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SSCM Società svizzera di scienze della comunicazione e dei media
SACMR Swiss Association of Communication and Media Research
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Università della Svizzera italiana

Contents

209 Editorial (by Katharina Lobinger, Sara Greco)

General Section

215 Marie-Isabell Lohmann, Andreas Riedl: *Public nuisance or an asset to democracy? Does the free press aim to provide a public service? An empirical study examining journalistic functions within the normative framework of the European Union*

231 Dorothee Arlt: *Who trusts the news media? Exploring the factors shaping trust in the news media in German-speaking Switzerland*

247 Diana Ingenhoff, Dominique Richner: *The effects of public diplomacy on country identity in countries with different language regions and cultures: The case of Switzerland*

Thematic Section

269 Nadzeya Kalbaska, Teresa Sádaba, Lorenzo Cantoni: *Editorial: Fashion communication: Between tradition and digital transformation*

287 Annick Paternoster, Francesca Saltamacchia: *Il vestito forma la persona – "clothes make the man": Fashion morality in Italian nineteenth-century conduct books*

307 Pelin Ok: *European luxury fashion brand advertising, and marketing relating to nostalgia*

325 Myles Ethan Lascity: *Girls that wear Abercrombie & Fitch: Reading fashion branding aesthetics into music videos*

339 Deborah A. Christel, Susan C. Williams Née Dunn: *What plus-size means for plus-size women: A mixed-methods approach*

353 Paula von Wachenfeldt: *Communicating seduction. Luxury fashion advertisements in video campaigns*

365 Simonetta Buffo: *Body in fashion films: The new net-aesthetic era*

383 Matthew Hibberd: *Key challenges for the fashion industry in tackling climate change*

399 Rachel Matthews: *Taste-making in turbulent times: Vogue and its social networks*

411 Alexandra Tuite: *Communicating material characteristics in a digital age: Three case studies in independent fashion*

425 Cristina González Fernández, Raquel Martínez-Sanz: *Fashion influencers and Instagram. A quasi-perfect binomial*

439 Patricia SanMiguel, Simone Guercini, Teresa Sádaba: *The impact of attitudes towards influencers amongst millennial fashion buyers*

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Editorial

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Dear Reader,

This issue marks the second year since *Studies in Communication Sciences* (SComS) is published Open Access on the HOPE platform of the University of Zurich (www.scoms.ch).

The present issue of SComS perfectly reflects the unique character of the journal. Not only do we present you a thematic section with a very innovative topic, namely Fashion Communication. We also collect three papers in the general section that, despite their different topics, have something in common that is telling for the role of communication in Switzerland.

The papers of the general section focus on the free press in Austria, on trust in news media in German-speaking Switzerland and on the implications of public diplomacy for domestic audiences in different language regions of Switzerland. With their focus on Austria and Switzerland, the articles highlight the importance of examining closely and of acknowledging the peculiarities of national and regional markets and environments.

What do they have in common? First of all, they all focus on smaller European countries and markets. This allows for comparisons with existing studies on different national and cultural contexts. But at the same time, the application of existing concepts and approaches to smaller contexts represents a challenge, not least due to the fact that many of these concepts and approaches were originally developed for the US context. The studies in the general section thus enable reflections on how to situate and adapt concepts to certain national, regional or even local contexts with their specificities. And they also point to the fact the seemingly small contexts are nevertheless highly complex, with differences even between language regions. Finally, the papers provide important empirical findings about media environments in Switzerland and Austria. This empirical data and evidence is essential for understanding our own media environments and for providing relevant information to decision-makers; in other words, this information is essential for research to have an impact on society.

The first article of the general section is entitled "Public nuisance or an asset to democracy? Does the free press aim to provide a public service?". The authors, Marie-Isabell Lohmann and Andreas Riedl, collected data from Austrian journalists within the Austrian part of the Worlds of Journalism Study, funded by the Austrian Science Fund. The authors were interested in different journalists' opinions regarding the functions of journalism and the role of journalism in society. In particular, they were interested in identifying similarities but also differences between journalists working in free press and journalists working in paid press with respect to three main functions: the information function, the monitoring function and the communication function. These functions represent a translation of EU legislation with respect to the democracy-building role of mass media, as detailed particularly in the European Convention on Human Rights, into a survey design. A general take on the detailed results indicates that journalists working for different kinds of media in Austria widely agree on the important democratic functions that journalism must fulfil for the public. However, some differences were also found. For example, journalists working for free daily newspapers seek to fulfil communicative functions to a greater extent. Connecting with their readers is thus a particularly relevant part of their daily work. At the same time, they are subject to greater commercialisa-

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tion demands than journalists from paid media.

In the second article of the general section, entitled "Who trusts the news media? Exploring the factors shaping trust in the news media in German-speaking Switzerland", Dorothee Arlt engages with the decline of trust that is currently being observed in many countries. Switzerland represents a special case in this regard, as media trust is relatively high and stable compared to other national contexts. Nevertheless, the need for critical examinations and empirical studies of the factors and predictors that lead to a reduction of media trust are highly relevant also for the Swiss context. In order to examine trust, Dorothee Arlt conducted an online survey with 1,019 participants of the population of the German-speaking part of Switzerland. Media trust was measured in terms of a) trust in the journalistic quality of media coverage about political issues and b) in terms of trust in the independence and impartiality of media coverage about political issues. First of all, it is noteworthy that the study found a positive association between watching public television and trust in journalistic quality. On the other hand, the use of particular news websites that provide alternative information on political issues is related to a lower media trust in general. Corresponding to previous research, the study also found a significant relationship between political disenchantment and media trust, which was found to be an important predictor among others, such as populist attitudes, anti-establishment attitudes or demand for people's sovereignty. Overall, this paper provides important empirical findings for the current debate about the role of public service media in many countries, as reflected in discussions related, for example, to the "No Billag Initiative" 2018 in Switzerland.

The third paper in the general section, "The effects of public diplomacy on country identity in countries with different language regions and cultures: The case of Switzerland", written by Diana Ingenhoff and Dominique Richner, considers how German and French Swiss perceive the identity of their country and examines the effects of public diplomacy on such perceived identity. Public diplomacy is understood as a strategy based on communication which sets out to influence another government's foreign policy decisions. In their paper, Ingenhoff and Richner measure how public diplomacy communication influences the perception of a country's identity by domestic public(s) – the "s" being particularly important in a multilingual context such as Switzerland. This article introduces an experimental design study using the example of the mass immigration initiative voted in 2014 as a stimulus. The authors analyse the collected data quantitatively, based on a multidimensional model (4D model) for measuring a country image/identity developed by one of the authors in previous research (Buhmann & Ingenhoff, 2015)[1]. Their findings show that a public diplomacy strategy designed by the government of a given country for a foreign public may indeed influence the perception of that country for domestic public as well. The effects of such influence are moderated by personal beliefs of the concerned publics and by the framing of the public diplomacy messages. As a whole, this study paves the way to a nuanced understanding of the complexity of communication effects on different – intended and unintended – publics, also shedding light on cultural and linguistic differences within one and the same country.

The thematic section of this issue of SComS, entitled "Fashion communication: Between tradition and digital transformation", is an example for SComS' intention of providing a platform on which communication scholars can navigate uncharted waters, opening new research trajectories and even new research fields. The eleven papers in this section examine fashion communication in the past and in the present, touching upon topics as vari-

1 Buhmann, A., & Ingenhoff, D. (2015). The 4D Model of the country image: An integrative approach from the perspective of communication management. *International Communication Gazette, 77*(1), 102–124. http://doi.org/10.1177/1748048514556986

ous as sustainability and climate change, narration, nostalgia and fashion paradigms, taste and seduction, and examining different forms of communication contexts and messages, from advertising to (music) videos, films and books. All this is preceded by a Guest Editors' introduction written by Nadzeya Kalbaska, Teresa Sádaba and Lorenzo Cantoni, in which our readers will find a discussion of the origins and the main topics within this multi-faceted and multi-disciplinary collection of approaches to fashion communication.

We hope that our readers will enjoy both sections of this rich and diverse issue of SComS.

SComS
General Section

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Public nuisance or an asset to democracy? Does the free press aim to provide a public service? An empirical study examining journalistic functions within the normative framework of the European Union

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Abstract
Utilizing an empirical approach, this paper lays out how journalistic functions differ from the perception of journalists working for the free and paid press in Austria. Analyses indicate that free press journalists appear to be significantly more inclined to generate discourse with their audience, but are also more influenced by commercialization than their colleagues working for the paid press. Both the free and paid press seem to fulfill diverging democratic functions that can be valuable to the public. Finally, the normative notion of journalistic functions as legislated by the European Union (EU) seems only partially represented within the journalists' self-perception.

Keywords
Free dailies, journalistic functions, Worlds of Journalism Study WJS, European Union

1 Introduction

While other European countries might be experiencing a decline in printed newspapers, Austria's daily press is still strong. However, its composition has been subject to a profound transition within the last two decades. While the most dominant tabloid newspaper, *Kronen Zeitung* (Magin & Stark, 2015), has lost a significant amount of market share, free daily tabloids[1] were quick to fill the void and dominate the market (Bakker, 2013), recently accounting for at least a third of the distributed circulation of all printed newspapers (ÖAK, 2016), and there are no signs of a decline in the close future so far.

The phenomenon described, seen within the context of increased economization of the profession, casts an alarming light on the future of journalism altogether (Lee-Wright, Phillips, & Witschge, 2011). While the rise of free dailies bears considerable consequences for the profession from an economic point of view by redefining market mechanisms and logistics on many levels, the transition might have serious implications with regards to the dailies' ability to fulfill democratic functions (Bakker & Seethaler, 2009).

As one of the most crucial functions of mass media, the public service function expects Western journalism to generate public attention for politically relevant issues, enable democratic processes, monitor the government, and provide public value (ECHR, 1979; Moore, 1995; Palmstorfer, 2015). The expectation placed on journalists to fulfill this public function is not only inexorable, it has also been codified in European law, thereby even legitimizing certain violations of the right to

1 This paper uses the terms "free tabloids," "free newspaper," "free press" and "free papers" etc. based on a common understanding (see also Ballarini, Alves, & Lamour, 2017) to describe press products "that are given away free of charge to readers" (Serazio, 2009, p. 649), which must not be confused with "free press" referring to "freedom of the press" as a concept (Russomanno, 2008).

https://doi.org/10.24434/j.scoms.2018.02.002

privacy of European citizens (ECHR, 1985; Emerson, 1979).

Beyond their given constitutional protection, much is demanded of journalists in the 28 European Union (EU) Member States, and thus in Austria. With regard to the rise of free daily newspapers in several European countries and the recent developments and transitions in journalism, the following questions arise (Lee-Wright, Phillips, & Witschge, 2011):

- Can the emerging model of free daily newspapers be of service to the public?
- How do journalists employed by free media perceive and/or aim to exercise their attributed democratic role compared to journalists working in paid media?

These questions will be explored using a classification of public functions – information, monitoring and communication – by legal scholar Nina Palmstorfer (2015) and utilizing a representative sample of 818 Austrian journalists from the *Worlds of Journalism Study* (WJS). Their self-reported data contains compelling insights into the adoption of public service functions by journalists in paid and free print press. Furthermore, the results put the normative notion of journalistic functions as determined by the aforementioned EU legislation into question.

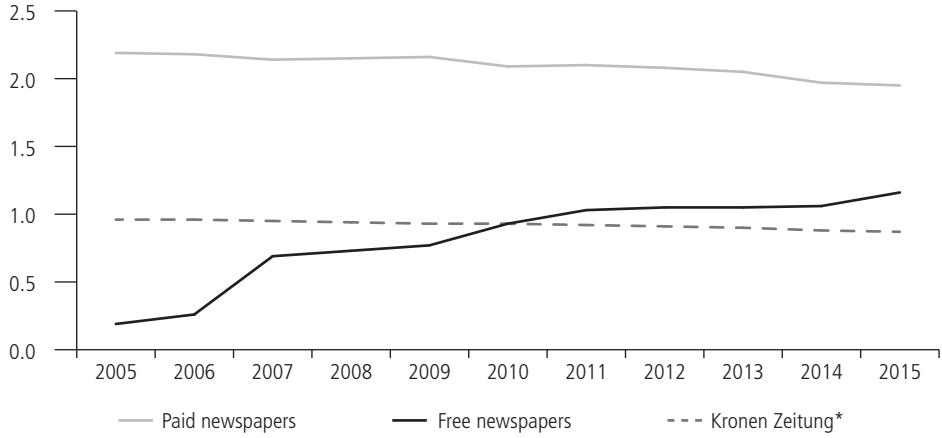
2 Background

Often called "the country of media monopolies," Austria is home to a media market that is traditionally associated with an atypically high media concentration in terms of market share as well as media ownership (Steinmaurer, 2008). Following a long period of relatively stable market conditions, the Austrian media system faced fundamental changes within the print and broadcasting sector throughout the last two decades. While the paid tabloid newspaper *Kronen Zeitung* dominated the print sector for decades, an emerging market share of free daily newspapers caused a long-lasting stir in the newspaper industry from the early 2000s onwards. Similar developments could be observed in other media sectors. The Austrian public service broadcaster, ORF, simply did not have to face any Austrian competitors since the foundation of the republic, but the introduction of the dual system of public and private broadcasters in 2001 (Trappel, 2007) transformed a highly regulated media segment into a more liberal one.

Contrary to the sustained rise of new communication technologies via the ubiquitous use of social network services as observed in many other countries, the success of free daily newspapers seems to be a very Austrian characteristic. In contrast to international trends, where the rise of free daily newspapers mostly remained a temporary phenomenon, Austrian free dailies came to stay (Bakker, 2015). They recently accounted for one third of the total circulation of all distributed newspapers in Austria (ÖAK, 2016), and their market share continues to increase. It might come as no surprise that the free dailies mainly feed on the market share of paid tabloid newspapers as they seem to fulfill similar demands. However, paid quality newspapers struggle significantly less to maintain their market position. As is evident in Figure 1, the slow but steady decrease in total circulation of paid daily newspapers is mostly caused by the constant loss of Austria's most read tabloid newspaper, *Kronen Zeitung* – most other paid newspapers show considerably stable demand. Even though *Kronen Zeitung* is continuously losing reach compared to the free dailies, it is still the strongest player in the market with a current (2015) reach of 32.0 percent (compared to 44.9 percent in 2005). It seems reasonable to assume that the historical dominance of this tabloid newspaper paved the way for the free dailies, which operate with a very similar format and style and were therefore quickly liked by the public.

Interestingly enough, the Austrian wave of free dailies was started by the very publisher of *Kronen Zeitung,* Hans Dichand. By launching the free daily *U Express,* he aimed at filling this niche himself and compensating for the *Kronen*

Figure 1: The development of the total circulation of daily newspapers in Austria 2005–2015



Note. Average weekly (Monday–Sunday) distributed circulation (purchase and free of charge; excluding foreign circulation) in millions; *Kronen Zeitung is also included in "Paid newspapers" (Source: Österreichische Auflagenkontrolle, own calculations).

Zeitung's crumbling market shares. However, his German partner shareholders forced him to reject this project in 2004 (derstandard.at, 2015) in order to protect the *Kronen Zeitung* from self-made competition. Based on a sophisticated ownership construction which could evade from the legal influence of the business partners, it was Dichand's daughter, Eva, who realized a similar plan only a short time later by launching *Heute* (Skrabal, 2012), which has become Austria's most successful free daily.

3 Theoretical framework

The relationship between journalism and – mainly "Western" – democracies has been the subject of much scientific discourse in recent years. Above all, the field of communication studies can look back upon extensive research on the different roles and functions of mass media within a democratic framework. These ground on the assumption that journalism is a mandatory precondition for the functioning of democracy and thereby serves its citizens by enabling democratic processes (Meier, 2007).

The bond of journalism and democracy is a widely shared notion amongst scholars and often includes high expectations. For example, Gurevitch and Blumler (1990) suggested an often-cited list of democratic demands for media performance, commenting that these expectations are "no easy matter to achieve" (p. 26). The listed functions include the "surveillance of sociopolitical environments, reporting of development likely to impinge […] the welfare of the citizens," "mechanisms for holding officials to account for how they have exercised power," and giving "incentives for citizens to learn, choose, and become involved" (p. 25). This position is also reflected in the long-claimed paradigm in which journalism exists in order to help sustain and animate the public sphere, monitor the government, and provide public value (George, 2013; McQuail, 1992; Moore, 1995; Venturelli, 1998).

Because of the rather idealistic nature of these expectations, it might come as no surprise that the different aspects of the functions described have always faced criticism. For instance, it has been argued that journalism is more entertaining than it is informative by focusing on scandals, violence and political personalities rather than ideologies (Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Herman & McChesney, 1997; Keane, 1991; McChesney, 1999), and that the watchdogs get alarmed by the wrong things, leaving voters with very little information about actual political agendas (Bagdikian, 1983;

Barnett, 2002; Cappella & Jamieson, 1997; Fallows, 1996; Sabato, 1991).

While journalism's constructive contribution to democracy is more and more challenged, Western journalism is constantly associated with rising economic pressure. The media industry is described as becoming more commercialized than ever before, and the transformation is sometimes discussed in terms of a change from public-driven to market-driven conditions (Croteau & Hoynes, 2006; Lee-Wright, Phillips, & Witschge, 2011; Macnamara, 2010; Wadbring, 2013).

Many scholars have argued that the close linkage between journalism and democracy is endangered, and Western countries are said to be experiencing a decoupling of democracy and journalism (Grönvall, 2015; Josephi, 2013). Josephi (2013) argues that "there has been a time and place when the close linkage of journalism and democracy was valid," but claims that this can no longer be assumed (p. 441). Nerone (2013) even suggests that the way Western journalism is practiced is in itself counterproductive to democratic systems. Free newspapers play a special role in this discussion, as their performance is said to offer lower journalistic quality in most democratically relevant dimensions (for Austria, see Seethaler, 2015), although research shows that working routines are comparable to the paid press (for Denmark, see Sparre, 2017).

Despite scientific doubts concerning the implementation of the public service function within journalistic routine, it has long been codified in European law, thereby legitimizing governmental press subsidies as well as certain violations of European citizens' right to privacy (ECHR, 1985; Article 8 ECHR; Emerson, 1979). Despite recent doubts, EU legislation views traditional mass media as being integral to democracy: the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) has long assigned many democracy-producing functions to traditional mass media. They can be found in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which is intertwined with national legislation, as well as in relevant judgments of the ECHR.

Based on this legal framework, Palmstorfer (2015) defines a model that breaks the normative functions of mass media down into an *information function,* a *monitoring function* and a *communication function.* This model stands in line with Moore's (1995) suggestion that mass media bears the role of "informing" and "monitoring." By adding a third function, "communication", Palmstorfer takes the last two decades of evolving digital communication technologies as well as corresponding legislation into account.

Why exactly apply law in general and, more particularly, EU law when studying the press in Austria? Firstly, in contrast to the jumble of journalistic roles and functions discussed in the scientific community, the EU regulatory framework provides the scaffolding for a universal model, which can be tested empirically. This model bridges *normative demands* reflecting societal responsibilities and abilities of journalism and concise *practical implications* as expressed in factual jurisdiction.

Secondly, EU legislation and the European Court of Human Rights are seen as a "living instrument" whose "dynamic interpretation" follows societal change processes and therefore "must be interpreted according to present-day conditions" (Letsas, 2013, p. 107). Hence, one of the strengths of the approach of using EU law as a starting point for journalism research is that it allows its scope to be refined according to ongoing societal changes.

Thirdly and finally, there are also various implications of domestic Austrian law for the role of the media in general (Palmstorfer, 2015, pp. 51–54) and of broadcast media in particular (Seethaler & Beaufort, 2017), as they can serve to deduce empirical hypotheses for journalism's actual societal role in Austria (Riedl, 2018). However, EU law paves the way for international comparative research on that matter: as EU law offers equivalent legal guidelines for all 28 member states, international comparisons might allow country-specific factors that do contribute or endanger democratically relevant functions of the

media to be identified. Against this backdrop, this study serves as a first step and aims to translate legal implications into empirically measurable constructs using the example of a single country.

3.1 Information function

As elections are the core of all representative democracies, citizens need to be supplied with all of the information they need in the polling booth. The mass media bears responsibility for that and should "provide high-quality political information […] and help citizens to come to well-informed political opinions" (Jandura & Friedrich, 2014, p. 352). The freedom of expression and freedom of information are fundamental for that. These pillars are legally based on EU law and specifically codified in Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights, stating:

> … freedom of expression […] shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers […] in a democratic society. (ECHR, 1953)

However, based on EU court rulings as well as its regulatory framework, the information function does not only imply plain information distribution by the media and journalism. To make sure that citizens in fact *receive* this relevant information, Palmstorfer (2015) argues that, confronted with both limited resources of attention on the part of citizens as well as with a continuously growing amount of news – often called an "information overload" (Eppler, 2015) – journalists are strongly responsible for analytically selecting this information ("gatekeeping") and presenting it comprehensibly within the scope of journalism.

Thereby, the European Convention on Human Rights as part of the EU legal framework essentially conveys the crux of journalistic responsibilities. Journalism has a responsibility to provide people with relevant information and is therefore a protected enterprise within a democratic society. European citizens have the right to freely make political decisions and participate in democratic elections, and thus depend on journalism's role to enable them to make these political decisions based on relevant information (Schudson, 1998). It is therefore necessary that journalism enacts its gatekeeping mechanism to convey relevant information regarding a plethora of issues to the average citizen. Journalism makes materials relevant to particular issues accessible to its audience, thus, whether directly or indirectly, facilitating and strengthening the democratic process (Palmstorfer, 2015).

3.2 Monitoring function

In addition to their duty of conveying selected relevant information in a comprehensive and understandable way to the public, journalists have a monitoring function: according to Palmstorfer (2015), journalists have a responsibility to monitor and criticize government, politics, and the economy in the name of the citizen. While the information function mainly addresses citizens as voters and thus aims to *establish* democratic representation, the monitoring function aims to *maintain* this representation during times of governing to ensure the representatives feel obliged to uphold the pledges made before elected. Moreover, this bestowed monitoring responsibility, or public watchdog role, strengthens the democratic process by creating an additional layer of protection against potential detriments or injustices against citizens.

The idea of media's monitoring function basically reflects the legal concept of division of powers that shapes modern constitutional states. Aware of that, legal justification for journalism's monitoring role, as well as emphasis on its importance, is explicitly exemplified in the case of the Norwegian newspaper *Bergens Tidende*. In this legal precedent, the right to freedom of expression (Article 10 ECHR) of the newspaper was declared to be violated after a national court condemned it for having disrespected a plastic surgeon's rights by publishing a massive critique of his treatment of patients. The case is insofar significant for the clarification of the media's democratic monitoring func-

tion as the ECHR stresses that the "public watchdog" role is "vital" to the press (Bergens Tidende and others v. Norway, 2000). An additional 2013 decision adds to the codification of the watchdog role (Węgrzynowski & Smolczewski v. Poland, 2013).

Finally, as a result of the monitoring function, political decisions are reached under consideration of the public, which the media has integrated. This can both have consequences for the decision-making process as such as well as the decision-making behavior of the elected (Palmstorfer, 2015).

3.3 Communication function

Besides the expectation of both the informing and monitoring functions, the comparably new communication function as firstly derived from the legal framework by Palmstorfer (2015) demands media to be the "mouthpiece" of the citizens and to interact with them to do so. This has various implications: basically, to identify citizens' needs and necessities and make them public, journalists both need to facilitate active participation by the citizens, motivate them to participate and aim to let these people express their views and perspectives. As the communication should not be unidirectional but the more reciprocal, journalists should focus on dialog and interactivity (Palmstorfer, 2015). This notion of journalism is demonstrated in the ECHR case ruling Castells v. Spain, which hints at the importance of a public discourse:

> Freedom of the press affords the public one of the best means of discovering and forming an opinion on the ideas and attitudes of their political leaders […]. It thus enables everyone to participate in the free political debate which is at the very core of the concept of a democratic society. (Castells v. Spain, 1992)

As clearly demonstrated in this decision, when creating a public forum for the citizenry, media should include everyone – even those at the periphery of society. In aiming to do so, media should promote societal diversity and invite both political and civil society actors to tolerate and accept diverging views of life. The public forum established via the media's communication function may also function as an initial point of social change if it is the collective will of the citizenry as a sovereign entity in democratic societies.

In establishing mutual discourse, the communication function does also face a technical dimension: from a normative perspective, through the advancement of the internet, reciprocal communication can be established and facilitated beyond the limitations associated with traditional media such as newspaper, TV and radio. Thus, it amplifies the possibility of participation, supplementing the democratic process by creating and maintaining various possibilities of interactions, feedback systems, and discourse (e.g., Ferdinand, 2000).[2]

In this context, Palmstorfer (2015) consults Bertolt Brecht's (1979) idea of radio as a means of communication to illustrate this technical dimension. Brecht argues that radio would be the greatest communication technology of public life if it could not only to broadcast, but also receive information. In fact, this development goes beyond online media and influences traditional media equally, pressuring journalists in traditional media to approach this new public service function and find ways to incorporate it within the possibilities of the respective media channel. Hence, the function is undergoing constant change and is therefore rather fluid in its interpretation.

4 Material and methods

4.1 Sample

A survey was conducted to collect data from Austrian journalists within the Austrian part of the *Worlds of Journalism Study*[3], funded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF).[4] The survey covered the period between

2 It goes without saying that the internet indeed could not always fulfill these high expectations (e.g., Dahlgren, 2005).

3 http://www.worldsofjournalism.org.

4 Mapping Change in Journalism: How Jour-

November 2014 and August 2015. The selection of the sample (*N*=818) was intended to be representative of the population of journalists in Austria. We had initially contacted a total of 2 843 journalists with a response rate of 28.77 percent (n=818). 99 percent of these interviewees completed the standardized quantitative survey online, the remaining 1 percent were surveyed via telephone. The journalists were recruited via email, however most of them required a telephone follow-up to ensure completion of the survey.

In order to create a representative sample, a multistage sampling approach was carried out. For that purpose, the population of professional journalists was first estimated: Journalists who are primarily entrusted with *journalistic tasks,* who *select, edit* and *publish* news that has a social function, are guided by *professional norms* and *work primarily* in journalism, thus drawing at least 50 percent of their income from journalistic activities, were considered to be professionals. To be able to identify them, the media landscape was analyzed in detail and all editorial departments were identified. Editorial departments were understood as those organizational units that are *editorially independent,* produce *journalistic content* and correspond to the functions of *journalistic communication*. In order to be considered for inclusion in the sample, editorial departments had to have a certain media-specific *periodicity, reach* and *size*. Based on these criteria, a list of editorial units was created. This list turned up a total of 4 100 professional journalists.

Out of the list of editorial units, a proportionally stratified random sample with two layers, depending on the respective national reach (0.5%–1.5% vs. > 1.5%), was chosen. In both layers, every n^{th} editorial unit was drawn from media genre-specific lists and classified as a large (= above-average) or small unit. Subsequently, in each of the two layers, 28 journalists were randomly chosen as respondents from large editorial units and 16 journalists from small units. The quotas of the stratified random samples were proportional to the distribution of journalists in the respective media types. The sampling also ensured that journalists in leading positions were represented according to their distribution in the population. The sample size had a confidence level of 95 percent and a margin of error of 3 percent, taking into account the estimated population of Austrian journalists in 2014.

A total of 111 traditional media (daily newspapers, weekly newspapers, news agencies, radio, TV, and magazines) and 22 digital media (stand-alone and spin-off) were identified through that process. A total of 411 participants work in press, of which 336 are employed by paid print media and 75 of which work in free print media. After being contacted, the journalists who agreed to voluntarily participate in the study were informed about the objectives of the research. (For more details on the survey see the Austrian country report available online, Lohmann & Seethaler, 2016.)

4.2 Measures and indices

In order to measure the three described functions, the study addressed professional role perception by asking for the journalists' opinion on journalism's role in society (e.g., Patterson & Donsbach, 1996): "Please tell me how important each of these things is in your work" (scale from 1 = unimportant to 5 = extremely important); for more details on the questionnaire, its contents and structure, see the equivalent international version available online (Worlds of Journalism Study, 2014). Possible answers included several items that specifically respond to all three public service functions described above:

Information function (Cronbach's α = .662)

- Be a detached observer
- Report things as they are
- Provide analysis of current affairs
- Provide information people need to make political decisions

nalists in Germany, Austria and Switzerland Perceive the Transformation of News Making – Worlds of Journalism (WJS), Part II, funded by the Österreichischer Wissenschaftsfonds FWF, Project Id: I 1341-G16.

Monitoring function (Cronbach's α = .916)
- Monitor and scrutinize political leaders
- Monitor and scrutinize business

Communication function (Cronbach's α = .768)
- Advocate for social change
- Motivate people to participate in political activity
- Let people express their views
- Promote tolerance and cultural diversity

In order to compensate for economic pressure and thereby take into account recent developments within the field (Lee-Wright, Phillips, & Witschge, 2011; Macnamara, 2010), an index for commercialization was also created:

Commercialization (Cronbach's α = .708)
- Provide entertainment and relaxation
- Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience
- Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life

The internal consistency of each construct, measured with Cronbach's alpha, exhibited adequate reliability in each of the types of influence, following the suggested minimum value of 0.60 in exploratory studies (Robinson, Shaver, & Wrightsman, 1991).

4.3 Analysis

For the analyses, the sample was split into four groups: journalists working in free daily press, journalists working in paid daily press, journalists working in free weekly press and journalists working in paid weekly press. Additionally, the study further analyzed journalists from other media, including TV, radio and online media. The different groups were compared using bivariate difference tests, comparing the mean of the groups (ANOVA).

5 Results

Analysis of the responses of Austrian journalists working for daily and weekly newspapers showed that the mean responses of journalists working for paid print media to the information and monitoring functions exceed those of the journalists working for free print media (see Table 1). The mean values for journalists of paid print media are 4.32 (N=336, ∂=0.64) for the information function and 3.31 (N=315, ∂=1.33) for the monitoring function. Those working for free print media have mean values of 4.24 (N=76, ∂=0.61) and 3.03 (N=75, ∂=1.19), respectively. This demonstrates that paid print media journalists perceive a greater importance of both the information and monitoring functions. However, the differences keep within limits.

On the other hand, mean values for journalists working for free print media exceed the mean values of journalists for paid print media for both the communication function and commercialization index. Journalists working for free print media have mean values of 3.75 (N=76, ∂=0.75) and 3.94 (N=76, ∂=0.72) for the communication function and commercialization index, respectively, while journalists working for paid print media have a mean value of 3.44 (N=336, ∂=0.88) for the communication function and 3.56 (N=336, ∂=0.81) for the commercialization index. This reflects a perceived emphasis of both the communication function and commercialization index amongst journalists working for free print media.

In summary, by comparing the two groups of journalists it becomes clear that those working for paid newspapers appear to embody the information and monitoring functions more so than journalists working for free media, but the mean values reveal rather minimal differences that are statistically not significant. However, according to ANOVA tests, journalists working for free newspapers are significantly more likely to assume a communication role and are more influenced by commercialization. In general, journalists tend to fulfill the monitoring function least of all, whether a journalist works for a paid or free newspaper.

So far, results have been reported about journalists working in weekly as well as in daily newspapers due to a higher and therefore more scientifically valuable sam-

Table 1: Democratic functions of journalists working for paid vs. free newspaper in comparison

		Information	Monitoring	Communication	Commercialization
Journalists working for paid newspapers	*M*	4.32	3.31	3.44	3.56
	N	336	315	336	336
	SD	0.64	1.33	0.88	0.81
Journalists working for free newspapers	*M*	4.24	3.03	3.75	3.94
	N	76	75	76	76
	SD	0.61	1.19	0.75	0.72
Austrian print journalists (paid vs. free)	*df* (within/between groups)	1/410	1/388	1/410	1/410
	F	0.923	2.806	8.312**	14.724***

Note. Scale ranges from 1–5 (1 = "role is not influential"; 5 = "role is extremely influential"). ANOVA results: Journalists working for free/paid print media. Only significant main effects are reported: *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001.

Table 2: Democratic functions of journalists working for paid vs. free daily newspaper in comparison

		Information	Monitoring	Communication	Commercialization
Journalists working for paid daily newspapers	*M*	4.37	3.38	3.46	3.57
	N	243	228	243	243
	SD	0.57	1.26	0.81	0.78
	Variance	0.32	1.59	0.65	0.61
Journalists working for free daily newspapers	*M*	4.17	3.15	3.56	4.03
	N	13	13	13	13
	SD	0.45	1.18	0.65	0.75
	Variance	0.20	1.39	0.42	0.56
Austrian daily journalists (paid vs. free)	*df* (within/between groups)	1/254	1/239	1/254	1/254
	F	1.509	0.411	0.169	4.253*

Note. Scale ranges from 1–5 (1 = "role is not influential"; 5 = "role is extremely influential"). ANOVA results: Journalists working for free/paid daily newspapers. Only significant main effects are reported: *p<.05; **p<.01.

ple size. If the focus shifts to journalists working in dailies only, we get very similar results. As Table 2 shows, free media journalists score slightly lower on traditional public service functions such as the information and monitoring functions, but higher on the communication function. Contrary to the bigger sample including journalists for daily and weekly newspapers, the differences remain too small to be of statistical significance. Regarding the commercialization index, in which the groups vary significantly in the bigger sample ($p<.001$), a reduced effect can be demonstrated in the smaller sample as well ($p<.05$).

These small differences in the two results could be due to the smaller sample size *(N)*. There were only 13 journalists working in the free daily press who participated in the study compared to the 243 paid press journalists in the sample. However, as the variances for all four indices (0.20, 1.39, 0.42, and 0.56, respectively) reveal, the free press journalists, albeit fewer in number, are a more homogeneous group, holding similar role perceptions. A certain trend amongst these journalists is therefore to be expected.

To conclude, the findings within the sample of daily journalists appear, to a great extent, to be consistent with journalists working in print in general. Journalists working for paid media appear to embody the monitoring function slightly more than journalists working in free media. However, the differences are not that significant in comparison to journalists working for free press, who are significantly more likely to assume the communication role and

are more influenced by commercialization. Generally, we can see that journalists, both in paid and free press, tend to fulfill the monitoring function least of all.

6 Discussion

Despite the debate amongst scholars and media critics regarding the alleged lack of quality in free dailies, their journalists appear to embody public service functions in a similar way as their colleagues from the paid press. These findings appear to be in line with other studies. In 2007, Bakker concluded that Danish journalists working for free dailies do not have fewer qualifications than those working for paid media, nor are they working with less enthusiasm (Bakker, 2007). Furthermore, Spanish scholars show that neither type of newspaper shows statistical differences with respect to several indicators currently linked to journalistic excellence (Berganza & De Miguel, 2010). However, the conditions and resources provided by the publisher are different and subsequently limiting. Bakker (2007) stated that publishers invest less in journalism because competition surrounding content is not the main objective. As for the Danish free daily *MetroXpress,* "only 10% of the total budget goes to journalists, which is lower than any paid newspaper" (p. 28). With some caution, this can also be assumed to be true of Austrian free dailies.

One of the key findings of this study is the observed connection between the rather new "communication" function and free press journalists: journalists working for free print media are more inclined to *advocate for social change, motivate people to participate in political activity, let people express their views* and *promote tolerance and cultural diversity* than their colleagues from the paid press. This was a surprising finding considering that the correlation is present in media that is more influenced by commercialization.

However, a limitation of this study can be found in the fact that the data is based on self-declaration of journalists. Thus, the potential discrepancy of the journalists' attitudes towards their profession and the publishers' notion of journalism could weaken the validity of the statements made in the study. For even if journalists working for the free press are committed to fulfilling public service functions, their working conditions might not fully allow them to do so due to pressure placed on them to increase audience reach with an emphasis on simplification as well as sensationalism. This assumption is supported by the perception that commercialization has a significantly higher influence on journalists working for the free press than on journalists working for paid newspapers. In this context, it might also be possible that journalists working in the free press typically have a different understanding of the respective items: for example, in the eyes of a paid journalist specialized in, say, politics and provided with considerably higher resources, "social change" or "participat[ion] in political activity" might have a drastically stronger democratic notion than it has within interpretative patterns of colleagues from the free press.

Nevertheless, these results are supported by an analysis on the level of media performance: descriptive results of a content analysis by Josef Seethaler (2015) indicate that – in line with the findings of this study – the free press shows a lower level of quality both in terms of objectivity as well as a "discourse index", as they are most strongly reflected in journalists' information function as understood here. In contrast, most of the free newspapers rank higher in a responsiveness index, which is why Seethaler tentatively locates them within the "popular" group of media outlets that can be characterized by a "participatory" orientation. This is also in line with the finding that journalists working for free newspapers are more likely to assume a communication role that contains the goal of "motivating people to participate in political activity."

Furthermore, hints of similar relationships, as reflected in the study, can be found in other countries. According to Lamour (2016), the free daily newspaper *L'essentiel* in Luxembourg plays a key role

in displaying the socio-economic rights of cross-border workers and the civic rights of foreigners in the country. A comparable phenomenon is found in Sweden, where, according to Sparre (2016), the *MetroXpress* operates amongst other aims according to the mission statement "It makes me want to get involved." By publishing selected commentary from social media, fulfilling the communication function is part of the daily routine of the newspaper, although not always in the classic sense of providing a forum for primarily political debate.

In a time when readers are not able to discern automated content from content written by a human, opinionated journalism achieves a new relevance. The notion of information in the very traditional understanding (e.g. "be a detached observer," "report things as they are," as used in the information index) might lose its significance (Clerwall, 2014). This seems especially true as …

> … some aspects of quality, such as being clear and being pleasant to read, received a slightly higher score for human-written content, but others, such as trustworthiness, informative, and objective, were higher for the automated content. (Clerwall, 2014, p. 9)

With this in mind, the predominant emphasis of free newspapers on the communicative function might give them a leading edge, focusing on participatory contents ("advocate for social change," "promote tolerance and cultural diversity"). From this point of view, the free press makes a valuable contribution to society that lies within the notion of a participatory democracy (Curran, 2000).

