recycled old clothes into new ones; Clara told of how she took a man’s suit and altered it:

My boyfriend at the time, I remember that he had a beautiful tweed suit that got too small for him in college, and I turned it into a suit for me…completely remodeled it in to a suit for me. That was the year I married him.

“Did you ever buy anything that had a political/patriotic image on it? (examples would include stars & stripes, General Patton on a handkerchief, etc.) If so, could you describe it please? How often did you wear this item?”

Of the sixteen women who answered this question, eight of the participants spoke of not buying anything that had a political or patriotic image on it. “You didn't have to reflect your patriotism during this time,” Marcy stated. The eight other women that answered yes spoke about various accessories that had been bought, or received, during
the war years. Quinn spoke of small items she had: “We had hankies that had USO and USA on it, little memorabilia things.” Edna also shared:

I certainly wouldn't have been averse to it if I saw something that I could afford that I liked that had patriotic stuff on it. I certainly would have bought it - we were all very much into that war because we were attacked and we felt like we were the good guys and everybody that didn't like us were the bad guys.

Some of the women had items sent to them from servicemen: “I would get things…belonging to a USO I would get things from the guys, you know, pins with the Air Force eagle on it or the Navy anchor, something like that,” Taryn remembered. Sally agreed: “My brother was a naval officer; [he] would send me things like charm bracelets with Navy emblems on it and I wore that.” Kelly, who had also received “a real pretty Navy bracelet” from a neighbor, talked about how she “would be more apt to wear red white and blue clothing” during the war.

Rose and Wynne both have distinct memories of clothing items they had during World War II that reflected a political image. Rose talked about how she “took some WAC uniforms…I brought them back from the PX and I made sundresses out of that, my mother did.” For one Easter around 1940, Wynne and her sister had received “navy blue capes with gold applets on the shoulder” that she remembered wearing.

“Did you ever buy items that you thought represented a militaristic silhouette? (Broad shoulders, the Eisenhower jacket look, etc.) If so, could you describe it please? How often did you wear this item?”
Twenty participants answered this particular question; seven of the women remembered buying an item that had represented a militaristic silhouette. Natalie talked about how she would wear her father’s discarded Marine Corps shirts; “They were great and there was a period, if you were in high-school, you often wore an oversize shirt or a man's shirt of some sort.” Sally, too, had a story:

I remember a dress I had when I was a freshman in high school which would’ve [been] in 1941 or 1940…it was navy blue and it had brass buttons down here [center front of top], a whole row of brass buttons. There is something about it that looked militaristic, I don’t know… I don’t think I ever thought about it that way but yeah.

“Well when did Eisenhower jackets come in?” Olivia asked. She continued, “They were the short jackets…we wore jackets that were a little bit longer, though [than the Eisenhower jacket], and [it] had peplums.”

Thirteen of the women did not wear anything patriotic. Ida, who was a teenager during the war, explained why she did not have anything that represented a militaristic silhouette: “If I had maybe been older at the time, I daresay I probably would have, but when you’re a teenager, all you remember is everybody copied everyone else.” Kelly remembered being more ‘action oriented’ instead of wearing something militaristic:

My dad was in World War I too…My dad was in charge of the American Legion and I drove people [around] and put flags in yards and graves from the time I was six years old - patriotic yes, but I didn't wear anything [that represented patriotism].
Clara, who was the Home Economics major, spoke of her talents: “I wore whatever was fashionable at that time. I could adapt to the period of time being a Home Ec. major. We could adapt; we didn't have a lot of money to just go out and buy clothes.” It was here that Clara spoke of an upscale department store, Woofwyle, where customers could have stockings repaired:

It was outstandingly fashionable. One of the interesting things they did during World War II was that they [Woofwyle] would take nylon stockings and they could repair them, which was very important because they charge 10¢ a run…It didn't seem expensive if you had a pair of stockings to fix. If you had five little runs, it was only 50¢ to fix and you absolutely couldn't tell that they had mended them. We did a lot of that in World War II…I made a pair of stockings last a year. I remember I took them in when I would get a run. You didn't pitch'em, not then you didn't. I wore one pair of stockings for one year; the only pair stockings I had. Once they had a run I took them to this lady because I had moved away from Woofwyle, and she did it for a living and she would do it for 10¢ a run. That was a lucrative business for people because you were lucky if you owned two pairs [during the war].

“What were your clothing needs during World War II? Did you buy shirts and skirts and coats?”

Eight of the participants answered this question, and of those, four mainly bought clothes for work and the other four bought clothing primarily for school. For work the women wore quite a few “skirts, sweaters, jackets…” said Kelly. “More sweaters and
jackets for dress…a blouse and a sweater with ankle socks and brown shoes or saddle shoes [was the norm],” she continued. For school, Edna spoke of similar clothing needs: “Teenage girls bought pleated skirts; they were tacked down to about here [pointing to knee] and with pleats and sweaters that came down to there [pointing to waist]. It was almost like a uniform.”

