

<b>Institution:</b>	<b>Goldsmiths, University of London</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b>	<b>24: Anthropology &amp; Development</b>
<b>Title of case study:</b>	Dress, Identity and Religious Expression
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)	

Emma Tarlo’s research on modest dress and Islamic fashion plays a substantial role in combatting social prejudice and promoting understanding of religious minority groups in Britain and Europe. Addressing issues of the rights to religious expression and the need for socially inclusive design, it has attracted widespread coverage in British and international media, including religious and ethnic minority and fashion media, stimulating public debate on-line and off. Professor Tarlo has engaged with diverse publics in the context of museums, Islamic societies, inter-faith events, schools conferences, and through interviews on radio and film. Her research has been taken up in new educational curricula and by artists and designers seeking to combat social prejudice through design.

<b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)
--

Since joining Goldsmiths as a Lecturer in the Department of Anthropology in January 2007 (where she was promoted to Reader in September 2008 and Professor in September 2012), Tarlo has produced a substantial body of research dedicated to explaining the rising popularity of Islamic fashion and other forms of modest dress in Britain and continental Europe.

Tarlo’s book *Visibly Muslim: Fashion, Politics, Faith* was published in 2010.<sup>(1)</sup> It was the first book to document the rise of Islamic fashion in Britain and through the Internet, and to demonstrate its significance for religious diversity and social integration. Tarlo went on to co-edit (with Annelies Moors) a collective volume, *Islamic Fashion and Anti-Fashion: New Perspectives from Europe and America* (2013) which documents how Muslims throughout Europe are participating in public debates about identity, integration and the role of religion in the public sphere through their clothing choices.<sup>(2)</sup> This research was conducted as part of the of the ESRC/Norface Research Programme, ‘The Re-Emergence of Religion as a Social Force in Europe.’

In addition Tarlo collaborated as co-investigator with Reina Lewis in an AHRC-funded project, *Mediating Modesty* (2010 – 2011), which investigated the inter-faith exchanges taking place between Muslims, Jews and Christians through a shared interest in modest fashion. The resulting book, *Modest Fashion: Styling Bodies, Mediating Faith* (2013, edited by Reina Lewis) contains an article by Tarlo on Jewish-Muslim online exchanges relating to dress.<sup>(3)</sup> Through participation in conferences and workshops linked to these programmes and through taking up invitations to speak at the Universities of London, Oxford, Cambridge, Cardiff, California, Princeton, Indiana, CUNY, Atlanta, Delhi, Stockholm, Paris, Potsdam, Leiden and Amsterdam, Tarlo has engaged in dialogue with scholars from anthropology, religious studies, sociology, fashion and museum studies and her work is informed by this international inter-disciplinary engagement.

Key findings of the research are as follows:

1. Far from indicating a ‘clash of civilizations’ between Islam and the West, visibly Muslim dress practices in Britain and Europe are strongly influenced by secular fashions and ideologies.
2. Although associated in many mainstream media and political debates with backwardness, foreignness, social segregation and religious extremism, fashionable new forms of modest dress are attractive to many young women of faith (both Muslim and Jewish) as a means of expressing identity and belonging. This development does not so much show their distance from mainstream youth culture as their engagement with it.
3. A new generation of Muslim designers and entrepreneurs have emerged who perceive Islamic fashion as a powerful medium of communication through which they seek to promote a more inclusive multi-cultural society.
4. Her research highlights the role design can play in encouraging communication and social

**Impact case study (REF3b): GOLDSMITHS – Dress and Identity**

integration, combatting prejudice and widening the participation of women from diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds in activities such as sports.

5. The modest fashion sector cuts across religious differences to some extent, and plays a role in bringing women of different faiths into dialogue.

<b>3. References to the research</b> (indicative maximum of six references)
---

**Evidence for the international quality of the research:**

Tarlo's book, *Visibly Muslim* (2010)<sup>[1]</sup> has been described as “a true anthropological achievement” (*Anthropos*) which “opens up dialogue for mutual understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims” (*Choice*) and helps “reframe debates about Muslim dress and Muslims in the West more generally” (*Middle East in London*). The book has been favourably reviewed in the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, *Current Anthropology*, *Anthropology Review Database*, *Ethnicity and Race in a Changing World*, *The Material Culture Blog* and *Sociological Review*, as well as receiving widespread appreciation in Muslim media. In addition, *Muslim Fashions*,<sup>[9]</sup> co-edited by Tarlo and Moors, was awarded Honourable Mention in the category “Best special issue of a scholarly journal” by the Council of Editors of Learned Journals, USA, December 2007.