> The first step to rethinking liberal theory is to break free from the assumption that the media are a single institution with a common democratic purpose. Different media should be viewed as having different functions within the democratic system, calling for different kinds of structure and styles of journalism. (Curran, 2000, p. 140)

The paid and free press both seem to fulfill diverging functions, both valuable to democracy in their own way. This assumption is supported by the fact that free papers are surviving in the face of significant opposition from existing daily newspapers, revealing that they are serving a need of readers and advertisers that has not been met by traditional newspapers (Picard, 2001). In almost every European country, paid papers have been losing circulation (Bakker, 2007). However, this has happened even in Norway, where there are no free papers in circulation. Furthermore, as of 2012, the circulation of paid newspapers in Luxembourg appeared to be unaffected by the rise of free dailies (Bakker, 2013). In Austria, paid tabloids are constantly losing to free dailies, but quality newspapers appear hardly affected. The free press seems to coexist with the paid press, as long as it offers a unique "selling" proposition. Even though free papers work with fewer journalists, employ no foreign correspondents, and do not have a significant cultural department, they often offer their own agenda, concentrating on certain topics of interest to a large audience that paid newspapers seem to ignore (Bakker, 2007).

As this study tried to operationalize a normative notion of journalism as defined by the EU and executed by the ECHR, it has tested whether or not this notion applies to journalists' perceptions and their job reality. In this respect it is worth mentioning that the information index is high amongst both paid *and* free press journalists; both of these values are much higher than the monitoring index values. By EU standards, however, both of these functions are part of the public service standard. Thus, this discrepancy hints that the EU's notion of journalism is not shared by all journalists equally. The next step in our research will therefore be to explore *actual* functions as defined by journalists in several media sectors and to compare the results with long-lasting normative notions as represented by the legal framework of the EU. Moreover, WJS data allows a total of 67 different participating countries to be analyzed. This broadens the scope from

a solely "westernized" focus to an open comparative analysis of several regions of the world.

7 Conclusions

According to journalists' perception of their function based on the WJS survey, it can be hypothesized that journalists from the free press place slightly less significance on the information and monitoring functions as journalists working for the paid press, albeit the differences are statistically insignificant.

One of the key findings is that journalists working in free press aim to fulfill the communication function significantly more so than journalists working for the paid press. Journalists working for free print media are more inclined to *advocate for social change, motivate people to participate in political activity, let people express their views* and *promote tolerance and cultural diversity.* Taking into consideration that the communication function is, above all, fueled by the rise of the internet and influenced by the rise of varying social media networks, the correlation might be exaggerated: the free daily press, as a rather new business model, seems to be more open to newer concepts of journalism. Hints of this correlation can be found in France and Denmark as well (Lamour, 2016; Sparre, 2016).

On another note, free press journalists appear to be significantly more influenced by commercialization than their colleagues working for the paid press. This is likely due to economic pressure as the free press is more dependent on advertisements in order to survive. Free dailies primarily thrive via their openness to more commercialization as a majority of their commercial profits come from advertisements. With the value of advertisements increasing as the audience reach of the newspaper increases, the market orientation may affect the type of subject matter that is reported. This trend tends to simplify and sensationalize the content of free dailies, thus partially restricting the fulfillment of some public service functions (information function and monitoring function). However, following their own agenda, the free press often tends to touch upon topics of interest to the audience that are left out by the paid press, offering participative content (communication function).

Based on this study it can be assumed that free dailies fulfill slightly different functions and satisfy different needs, and might thereby coexist with paid (quality) newspapers. From a democratic standpoint, they both fulfill functions that can be valuable to the public. Finally, it is important to emphasize that the normative notion of journalistic functions, as determined by the aforementioned EU legislation, seems to be only partially represented within journalists' self-perception.

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Who trusts the news media? Exploring the factors shaping trust in the news media in German-speaking Switzerland

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Abstract

Although a decline of trust in the news media can be observed in many countries, in international comparison, Switzerland is still considered one of the countries with a relatively high level of media trust. Nevertheless, knowledge concerning the factors that promote and hinder media trust in Switzerland is still limited. Building on the research on media trust and media scepticism, this study investigates the effects of political orientation, political disenchantment, populist attitudes, and news exposure on media trust. The study uses survey data (N=1 019, 50% females, 50% males) on the Internet-using population of the German-speaking part of Switzerland, collected in June 2017. Examining media trust by assessing the characteristics of media coverage, two dimensions of trust were revealed: (1) trust in journalistic quality and (2) trust in the independence and impartiality of media coverage about political issues. Overall, the results demonstrate that the level of trust concerning these two dimensions is rather low, whereas the level of trust in journalistic quality is slightly higher than trust in the independence and impartiality of media coverage on political issues. Regarding possible explanations, the findings show that political disenchantment and populist attitudes, anti-establishment attitudes, and demand for people's sovereignty are negatively related to media trust, while belief in the homogeneity of the people is positively related. Moreover, the results reveal that exposure to news via public television in Switzerland is positively associated with trust in journalistic quality, while the use of special news websites is negatively associated with both dimensions of trust. The implications for future research on media trust are discussed.

Keywords

media trust, media scepticism, political disenchantment, populist attitudes, news exposure

1 Introduction

In many Western democracies, there is an ongoing public debate about the dramatic loss of public trust in the news media and journalism. Journalists are suspected of information concealment, news manipulation, or the production of "fake news." The mainstream media is even condemned as "propaganda machines" or "lying press." According to the latest 2017 Reuters Institute Digital News Report, more than half of the population (57%) across all the 36 countries does not trust the media (Newman, Fletcher, Kalogeropoulos, Levy, & Kleis Nielsen, 2017, p. 30). Also, in Switzerland, where the Swiss Radio and Television and printed newspapers are still the most important source for news, trust in the news media has slightly declined from 50% in 2016 to 46% in 2017 (Schranz, Eisenegger, & Udris, 2017). Hence, given that more than half the population in Switzerland's direct democracy does not trust the media, this erosion of trust is highly problematic, especially since most people in modern societies rely heavily on the news media to understand the major political and social issues of their countries, to observe other social systems such as politics, economy or science, and to reduce complexity (Kohring, 2004; Luhmann, 2001). Therefore, a certain level of trust in the news media is a crucial precondition for the functioning of modern democratic societies in terms of an informed participation in civic life and a building of trust in the institutions and activities that comprise the social and political spheres (Ardèvol-Abreu & Gil de Zúñiga, 2017; Kohring, 2004). Hence, it is not surprising that communication science is current-

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ly intensifying its research on trust and distrust in the news media. In particular, media trust in the course of digitization has become a new issue (Blöbaum, 2016; Grosser, 2016) as recipients often place their trust in various new journalistic and non-journalistic actors online, of which some are accused of intentionally trying to undermine the recipients' trust in the traditional news media by disseminating misinformation and conspiracy theories online. However, despite the relevance of the issue, research on media trust is rather fragmented, unsystematic, and, used to be strongly focused on the United States; yet, nowadays also more studies from Israel and Germany exist. However, given the peculiarities of the American media system (Hanitzsch, Van Dalen, & Steindl, 2018), it is difficult to draw conclusions on media trust in European countries based on U.S. studies, which is particularly true for Switzerland. Consequently, very little is known so far about trust versus mistrust in the news media in Switzerland (Schranz, Schneider, & Eisenegger, 2016). Therefore, this study aims to investigate the level and dimensions of citizens' media trust in German-speaking Switzerland and to explore the factors shaping it. The remainder of this paper proceeds as follows: first, existing theoretical concepts of media trust are discussed as they will serve as the basis for the later operationalisation; second, previous studies regarding the factors influencing media trust and scepticism are reviewed to derive the paper's guiding hypotheses and research questions; third, data and measurements are introduced; and finally, the results are presented and critically discussed in the conclusion.

2 Defining and Measuring Trust in News Media

Although conceptualisations of trust can be found across a broad range of disciplines, including psychology (Rotter, 1967), organisation studies (Bachmann & Zaheer, 2006; Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995), sociology (Luhmann, 1968; Misztal, 1996), and media and communication sciences (Bentele, 1994; Blöbaum, 2016; Kohring, 2004), there is still no commonly shared concept. However, despite the varied definitions, a number of key features of trust can be extracted from the existing research on trust (Blöbaum, 2016).[1] While from a psychological perspective, trust describes "a mental state, an attitude" of individuals (Castelfranchi & Falcone, 2000, p. 801), from a sociological perspective, trust refers to the relation between a trusting party, the trustor, and a party to be trusted, the trustee (Blöbaum, 2016), in which the trusting party is willing "to be vulnerable to the actions" of the trustee (Mayer, Davis, Schoorman, 1995, p. 712). Thus, in terms of media trust, it is not the interpersonal trust between individuals, but rather the system trust (Luhmann, 1968) or public trust (Bentele, 1994) that is relevant. According to Bentele (2015, p. 622), "Public trust can be defined as a process and an outcome of a publicly generated, communicative mechanism within which publicly perceptible individuals, organizations, and other social systems at as 'trust objects'. Public trust is generated within the public communication process in which 'trust subjects' attribute more or less trust to trust objects" (see also Bentele, 1994). In general, the trust relation is asymmetric as the trustee usually has a resource, for example, certain information, that the trustor does not have in the same amount (Jackob, 2012; Tsfati, 2002). Consequently, putting trust in the actions of the trustee enables the trusting party to reduce information complexity (Bentele, 1994; Luhmann, 1968) and to act in a situation of unlimited information and uncertainty (Blöbaum, 2016). In the context of media and communication, trust refers to the relations between journalists, media organ-

1 One reason why research on media trust is rather heterogeneous is that communication research on media trust initially emerged under the label of media credibility (Kohring & Matthes, 2007). Consequently, the terms "media trust" and "media credibility" do not refer to totally different concepts, but have been used partly synonymously in previous research (e.g., Gaziano & McGrath, 1986; Kiousis, 2001).

isations, or journalism as a social system, which are the trust objects, and the recipients, who are the trust subjects (Blöbaum, 2016; Kohring, 2004). Therefore, media trust can be defined as recipients' willingness "to be vulnerable to the journalistic system's selection and communication of current information" (Grosser, 2016, p. 5) or "to be vulnerable to news content based on the expectation that the media will perform in a satisfactory manner" (Hanitzsch et al., 2018, p. 5). Thus, recipients put their trust in journalists, whom they expect "to put aside their political views and create unbiased news stories in accordance with the principles of 'objectivity,' 'fairness,' and 'clear separation of information and opinion'" (Ardèvol-Abreu & Gil de Zúñiga, 2017, p. 704) and in journalistic selectivity as "journalists selectively choose some information over other information" (Kohring & Matthes, 2007, p. 239). Media distrust (Ladd, 2010) or media scepticism (Tsfati, 2002, 2003, 2010; Tsfati & Peri, 2006), however, refer to the opposite concept as recipients have the impression "that journalists are not fair or objective in their reports" (Tsfati, 2003, p. 159) and that their selection decisions are inappropriate. Finally, with respect to the journalistic principles of fairness and balance, the concept of media (dis-)trust is closely related to the hostile media phenomenon, which describes peoples' tendency to perceive media coverage as biased against their own views (Gunther, 1992; Vallone, Ross, & Lepper, 1985).

Given the variety of definitions and concepts, it is not surprising that trust in the media is operationalised in very different ways. One approach is to measure a diffuse, general level of media trust by asking recipients how much they trust the media or news (e.g., Ardèvol-Abreu & Gil de Zúñiga, 2017; Fletcher & Park, 2017; Jones, 2004; Lee, 2010; Tsfati & Ariely, 2014). The problem with this approach, however, is that recipients have very different understandings of trust, which are not taken into account (Kohring, 2004). A second approach is to measure media trust with multiple items. For example, Kohring and Matthes (2007) measure people's trust in journalism with numerous items on four dimensions: trust in the selectivity of issues, trust in the selectivity of facts, trust in the accuracy of depictions, and trust in the journalistic assessment (see also Kohring, 2004). Likewise, Tsfati (2002, 2003), who examines media trust under the label "media scepticism," uses several items he initially adapted from Gaziano and McGrath's (1986) News Credibility Scale and Cappella and Jamieson's (1997) concept of "media cynicism." Moreover, single trust indicators such as impartiality or balance are at the core of hostile media research (Gunther, 1992; Vallone, Ross, & Lepper, 1985).

3 Predictors of Trust and Distrust in the Media

The following section summarises the state of research on how recipients' characteristics are related to trust and distrust in the media. In order to systematise the sometimes very fragmented and contradictory state of research (Tsfati & Cohen, 2013, p. 4), three dimensions of influence can be distinguished: political characteristics, media-related attitudes, individual behaviours, and individual characteristics.

3.1 Political Characteristics

From previous research, a whole series of connections between political characteristics and media trust can be derived. First, several studies found that a more conservative (Gronke & Cook, 2007; Jones, 2004; Ladd, 2010) and right-wing political orientation (Livio & Cohen, 2016; for example, for the German political party Alternative für Deutschland [AfD], Schultz, Jackob, Ziegele, Quiring, & Schemer, 2017; Schindler et al., 2018), are associated with lower levels of media trust. Likewise, studies on the hostile media phenomenon found that perceptions of media bias are more strongly pronounced among conservatives than among democrats (e.g., Dalton, Beck, & Huckfeldt, 1998; Huge & Glynn, 2010; Lee, 2005). Hence, negative attitudes toward the news media result from recipients perceiving the media as being biased against their political predispositions. Second,

scholars provide evidence that trust in the institutional news media is negatively related to political disenchantment (Schultz et al., 2017) and political cynicism (Carr, Barnidge, Lee, & Tsang, 2014). In turn, satisfaction with the US president's job performance (Bennett, Rhine, Flickinger, & Bennett, 1999) and trust in politics (Jones, 2004; Lee, 2010) are positively related to media trust. Likewise, media cynics – people that deeply distrust the established mainstream media – are strongly disappointed with politics and have doubts in the democratic system (Jackob, Schultz, Ziegele, Schemer, & Quiring, 2017). Third, initial findings on the relation between populist attitudes and media trust demonstrate that people holding stronger populist attitudes show lower levels of media trust (Fawzi, 2016) and higher levels of media hostility (Schindler et al., 2018). This relation seems particularly plausible as "several researchers have suggested that populist actors often perceive mainstream media as part of the elite, as supporters of the established political powers, and thus advocates of the status quo" (Reinemann, Matthes, & Sheafer, 2017, p. 389). Consequently, populists are quite likely to blame the mainstream media and journalists for what they perceive as unfair media coverage. Based on these findings, it can be summarised that right-wing political orientation, political disenchantment, and populist attitudes seem to diminish trust in the media, while trust in politics have an obverse effect. Therefore, the following hypothesis can be predicted:

> *H1: Right-wing political orientation (H1a), political disenchantment (H1b), and populist attitudes (H1c) are negatively associated with media trust.*

3.2 News Exposure

Presumably, it is no coincidence that the present debate concerning a decline of trust in the mainstream media corresponds with the digital media revolution. Media usage has become increasingly individualised, and many new information opportunities, such as social media, blogs, or alternative news websites, have emerged. At the same time, competition for the audience's attention is increasing, and the growing economic pressure on the established media has led to a loss of quality in many places. Consequently, the presumption suggests that media trust and distrust are related to people's individual information behaviours and media usage patterns. Although previous research supports this presumption, the direction of the relation, however, seems to vary strongly among different sources of information. Various studies reveal a positive relation between traditional news media use and media trust (Jackob, 2012; Schranz et al., 2016; Schultz et al., 2017; Tsfati, 2010; Tsfati & Ariely, 2014). For example, Tsfati and Ariely (2014) found a positive relation between media trust and the use of television news and newspapers. Schranz et al. (2016) and Schultz et al. (2017) confirmed such a relation in particular for the use of public television, which in both Switzerland and Germany functions as a public institution. With respect to online media, empirical evidence is rather mixed. In the U.S. context, Johnson and Kaye (2014) found that using blogs and YouTube for information purposes was related negatively to trust in traditional news media, while using social networking sites (SNSs) for information purposes was related positively. By contrast, according to the findings of Schranz et al. (2016), social media use was associated negatively with media trust. Finally, the use of non-mainstream, alternative news websites seems to be positively related with media distrust (Schultz et al., 2017; Tsfati, 2010; Tsfati & Peri, 2006). Based on these findings, the following two hypotheses regarding the relation between media use and media trust are predicted:

> *H2. Greater exposure to news through mainstream news media will be positively related to media trust.*

> *H3. Greater exposure to news through social media (H3a) and non-mainstream, alternative media (H3b) will be negatively related to media trust.*

3.3 Sociodemographic Characteristics

Regarding the relation between sociodemographic characteristics and media (dis-)trust, the empirical evidence is rather diverse. For example, two international comparative studies found that men trust the media significantly less than women (Schranz et al., 2016; Schultz et al., 2017; Tsfati & Ariely, 2014). By contrast, various single-country studies found no relation between sex and media (dis-)trust (e.g., Bennett, Rhine, & Flickinger, 2001; Gronke & Cook, 2007; Lee, 2010; Livio & Cohen, 2016). Findings on the effects of education and age are similarly contradictory. While some studies found that education was a negative predictor of media trust (Gronke & Cook, 2007; Tsfati & Ariely, 2014), others found a positive (Donsbach, Rentsch, Schielicke, & Degen, 2009; Johnson & Kaye, 2014) or even no effect (Jackob, 2012; Lee, 2010) of education. Similarly, most studies found that age had no effect (Bennett et al., 1999; Jackob, 2012; Lee, 2010; Livio & Cohen, 2016; Tsfati & Ariely, 2014). Thus, as previous studies have produced inconsistent findings on the effects of sociodemographic factors, the following research question is stated:

> *RQ1: How are sex, education, and age related to media trust?*

4 Methods

4.1 Data Collection and Sample

A standardised online survey was conducted in June 2017 within the population of the German-speaking part of Switzerland among individuals older than 16. Respondents were recruited via an online access panel of a professional external panel provider, which is certified according to Global ISO 26362 and a member of the European Society for Opinion and Market Research (ESOMAR) and the German Society for Online Research (DGOF). Specific quotas regarding age, sex (crossed), and educational levels were imposed. Thus, the sample is roughly representative of the Internet-using population of the German-speaking part of Switzerland. Overall, 1 019 people (50% females, 50% males) between 16 and 74 years old (M = 44 years of age) took part in the study. Approximately 11% reported a low level of education, 49% a middle level, and 40% a high level.

4.2 Measures

Media trust. Considering the problems of measuring people's media trust with a single item (see Kohring, 2004), this study examines media trust with a total of 11 items adapted from previous studies on trust in journalism (e.g., Kohring & Matthes, 2007), media credibility (Gaziano & McGrath, 1986; Meyer, 1988), and media scepticism (Tsfati, 2002, 2003) on a five-point Likert scale (1 ["strongly disagree"] to 5 ["strongly agree"]), which were subsequently subjected to factor analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Oklin (KMO) statistic was 0.91, indicating a strong validity for the factor analysis. The solution resulted in two distinct factors accounting for 63% of the total cumulative explained variance (Table 1). The first factor comprises seven items that examine to what extent recipients have the impression that the media meet journalistic quality criteria, such as credibility, balance, correctness or completeness; therefore, this factor was labelled trust in journalistic quality of media coverage about political issues. For further analysis, the items were summarised in an index (M = 2.8, SD = 0.8; Cronbach's α = .91), where the higher mean scores reflect a higher level of media trust. The second factor includes four items that reflect recipients' perception that the media coverage about political issues is influenced, biased, and one-sided. Due to the negative formulation of these items, they were recoded for further analysis and summarised in an index trust in independence and impartiality of media coverage about political issues (M = 2.6, SD = 0.8; Cronbach's α = .73).

Political dispositions. The respondents' political left-right orientation was assessed with one item asking respondents to place their own political position on a scale, where 1 meant "left" and 7 meant "right" (M = 4.1; SD = 1.5). Respondents' disenchantment with politics was examined using indicators that have

Table 1: Trust in the media coverage on political issues (factor analysis)

Media coverage about political issues…	Trust in journalistic quality of media coverage about political issues	Trust in independence and impartiality of media coverage about political issues (recoded)
… is credible.	0.83	
… is balanced.	0.82	
… is carefully researched.	0.82	
… presents the facts as they are.	0.81	
… takes all essential aspects into account.	0.80	
… is neutral.	0.76	
… takes place from different angles.	0.75	
… is strongly influenced by politics and economy.		0.82
… is determined by the political elite.		0.82
… is distorted.		0.69
… focuses only on negative aspects.		0.61
Eigenvalue	4.86	2.03

Note. Primary component analysis with varimax rotation; 62% explained variance; all factor loadings > 0.40; KMO = 0.91.

been applied in previous research on political disengagement, such as perceived political non-influence and dissatisfaction with politics in terms of economic situation, government's performance, and democracy (Arzheimer, 2002; Wolling, 1999). Attitudes towards the possibility of having a political influence were examined using the following two statements on a five-point Likert scale (1 ["very little"] to 5 ["a lot"]), which were taken from the ESS 2014 questionnaire for Switzerland (FORS, 2014): "How much would you say the political system in Switzerland allows people like you to have a say in what the government does?" (M = 3.1; SD = 1.1) and "How much would you say that the political system in Switzerland allows people like you to have an influence on politics?" (M = 3.0; SD = 1.1). For further analysis, the items were recoded and entered in the index perceived non-influence on politics in Switzerland (M = 3.0, SD = 1.0; Cronbach's α = 0.86), where higher mean scores indicate that people are less convinced that they have an influence on politics in Switzerland. Respondents' dissatisfaction with politics was examined using the following three statements on a five-point Likert scale (1 ["extremely dissatisfied"] to 5 ["extremely satisfied"]), which were also taken from the ESS 2014 questionnaire for Switzerland (FORS, 2014): "On the whole, how satisfied are you with the present state of the economy in Switzerland?" (M = 3.5; SD = 1.0), "Now thinking about the Switzerland government, how satisfied are you with the way it is doing its job?" (M = 3.1; SD = 1.0), "And on the whole, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Switzerland?" (M = 3.6; SD = 1.1). For further analysis, the items were recoded and summarised in an index dissatisfaction with politics (M = 2.6, SD = 0.9; Cronbach's α = 0.82), where higher values reflect more positive attitudes and, thus, a greater political satisfaction.[2] Finally, populist attitudes were examined using the nine-item version of the inventory developed in the National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) Democracy project (Schulz et al., 2017; Wirth et al., 2016). Based on this inventory, three dimensions of populist attitudes were assessed, each with three items on a five-point Likert scale (1 ["strongly disagree"] to 5 ["strongly agree"]): anti-establishment attitude (M = 3.5, SD = 0.9;

2 To ensure that political disenchantment can actually be considered separately from media trust/distrust or whether both belong to the same "anti-establishment" concept an additional factor analysis using both the indicators for political disenchantment and for media trust was calculated (see Table 4 in the Appendix). The analysis extracted three dimensions, the two dimensions of media trust (see also Table 1) and a third one which comprised all indicators for political disenchantment. Thus, political disenchantment formed its own factor and therefore was considered as a predictor of media trust in this study.

Cronbach's $\alpha = .66$), demand for sovereignty of the people ($M = 3.9$, $SD = 0.9$; Cronbach's $\alpha = .82$), and belief in the homogeneity of the people ($M = 2.9$, $SD = 1.0$; Cronbach's $\alpha = .71$).[3]

News exposure. To examine people's exposure to news through mainstream media, social media, and non-mainstream, alternative media, respondents were asked to indicate how often they use different information sources to inform themselves about political issues on an 8-point scale (0 ["never"] to 7 ["several times a day"]).[4] Exposure to news through mainstream media was examined for the following five media outlets, and it did not matter whether respondents used them offline (on TV or as a printed version) or online (media library, website or via an app): *public television news* ($M = 3.0$; $SD = 1.9$), *private television news* ($M = 2.3$; $SD = 2.0$), tabloids and commuter newspapers ($M = 2.9$; $SD = 2.2$), local and national *daily newspapers* ($M = 2.9$; $SD = 1.9$), and *weekly newspapers and magazines* ($M = 2.1$; $SD = 1.7$). Using political information through social media was measured for *Facebook* ($M = 2.2$; $SD = 2.5$), *Twitter* ($M = 0.7$; $SD = 1.6$), and *YouTube* ($M = 1.7$; $SD = 2.1$). Finally, *blogs* ($M = 0.7$; $SD = 1.3$) and *special news websites, which are only available online* ($M = 0.9$; $SD = 1.7$) served as indicators for using political information from non-mainstream, alternative media.

5 Results

Taking a closer look at the descriptive results, it becomes apparent that just a marginal group of respondents perceives that the media coverage about political issues is independent and *not* influenced by politics and economy (9% agreement), the political elite (15% agreement), or distorted (24% agreement). Likewise, only a minority has the impression that the media coverage is neutral (16% agreement), presents the facts as they are (20% agreement), and is balanced (22% agreement). Overall, the findings reveal that the level of media trust in the journalistic quality ($M = 2.8$, $SD = 0.8$) of media coverage is slightly higher among the Swiss population than is their trust in the independence and impartiality of media coverage about political issues ($M = 2.6$, $SD = 0.8$) (see Table 2).

To explore further how media trust relates to sociodemographic characteristics, political dispositions, and news exposure, two hierarchical regression analyses were calculated using the two earlier extracted dimensions of media trust (see Table 1) as dependent variables. In the first step of the regressions, the control variables (age, sex, and education) were considered. In the second step, the various indicators for political dispositions were added as predictors. Finally, in the third step, variables on news exposure were included in the analysis. The results are presented in Table 3.
The results of the first step of the regressions show that, with one exception, media trust is not related to sociodemographic characteristics (see Table 3). Only younger people reported a higher level of trust in the independence and impartiality of

3 *Anti-establishment attitude:* "MPs in Parliament very quickly lose touch with ordinary people" ($M = 3.7$; $SD = 1.1$); "The differences between ordinary people and the ruling elite are much greater than the differences between ordinary people" ($M = 3.8$; $SD = 1.1$); "People like me have no influence on what the government does" ($M = 3.2$; $SD = 1.2$); *demand for sovereignty of the people:* "The people should have the final say on the most important political issues by voting on them directly in referendums" ($M = 4.0$; $SD = 1.1$); "The people should be asked whenever important decisions are taken" ($M = 4.0$; $SD = 1.0$); "The people, not the politicians, should make our most important policy decisions" ($M = 3.7$; $SD = 1.1$); *belief in the homogeneity of the people:* "Ordinary people are of good and honest character" ($M = 3.1$; $SD = 1.2$); "Ordinary people all pull together" ($M = 2.7$; $SD = 1.2$); "Although the Swiss are very different from each other, when it comes down to it they all think the same" ($M = 2.8$; $SD = 1.2$).

4 Scale is based on the latest Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2017; 0 ("never"), 1 ("less than once a month"), 2 ("less than once a week"), 3 ("once a week"), 4 ("two to three days per week"), 5 ("four to six days per week"), 6 ("every day"), 7 ("several times a day").

Table 2: Descriptive results on distrust in the media coverage on political issues

The media coverage on political issues…	M (SD)[1]	Disagreement[2]	Agreement[3]
… is neutral.	2.5 (1.0)	48%	16%
… presents the facts as they are.	2.8 (1.0)	42%	20%
… is balanced.	3.1 (1.0)	36%	22%
… takes all essential aspects into account.	2.9 (1.0)	36%	25%
… is carefully researched.	2.7 (1.0)	32%	27%
… is credible.	2.9 (1.0)	32%	29%
… takes place from different angles.	2.8 (1.0)	27%	31%
Index: trust in journalistic quality of media coverage about political issues	2.8 (0.8)		
… is strongly influenced by politics and economy. (recoded)	2.2 (0.9)	64%	9%
… is determined by the political elite. (recoded)	2.9 (1.1)	57%	15%
… is distorted. (recoded)	2.8 (1.0)	40%	24%
… mainly focuses only negative aspects. (recoded)	2.4 (1.1)	36%	28%
Index: trust in independence and impartiality of media coverage about political issues	2.6 (0.8)		

Note. [1]Mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) on five-point Likert scale (1 ["strongly disagree"] to 5 ["strongly agree"]); [2]points 1 and 2 on the scale. [3]points 4 and 5 on the scale.

media coverage about political issues (age: $\beta=-0.11$; $p<.001$). By contrast, the findings of the second step of the regressions reveal that media trust is strongly related to people's political dispositions. This becomes particularly apparent through the strong change of R-squared in both models. However, the effects of the single variables were extremely dissimilar. First, people's political orientation was not related to media trust; therefore, H1a must be rejected. Regarding the supposed negative relation between media trust and political disenchantment, this relation was strongly supported for people's trust in the journalistic quality, but not for trust in the independence and impartiality of media coverage about political issues. People perceiving themselves as having a low influence on politics ($\beta=-0.23$; $p<0.001$) reported a lower level of trust in the journalistic quality of media coverage about political issues. Moreover, people who are more strongly dissatisfied with politics showed lower levels of trust in both journalistic quality and the independence and impartiality of media coverage (see Table 3). Looking at these findings together, H1b is strongly supported as people who are disenchanted with politics show lower levels of media trust. With respect to the presumed negative influence of populist attitudes, the findings are mixed. For example, people's anti-establishment attitudes were the strongest predictor of trust in the independence and impartiality of media coverage about political issues ($\beta=-0.41$; $p<0.001$), but showed no effect on trust in journalistic quality. Moreover, a strong demand for people's sovereignty was a negative predictor of media trust in both cases; however, it was significantly lower ($\beta=-0.10$; $p<.01$). By contrast, the third dimension of populist attitudes tested here, the belief in the homogeneity of the people, was positively related to trust in the journalistic quality of media coverage about political issues ($\beta=0.16$; $p<.001$). Thus, H1c was partly supported for anti-establishment attitude and the demand for people's sovereignty but must be rejected for the belief in the homogeneity of the people.

Regarding the relation between news exposure and media trust, the results of the third step of the regressions revealed a rather weak relation, as the R-squared changed just slightly, and the variables showed only isolated effects (see Table 3). Of the various variables tested for exposure to news through mainstream media, only one significant effect was found: People that are more frequently exposed to news via public television ($\beta=0.18$; $p<.001$) reported a higher level of trust in the journalistic quality of media coverage about political issues. Consequently, H2 was confirmed only for one case. With respect to the presumed negative relation between exposure to news through social media and media trust, H3a must be re-

Table 3: Hierarchical regression: influences of sociodemographic factors, political dispositions, and news exposure on media trust

	Trust in journalistic quality of media coverage about political issues		Trust in independence and impartiality of media coverage about political issues	
	β	Sig.	β	Sig.
Block 1: Control Variables				
Age (in years)	0.05		–0.11	**
Sex (men)	0.03		0.02	
Education (high)	0.02		–0.02	
R^2	0.00		0.01	
Block 2: Control Variables + Political Predispositions				
Age (in years)	0.10	**	0.00	
Sex (men)	–0.01		0.03	
Education (high)	–0.03		–0.09	**
Political orientation (1 = left; 7 = right)	–0.06		0.01	
Perceived non-influence on politics (high)	–0.23	***	0.03	
Dissatisfaction with politics (high)	–0.29	***	–0.07	*
Anti-establishment attitude (strong)	0.01		–0.41	***
Demand for people's sovereignty (strong)	–0.10	**	–0.10	**
Belief in homogeneity of the people (strong)	0.16	***	0.02	
R^2 change	0.23		0.20	
Block 3: Control Variables + Political Predispositions + News Exposure				
Age (in years)	0.02		–0.02	
Sex (men)	–0.01		0.03	
Education (high)	–0.05		–0.09	**
Political orientation (1= left; 7 = right)	–0.07	*	0.00	
Perceived non-influence on politics (high)	–0.20	***	0.02	
Dissatisfaction with politics (high)	–0.26	***	–0.06	
Anti-establishment attitude (strong)	–0.01		–0.40	***
Demand for people's sovereignty (strong)	–0.09	*	–0.09	*
Belief in homogeneity of the people (strong)	0.15	***	0.02	
Public television news use	0.18	***	0.02	
Private television news use	–0.01		0.07	
Tabloid and "commuter" newspapers use	0.05		–0.01	
Local and national daily newspapers use	0.00		0.02	
Weekly newspapers and magazines use	0.01		–0.06	
Facebook use	–0.06		–0.05	
Twitter use	0.01		–0.02	
YouTube use	–0.01		0.00	
Blog use	0.10	**	0.03	
Special News websites use	–0.09	*	–0.10	**
R^2 change	0.04		0.02	
Total R^2	0.27		0.23	

Note. *$p<.05$; **$p<.01$; ***$p<.001$.

jected as no such effect could be found for Facebook, Twitter, or YouTube. Regarding the effect of using non-mainstream, alternative media on media trust, the evidence is mixed. The results showed that using a blog is positively related to people's trust in the journalistic quality of media coverage about political issues ($\beta = 0.19$; $p<.01$). Thus, in the case of blogs, H3b must be rejected. By contrast, the findings revealed a strong relation between the exposure to news through special news websites on the Internet that provide alternative information, and trust in the media: people

more frequently using such news websites to perceive information on political issues show lower levels of trust both in the quality (β=–0.09; p<0.05) and in the independence and impartiality of media coverage about political issues (β=–0.10; p<.01). Therefore, in the case of news exposure through special news websites, H3b was confirmed.

6 Conclusion

Although media trust in Switzerland is high compared to other countries, citizens' mistrust has risen by four percentage points in the last year (fög, 2017). However, with respect to the predicators and consequences of negative and sceptical attitudes towards the mainstream media, the majority of research now stems from the United States, Israel and Germany. Thus, despite the potential dangers of a declining media trust for the Swiss democracy, particularly as public broadcasts and the press are still the most important sources for news and political information for Swiss citizens, little is known about the dimensions, level, and predictors of media trust in Switzerland. Therefore, the present study explores media trust among Switzerland's German-speaking population.

Even though communication science has been dealing with media (dis-)trust and related phenomena like the hostile media phenomenon quite intensively for some years, no commonly shared concept of media trust exists. However, common to most conceptualisations is that media trust refers to the relation between the media and its audience, where the audience, as the trusting party, is willing to be vulnerable to news coverage and put their trust in an accurate, comprehensive, and neutral selection and presentation of information by the media and journalists (e. g., Ardèvol-Abreu & Gil de Zúñiga, 2017; Grosser, 2016; Kohring & Matthes, 2007). Based on this, many studies have examined trust in the media through an assessment of the characteristics and quality of media coverage that is the result of journalistic decision making and actions (Kohring, 2004; Kohring & Matthes, 2007; Tsfati, 2002, 2003). Accordingly, in this study, media trust has been measured with multiple items to assess the characteristics of reporting on political issues (see Table 1). Thereby, two dimensions of media trust were extracted: (1) trust in the journalistic quality and (2) trust in the independence and impartiality of media coverage on political issues. Yet, with respect to the level of media trust, the findings show that it was rather low among the Swiss population on both dimensions. Regarding the question of who trusts the media, hypotheses regarding the relations of political characteristics and news exposure have been derived from previous research. To test these hypotheses, hierarchical regression analyses were applied to data from a quantitative online survey conducted in June 2017 with a quota sample of 1 019 citizens from the German-speaking part of Switzerland.

Looking at the effects of people's political characteristics, the results strongly supported previous research that there is a significant relationship between political disenchantment and media trust; and yet, that they can be belong to different concepts (see also Table 4 in the Appendix). Perceptions of a minor influence on politics in Switzerland and dissatisfaction with politics are strongly related to lower levels of media trust. Furthermore, the findings strengthen the initial evidence that media trust is related to populist attitudes (Fawzi, 2016; Schindler et al., 2018); however, the direction and strength of this relation seem to vary along with the conceptualisation of populist attitudes. In this study, populist attitudes have been measured as three-dimensional (Schulz et al., 2017; Wirth et al., 2016), producing evidence on the relation of these three dimensions with media trust. While an anti-elitism attitude and preference for people's sovereignty were related negatively to media trust, belief in people's homogeneity was positively related. Thus, the findings in particular support the argumentation of Aalberg et al. (2017) that populists perceive institutional media as part of the political elite as an anti-elitism attitude turned out to be

the strongest predictor for a low level of trust in the independence and impartiality of media coverage of political issues. Thus, people who view political elites as strongly distant from ordinary people and who view ordinary people as hardly influential on politicians show lower levels of trust in the independence and impartiality of media coverage of political issues.

The positive relation between mainstream media use and media trust that was found in previous studies (Schranz et al., 2016; Tsfati, 2010; Tsfati & Ariely, 2014; Tsfati & Cappella, 2003; Tsfati & Cappella, 2005) was only supported for one case: People who more frequently use public television news report higher levels of trust in the journalistic quality of media coverage on political issues. Thus, this finding in particular supports the essential role of a distinct public broadcast – as is the case in Switzerland – in the debate regarding trust and mistrust in media. Other than expected, the use of social media for information reasons was not related to media trust. Finally, this study's findings strengthen the previous research that has shown that media trust is negatively related to the use of non-mainstream, alternative media (e. g., Tsfati, 2010; Tsfati & Peri, 2006). In the present study, there is a consistent finding that a more frequent use of special news websites that provide alternative information on political issues is negatively related to trust both in the journalistic quality and in the independence and impartiality of media coverage about political issues. This result also strengthens the type of selective exposure that focusses on the medium as in the contemporary media environment people have the opportunity "to go online for information when they disagree with or do not trust the reportage in more mainstream outlets" (Stroud, 2017, p. 5). Overall, the results have revealed that media trust is mostly affected by political and populist attitudes and less affected by sociodemographic factors and media use. This finding underlines the general observation that the mistrust of the population is not directed specifically against the media, but more generally against social and political institutions and elites.

This study has some methodological weaknesses that must be acknowledged and addressed in future research. The first limitation relates to the use of cross-sectional data to examine the relation between political disenchantment, media use, and media trust; there are several reasons to expect that these three phenomena influence each other. This paper treated political disenchantment and news exposure as predictors of media trust; however, other studies examine media scepticism as a predictor of exposure (Tsfati & Cappella, 2003, 2005) and political trust (Ariely, 2015) or media exposure as a predictor of political disenchantment (Maurer, 2003; Wolling, 1999, 2014). Consequently, so far, the question of the direction of causality between media trust, political disenchantment, and media use, and how they may affect each other over time, remains open. Therefore, in future research, panel surveys should be conducted to examine how these three concepts change over time. Particularly, the question of whether a negative downward spiral between a decline in media trust, political disenchantment, and news avoidance behaviours can be observed, and which factors may have the potential to counteract such a spiral, is of strong scientific and political interest. Second, this study uses data from an online survey conducted within the population of the German-speaking part of Switzerland; thus, the findings provide only partial insights. Therefore, future studies should examine the existence of media trust from a comparative perspective between the German-speaking, the French-speaking, and the Italian-speaking parts of Switzerland. Such an approach would provide an essential contribution for two reasons: 1) it allows for exploring the interplay between the media trust and political disenchantment in the different language regions, as well as the subsequent consequences for the direct democracy in Switzerland as a whole; 2) it offers the possibility not only to consider the influencing factors on media disenchantment at the individual level but also on the context level, as all three language regions represent linguistically segmented media markets that also dif-

fer in the quality of the political reporting (fög, 2015, 2016).