“Describe your level of patriotism during World War II? Did you buy clothing that reflected your level of patriotism?”

All twenty-three of the women described their patriotism as “100%,” “supported the war totally,” “very patriotic,” or variations thereof. As Olivia pointed out, “We were patriotic as all hell.” Betsy talked about her volunteer time in the reserves in high school: “The girl reserves would meet the troop trains in Uhrichsville and Dennison [Ohio] and give them doughnuts and coffee…We had scrap drives where we would collect metal.” Ida talked about how her patriotism was “High for no other reason than we were at war and for the very personal reason that my entire family also worried about my brother [who was in the service].” Sally also mentioned family: “I felt very patriotic, I had two brothers, they were in the war, and there certainly seem to be ample reason for our involvement in the war.” Polly remembers receiving war bonds as part of her Christmas gifts during some of the war years.

“As far as I’m concerned I was quite patriotic you know…My country was very important. They attacked us type of thing [referring to Pearl Harbor],” Ulla remembered; she also spoke of the attack on December 7th:
Oh that was terrible…we were still in Georgia then. See my husband was an officer and we would go to church and soldiers would come over for Sunday dinner. We had something going on that Sunday, Pearl Harbor Day, December 7, 1941. I’ll never forget it. We were sitting in our living room playing some kind of game and we had the radio on, and then they came on the radio and we were in shock…Really, and we knew right away what was gonna happen. We would be at war because my husband, up until that point had been very fortunate; he had just been teaching to other people that were fighting, like the British.

Vera also spoke of December 7th, 1941:

Of course we were horrified by Pearl Harbor, [even] if we did not realize [what was going on]. My age group especially, the girls did not realize what war was...we didn’t have TV’s in our living rooms - TV has done that, makes you [more] aware of things that go on.

She continued, referring to the latter part of the question:

No, I never bought anything, no. And recruiters came to the college, and the first it was the WACs. OK I did not like their uniforms. Then the Waves came, and I thought their uniforms were pretty, but what I wanted to do, and this might sound silly, I wanted to be an ambulance driver for the Red Cross...I wrote a letter and I applied for this and [found out that] you had to be 25!

Wynne spoke of how she tried to defend people that were picked on after the United States joined the war,
I didn’t understand everything that was going on, but [I] heard an awful lot and I would get upset because some kid would say something nasty about the Jews and I really didn’t know what was going on, but I knew that wasn’t right.

Joan, who also agreed she was very patriotic, spoke of the perils of hindsight once the dust had settled after the war:

One thing I thought was so bad that I thought of after the war - you realize that propaganda has to be so bad about the other people that you really don't believe that they’re totally human, and the Japanese were made to look like non-human, almost a little related to apes, their features were nonhuman so they looked like evil people. And then Germans were made to look like Adolf Hitler, exaggerated without hair and that salute...like they're unfeeling people. The propaganda that was on the movies, like war movies, when the submarines were shot down everybody's clapping, happy that they were destroyed...they destroyed all these people. There wasn't any feeling of remorse; it was a feeling of ‘we got them, we got those son of a bitches, yeah!’ And you look at that now and you think, “Oh my goodness.” The hype that was made then was successful. Our boys were winning and during the war that seemed okay that propaganda was done in the movie theaters and all around. And you really thought it was okay; not the feeling of “you’re destroying human lives.” And this is the only way you can have a war; otherwise people can’t kill each other. Eisenhower had even said war is hell; war is not the way to solve problems. So I think only after the fact did people start to
ask what had happened. [During] the Korean War, it began to happen where people were “like wait a minute, what are we doing?”

With regards to the latter part of the question, the women that answered the question reiterated what had been said before about buying trinkets or scarves; or, as Kelly pointed out, “not unless I wore some red, white, and blue something...maybe on 4th of July.”

“How did clothing rations affect your consumption behaviors during the war?”

This question generated very in-depth and thorough responses from some of the participants; some of the women had spoken of their memories of leg paint. Annabelle was the first to bring it up:

We used leg makeup, because you couldn't get hose. And when my husband came back, he had managed to get a couple pairs silk hose; nylon wasn't in yet.

Especially in the summer we wore that; I don't know what we did in the winter because you couldn't get silk hose. Now that I think about it, there must've been some kind of rayon because I worked in a department store. If they'd get anything and we got the chance to get them...but as I said in the summertime we just used leg makeup that came in a bottle. It wasn't a spray like that we sort of have now.

Annabelle also spoke of a lack of assortment of clothing choices:

I don't remember there being too much problem getting clothing as such, but when we did get married I think there's only one or two wedding dresses in town, and I was much skinnier than the wedding dress is so my cousins had to take it all in...So there was not a large assortment of that kind of thing which is surprising because a lot of people were getting married then during the war.
Rose discussed how a woman had to look good, no matter the cost:

Well stockings, you know, we used to paint our legs, because you couldn’t get hose. Then that would get all over everything; it would get on the men’s pants because it was…It was horrible. It was a cream, it would get on everything. I hated that, but you had to look good.