1. Tarlo E (2010) *Visibly Muslim: Fashion, Politics, Faith*. Oxford: Berg ISBN-10: 1845204336.
2. Tarlo E and Moors A (eds) (2013) *Islamic Fashion and Anti-Fashion: New Perspectives from Europe and America*. Oxford: Berg. ISBN 10: 085785335X
3. Tarlo E (2012) Meeting through Modesty: Jewish-Muslim Encounters online. In Lewis Reina (ed), *Modest Fashion: Styling Bodies, Mediating Faith*. IB Taurus. ISBN: 9781780763835
4. Tarlo E and Moors A (Eds) (2007) *Muslim Fashions*, guest edited special double issue of *Fashion Theory, The Journal of Dress, Body and Culture*, 11(2/3) 2007, June/September. ISSN 1362-704X, Online ISSN: 1751-7419.
5. Tarlo E. (2012) Dress and the South Asian Diaspora. In J Chatterjee and D Washbrook (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of South Asia Diaspora Handbook*. London: Routledge. ISBN-10: 0415480108

<b>4. Details of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 750 words)
--

**Enhancement of public understanding and awareness of Muslim perspectives**

Tarlo has engaged different types of audience in a range of institutional and public settings.<sup>[6]</sup> The Fashioning *Diasporas* Symposium and the *Fashion Matters* Public Forum (both held at the V&A in 2009) attracted audiences from the museum and design sectors. Talks at the Royal Academy of Arts (2011) and The Costume Society (Malvern, 2009) were addressed to a wider public of non-specialists interested in the arts. Public lectures given at The Centre for the Study of Islam in the UK (Cardiff, 2010) and Islamic Societies at Oxford and Cambridge, by contrast, attracted predominantly Muslim audiences with a personal investment in Islamic fashion and social diversity. A talk given at the Middle East and Middle Eastern American Centre at CUNY (New York 2010) received coverage from journalist and fashion designer Elif Kavakci in her blog *Hijabitopia* and in an article in the Turkish women's news website *Kadin Haberleri*.

Tarlo raised awareness of the importance of socially inclusive design through engagement with young people at the ESRC-funded secondary schools' conference on Widening Women's Participation in Sports, held at the Women's Library in London in 2011, at the London Anthropology Day (British Museum, 2012), and at a Sociology Conference at Christ the King 6th Form College in South East London (2013).

**Interfaith dialogue and understanding:**

Tarlo was invited to promote inter-faith understanding by sharing her research with mixed faith

**Impact case study (REF3b): GOLDSMITHS – Dress and Identity**

audiences in the context of the V&A round table public forum on Fashion and Faith (2009)<sup>(7a)</sup> and two international conferences at the London School of Fashion.<sup>(7b, 7c)</sup> These events brought into dialogue speakers and audiences from different faith groups with journalists, human rights specialists, fashion designers and an interested public. The event was covered in the *Jewish Chronicle*.<sup>(7d)</sup> Tarlo's research concerning the importance of religiously sensitive socially inclusive design for encouraging wider participation in sports gained widespread coverage and appreciation in inter-faith and other minority blogs in the run-up to the London Olympics 2012 (including *Diseret News*, *OBV* (Operation Black Vote), and *AsiaLife Magazine*)<sup>(8b)</sup>.

Stimulation of debate in British and International Media:

More generally Tarlo's findings have featured in mainstream media in the UK, France, Turkey, India, Pakistan, Canada, and the USA. Interviews with Tarlo have been quoted in *Voice of America*,<sup>(9a)</sup> *Express Tribune*<sup>(9b)</sup> (Pakistan's leading English-language newspaper), *FASHION* magazine (Canada's biggest fashion magazine), *The Guardian*<sup>(8d)</sup> and *Muslim Media Watch* (featured on Patheos.com, the biggest online forum for global dialogue on religion and spirituality)<sup>(10c)</sup> and on Radio 4's *Women's Hour*.<sup>(9c)</sup>

In 2012 Tarlo's discussion of sports design and social inclusion in relation to the London Olympics was published in the *Huffington Post*<sup>(8a)</sup> and gained widespread international media coverage through *Reuters*,<sup>(8c)</sup> stimulating online debate internationally. An interview with Tarlo, on socially inclusive sports design, also features prominently in a short documentary, *Sporting Sisters*,<sup>(8e)</sup> made by ten young Muslim women in London as part of an IARS (Independent Academic Research Studies) project,<sup>(8f)</sup> funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund through the Young Roots programme and accessible to young audiences through Youtube.