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Appendix

Table 4: Trust in the media coverage on political issues and political disenchantment (factor analysis)

	Trust in journalistic quality of media coverage about political issues	Indicators for political disenchantment	Trust in independence and impartiality of media coverage about political issues (recoded)
Media coverage about political issues…			
… is carefully researched.	0.80		
… is balanced.	0.80		
… is credible.	0.79		
… presents the facts as they are.	0.78		
… takes all essential aspects into account.	0.77		
… takes place from different angles.	0.75		
… is neutral.	0.75		
On the whole, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Switzerland?'		0.78	
How much would you say the political system in Switzerland allows people like you to have a say in what the government does?		0.76	
How much would you say that the political system in Switzerland allows people like you to have an influence on politics?		0.74	
Now thinking about the Switzerland government, how satisfied are you with the way it is doing its job?		0.74	
And on the whole, how satisfied are you with the present state of the economy in Switzerland?		0.70	
Media coverage about political issues…			
… is strongly influenced by politics and economy.			0.82
… is determined by the political elite.			0.81
… is distorted.			0.68
… focuses only negative aspects.			0.62
Eigenvalue	5.95	2.07	1.94

Note. Primary component analysis with varimax rotation; 62% explained variance; all factor loadings > 0.40; KMO = 0.90.

Studies in Communication Sciences 18.2 (2018), pp. 247–266

The effects of public diplomacy on country identity in countries with different language regions and cultures: The case of Switzerland

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Abstract
The aim of this study is to explore the existing differences in (regional) country identity between the two biggest language regions of Switzerland, and the effects that differently-framed public diplomacy messages have on these country identities. To analyze the heterogeneous dimensions of regional country identity in the two language regions and the effects of public diplomacy messages, an experimental study with four different groups was conducted. The results show that a) even within one country, different language regions have differing country identities and give varying significance to different dimensions, b) these differences have an impact on how public diplomacy messages are perceived, and c) they also have an impact on the overall country identity of the recipients of these messages. Finally, we show that d) these impacts are moderated by the subjects' political opinions on an issue as well as the framing of the message itself.

Keywords
Partial Least Squares (PLS), Multi Group Analysis, Public Diplomacy, Country Identity, 4D Model, Mass Immigration Initiative

1 Introduction

With the advent of the digital era, the world has experienced huge changes. Digitalization and globalization have led to new ways of communication impacting upon public diplomacy. Public diplomacy is defined as "the way in which both government and private individuals and groups influence directly or indirectly those public attitudes and opinions which bear directly on another government's foreign policy decisions" (Delany, 1968). In recent decades, the conditions for public diplomacy activities have changed drastically due to three different developments: *The revolution in communication technologies, the revolution in politics* – as many societies move towards becoming democracies, the means and extent of mass participation in political processes has changed – and *the process of globalization,* which has led to a dissolving of national borders, to a new interconnectedness around the globe and to a massive compression of available time and space (Nye, 1990; Gilboa, 2008; Vickers, 2004).

Given these developments, Melissen (2005) identifies three major changes in public diplomacy: (1) a shift in public diplomacy motivated by the emergence of new actors, (2) a shift away from one-way communication towards dialogues and collaborations and (3) public diplomacy targets becoming increasingly interconnected. The advent of social media has been a particular catalyst for these changes by recasting public diplomacy from an asymmetrical top down communication into a potentially symmetrical communication by giving anyone the opportunity to speak up and take part in the public discourse (Harris, 2013). This last change poses a new challenge for public diplomacy: to align communication strategies, which were designed for a foreign public, with the concerns of a domestic public as well (Goodman & Wang, 2006). In her article,

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Fitzpatrick (2012) comes to the conclusion that "if public diplomacy programs are to be managed strategically, the field of publics must include domestic publics. In this era of global connectedness and interdependence, the networks of influence that determine public diplomacy outcomes are no longer defined by geography or national borders."

Research in public diplomacy has acknowledged these developments and examined the subject in its new environment. However, the research still seems to be limited in different ways. Firstly, most research uses content analyses (Golan & Viatchaninova, 2013; Mogensen, 2015; Strauss, Kruikemeier, van der Meulen, & van Noort, 2015) or case studies (Khatib, Dutton, & Thelwall, 2012; Smyth, 2001; Zhong & Lu, 2013). There are not many experimental researches contributing to the understanding of causal relationships. Secondly, most of the research tests the status quo (Golan & Viatchaninova, 2013; Khatib, Dutton, & Thelwall, 2012; Smyth, 2001; Zhong & Lu, 2013); in other words, it analyzes what public diplomacy actors do. The environmental changes, however, specifically illustrate the importance of the effects of public diplomacy activities on publics, an area which has not yet been addressed by any studies. The aim of this study, therefore, is to contribute to this research gap by exploring existing differences in country identities, taking the two biggest language regions of Switzerland as an example, and the effects that differently-framed public diplomacy messages have on these country identities. We understand country identity as the perception of the country held by the domestic public itself (Buhmann & Ingenhoff, 2015a; Rusciano, Fiske-Rusciano, & Wang, 1997). We show that the perception of the significant dimensions forming a country identity is different between the French- and German-speaking parts of Switzerland, is moderated by political opinions and attitudes, and that these differences have an influence on how public diplomacy messages are perceived.

1.1 Country identity and the 4D model

To understand the concept of country identity it is important to understand the differentiation between country image and country identity. We will refer to the country image when talking about the external perception, and to country identity when dealing with the perception of the domestic public (Buhmann & Ingenhoff, 2015a; Rusciano, Fiske-Rusciano, & Wang, 1997). Even though country identity is concerned with the domestic public only, it does not mean that this public is homogenous (Buhmann & Ingenhoff, 2015a). If we think for example of Switzerland, with its various linguistic regions and its migrants, it becomes obvious that even within the domestic public there exists a very heterogeneous population. Thus country identity and country image cannot be completely separated, because "who we are cannot be completely separated from the perceptions others have of us and we have of others" (Hatch & Schultz, 2000, p. 27). The two concepts are strongly interrelated, as there is a permanent negotiation between the country identity and the communicated images, which then shape the country identity and vice versa (Rusciano, 2003).

In order to measure country identity, the 4D Model of Buhmann and Ingenhoff (2015a) will be applied. This model is an integrative framework, developed to measure the multidimensional construct of country image and/or country identity. It draws on three basic concepts: *the concept of national identity* by Smith (1991) to describe the image object, *the attitude theory* by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) to analyze the attitudes toward a country, and *the model of reputation as a multidimensional construct* (Eisenegger & Imhof, 2008; Ingenhoff & Sommer, 2007) to differentiate between the cognitive and affective components of the construct. It contains four dimensions: (1) The functional dimension of the model measures the beliefs about the competences and competitiveness of a country; (2) the normative dimension covers the beliefs regarding a country's norms, values and integrity; (3) the aesthetic dimension measures the beliefs regarding a country's attractiveness of culture and

landscape; and (4) the emotional dimension consists of the attractiveness and fascination of a country and its citizens (Buhmann & Ingenhoff, 2015a).

1.2 Public diplomacy and framing theory

In public diplomacy, communication is the primary tool. However, any message can be framed to achieve a different reaction. Until now, the framing theory has very rarely been used to describe or analyze public diplomacy activities. This lack of research on framing and theoretical infrastructures was also criticized by Entman (2008). This study therefore aims to test different frames as different public diplomacy strategies in order to examine their impacts on the audience. The framing type used in this study is attribute framing, "in which some characteristic of an object or event serves as the focus of the framing manipulation" (Levin, Schneider, & Gaeth, 1998, p. 150). This means, for example, that an issue is addressed from only one perspective of the argument, while ignoring others. Entman (2008) identifies two variables moderating the effect of a framed strategy: *magnitude* and *congruence*. When the *magnitude* (i. e. the frequency and prominence) of an issue increases, influence can be exerted on public opinion about this issue. But when the issue is already prominent and frequently covered in the media, and the public is well informed, the effect of framing will reduce. With *congruence,* he means that a framed message has more effect if it is compatible with the dominant opinion of the public than that of an incongruently framed issue. Chong and Druckman (2007) showed that most individuals are less easily affected by frames which contradict their own opinion. However, if the issue is controversial and there is no dominant opinion, the framing effect is potentially high (Entman, 2008).

1.3 The mass immigration initiative and cultural differentiation

To analyze the impact of public diplomacy on country identity, the democratic vote on the mass immigration initiative in Switzerland in February 2014 serves as a stimulus. The initiative was launched by the Swiss People's Party (SVP) in 2011. Its aim was to restrict immigration to Switzerland with limits and quotas and to privilege Swiss nationals when hiring staff. This vote is interesting to analyze in multiple ways. Not only was the initiative of remarkable global interest, but it also showed a deeply divided country. Even though the vote in favor was surprisingly high – with 50.3 % (BK, 2015) – it was obvious that it was not unanimous. Firstly, there was a difference in voting behavior between rural regions, who voted more in favor of the initiative (57.6%), and urban centers, where people were less likely to vote yes (41.5 %). This indicates that the more urban the area voters lived in, the less likely it was that they voted yes. Secondly, and even more noticeable, are the differences between the country's language regions. While in the German-speaking part of Switzerland (52%) and the Italian-speaking part (68%) more than 50% voted yes, in the French-speaking part only 41.5% voted yes (BFS, 2015b). This is in line with the results of Schmid (1995), who shows that the German- and French-speaking parts of Switzerland differ in terms of their value systems, their political points of view, and their attitudes and identity. Although country identity has been attributed, amongst other things, to a territory, the symbolic factor of a common language plays an important role in the formation of a country identity (Smith, 1996). This leads to the research question (RQ) of this study:

> *RQ:* What is the impact of different public diplomacy strategies on country identity?

It can be assumed that the German- and French-speaking parts of Switzerland have different regional country identities, which could be a reason for the differing opinions expressed in the vote.[1] Thus, the first hypothesis is:

1 This assumption could be valid for all language regions. In this study, however, the focus remains on the two largest language regions.

H1: The country identities of the German-speaking and French-speaking parts of Switzerland differ, i. e. the values given to the different dimensions that form a country identity are different in the German- and French-speaking parts of Switzerland.

Public diplomacy messages are usually designed to affect the image foreign publics have of a country. If the domestic public, due to the new interconnectedness, also receive the message designed for the public abroad, it might also have an impact on them. Therefore, we can assume:

H2: Public diplomacy strategies influence country identity.

The framing mechanisms showed that there are two moderating variables, magnitude and congruence. The mass immigration initiative is a very controversial and prominent issue and the Swiss public is potentially very well-informed. In this case congruence might play a significant role as the federal council had to explain why there was a yes vote, even though there was also a lot of opposition. So, it can be assumed that the people who supported the initiative, based on a specific political opinion, reacted differently to such a message than the people who were opposed to it.

H3: Personal beliefs/political opinions on a communicated issue moderate the effect of a public diplomacy strategy on country identity.

Framing theory leads to the assumption that differently-framed public diplomacy messages will not have the same effect. Also, it is possible that the different frames have different effects on German- and French-speaking Swiss, or on supporters, opponents or undecided voters:

H4: Differently-framed public diplomacy messages have a different effect on country identity.

These hypotheses will be tested statistically to answer the research question of the study. To analyze causal relationships, it is reasonable to conduct an experiment. Therefore, the next section will be used to outline what method was used and why it was used.

2 Method

2.1 Epistemic structure and operationalization of the construct

Country identity is a complex latent construct with both reflective and formative indicators. The epistemic structure is dependent on the specification of these two types. The reflective indicators are the outcomes of the underlying construct and dropping one item should not alter the construct, as the items result from it. The direction of causality of the formative indicators, however, is from measure to construct. Hence dropping an item here would alter the construct, as the loss of the item might lead to the omission of an important part of the construct (Buhmann & Ingenhoff, 2013; Fornell & Bookstein, 1982; Jarvis, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2003).

Existing research concerning country image or country identity focuses mostly on reflective indicators (Ingenhoff & Sommer, 2010). However, the cognitive dimensions – functional, normative and aesthetic – can be seen as "variables that make the underlying construct appear, not as outcomes" (Buhmann & Ingenhoff, 2013, p. 68) and therefore should be treated as formative indicators. The emotional dimension, on the other hand, is an outcome of the country image or country identity and needs therefore to be operationalized by reflective items. The operationalization of this construct is based on the 4D Model of Buhmann and Ingenhoff (2015a). Given the argumentation above, "the exogenous constructs of the functional (FUNC), normative (NORM), and aesthetic (AEST) dimensions (cognitive country image component) were operationalized with formative indicators while the endogenous construct of the emotional (EMOT) dimension (affective country

image component) was matched with reflective indicators" (Buhmann & Ingenhoff, 2013, p. 69).

2.2 Variables

Political Attitudes and Personal Beliefs. First, the political attitudes and personal beliefs on the mass immigration initiative had to be measured as control variables. The items used here are from the 2015 Swiss election studies (Lutz, 2015). The subjects were first asked to relate themselves to the Swiss party they think match their opinions the most. Then they were asked to position themselves on a left-right scale with seven options. Lastly, they were asked how they voted (or if they didn't vote, how they would have voted) on the mass immigration initiative on 9th February 2014.

Opinions of Switzerland (i.e. summary items). It is also necessary to test overall opinions of Switzerland before presenting the stimuli. In order to do so, the subjects were asked four questions, rating each of the four dimensions of country identity (functional, normative, aesthetic or emotional) on a seven point Likert-scale. These questions were also used as global items summarizing the four constructs, which helps in assessing the external validity of the formative constructs later on.

Country identity. To measure country identity the items of Buhmann and Ingenhoff (2013) were used. The set consists of 43 items: 19 for the functional dimension, 12 for the normative dimension, 8 for the aesthetic dimension (formative items) and 4 for the reflective specified dimension (emotional dimension).

2.3 Experimental online survey

To analyze the impact of public diplomacy on country identity, an experimental study with four different groups was conducted. This method was used because it can look for causalities. To control for intervening variables the subjects are randomly allocated to a group, so the groups are as similar as possible (Kühl, 2009). In order to be able to assign the differences between the groups to the stimuli, it is favorable to have a homogenous sample. The more similar the subjects are, the more clearly the differing outcome can be related to the measured causality. Different communication strategies on explaining the outcome of the vote on the mass immigration initiative served stimuli. They were created as newspaper articles in order to gauge their different impacts on the country identity. The public diplomacy strategies were fictional, each strategy referring to one dimension of the three independent dimensions of the 4D Model (functional, normative and aesthetic). Thus the subjects were divided into three treatment groups, with each group exposed to one of the three stimuli, and one control group.

The fictional newspaper articles were set in two different real newspapers, the French *Le Figaro* and the German *Die Süddeutsche Zeitung*. As the experiment took place in both the French- and German-speaking parts of Switzerland, the highest-circulation quality newspapers of each of the neighboring countries were chosen (Latzer, Aubert, Just, Korinth, & Saurwein, 2012). To come up with the content of the newspaper articles, different existing newspaper articles dealing with the mass immigration initiative were used as orientation.

In order to test the hypotheses, we decided to choose the professional Swiss farmer's association, "IP-Suisse," as a sample. This was chosen because it is helpful in an experimental study to use a homogenous and large sample. Due to the huge number of IP-Suisse members, the sample consists of 1 477 persons. The participants were randomly divided into the four groups, resulting in 395 subjects in the control group, 366 in the functional framed group, 343 in the normative framed group, and 373 in the aesthetic framed group. The sample is dominated by men (82%), which is not surprising among farmers. The average age of the sample is 54 years ($SD = 10.074$). Although the sample is not representative of the Swiss population, members of IP-Suisse are nevertheless a suitable group to test the hypotheses. Farmers and agricultural employees are generally known to have political opinions on the issues of mass immigration and cul-

tural differentiation, which lowers the risk of measuring opinions that do not actually exist. In fact, on a scale from one (left) to seven (right), 40.3% positioned themselves on the right end (six and seven), with 67.8% (69.4% German-speaking, 60.6% French-speaking) answering that they voted (or would have voted) yes for the mass immigration initiative. Moreover, the farmer's association has members across all language regions of Switzerland, which allows for comparison of German-speaking and French-speaking Swiss. Of these 1 477 subjects, 1218 (82.5%) are from the German-speaking part of Switzerland and 259 (17.5%) from the French-speaking part.

3 Results

In this study we test a variance-based partial least squares structural equation model (PLS-SEM), which offers more flexible modeling (Tenenhaus, Vinzi, Chatelin, & Lauro, 2005). This way of modeling is especially useful when measuring formative constructs (Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001; Monecke & Leisch, 2012). We used the software Smart-PLS to conduct PLS-SEM, which also offers the option of calculating Multi Group Analyses (MGA) to analyze the significance of differences between groups in PLS-SEM. In the following, we will first present the different ways of evaluating the measurement models, both for the reflective construct of the emotional dimension and the formative constructs of the functional, normative and aesthetic dimensions. We will then analyze the structural models, and draw conclusions for testing our hypotheses.

3.1 Measurement and structural model evaluation

The analyses of the reflective construct for both the German and French models show that the validity is given. The loadings are all above the target value of 0.7, and can therefore explain more than 50 percent of the variance of the latent construct. For the French-speaking group, the third indicator is below 0.7 (0.632) and would therefore usually be omitted. However, in order to keep the models comparable and due to the other quality criteria, which suggest that it is nonetheless a good model, this indicator will be kept.

In order to analyze the external validity of the formative model, the correlation of the formative indicators with a reflective indicator of the same construct will be examined. Therefore, a global item for each construct has been developed and was integrated in the survey (Buhmann & Ingenhoff, 2015b). For the German-speaking part, all indicators show a significant positive correlation with the global item. For the French-speaking part, one indicator of the aesthetic dimension is not significantly correlated. Nevertheless, the great majority confirm the external validity of the constructs. In a next step, the model has to be tested for collinearity issues. The variance inflation factor (VIF) describes the "degree to which the standard error has been increased due to the presence of collinearity" (Hair Jr, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2013, pp. 124–125). In a PLS-SEM, a VIF-value ≥ 5 implies collinearity issues. The VIF of the two models are all below the critical value. Therefore, we can assume that there are no collinearity issues within the models. In a final step, due to its significance and relevance, i. e. the outer weights, the functional item *influential culture* was omitted. From a theoretical point of view, it can be argued that a distinction from the aesthetic construct is difficult and that it might not be as important to the subjects in their functional country identity. The other indicators proved to be important.

To assess the structural model, the path coefficients and their *t*-values are examined in order to evaluate their significance. The cognitive components (as predicted by Buhmann and Ingenhoff, 2015a) all have a significant positive correlation with the affective component. The results of the *t*-values show that the cognitive dimensions contribute significantly in explaining the affective dimension, as they are all above the critical value of 1.96. The cognitive components explain 41.6% (German-speaking Swiss) to 67.2% (French-speaking Swiss) of the variance

of the affective component. These results are satisfactory. For the German-speaking Swiss model all effect sizes are small, while for the French-speaking Swiss the f^2-effect size of the aesthetic construct is medium (Cohen, 2013). This means that for French-speaking Swiss the aesthetic dimension contributes more of the variance of the emotional dimension.

Although Tenenhaus, Amato, and Esposito Vinzi (2004) suggested a PLS goodness-of-fit (GoF) index, which would validate the model more globally, Henseler and Sarstedt (2013) came to the conclusion that the usefulness of the GoF is not given as a PLS-SEM criterion. The only approximate criterion to evaluate the model fit in PLS-SEM is the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR). The SRMR is the distance between the "model implied and the empirical correlation matrix" (Henseler, Hubona, & Ray, 2016, p. 11). For the SRMR, a value of 0.08 or lower indicates a good model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The German-speaking Swiss model value is 0.055 and the French-speaking Swiss model value is 0.069. Both models therefore show acceptable model fits.

In summary, the structural model results show two acceptable models (Figure 1 and 2), which sufficiently explain the variance of the endogenous construct and show significant paths. The SRMR indicates that both models have an acceptable fit, and are therefore ready for comparisons.

3.2 Testing the hypothesis

To test the first hypothesis, a Partial Least Squares Multi-Group Analysis (PLS-MGA) is conducted. The MGA aims to examine the effect of a categorical variable on the relationships of the PLS-SEM. This method offers the possibility of comparing the path model between the groups and evaluates the probability that parameter estimates are higher in one subsample than the other, in order to verify the probable difference of these estimates among the subgroups.

The first hypothesis states that the German-speaking Swiss have a different country identity to the French-speaking Swiss. In order to examine this hypothesis an MGA between the German- and French-speaking groups is conducted including only the control group.

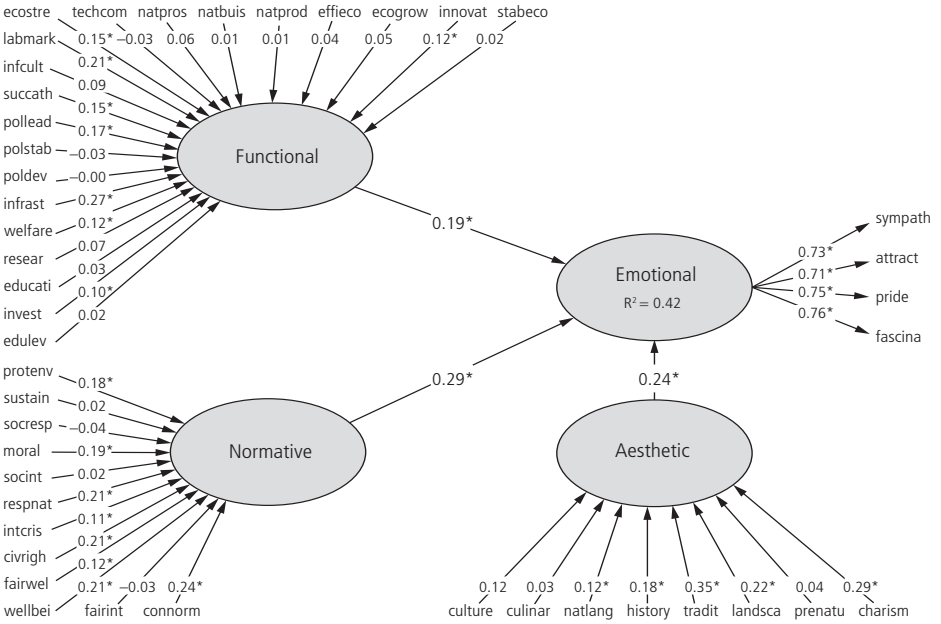
The results in Table 1 show that the German-speaking Swiss have a much higher coefficient for the relation between the normative and emotional constructs (0.318 to 0.072), while the French-speaking Swiss have higher coefficients for the relation between the functional and emotional ones (0.482 to 0.277).

Table 2 presents the differences of the outer weights and loadings. Looking at the functional indicators it can be observed that the different language regions estimate the indicators very differently. For example, for the French-speaking Swiss the partialized effect of the country's innovativeness on the functional dimension is negative (–0.317), whereas it is a high positive effect (0.204) for the German-speaking Swiss. The outer loadings (except for the fascination for Switzerland) all differ significantly. These results show that hypothesis 1 can be accepted. There are significant differences between the country identities of the two different language regions.

In order to analyze whether the public diplomacy strategies have an effect on country identity, the control group are compared with the treatment groups (Table 3). For the German-speaking Swiss no significant differences can be found. For the French-speaking Swiss there is a significant difference in relationship between the normative and emotional dimensions of the construct (0.062 to 0.282). Thus reading any of the three different frames seems to have an influence on the relationship between the normative and emotional dimensions of their country identity.

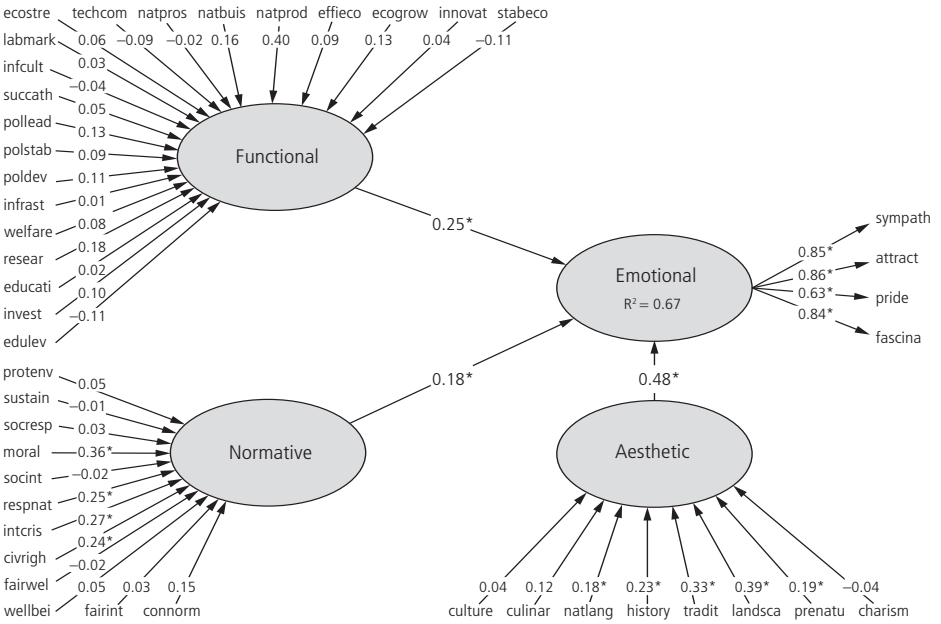
The differences between the indicators for the German-speaking Swiss can be seen in Table 4. The results show that while the examination of the path differences showed no significant results for the German-speaking Swiss between those who were not exposed to a stimulus and those who were, the indicators differ between the groups. It is interesting to see

Figure 1: Structural model results of the German-speaking group



Note. German-speaking part of Switzerland (N = 1 218); SRMR = 0.055; VIF: Functional = 3.95, Normative 3.49; Aesthetic = 1.92; AVE: Emotional = 0.543; Composite Reliability = .826; Cronbach's α = .720; Bootstrapping = 5 000.

Figure 2: Structural model results of the French-speaking group



Note. French-speaking part of Switzerland (n = 259); SRMR = 0.069; VIF: Functional = 2.97, Normative = 2.64; Aesthetic = 2.18; AVE: Emotional = 0.640; Composite Reliability = .875; Cronbach's α = .81; Bootstrapping = 5 000.

Table 1: Comparison of country identity in German- and French-speaking Switzerland

	German-speaking (n=311)			French-speaking (n=84)			
	Path coeff.	*t*-values	*SE*	Path coeff.	*t*-values	*SE*	|diff|
FUNC –> EMOT	0.277	3.820	0.072	0.482	5.393	0.089	0.205*
NORM –> EMOT	0.318	4.109	0.077	0.072	0.954	0.075	0.246*
AESTH –> EMOT	0.167	2.643	0.063	0.380	4.696	0.081	0.213

Note. *$p \leq .05$; **$p \leq .01$.

Table 2: MGA results of comparison: Outer weights and loadings of the different language regions

	German-speaking Switzerland			French-speaking Switzerland			
	Loadings	*t*-values	*SE*	Loadings	*t*-values	*SE*	|diff|
Liking the country	0.722	15.816	0.046	0.883	24.445	0.036	0.161**
Country attractiveness	0.715	14.991	0.048	0.881	30.921	0.028	0.166**
Pride in the country	0.803	24.914	0.032	0.564	4.531	0.124	0.239*
Dimensions	Weights	*t*-values	*SE*	Weights	*t*-values	*SE*	|diff|
Functional dimension							
Country innovativeness	0.204	1.767	0.116	–0.317	1.919	0.165	0.521**
Efficient economy	0.100	1.058	0.095	0.612	2.833	0.216	0.511*
Economic strength	0.180	2.070	0.087	–0.092	0.686	0.134	0.272*
Use of international political developments	–0.228	1.745	0.131	0.311	2.035	0.153	0.539**
Infrastructure	–0.009	0.097	0.097	–0.360	2.154	0.167	0.351*
Normative dimension							
Interest in well-being of fellow men	0.320	2.606	0.123	–0.089	0.419	0.211	0.213*
Aesthetic dimension							
Culinary	0.166	9.956	0.017	0.275	7.996	0.034	0.109**
History	0.161	8.304	0.019	0.082	1.410	0.058	0.116**
Intact nature	0.119	5.015	0.024	0.213	4.546	0.047	0.094*
Charismatic pers.	0.224	10.595	0.021	0.094	2.079	0.045	0.130**

Note. *$p \leq .05$; **$p \leq .01$. Table only contains on significant differences for readability reasons.

Table 3: Effects of stimuli on country identity of German- and French-speaking respondents

	Path coeff.	*t*-values	*SE*	Path coeff.	*t*-values	*SE*	|diff|
German-speaking	Control group: German-speaking (n=311)			Stimulus group: German-speaking (n=907)			
FUNC –> EMOT	0.246	3.288	0.075	0.199	4.076	0.048	0.047
NORM –> EMOT	0.307	3.941	0.078	0.280	6.283	0.045	0.028
AESTH –> EMOT	0.221	3.063	0.072	0.242	5.575	0.043	0.021
French-speaking	Control group: French-speaking (n=84)			Stimulus group: French-speaking (n=175)			
FUNC –> EMOT	0.460	5.101	0.089	0.249	3.305	0.075	0.211*
NORM –> EMOT	0.062	0.771	0.080	0.282	4.072	0.069	0.220*
AESTH –> EMOT	0.422	5.237	0.081	0.395	5.288	0.075	0.027

Note. *$p \leq .05$; **$p \leq .01$.

Table 4: MGA results of comparison: Outer weights and loadings of German-speaking respondents with and without Stimulus

	Control group			Stimulus group			
	Loadings	*t*-values	*SE*	Loadings	*t*-values	*SE*	|diff|
Pride in the country	0.804	24.991	0.032	0.727	27.044	0.027	0.077*
Dimensions	Weights	*t*-values	*SE*	Weights	*t*-values	*SE*	|diff|
Functional dimension							
Efficient economy	0.219	1.978	0.111	–0.040	0.685	0.058	0.259*
Use of international political developments	–0.008	0.088	0.095	0.262	4.149	0.063	0.270**
Infrastructure	–0.227	1.718	0.132	0.031	0.390	0.081	0.259*
Normative dimension							
Environmental protection	0.350	3.127	0.112	0.099	1.540	0.064	0.251*
Sustainability	–0.229	2.590	0.088	0.134	2.483	0.054	0.363**
High moral standards	0.317	3.235	0.098	0.127	2.223	0.057	0.191*
Fair welfare system	–0.031	0.273	0.112	0.182	2.880	0.063	0.213*
Aesthetic dimension							
Cultural goods	–0.058	0.449	0.128	0.186	2.434	0.076	0.244**
Landscape	–0.066	0.514	0.127	0.336	4.516	0.074	0.402*

Note. $^{*}p \leq .05$; $^{**}p \leq .01$

that there are indicators that have higher effects, while others have lower effects among the functional and normative dimensions when exposed to the stimuli. However, the significant differences of the aesthetic indicators are all higher when the subjects read a stimulus.

For the French-speaking Swiss, the indicators of the emotional dimension do not show any significant difference between the group with a stimulus and the control group (Table 5). It can be seen that the indicators of the functional dimension reacted the most with the stimuli. Overall the results show differences between the group with a stimulus and the group without, either in the paths or the indicators or both. Therefore, the second hypothesis can be confirmed. There is a difference in country identity after being exposed to a stimulus.

Hypothesis 3 states that the recipients' personal beliefs on the communicated issue of the public diplomacy message moderates the effect that the message has on their country identity. Even though there were differently-framed messages, they were all explaining the acceptance of the yes vote in a subjective way. This means that the personal beliefs of the supporters of the mass immigration initiative (i. e. their acceptance) were reflected in the text. Thus, the same analysis as before is conducted again, but this time with the two language regions further separated in their personal beliefs on the mass immigration initiative (i. e. supporters and opponents).

In Table 6 the results of the combined calculation are presented. The results show that within the German-speaking Swiss only the supporters of the mass immigration initiative show a significant difference between the group with the stimuli and the group without. The different path is the one between the functional and emotional construct, which is higher when exposed to a stimulus (0.178 to 0.303). Interestingly, for the French-speaking supporters this result cannot be observed. However, there might still be differences found among the indicators of the different subgroups. Tables 7, 8 and 9 present the multi-group analysis results for the indicator weights and loadings for the different subgroups calculated in Table 6.

For the German-speaking Swiss who support the mass immigration initiative, the results show that for the normative and aesthetic dimensions the effects are significantly higher when exposed to the stimuli. However, the functional dimen-

Table 5: MGA results of comparison: Outer weights and loadings of French-speaking respondents with and without stimulus

Dimensions	Control group			Stimulus group			
	Weights	*t*-values	*SE*	Weights	*t*-values	*SE*	|diff|
Functional dimension							
Country innovativeness	–0.318	1.917	0.166	0.076	0.839	0.090	0.394*
Efficient economy	0.613	2.867	0.214	–0.114	0.762	0.149	0.726**
Use of international political developments	0.312	2.082	0.150	0.005	0.059	0.090	0.306*
Infrastructure	–0.361	2.158	0.167	0.282	2.559	0.110	0.642**
Normative dimension							
Environmental protection	0.326	1.842	0.177	–0.137	1.441	0.095	0.463**

Note. *$p \leq .05$; **$p \leq .01$.

Table 6: Effects of stimuli on country identity of German- and French-speaking respondents with regard to political beliefs

	Path coeff.	*t*-values	*SE*	Path coeff.	*t*-values	*SE*	|diff|
German speaking							
	Control group: Supporter (n=219)			Stimulus group: Supporter (n=626)			
FUNC –> EMOT	0.403	2.535	0.077	0.142	6.025	0.055	0.262*
NORM –> EMOT	0.178	5.264	0.070	0.303	2.599	0.050	0.125
AESTH –> EMOT	0.255	3.714	0.069	0.274	5.150	0.053	0.019
	Control group: Opponents (n=78)			Stimulus group: Opponents (n=241)			
FUNC –> EMOT	0.447	3.362	0.133	0.315	3.886	0.081	0.131
NORM –> EMOT	0.295	2.728	0.108	0.232	3.128	0.074	0.063
AESTH –> EMOT	0.218	2.217	0.098	0.233	3.258	0.071	0.015
French-speaking Swiss							
	Control group: Supporter (n=54)			Stimulus group: Supporter (n=103)			
FUNC –> EMOT	0.497	4.102	0.121	0.492	5.771	0.085	0.004
NORM –> EMOT	0.112	1.150	0.098	0.123	1.677	0.077	0.011
AESTH –> EMOT	0.326	3.307	0.099	0.348	4.511	0.077	0.022

Note. *$p \leq .05$; **$p \leq .01$.

Table 7: MGA results of comparison: Outer weights and loadings of German-speaking respondents with and without stimulus moderated by supporting (congruent) personal beliefs

	Control group			Stimulus group			
	Loadings	*t*-values	*SE*	Loadings	*t*-values	*SE*	|diff|
Pride in the country	0.810	23.102	0.035	0.713	20.283	0.035	0.097*
	Weights	*t*-values	*SE*	Weights	*t*-values	*SE*	|diff|
Functional dimension							
Stable economic system	–0.105	1.259	0.084	0.099	1.296	0.076	0.204*
Country innovativeness	0.390	3.449	0.113	0.118	1.291	0.091	0.272*
Political stability	–0.080	0.821	0.098	0.315	3.761	0.084	0.396**
Normative dimension							
Sustainability	–0.194	1.921	0.101	0.130	1.912	0.068	0.324**
Fairness of international economic/trade policy	–0.132	1.291	0.103	0.090	1.223	0.074	0.223*
Aesthetic dimension							
Landscape	–0.165	1.334	0.124	0.313	3.169	0.099	0.478**

Note. *$p \leq .05$; **$p \leq .01$.

Table 8: MGA results of comparison: outer weights and loadings of German-speaking respondents with and without stimulus moderated by opposing (incongruent) opinion

	Control group			Stimulus group			
	Weights	*t*-values	*SE*	Weights	*t*-values	*SE*	|diff|
Functional dimension							
Use of international political developments	–0.471	1.672	0.282	0.091	0.883	0.103	0.562*
Normative dimension							
Sustainability	–0.302	1.542	0.196	0.098	0.997	0.098	0.400*
Engagement for societal interests	0.471	2.247	0.210	0.085	0.892	0.096	0.386*
Respect for other nations	–0.687	2.543	0.270	0.227	2.117	0.107	0.914**
Aesthetic dimension							
National languages	–0.350	1.300	0.269	0.177	1.243	0.143	0.528*

Note. $^{*}p \leq 0.05$; $^{**}p \leq 0.01$.

Table 9: MGA Results of comparison: outer weights and loadings of French-speaking respondents with and without Stimulus moderated by supporting (congruent) personal beliefs

	Control group			Stimulus group			
	Loadings	*t*-values	*SE*	Loadings	*t*-values	*SE*	|diff|
Pride in the country	0.220	1.077	0.204	0.675	9.573	0.071	0.455*
	Weights	*t*-values	*SE*	Weights	*t*-values	*SE*	|diff|
Functional dimension							
Country innovativeness	–0.559	2.008	0.278	0.129	1.196	0.108	0.688*
Successful athletes	0.287	1.254	0.229	–0.177	1.687	0.105	0.463*
Infrastructure	–0.623	1.617	0.385	0.201	1.663	0.121	0.825*
Normative dimension							
Environmental protection	0.481	1.994	0.241	–0.168	1.348	0.125	0.649*
Aesthetic dimension							
Intact nature	0.472	2.743	0.172	0.091	0.941	0.097	0.381*

Note. $^{*}p \leq 0.05$; $^{**}p \leq 0.01$.

sion offers mixed differences (higher and lower for the group with the stimuli). It is also interesting that pride in the country has a lower effect when exposed to the stimulus.

For the German-speaking Swiss who opposed the initiative it can be seen that none of the emotional indicators are significantly affected by the stimulus. Except for one indicator (engagement for societal interests 0.471 to 0.085), all indicators have higher effects on the different dimensions.

For the French-speaking Swiss who supported the mass immigration initiative, as with the German-speaking supporters, the indicator "pride in the country" is lower when exposed to the stimulus. But the values of the loadings are way below the critical value of 0.7. Therefore this indicator does not reflect the favorable attitude towards the country of the French-speaking Swiss who supported the mass immigration initiative. However, in contrast to the German-speaking supporters, the normative and aesthetic indicators with significant differences are lower (0.481 to –0.168; 0.472 to 0.091) for the French-speaking Swiss when exposed to the stimulus. Here, the functional indicators again offer mixed significant differences. Unfortunately, the French-speaking Swiss group who oppose the mass immigration initiative is too small (i. e. $n = 28$ in the control group) to get any valid results. Therefore, this space is left blank in the Table 6.