Other women had spoken of the perils of rationing pertaining to silk or nylon stockings during World War II. Quinn had remembered how her father had gotten a pair somehow:

OK well, what was rationed was silk hose. You could not get silk hose with a line up the back. And somehow people would get them and sell them to you. My dad was able to pick up some for my mom and that was a big deal. They would trade coupons for sugar or tires or something and get mom some silk stockings.

Ulla, who had moved back to a farm in Dublin, Ohio, during the war to raise her daughter, still had spoken of a lack of hose, even though that did not bother her that much:

You know I can’t think that that really affected me. Probably the main thing that you had to do without was probably hose. I mean you had to be very careful, but then of course we also wore socks. We didn’t call them “bobby’s” at that time; they were socks [worn with] moccasins, anklets is what we called them.

Ida, who was in high school during most of World War II, had more of a common sense approach to the ration of stockings:
There is a ration on silk stockings…I remember food rationing and gasoline. I don't remember clothing rationing other than the silk stockings, which probably meant that during those years I probably didn't buy a great deal.

Edna had spoken of leather rations during the war:

All I can remember is that [what] really affected us all - shoes were rationed. A family could buy only an ‘x’ number pairs of shoes in a year. I remember that my dad was [part] Scotch so I wouldn't have a bunch of shoes anyway… Saddle shoes came in then and that was the uniform. I mean if you didn’t wear saddles, you were out, OK!

Natalie recollected leather rations as well and the hazards of the new technological advances in hosiery; also, her use of leg paint:

Well shoes were the only thing that were a problem since my mother could make our other clothes. Well shoes and stockings. We had rayon stockings and they bagged at the ankles, and they were really ugly. And then for a while you couldn't really get any stockings at the PX. So I used leg make up. And if you were really picky about it, you used an eyebrow pencil and drew a seam on the back of your leg and it's really hard to draw the seam on the back of your leg! And if you had nylons and got a run in them, you could always use colorless nail polish to mend them. You could darn rayon stockings, but it did not work very well.

Olivia had very distinct memories of stockings:

Particularly shoes…Well, you have to understand, I made shoes last a long time anyway. We were not frivolous at my house, when I went back to school in the
fall, you would have worn shoes that would match your gloves and your hat. That's where I would use my coupons in the fall. So you would have to decide if you want to use your coupon for your pair of pumps or your loafers. And of course silk became scarce. Nylon hose had just come in, and then you could not get them! We all wore hose with garter belts, and I had a pair of gray almost black nylon hose, and I got a run; they all had seams you know, and I get a run right up that seam. I still would put them on and wear them, and somebody would say, “Olivia did you know you had a run in your stocking?” And I would throw a perfect fit. “Oh no,” I would say, “Oh don’t tell me, which leg is it?” And I would hope I would never see that person again because I would wear them the next week!

Olivia went on to discuss her memories of the servicemen and the gifts they would bring during the war:

Particularly Air Force boys, towards the end of the war, they could get more stuff than others. And they would get them somewhere and would come and bring you a pair of hose. And of course women weren’t supposed to accept clothing from boys, but if they could bring you a pair of nylon hose that was really it! And now many of them, mostly the Navy, would come in to Norfolk, Virginia, and a girl would be dating someone on the ship [she] would run around looking for a blind date for his buddy, and they would come bearing cigarettes. Cigarettes and stockings; they were ever so much more appreciated then candy and flowers!

Betsy had recalled sacrifices due to the war effort:
We were very careful of our clothes, patching it. We didn't go out and buy everything we see because we didn't have the money to do it. And another thing, the supplies weren’t there - if there were extra supplies it would go to the war effort.

Clara, who was older than the other women interviewed, had remembered how the Depression had made a deeper impact on her fashion choices:

The depression affected us more so. The depression had a great influence on the amount of…we didn’t just to buy because we like to buy, like we do now. You bought because you needed a suit or you needed a dress. I remember a coat I had that I wore in college that had bought. They [the coat] had the style of the day. If it had puffed sleeves, we had puffed sleeves. If it had tailored sleeves, we had tailored sleeves. And when the tailored sleeve came and without the pleats, we had a tendency to rip out the sleeve and make them to look like a modern coat.

The thirteen other women could not remember clothing rations affecting their consumer behavior in particular but did remember rations affecting other areas of their life. “You couldn't get any butter, so there were sticks of oil; they were white and they had an orange thing [capsule] and you would mix it up to turn it a yellow so it would look like butter,” Joan recalled. Hazel also had a realistic approach to consumerism during the war. “We made do with what we had,” she stated.