Impact in Education:

Tarlo's book *Visibly Muslim* is listed as a resource for teachers on the Anthropology A-level syllabus which is part of the national curriculum framework. The Open University's new level 3 module entitled, 'Why is Religion Controversial?' features 3 short interviews with Tarlo about her research. Five hundred students a year are taking the module from September 2013. The interviews with Tarlo were selected as being of particular interest and social relevance and have been made accessible as an itune-U app for iPod and iPhone.<sup>(11)</sup>

Impact on Religious Communities:

Tarlo's work has resonated widely with Muslim and other religious communities. Several blogs and articles testify to this impact.<sup>(10j)</sup> *Visibly Muslim* has been reviewed or discussed in Hijab Style, The Hijabi Fashion Blog, Hijabtopia, Muslimah Media Watch, Emel, and The Middle East in London. The Muslim blogger behind the Malaysian *Love to Dress* blog cites Tarlo's book as one of the inspirations for her blog and the Mennonite blogger of *Third Way Style* and Mormon blogger of *Deseret News* both use Tarlo's findings to promote inter-faith understanding.

Impact on Fashion and Design:

Tarlo's research has inspired new design interventions from artists and designers interested in combatting stereotypes and creating practical design solutions for Muslim women. Suzanne Kirkpatrick, a New York based designer and creative technologist, cites *Visibly Muslim* as a key influence on her 2011 project, 'retroreflective' burkas which focused on improving the Afghan burkha by using breathable light-sensitive and affordable fabrics.<sup>(12a)</sup>

Textile artist, Denise Maroney, also cites Tarlo's book as a key inspiration for her art installation, *Burkha*, at the Textile Arts Centre in Brooklyn, New York (2011) where she explored ideas of public and private and the potential aesthetic appeal of covering.<sup>(12b,c)</sup>

<b>5. Sources to corroborate the impact</b> (indicative maximum of 10 references)
---

The sources below are also available in hard or electronic form on request from Goldsmiths Research Office.

6. Lectures and talks: A collation of webpages and programmes containing details of these is available on request from the Research Office
7. *Inter-faith events and coverage (linked to Mediating Modesty Project with Reina Lewis)*
  - a. [‘Fashion and Faith’](#) panel, V&A
  - b. [Modest Fashion public launch event](#) and round table discussion, London School of Fashion on 25 May 2010
  - c. [Modest Fashion Symposium](#), June 2011 London College of Fashion (with 105 Facebook ‘likes’ as of April 2012)
  - d. [‘Vogue does Strictly Orthodox Fashion’](#) the *Jewish Chronicle* 23 June 2011 for online
8. Relevance of Tarlo’s work in relation to Olympics 2012:
  - a. [The Huffington Post](#) (streamed on front page, prompting comments and tweets)
  - b. [AsianLite](#) (e-edition, p33)
  - c. [Reuters](#)
  - d. [The Guardian](#)
  - e. Documentary [‘Sporting Sisters: Stories of Muslim women in Sport’](#), contains interview with Tarlo on design solutions for hijab-wearing women in sport (4728 views, by Sep 20 2012)
  - f. Project described on the [IARS website](#)
9. Discussion of hijab Fashion based on interviews with Tarlo in mainstream international media:
  - a. [‘European Muslims Reconcile Cultures through Fashion’](#), in *Voice of America*, 22/03/10
  - b. [‘Hijab: Act of Rebellion or a Choice?’](#) published in the *Express Tribune* (Pakistan) 20/12/10
  - c. BBC Radio 4, [Dare you dress to be different?](#)
10. Evidence of Muslim Beneficiaries:
  - a. *Coverage of Tarlo’s book ‘Visibly Muslim’ in Muslim media*; [Hijabtopia blog post 27 September 2010](#)
  - b. [Shukr Islamic Clothing](#)
  - c. *Muslimah Media Watch* on 5 February 2009 ([The Headscarf as Cultural Barometer: Emma Tarlo’s Book on the Hijab](#))
  - d. [Hijabstyle](#)
  - e. [Emel](#), Muslim Lifestyle Magazine, vol 69, June 2010
11. Educational Resources
  - a. [‘Veiling: Tradition, Identity and Fashion’](#), 3 interviews with Emma Tarlo in connection with the The Open University course, Why is Religion Controversial? itune-U app for iPod and iPhone
12. Artists and Designers inspired by Tarlo’s book, Visibly Muslim
  - a. Suzanne Kirkpatrick’s blog, the [Retroflective Burqa](#) project, blogged 9 May 2011
  - b. [Denise Maroney](#), *textile artist*: Biography on her website citing Tarlo’s work
  - c. [Now](#) magazine interview with Denise Maroney. See especially the statement: ‘Sheer textiles create a tension that reflects the quote that inspired this project: “A covered woman is simultaneously present and absent, public and private” (written by Emma Tarlo in her book Visibly Muslim)’.