These results show that personal beliefs on the issue are actually moderating the effect of public diplomacy on country

identity. Thus, hypothesis 3 can be accepted.

The final hypothesis states that differently-framed public diplomacy messages have different effects on country identity. Therefore, the separate treatment groups and the control group will be compared to evaluate the varying reactions to differently-framed public diplomacy communication. Tables 10 and 11 show the comparisons between the different experimental groups. The results show that for the German-speaking Swiss the groups do not differ significantly among the paths. Thus, there is no difference between the subjects who were exposed to a functional framed stimulus, a normative framed stimulus, an aesthetic framed stimulus or even none at all on the paths. However, previous results of this study confirmed the moderating role of personal beliefs on the issue, which means that it is possible that political beliefs moderate the effect again here.

For the French-speaking Swiss the results show a different picture. Comparing the control group with the group that had a functional framed stimulus, the path between the normative and the emotional construct exhibits a significant difference. This path increases (0.062 to 0.233) when the subjects are exposed to a functional framed message. The same is true for the comparison between the control group and the group with the normative framed stimulus, as the path between the normative and emotional constructs increases by 0.189 (0.062 to 0.251). There is also a significant difference between the control group and the group with the normative framed stimulus with the path between

Table 10: Multi-group analysis of all treatment groups: Comparison of the effects of the different frames on country identity of German-speaking respondents

Relations			Control group (*n*=311)			Functional framed (*n*=322)			Normative framed (*n*=278)			Aesthetic framed (*n*=307)		
			Path coeff.	t-values	SE	Path coeff.	t-values	SE	Path coeff.	t-values	SE	Path coeff.	t-values	SE
FUNC	–>	EMOT	0.246	3.262	0.075	0.278	4.216	0.066	0.313	3.851	0.065	0.313	4.585	0.068
NORM	–>	EMOT	0.307	3.836	0.080	0.204	3.039	0.067	0.239	3.691	0.081	0.299	4.767	0.063
AESTH	–>	EMOT	0.221	3.084	0.072	0.276	4.262	0.065	0.241	3.478	0.069	0.151	2.250	0.067

Differences (MGA)

Relations				$CG \rightarrow TG_F$	$CG \rightarrow TG_N$	$CG \rightarrow TG_A$	$TG_F \rightarrow TG_N$	$TG_F \rightarrow TG_A$	$TG_N \rightarrow TG_A$
|diff|	FUNC	–>	EMOT	0.032	0.067	0.067	0.035	0.035	0.000
	NORM	–>	EMOT	0.103	0.068	0.009	0.035	0.095	0.060
	AESTH	–>	EMOT	0.055	0.020	0.070	0.035	0.125	0.090

Note. $^{*}p \leq 0.05$; $^{**}p \leq 0.01$.

Table 11: Multi-group analysis of all treatment groups: Comparison of the effects of the different frames on country identity of French-speaking respondents

Relations			Control group (n=84)			Functional framed (n=44)			Normative framed (n=65)			Aesthetic framed (n=66)		
			Path coeff.	*t*-values	*SE*	Path coeff.	*t*-values	*SE*	Path coeff.	*t*-values	*SE*	Path coeff.	*t*-values	*SE*
FUNC	–>	EMOT	0.460	5.154	0.089	0.393	2.496	0.091	0.509	3.740	0.136	0.311	2.669	0.116
NORM	–>	EMOT	0.062	0.782	0.079	0.233	2.563	0.157	0.251	2.230	0.112	0.214	2.310	0.093
AESTH	–>	EMOT	0.422	5.195	0.081	0.396	3.463	0.114	0.178	1.664	0.107	0.446	4.046	0.110

Differences (MGA)

Relations				$CG \rightarrow TG_F$	$CG \rightarrow TG_N$	$CG \rightarrow TG_A$	$TG_F \rightarrow TG_N$	$TG_F \rightarrow TG_A$	$TG_N \rightarrow TG_A$
|diff|	FUNC	–>	EMOT	0.067	0.049	0.149	0.116	0.082	0.198
	NORM	–>	EMOT	0.172*	0.189*	0.152	0.017	0.020	0.037
	AESTH	–>	EMOT	0.026	0.245**	0.024	0.218*	0.050	0.269**

Note. $^{*}p \leq 0.05$; $^{**}p \leq 0.01$.

the aesthetic and the emotional construct (0.422 to 0.178). Thus, the path decreases significantly if the subjects are exposed to the normative framed stimulus. Another significant difference occurs between the group with the functional framed article and those with the normative framed article. The path between the aesthetic and the emotional construct is lower (0.396 to 0.178) if a normative framed article was read in comparison with the functional framed article. Also, a significant difference can be seen between the group with the normative frame and the one with the aesthetic frame. The differing path is again the one between the aesthetic and the emotional construct (0.178 to 0.446), which is higher with the aesthetic framed stimulus compared to the normative framed stimulus. Thus, there is a different effect on the country identity of the French-speaking Swiss subjects depending on how a public diplomacy message is framed.

Unfortunately, for the French-speaking Swiss, separating the groups into four subgroups again makes it impossible to check for the moderating effect of political beliefs because the groups are too small (i. e., $n = 28$ CG; $n = 16$ TG_N; $n = 26$ TG_F; $n = 25$ TG_A). Therefore, this step can only be made for the German-speaking Swiss. The results show significant differences for the German-speaking Swiss who support the mass immigration initiative. Table 12 displays the results of the comparison. It can be seen that there are significant differences between the control group and the other groups. Between the control group and the group with the functional stimulus, the path between the functional dimension and the emotional dimension differs significantly. Looking at the path coefficients it can be observed that the control group's path is higher than the functional framed group's (0.403 to 0.219). But the control group also differs from the other two dimensions regarding the path

Table 12: Multi-group analysis of all treatment groups: Comparison of the effects of the different frames on country identity of German-speaking respondents controlled for political beliefs

Relations	Control group			Functional framed			Normative framed			Aesthetic framed		
	Path coeff.	*t*-values	*SE*	Path coeff.	*t*-values	*SE*	Path coeff.	*t*-values	*SE*	Path coeff.	*t*-values	*SE*
Supporters												
FUNC –> EMOT	0.403	5.260	0.077	0.219	3.017	0.073	0.268	3.429	0.078	0.280	3.258	0.086
NORM –> EMOT	0.178	2.546	0.070	0.221	2.844	0.078	0.329	4.452	0.074	0.311	4.442	0.070
AESTH –> EMOT	0.225	3.672	0.069	0.308	4.207	0.073	0.213	2.998	0.071	0.156	1.752	0.089
Opponents												
FUNC –> EMOT	0.447	3.378	0.132	0.455	3.969	0.115	0.569	4.439	0.128	0.460	5.217	0.088
NORM –> EMOT	0.295	2.803	0.105	0.209	2.243	0.093	0.154	1.400	0.110	0.234	2.333	0.100
AESTH –> EMOT	0.218	2.124	0.103	0.142	1.668	0.085	0.213	1.951	0.109	0.196	2.205	0.089

Relations	CG –> TG_F	CG –> TG_N	CG –> TG_A	TG_F –> TG_N	TG_F –> TG_A	TG_N –> TG_A
Differences (MGA)						
Supporters |diff|						
FUNC –> EMOT	0.184**	0.135	0.124	0.049	0.060	0.011
NORM –> EMOT	0.043	0.151*	0.133*	0.108	0.090	0.018
AESTH –> EMOT	0.053	0.042	0.099	0.095	0.152*	0.057
Opponents |diff|						
FUNC –> EMOT	0.008	0.122	0.014	0.114	0.005	0.109
NORM –> EMOT	0.086	0.141	0.061	0.055	0.026	0.080
AESTH –> EMOT	0.076	0.005	0.022	0.070	0.053	0.017

Note. $^*p \leq 0.05$; $^{**}p \leq 0.01$.

between the normative and the emotional dimension. Each group's path coefficient is significantly higher than that of the control group (0.178 to 0.329; 0.178 to 0.311). Another group comparison that offers a significant difference is that between the functional framed group and the aesthetic framed group. The path coefficient between the aesthetic and the emotional construct is significantly higher for the group that was exposed to the functional framed newspaper article (0.308 to 0.156). Thus, for both language groups there have been significant differences between the control group and at least one treatment group. Therefore, hypothesis 4 can be accepted. There is an effect of public diplomacy strategies on country identity.

3.3 Interpretation

The results indicate a clear difference between the country identities of the German-speaking and French-speaking Swiss. The composition of the different dimensions differs significantly between the two language regions, which confirms the findings of Smith (1995) that the different regions have different values, attitudes and, most importantly, identities. It is noticeable that for the French-speaking Swiss the normative dimension seems not to be a significant part of their constructed country identity, while it is the most important one for the German-speaking Swiss. This means that the German-speaking Swiss compose their country identity more from their beliefs about norms and values while the French-speaking Swiss have stronger beliefs about the competitiveness of Switzerland and the attractiveness of the Swiss culture and landscape.

Comparing the country identity of the groups who were not exposed to the stimulus with those who were, the results show significant differences. For the French-speaking Swiss these differences are immediately clear. Their normative dimension is more important after being exposed to the stimulus, which indicates that reading how the federal council explains the acceptance of the mass immigration initiative to foreign publics triggers the normative dimension, which then constitutes the favorable attitude toward their own country and with it their country identity. As the debate is an issue that concerns a lot of normative values (treatment of immigrants), it makes sense that this dimension is triggered by the messages overall. The increase of the normative dimension implies that the French-speaking Swiss value this dimension (i. e. the norms and values of Switzerland) more highly when they are exposed to a stimulus, even though this dimension did not contribute to their emotional attitude towards Switzerland before the stimulus. On the other hand, they perceive the competences and competitiveness as lower than they did without having read the newspaper article. These results suggest that what they have read intensified their beliefs about the normative attributes of Switzerland but also weakened their beliefs about the competitive attributes. This reflects the thought of Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) that "the purpose of persuasive communication is to change the primary beliefs […]." For the German-speaking Swiss there is no difference in the relations of the dimensions of their country identity. However, looking at the indicator differences for the German-speaking Swiss also reveals significant changes as a result of the stimuli. Thus, for both language regions significant differences can be found between the subjects who were not exposed to a public diplomacy message and those who were. These results confirm the hypothesis that public diplomacy strategies do have an effect on the country identity of the domestic public.

Testing the same comparison as above, while using personal beliefs on the mass immigration initiative as a moderating variable, reveals significant differences in paths as well as indicators. The results show that for the German-speaking Swiss supporters the effect on congruent personal beliefs is verifiable, while looking at the paths none can be detected for the opponents. German-speaking supporters of the initiative who read a public diplomacy message estimated the competitiveness of Switzerland to be higher than those who were not exposed to the message. However,

German-speaking opponents did not show any reaction to the stimulus. This finding is in line with the assumption of Entman (2008) that issues have stronger effects on recipients whose personal beliefs are congruent to the issue, than on incongruently-opinioned recipients. Interestingly, for the French-speaking Swiss who supported the initiative, no significant difference of the paths can be found. This is, insofar as it goes, not intuitive as previous results showed significant differences between French-speaking Swiss who were exposed to a stimulus and the control groups. However, looking again at the indicator differences, multiple changes of the country identity can be observed. Thus, the personal beliefs on the issue being communicated are clearly moderating the effects of public diplomacy on country identity. This means that the overall frame, i. e. whether an issue is communicated in a positive or negative way, does have a different effect depending on the recipients' personal beliefs. These results underline previous findings that a strong opinion or belief has an impact on the effect of frames (Druckman & Nelson, 2003; Slothuus, 2008).

Also acting as moderators are the different frames used to design the public diplomacy messages. The German-speaking Swiss who supported the initiative show a significant difference between the control group and the other three groups. The control group's path between the functional and emotional constructs is significantly higher than that of the functional framed group, while its path between the normative and emotional constructs is significantly lower than that of the groups exposed to a normative or aesthetic framed stimulus. This means that the belief in the competitiveness of Switzerland declines when exposed to the functional framed public diplomacy messages. Thus, for supporters of the mass immigration initiative, the functional arguments for its acceptance, which were stated in the article, trigger a decline in the functional dimension of Switzerland. On the other hand, being exposed to a normative or aesthetic framed newspaper article triggered an increase of belief in the norms and values of Switzerland. Another significant difference can be seen between the functional framed stimulus group and the aesthetic framed stimulus group. The belief in the attractiveness and beauty of Switzerland's culture and landscapes is significantly lower when the subjects were exposed to the aesthetic frame than to the functional frame. This could imply that the supporters might have feared the loss of cultivated land, which was mentioned in the aesthetic framed article. Considering their profession as farmers, this issue might have had a stronger effect. The results for the French-speaking Swiss show firstly that there is a significant difference between the control group and the groups with the functional and normative framed newspaper articles. Both groups with stimuli show an increase in the path of the normative to the emotional construct. This result reflects what has been observed before while testing all treatment groups combined. Thus, reading how the federal council explains the acceptance of the mass immigration initiative by referring to one of these two dimensions triggers an increase in the beliefs of the French-speaking Swiss about the normative dimension of Switzerland. There is also a significant difference on the path between the aesthetic and the emotional construct between the normative framed stimulus group and all the other groups. The results show a significant decrease of that path within the group with the normative framed newspaper article compared to all other groups. This indicates that, compared to all other groups, having read the normative framed article the subjects' beliefs about the beauty of Switzerland's culture, tradition and landscapes is much lower. At first glance this result is counterintuitive as it is not clear why the normative frame affects the aesthetic beliefs regarding the country identity of the French-speaking Swiss. However, the structural model results identified a much larger f^2-effect size for the aesthetic construct than for either of the other two. Therefore, it can be assumed that the country identity of the French-speaking Swiss depends very strongly on their

aesthetic beliefs about the country. These results show that depending on what is communicated and what is not, different effects can be observed. In the case of the mass immigration initiative, communicating the arguments from different perspectives changed the country identity of the domestic public in different ways. Thus, it is not only what is said that is important, but also in what overall tone and in what perspectives it is framed. Additionally, the country identity composition (i. e. what dimensions are important and to what extent) plays a role on the effect (direction and intensiveness) of the public diplomacy message on the country identity.

4 Discussion and conclusion

The aim of this study was to analyze the effect of differently-framed public diplomacy messages on the domestic public's country identity. The assumption behind this analysis is that, due to globalization and digitalization, publics in the digital era are interconnected and information can be accessed around the globe. Thus, public diplomacy messages which might originally be designed to alter a foreign public's image of a country can also be received by the domestic public and potentially alter their country identity. Applied to a country like Switzerland, with its different language regions, different country identities within a country should not be ignored. As Anthony D. Smith (1986, p. 220) states: "language as a criterion of the 'genuine' nation has erected new barriers within and outside the community. […] Language introduces a new powerful dimension of identification and community, but it also becomes a […] new principle of cleavage and antagonism, superimposed on other cultural differences." Therefore, this study examined the different country identities of the two biggest language regions of Switzerland and the effect of differently-framed public diplomacy messages on these country identities. An experimental design study was conducted to analyze the causal relationships between the public diplomacy messages and the country identity, which was measured using the 4D Model developed by Buhmann and Ingenhoff (2015a).

The results show that a public diplomacy strategy designed for foreign publics can influence the country identity of the domestic public. This is in line with the case study of Huijgh and Byrne (2012), who found that "public diplomacy has provided a vehicle for the shaping and reshaping of national identity" and therefore there should be a reconceptualization in order to include a domestic dimension in public diplomacy. Thus, in an era where everyone can access almost every message, public diplomacy can affect more people than ever before. However, the differentiation of publics makes it difficult to create a strategy that is suitable for all of them. The effect of public diplomacy on country identity is moderated by the personal beliefs of the domestic public on the communicated issue, as well as the way in which it is communicated. Therefore, in modern times communicating something to a target public can only be done partially, as it must always be considered that the message might go around the globe and affect not only images of the country but also country identities.

5 Limitations and future research

Although the study contributes to the research gap in terms of its application of the quite recently developed 4D Model, its research design and its interest in the outcome rather than the output of public diplomacy, there are still limitations. The results are not generalizable due to the homogenous sample drawn from IP-Suisse. Another limitation of the study is its focus on the two biggest language regions of Switzerland, thereby showing only part of the national picture, as there are four language regions in total. Additionally, personal beliefs on the mass immigration initiative were measured by a single item asking the subjects how they voted (or if they did not, how they would have voted) on the initiative. However, a political belief on a controversial issue like the mass im-

migration initiative is a complex construct and should therefore be measured with multiple different items in order to really capture the varied and complex personal beliefs of the subjects on this issue. As stated in the results, one limitation is that the undecided group is too small to calculate. This unprejudiced group might react completely differently to the different stimuli.

The study does reveal several directions for future research. Starting with Switzerland, there are four language regions and they might all have different country identities. It would be interesting to analyze all four of them as they could have different reactions to different public diplomacy strategies. However, the very small group of the Rhaeto-Romanic-speaking part of Switzerland might prove difficult to analyze. To gain a bigger sample, larger bilingual countries such as Belgium or Canada might be an option. In addition, the country identities of Switzerland could further be differentiated and analyzed, for example by including minority groups like naturalized foreigners, as foreign-born citizens represent about 25% of the population of Switzerland (BFS, 2015a). The comparisons could be done between country images, for example by comparing the effect of the minaret initiative in Switzerland on its country image in Muslim countries and European countries. But also to simply compare the country identities of different publics might provide interesting information about the composition of their country identities. This study showed how these compositions can differ between two ethnic groups even in a small country like Switzerland. In order to make further analyses comparable it would be reasonable to use the 4D Model for future examinations. Furthermore, it would be interesting to examine an issue which is less high profile in order to have a bigger group of undecided subjects. As the results showed, there were different effects on the supporters and opponents of the initiative. It would therefore be interesting to analyze how public diplomacy strategies affect previously undecided publics. Additionally, the reasons why an indicator or dimension is affected would shed some light onto the effect of public diplomacy on country identity. However, in order to achieve this, the research design would probably need to combine quantitative (i. e., measures of the country identity) and qualitative (i. e., understanding what exactly changed the attitude for one particular item or path) aspects.

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Editorial: Fashion communication: Between tradition and digital transformation

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We are happy and thrilled to introduce this thematic section of *Studies in Communication Sciences* (SComS), devoted to Fashion Communication. It was about two years ago when we first discussed the idea in Madrid: then we got the approval by SComS Editors, published the call, and eventually secured the outstanding collection of papers you have in your hands (or on your screen). A long and enriching journey, full of interactions, conversations, views and reviews, a journey that makes the scholar's work so fascinating (even if, sometimes, not that fashionable).

This editorial has two main goals.

On one side, it aims to provide a helicopter view on the topic, exploring fashion as (also) communication (par. 1); how communication and its media have been intertwined with fashion and its related industries and practices (par. 2); how recent digital transformation has impacted fashion, making room for new communication affordances and business models (par. 3).

On the other side, it presents the collected articles, placing them on the above-sketched map of fashion communication (par. 4): their diversity and complementary nature is for sure a great richness for this issue of SComS and for all its readers.

1 Fashion is (also) communication

All human beings are born unclad, but need to dress in order to protect from external agents – cold, heat, sun, rain, snow, sand, surfaces – and because of modesty – all human communities cover their genitalia.

The way we dress ourselves goes well beyond functional needs and the protection of one's own intimacy. It is a major way through which we express ourselves and communicate to others who we are or who we would like to be. While covering our body with clothes, accessories and makeup, we unveil – through them – our deepest thoughts, values, desires… Or they betray us!

We enter in a relationship with other human beings and with our communities at large (also) through the way in which we dress. First through the way in which we are adorned by our parents, and, later – once grown-up – through the clothes we choose to wear. Our visual appearance accompanies, and even precedes us. It helps us to communicate who we are. Our identity is somehow connected with the way we dress and position ourselves within the wider paradigm of (un)acceptable options and practices.

The etymology of *Cosmesis* links it with the ancient Greek verb κοσμέω (kosméo), which means: "to put order." This is also the case with Cosmos, which means an ordered Universe. Terms related to these were used to refer to the adornment of the human body and to house decor. The connection between (i) our skin – where cosmetics are used; (ii) the way in which we cover it – apparel; and (iii) the way in which we shelter it – home, is apparent in the Latin terms *habitus* (habit and dress) and *habito* (living), both originating from *habere* – "to have." Interestingly their frequentative form, *what I have regularly,* is used to refer to our way of behaving (*habit,* socially accepted *customs*), of dressing

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(e.g.: in Italian: *abito*), and of living (e.g.: in Italian: *abitazione*).

Those "ways of," which express and communicate in a visible way the invisible human mind and spirit, are closely connected with culture. Basing ourselves on the Latin verb "colo" (meaning "looking after," "caring"), culture can be seen from the different perspectives of (i) cultivating our physical/natural environment *(agri-culture)*; (ii) looking after ourselves and other human beings (in order to become *well cultivated* persons); and (iii) entering in relation to God *(cult)*. If we look at those perspectives with relation to fashion we derive three layers for cosmetics and clothes, which (i) use available natural materials or create new artificial ones; (ii) are shaped and designed according to different culturally-linked styles and fashions; (iii) are particularly elaborated when in relation to the very meaning of human life – weddings, religious celebrations and cult, holidays, funerals…

The way we dress might be part of the intangible cultural heritage, which, according to the 2003 UNESCO Convention, encompasses "(…) (b) performing arts; (c) social practices, rituals and festive events; (…); (e) traditional craftsmanship" (UNESCO, 2003: art. 2). In summary: "We wear culture" as is suggested by the payoff of a major initiative by the Google Cultural Institute, aimed at digitally documenting fashion history and trends.

Based on these few suggestions, it becomes clear why fashion has been so frequently approached within semiotic and communication studies, offering endless opportunities to interpret human behavior and communicate relationships, as well as social values and practices.

If we delve deeper into the relationship between fashion and communication, we come across various angles that directly connect the two realms. Without being exhaustive, we can talk about the following aspects: (a) *imitation* as a form of leverage in fashion and as a formula for social cohesion and communication; (b) *appearance* and its relationship with reality in the fields of fashion and communication; (c) *fashion as a means of communication* and *expression* in itself; and (d) *prescription and influence* on the part of leaders within the realms of fashion and communication. Imitation, expression, prescription and appearance are all issues that are tackled in depth by communication theory, and that provide us with a direct explanation of the fashion phenomenon.

1.1 Imitation

First of all, and as a defining characteristic, fashion combines a unique dimension with a general appeal, in the sense that, through our dress sense and demeanor, we seek to gain social approval, on the one hand, and we aspire to distinguish ourselves through a unique appeal, on the other. Fashion, therefore, hinges together a desire to belong with a desire for personal expression; it combines a wish to avoid social isolation with a search for being different.

Georg Simmel, in his *Philosophy of Fashion* (1905), states that fashion is a constant feature in the history of our species because it satisfies two needs of all individuals: the need to depend on society, to belong and to fit into the group; and the need to set ourselves apart, affirming our personal identity, which tends towards differentiation, towards change and standing out from the rest.

Simmel declared that this integration of the social and individual realms takes place through imitation, given that in this manner, the individual has "the assurance of not standing alone in his or her actions" (1923, p. 60). Imitation is "the child of thought and thoughtlessness" and "it permits purposive and meaningful action even where nothing personal or creative is in evidence." Imitation is the hinge that makes the dynamics of fashion possible.

Gabriel Tarde, in *Les lois de l'imitation* (1890), explained that imitation is an elementary social phenomenon that creates unity within society, given that imitation does not exist on its own, we must imitate "something" and that "something" is a belief, a desire, an object. When imitating, we establish a copy of a model and a similarity, in whose respect a so-

cial relationship is created. Consequently, Tarde argues that society began "on the day when one man first copied another."

According to these authors, the dynamics of fashion are sociologically stratified according to class. Simmel writes that "fashions are always class fashions, by the fact that the fashions of the higher strata of society distinguish themselves from those of the lower strata, and are abandoned by the former at the moment when the latter begin to appropriate them" (1923, p. 62). In Tarde's opinion, fashion is like "a continuous waterfall of imitation," where fashion is a social process of imitation in which the lower social classes seek to imitate the higher classes. This has been called the "trickle-down theory." Modern-day theorists such as Gilles Lipovetsky (1987) declare that the relationship between fashion and social classes and estates undoubtedly exists. He warns though that fashion cannot be reduced solely to this, because viewing it exclusively in these terms "leaves out an essential dimension of the phenomenon: the play of freedom inherent in fashion, possibilities of nuance and gradation, opportunities to adapt or reject innovations" (p. 45). Lipovetsky explains that, since the day of Chanel in the 1920s, fashion has no longer belonged solely to the élite, but has been extended throughout all the social classes. For Madame Coco, "if a fashion does not spread to the majority it has not succeeded." Furthermore, imitation does not always take place at the bottom looking upwards from a social point of view; it often takes place in the opposite direction.

Dick Hebdige (1988) illustrates this point by analyzing the case of the Vespa. The Vespa was created in Italy as a feminine counterpart for Harley Davidson, the quintessentially masculine motorbike linked to the rock movement. Piaggio dreamed up the idea of the scooter by thinking of a motorbike for women, but it was not very successful. It was not until the 1960s that the Mod movement (English followers of modern jazz, tailored suits) took off in England and appropriated the Vespa as its iconic symbol. In fact, the main reason this happened was because public transport ceased to operate relatively early in the evening, and Vespas were cheaper than cars. After a law was passed requiring at least one rear-view mirror on each motorbike, the Mods added large numbers of them to their bikes – it became customary to install more than ten – to mock the new law. Although the Vespa had a new target group, manufacturers were satisfied because it was coherent with their product: an urban customer with a friendlier image than the one Hollywood associated with the Harley.

This example reveals the meaning of products and their transformation, but also the need for identities, as shaped through icons of a highly symbolic and, therefore, communicative value.

In this respect, imitation is conceived as a mechanism for promoting social uniformity, but also as an entire educational process for individuals, a process whereby they adapt to their environment, enabling them to live in society. Fear of social isolation leads us to seek out this information and to adapt our tastes to new patterns.

1.2 Appearance

It is this fear of social isolation that public opinion studies refer to as the "Spiral of Silence," a theory propounded by Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann (1974). According to this political scientist, we adapt our behavior to predominant attitudes regarding what is considered acceptable and what is not. And who determines what is acceptable? According to Noelle-Neumann, the media contribute in a decisive manner when it comes to creating a climate of opinion that is favorable or unfavorable to a certain idea or form of behavior. The more widely this dominant version is disseminated, the more silent any individual dissenting voices become, which produces a "spiral of silence."

We might mention a fairy-tale here that refers to the spiral of silence and the question of dress sense: Hans Christian Andersen's *The Emperor's New Clothes*. In the story, two cunning tailors take advantage of an emperor's arrogance, and they convince him that they are capable of weaving a suit that can only be seen by highly

intelligent people. When the tailors are simulating their work, the emperor's arrogance prevents him from saying what is really happening, out of a fear of being considered stupid. And this vanity leads him to parade up and down in front of his subjects, who, in turn, pretend to see the suit in order not to reveal their ignorance to their fellow onlookers. In the end it is an innocent child, free of prejudices and who has no need to demonstrate anything to anyone, who shouts out: the emperor has no clothes!

This tale illustrates another fundamental paradox of fashion and its communicative dimension: the tension between appearance and reality. This has to do with the public demonstration of a way of being and dressing and their relationship with the reality on which they are based. This is one of the most fascinating aspects of communication and it has guided the debate regarding knowledge and its communication since the time of Plato's cave.

Machiavelli, the master of political communication in the modern age, urged Lorenzo de Medici on by telling him: "Men judge generally more by the eye than by the hand." This recommendation led to an entirely new way of understanding social behavior, but it also pitted appearance against truth, when the latter should really guide the former. With our appearance we are already saying a great deal about who we are, and for this reason it is no trivial thing to dress one way or another according to the occasion and the function our dress-sense fulfills. We communicate through appearance. Julius Caesar's saying, as quoted by Plutarch, is famous: "Caesar's wife should not only be honest, but should be seen to be honest."

Whatever the case may be fashion is immersed in the realm of appearance to the extent that it seeks to cultivate appearance. As Peter Burke (1995) pointed out, the suit helps to 'fabricate' an identity through the power of image and the creation of appearances.

1.3 Expression

Third, as we pointed out in the first few lines of this introductory chapter, fashion and its relationship with semiotics leads to a direct link to the realm of communication. Fashion, as a channel for communication, has been analyzed by various researchers like Barthes (1973), Alison (1981), Davis (1994), Entwistle and Millet (2002), and Lotman (2011). For some, such as Alison (1981), fashion, understood in its widest sense – clothing, hairstyles, postures, ways of walking, etc. – has its own grammar and vocabulary, just like spoken languages. For others, such as Davis (1994), although we can think of fashion as a language, it is an ambiguous language, as in the case of music as a language. Davis, unlike Alison, argues that the idea of fashion as a language should be applied in a metaphorical rather than a literal sense.

Considering the power of image in fashion, it could be said that fashion as language is a visual language. Therefore, it is a nonverbal, universal language with many interpretation possibilities.

Tungate (2013) reflects on the expressive capacity of fashion when he explains that individuals do not purchase clothing; they purchase identity: "When clothes leave the factories where they are made they are merely 'garments' or 'apparel.' Only when the marketers get hold of them do they magically become 'fashion'" (2013, p. 11). For this reason, "it would be foolish of us to underestimate the importance of fashion in society. Clothes and accessories are expressions of how we feel, how we see ourselves – and how we wish to be treated by others" (2013, p. 11). And in this manner, thanks to its capacity to reflect what the individual is, feels or thinks, fashion helps to construct and convey our identity.

1.4 Prescription and influence

Finally, we might talk about the relationship between fashion and communication through an analysis of influence. Back in the 1940s, Paul Lazarsfeld and colleagues (1944) investigated the impact of personal relations in influence processes. In Decatur, Illinois, he carried out research in order to determine the level of influence to which the inhabitants of this Mid-West town were subjected, considering Decatur to be an average American town. With re-

gard to aspects relating to their daily lives, Lazarsfeld sought to determine those opinions that were taken into account and those that led the inhabitants to take certain decisions. The aspects he tackled in his study were, therefore, the kind of things that come up in a daily chat: politics, cinema, marketing… and fashion. His findings led him to conclude that certain opinion leaders existed who operated at an informal level, almost unconsciously, amongst friends, family, colleagues and neighbors. For example, we might mention a mother's opinion about how her child should dress, a dinner conversation in which the participants talk about the mayor or a chat amongst friends about the latest Hollywood movie.

More recently, a study has revealed that one out of ten Americans tells the other nine how to vote, where to eat and what to buy (Keller & Berry, 2003). That is to say, certain people exist among us who have a capacity to prescribe what we purchase, to influence our political views and tell us what we should wear tomorrow. These people are known as 'influentials.' A study published recently states: "influentials do not exercise high-level leadership like that of Churchill, nor that of a politician, and not even that of the social élite. Rather, their influence works at the opposite end of the spectrum: it is an almost invisible and certainly inconsistent influence, one that works at a face to face, daily, private and informal level" (Jove, 2011, p. 130).

Given the importance of these figures as generators of opinion, consumption and behavior, researchers have focused for some time now on detecting precisely who these influentials are and how they can be identified. In Germany in the 1980's, the magazine *Der Spiegel* was interested in "active consumers who set the standards for their communities," so it asked the Allensbach Institute to create a scale to identify them, to discover the characteristics of an influential. They defined a "personality strength scale" (Noelle-Neumann, 1983) associated with three attributes: (a) personification of certain values (who you are); (b) competence (what you know); and (c) strategic location, socially-speaking (whom you know). The higher the levels of personification, knowledge and social relations in a specific context relating to a certain matter, the higher the influence of the individual in question. In a very similar manner to these conclusions, Malcolm Gladwell, in *The Tipping Point* (2000), a book that has become a veritable classic amongst communication and fashion analysts, characterized influentials and attributed to them the capacity to generate social change. Change, according to Gladwell, works like an epidemic: the spread of new products or ideas penetrates society in the same way as a virus.

This US author began his popular book by citing an example of fashion within the footwear sector. He focused on Hush Puppies, a hard-wearing footwear brand that emerged in 1958 to meet the demands of the post-war generation. The brand was highly successful in the 1960s, but subsequently entered into terminal decline, to the point in which the brand's factories almost closed completely in the 1990s. However, a New York group suddenly started to wear the shoes, others copied them and these, in turn, were copied by others… The brand's image (a basset hound) appeared on the roof of a shop in New York's Soho neighborhood. In 1995 some 430 000 pairs of shoes were sold. The following year, sales quadrupled and, subsequently, they continued to rise. Hush Puppies were brought back to life without the company having done anything.

Prescription, imitation, influence and personal relations: they all help to create a trend and determine its penetration within social life.

What doubt can there be that this set of factors is enhanced and achieves a whole new dimension with all the possibilities for interaction and spontaneity provided by the Internet? Indeed, the Internet strengthens mechanisms for selective perception and subjective interest, given that it empowers users to focus their search for information on aspects that are important to them. With the opportunities offered by the Internet, Lazarsfeld's concept of opinion leaders is brought back to life and endowed with a new dimension:

Influentials are capable of obtaining and generating informative resources (SanMiguel et al., 2017) regarding their topic and can explain and distribute these through their personal relationships (via the social media, for example).

With the possibilities provided by the Internet, we can delve deeper into communicative relations. If, just a few decades ago, talking about communication meant talking about the influence of mass media, today, it is clear that communication also extends to the realm of personal relations.

It has also been demonstrated that influentials are more subject to information that appears in the traditional media regarding their topic of interest in this case fashion. In this respect, we can suppose that the new influentials consume more fashion magazines and are more alert to the advertising that appears in them.

A review of traditional communication theories, such as that of Lazarsfeld, which have gained new relevance thanks to the Internet, might also lead us to propose the idea that the relationship between communication and fashion – and the tensions that exist between them – may have also acquired a new shape in today's society.

2 Communication (media) and fashion-related industries and practices

For the dissemination and consumption of trends to be effective, it is essential that these should be communicated. Purchasing behavior can only be activated if the consumer previously knows and values the product. This awareness and these attributes must be deployed in the communication strategy.

Traditionally, the realm of communication, understood as a professional activity designed to serve fashion brands and companies, could be split into the following fields, at the very least:

- Corporate communication: positioning, identity, lobbies, relations with investors.
- Internal communication.
- External communication: advertising (various formats), campaigns, promotions, publicity, sponsorship, media relations.
- Public relations: institutional relations, events, patronage, protocol.
- Crisis communication.
- Social media.

Furthermore, due to the close relationship between fashion and communication, all manifestations of the communication strategy acquire a unique appeal within the realm of fashion. Fashion in itself has an expressive and communicative capacity, and many characteristic aspects have a communicative power. For instance, the product itself: labelling, packaging, product placement; the shop and its location, sales force, visuals or fashion shows with celebrities, designers, backstage…

However, in a changing communication environment, many of these areas of communication take on new meanings. Specifically, we might mention some changes that affect almost all of these communication facets. On one hand, the immediacy of new fashion business models and the immediacy facilitated by the technology employed by users has changed communication times and intervals and modified certain formulas, such as fashion shows, for example. On the other hand, the Internet has created hybrid models between communication and trade, models that have emerged as strong new players within the fashion market.

Whatever the case may be, and although the validity of certain traditional communication activities has been called into question, new opportunities and new ways of focusing on and reaching target groups have come to the fore.

2.1 Fashion magazines

2.1.1 Historic overview

One paradigmatic example of these developments is provided by fashion magazines. If fashion is a realm for innovation and imitation, it is the specialized fashion press that has been the engine that has helped the fashion phenomenon to become a reality.

With the idea of propagating lifestyles and fashion through information and advertising, fashion magazines have witnessed and promoted the great trends and changes that have taken place within the industry. A considerable part of the importance of Paris as the cradle of fashion and worldwide model for elegance has to do with the fact that the first fashion publications available emerged in France.

In effect, one of the very first publications that could be considered a forerunner of the fashion magazine was *Mercure Galant* (renamed *Mercure de France* in 1714), the first French literary gazette. It was published between 1672 and 1724 (with a dormant interval between 1674 and 1677). Founded by the writer Jean Donneau de Vizé, it was aimed at members of the elegant French society in order to inform them about Court activities, artistic premières and new literary features, as well as offering songs, poems, anecdotes, society news and fashion reports. It played an important role in terms of promoting those establishments where the appropriate clothing items and accessories could be found, as well as defining the world of luxury and the rules of etiquette that governed Court life during the reign of Louis XIV and subsequent monarchs.

However, although we can find various forerunners of fashion publications in the eighteenth century, it was not until the twentieth century that fashion magazines became a popular and widespread feature within society. This development emerged, above all, in the United States, with the appearance of *Harper's Bazaar* (1867) and *Vogue* (1892). In 1913, Hearst purchased *Harper´s Bazaar,* which became Vogue's main competitor throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Condé Nast acquired *Vogue* after its founder's death in 1909 and began to publish the magazine in the United Kingdom in 1916 and in France in 1924. The same publishing house created *Vanity Fair* in 1913, a publication that was relaunched in 1983.

The success of both magazines, *Harper's* and *Vogue,* coincided with economic boom periods in the United States. Furthermore, the publishers of *Harper's Bazaar,* first Carmel Snow and, in particular, Diana Vreeland, were able to endow the magazine with a certain touch of glamour and creativity. The key role of the editor was later inherited by Anna Wintour at *Vogue* in 1988, when she combined unknown models with renowned actresses, and "fast-fashion" brands with luxury brands. As of this moment a new approach to fashion communication was born.

The network of participants, characteristic of these magazines, such as stylists, editors, photographers and models, introduced a whole series of new players within the fashion world. Within the realm of photography, Newton, Pen and Avedon transformed the vision of fashion magazines during the first half of the twentieth century, whilst others such as Demarchelier, Testino and Outumuro transformed their outlook in the second half of the century. All of these figures shaped the development of fashion magazines, as we know them today (Casajus, 1993).

After the end of the Second World War, two French magazines also achieved considerable commercial success. First came *Elle* in 1948, and then *Marie Claire* reappeared with a new lease of life later on, both publications focusing on a new kind of modern woman who worked outside the home. These magazines managed to seduce the average reader and exercised a special influence when prêt-à-porter burst onto the scene in Europe.

In general, fashion publications target a type of reader who is more or less an expert in fashion. The spring issue (February/March) and the autumn issue (August/September) contain extensive editorials and often come with supplements showing the international collections that have been presented over the previous quarter at fashion shows. Only the large fashion houses and leading designers with financial clout plan their communication campaigns in these kinds of publication, given the high cost of including advertisements in fashion magazines.