“Have you ever heard of/did you use the term Home front Textiles/clothing? If so, what does that term mean to you, or what did it mean to you then?”
Not one of the twenty-three women had ever heard of the term Home front clothing. As Polly recalled, “No I don’t remember hearing that; I remember hearing ‘Home Front’ a lot but not with textiles.”

It was here, though, that Vera had remembered a story about stockings and painting her legs during the war:

My sister had given me a pair for high school graduation; that was ‘41 and I just took such good care of those hose, except that I was visiting…I had a friend that lived in Wilkesville…One night we had been out and came back and we did not get out of the car until it was in the garage, and when I got out I ran into the lawnmower and that was the end of my nylons. So what you did was…You painted your legs like with this paint thing… Somebody you knew would put the line [on] for you and if you stood on a chair they could have the whole leg done, and then of course if it were summertime and you danced around and got sweaty it would start smearing.

Vera had gone on to talk about how her husband, who was an Army recruiter towards the end of the war, had ways of finding her “black market” stockings and the perils of being caught with a pair on:

Well, all I knew about this was that they [servicemen] had a source for getting these nylons, and the guys in the service have privileges. You know people would like to sell it in the black market. [In this case] was where the merchandise was never shown…Of course I couldn’t tell anybody either. [One time] I had an attack of appendicitis and I had to have an appendectomy before it got serious - but I’m
on the table [in the hospital] and I had these [nylons] on for some reason, went in for an examination and the nurse is going, “Wow you have nylons.” And I was like [coy], “Yes”.

“The L 85 Regulation Act restricted the use of excess materials or eliminated the use of certain materials in women’s dress/accessories starting in 1942. Were you aware of this act? If so, how did you feel about it with regards to your fashion decisions?”

Not one of the twenty-three women had been aware of this act by name, but some of the women do remember the repercussions of this act pertaining to the fashions that were worn at the time. Annabelle, Natalie, Polly and Rose all recalled how skirts had shortened and the lines of the dress slimmed down quite a bit; not using as much fabric to make clothing as in the 1930’s. Olivia had a good point for not paying too much attention to this particular act, “No, I was not aware of that but then we always had a drawer full of buttons, and I still have drawers full of buttons and zippers, my mother saved everything she would rip zippers off of old clothing.” As Rose also remembered:

That was fine for me because I’m a tailored woman…I like clean lines. My mother taught music and art and she said there’s nothing so complex as simplicity and that was driven in all of us kids. More is not always the best.

“Do you have any distinct memories of clothing or fashion trends during WWII? Could you describe the item?”

The respondents had a plethora of answers ranging from puff sleeves to saddle shoes to the lightweight pastel head scarves worn while driving. It was here that Betsy spoke of her memories of the lack of hosiery:
The only thing I can remember is we did not have hose to wear. That's what I can remember the most of. We didn't have a line [going up the back of the leg], just the makeup. It was a liquid type thing that you would rub on your legs, and it would rub off on things, and it wasn't very pretty so you try to get to tan in the summer. But as far as any trend of doing without, I couldn't think of anything then.

Wynne also spoke of how she wore leg paint:

We wore leg paints…Eve Arden leg paint. It was funny; we were supposed to wear hose at Saint Mary’s high school and you couldn’t get it. But it was funny because some of the nuns [reaching down to see if I was wearing hose] would say, “that’s not hose;” [and she would say,] “but Sister we can’t get them!” [laughing]… Well at first they said, “Well now you are not dressed properly.” “Sister we can’t buy any hose!” And the ones you could buy, we were glad when you couldn’t buy any more because they were rayon and they were thick! I can’t say I remember that [the smell], but you know you wanted to take a bath every day. You won’t get into bed with leg paint!

One of Fae’s most distinct memories was of seersucker dresses; Edna, Ida, Marcy, and Polly had all mentioned saddle shoes or loafers as one of their most distinct memories. Two other women had brought up different kinds of shoes. Olivia spoke of the perils of the rubber shortage among other things:

You could not get to rubber galoshes! I just remember mostly in college we wore pleated skirts and sweaters; you can’t wear slacks or jeans. Well jodhpurs worn
maybe, by the time [of] the war; they…weren’t terribly popular during the thirties.
Katharine Hepburn in the movies, she wore jodhpurs. I love jodhpurs. I might
have a worn them at that point, but Mary Washington girls did not go on campus
wearing slacks on!

Joan also spoke of her memories of shoes:

…Some girls had Spalding shoes, the black and white shoes. There was also
Spectators. They had heels and they were dress shoes - only the toes had a little
brown or black. They were white shoes and then the back was done the same way
[as the front], and they were called Spectators. And they may have been before
that [the war], but I remember them being around then. If you had a pair of black
dress shoes, you could have a pair shoes for a couple years. You didn’t wear them
that often, and you would just take them to get resoled; heel cobblers were big
operators in those days. Instead of getting new things, you would just fix
everything and that was just a way of life from the Depression era. During the
Depression, you were used to doing that kind of thing. It wasn’t foreign to have
things fixed.