These publications have the following functions: they (a) provide information to readers; (b) legitimize products for buyers – according to their importance,

they play a part in selecting the textile samples and different models presented to clothes-makers (Rivière, 1977). In this manner, the trade knows when to make the purchase, given that the products will be supported by the fashion press; they (c) prescribe products and different ways of wearing them; and (d) provide advertising space for conventional ads, advertorials, clothes presented in showrooms, or what is known as the "Italian model." It is a systematic negotiation for the publication of informative photos in exchange for advertising pages; where the advertiser negotiates, for example, the appearance of 40 models in the editorial information in exchange for the inclusion of advertising for 80 models. The effectiveness of this tactic leaves the fashion editor somewhat impotent, given that he or she is unable to reflect his or her own taste or choice in terms of style, with the advertiser's marketing strategy taking precedence.

2.1.2 Impact of digitalization on fashion magazines

Today fashion magazines are beginning to question their role within the new digital environment, in the same manner in which the general-interest press has begun to question its own. In this respect, the re-invention of the fashion press has led to a more prominent role in other spheres, based on the following tendencies:

- Editors as celebrities and authorities. They have become more important than the magazines themselves, because the fashion editor has been enthroned as an authority within the field. Although Snow and Vreeland already possessed this authority, it was perhaps the novel and subsequent film of *The Devil Wears Prada* (2006) that established the fashion editor as the legitimizing figure for the industry. Subsequent documentaries, such as *The September Issue* (2009) by R.J. Cutler, HBO's production entitled *In Vogue: The Editor's Eye* (2012), and the more recent *Mademoiselle C* (2013) by Fabien Constant have helped to create this halo and this fascination with fashion editors.
- Magazines are entering the fashion business itself by launching their own brands, such as *Elle* Womenswear in the summer of 2006.
- Incursions into parallel worlds in order to raise awareness and generate legitimacy, such as art and museums. One example of this strategy is provided by the MET Gala, annual event organized at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume in New York city, which is linked to the *Vogue* magazine.
- And, of course, the creation of online magazines by fashion brands, such as Net-à-Porter.

The fact is that, with new technologies, fashion brands are able to broadcast their marketing messages without the intermediation of magazines. Many brands generate their own editorials and seem to have transformed themselves into another member of the communication media. This has not only occurred within the luxury segment, but companies such as Zara now editorialize their own web pages and compete with magazines in terms of quality and content. Brands have also begun to create their own visual contents with 'fashion films', a genre that offers endless possibilities and in which the leading film producers work with the brands to create high-quality worlds of visual content (Noguera & Torregrosa, 2015).

2.2 Fashion shows

Another realm of communication that has witnessed significant changes are fashion shows. They have played an important role in fashion since Charles Frederick Worth (1825–1895) first presented its seasonal trends using models and featuring a certain degree of spectacle.

Originally designed for buyers and the press, shows are previews of collections that would hit stores six months later: buyers come to see the upcoming season's offerings and put in orders while fashion magazine editors use it to forecast trends and see what looks and pieces they want to feature in their publications. This also allows time for retailers to arrange to pur-

chase or incorporate the designers into their retail marketing.

Four leading fashion centers (London, Milan, New York, and Paris) have been complemented by cities such as Tokyo, Buenos Aires and Madrid, whilst some 140 fashion weeks are estimated to take place throughout the world. Today, Miami and Dubai have emerged as up-and-coming fashion show centers. Some focus on specialist segments (menswear, swimwear, wedding fashion …).

With the advent of digital technologies, fashion shows have witnessed numerous changes:

- Many brands have been able to shorten production times (for example, "fast fashion") and are thinking about reducing lead times, because otherwise they may lose their consumers' interest, who, in turn, may go and buy their designs from a brand that has been able to produce the trend faster.
- Consumers can access live-streams of most of the shows, which means that by the time the clothes actually hit the stores, they are not perceived as "new" anymore.
- Consumers want to buy things they see on the runway right away: "see now, buy now." As a result, "in-season collections" have begun to make an appearance. So these days, you might see winter clothing on the runway in September.
- The front row is not only packed with celebrities and members of the press, but also with bloggers who have replaced these figures, generating some considerable controversy regarding their role (Pedroni et al., 2017).

Bearing in mind these changes, it might seem that fashion shows are doomed to disappear. However, they continue to constitute a grand media event and have become increasingly spectacular (high-impact venues, Hollywood-style production, etc.). Furthermore, fashion centers have found that these fashion weeks bring great benefits to the cities in question (Kalbaska et al., 2018).

Within this new context, brands look around for alternative ways of raising awareness and reaching customers. They have found that the Internet and the social media offer them the possibility of generating their own contents without any need to turn to third parties. We could state that the new communication environment has created a key paradox. On the one hand, brands have become members of the media to the extent that their websites, videos and trading networks are now directly within reach of the audience. On the other, the same audience has gained greater control than ever over the messages that are generated and is capable of molding many contents according to its tastes. That is to say, that as brands have become more capable of generating direct messages, they have also lost control of the messages themselves.

In this respect, brands have become more subject to public scrutiny and more vulnerable to possible communication crises. Although knowledge of crisis management has progressed quite considerably (Pearson and Clair, 1998), this area constitutes one of the new communication fields in which fashion still has some work to do.

Following the fall-out of the Rana Plaza tragedy on the 24th April 2013 (Sádaba & Sanmiguel, 2014), we might state that a new communication field has emerged that revolves around management issues, focusing on aspects such as sustainability and social campaigns. Although the impact of issues of this kind is not clear amongst consumers (Mohr et al., 2001), such issues have begun to have a considerable effect on the rest of the stakeholders of fashion companies: employees, shareholders, regulators… In such cases, reputational aspects may not have much of an effect in the short term, but they do become important in the long term. And in this respect, communication, understood in its more strategic sense, once again seems to have a key role to play.

3 Digital transformation and fashion communication

Fashion has started and is undergoing a major digital transformation, which is touching all its facets, layers, and processes (Rocamora, 2017). While we are focusing on communication-related aspects, it is important to briefly outline this digital transformation process in order to emphasize how communication is aligned and intertwined with all other aspects of a global process (Cantoni & Danowski, 2015).

We could consider three different layers, where fashion interacts with information and communication technologies (ICTs) – which can be referred to, in a single word, as e-Fashion or "digital fashion":

1. ICTs are used to design, produce, and distribute fashion products;
2. ICTs impact marketing and sales;
3. ICTs are extensively used in communication activities with all relevant stakeholders, and contribute to co-creation in the fashion world.

These three layers of digital transformation and fashion communication are explained below.

First, ICTs are now playing a major role in the fashion industry, from the very sketching and designing of a fashion item (e.g. a piece of cloth or a pair of shoes), up to its production process and to the management of its distribution. ICTs do not only have accelerated such processes, making them more efficient, but have opened up new venues for business, as well as raised new challenges.

Second, both marketing as well as all other contacts with prospects and clients are extensively mediated or facilitated by ICTs. Digital technologies are more and more present in physical shops (e.g.: digital mirrors, augmented reality, tools for analytics etc.) and provide the main kernel that supports the fast emergence of eCommerce, as well as of other emerging business models (e.g.: exchanging or renting). More and more, players in the fashion domain need to work in an "omnichannel" way, that is, caring for clients across their complex journey through screens, publication and advertising outlets, virtual and physical touch points. These could be shops, printed and/or digital magazines, websites, mobile apps, newsletters, augmented reality applications, and many other things brands are experimenting and innovating with. In fact, also B2B marketing and internal communication – for instance training – are also leveraging on the extensive new opportunities offered by ICTs.

Third, the very processes through which something becomes fashionable or not, "in" or "out" are now happening increasingly online. Especially through social media, communities do negotiate online styles and trends, are exposed to influencers, share their reviews and opinions, as well as their own outfits. Such conversations are, at their turn, searchable and sharable, as well as open for companies and researchers to be listened to, in order to spot trends, interests, cultural differences …

Communication studies and practices do address mainly the second and third levels. However, they have to constantly keep into consideration the first one, which is closely connected with them, in a circular way. For instance: an item can be fully designed through digital means and can be then displayed as dressed by a digital model (first level); it can be shared and promoted online (second level), in order to get feedback and to check the interest of intended audiences (third level). Depending on such feedback, it might be eventually produced and sold, or changed/adapted, or discarded without any physical sampling (first level again).

Online Communication Model and its application to digital fashion.

When it comes to communication processes happening online, the Online Communication Model (Tardini & Cantoni, 2015) can provide us with a useful map. This model helps companies to evaluate their existing online communication practices, measure the quality of their online communication and supporting technical tools, determine who their customers and

users are, manage employees involved in digital communication, and also gain information about market and competitors.

The Online Communication Model distinguishes four main pillars and a fifth element, which are briefly introduced and applied to online communication in the fashion context. They are: (1) contents and functionalities; (2) technical tools; (3) people who manage digital communication; and (4) users and clients; and (5) information market/competitors.

3.1 Contents and functionalities

ICTs allow for multi-media content publication and high interactivity, offering endless opportunities to explore, vote, buy, customize, connect, share, exchange, copy, ask for and provide advice. Among the main communication issues we encounter here, one can list the following ones: information and communication quality; cultural translation (so-called localization) so to cater for different markets and cultures; the development of new genres needed by different distribution channels (e. g.: squared small size photos needed for Instagram, or Twitter texts, or 5 seconds of video-advertising).

The hybridization between physical and digital media requires constant adaptation and creativity: let us think of printed media connected with digital platforms via QR codes, or of interactive TV, or the endless opportunities offered by Augmented Reality or Mixed Realities to enrich the experience we have of fashion items.

3.2 Technical tools that make available such contents and functionalities

Second, how such contents and functionalities are made available through digital means has to be considered. This encompasses hardware and software, as well as the actual layout and information architecture, if we think of owned media (e. g.: official websites, mobile apps, newsletters). Here we should also address the strategic decision, about which contents/functionalities should be offered through which publication outlet, be it an owned medium or an earned one – for instance, a social media platform, or a paid medium (e. g. a video campaign).

A range of opportunities, styles, and affordances can be seen here, in constant evolution. While at first, the *default* experience was being offline, and one had to *go online,* nowadays, we are experiencing exactly the opposite. The *default* is being *constantly online,* always connected via mobile devices, and we get offline either through an explicit decision (e. g.: in order to do some digital detox) or due to unfortunate events – loss of hardware, running out of a battery, lack of Wi-Fi or 3/4G coverage, exceeding of contractual data… In many cases, being offline is perceived as an un-happy of even painful experience, kind of lacking a major vital element, like oxygen. In fact, digital media are not any longer only a set of communication channels, but do constitute, more and more, the context of one's ordinary life.

In this area, while recognizing the huge developments of digital technologies, we should also remember that they are still quite limited, especially when it comes to communicating, supporting or enriching the sense of touch, so important when it comes to the experience of dressing something. Weight, contact with the skin, and temperature are definitely not (yet) captured by digital technologies. Even if we cannot predict that suitable technologies will be available on the market soon, we can still study how this lack does impact the way we approach fashion items, sometimes over-weighting their visual appearance over their actual physical structure. A similar discourse could be done about the sense of smell, when it comes to perfumes.

Technology is not only enabling fashion, but it is fashionable itself: wearable technologies and 3D printing are somewhere in between experiments and everyday practices.

Within major technological trends, we should mention here also the fields of (big) data analytics, and of Artificial Intelligence, being extensively deployed in order to better understand users' profiles, practices, and intentions to buy. Semantic technologies are also being applied to this

field, in order to ensure a better re-use of information, as well as its retrieval.

3.3 People who manage digital communication

On one side, companies need to reach higher maturity levels about digital transformation and its implications for fashion communication. The space between awareness and a full integration of processes is large, and no shortcuts or prêt-à-porter solutions are available. On the other side, higher education institutions need to open needed research lines and curricula, so to prepare the next generations to leverage on huge new opportunities and to cope with new challenges (Kalbaska & Cantoni, 2019). This special issue seeks to be a contribution in this direction.

A close dialogue with practitioners is required, reflecting on good/best practices and aligning communication theories with social and economic trends. ICTs and their impact are not only the topic/subject to be studied and taught, they might constitute also a channel through which we learn and up-skill – think of relevant eLearning, Open Educational Resources, or Massive Open Online Courses (Kalbaska, 2018).

We do not want to ignore that, here, we see several ethical issues and challenges. A naïve approach to the industry, based on "the more the better" equation, has to be abandoned, in favor of a higher awareness of the importance of fashion in the construction itself of living styles and societal values, when it comes to mutual respect or to economic, environmental, or socio-cultural sustainability. Think, for instance, among the many issues, of the power of models to shape the image of a "nice body," or of the issue of using (big) data from clients when it comes to protecting their privacy. One should prepare to work in the field of Digital Fashion Communication with a great awareness of such responsibilities.

Such responsibility should also be requested from influencers, whose practices increasingly require transparence and a clear understanding of the interests at stake (not to mention the phenomenon of fake followers).

3.4 Users and clients

In fact, users and clients should be at the center of every communication practice or study. Communication happens not only through the mere expression and (broad) casting of messages, but only if they reach an addressee, and are somehow interpreted and understood. The digital transformation has opened up huge opportunities for customization not only of products and services, but also of communication itself. It has, moreover, demonstrated how the simple approach to the addressees as "targets" is no longer useful. Companies should not "target" prospects/clients, but nurture meaningful conversations with them, leveraging on digital communication not only to spread well-designed messages and offers, but also to create fine-tuned messages for each of them. First and most importantly, they need to listen to them. Digital analytics, supported both by high-touch and high-tech – for instance, by experts in argumentation to understand their main drivers, or by artificial intelligence to interpret main trends – are more and more needed to grow sustainable practices in the fashion domain.

3.5 Information market/competitors

As Semiotics and Linguistics have taught us, no sign lives in a vacuum: all signs do belong to systems, where the relationship with all other items helps to shape their different meanings and roles. Clothes, brands, designers, shows do belong to (i) paradigms – clusters of elements that are somehow interchangeable, because they can take the same role, and (ii) to syntagms – different combinations of paradigmatic elements. We can think of the paradigm of haute-couture brands vs. fast fashion ones, or of the syntagm of different clothes/apparels a person might wear for a meeting whose dress code is "business informal" vs. "casual."

Internet has made such relationships clearer and even more easily findable. Online, one can explore similar/opposite communication practices, compare of-

fers and looks in a minute. Every change, aimed at re-structuring the overall system can be seen and can impact the market faster and deeper, due to the speed of online communication, where everything is just a click away. For industry players and researchers, online communication expands the access to innovations and amplifies its effects, while shortening and speeding up the innovation cycle. For users, we might see the same effect, which empowers them to access more info and offers, or an opposite one, where people might be locked within self-constructed information bubbles or echo-chambers, which limit their capacity of exploring or even just seeing alternatives and different styles.

4 Mapping this special issue on Fashion Communication and its articles

Once the many relationships between fashion and communication and the impact of digital transformation on both have been framed, it is time to map accepted papers to this special issue according to such a frame. The articles belonging to this special issue are presented in three sections: *Fashion is (also) communication; Communication (media) and fashion-related industries and practices; Digital transformation and fashion communication.*

4.1 Fashion is (also) communication

We are glad to start with a paper *Il vestito forma la persona "clothes make the man": fashion morality in Italian nineteenth-century conduct books,* by Paternoster and Saltamacchia, which discusses the relation between etiquette rules for dress and moral values. This research presents a detailed analysis of what fashion meant for Italian nineteenth-century etiquette books. While analyzing a corpus of influential conduct books, the authors apply current insights in the role of values for the emergence and maintenance of conventions developed within the pragmatics of politeness to the prescriptive discourse on fashion. The authors argue that fashion choices are always said to communicate moral values. In fact, most Italian conduct books in the nineteenth-century reinforce fashion norms by anchoring them in moral values because the authors expect their readers to be morally evaluated in terms of the clothes they wear. Researchers provide an overview of rules regulating bodily hygiene, adornment, dress choice and fashion, and analyze which values are explicitly cited to justify such rules. The manuscript, thus, is rich and appealing for those readers interested in the history and representation of fashion, and in its relationships with literature.

With the next contribution, we are staying within the European fashion context. The research by Ok – *European Luxury Fashion Brand Advertising, and Marketing Relating to Nostalgia* examines how European luxury fashion brands use nostalgia in their advertising & marketing. This research, through a qualitative content analysis, identifies how nostalgia theme was used in the adverts from Vogue magazine. It provides an understanding of the themes, and an analysis of adverts in terms of luxury brand characteristics, narrative, and semiotics. Indeed, this contribution might be of interest for those studying luxury fashion advertising, brand heritage, emotional branding, and semiotics.

The third contribution in this section is by Lascity – *Girls that Wear Abercrombie & Fitch: Reading Fashion Branding Aesthetics into Music Videos.* It should be of relevance of those studying fashion branding and mediated popular culture. The author investigates 42 music videos that appeared on MTV's Total Request Live, which contain elements of the "Abercrombie" lifestyle. This research suggests that music videos from the time were instrumental in spreading the brand's aesthetic, and that there is a strong interplay between media popular culture and the aesthetics of fashion brands. The author suggests that brand's marketing images could have been ripped from popular music videos (and vice versa), which helped drive Abercrombie & Fitch's cultural influence and financial success.

A different perspective to fashion communication is brought by Christel and Dunn. Their study: *What Plus-Size Means for Plus-Size Women: A Mixed Methods Approach* offers insights into how plus-size consumers view sizing communications. This study proposes a valuable ranking of terms that fashion companies can adopt to ensure they are communicating in a language that the intended consumers might prefer. This study contributes to research on social identity of clothing size, plus-size consumer experiences, and further validates the multidimensional challenges faced by plus-size consumers. It might be of use by both research communities interested in the retail strategy communication, consumer behavior, and fashion marketing, but also fashion companies working in the domain. Moreover, it helps to keep into consideration also the related ethical issues.

4.2 Communication (media) and fashion-related industries and practices

The article by von Wachenfeldt – *Communicating Seduction: Luxury Fashion Advertisement in Video Campaigns* will start the section of our special issue dedicated to the communication (media) and fashion-related industries and practices. She examines communication practices that take place in video ad campaigns deriving from five French luxury fashion houses, namely Louis Vuitton, Dior, Chanel, Cartier and Hermès. The semiotic method used enables her to recognize in videos the themes of adventure, seduction, love and playfulness. This study investigates also how the myth becomes an important meaning-maker of the luxury commodity, filled with sensations and pleasure. The author suggests that the objects of luxury constitute a strong communication tool, helping us to discover new places, to fall in love, to create magic, and to experience playfulness. Von Wachenfeldt concludes that embedded in recognizable social narratives, the objects in the moving image are provided with magical meaning able to support the eternal myth of luxury.

Video is one of the most powerful media channels in the fashion domain. We see it also with a research by Buffo – *Body in Fashion Films: the Net-Aesthetics Era.* With the term "fashion film" she refers to those online videos that are peculiar to the fashion industry and are developing their own language and new typologies of brand narration. The field of study presented here is related to language. In fact, the objective of this research is to better understand how this new communication tool has influenced the traditional language of fashion images by developing new codes or transforming existing ones. The object under examination is, in particular, the body as a preferred communication code in this industry. The body, according to Buffo, is not viewed by fashion as a simple object to dress, but as a mediating channel between the person's individuality and the need for communication, or rather, the need to establish a relationship within its context. The author examines the history of fashion images by focusing concisely on the analysis of how the body has changed its communicative role over the decades. Further analysis was then conducted focusing on the new meaning taken on by the body in fashion films. The result is a complex and extremely rich picture. Indeed, this contribution is of interest for those studying fashion films, visuals, and photography.

The article by Hibberd – *Key Challenges for the Fashion industry in Tackling Climate Change,* rises the topic of climate change, a major political, economic and social issue. One of the main industries when it comes to pollution is the fashion one, as every stage in the production of garments creates pollution and emission problems. The author examines broad attempts of using public campaigns, which include fashion involvement, to focus attention on climate change with particular attention paid to two popular British climate change initiatives. This research is based on interviews with climate change experts and those working within the campaigning industry, including 10:10 and the WWF's Earth Hour. The author suggests that the fashion industry can capitalize

on its modern high-profile status to bring real attention to climate change and pollution issues through publicity and media attention. This article should be of interest among many others to those studying media management and sustainable fashion communication.

The article, which closes this section, by Matthews – *Taste-making in turbulent times: Vogue and its social networks* examines the evolution of taste-making practices in fashion communication. The contents from British Vogue May 1967 and May 2017 provide data for a comparative analysis of changing methods of influence in fashion. This qualitative case study considers how Vogue has responded to the networked conditions of the contemporary communication environment, and what its digital strategy can reveal about new methods of influence. It identifies how the ongoing structural changes to fashion communications continue to reshape institutional tastemakers such as Vogue, online and offline. This well structured and a clearly presented piece of work is relevant for the industry and the fashion communication research community at large.

4.3 Digital transformation and fashion communication

The articles belonging to the last section are examining the impact of the digital transformation on fashion communication. The first article, by Tuite – *Communicating material characteristics in a digital age: three case studies in independent fashion*, focuses on the intersection of the material and the digital in the independent fashion sector, with a focus on ways in which digital media and contemporary communication tools are being used to unite them. The researcher explores the tension between the opportunities provided to small businesses in the contemporary media landscape and its use in a sector closely associated with a nostalgic valorization of material qualities related to nature, artisanship, and luxury. This thematic analysis of online texts and images related to three contemporary American independent labels, finds that instead of being viewed as a threat to the independent fashion sector's driving ethos, technology has been embraced as a tool allowing independent fashion producers to amplify their voices as they challenge existing fashion paradigms.

The last two papers of this special issue deal with the emerging topic of fashion influencers. Both papers should be of interest for those researching brand communications, social networks, and the role of influencers. The paper by González-Fernández and Martínez-Sanz – *Fashion Influencers and Instagram. A quasi-perfect binomial* explores communication strategies of main Spanish fashion bloggers in their Instagram profiles. In addition, compliance with Spanish legislation on advertising is monitored, which obliges the authors to explicitly indicate any message that promotes a product or service from a contractual agreement.

The closing contribution by SanMiguel, Guercini, and Sádaba – *The impact of attitudes towards influencers amongst millennial and post-millennial fashion buyers* identifies the way influencers affect the behavior of millennial buyers in the process of consuming fashion goods. The paper presents an extensive literature on opinion leaders, ranging from the origins of the concept to its developments within the context of the Internet. The shift from influential to influencer and the different types of influencer are examined and certain hypotheses regarding the role of influencers (including all the influential players) regarding fashion-buying millennials are examined.

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In this introduction we provided a map of fashion communication, and a compass to navigate within it. It is now time for you to explore such fascinating territory, approaching the contributions collected in this issue of SComS.

We wish you an enriching and inspiring exploration!

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Il vestito forma la persona – "clothes make the man": Fashion morality in Italian nineteenth-century conduct books

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Abstract
Using a corpus of 40 influential conduct books published in Italy in the long nineteenth century, we apply current insights in the role of values for the emergence and maintenance of conventions developed within the pragmatics of politeness to the prescriptive discourse on fashion, because in these sources norms for verbal and non-verbal behaviour are justified in a similar way. We argue that fashion choices are always said to communicate moral values. Most conduct books reinforce fashion norms by anchoring them in moral values because the authors expect their readers to be morally evaluated in terms of the clothes they wear. We will give an overview of rules regulating bodily hygiene, adornment, dress choice and fashion, and analyse which values are explicitly cited to justify the rules. The positive values such as diligence and parsimony show that fashion morality is seen as a means of self-improvement for the petty bourgeoisie whilst excesses (avarice and laziness on one end and vanity and frivolity on the other) lead to poverty. Our sources predominantly regulate fashion with personal, ego-centered values. This is markedly different from the current debate on sustainable fashion, led by social values such as compassion and altruism. With this historical paper we hope to contribute to the discussion of new approaches for the analysis of moralising discourse in fashion communication.

Keywords
morality, values, conventions, Italy, long nineteenth century, conduct books, ethical fashion

La pulitezza è il lusso del povero […].
[Cleanliness is the luxury of the poor {…}].[1]
Clemente Rossi

1 Fashion Morality

Historians of fashion have often underlined the interwovenness of dress and morality (Breward, 1995; Hollander, 1978, 1994; Kuchta, 2002; Ribeiro, 1986) to set the history of fashion apart from present-day attitudes supposedly characterised by total fashion freedom. Nevertheless, present-day demands for sustainability have reignited the debate on fashion morality. On the one hand, fast fashion is under scrutiny because of environmental issues (textile waste, use of toxic chemicals and of non-biodegradable materials) and its links with cheap labour in so-called sweatshops, with unacceptable wages and dangerous working conditions; on the other, fast fashion consumers are linked to an Instragram culture, where cheap clothes allow users to wear as many different outfits as possible, in order to perpetuate a (fake) image of wealth and success. From this perspective, fashion morality regards the industry as well as its consumers in that both are subjected to moral judgments: their actions are evaluated in terms of moral values, as good or bad, right or wrong, preferable or avoidable, provoking feelings of like or dislike, and so on. Sustainable fashion is positively evaluated, as "ethical," because it endeavours to maximise benefits to communities and minimise impact on environment (Ethical Fashion Forum, n.d.; Henninger, Alevizou, & Oates, 2016). The respective moral

1 Translations are ours, unless indicated otherwise.

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evaluations of slow and fast fashion, then, regard both the industry and its consumers, whereas a concept like modest fashion appears to be solely focused on the values of the consumers (Almassi, 2018). In this essay dedicated to the discourse on fashion morality in nineteenth-century Italian conduct books, fashion is used mainly as a benchmark to judge the user, although considerations for fashion as a creator of employment often surface. We argue that in our sources vestimentary choices are always said to communicate moral values and therefore, in this special issue about fashion communication, we understand this topic in two ways: a) most conduct books include a prescriptive and heavily moralising discourse on fashion, i. e., they reinforce fashion norms by rooting them in moral values because b) the authors expect their readers to be morally evaluated in terms of the clothes they are wearing.

Conduct books, by their very nature, focus on politeness and good manners to build meaningful social relationships. They traditionally provide rules for the presentability of one's person and the respectability of one's interactions, where presentability – the quality of who is fit to be seen in public – is considered a prime condition to achieve respectability. Fashion, therefore, is an important element within the codification of presentability. There are, in fact, certain overlaps between fashion and politeness, not in the least because both politeness and fashion are social regulating systems, based on social conventions. The pragmatics of politeness, born in the 1970s and 1980s with seminal publications by Brown and Levinson (1978/1987) and Leech (1983), has increasingly looked at non-verbal communication, whereas fashion as well is conceived as a form of non-verbal communication (on the semiotics of fashion, see Barthes, 1967/2015; Crane, 2000). Only fairly recently, politeness studies have started to investigate the role of moral values and how they relate to social conventions. Conventions are kept in place by their frequency, but also by moral values. Moral values constitute a common ground, a shared benchmark for decision-making and for the judgement of people's behaviour and relationships. Conventions and values constitute a moral order (Kádár, 2017; Kádár & Haugh, 2013), which is maintained via interaction and moral evaluations of interaction, but also, importantly, by metadiscourse – lay discourse on politeness and impoliteness. In this respect, conduct books in particular play a key role: not only do they contribute to the conventionalisation of certain polite usages (Terkourafi, 2011, p. 176; Terkourafi & Kádár, 2017, p. 190), they also help maintaining the moral order via their typically moralising discourse: conventions are reinforced each time they are anchored into moral foundations (Kádár, 2017 who refers to moral value theories in social psychology such as Haidt, 2012; Schwartz et al., 2012). In other words, conduct books contain an explicit discourse on moral values, which aims to justify conventions. Our study on norms for polite verbal behaviour based on the same corpus of conduct books has shown how politeness is explicitly rooted in values like reciprocity and fraternal love (Paternoster & Saltamacchia, 2017). In the current article we want to extend a metapragmatic method developed for linguistic politeness (where metapragmatic stands for the reflexive monitoring of linguistic choices, see Caffi, 1984, 1998; Verschueren, 2000) and apply it to fashion, because there are no real differences in the way conduct books morally justify verbal and non-verbal norms, which include norms on fashion. This way we hope to contribute to the discussion of new methodological approaches for the analysis of the present-day moralising discourse on fashion as seen in Geiger & Keller, 2017; Lundblad & Davies, 2015; Manchiraju & Sadachar, 2014; Niinimäki, 2015, who analyse sustainable fashion in reference to the values of altruism, empathy, compassion.

Using a corpus of 40 conduct books published in Italy in the long nineteenth century (1800–1920), we compare the chapters dedicated to fashion (a term we conceive broadly, as pertaining to bodily hygiene, laundry, adornment and vestimentary choices) and we analyse which specific moral values are quoted to justify

particular vestimentary rules. Our corpus withholds, out of a possible 186 texts,[2] the most reprinted texts per decennium, in order to warrant maximum impact with the historical reader.[3] As the discourse on fashion proves rather homogeneous across the sources, selecting representative passages has proven relatively straightforward. The essay thus discusses representative passages on fashion morality occurring in texts that were quite diffused at the time, in one specific layer of society.

Italian nineteenth-century conduct books address (pre-)adolescents on one hand, and members of the lower middle class and the top echelon of the working class on the other, who are all invited to share the values and the lifestyle of the middle classes.[4] Primary school was made compulsory straight after the Unification for children of 6 and 7 years of age and soon after, in 1877, extended to 9-year-olds. Compulsory schools received a socially mixed public, and overall the aim was to provide children from all backgrounds with the tools to improve their chances at social advancement. Tasca (2004, pp. 51–57) reports how, in schools, *galatei* (or conduct books) were used as reading material in class and read out loud during meal times. Although illiteracy in the young nation was almost at 80% (Genovesi, 1998, p. 226), conduct books were present in free libraries for the people and in parish libraries. The *galatei* for the people originated within charitable associations or were sponsored by local councils. Given their socially inclusive nature, conduct books wrote about inexpensive activities: visits, walks, theatre, churchgoing etc. Typical chapters concern themselves with religion, conversation, games, table manners, visits, greetings on the street, hygiene and order, work and study, education. Given the absence of illustrations, the use of low-quality paper, the pocketsize format, the relatively low number of pages, and the simple typographic composition, Tasca (2004, p. 117) concludes that this is a product for a public with limited financial resources (on Italian conduct books see also Botteri 1999; Turnaturi 2011; Vanni 2006).

If with fashion we are to understand a quickly changing norm in clothing and accessories, hairstyle, makeup, footwear – involving regular spending –, it must be clear that the typical addressee of the conduct book – who has limited financial resources – cannot afford to keep up with fashion. However, that does not mean that *la moda* "fashion," was a topic deemed unfit for inclusion. Quite the contrary, most conduct books extensively discuss norms for public presentation of the body. In the next section, we introduce a first historical source, from 1902. Rather than being a prescriptive source, this is a retrospective analysis of the history of fashion in the nineteenth century and the advance of the bourgeois outfit: as it captures processes of democratisation through fashion, the text allows us to introduce the topic of self-improvement, which is at the heart of our sources. We split the central section of this essay in two parts. The first one is dedicated to Melchiorre Gioja, whose *Nuovo Galateo* "New Galateo" dominates the genre in the first half of the century. Whilst Gioja has a secular approach and the treatises of the second half of the century are mainly (but not exclusively) furthering a Catholic ideology, Gioja's utilitarianism, which favours both fashion and the fashion industry in the context of self-advancement, is not in contradiction with the later Catholic conduct books, on the contrary. After the unification of Italy in 1861, numbers of conduct books rise, peaking in the next two decennia. The second part is dedicated to these post-unification conduct books: within

2 The total number of titles listed in an inventory of Italian conduct and etiquette books, 1800–1920, compiled by Tasca, 2004, pp. 209–224.

3 We use Paternoster Annick & Saltamacchia Francesca (compilers). *Corpus di galatei italiani ottocenteschi (CGIO),* in preparation at the Università della Svizzera italiana, Lugano (CH). The corpus comprises digital versions of the 50 most reprinted conduct and etiquette books of the long nineteenth century (1800–1920). It contains 40 conduct books and 10 etiquette books.

4 There are also conduct books for the professions, such as physicians and solicitors, which we have not taken into consideration here (Botteri, 1999, pp. 245–319).

the huge nation-building effort (Gigante, 2013; Musiani, 2018; Patriarca, 2010) conduct books were seen as an efficient tool to promote social values alongside personal values (love of work, diligence) deemed necessary for the economic development of the country. We will give an overview of rules regulating bodily hygiene, adornment, dress choice and fashion, and analyse which values are explicitly cited to justify the rules. We will find that, in line with Gioja, positive evaluations mostly centre on diligence and appropriacy while negative valuations range from laziness and avarice (for not investing enough time in one's public appearance) to vanity and frivolity (for investing too much time in one's public appearance). Overall, we will conclude that discourse on fashion is firmly embedded in the ideology of self-advancement and we discuss suggestions for further research, mainly in the closely related genre of etiquette books: from the 1880s, the editions of conduct books slowly decrease and etiquette books, addressed to a mainly female readership belonging to the established bourgeoisie, become very successful.

2 Mara Antelling's retrospective view

In 1900 the Milanese publisher Vallardi invited well-known Italian intellectuals, amongst others the novelist Luigi Capuana, to reflect on the progress achieved in the nineteenth century. The series *Il secolo XIX nella vita e nella cultura dei popoli* "the nineteenth century in the life and the culture of the peoples" consists of 17 elegantly illustrated volumes, covering literature, music, art, economy, the sciences… Volume 11 is dedicated to *Vita intima, la moda e lo sport, vita sociale* "family life, fashion and sport, social life," with Mara Antelling (ca. 1902) contributing a lengthy essay about fashion. An established fashion journalist,[5] she wrote a column *L'arte e la moda* "Art and Fashion" for the magazine *Natura ed Arte* "Nature and Art." Whereas fashion magazines – such as the first Milanese magazine *Corriere delle dame* "Ladies' gazette" founded in 1804 (Franchini, 2002; Sergio, 2010) – usually treated fashion in a descriptive way,[6] Antelling has a sociological and analytical approach, in which she reflects on the role of women in society (Frau, 2011, p. 10). She is aware that clothes have a connotation that is "not only aesthetic, but also (and foremost) socio-ethical" (Frau, 2011, p. 1).

Antelling's essay identifies connections between major socio-political changes and fashion. The French Revolution put an end to aristocratic vestimentary excesses that characterised the inhabitants of Versailles and dress was being standardised: "Nel [secolo] decimonono [la moda] subì trasformazioni svariatissime, tendendo a unificarsi in tutti gli stati sociali […]" ["In the nineteenth [century], [fashion] underwent a vast range of variations, which tended to unify all the social layers {…}"] (Antelling, ca. 1902, p. 84). Advances in the textile industry enabled mass production and a faster distribution, and allowed the development of prêt-à-porter ranges, for sale in department stores. The bourgeois outfit became increasingly available to those with only limited financial resources (Perrot, 1989), in other words, the typical reader of Italian conduct books as explained above. Whereas in the first half of the century, in France, it was still possible to recognise different professions in the street by their costume (Frau, 2011, p. 1), midway through the century this was becoming harder. Precisely from this period comes the following quote, found in a French conduct book, probably originating in the 1840s and translated into Italian in 1853:[7]

5 Pseudonym of Anna Menegazzi Piccoli, born in Treviso (1845–1904). For an overview of her journalistic output, see Frau, 2011, pp. 4–5.

6 On the history of fashion and fashion writing in Italy see Jones, 2000; Levi Pisetzky, 1969, 1973, 1978; Paulicelli, 2001. On the early modern period see Paulicelli, 2014.

7 The first author was able to trace a copy of the French original (An., 1847) at the Musée des Ursulines (Quebec, CA), a Catholic order dedicated to the education of girls.

> Oggimai la ricchezza delle vesti non è più distintivo dei diversi ordini di cittadini; il lusso è arrivato a tal punto da agguagliare condizione ed età […]. [These days the riches of one's clothes does no longer distinguish between the different ranks of citizens; luxury has reached a point where it equalises rank and age {…}]. (Thouar, 1853, p. 33)

On one hand, Antelling is welcoming uniformity as a result of a democratisation process; on the other, she also expresses doubt about real social advancement. Fashion operates as a "turbine livellatore" "engine for equalisation":

> Il primo colpo lo dà la moda, insinuandosi coi suoi dettami in tutti gli ordini sociali, portando lo stesso verbo nell'umile casa borghese o nella semplice casa provinciale, come nel palazzo avito, o negli appartamenti delle dive in vena di *bonne fortune*. [Fashion gives the first blow, as it slowly infiltrates every social rank with its rules, spreading the same gospel in the humble bourgeois house or in the simple country house, as well as in the ancestral palace, or in the apartments of divas enjoying good fortune.] (Antelling, ca. 1902, p. 88)

However, for Antelling the democratisation is only apparent. Fashion creates uniformity for the top layer, whilst at the same time increasing the distance from the bottom layer:

> L'eguaglianza negli abiti non rompe le dighe sociali che si erigono ancora fra classe e classe: le superiori sono rinserrate in un circolo saldo, chiuse in una rocca, e guardano con diffidenza la marea che monta e minaccia invasione. [The equality of clothes does not break the social dikes that are still erect between the social classes: the upper classes have locked themselves in a tight-knit club, barricaded in a fortress, and look with diffidence at the tide that mounts and threatens an invasion.] (Antelling, ca. 1902, p. 88)

Importantly, Antelling diagnoses the emergence of a strong demarcation line between the social classes, also identified by present-day historians. The lower middle class or petty (from *petite*) bourgeoisie included primary school teachers, "scribes, copyists and similar employees in banking, the law, insurance and the lower ranks of the civil service" (Evans, 2016, p. 327), supervisory grades in the industry and independent artisans, shopkeepers and shop assistants in the newly expanding sector of department stores, whilst women increasingly found work in department stores, in "post offices, telephone exchanges" and in offices (Evans, 2016, 330; on Italy's nineteenth-century middle classes see Banti, 1996; Meriggi, 1992). This lower middle class endeavoured to be "accepted as middle class, through their dress, housing, social interests, education, etc., in order to insist on the differences between themselves and the working class" (Pilbeam, 1990, pp. 10–15; Montroni, 2002, p. 104 on the "rather strong" divide between these two groups in Italy). For the petty bourgeoisie, table manners, proper conversation and dress were crucial class symbols meant to maintain respectability (Kocka, 1989, p. 20). Table manners, e. g., needed to hide recent arrival from a social sphere where hunger and gluttony were rife. Italian nineteenth-century conduct books are precisely helping the petty bourgeoisie to avoid identification with the working class.