Quinn mentioned how some women would imitate the styles of the servicemen: “I
think the women were wearing suits with epaulets as part of the design for the military,
but they were produced and [wearing] sailor hats, Gob hats.” She continued, explaining
Gob hats were what Navy men wore and how women imitated servicemen in other ways
as well: “…And [women wore] sailor shirts, blouses like, so they can dress up like
sailors. The girls probably [did that] when they went to the USO; the girls would go out
and dance with the guys.” The most distinct memory regarding military clothing for Rose was the men in the clothing:

I guess because I was so young, most girls at that time tended to go towards the officers and they had beautiful uniforms. I’m gonna tell you that because that was true, and if you could get a captain or lieutenant [that was even better]. My husband was a staff sergeant; those uniforms were beautiful. Oh when my husband went back to Ohio State, he was told that he was not allowed to wear his uniform, but you don’t mess with those boys, and they said, “We are wearing them!” And he had to wear the pants and maybe a shirt for a little while after he came back [from active duty]; they just couldn’t get the clothes!

Both Kelly and Vera had mentioned what had been echoed before with regards to the subtle shape or style of clothes. “I was more concerned about being clean and neat and having clothes that look good on, and I’m sure I was somewhat style conscious…What was there I bought if I liked it [and] I am a tailored person,” remembered Kelly. Vera, too, spoke of her liking a trim look:

I would say things were more tailored and not frilly… but then I was more of a tailored person anyway so maybe that’s what I looked for. Yes things were more tailored and not extravagant. Made with the least amount of material that was required, things like that.

Taryn, who in lived in Chicago during World War II, remembered seeing the women who would go to work in the factories: “…you would see the women in the factories…all dressed up. They would be wearing jumpsuits or uniforms, and I don’t
remember that before [the war], probably because there weren’t very many women in the factories before, maybe not any.”
Chapter 5: Conclusions

There was unconditional support towards the war effort expressed by all twenty-three of the participants interviewed for this research. A few of the participants’ reasons for supporting the war had to do with the idea that America was attacked by outside forces and, therefore, America needed to retaliate. As expected, none of the women labeled anything they wore on their body as propaganda. Some of the women that did buy what would be considered propaganda clothing in this study did not call it by such a name. However, when analyzing the results, several significant themes emerged in the research, which are discussed below.

Patriotic in behavior

During this study, there was not much talk of opposition by any means with regards to patriotism during World War II. Of the statement concerning “I supported the United States joining The Allies in 1941 to fight against the Axis powers,” twenty-one out of twenty-three women answered positively to this. None of the respondents hesitated to express their opinion for cooperation towards the war effort; but, as one woman pointed out, the sound of discord came later, after World War II. A few of the women did mention how they had an uncooperative attitude toward the war at some point for the simple fact that these women had lost a family member during that time. Another example of Asch’s theory of conformity includes how most of the participants that did answer the question pertaining to President Roosevelt had brought up their families’ political affiliation when it came to whether or not there was support for the President during the time before the United States had entered into the war.
A handful of women discussed going out of their way to buy what would be considered propaganda textiles, such as Polly and her red, white, and blue chintz pinafore, but they did not necessarily label it as such. As Sally remembered, “I don’t think I ever thought about it that way.” Other women discussed how they bought smaller propaganda textiles, items that included USO scarves or lapel pins that were sent to them by servicemen; this supports the model of consumer behavior with regards to purchase behavior of propaganda textiles. Also, regarding the statement “I wore or bought a scarf similar to the one in the picture,” over half the women disagreed with this statement pertaining to the picture, even though at least eight of the women remember having items such as scarves and service lapel pins. This might have something to do with the emblem on the scarf, which is an Army emblem, and the women, such as Quinn, had scarves that supported the United States in general.

Some of the women did discuss how, due to the nature of their location by (or on) an military base, they had bought second-hand military clothing that could be altered and used for everyday wear; items included seersucker dresses and parts of WAVES uniforms. Rose and Wynne both have distinct memories of clothing items they had during World War II that reflected a political image. Rose made summer dresses out of old WAC uniforms and Wynne’s parents had bought her and her sister matching Navy-inspired capes to wear one Easter.

When it came to outerwear, a majority of the women agreed with the statement “I wore a coat or bought one similar to the white one in the picture.” This is most likely due to the fact that the coat was utilitarian in nature first and foremost, since none of the
women had said they bought it for its militaristic theme. Other women did not feel that it was necessary, or respectful, to express their patriotism through the use of propaganda items pertaining to fashion; this can be seen as an example of Triandis’s theory of interpersonal behavior with respect to what he calls moral considerations (Triandis, 1979).