3 Melchiorre Gioja and the *Apology of Fashion:* on the socio-economic purpose of fashion

In the nineteenth century the production of conduct manuals is inaugurated in 1802 by the *Nuovo Galateo* "New Galateo" written by Melchiorre Gioja, the official historiographer of Napoleon's Cisalpine Republic, and subsequently the Director of the Bureau of Statistics of the Italian Kingdom. His treatise marks the beginning of a prolific publication of conduct manuals proposing a bourgeois model of politeness (Vanni, 2006, p. 13). In the new society that arises after the French Revolution social relationships become more complex. As they are no longer depending on a rigid hierarchical structure anchored in law, they are now negotiated on differ-

ent grounds: merit and work (and money) take the place of birthright (see Gipper, 2001). The first edition of the *New Galateo,* which will be followed by three expanded versions (1820, 1822, 1827), posits itself in opposition to the aristocratic code of conduct, and – particularly – to a model based on strict conformity to conventional "ceremonies":

> Nelle monarchie le cerimonie prendono il posto dei doveri sociali […]. Gli uomini sono più apprezzati dai loro abiti che dai loro sentimenti, e la gentilezza nel gesto e nelle maniere ottiene maggior lode che la più eroica virtù. [In monarchies ceremonies take the place of social duties {…}. People are mostly appreciated for their dress rather than for their feelings and the elegance of manner is more appreciated than the most heroic of virtues.] (Gioja, 1802/1853, p. 8).

Although Gioja criticises the fact that people "are mostly appreciated for their dress rather than their feelings," in the second edition he admits that "sebbene l'abito non faccia il monaco, ciò nonostante la maggior parte degli uomini, i quali hanno più occhio che intelletto, dall'abito giudicano le persone" ["although the habit does not make the monk, nevertheless most people, who have more eyes than brains, judge other people by their clothes"] (1820, p. 107). The presence of this proverb in behavioural literature goes back to the *Book of the Courtier* by Baldassar Castiglione (1528), an author who is often quoted in the *New Galateo.* In Book II, Chapter X–VIII, the interlocutors of this dialogue set at the court of Urbino discuss the meaning of clothes for the courtier. Whilst one interlocutor claims that people have to be judged rather by words and deeds than by clothes, precisely because of "quel proverbio che l'abito non fa il monaco" ["the proverb saying 'The habit does not make the monk',"] the main interlocutor disagrees: of course words and deeds are important, nevertheless one's attire "non è piccolo argomento della fantasia di chi lo porta" ["is no slight index of the wearer's fancy"] (Castiglione, 2002, p. 136; Castiglione 1959, p. 123). Gioja defends the latter argument because "ciascuno aspira alla *stima* degli altri e ne teme il *disprezzo*" ["every man aspires to the others' *esteem* and cannot tolerate *scorn*"] (1820, p. 28, original emphasis). To obtain esteem and appreciation is indeed the aim of the politeness model proposed by Gioja, which is based on the new concept of "social reason, i. e. the capacity of people to live together in a way that others are pleased with us and with themselves ["in modo di rendere gli altri contenti di noi e di loro stessi"] (1822/1853, pp. 109–110). Gioja's individual affirms himself in his social relationships, which are focused on usefulness.

Gioja recommends taking great care in wearing clean clothes, since people "restano offesi dalla sordidezza" ["are offended by filth"] (1820, p. 106). He also prescribes cleanliness because, he argues, "la pulitezza, conservando le forze fisiche, ci conserva la possibilità d'eseguire i doveri sociali e d'essere utili agli altri" ["cleanliness preserves our physical strength, thus preserving the possibility to execute our social duties and to be useful to others"] (1822/1853, p. 116). Furthermore, dress should correspond to one's financial condition because he who dresses above his means "si toglie di credito" ["loses credit"] since he "fa supporre che si veste a spese altrui" ["gives ground to suspicions that he dresses at the cost of other people"]; by contrast, he who dresses below his means "si tira addosso la taccia di pidocchieria" ["attracts onto himself the bad reputation of being a scrooge"] (1820, p. 112). Therefore, there is a golden mean to be followed. In sum, Gioja lays the foundations of the nineteenth-century rules: on the one hand, attention to personal hygiene and clean laundry, on the other, appropriate dress-choice. Interestingly, these precepts are argued for in view of a goal, and, more specifically, in view of a utilitarian motivation: achieving the others' esteem and appreciation allows one to obtain public esteem, offices and honours, religious rewards, as Gioja explains in his preface. This utilitarian view, influenced by the French ideologues (such as Condillac and Cabanis) and Jeremy Bentham's utilitarianism (see Sciacca, 1948, pp. 132–

133 and Botteri, 1990; Ghiringhelli, 1990; Sofia, 1990; Tasca, 2004; Vanni, 2006), equally dominates the chapter *Apologia della moda* "Apology of Fashion," which Gioja introduces in the second edition of the *New Galateo*.

The *Apology of Fashion* follows a similarly instrumental approach, but at the same time, there are differences: whereas the *New Galateo* is a prescriptive text, the *Apology of Fashion* is an argumentative text, in which Gioja argues two sides of the question "fashion" adopting a favourable stance. We begin by discussing the historical context leading up to this chapter. Luxury and fashion form a hotly debated issue in the eighteenth century. Cecilia Carnino (2014), who offers a detailed reconstruction of this debate, argues that the complex discussion about luxury and wellness was actually a vehicle for a political debate focused on the free movement of wealth, on criticism of the traditional hierarchies and on the legitimation of new social classes. Carnino also underlines the new meaning that the word "consumption" acquires in the eighteenth century: far from being considered a mere destruction of resources, consumption was rather seen as a component of the demand for consumer goods. The reflection about the relationship between economy and luxury and fashion is at the core of the works of Mandeville in England (*The fable of the bees,* 1705) and Melon in France (*Essai politique sur le commerce,* 1734). Whilst according to the former, private vices can produce benefits because they offer opportunities for new employment, the latter considers luxury as a base for the economic development of a state. In Italy, fifteen years later, Galliani in *Della moneta* (1750) argues about the relationship between luxury, fashion and the progress of societies: he opposes a society based on conquest to a modern society based on economic development and civil progress. After Galliani, Verri (1764), Genovesi (1765) and Beccaria (1769) readily adopt Mandeville's idea that luxury and fashion boost economic activity and, particularly, work. However, this positive view on luxury and fashion is strongly resisted by Catholics who accuse fashion and luxury as the cause of moral corruption. They in particular focus on charity by arguing that the superfluous – i. e. luxury – is supposed to be donated in charity rather than to be used for personal gratification.

Melchiorre Gioja positions himself as the defendant of the first position and the accuser of the second position. In the first section of the *Apology of Fashion* he advances arguments in favour of fashion adopting an economic point of view: "i capricci della moda sono il mezzo per cui […] il ricco alimenta il povero non a titolo di limosina, ma di lavoro" ["the whims of fashion are the means by which {…} the rich help the poor by supplying them with work rather than with a handout"] (Gioja 1822, p. 205). He argues this sentence in this way:

> Un abito che presenta l'apparenza della novità è tosto ricercato dalle persone più ricche, e diviene l'oggetto delle brame di quelle che lo sono meno. […] gli artisti imitano con materie meno costose […] la prima foggia […] e per conseguenza ne decade il prezzo. Decadendo il prezzo diviene proporzionato alle finanze delle persone povere, le quali per ciò vengono messe a parte di piaceri, da cui senza le variazioni della moda resterebbero escluse. La moda […] eccita nella massa popolare la voglia di parteciparvi; quindi diviene pungentissimo stimolo contro la naturale inerzia. [A costume with the outward appearance of newness quickly becomes sought-after by the richest people, and it becomes the object of desire in people who are less rich. {…} the artists imitate the original model with less expensive materials {…} and therefore its price drops. With the price getting lower, the dress becomes proportionate to the financial resources of the poor, who, therefore, can take part in pleasures from which, without the changes in fashion, they would remain excluded. Fashion {…} fuels in the masses a desire to take part in it, thus becoming a biting incentive against natural inactivity.] (Gioja, 1822, p. 205)[8]

8 Note the similarity with the historical discourse on nineteenth-century price reductions in Philippe Perrot (1989) discussed in section 2. Interestingly, one of our anony-

Gioja summarises some of the main themes of the eighteenth-century debate on luxury. He embraces the idea that fashion is good because it offers new opportunities for employment; he also takes into consideration the public debate on charity by affirming that thanks to the whims of fashion the rich can help the poor by supplying them with work instead of alms – we can infer that work is preferable to charity because the former is an incentive against natural inactivity. Furthermore, by affirming that an outfit "becomes the object of desire in people who are less rich" and that fashion "fuels in the masses a desire to take part in it," Gioja offers an interesting description of the dynamic of human desire. This idea is taken from Verri, who states that luxury is "lo sprone più vigoroso dell'industria" ["the strongest stimulus for the industry"] (1764/1993, p. 38) because the desire to buy luxury goods fuels the desire to work. Moreover, Verri underlines the fact that all passions and desires, both of rich and poor, are legitimate as a ground for economic development, and lead to an equal society.

The main argument advanced by Gioja to attack the opposing argument (fashion corrupts) is the following:

> L'amore è di sua natura esclusivo […]. Aumento di affezioni amorose è dunque uguale a diminuzione di godimenti comuni. Ora in generale le affezioni amorose crescono in ragione della bellezza. Quindi i popoli più laidi sono i più dissoluti. [Love, by its nature, is exclusive {…}. An increase in love is proportionate to a decrease in communal enjoyment. Now, in general love increases in reason of [i. e. in proportion to] beauty. Thus, the ugliest peoples are the most dissolute.] (Gioja, 1822, p. 209)

According to Gioja fashion cannot be the cause of corruption because "the ugliest people are the most dissolute" as they are prone to "communal enjoyment." It follows that corruption is strictly related with uncivilized people rather than civilized people – and fashion characterizes a civilized society.

From these short extracts taken from the *Apology of Fashion* it can be concluded that Gioja evaluates fashion positively, it is considered from an instrumental point of view as a vehicle for an economic and ideological discourse. The nineteenth-century philosopher and theologian Antonio Rosmini realised this better than anybody else; he in particular sensed the danger of a popularisation of the utilitarian ideas contained in Gioja's *Apology of Fashion*. In the *Esame delle opinioni di Melchiorre Gioja in favore della moda* "Examination of Melchiorre Gioja's opinions in favour of fashion" (1824) he advances more than forty "observations" countering not only the arguments that Melchiorre Gioja supported in defense of fashion, but also the utilitarian ideology that permeates the entire text (see Saltamacchia & Rocci, 2018; in press).

4 Post-unification Conduct Books

Whereas Gioja's stance is secular, even anticlerical, post-unification conduct books propose, so to speak, a practical "appendix" to Catholic ethics (Tasca, 2004, p. 109). Many conduct books, especially those written for young readers, have a structure that follows "a day in the life of" their recipients and start with a chapter on the morning ritual: with an early rise comes the requirement to thank God for the new day, followed by rules for personal hygiene. Rules are justified by the need for good manners, but also by medical reasons: the persistent need to recommend frequent ablutions can be explained by a lingering fear of water as contamination agent for diseases such as cholera and the plague (Sorcinelli, 2009; Gatta e. g. explains the etymology of the word to his young readers: "Dalla voce greca hygies, sano" ["from the Greek work hygies, healthy"] (1865/1869, p. 9). Gattini (1869/1870, pp. 14–22) and Cianfrocca (1872/1878, pp. 11–16) provide detailed rules, but the longest lists appear in Chiavarino (1897, pp. 96–106) and Krier (1894/1900, pp. 29–35). Chiavarino's list

mous reviewers pointed out how this sounds like a description of so-called high street brands, like Zara or H&M, etc. *ante litteram*.

contains no less than 34 items. Alongside a generic recommendation to wash, rules specifically target face and neck, ears, hands, nails, teeth, hair, feet, discuss the correct way to blow your nose, sneeze, spit, the correct use of handkerchiefs, and continue seamlessly to the cleanliness of clothes. To illustrate the level of detail involved, one example will suffice:

> Il tossire e lo starnutire non deve essere troppo forte, nè sul volto delle persone, nè vicino a cose cui male sarebbe spruzzare, od anche solo darne il sospetto, come cibi, fiori, od altro. Avverti perciò di volgerti alquanto da parte, e di tenere il fazzoletto alla bocca. [Coughs and sneezes must not be too loud, and not in other people's face, neither close to objects which must not be covered in spray, nor even a suggestion of it, such as food, flowers, etc. Therefore, take care to turn yourself slightly sideways, and hold a handkerchief to your mouth.] (Chiavarino, 1897, p. 98)

Importantly, personal hygiene and cleanliness of clothes are treated in an absolute way: "acqua fresca in abbondanza, sapone semplice nostrano, buoni pettini e buone spazzole" ["abundant cool water, simple local soap, good combs and good brushes"] (Gatta, 1865/1869, p. 28). When washing "l'acqua non va punto risparmiata" ["water is not to be used sparingly"] (Grelli, 1889, p. 6). On the contrary, more is better: "Puossi giudicare […] del grado di civiltà di un popolo dalla quantità d'acqua che consuma per la propria nettezza" ["One can judge {…} the degree of civilisation of a people by the amount of water it consumes for its cleanliness"] (Gallenga, 1871, p. 114; and see similar in Rossi on the use of soap for clean laundry, 1878/1921, p. 117 and p. 165).[9] Cleanliness, in fact, is seen as a generic indicator of one's moral standards. For Rossi, it is a "coefficiente di moralità" ["a coefficient of morality"] (1878/1921, p. 164); for Pellegrino it is "lo specchio della mente e del cuore" ["the mirror of mind and heart"] (1870, p. 51 and similar on p. 57). It reflects purity (Fiorentina, 1915/1918, p. 15), candour and kindness (Cajmi, 1865–1867/1869, p. 9). Both Chiavarino and Krier refer to clean clothes as a representation of "interna onestà" ["internal honesty"] (1897, p. 108; 1894/1900, p. 39). Conversely, "l'immondezza del corpo" ["the filth of the body"] is not seldom "testimonio che rivela la bruttura del cuore" ["a witness revealing the ugliness of the heart"], according to Rizzoli in an earlier conduct book for priests (1845, p. 16). Similarly, for Rossi, a physical smell points to "puzzo morale" ["moral stench"] (1878/1921, p. 164).

Precisely because they send out this powerful moral message, clean clothes have the power to override the social stigmata of lower class and poverty. Dirt originating in manual work bears no negative connotation, on the contrary. According to Cajmi's *Nuovo Galateo, consigli di un nonno a' suoi nipoti* "New Galateo, Advice from a grandfather to his grandchildren," peasants and artisans cannot possibly keep clean while they work. However,

> […] deposta la marra o il martello, vedili nel dì di festa: crederebbero mancare di reverenza perfino a Dio, se la candida camicia, o il giubbone custodito con tanta cautela dalle vigili donne, non imprimessero in quelle figure indurite ai travagli qualche po' di gentilezza e di civiltà. [{…} once they put down the hoe and the hammer, just look at them on a Holy Day: they would think of themselves as disrespectful even to God, if the pure white shirt, or the jacket so carefully preserved by their attentive wives, would not impress onto those figures hardened by labour some kindness and civility.] (Cajmi, 1865–1867/1869, p. 11)

In their Sunday best, they too become civilised.[10] In the nation-building effort, work is always positively evaluated. Also, in the wake of the successful self-help

9 Rossi references the *Familiar Letters on Chemistry*, 1851, by Justus von Liebig, the father of organic chemistry, albeit in a rather approximate wording.

10 This quote neatly ties in with what Alain Corbin writes about the tendency in working class members to *s'endimancher* "put on their Sunday best" (*dimanche* in fact, means "Sunday" in French), effectively dress in a bourgeois costume. Alain Corbin, 1987, p. 449, quoted in Frau, 2011, p. 7.

movement in Victorian England, inaugurated by the publications of Samuel Smiles, self-help became very popular in Italy and it strongly encouraged work as a way for self-reliance (Tasca, 2004, p. 187; Turnaturi, 2011, p. 37). The same topic emerges in Pasquali, who teaches manners with edifying anecdotes: Beppino decides to leave school and, at the end of his first working day, he goes back to see if his companions will still greet him now that he has "un viso nero" ["a blackened face"] (Pasquali, 1897, p. 24). Most pupils ignore him, except for his former desk companion, who shakes hands affectionately "senza badare se nella stretta ritira la sua un po' annerita" ["and does not mind if his hand turns a bit dirty from the handshake"] (Pasquali, 1897, p. 24). However, not only the working poor are respectable (despite the dirt), the clean poor are too: "Non è riprovevole che gli abiti siano vecchi o rattoppati, purché siano puliti" ["Old and patched cloths are not reprehensible, provided they are clean"] (Commodari, 1893, p. 24); "[…] infatti non ci spiace nemmeno l'abito misero e rattoppato del mendicante se è pulito" ["{…} in fact, not even the miserable, patched clothes of the beggar displease us, provided they are clean"] (Krier, 1894/1900, p. 39, and similar in Gallenga, 1871 p. 243). The most striking wording is found in Rossi: "La pulitezza è il lusso del povero" ["Cleanliness is the luxury of the poor"] (1878/1921, p. 164). It is better to have "cento toppe" ["one hundred patches"] than "una macchia sola" ["only one stain"] (Rossi, 1878/1921, p. 165). The hyperbole of the one hundred patches demonstrates that this discourse on hygiene and cleanliness is cast in absolute terms. Even one stain puts its owner on the wrong side of the demarcation line of who is respectable or not, who is part of the undeserving or deserving poor; that is those who deserve assistance, employment and those who do not, because they are lazy.[11] In fact, cleanliness is an indication of diligence (Commodari, 1893 p. 24).[12]

It is worth insisting that rules for basic hygiene are coached in absolute wordings because when authors turn to other fashion-related topics, the moralising discourse becomes relative: virtue is formulated as an Aristotelian golden mean, and excesses are evaluated as vice. Let us look at the rules for body adornment with perfumes, cosmetics, hair pomades and oils: "un'acconciatura eccessiva indica vanità e leggerezza" ["excessive adornment points at vanity and frivolity"] (Cianfrocca, 1872/1878, p. 14). In the morning, Thouar does not want girls to spend "troppo tempo" ["too much time"] to take care of their appearance, "il che potrebbe facilmente essere indizio o fomite di mollezza, di svogliatezza e d'ozio pericolosissimo" ["this could easily be a sign of or an incitement to frivolity, listlessness or very dangerous laziness"] (Thouar, 1853, p. 26). The main problem here is time wasting. This is the reason why Gatta does not want to see a dressing table cluttered with "cosmetici di vario colore e odore, quelle essenze, quegli olii, quelle polveri" ["cosmetics of different colour and scent, those essences, those oils, those powders"]: "Eh via, lasciate queste frascherie ai perdigiorni […]" ["come on, leave these fripperies to idlers {…}"] (Gatta, 1865/1869, p. 28). To avoid excess, young people need a middle way: "Prendete la via di mezzo; chè si vuole la pulizia, non già la caricatura" ["Take the middle way, because cleanliness is what we want, definitely not a caricature"] (Cajmi 1865–1867/1869, p. 6). The need to measure the use of perfume is still linked to frivolity, but it also involves taking into account other people's wellbeing. Cajmi takes about "il vezzo che ha taluno di costringere altri a respirare quanto egli si è messo dattorno" ["the mannerism of some who force others to breath in what they have put on"] (1865–1867/1869, p. 19; see also Gatta, 1865/1869, p. 30–31; Demartino, 1888/1897, p. 75).

11 The traditional dividing line is important for policy-makers in Victorian England, but the notion exists in Italy since late Antiquity (Allen, Neil & Mayer, 2009, p. 171).

12 It is often claimed that people who take care of their clothes are generally tidy, measured and diligent (see Pellegrino, 1870, p. 56).

Quite naturally, the amount of effort spent on getting dressed is evaluated in exactly the same way. Moral awareness is particularly prominent here, also in regards to underuse. For Thouar, underuse in the care of one's outfit ("toelette") is "indizio certo d'incuria e di pigrizia" ["a sure sign of negligence and laziness"] and overuse can be "contraria a modestia e rivelare vanità e leggerezza" ["opposed to modesty and reveal vanity and frivoulness"] (1853, p. 32). Gatta understands that young girls need some time to get dressed, however he asks they do not go beyond "i limiti onesti del convenevole" ["the honest limits of what is appropriate"] (1865/1869, p. 33; see also Gallenga 1871, p. 431 and Righi, 1889, p. 72). Paragraph 1 in Chiavarino's chapter on clothing starts as a search for the golden mean: "Guardati dall'eccedere sia per troppa cura come per troppa trascuraggine" ["Beware not to exceed nor by too much care neither by too much negligence"] (1897, p. 107). His list of values is particularly extensive. Too much effort will attract a series of negative evaluations: it reveals his reader to be "sciocco" ["stupid,"] "vanerello" ["frivoulous,"] and it "è segno d'animo piccolo, di gretto carattere, di cuor vuoto, di cultura superficiale, e spesso anche di una smania peccaminosa di piaceri e di passioni disordinate" ["is a sign of small-mindedness, pettiness, heartlessness, superficial culture, and often also of a sinful desire for pleasures and unruly passions"] (Chiavarino, 1897, p. 107). Vice versa, sloppiness "rivela avarizia, mancanza dei dovuti riguardi" ["reveals stinginess, lack of due respect"] and sometimes it "dinota una coscienza turbata" ["means a troubled conscience"] (Chiavarino, 1897, p. 107). Krier follows Chiavarino almost word by word, but adds gloomily that excessive care of one's looks will drag the soul "sopra un cammino sdrucciolevole" ["on a slippery path"] that will lead it to become "schiava dei vizii più odiosi" ["slave of the most odious vices"] (1894/1900, p. 37). Interestingly, our sources display a semiotic awareness with frequent expressions relating to communication: dress is *specchio, testimonio, indizio (certo), segno di* ["mirror," "witness," "a (sure) clue, a sign"] and *rivela, dinota,* ["reveals," "indicates."]

Just as spending the right amount of time to adornments and clothes is regulated as a golden mean, the choice of clothes is equally determined in a relative way, that is, as appropriateness to circumstances. The most important circumstance is one's social class. Several authors quote *la condizione* ["status, station, standing"] as the only factor determining appropriate dress: "Il buon gusto, soprattutto, voi dovete dimostrarlo nel perfetto accordo della vostra condizione col vostro abbigliamento" ["Taste, especially, has to be shown through the perfect harmony between your social standing and your clothes"] (Fiorentina, 1915/1918, p. 67 and similar in Cajmi, 1865–1867/1869, p. 9; Gatta, 1865/1869, p. 31; Gallenga, 1871 p. 431 and Cipani, 1884, p. 13). Others introduce more factors. Thouar adds age (1853, p. 26), Rizzoli and Righi list status, age and add gender (1845, p. 20; 1889, p. 72). Krier wants his reader to adapt clothes to status, profession and age and he gives one example of each: "Lo studente non può vestirsi come il contadino, nè il magistrato come il commesso viaggiatore, nè il vecchio come il giovane" ["A student must not dress like a peasant, neither a magistrate like a travelling salesman, nor an elderly man like a young one"] (1894/1900, p. 38). Overall, the most elaborate rule is found in Gattini and Chiavarino who want clothes to be "convenienti all'età, alla condizione delle persone, ed anche alle circostanze de' luoghi, de' tempi, e del costume" ["appropriate to age, one's status and the circumstances of place, time and usage"] (Gattini, 1869/1870, p. 15; Chiavarino, 1897, p. 108). Historically, these lists originate in classical rhetoric as the *circumstantiae locutionis* "the circumstances of speech", traditionally listed as: who, what, why, in what manner, where, when, by what faculties. Here they are adapted to convey a visual rhetoric of appropriacy.[13] In this regard, the call for simplicity shows that it was feared readers would breach the appro-

13 This conversion from verbal to non-verbal rhetoric takes place in Renaissance conduct books (Paternoster 1998).

priateness rule rather by overstating their rank than by understatement: "Non troppa cura!" ["not too much care!"] because *"La maggior semplicità piace sempre di più"* ["the greatest simplicity always pleases the most"] (Chiavarino, 1897 p. 107, original emphasis; Krier, 1894/1900, p. 37). Cajmi links simplicity of dress to the simplicity of the soul (1865–1867/1869, p. 9), whereas Fiorentina, who proposes – literally – a "barometro" ["barometer"] of dress choices with their corresponding values,[14] favours un "vestito semplice, adatto alla condizione finanziaria e alla posizione sociale" ["a simple costume, adapted to financial condition and social position"] as it reveals "carattere serio, buon senso" ["seriousness, common sense"] (1915/1918, p. 81).

Unsurprisingly, given the consistent coupling of dress choices with moral values, several conduct books explicitly reflect on clothes as a complex signifier, the semiotics of which go far beyond mere aesthetic relevance. These reflections often coagulate around the proverb *l'abito non fa il monaco* (literally, "the habit does not make the monk"), as previously seen in Gioja. Whilst some authors quote the traditional proverb, like Gioja they are quick to point out that it is not entirely valid:

> L'abito non fa il monaco, è vero; ma lo fa distinguere dagli altri. Dio giudica l'interno, ma l'uomo, che non può guardare che all'esterno, ha diritto di argomentare dall'apparenza per giudicare della sostanza. ["True, the habit does not make the monk, but it distinguishes him from the others. God judges the inside, but man, who can only look at the outside, is right to base his argument on the appearance in order to judge the substance."] (Cipani, 1884, p. 13 and similar in Rizzoli, 1845, p. 21, Righi, 1889, p. 71)[15]

Thouar, however, rejects the proverb outright. Strangers judging a girl will always look at her clothes first. And therefore:

> Non è da citar qui il proverbio, l'abito non fa il monaco, poiché è naturale che il cappellino strapazzato, le scarpe sudicie, il vestito macchiato sveglino poco buona opinione verso chi li porta." ["The proverb, the habit does not make the monk, cannot be quoted here, since it is only natural that the worn-out hat, the dirty shoes, the stained dress do not rouse a good opinion towards she who is wearing them."] (Thouar, 1853, p. 32)

For Krier, clothes provide a wide range of information: they constitute the easiest argument for judging someone's "carattere" ["character,"] "costumi" ["manners"] and "valore morale" ["moral value,"] and furthermore, they suggest someone's "stato" ["status,"] "animo" ["mind,"] "gusto personale" ["personal taste"] and "il grado di educazione" ["the degree of education"] (1894/1900, p. 36). Consequently, he proposes an alternative proverb, in a positive wording: "[…] il vestito forma la persona." ["{…} clothes make the man.]" (Krier, 1894/1900, p. 36; Chiavarino, 1897, p. 107). Demartino, writing for seminarists, provides two more sayings: "Il vestito è il nuncio dell'uomo" ["the costume is the ambassador of the man"] and "la decenza dell'abito è una lettera di raccomandazione" ["the decency of one's costume is a letter of recommendation"] (1888/1897, p. 74).

Fashion, then, is codified in a similar, that is, relative way. What distinguishes the discourse on fashion from the one on dress is the addition of the element of change over time. Cajmi admits the power of fashion, a "tyrant" imposing change (1865–1867/1869, p. 12). Men like change: "È vanità? è leggerezza? è bisogno di rovesciare sempre il vecchio, perchè col nuovo si alimenta l'industria e il commercio? Un po' di tutti questi motivi" ["Is it vanity? Is it frivolity? Is it a need to always overturn what is old, because what is new feeds industry and trade? A bit of a combination of all these motives"] (Cajmi, 1865–1867/1869, p. 12). However, in itself,

14 For praise of simplicity see also the first novel in Savigny, 1844. *La sveglia* "The clock."

15 Elsewhere, Rizzoli compares personal hygiene to "una lettera di raccomandazione" ["a letter of recommendation"] (1845, pp. 19–20), a metaphor which appears also in Demartino (1888/1897, see below).

fashion is not the object of moral condemnation. On the contrary, in continuation with Gioja's economic argument,[16] Cajmi evaluates fashion positively because it provides work to the poor. There is no point blaming fashion:

> La c'è, e bisogna tollerarla; chè alla fin fine fornisce del pane alla povera gente, e il riprovarla, oltreché è vano, porterebbe de' mali maggiori: del resto tanto peggio per le teste di nebbia che se ne fanno schiavi e vittime. ["It is here, and one has to accept it; because in the end it puts bread on the table for the poor and condemning it, which is useless anyway, would bring worse problems. Besides, so much the worse for the airheads who turn into fashion slaves and victims."] (Cajmi, 1865–1867/1869, p. 13)

Luxury is treated along the same line, as "l'alimento di molte industrie, quindi la fonte vitale della esistenza di molte nazioni" ["it powers many industries and is therefore the vital source for the existence of many nations"] (Cajmi, 1865–1867/1869, p. 15). The followers of fashion, indeed, as with the use of adornments and clothes, need to observe a golden mean "tra il buttarsi all'impazzata dietro il primo figurino di mode che ci casca giù d'oltremonti, o l'ostinarsi ad aggirarvi per la città come uno spicchio del secolo passato" ["between racing to throw yourself at the first fashion sketch that lands here from across the Alps and persisting in roaming around town like a slice of last century"] (Cajmi, 1865–1867/1869, pp. 12–13). Only excessive attitudes are condemned. Follow fashion too closely, and you are judged as fickle, mercurial, as someone who has "dato di volta al cervello" ["lost his mind"] (Cajmi, 1865–1867/1869, p. 12):

> […] il meno che si dica di chi insazievolmente tramuta il proprio abbigliamento o i propri arredi è l'essere egli un fanullone, un farfallino, un essere vacuo. [{…} the least people say of whoever changes his clothes or his furniture insatiably is that he is an idler, a frivolous, and empty human being.] (Cajmi, 1865–1867/1869, p. 12)

Therefore, following fashion in an appropriate way comes down to determining when the time is right. Fashion is a vestimentary art of *kairos,* the opportune moment. The reader should copy a new usage "senza tanta fretta" ["without too much haste"] (Savigny, 1844, p. 11). "Non siate mai i primi nelle novità" ["never be the first to adopt novelties"] and give it some time: "lasciate un pochettino abituarsi l'occhio e l'orecchio della gente ai mutamenti d'ogni genere, e non vi accadrà mai di pentirvi" ["Allow people's eyes and ears to get a little bit used to changes of any kind, and never will you have regrets"] (Cajmi, 1865–1867/1869, p. 13). If not, the reader would single him- or herself out: "[…] schivate sopratutto di distinguervi fra gli altri per qualche moda bizzarra e in generale non ancora accettata" ["{…} above all avoid distinguishing yourselves from the others by adopting some bizarre fashion, which is not yet widely accepted"] (Gatta, 1865/1869, p. 31). The way to do this is to copy "il costume dei più" ["the costume of the majority"] (Gatta, 1865/1869, p. 31), in other words, when "le mode" ["fashions"] are "accettate generalmente" ["widely accepted"] (Krier, 1894/1900, p. 37). Nevertheless, ridicule can be caused just as much by ignoring fashion: wearing clothes "poste in disuso" ["put into disuse"] would come down to "volersi rendere singolare per altro verso e […] andare incontro al ridicolo" ["wanting to single yourself out in another way and {…} encounter ridicule"] (Thouar, 1853, p. 33).

If ignoring fashion attracts negative evaluations, being a slave to fashion is equally condemned, as we have seen. In this final paragraph, picking up an important strand in Gioja's argumentation, we want to zoom in on the financial consequences of an excessive attention to fashion, which is closely scrutinised under the heading of "ambizione." Ambition is linked to a taste for luxury: since luxury is defined as the superfluous (Cajmi, 1865–1867/1869, p. 15), ambition is seen as a desire to live above one's station, and

16 Gioja's name is mentioned in the next chapter on luxury, p. 15, precisely in the context of his economic studies.

this inevitably means overreaching one's finances. As a result, ambition is evaluated as a vice: Cajmi puts it at same level with "vanità" ["vanity,"] "orgoglio" ["pride,"] "rivalità" ["rivalry,"] and "invidia" ["envy"] (1865–1867/1869, p. 16). He pities the family that is buying the superfluous whilst it has nothing to "accendere il focolare o ammanire la mensa" ["lit the fire or set the table with"] (1865–1867/1869, p. 16). For Pellegrino, "gli ambiziosi e vanitosi giovinetti" ["the pretentious[17] and vain young men"] who show off a watch, a pendent, a new tie, deserve "disprezzo e compassione" ["disdain and compassion"] as they are only "povere bolle di sapone che un leggier soffio fa scoppiare" ["poor soap bubbles, exploding with a gentle puff"] (1870, p. 84). Recalling her own schooldays, Fiorentina quotes the caretaker who commented on pupils wearing luxury items: "'Chi sa che stiramenti allo stomaco!' borbottava, con un sorrisetto arguto […]." ["'Who knows how these stomachs are rumbling!' she mumbled, with a tiny sly grin"] 1915/1918, p. 80]. Fiorentina can only wearily observe that, in the mean time, ambition is spreading with "passi da gigante" ["giant steps"] (1915/1918, p. 79):

> E questo, purtroppo, vien fatto di pensare oggi, quando passa accanto uno sciame garrulo di giovinette in ghingheri, dietro cui talvolta s'affanna l'ombra pallida della madre che, tra le pieghe fonde del viso, lascia leggere qualcosa: intanto che non è nutrita come ne avrebbe bisogno. ["Unfortunately, this comes to mind nowadays when you come across a chirping swarm of youngsters all dolled up, followed, sometimes, by the pale shadow of an exhausted mother, who, in between the deep wrinkles of her face, gives you to read something: to begin with, that she is not eating as much as she should."] (Fiorentina, 1915/1918, p. 80)

17 We use this adjective to render the historically negative connotation of the term. In a historical dictionary, the Tommaseo-Bellini, 1861, retrieved from www.tommaseobellini.it, the lemma "ambizioso" contains the observation that the term can have a positive meaning, but only "abusivamente" "in an abusive manner" (*ad vocem*).

The woman's wrinkles reveal a daughter who, "ineducata" ["uncivilised,"] "senza cuore" ["heartless,"] imposes sacrifices on her mother (Fiorentina, 1915/1918, p. 80). Fiorentina's demand? "E intanto procurate che vostra madre non manchi del necessario" ["meanwhile make sure your mother does not lack in what is necessary"] (1915/1918, p. 80). The girls should also know the value of money and start saving. Clemente Rossi bans "capriccietti" ["little whims"] (1878/1921, p. 150) because "ricche stoffe spengono il fuoco della cucina" ["expensive fabrics put out the fire in the kitchen"] (1878/1921, p. 151). He warns for small debts, because "dal poco, mie care, si passa al molto" ["from small amounts, my dear girls, you move to big amounts"] (1878/1921, p. 151). Fornari's *galateo,* addressed to little girls, includes an edifying play on the dangers of ambition (1888, pp. 24–41), closely followed by a short narrative in the 1st person by a woman who ended up poor because, orphan, she sacrificed everything to pay for a luxury lifestyle, even her mother's jewels (1888, pp. 43–47). Although Rossi, Fiorentina and Fornari address girls, the condemnation of overspending is not gendered. Pellegrino (see above) only addresses boys and another chapter on ambition appears in Cajmi (1865–1867/1869, pp. 80–83) whose grandchildren consist of a boy and two girls.

5 Conclusion

Our attempt at applying a metapragmatic approach developed for the study of politeness values in politeness meta discourse on sections dedicated to fashion in conduct books has demonstrated that fashion rules, just like politeness rules, tend to be accompanied by moral justifications. These prescriptive sources treat the presentation of the body in public as an act rich in consequences for subsequent moral evaluations of the reader by the public. The link between fashion and moral values is constant and also consistent, whether embedded in a secular morality, as is Gioja's utilitarianism, or a mainly re-

ligious one, typical of later texts. This explains why so many sources disagree with the proverb "the habit does not make the monk" and suggest a version without the negation. As a result, we have been able to reconstruct a rather homogeneous body of rules and values. The biggest difference we found was between rules regarding the morning ritual and the remaining rules: personal hygiene and the use of well laundered clothes are presented in an absolute way, as the degree of one's outer cleanliness is considered a gauging rod to measure one's overall purity and candour: more external purity means more internal purity. The remaining rules, whether for body adornment, dress choice and fashion are defined in a relative way, that is, they are based on the search for a golden mean (indicating modesty, simplicity, common sense, seriousness, usefulness) between sinful extremes of investing too much time in one's public appearance (vanity, frivolity) and not enough time (avarice, laziness). The right dress choice is deemed to be the one that is appropriate to one's social condition, but also age, gender, profession, time and place… The right time to copy a fashion trend is when the overall majority has started to follow it. However, the edifying arguments are closely linked to socio-economic concerns: the recommendations to use abundant water and soap can be explained by the fact that these are cheap measures, which can go a long way to achieve respectability, prove diligence in the poor and mark them out as deserving. Vice versa, ignoring your appearance can lead to an evaluation of laziness, whereas excessive spending and frivolity is banned in the context of hunger, debt and financial ruin. Both negative extremes lead to poverty. The positive values such as diligence and parsimony show that fashion morality is seen as a means to self-improvement and a way to avoid poverty for the petty bourgeoisie. The fashion industry, as discussed in Gioja and Cajmi, receives the same positive evaluation: it creates jobs and helps people to avoid poverty. In respect to nowadays discussion on slow fashion, this is an interesting and clearly distinct find, as the need for sustainability is predominantly justified with values relating to self-transcendence as altruism, empathy, compassion. In terms of Schwartz et al.'s (2012) classification of basic human values, the nineteenth-century fashion values are considered personal values, they are ego-centered, while the values involved in slow fashion are part of social, other-centered, values.

Although we took great care to only work with sources that enjoyed several reprints (Gioja and Chiavarino are true bestsellers, with respectively 46 and 10 editions up until 1920),[18] it is true that the moralizing discourse on fashion is directed at a very specific segment of the population, the lower middle class. Overall, the middle classes were a small part of the Italian population – in 1881, the Italian electorate (which excludes the working class but includes the nobility) amounts to 2% of the population (Meriggi, 1989, p. 171) – and therefore arguably this kind of advice cannot be generalized to all layers of society. It is true that conduct books were used in schools, which had a very mixed public, but many of the poorest children, especially in southern and rural areas, were not sent to school.