Fashion conformity

The clothing choices that the women made during the war reflected the subtle and unspoken desire to fit in with the shifting cultural trends, whether the women were students or working in a job or at home. The participants that were in high school or college during this time spoke of a “uniform” that would be worn almost every day that included knee-length skirts, sweaters and ankle socks with saddle shoes. Not that it was necessary to wear this particular outfit to school every day, unless a young woman actually did go to a school that required a uniform. This might indicate support for Asch’s theory of conformity; as Ida pointed out before, “…when you’re a teenager all you remember is everybody copied everyone else.”

The participants that had either graduated high school in the years between 1935 and 1945 or had finished school before 1935 and were working in various jobs during World War II had clothing needs similar to the former group mentioned, but these women spoke more of wearing a jacket with their knee-length skirts. Some of the women, like Kelly who was a nursery school teacher, did wear ankle socks (some women called them bobby socks even though they acknowledged that term was later, after the war) with penny loafers or saddle shoes. Other women that had office or retail jobs deemed it
necessary to wear hose if they were available. A good pair of hosiery seemed to be scarce during the war and leg paint offered some of the women another way to make sure they did not go out in public dressed improperly. Since hosiery was rationed during the war, it seemed more acceptable and common for women to go out in public wearing just socks with shoes. However, leg paint, even though it was messy, presented the women with a choice to look a little more dressed up when attending public events; as Rose had pointed out earlier when she would attend USO dances:

We used to paint our legs, because you couldn’t get hose. Then that would get all over everything; it would get on the men’s pants because it was…It was horrible. It was a cream; it would get on everything. I hated that, but you had to look good.

Consider the next two statements: “I would have considered myself a fashionable and trendy young woman during the war in the 1940s,” and “I bought what I considered the latest fashion when I had the opportunity to do so during the war.” In both instances a little over half the women considered themselves fashionable or trendy during the war, which indicates that these women did, on some level, pay attention to outside sources, such as Natalie and her Vogue magazines, and tried to imitate the fashions that they saw advertised with the clothing that they would buy. With regards to the next statement; “I would pay attention to the fashion that my friends would wear and try to imitate it.” Over half of the respondents answered positively to this as well. The answers to these particular questions might indicate that Asch’s theory of conformity can be used to explain the consumer behavior and following of fashion trends of the women
involved in the research due to the possible need to feel part of a particular group within a society.

Though not blatant in design, patriotic textiles were sometimes advertised as focusing on skirt lengths and trim lines (Weatherford, 2010). Some of the women did point out that they recognized the new sleek look with little or no “frills” during the war, but did not recognize this as being specifically patriotic, which could imply that they were engaged in Asch’s conformity theory. These women were readily accepting a clothing trend that was relatively risqué, considering skirt lengths had only been knee length once before, in the 1920’s, which was seen as highly rebellious in society at that time (Latham, 1997).

Another good example of both Asch’s theory of conformity as well as Triandis’s theory of interpersonal behavior includes the question, “What was acceptable for women to wear during this time, in your opinion?” The answer most produced by the respondents encompassed a cultural context as well as the participant’s opinion of what was right. A third of the participants discussed how pants were not appropriate to wear other than when engaging in outdoor activities, which possibly indicates that the women did not care to “go against the norm” even though a few had pointed out that different celebrities were wearing pants in the movies.

Societal pressures such as “having to look good for the boys” would also come into play, with pants not being “proper” because women might have been seen as too manly and not feminine enough (Eerkens & Lipo, 2007). A few of the women had pointed out how their mothers would not have left the house wearing pants, which might
have instilled a belief in the women interviewed that wearing pants, other than during outdoor activities or labor, was improper. During the war, media, such as magazine articles, “offered” advice to women on styles of dress, how to behave in public, as well as how to conserve femininity while doing their part for the war effort (Hegarty, 2008). This seemed to have had an impact on these women and the style of dress these women chose to wear.

**Clothing rations during the war**

Rations on shoes seemed to be the leading memory on everyone’s mind. Many of the respondents questioned brought up how two new pairs of shoes could be bought a year, if that, with ration coupons. Of all the countries involved in the war, America was the least affected by clothing rations – except in the case of rubber goods and shoes (Maginnis, 1992). This was in line with what was going on in the manufacturing sector. During the war most shoe factories were prioritizing their contracts with the government in favor of servicemen over civilians (Weatherford, 2010). Consider the question, “*How did clothing rations affect your consumption behaviors during the war?*” Other answers besides shoes included galoshes (rubber), the use of leg makeup, patching/recycling of old clothes, and the lack of a good pair of hose – silk or nylon or rayon or cotton. Leg makeup was a distinct memory for many of the women involved in the study, which was surprising since the research questions did not involve a “trigger” question directly asking about the subject. Clara had spoken of her memories with regards to taking silk hose in to get mended when she was mentioning clothing stores that she had shopped at. The
researcher suspects if there had been a particular question on hosiery, that all the women would have expressed their opinion on the matter.