6 Further research

To overcome this limitation of the study, it could prove useful to make a comparison with the fashion discourse in the etiquette genre, which makes a successful appearance in the *Belle époque* and addresses a different segment of the population. Such a comparison would a) help to fully appreciate the unique moral "coding" of fashion in conduct books, but b) it would also shed light on the gradual erosion of a moral discourse on fashion, as many etiquette books claim to be dealing with conventions and not values. Unlike conduct books, etiquette books are fully commercial enterprises addressing the women of the established bourgeoisie and the lower aristocracy. The precepts centre around the figure of the lady, who engages in an

18 However, Chiavarino's conduct book was in print until 1960.

active social life typical of high society: gala dinners, tennis luncheons, garden parties at court, to name but a few. Importantly, the structure of the regulation is changing: general rules are lacking as these recurrent contexts are treated as scenarios, with very specific rules covering every tiny step of the script: etiquette is treated as un *cerimoniale di convenzione* "a ceremonial of conventions," a fixed set of pre-negotiated rules. The explicit connection between rules and values is often lacking: mainly rules have to be followed simply because they represent common usage.

The same orientation applies to fashion. Advice on fashion is plentiful: it follows the different stages of a woman's life and, within those stages, it depends on the activity she is doing: high society members change clothes several times a day. A context where rules are particularly copious is mourning wear: etiquette books offer lengthy advice on which fabrics, colours and jewels are suitable for full and half-mourning. Similarly, instructions for the bridal trousseau and for wedding wear are always very detailed. The main justification for this bonanza of fashion advice is to be found, not as much in moral values (although they are not completely disappearing), but rather in concerns for social distinction: the lady's clothes are truly a status symbol (on values in Italian etiquette books, see Paternoster, 2019). She advertises her husband's social status and wealth and it is important she never looks as if she were belonging to the nouveau riche, whose recently acquired wealth causes them to be guilty of bad, that is, ostentatious, taste. One example will suffice. Caterina Pigorini Beri, author of *Le buone maniere. Libro per tutti,* 1893/1908, fiercely attacks *il lusso falso* "fake luxury" in the parlour: fake lace, fake earthenware, fake bronze ware, and fake flowers are "un falso lusso di borghese indomenicato", a fake luxury of the bourgeois in his Sunday best, "the laughingstock" of people who understand "true elegance and true distinction" (1893/1908, p. 55). With this quote, we have come full circle. Whilst in conduct books the worker wearing his Sunday best represents moral dignity, in etiquette books the bourgeois in Sunday best is stripped from respectability: he does not know how to choose a proper outfit because his status as nouveau riche causes him to overdo it (*indomenicato* has indeed a negative connotation of pomposity).[19]

With etiquette books, the social range of the reference public is changing quite dramatically and so is the type of regulation, which is starting to evolve away from justifications rooted in moral values. Etiquette books, popular on both sides of the Atlantic, could prove a valuable link in studying the transformation from historical fashion morality to fashion freedom, bearing in mind that our own recent history, has seen the reverse, the reintroduction of fashion morality. In this context, we hope that our discussion of moral values can contribute to the study of values involved in the debate on "ethical" fashion.

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19 For criticism of the nouveau riche, see Alfonso Bergando's chapter *Usanze antisignorili* "anti-gentlemanly customs," 1881/1882, pp. 177–183.

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European luxury fashion brand advertising and marketing relating to nostalgia

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Abstract
This research seeks to examine how European luxury fashion brands use nostalgia in their advertising and marketing, and the benefits of using nostalgia by analyzing selected adverts from Vogue magazine. The research adopts Narrative Transportation Theory, aims to create a model which develops Van Laer, de Ruyter, Viscanti and Wentzels' (2014) "Extended Transportation-Imagery Model", and provides managerial implications. Qualitative content analysis of imagery was conducted to analyze 60 adverts of five luxury fashion brands between 2010–2016. This research offers a different product category to investigate for nostalgia literature: luxury fashion brands' advertising, a different cultural context: European luxury fashion brands, and examines luxury fashion brand characteristics within the adverts' narratives by semiotics discipline. Research identifies how nostalgia theme was used in these adverts, provides an understanding among the themes, and adverts' analysis in terms of luxury brand characteristics, narrative, and semiotics.

Keywords
Luxury fashion advertising, luxury brand characteristics, nostalgia, brand heritage, emotional branding, semiotics, narrative transportation theory

1 Introduction

The luxury market usually associated with exclusivity, and privilege which also provides a lifestyle to the customer, has been a growing sector over the years; even the global recession is not an obstacle for this market growth which overall exceeded € 1 trillion in 2016 (Bain & Company, 2016). Specifically, personal luxury fashion goods "ballooned to more than € 250 billion in 2016, more than tripling over the past 20 years" (Bain & Company, 2016, p. 5). Advertising of luxury fashion products has been crucial for luxury brands since it triggers this market growth by increasing brand awareness.

Fashion advertising in research has been discussed as not a separate section of advertising. However, it is different than regular advertising since fashion advertising includes, and uses specific techniques such as shock advertising (Andersson, Hedelin, Nilsson, & Welander, 2004), and extraordinary and discrepant images (Phillips & McQuarrie, 2011). Furthermore, luxury fashion advertising has content, and techniques, which are more concerned with the aesthetics, tonality, and narrative (Flueckiger, 2009). Common characteristics of luxury fashion brands are focused on a distinct brand identity: country of origin, heritage, and craftsmanship: role of the designer (Hines & Bruce, 2007). Thus the difference in advertising approach of luxury fashion products occurs as a necessity for representing luxury products in an appropriate way by emphasizing exclusivity, rarity, and brand heritage characteristics (Okonkwo, 2007), however also focusing on the experience by the aim of selling the experience as a lifestyle (Hansen & Wanke, 2011). While luxury advertising represents a lifestyle experience (Flueckiger, 2009), it also includes traditional, and cultural symbolic values (Freire, 2014) which are different, and specific to each luxury brand generated in advertising by using specific types of nostalgia: personal, historical (Stern, 1992a), or collective (Baker & Kennedy, 1994) as a theme to persuade the customer via reminiscing his/her past. Nostalgia generated in advertising invokes familiar-

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ity (Van Laer et al., 2014), so that the audience empathizes with the content. This process leads to narrative transportation (Green & Brock, 2000) of the audience which results in persuasion of the customer. This research seeks to answer the research question: How do European Luxury Fashion Brands use Nostalgia in their Advertising, and Marketing? Furthermore, the research aims to analyze how European luxury fashion brands use nostalgia as a theme in their advertising and marketing, and to analyze the benefits of using nostalgia theme in these adverts. The research has three objectives: firstly, to identify, and analyze various European luxury brands' advertising relating to nostalgia from Vogue magazine by a content analysis of imagery. Secondly to create a model which develops Van Laer et al.'s (2014) model which is an extended version of Narrative Transportation Imagery Model (Green & Brock, 2002), and finally to provide managerial implications beyond the theory for advertisers, and marketers in terms of promoting nostalgia for luxury fashion advertising field.

Nostalgia research commonly focused on brand advertising of comfort food (Stern, 1992a). There is a gap in the nostalgia research in luxury fashion brands' advertising. Furthermore, the research aims to fill the gap in research suggestions: to explore other cultural contexts in terms of nostalgia and heritage, and to research a brand's heritage via content analysis in brand's advertising (Merchant & Rose, 2013). Finally, the gap in the research of Kim, Lloyd, and Cervellon (2016) by analyzing the luxury brand characteristics in the advertising narratives in depth. Thus, this research has an original value since it fills the gap in literature by offering a different product category to investigate for nostalgia literature: luxury fashion brands' advertising, and from a different cultural context: European luxury fashion brands, and brands which target the European market. Furthermore, it aims to analyze luxury brand characteristics in further detail. The persuasion power of luxury fashion advertising is impressive, and different from regular advertising. That is why the rationale of conducting this research comes from the curiosity, and wish to analyze luxury fashion advertising relating to nostalgia in great detail which promotes, and triggers luxury fashion market's success. While the research aims to contribute to narrative transportation, and nostalgia literature in terms of advertising; it also draws managerial implications for marketers, and advertisers.

2 Literature review

2.1 Luxury brand characteristics

There are various core characteristics that a fashion brand must obtain to achieve an authentic luxury brand status. Okonkwo (2007, p. 105) describes these characteristics of luxury fashion brands' anatomy: "Innovative, creative, unique products; a heritage of craftsmanship; a distinct brand identity; high visibility; premium pricing; emotional appeal; a global reputation; consistent delivery of premium quality; exclusivity in goods production, and tightly controlled distribution". These characteristics are crucial for luxury fashion brands because they are the source of power, which provide a distinctive brand value for the brand, and emotional attachment for the customer. Another study relating to luxury fashion brands suggests the following six elements: "Excellent quality, high price, scarcity & uniqueness, aesthetics & polysensuality, ancestral heritage & personal history, and superfluousness as key characteristics" (Dubois et al., 2001, cited in Hines & Bruce, 2007, p. 131).

Country of origin "provides a national identity and attitude, associated with the brand" (Hines & Bruce, 2007, p. 136). While this distinct national identity enables luxury brands to distinguish its identity among its rivals in the competitive luxury fashion market, it also increases brand awareness by attracting customer attention via familiarity of historical background. In addition "association with a country of origin that has an especially strong reputation as a source of excellence in the relevant product category" (Nueno & Quelch, 1998, p. 63), is a sign of

product quality. Another key characteristic: "Heritage of the brand and the history associated with its founder and its craftsmanship are built into the luxury brand" (Nueno & Quelch, 1998, cited in Hines & Bruce, 2007, p. 132). Particularly brand heritage refers to "a dimension of a brand's identity found in its track record, longevity, core values, use of symbols and particularly in the organizational belief that its history is important" (Urde et al., 2007, p. 4). Heritage, and craftsmanship do not only tell a story of a luxury brand's history, and guarantees longevity; but also points out the rarity, and exclusivity of the luxury products. Furthermore "the retention of heritage has the ability to create nostalgia and credibility for a brand, and is often correlated to the heritage of the country of origin" (Fionda & Moore, 2009, p. 352). As a result of these crucial characteristics: "The luxury fashion brand becomes a lifestyle statement that permeates across other aspects than apparel" (Hines & Bruce, 2007, p. 138). Furthermore, examining these characteristics in luxury fashion advertising narrative is a subject which requires further investigation because of the lack of research which combines these two areas.

2.2 Luxury fashion advertising and marketing

Even though research in advertising is very broad; research in fashion advertising is surprisingly narrow, and does not go beyond examining fashion imagery as an advertising type which mainly does not include text but includes extraordinary, and discrepant visuals (Phillips & McQuarrie, 2011), has an aim to shock the audience with contents such as violence (Andersson et al., 2004), and is shaped through aesthetical concerns (Wallerstein, 1998). On the other hand, fashion imagery's social impact on women, and society has been researched in many perspectives. For instance, its impacts such as stereotyping idealized women (Stokrocki, 1988, cited in Phillips and McQuarrie, 2011), including thinness: Hunger, and unsmiling models associated with looks called heroin chic, and junkie look (Wallerstein, 1998), and representation of alternative sexualities (Oswald, 2010) in fashion advertising in order to increase brand awareness, and target a broader audience.

However, luxury fashion brand advertising is more concerned with protecting the exclusivity of luxury products (Hines & Bruce, 2007), aesthetics, and narrative (Flueckiger, 2009) of the advert, presenting the product in a story since it is not completely product focused, but mainly experience focused. Luxury adverts provide an abstractness (Hansen & Wanke, 2011), and "mythical history" (Freire, 2014) of the luxury brand to the audience. The aim of selling the experience that a consumer might have by possessing the product rather than selling the product is crucial for a luxury fashion brand to achieve in their advertising approach.

"In the luxury domain in recent years, a certain type of advertisement has emerged that relies almost exclusively on the evocation of pure sensations" (Flueckiger, 2009, p. 196). Sensations provoke the audience to connect, and emphasize with the structure of the adverts. Such structure includes characters, product, plot, background, narrative, and music which lead to sensations as an outcome. Sensations are supported by "aesthetic features of style such as depth of field, diffusion, colour or light enhance the spectator's sensorial response" (Flueckiger, 2009, p. 196). Different than fashion advertising, luxury advertising is close to lifestyle advertising since the product, and its functional information are slightly mentioned.

On the other hand, Hansen, and Wanke (2011) argue the abstractness of luxury. Abstractness in their research refers to both the distance between the non-target audience, and the luxury product physically and psychologically. The distance between the product, and non-target audience occurs physically since "luxury is something inessential but conductive to pleasure and comfort or something expensive or hard to obtain" (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000, cited in Hansen & Wanke, 2011, p. 790). Thus luxury is only obtained by a limited audience, so that the regular customer feels both physically, and psychologically distanced from the world of

luxury. The research also points out that "advertisers tend to use more abstract language when they describe their luxury products" (Hansen & Wanke, 2011, p. 794). Since the product representation includes exclusivity, rarity, and a premium priced luxury product, the language also reflects these characteristics. While luxury advertising represents a lifestyle experience; it also includes traditional, and cultural values which are different, and specific to each luxury brand. "Luxury advertising is particularly image-dependent and vehicle their messages by interpreting representations and cultural symbols supposed to be known by the consumer" (Freire, 2014, p. 2668). Therefore, emphasizing, and representing roots, and historical values of these brands via advertising is crucial as a message. Adopting symbols within the adverts serves for this purpose.

2.3 Semiotics

Semiotics discipline enables this research to make solid comments on symbols, and cultural references located in the adverts. "Semiotics is a discipline that provides a structure for studying and analyzing how signs function within a particular environment" (Zakia & Nadin, 1987, p. 5). Within a structure provided by semiotics, commentary on the signs gains value. According to the first semiotician Ferdinand de Saussure, signs had 2 elements in their structure: the signifier, and the signified. The signifier refers to the part of communication which carries the message, and the signified refers to which is communicated by the signifier (Hall, 2012). Fashion, and luxury fashion advertising frequently adopt semiotics since they use various symbols. Especially luxury fashion advertising which is more concerned with the narrative (Flueckiger, 2009), having an abstract representation (Hansen & Wanke, 2011), representing brands' heritage, and mythical history (Freire, 2014).

2.4 Narrative transportation

Narrative in advertising is crucial for a luxury brand. It is not only a way to introduce their product but also a way to express the brand's identity, culture, heritage and lifestyle. "The power of narratives to change beliefs has never been doubted and has always been feared" (Green and Brock, 2000, p. 701). For a narrative to be powerful it is important to be able to transport the customer via empathy, and imagination. Narrative transportation theory constitutes the core of this research. Gerrig (1993) described transportation as an experience which a traveler (a metaphor for a reader), moves away from his world of origin by the experience of reading (travel), and this experience changes the traveler. Although Gerrig's research correctly identifies transportation, it fails to consider consequences, and components of this experience. However later Green and Brock (2000), further developed Gerrig's description of narrative transportation; defining it as a convergent mental process which might occur as a result of both fictional or non-fictional narratives. By focusing, transportation causes the reader to lose information of real world, and changes the reader's beliefs & attitudes based on the narrative as consequences. Transportation makes the persuasion possible by reducing cognitive responding since it decreases counterarguments, negative thoughts, and makes the narrative look like a real life experience. Green and Brock (2000) established that transportation can be achieved by not only reading but also by listening, and viewing the content without a written material, while Escalas (2007) also argues that narrative transportation is possible via adverts if the adverts lead the customer to construct a narrative. Thus it explains the transportation power of fashion advertising which do not have texts.

Phillips and McQuarrie (2010) identify how the grotesque imagery can provide narrative transportation to the customer. The authors outline five modes of engagement which make persuasion possible. Even though their research connects fashion advertising to narrative transportation in grotesque imagery; it fails to consider luxury fashion brands' anatomy, and characteristics. Van Laer, De Ruyet, Visconti & Wetzels (2014) provide an extended version of narrative transportation theory by developing a model about its anteced-

ents, and consequences. Lastly, Kim et al. (2016) introduced luxury fashion branding to narrative transportation by researching narrative-transportation storylines in luxury brand advertising, focusing on themes which emerged from their interviewees' descriptions. However, further research in this area is necessary, since their research is limited to the themes they identified, and it does not offer an insight into the characteristics of luxury brands.

2.5 Nostalgia

Nostalgia used in advertising stimulates empathy with the customer via his past, and the customer experiences narrative transportation by the nostalgic advertising narrative. "Marketers can promote a brand's heritage by evoking the brand's history and/or a brand's origins through vicarious nostalgia based advertising" (Merchant & Rose, 2013, p. 2624). Therefore; narrative transportation, brand heritage, and nostalgia theme in the adverts' narratives are linked together to persuade the customer.

Nostalgia is a yearning for yesterday (Davis, 1979). "A sentimental or bittersweet yearning for an experience, product, or service from the past" (Baker &Kennedy, 1994, p. 169). Marketing, and advertising practices have started to include nostalgic themes increasingly in adverts since the 90's, therefore it is a relatively new application. Stern (1992a), identifies two types of nostalgia: personal, and historical. Personal nostalgia refers to idealizing "the personally remembered past" (Stern, 1992a, p. 16) while historical nostalgia refers to desire for returning to a time in the past before the audience was born. This is supported, and further developed by Baker and Kennedy (1994) who identified three types of nostalgia: real, stimulated, and collective. Real nostalgia is similar to personal nostalgia, its stimuli can evoke vivid memories since it is experience based. Stimulated nostalgia which is similar to historical nostalgia, refers to "yearning for the indirectly experienced past" (Baker & Kennedy, 1994, p. 171). Finally, collective nostalgia which is a contribution to Stern's categorization, refers to "bittersweet yearning for the past which represents a culture, a generation, or a nation" (Baker & Kennedy, 1994, p. 171). Even though nostalgia has been increasingly used as a theme in advertising and marketing; research of nostalgia's impacts on advertising is limited and relatively new. Havlena and Holak (1991, 1998) as well as Stern (1992a, 1992b) are the first authors who focused on nostalgia from a marketer, and advertiser's perspective rather than nostalgia research in psychology (Daniels, 1985), and sociology (Davis, 1979) fields.

Stern (1992a) identified benefits of using personal, and historical nostalgia in advertising separately since they are appropriate for certain products from different categories. The author claims that personal nostalgia is more useful for "cocooning or nesting products that are socially inconspicuous, but that provide the benefit of comfortability" (Stern, 1992a, p. 19). For instance: comfort food. Since these products speak to target audience's self-concept and is associated with their past: childhood, and home. However historical nostalgia suits representation of products which are more concerned with "status claims, and appeals to the consumer's ideal social self-concept" (Stern, 1992a, p. 19). Whereas Stern overlooked nostalgia's emotional impacts as a consequence of advertising, Havlena and Holak (1991) focused on benefits of nostalgia in advertising in terms of evoking positive emotions related to the customer's past. "Advertising for products may consciously evoke past associations and memories or create or recall positive affective responses" (Havlena & Holak, 1991, p. 325). It is crucial for a nostalgia themed advertising to be able to filter negative thoughts that a costumer might possibly have about his/her past. The authors identified three possible cases which might occur: having neutral, negative or positive memories, and emotions about the past.

Merchant and Rose (2013), provide knowledge about the effects of historical nostalgia in advertising on brand heritage. Research reveals "the relationship between nostalgia proneness, and brand heritage highlights the importance of ef-

fective advertisements in creating and enhancing brand heritage and deepening brand attachment" (Merchant & Rose, 2013, p. 2624). Further research suggestions offer exploring other cultural contexts in terms of heritage, and nostalgia via content analysis (Merchant & Rose, 2013). Research for nostalgia in advertising, and marketing is limited, and open to further investigation especially in different product areas, and brand categories. There is a gap in the nostalgia research in luxury fashion advertising which requires further research since heritage, and origins of luxury fashion brands are important characteristics; emphasizing brand heritage via advertising with nostalgia theme is crucial for a distinctive luxury brand identity. Therefore, consistent with the further research suggestions, this research aims to investigate European luxury fashion brand advertising relating to nostalgia, and how these brands use nostalgia theme in their marketing, and advertising.

3 Methodology

3.1 Research question

How do European Luxury Fashion Brands use Nostalgia in their Advertising, and Marketing?

3.2 Philosophy

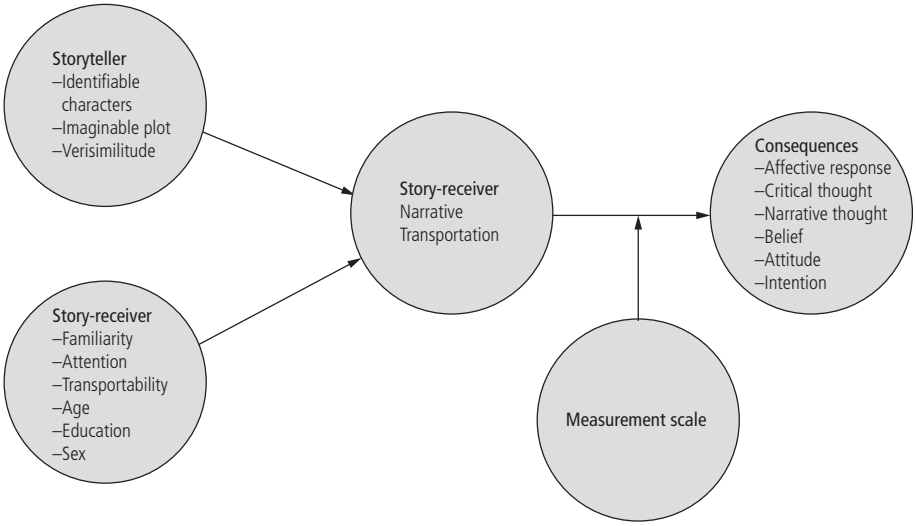
The research adopts social constructivism philosophy which is a worldview where "individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work" (Creswell, 2014, p. 8). The reason for adopting social constructivism is that this philosophy enables the researcher to develop subjective, and multiple meanings from their experiences (Creswell, 2014).

3.3 Theoretical framework

Narrative Transportation Theory, constitutes the core of this research which provides a framework in order to understand, and investigate the narratives of the selected luxury fashion advertising relating to nostalgia. Accordingly, an extended version of the Transportation-Imagery Model (Green & Brock, 2002), established by Van Laer et al. (2014) was used as a model to follow since the advanced model provides specific antecedents, and consequences of narrative transportation in great detail from both the storyteller's, and story-receiver's perspective. The authors confirmed by their research that these antecedents affect, and increase narrative transportation. As consequences; audience's beliefs, attitudes, and purchase intentions change since narrative transportation increases affective responses, and decreases cognitive responses and critical thoughts (Van Laer et al., 2014). The research focuses on the storyteller components.

As seen in *Figure 1,* storyteller antecedents are identifiable characters, imaginable plot, and verisimilitude. "Identifiable characters affect narrative transportation because story receivers vicariously experience characters' beliefs and emotions, empathize with them, and become engrossed in the story" (Slater & Rouner, 2002, cited in Van Laer et al., 2014, p. 802). Imaginable plot makes narrative transportation possible since "stories resemble real-life experiences" (Green, 2006, cited in Van Laer et al., 2014, p. 802). Finally, verisimilitude refers to lifelikeness of the story which persuades audience that the story has a possibility to occur in real life. These storyteller components were examined as themes by a content analysis of imagery in luxury fashion adverts relating to nostalgia. Because identifiable characters whom the receiver can empathize with; imaginable plot which also proposes a lifestyle to the receiver; and verisimilitude are the themes which the receiver can empathize with by reminiscing his/her past, and can be found in nostalgia related advertising. Familiarity story receiver antecedent was also mentioned in this research, since it refers to "the degree to which a story receiver has prior knowledge about or personal experience with the story topic or genre" (Green, 2004, cited in Van Laer, 2014, p. 803). Nostalgia provokes familiarity which leads to narrative transportation of the receiver. Provoked nostalgia in this case of familiarity might be personal,

Figure 1: Extended Transportation-Imagery Model



Adapted from Van Laer et al., 2014, p. 801

historical, or collective. Nostalgia type depends on the receiver's past experience, and triggers familiarity.

3.4 Research method: content analysis

Definition of content analysis has been changed over the history since the development process goes on. According to Holsti (1969), content analysis is a technique, which enables making inferences by identifying specific characters of messages objectively and systematically. Holsti (1965), groups 15 uses of content analysis into three main categories. The category: "To describe trends in communication content" is chosen. This category helps investigating the differences, and similarities among the findings; since content analysis is a useful technique for analyzing trends, and patterns within the text. The analysis was done in 2016, and to ensure cross-coder reliability; the results, and themes were crosschecked with a supervisor, and a group session activity in class.

3.4.1 Semiotics

Research adopts semiotics discipline to analyze 20 luxury fashion adverts with prominent symbols out of 60 selected adverts. A table for each advert was made which was inspired by Roland Barthes' (1964) *Signifier and Signified Table* and semiotics table of Freire (2014) in terms of structure.

Sample: For the qualitative content analysis of imagery, 60 print adverts from Italian Vogue between 2010–2016 were examined. The adverts of 5 luxury fashion brands targeting the European market were analyzed. Dolce & Gabbana, Gucci, Louis Vuitton, Chanel, and Tommy Hilfiger brands were chosen; because their adverts are located in the first main pages of Vogue magazines, and they use nostalgia as a theme in their advertising the most since these brands have a strong brand heritage.

4 Findings

This research used content analysis of imagery to identify nostalgia in European luxury fashion brands' adverts. Firstly, descriptions of images were made; key themes, and words were formed as nodes in content analysis. Secondly, the software NVIVO was adopted to import the adverts, highlight, and code the adverts' descrip-

tions. NVIVO is an advanced qualitative research software which enables the user to import, and analyze documents, images, and audios according to themes via coding (Qrinternational, 2015). The highlighted content from the descriptions were analyzed. The results were examined to understand nostalgia's use, and benefits in luxury fashion advertising. Vogue was used for this purpose since the magazine is published internationally, has a high circulation rate, and reputation for advertising various prestigious luxury brands over the history (Conde Nast, 2016). Vogue issues (72 issues) were examined to choose desired nostalgia related adverts. Luxury fashion adverts from selected issues between 2010–2016 were scanned, and imported. Two adverts per brand, and year. 60 adverts in total were examined to ensure parity. The reason for this timeframe is the increase observed in the use of nostalgia theme in luxury fashion advertising in this period. To discover the trends in the communication content, the descriptions of the scanned 60 adverts were coded according to the key themes and words. Text Search Query, and Word Frequency Query features were used by searching the selected words among the initial analysis data. Key themes, and words were selected again for the text search query option. Accordingly, the most frequently used key themes, and words related to nostalgia for each luxury fashion brand were found. Afterwards, a new version of major key themes, and words were revealed (See Table 1). The reason for narrowing down the number was to maintain the focus of this research: nostalgia.

Table 1: Final key themes and words

Final key themes (Categories)	Final key words: for each key theme
Nostalgia	Experience
	Memories
	Old
	Vivid
	Past
	Birth
	Vintage
	Antiques
	Bitter-sweet
	Home-sick
	Souvenir
Culture	National Food
	Music
	Tradition
	Origin
	Home
	Family
	Dinner
	Children
	Movie reference
History	Historical Buildings
	Events
	Ceremony
	Childhood
	Celebration
	Historical
Heritage	Personality
	Longevity
	Rarity
	Craftsmanship
Lifestyle	Travel
	Escape
	Youth
	Holidays
	Friends
	Exclusivity
	Freedom
	College (University)
Fantasy	Dreams
	Exotic
	Empathy
Aesthetics	Symbols
	Abstractness
	Verisimilitude (Life-Likeness)

4.1 Analysis of adverts

4.1.1 Louis Vuitton adverts

The main themes are travel, freedom, and escape. The models represent youth, natural beauty; their attitudes are fearless, and adventurous. However, the themes mentioned are represented by different symbols. In 2012-September advert (Table 2) (See Wwd.com, 2012) the symbol which represents travel, escape, and freedom is "an old train"; for 2014-April advert (Buro247.me, 2014): a safari car, and a desert background. For 2012-December advert (Vogue.es, 2012) is a red hot air balloon, and Louvre Museum. Another common point is Louis Vuitton garments, bags, and suitcases located in these adverts. They represent heritage quality, craftsmanship, exclusivity, and brand history as luxury brand characteristics. Their symbolic meaning is that they provide a "support mechanism" for the models in their

Table 2: LV advertisement 2012 september

Personage/Object (Icon/Signifier)	Symbolic Meaning (Signified) and Narrative	Icon's contribution to luxury brand characteristics	Icon's contribution to Nostalgia Literature
Young Models	Youth, beauty, fearless, adventurous, freedom	Beauty, brand identity, rebellious	Youth, dreams, abstractness
Louis Vuitton Bags	Travel, holidays	Authenticity, quality, innovation, heritage, craftsmanship	Traveling: Escaping from the present to the past, home-sick
Old Train Background	Travel, escape, freedom, nostalgic, timeless, historical	Brand history, origins, roots, lifestyle	Nostalgic, antiques, old

journey, and adventure. These symbols, and themes make the narrative stronger, and abstract. Furthermore, they contribute to nostalgia literature since they represent travel, which is an escape from the present life. The reason for that could be longing for, and missing one's past, and old memories. Nostalgic, vintage inspired garments, and suitcases; backgrounds such as an old train, and Louvre Museum (2012-December) in these adverts are other evidences for valuing the past. Such backgrounds, especially Louvre Museum are historical, and cultural references which represent the past, and origins of the luxury brand.

4.1.2 Dolce & Gabbana adverts

The main themes are family, home, Italian tradition, and culture. The models represent natural beauty, traditional Italian women, and confidence. For the advert 2010-September (Porcelainista.net, 2014) the model (Madonna) represents a traditional Italian mother. She is in D&G garments which have a traditional Italian style. They represent brand heritage, origin, and craftsmanship. The background is a traditional Italian family house which has nostalgic decoration inspired by D&G's origin: Sicily. The baby is a symbol for childhood, innocence, and family that represents innovation as a luxury brand characteristic; family, future, and birth as nostalgia contributions. The representation of an Italian woman who is bonded to her family, and traditions becomes a powerful narrative, and represents a traditional Italian lifestyle which is nostalgic since it is different from today's Italian lifestyle. In the 2012-January advert (Table 3) (Yatzer.com, 2011), there is a crowded Italian family in front of a traditional Italian house as a background. It is a symbol for home, unity, and tradition. This symbol represents brand heritage, and history as luxury brand characteristics; unity, tradition, and home-sick memories as nostalgia literature contributions. The models are in traditionally designed lace clothes which represent brand heritage, origins: Sicily, and craftsmanship. There is a little boy who is a symbol for childhood, innocence, and freedom. It can be interpreted as innovation as a luxury brand characteristic; future, and freedom as contributions to nostalgia literature. The "white bow" which is on the little boy's suit is a symbol for the event: "first communion" It represents the respect for Italian traditions, and culture as contributions to nostalgia literature; brand's roots, and culture as luxury brand characteristics.

4.1.3 Chanel adverts

The common themes are nostalgia, history, and freedom. Adverts represent the Parisian lifestyle from different time frames. Models represent youth, freedom, confidence, and iconic Parisian beauty and style. They are in iconic Chanel garments which emphasize brand identity, heritage, and craftsmanship. The advert: 2015-February (Conversationsabouther.net, 2014) takes place in front of the iconic Parisian café: Café de Flore. This café is a symbol for the classical Parisian café culture, and lifestyle. It represents brand history, and Parisian roots as luxury brand characteristics. The bag in the advert is a symbol for escaping, and traveling. It represents escaping from the present, going back home, and being home-sick as contributions to nostalgia literature.

Table 3: D&G advertisement 2012 january

Personage/Object (Icon/Signifier)	Symbolic Meaning (Signified) and Narrative	Icon's contribution to luxury brand characteristics	Icon's contribution to Nostalgia Literature
Young Models	Youth, traditional beauty	Youth, traditional beauty, perfection	Youth, freedom, life-like
Walk-on: Family	Family, home, unity, tradition, family gathering (for church)	Brand history, heritage, origins, roots	Unity, home, home-sick, tradition, memories
Little Boy	Childhood, innocence, freedom, future	Innovation, future, freedom	Home, family, childhood, future
White Bow (on little boy)	Church event: First Communion	Respect for traditions, and brand's roots: Italy	Tradition, culture, respect
D&G Garments	Traditional Italian style, origins	Brand heritage, craftsmanship, history, brand identity	Heritage, personality
Italian House Background	Family, home, unity, culture, Italian tradition and lifestyle	Brand history, origins, roots, Italian lifestyle	Tradition, culture, family, home-sick, memories

Table 4: Chanel advertisement 2012 november

Personage/Object (Icon/Signifier)	Symbolic Meaning (Signified) and Narrative	Icon's contribution to luxury brand characteristics	Icon's contribution to Nostalgia Literature
Young Model	Youth, freedom, confidence, fearless, beautiful, nostalgic	Brand identity, beauty, personality, rarity	Youth, dreams, abstractness, past
18th Century Costume	A reference to the 18th Century in Paris	Authentic, longevity, brand identity, brand origins, crafts-manship, exclusivity	Old, antiques, vintage, history, Tradition
Chanel Suit-Jacket	Nostalgic, vintage, old, iconic, antiques, reminds of Coco Chanel the designer	Tradition, craftsmanship, heritage, longevity, brand identity, rarity, personality	Vintage, old, past, antiques, heritage
Palace Background	Historical, reference, origins, Parisian	Brand origins, brand history, heritage, roots, longevity	Historical, old, past, abstractness

Table 5: Gucci advertisement 2012 october

Personage/Object (Icon/Signifier)	Symbolic Meaning (Signified) and Narrative	Icon's contribution to luxury brand characteristics	Icon's contribution to Nostalgia Literature
Young Model	Youth, natural beauty	Brand identity, beauty, personality	Youth, freedom, life-like
Gucci Horsebit Loafers	Recreation of Gucci Horsebit Loafers from 1953	Brand history, heritage, craftsmanship	Vintage, Antiques, past
Record Player and Records	Vintage, antiques, old, memories, souvenir	Brand history, longevity, personality	Vintage, Antiques, memories
Home Background	Family, home, unity	Family lifestyle, comfort	Family, going back home, home-sick, memories

The advert: 2012-November (Table 4) (tatajazzblog.blogspot.com, 2012) has a palace background. The 18th Century inspired costume of the model, and the background with antique possessions, represent the 18th Century in Paris. This era is important for the narrative since it emphasizes the brand's origins. The background, and costumes provide contributions to nostalgia literature since they are inspired from the past, and the French heritage historically.

4.1.4 Gucci Adverts

The advert 2015-July (Businessoffashion.com, 2015) has travel, and escape themes.

The subway is a symbol for escaping from the present, and for freedom which are nostalgia contributions. The bag, and shoes are prominent; they represent brand heritage, and craftsmanship.

The advert: 2012-October (Table 5) (Pinkfishmedia.net, 2012) has home, and family themes. The model is in a family house which represents family, and unity. There are vintage records, and a record player in the background. They represent history, and memories as nostalgia contributions; longevity, and brand history as luxury characteristics. The model is in Gucci Horsebit Loafers which are recreations of the original shoes from 1953. They represent heritage, craftsmanship, and brand history.

4.1.5 Tommy Hilfiger adverts

The advert: 2011-December (Cdn.stylefrizz.com, 2011) has family, and holidays themes. The models in festive Tommy Hilfiger garments represent youth, and freedom. They have a carefree, and exclusive lifestyle. There is an old male model who is the father of the family. He represents guidance to the youth, the past, and unity as nostalgia contributions. There are also children who represent innocence, and future; innovation as luxury brand characteristics, and future and childhood as nostalgia contributions. There is a house background which is decorated for Christmas. It represents family, home, holidays, and unity as nostalgia contributions.

5 Discussion

5.1 Representation of luxury brand characteristics

Luxury brand characteristics: Heritage, craftsmanship, exclusivity, rarity, brand identity, brand origin, and longevity were highlighted in these adverts in the findings. By the strong narrative, and themes; brand origin, and heritage and craftsmanship characteristics were emphasized by representing the brand's country of origin as frequently seen in D&G adverts with the representation of Sicilian inspired lace clothes, and background decoration. Furthermore, in Gucci, and Louis Vuitton adverts; craftsmanship, and product quality especially in terms of leather products were strongly emphasized within the narrative. Since leather products are the iconic products for both of the brands, and for Louis Vuitton leather travel-goods were its starting point-origin. Therefore, the research agrees with "association with a country of origin that has an especially strong reputation as a source of excellence in the relevant product category" (Nueno & Quelch, 1998, p.63). It can be interpreted as the respect to the brand's country of origin. Heritage was the most important characteristic among them since it was frequently used to represent the brand's history. Exclusivity by representing an exclusive lifestyle, and rarity by providing rare luxury products were emphasized commonly as seen in Louis Vuitton, and Chanel adverts. Also quality of the product was strongly emphasized. Furthermore, youth was one of the most frequently used words to describe the models, and children. It can be interpreted as innovation: innovative designs of these brands.

Common points of research in luxury fashion characteristics were a distinct brand identity, country of origin, heritage and craftsmanship (Hines & Bruce, 2007). Furthermore, as Fionda, and Moore (2009) identified heritage characteristic has the ability to create nostalgia, and credibility for the brand; and it is correlated to the brand's country of origin. It is also found in this research since heritage, nostalgia, and country of origin characteristics were inseparable in these adverts. According to Urde et al. (2007), brand heritage refers to core values, use of symbols, and brand history which is evident in the findings of this research suggesting that heritage characteristic was represented via symbols, and values which tell a story about brand history in these adverts. Finally, Kim et al. (2016) introduced luxury fashion branding to narrative transportation by focusing on themes which emerged from their interviews. Their research was limited to these themes. Thus this research fills this gap by analyzing the luxury brand characteristics in the advertising narratives in

depth. According to analysis, luxury brand characteristics were emphasized via certain symbols embedded within the narrative of the advertising. The outcome of the advertising which is strengthened by various luxury brand characteristics provides a lifestyle to the customer. As a result, the brand becomes a lifestyle statement for the observer which makes the brand more than apparel (Hines & Bruce, 2007).

5.2 Luxury fashion advertising

In the findings, the themes structured were nostalgia, culture, history, heritage, lifestyle, fantasy, and aesthetics. The lifestyle theme was frequently used in order to represent exclusive, and various lifestyles specific for each culture such as Parisian, and Italian cultures. Travel, holidays, escape, youth, and freedom were other sub themes used in the adverts along the lifestyle theme. This result is consistent with the suggestion of Flueckiger (2009) related to luxury fashion advertising being strong in narrative, and presenting the product in a story such as a lifestyle. These themes represent a free, adventurous, and exclusive lifestyle to the luxury customers. It can be interpreted as a longing for youth, and a carefree lifestyle since the luxury customers might have a busy lifestyle instead. Thus this research agrees with the reference on the luxury commercials depicting a form of travel which represents "experiences that might have occurred in the younger, more adventurous days of a now successful audience stuck in conventions" (Flueckiger, 2009, p. 206). Thus emotional connection to the advertising might lead to the thought of obtaining a free lifestyle by purchasing, and being a part of these brands. This theme is frequently used in Louis Vuitton adverts. Another key theme: Fantasy was used to represent dreams, and empathy that an observer might have. This theme combined with the lifestyle theme provides an exotic, abstract, and a dream-like world to the audience. Due to these certain themes which represent abstractness, the research partially agrees with the statement of Hansen and Wanke (2011) which identifies luxury fashion advertising as an abstract type of advertising.