As stated before, seventeen out of twenty-three women had worked at some point during the war; it is assumed then that most of the respondents might have had a disposable income that would have led to more opportunities for shopping and, therefore, more opportunities to buy propaganda textiles or clothing. What the women seemed to remember most, though, was what could not be obtained as opposed to what could be purchased. This is why the next question is fitting since some of the women also addressed leg paint and shoes as well: “Do you have any distinct memories of clothing or fashion trends during WWII? Could you describe the item?” Both Betsy and Wynne had brought up leg paint at this point, and four other women had brought up their memories of the popularity of saddle shoes. Saddle shoes were the staple of most of these women during the war years; this is further support for Triandis’s theory of interpersonal behavior with regards to the habitual responses to their social buying behavior.

Attitude behavior gap

One of the theories that might relate to the actions of the participants in the research is Attitude-Behavior Gap (Latesteijn & Andeweg, 2011). This refers to the difference between what individuals say and what individuals do (Devinney, Auger, & Eckhardt, 2010). Many of the participants did speak about the widespread rations occurring during World War II, which could have led to not buying propaganda clothing. Nonetheless, the gap between the participants’ beliefs during World War II and their buying behavior most likely had implications on an economic and social level at that
particular time in history (Devinney, et. al., 2010). As Marcy pointed out, it was not necessary to prove one’s patriotism through the procurement of patriotic textiles or clothing; however, the more subtle act of wearing clothing that had a militaristic theme did, if they did wear it, in a way support the use of propaganda clothing within the context of the society during World War II.

A good example of the attitude behavior gap pertaining to militaristic themed clothing involves a statement from the survey. Considering the women’s high level of patriotism, it is expected that the women would have agreed with the following statement since the dress looked militaristic in style: “I wore or bought a dress similar to the one in the picture.” However, fourteen of the respondents disagreed with this statement and four were neutral on the matter. This reflects that some of the women might not have bought what they perceived as militaristic style clothing even though they supported the servicemen.

Another example of this involves the question “Describe your level of patriotism during World War II. Did you buy clothing that reflected your level of patriotism?” All twenty-three of the women did discuss how they were patriotic, but only Kelly brought up how she might have been more apt to wear red, white, and blue around the 4th of July. Also, due to larger issues at hand, such as using excess material for the war effort, or having just survived the Great Depression, the need to go out of the way to emulate militaristic style clothing or spend extra money on propaganda textiles did not stand out as a high priority to the women interviewed.
Implications

Implications for this research include how it documents a particular time and place in our cultural heritage; it captures the emotions and memories of a group of women that were between the ages 16 to 30 by the end of the war in 1945. The generation represented within this research can have effects on future studies since this group of women represent the “everyday” woman and not necessarily the ones that were portrayed in the media from the World War II era.

The historical perspective presented in this research provides better insight into evaluating how the past can impact the present regarding fashion trends (Flynn & Foster, 2009). In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks in 2001, fashion designer Mary McFadden, had spoken about how, when people look back at this time in civilization, they will notice our clothes look very functional (Tan, 2008). Also, observations made shortly after 9/11 noted a visible change in the type of shoes women wore on an everyday basis in New York City (Pham, 2010). Shoes and clothing had become more utilitarian in most instances and women wore running shoes or heels no taller than one-inch instead of the stiletto heels of the previous fall (Pham, 2010).

Fashion trends moving towards a distinctly modest style shortly after the attack of 9/11 correlated with the style worn by the participants during World War II. The statements on functionality and utility related to what some of the women had expressed pertaining to fashion during World War II. Vera, Olivia, and several of the other respondents had mentioned words to describe their clothing during the war as “not frilly,” or “tailored.” Even with the hemline shortened during World War II in order to conserve
fabric. Some of the participants in this study had described their clothes as subtle with little or no cleavage showing since sexy was not in vogue during the war. As Olivia pointed out; “When you saw someone that was dressed inappropriately, you knew.” It appeared to be more acceptable to dress in functional clothes than sexy clothes during the war.

Furthermore, this study demonstrates how Asch’s theory of conformity and Triandis’s theory of interpersonal behavior can be used during times of social conflict to better understand micro and macro social behaviors within a given society.

Limitations

This study involves interviewing women about World War II which, currently, resides approximately seventy years in the past. Memory is one of the largest inconsistencies that the study acknowledges. Due to the nature of the study, measures were taken to add validity to the research; there was a first-degree member check involving three participants that were given a copy of their transcripts to review to make sure there were no large discrepancies with the interview given. Also, theory triangulation, as stated in chapter 3, was implemented in order to investigate the research from different angles. Lastly, thick detailed descriptions were used in order to fully understand the nature of the subject being examined.

Additionally, multiple questions regarding propaganda textiles were repeated in various forms throughout the questionnaire. These questions and statements include: “If I had the chance I would buy clothing items or accessories that clearly stated support for U.S. involvement in World War II (i.e. a scarf with our national emblem on it).” “If you
made your own clothing, did you buy fabric that had an American theme (i.e. flags, stripes) or did you recycle old clothes into new ones?” “Did you ever buy anything that had a political/patriotic image on it? (Examples would include stars & stripes, General Patton on a handkerchief, etc.) If so, could you describe it please? How often did you wear this item?” “Did you ever buy items that you thought represented a militaristic silhouette? (Broad shoulders, the Eisenhower jacket look, etc.) If so, could you describe it please? How often did you wear this item?” And, “Did you buy clothing that reflected your level of patriotism?” The four questions that involve the pictures as part of the questionnaire consist of clothing or textiles that represent, for the purpose of this study, propaganda textiles. This insures that the respondent, who might have had a memory triggered by a particular question, had another opportunity to answer a similar question.

Areas of further study

In order to expand on themes not addressed in the current study, future areas of study include:

- What would lead women to wear shorter skirts? Was it media/advertising pressure or lack of availability of longer skirts?
- Correlating various age groups and their consumer behavior.
- Analyzing purchase trends in ‘times of peace’ (no official war declared involving the United States)
- Explore geographical differences between rural and urban women pertaining to World War II and their consumer behavior.
- The role of leather during World War II and the effect leather rationing had on shoes and other accessories during that time.

- Investigate the type of merchandise carried by the various department stores listed by the respondents.

Future research on this subject should endeavor to obtain greater diversity involving a variety of socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds than this investigation to further explore consumer behavior concerning fashion choices that women made during World War II. Furthermore, this subject of research would benefit from attaining a larger range of participants from various geographic regions to develop a better understanding of the cultural influences concerning regional locations of women during World War II.
References


Appendix A: Pilot Study IRB Approval

A determination has been made that the following research study is exempt from IRB review because it involves:

Category 2. research involving the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior

Project Title: Case Study on Cultural Influences Regarding Consumer Behavior during World War II

Primary Investigator: Trina C Gannon

Co-Investigator(s):

Advisor: V. Ann Paulins

Department: Human and Consumer Sciences Education

Robin Stack, CIP, Human Subjects Research Coordinator
Office of Research Compliance

The approval remains in effect provided the study is conducted exactly as described in your application for review. Any additions or modifications to the project must be approved (as an amendment) prior to implementation.
Appendix B: Pilot Study Survey

- What year were you born?
- Were you old enough to vote in 1936? 1940? 1944? Did you vote? If so, do you mind if I ask who you voted for?
- Did you have a job in or outside the home during World War II? What was your job?
- Did you support U.S. involvement in the War? Did you have family members that were active militarily?
- Were you married or single during WWII? If married, what was your husband occupation?
- What were the names of some of the stores that you would shop at? Were they department stores, five-and-dime stores, etc?
- Did you mostly buy clothing or make your own clothing?
- When you went shopping during that time period would you have considered yourself one to choose fashionable items to wear?
- Did you like to go shopping in order to buy clothing? Did you shop with friends often?
- Did you ever buy anything that had a political/patriotic image on it? (examples would include stars & stripes, Patton on a handkerchief, etc.) If so, could you describe it please?
- Did you ever buy thing that you thought was militaristic in silhouette? If so, could you describe it please?
- If you made your own clothing, did you buy fabric that had an American theme or did you recycle old clothes into new ones?
- Have you ever heard of/did you use the term Home front Textiles/clothing? If so, what does that term mean to you, or what did it mean to you then?
- The L 85 Regulation Act restricted the use of excess materials or eliminated the use certain materials in women’s’ dress/accessories starting in 1942, were you aware of this act? If so, how did you feel about it with regards to your fashion decisions?
- What do you remember as being one of the few things that stood out to you regarding fashion during this time period? Could you describe the item?
Appendix C: Current Study IRB Approval

A determination has been made that the following research study is exempt from IRB review because it involves:

Category 2. research involving the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior

Project Title: An Investigation into Cultural Influences on Consumer Behavior with Regards to Propaganda Textiles during World War II

Primary Investigator: Trina Gannon

Co-Investigator(s):

Advisor: Schuyler Cone

Department: Human and Consumer Sciences Education

Robin Stack, CIP, Human Subjects Research Coordinator
Office of Research Compliance

The approval remains in effect provided the study is conducted exactly as described in your application for review. Any additions or modifications to the project must be approved (as an amendment) prior to implementation.
Appendix D: Research Flyer to Invite Participants

Ladies, World War II, & Fashion
Looking for participants to tell their stories!

The purpose of my research is to understand the nature, or the mindset, pertaining to women primarily in America that were the leading consumer base during World War II regarding the years between 1931 to 1945.

This project is an exploration into individual female behavior with regard to what kind of clothing they chose to buy and did their clothing choices reflect what was going on in the world during World War II.

I am a second year graduate student who is looking for females to help with my study who are age 82 and over, to recall various WWII memories and fashion. I have a short survey to fill out that would only take about 30 minutes of your time.

Trina Gannon
Contact info:

[Image of photos of women from WWII]