According to the findings, and analysis: Heritage theme as mentioned in luxury fashion brand characteristics represent the brand's identity, craftsmanship, longevity, and rarity. Heritage provides an emotional bond to the brand's culture, informs, and makes the observer be a part of the brand's history. That is why this theme was frequently linked to culture, and history themes in these adverts. Culture theme was used to represent customs, and traditions of the brand's country of origin as frequently seen in D&G, and Chanel adverts. They emphasize the importance of family bounds, national tastes, and country of origin. This theme makes the observer feel familiar with the content due to his cultural background, advert's imaginable plot, and identifiable characters as family, so that the luxury brand does not look like a distant, and abstract aspect anymore. Furthermore, the theme history educates the observer in terms of the brand's history, or country of origin's history via using masterpieces as backgrounds such as The Louvre Museum, and Café de Flore in Paris in Louis Vuitton, and Chanel adverts. Knowing the history of the brand makes the observer feel connected to the brand on a personal level. The aesthetics theme includes the symbols, abstractness, and the verisimilitude (life-likeness) aspects. According to these themes, the adverts which included cultural, and nostalgia themes were more life-like which represent a lifestyle, and imaginable plot to the customer while the rest of the adverts had an abstract representation. Symbols were frequently used in these adverts to strengthen the narrative, and the themes mentioned; no matter if they were abstract, or life-like. According to the analysis, symbols have made the narrative more powerful, and provided cultural references. Being concerned with the aesthetics: Symbols, and narrative have made these adverts a form of art and presented emotional content to the customer which leads to more powerful emotional branding, and brand loyalty.

As Flueckiger (2009) suggests in luxury domain, the advertisement relies exclusively on the evocation of pure senses,

aesthetics, and narrative. This research is in keeping with this as, according to the findings, aesthetic values such as symbols, representation of important themes strengthen the narrative, and also these aspects rely on evocation of senses. Furthermore, Hansen, and Wanke (2011) state that the luxury advertising is abstract due to the exclusivity of the products. This research partially agrees on this statement because of the certain symbols, and sometimes abstract narrative and themes such as fantasy, found in these adverts. However certain themes such as culture, and nostalgia provide an emotional connection to the observer due to having a warm, and welcoming representation which are imaginable, and life-like rather than abstract. Therefore, the research also strongly agrees with the statement of Flueckiger (2009) which suggests luxury advertising presents the product in a story such as a lifestyle. Finally, different from the researchers' opinions; this research states that certain themes: Nostalgia, and culture might bond the observer emotionally to the content; and the use of aesthetics makes the adverts a form of art instead of regular informative advertising.

5.3 Nostalgia: how luxury fashion brands use nostalgia as a theme in their advertising

According to the findings, nostalgia theme was frequently used in the selected adverts with the key words: past, vintage, antiques, bitter-sweet, memories, birth, experience, and home-sick. This major theme represents a longing for the past. Consistent with the adverts' analysis, nostalgia theme was frequently used to represent the brand's country of origin's traditional lifestyle, as can be seen in D&G adverts emphasizing Sicily. The main emphasize was on traditional Italian women, family, and lifestyle. It can be interpreted as a respect from the brand to its root, a longing for family, traditions, and traditional Italian lifestyle. Similar to D&G, Tommy Hilfiger adverts adopted nostalgia to represent the importance of family, unity, and home. One usually feels nostalgic when it is time to go back home for holidays, since it is the place where the childhood memories remain. However, in terms of Louis Vuitton adverts, the main theme was travel, and escape due to the brand's travel-goods origin. One desires to travel, or go on holidays when he/she needs a break from his present lifestyle. This can be also interpreted as nostalgia since the person wants to travel, and escape from his present lifestyle since the present lifestyle does not satisfy him. Different from the others; Chanel, and Gucci adverts adopted nostalgia to represent their brand heritage. Using nostalgia theme for emphasizing heritage is powerful for the narrative since it structures a story about the brand's roots, and history. For Chanel, representation of the country of origin's history via constructing narratives inspired from the 18th Century France was a way to use Nostalgia. Gucci adverts focused on vintage Gucci products with nostalgic backgrounds which represented brand heritage, craftsmanship, and product quality.

When the observer experiences the nostalgia themed advertising, the advertising has an emotional impact on him/her via reminding of his past through the nostalgia theme since the plot is imaginable. The impact depends on the observer's past, memories, and the degree of familiarity he/she has with the nostalgia themed advertising content. Emotional bonding is a desired outcome for brands via using emotional branding paradigm. "Emotional branding focuses on brand meanings that interact with consumer lives and inspire their passion, lifestyle, memories, and experiences" (Thompson et al., 2006 cited in Akgün et al., 2013, p. 504). As seen in this research; the emotional content used for emphasizing luxury brand characteristics such as heritage, and themes as nostalgia, build an emotional bond between the brand, and observer which helps building brand attachment, and brand loyalty. "Emotional branding is a consumer-centric, relational, and story-driven approach to forging deep and enduring affective bonds between consumers and brands" (Roberts, 2004 cited in Thompson et al., 2006, p. 50). Due to being a story-driven approach; narratives, and the degree of

empathy and familiarity used in the advertising content to emotionally affect the observer is crucial. Brands should focus on telling stories which inspire their costumers, and these stories should contain a true understanding of the observers' lifestyle, aims, and dreams (Thompson, 2006). Therefore, nostalgia theme also provides benefits for branding, and marketing via strengthening emotional branding.

Stern (1992a) identifies 2 nostalgia types: Personal nostalgia refers to idealizing the personally remembered past while historical nostalgia refers to desire for returning to a time in the past before the audience was born. In the analyzed adverts, both nostalgia types can be seen. Since some of them represent a closer time in the past as the 70's, 80's, 90's lifestyles; while some of them represent the 18th Century, and before the observer was born. However, this research also agrees on the nostalgia definition of Baker & Kennedy (1994), in which they identified 3 types of nostalgia. While real, and stimulated are similar to personal, and historical nostalgia; collective nostalgia refers to "a bittersweet yearning for the past which represents a culture, a generation, or a nation" (Baker & Kennedy, 1994, p. 171). Because in the analyzed adverts, there are cultural references, and symbols which an observer from a certain cultural background, a generation, or a nation can only feel strongly familiar with.

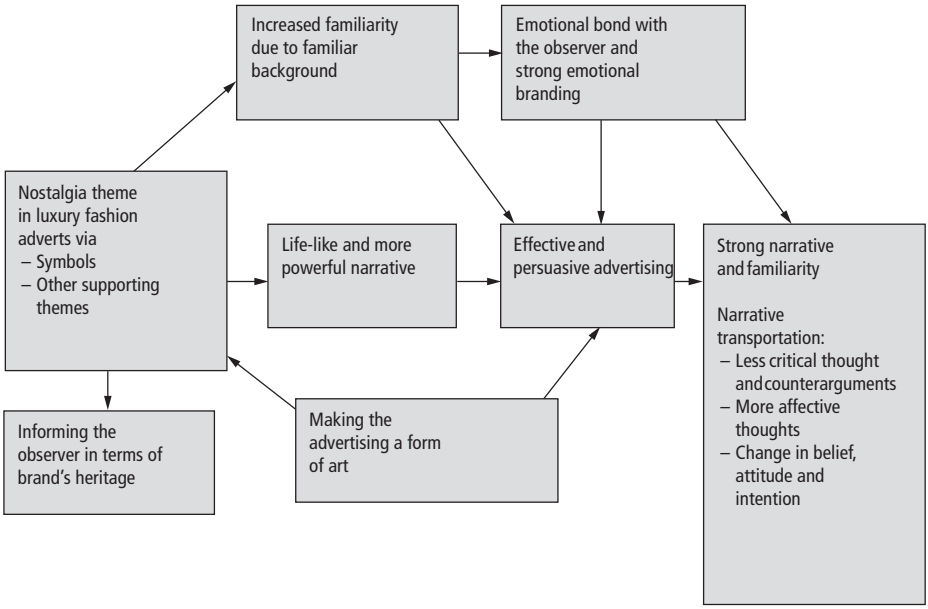
Furthermore, this research agrees on the statement: "Marketers can promote a brand's heritage by evoking the brand's history and/or a brand's origins through vicarious nostalgia based advertising" (Merchant & Rose, 2013, p. 2624). This statement was made for luxury brands; however according to the analysis, it is also acceptable for luxury fashion brands advertising since the use of heritage, and nostalgia together is evidenced; and nostalgia becomes a tool to inform the observer about the brand heritage. Thus this statement fills the gap in Merchant & Rose's further research suggestions: to explore other cultural contexts in terms of vicarious (historical) nostalgia and heritage, and to research a brand's heritage in advertising via content analysis (Merchant & Rose, 2013). Because this research examined the advertising of luxury fashion brands targeting the European market as a different cultural context via content analysis of imagery. On the other hand, Stern (1992a) suggests using nostalgia in advertising is more beneficial for nesting products, and comfort food. However, this research does not agree on Stern's generalization, since this research fills the gap in nostalgia literature in terms of luxury fashion brand category by showing that this field also adopts nostalgia for promoting brand heritage, and products by also using nostalgia as a theme for reminding of one's past, and childhood. Furthermore, Havlena, and Holak (1991) suggest that nostalgia evokes positive emotions, and filters negative thoughts related to the observer's past. This research agrees on this suggestion since the analyzed adverts projected a positive representation of the past, and the research states that nostalgia is beneficial to build an emotional bond between the observer, and brand which is possible by evoking positive memories about the past.

5.4 Nostalgia, and narrative transportation

Narrative is one of the most important elements of an advert especially for luxury fashion brands which aim to sell the experience. According to the analysis; strong key themes and words related to nostalgia, and symbols are the other core elements which strengthened the narrative. Using the theme nostalgia provides many benefits to the brand, and some of these benefits are the outcomes of narrative transportation.

As mentioned; Gerrig (1993), and Green & Brock (2000) describe transportation as an experience which a traveler moves away from his world of origin by reading a realistic narrative, and this experience changes the traveler's beliefs, and attitudes due to losing information of the real world. It makes the persuasion possible by reducing cognitive responding, and increasing affective thoughts. Furthermore, Escalas (2007), and Phillip & McQuarrie (2010) suggest that narrative

Figure 2: Model: Benefits of Using Nostalgia in Luxury Fashion Advertising



Own illustration

transportation is possible by observing also adverts since they provide necessary elements to construct a plot, and develop characters. This research was built on their suggestions, and is keeping up with their work as the adverts' analysis provide strong themes, symbols, and characters as necessary elements to construct a strong narrative. This research suggests that using nostalgia theme in luxury fashion advertising makes the narrative stronger. Because it provides a vivid - life-like (verisimilitude) story by using symbols, and strong themes as nostalgia. So that the observer feels familiar with the content of the advert which includes "identifiable characters, imaginable plot, and verisimilitude" due to his past memories, and experience which might happen because of personal, historical, or collective nostalgia depending on the person's past experience, cultural background, and age; consistent with Van Laer et al (2014) model.

Therefore, this research uses the "familiarity" element from the model of Van Laer et al (2014) to structure a new model which demonstrates benefits of using nostalgia in luxury fashion advertising, and the connection between nostalgia theme, and narrative transportation theory. The model (*Figure 2*) starts with: Adopting Nostalgia as a theme in luxury fashion advertising by also using symbols, and related themes. Then it further explains its benefits: Informing the observer about the brand's heritage, making the advertising a form of art due to the use of aesthetics, symbols and strong themes, building an emotional bond with the observer on a personal level via imaginable plot, and identifiable characters; strengthening emotional branding-brand loyalty, increasing familiarity of the observer to content due to familiar background related to nostalgia theme, and making the narrative life-like, and more powerful. In the end; the advert narratively transports the customer due to its effective narrative, and nostalgic content related to the observer's past experiences. Finally, according to narrative transportation theory, the observer's opinions, attitudes, and beliefs could tem-

porarily change about the product due to less critical, and more affective thoughts. However, the aims of this research were to show how luxury fashion brands use nostalgia as a theme in their advertising, and to analyze benefits of using nostalgia rather than testing narrative transportation theory. Thus this research does not prove that narrative transportation happens at the end of this process, it assumes this last step: "familiarity" leads to narrative transportation based on the model of Van Laer et al. (2014).

6 Conclusion

This research aimed to identify how luxury fashion brands use nostalgia in their advertising, and marketing. Firstly, the research analyzed 5 luxury fashion brands' 60 adverts from Italian Vogue by a content analysis of imagery, and semiotics discipline. This research revealed the importance of luxury fashion brand characteristics for a luxury fashion brand in the adverts' narratives, identified that nostalgia theme was frequently used in the analyzed adverts, and explained the benefits of nostalgia. By filling the gap in the research of Stern (1992a), the research demonstrated that also this advertising field uses nostalgia frequently as a theme, not only nesting food. Research identified strong themes, and symbols' meanings embedded in the narrative connected to nostalgia theme; and structured a model based on Van Laer et al. model (2014).

6.1 Recommendations

Advertisers, and marketers can use nostalgia as a theme in their advertising to inform the customer in terms of the brand's heritage. Furthermore, using nostalgia with other sub-themes and symbols makes the advertising a form of art which should be the aim. Using this theme is especially suitable for luxury fashion advertising since it should be built along aesthetic values, and cultural symbols which are more concerned with making the advertising an art form. Nostalgia increases familiarity with the customer's background, builds an emotional bond between the brand and the customer, and strengthens emotional branding-brand loyalty. Thus it also provides benefits for branding, and marketing. Therefore, if decreasing the psychological distance between the luxury brand, and the customer is aimed; this theme can be used to increase emotional branding. Finally, nostalgia theme can be used to make the narrative more powerful, and life-like since it provides a familiar story to the observer. As demonstrated in *Figure 2*, the narrative supported by nostalgia theme makes the advertising more effective due to familiarity. Thus it has the ability to narratively transport the customer. Narrative transportation of the observer results in belief, attitude, and intention changes. Therefore, if it is used wisely by the industry; nostalgia is a crucial theme to make powerful adverts in luxury fashion advertising.

6.2 Limitations and further research suggestions

This research focused on European advertising perspective. Further research should examine other cultural contexts, and product areas of advertising relating to nostalgia.

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Girls that wear Abercrombie & Fitch: Reading fashion branding aesthetics into music videos

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Abstract
Teen clothier Abercrombie & Fitch's mix of shirtless associates, nightclub-like stores and risqué photography by Bruce Weber helped propel the brand into icon status. The brand's name entered the popular lexicon as a synonym for cool and even received a memorable call out in LFO's pop song, "Summer Girls." This paper explores the interplay in aesthetics between *A&F Quarterly,* the brand's popular magazine-catalog hybrid, and popular music videos of the time. Specifically, this paper analyzes videos that appeared on MTV's *Total Request Live* between September 1999 and April 2001. In total, 42 music videos were found to contain elements of the "Abercrombie" lifestyle, including clothing that was sold by the brand, and props and settings similar to those found in the *A&F Quarterly.* In sum, this suggests that music videos from the time were instrumental in spreading the brand's aesthetic, and that the interplay between media popular culture and the aesthetics of fashion brands could yield productive future research.

Keywords
fashion branding, fashion communication, music videos, mediated popular culture

1 Introduction

Music videos have been a staple of popular culture since the launch of MTV in the early 1980s, but, their popularity and influence waxed and waned over the years (Arnold, Cookney, Fairclough & Goddard, 2017; Middleton & Beebe, 2007). Starting in September 1998, music videos regained prominence with the launch of *Total Request Live – TRL* for short – from its studios overlooking Times Square in New York City. Screaming fans lined Broadway, interacting street side with hosts and waving and flashing signs toward in-studio host Carson Daly. The show was a mixture of music videos, musical guests and friendly banter. During its run *TRL* helped launched a slew of pop stars, including 'N Sync, the Backstreet Boys, Brittany Spears, Christina Aguilera, 98 Degrees, Jessica Simpson and Mandy Moore. As marketing turned to "cool as hunters" to catch teen trends, little was an influential as *TRL* (Dretzin & Goodman, 2001).

At the same time, a teen fashion behemoth was being developed in the form of Abercrombie & Fitch. The fabled retailer that once outfitted the likes of Teddy Roosevelt and Ernest Hemingway had turned its attention to teens in 1992 and never looked back. With CEO Mike Jeffries at the helm, the store became a mall phenomenon, selling an aspirational lifestyle to teens through jeans, T-shirts and flip flops. The chain was not without its detractors: parents saw Abercrombie's racy photos as sexualizing youth while the company's hiring and employment practices were thought to be exclusionary and racist. Still, the company had remarkable growth financial growth and cultural influence.

The worlds of *TRL* and Abercrombie collided with the 1999 release of LFO's "Summer Girls." The song became the group's first (and biggest) hit, but also became a major "song of the summer." Most importantly, the lyrics name dropped Abercrombie & Fitch in its refrain giving the store a boost of publicity. The connection between the song and the band was so extensive that when the retailer ran into trouble in 2016, CNN Money used the headline "Summer girls no longer shop at Abercrombie and Fitch" (La Monica, 2016). In addition to several mentions of

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brand, the video looked like something that could have been ripped from Abercrombie's marketing materials. However, "Summer Girls" was hardly the only video promoting such a lifestyle; videos across the *TRL* spectrum including from artists like Britney Spears, Christina Aguilera and 98 Degrees also reflected the Abercrombie style.

This paper is a historical analysis that seeks to highlight the similarities of popular music videos that appeared on the U.S. version of *TRL* and the imagery presentation in Abercrombie & Fitch's marketing. By examining similarities in aesthetics, props, settings and characters, it is possible to see how the same imagery and lifestyle that was drawn on for LFO's "Summer Girls" was reflected in other music videos as well. This understanding of intertextuality within popular culture (Fiske, 2011, pp. 98–101) has been shown in other collections of music videos (De Cuir, 2017; Halligan, 2017) and suggests forms and aesthetics can influence one another. Taking this one step further, this paper traces the influence of Abercrombie & Fitch imagery through music videos between 1998 and 2001 and suggests that the brand was part of the cultural zeitgeist at the turn of the millennium largely due to its outsized influence within these music videos.

2 Music videos to TRL

While music videos gained prominence with the launch of MTV in 1981, their roots can be traced back decades earlier. As Rich (2008) points out animated videos such as Looney Tunes and Merrie Melodies merged visual art forms with music as early as the 1920s (p. 79). By the 1950s, musicians were making appearances in films and TV shows to promote their music – a process that reached a fever pitch with the fictional rock band the Monkees (Rich, 2008, p. 80). Once launched, MTV's popularity rose through 1984 before seeing a sharp decline in 1985 due to copycat channels (Aurfderheid, 1983, p. 61). Ultimately, MTV continued to grow and reached more than 52 million households by 1990, and was competing with the likes of CMT, BET and VH-1 (Rich, 2008, p. 81).

Given their popularity, music videos have long been sites of research and theorization (Arnold et al., 2017; Aurfderheid, 1983; Beebe & Middleton, 2007; Frith, Goodwin, & Grossberg, 1993; Sun & Lull, 1983; Railton & Watson, 2011; Vernallis, 2004). Generally, the creation of music videos is understood as a postmodern undertaking due to its fractured storytelling and hyper-reality (Straw, 1993, p. 12), but debate continues over the qualitative differences between music videos and other media. Vernallis suggests that music videos are a wholly different media form: they take parts from film and television, but should not be understood in through the same mechanisms researchers and theorists have used for other cultural products (Vernallis, 2004, p. 3). Music videos "are different from its predecessors – film, television, photography – a medium with its own ways of organizing materials, exploring themes and dealt with time" (Vernallis, 2004, p. x). Vernallis notes that music videos come from the songs they are created for, but meanings come from the "give-and-take" of sound and image (Vernallis, 2004, p. x). Like other forms of media, music videos relay on a mixture of narrative, video editing, characters, settings, props and sound for its creation (Vernallis, 2004, p. xi–xiii).

Some recent discussions of the "music video turn," as Arnold et al. (2017, p. 5) call it, have focused on how digital platforms like YouTube have altered creation and consumption of videos (Cookney, 2017; Manghani, 2017). This changing of context brings with it a renewed need for theorization, and can help shed light on previous discussions and times. Both earlier formats like the jukebox film (Herzog, 2007) and contemporary forms of digital videos have helped to separate the MTV channel from the music video programming which made it successful (Middleton & Beebe, 2007). Of note for this discussion, is how the channel and context on of music videos can mold its influence and consumption. Shows like *The Ed Sullivan Show* and *American Bandstand* were able to influ-

ence music consumption and highlight particular artists and broadcasting conventions (Coates, 2007). The same can be said for *TRL*.

While game shows, comedies and reality shows became more prominent on MTV through the 1990s, *TRL*'s debut in 1998 brought music videos back to the spotlight. According to MTV, the show "was one of the first truly interactive television shows, utilizing the synergy of the internet and television to countdown the top music videos of the day" (MTV, n.d.). The show aired in the afternoon—at 3 p.m. in the summer and 3:30 p.m. during the school year—and boasted ratings 52% among 12-to-34-year-olds in its first quarter (Heller, 2000). *TRL*'s peak popularity occurred in 1999 and 2000 when the show averaged more than 700,000 viewers. MTV finally pulled the plug on the show in 2008 after falling ratings and increase competition from the Internet (Sisario, 2008).

Following arguments that the medium context is important for understanding consumption (Cookney, 2017; Herzog, 2007; Middleton & Beebe 2007; Kooijman, 2017; Manghani, 2017), it must also be acknowledged that specific shows and influence consumption. *TRL* not only influenced what videos were watched, but helped package them into a program for consumption. Carson Daly and the rest of the *TRL*'s hosts used friendly banter, celebrity interviews and fan interaction to create a whole show and thereby helping link the videos together.

3 Fashion and storytelling in music videos

As noted above, music videos have a unique way of dealing with a host of storytelling dimensions, including costume and, as such, fashion. Various works interrogate fashion as part of film (Gaines, 2000; Munich, 2011; Uhlirova, 2013), television (Bruzzi & Church Gibson, 2004; Warner, 2014) and even music (Miller, 2011), but the relationship between fashion and music video has not received as much sustained attention. This may be due to music videos' place as the "Kleenexes of popular culture" (Railton & Watson, 2011, p. 1), but also due to researchers more sustained interested in representation and embodiment (Arnold et al., 2017, pp. 91–139; Lewis, 1993; Mercer, 1993; Railton & Watson, 2011; Vernallis, 2004, pp. 209–235; Wasler, 1993).

Still, as Miller points out, "… both music and fashion marketing are fed by a variety of practical and visual interrelationships in which fashion are style are core to a kind of intertextual taste-sharing between the two industries" (2011, p. 12). Vernallis notes that music videos allow even more of an emphasis on costume and clothing, however, she glosses over the clothing and emphasizes the symbolic nature of the garments (2004, pp. 100–104). There's no reason to believe that this symbolism cannot flow in different directions, especially since the concept of fashion branding emphasizes the cultural context surrounding garments (Hancock, 2009a, pp. 4–5). Miller highlights the intertextual relationship between music videos and particular garments in her analysis of Gwen Stefani's "Rich Girl." The video drew heavily from the fashion advertisements of John Galliano and Vivienne Westwood, and, through the presence of Stefani, promoted her own fashion line, L.A.M.B. The connections helped to establish the singer as a taster arbiter and L.A.M.B. as a peer of Galliano and Westwood (Miller, 2010, pp. 24–25). This is an example of intertextuality where the fragmented elements of fashion branding and fragmented storytelling of music videos overlaps to influence both products.

4 Methods

Acknowledging the intertextuality within videos, it is possible to imagine how the brand image of Abercrombie & Fitch could get tied up with popular music videos at the height of its popularity. Notable for this analysis is the mention of Abercrombie & Fitch in the LFO song, "Summer Girls." Assuming that sight and sound does intertwine in this video (Dickinson, 2007), it can be presumed the reference had a clear

influence on the brand's image. Further if, as De Cuir (2017) has noted, aesthetics and ideology from one video can influence others, and if repeated imagery across music videos can create particular consumption lifestyles (Halligan, 2017), then it is possible to see elements from "Summer Girls" reflected throughout the music landscape.

As such, the following pages are a close reading of popular music videos from the turn of the millennium that link their aesthetic qualities with Abercrombie & Fitch's brand image. This paper first sets out Abercrombie & Fitch's brand image as theorized by researchers and the popular press during this time period before conducting three different analyses to explore the pervasiveness of the brand image within music videos. First, the Abercrombie & Fitch image is explored within the "Summer Girls" video, as it directly mentioned the brand. Then, two different analyses are made with other popular music videos of the time. First, individual music videos are analyzed for similar themes of the brand's marketing; then, specific elements of the brand – both clothing and settings – are explored in various music videos. These videos selected and used within the analysis appeared on *TRL* between Sept. 1998 and April 2001, according to an unofficial database kept on atrl (atrl, n. d.), and were analyzed in October 2016. In total, there were 42 songs that appeared on the countdown fit some elements of the Abercrombie aesthetic, whether through settings, props or costuming. The videos detailed below were chosen because they offer the most salient examples of this interplay.

5 Abercrombie & Fitch style

At the same time that MTV was enjoying increased prominence due to *TRL*'s success, Abercrombie & Fitch was in the midst of its own renaissance. The storied sporting goods retailer had been revived as a clothing brand by The Limited in 1988 (*The New York Times*, January 16, 1988). In 1992, The Limited installed Mike Jeffries as Abercrombie & Fitch's CEO and under his leadership the brand flourished. In 1997, Abercrombie & Fitch launched its magazine-catalog hybrid (also known as a magalog), *A&F Quarterly*, which featured the erotic photography of Bruce Weber along with a variety of written articles and features.

A&F Quarterly buttressed the company's experiential branding efforts, which included darkening the sales floor, playing music at club levels and employing good looking young people in their stores (Goldstein, 2000). As Hancock (2009b) notes, Abercrombie was successful at selling a hypermasculinized image through its use of homoeroticism and sex scenes (pp. 69–71). In store, this included the employment of shirtless, male greeters accompanied by female assistants to blunt overt homosexual tones (Hancock, 2009a, p. 100). While the greeters brought Weber's imagery to life, the magalog went further to create what journalist Stacy Perman called, a "Technicolor teen lifestyle" (2000).

And, truly, *A&F Quarterly* offered advice for every facet of life. Being released quarterly, the magalog updated this lifestyle for Spring Break, Summer, Back-to-School and Christmas. Among the articles offered by in the magalog, readers could get drink recipes, sex tips, travel advice, celebrity interviews and even philosophical discussions. While many brands attempt to sell a "lifestyle," (Saviolo & Marazza, 2013, pp. 48–49). Abercrombie & Fitch marketed a completely fictional, yet highly desirable, lifestyle through its marketing communications in a manner that had not be matched. Under Jeffries, Abercrombie's profits increased for a decade and only fell after the 2001 recession, during which the CEO bucked conventional wisdom and refused to lower prices. While there would be some positive turns in the years after, the 2008 recession also took a toll, although it would take until 2014 for Jeffries to be replaced and the brand to attempt to change course (Berfield & Rupp, 2015).

Still, it cannot be ignored that Abercrombie's success came largely through exclusion and the erasure or mocking of racial minorities, overweight teens or anyone else deemed "uncool." As Jeffries

made clear in a 2006 interview, the brand aimed specifically for the cool kids and others need not apply. Jeffries said, "In every school there are the cool and the popular kids, and then there are the not-so-cool kids. Candidly, we go after the cool kids. We go after the attractive all-American kid with a great attitude and a lot of friends. A lot of people don't belong [in our clothing], and they can't belong. Are we exclusionary? Absolutely" (as qtd. in Denizet-Lewis, 2006). This lead to a discrimination lawsuit by Asian American, African American and Latino teens in 2003 that the company settled for $50 million (Berfield & Rupp, 2015); a religious discrimination suit in 2008 (Liptak, 2015) and numerous boycotts. McBride (2005) laid out his criticism of the brand in the book "Why I Hate Abercrombie & Fitch," where he documented how the brand's promotional images and control over store employees worked to promote and reinforce a primarily white, male image (pp. 66–83). Reinforcing a more racist exclusionary practice, one former associate told McBride, "that African American and Asian Americans 'can be A&F if they act white, have white friends, and are very assimilated'" (p. 82).

6 Girls that wear Abercrombie & Fitch

Abercrombie & Fitch truly entered the popular culture landscape with 1999's ubiquitous song of the summer, LFO's "Summer Girls." The song was released on the band's self-titled debut album and peaked at number 3 on the Billboard Hot 100 chart ("Summer Girls," LFO, n.d.). The album later peaked at number 21 on the Billboard 200 (*LFO,* LFO, n.d.). LFO followed up with several singles and a follow-up album in 2001 without the same success. "Summer Girls" remains LFO's defining song and has been ranked as one of the best "summer songs" by Billboard (Billboard Staff, 2014) and one of the best songs released by a boy band (Benjamin et al., 2015).

The song was well known for its referential lyrics and refrain that included the line "I like girls that wear Abercrombie and Fitch" and later reference that states, "You look like a girl from Abercrombie and Fitch." The lyrics do not explain what exactly that means, but taken in tandem with the video we can start to parse out some conclusions. More importantly, there is an overlap in imagery between the "Summer Girls" video (Raboy, 1999) and the advertisements in the *A&F Quarterly*. By teasing out the narrative, characters, settings and props within the video it is possible to see the "Summer Girls" video as a reflection of the Abercrombie & Fitch aesthetic.

From the start of "Summer Girls," there is a group of good looking young women arriving at a beach house in an classic black convertible, where the members of LFO are anticipating them. Three young, thin, attractive and white women clad in swim suits and other midriff-bearing outfits climb out of the car and meet the band members on the porch. The group members, who are also young, attractive and white, are dressed in more conservative attire, namely various forms of cargo or khaki pants, and T-shirt shirts and a sweater. The excitement is obvious and the women eagerly hug and jump on men.

The video then transitions into its second setting, a boardwalk scene. The video returns to this scene through and at times the group is singing while sitting on a picnic table or standing on top of the boardwalk stalls. At various points, a group of primarily young women – again, thin, attractive, white and dressed in somewhat revealing clothing – huddle around the group. At other points, the entire group of characters walks along with boardwalk in various states of physical engagements – holding hands, arms wrapped around each other and gesturing suggestively. At one point, the group watches a series of break dancers, who are also the most notable men outside of the band in the video.

Scenes are spliced between the boardwalk scene and the beach house scene, the latter of which has also become overrun with young adults dancing and having fun around the classic car. The dancing becomes more excited as the song goes on and eventually moves to include the group dancing and playing at the ocean's edge.

Here, the young adults are dancing as the waves roll in around them, soaking their pants and skirts; they are unmoved though because they are having too much fun. As day turns into night, the beachgoers huddle in towels and hooded sweatshirts while they sit away from the water. The scene is brief, however, as the video cuts back to the boardwalk scene from earlier.

There are several points to note here as several of the props used in the video line up closely with items that were sold in the *A&F Quarterly* around the time of the video's release. First, there is a young woman in the boardwalk scenes wearing a green camisole top with a pair of short orange cargo shorts. Similar shorts can be found for sale in *A&F Quarterly* (2000b, p. 42). A second comparison can be made between LFO member Devin Lima (2000b), who is wearing a pair of zip-off cargo pants, similar to those sold by the brand (p. 12). Finally, there is a young women of ambiguous heritage, who is wearing a yellow, ribbed tank top and a patterned skirt. Both of these garments are similar to things sold in Abercrombie's magalog (A&F Quarterly 2000b, pp. 33; 55).

Further, these characters are similar to the Abercrombie aesthetic. As mentioned above, the brand aimed heavily for the "cool, good-looking people" (Denizet-Lewis, 2006) at the expense of anyone not fitting into that mold. The video showed much the same. There is no one who does not fit tradition stereotypes of attractiveness; the young women are thin and the young men are muscular. Further, and perhaps most notably, most of the young adults are white. There are few racial or ethnic minorities portrayed in the video – the young women of ambiguous ethnicity being the most prominent. One of the break dancers appears to the black, and there appears to be one or two other people of color in the crowd—however, they are primarily in the background and play no extended role in the video. It is notable that Abercrombie had been sued for racial discrimination (Berfield & Rupp, 2015) and that journalists have documented that "less cool and less good-looking" workers did the inventory and replacement work in the store afterhours, after those hire to have a "good time" went home (Goldstein, 1999). A similar situation exists in the video where everyone is good-looking – those that do not measure up are simply erased in "Summer Girls" – and minorities take a backseat.

Having fun is also the primary activity and narrative in the video. Essentially, "Summer Girls" has little other action beyond singing and having fun – whether at the beach house, on the boardwalk or on the beach. This is similar to the *A&F Quarterly*, where young adults live a life of relative leisure, and Abercrombie & Fitch's employees who work as a "status thing" (Goldstein, 1999).

Finally, the settings also tie into the *A&F Quarterly*. Similar beach scenes can be found throughout the magalog's run. For Spring Break 1999, the cover featured a models holding a surfboard overhead while standing on a beach. Further, many of the photospreads took place on or near beaches, and several articles dealt with surfing (Abadsidis, 1999; Bixby, 1999), beach life (Gillies, 1999) or travel to beach locales (Branch, 1999). These themes were repeated in *A&F Quarterly*'s summer 1999 edition titled, *Summer Dreams*. The cover was in black-and-white and featured a model on a tropical beach. Sand, palm trees and sand all featured prominently in photospreads and articles featured the difference between the beach and the pool (Kon, 1999) and featured pieces about beaches in Thailand (Carone, 1999).

7 Beyond "Summer Girls"

Seeing how the Abercrombie lifestyle played out in "Summer Girls," this section focuses on two other videos that highlight the intersection of these elements: Christina Aguilera's "Genie in a Bottle" and 'N Sync's "Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays." Both videos display various parts of the Abercrombie lifestyle, including beach scenes and holiday scenes, respectively.

"Genie in a Bottle" – Aguilera's debut single, "Genie in a Bottle," launched her career. The song reached number 1 on the

Billboard Hot 100 in July 1999 ("Genie in a Bottle," Christina Aguilera, n. d.), while the album, *Christina Aguilera*, reached number 1 on the Billboard 200 (*Christina Aguilera*, Christina Aguilera, n. d.). "Genie" was a staple of *TRL*, being "retired" after appearing on the countdown for 65 days (atrl, n. d.).

The video (Martel, 1999) resembles many of the elements of "Summer Girls" and the imagery sold by Abercrombie & Fitch. The video begins with shots of Aguilera on a laying on a shady beach dune and her walking through a beach house and singing on a deck overlooking the shore. The scenes are shot in low light, making it difficult to determine a time of day, but also work to make the entire video more dream-like or mystical. As the video progresses, Aguilera is called by her friends to meet a group of guys who just arrived at the house – one of which is her love interest. Eventually, the entire group relocates to the beach for a bonfire and this scene is spliced with a scene where Aguilera performs a choreographed dance on a sandy dancefloor. The scenes throughout reflect the scenery of "Summer Girls" and of *A&F Quarterly*'s beach scenes.

Again, the props refer back to the Abercrombie & Fitch lifestyle. Specifically, during the choreographed dance Aguilera is wearing a pair of Abercrombie & Fitch's orange drawstring pants as sold in the *A&F Quarterly* (1999, Spring Break, p. 49). The supporting characters are also clad in the Abercrombie & Fitch aesthetic – from cargo shorts to Hawaiian print board shorts. In other props, the older convertible driven by the cohort of guys reflects the convertible as seen in "Summer Girls" and the style of car highlighted in the *A&F Quarterly* (2002a, pp. 114–123).

Like "Summer Girls," all of the characters in "Genie" are young, attractive and primarily white. A key difference here is that many of Aguilera's backup dancers are people of color, but just as minority Abercrombie & Fitch associates played a supporting role, all of the main characters are white. Despite being half Ecuadorian, Aguilera appeared as a pale women with blonde hair and can also be read as white.

The narrative in "Genie" also reflects a frivolity: the main narrative is around a nighttime beach party. Involved in the storyline is Aguilera's filtrations with one of the young men, but still this references the playfulness of "Summer Girls" and the Abercrombie lifestyle. This flirtation was key to Abercrombie's branding (Hancock, 2009a, p. 92–102) and also apparent in "Summer Girls."

Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays – Unlike the successes of "Summer Girls" and "Genie," 'N Sync's "Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays" was more muted. In fact, the song did not chart on the Billboard Hot 100 and the group's Christmas album, "Home for Christmas" peaked at a 153 on the Billboard 200 (*Home for Christmas,* 'N Sync, n. d.). The song, however, has become a something of a holiday staple – remaining on the Billboard Holiday chart and being covered by the Pentatonix nearly 20 years after its release (Spera, 2016). On *TRL,* the video appeared on the countdown daily between Dec. 14 and Dec. 22, 1998, reaching No. 1 three times.

The video (Martin, 1998) featured actor Gary Coleman as an elf tasked with replacing a Santa too sick to deliver presents. Finding an 'N Sync poster, he decides to call on the boy band to take over. The main scene is of the band members inside a sled in front of a green screen displaying scenes of the sky, the New York City skyline and other places the group is "traveling." The scenes are interspersed with other festive scenes: one scene shows the group feeding homeless people, another includes a Christmas-party like scene where people are dancing and decorating a tree, and still another shows band members giving gifts to their "loved" ones or likely girlfriends.

Unlike "Genie in a Bottle" and "Summer Girls," these scenes represent a different aspect of the Abercrombie lifestyle: the holiday season. "Christmas" was one of the four quarterly issues put out by the *A&F Quarterly* and like the other videos there appears to be a crossover in aesthetic and costuming.

In the video, band members are dressed for winter in fleece, vests and hooded sweaters. Justin Timberlake is wearing an

orange fleece; JC Chasez is wearing a grey fleece and black fleece vest; Lance Bass is wearing a yellow hooded sweatshirt and grey puff vest; and Chris Kirkpatrick is wearing a red puff jacket. Joey Fatone is the odd man out wearing a T-shirt, but he is wearing a pair of cargo ski overalls, similar to the parachute and cargo pants the other members are wearing. Taken together these outfits reflect the style of Abercrombie at the time (*A&F Quarterly*, 1998a, pp. 108–113), especially the fleeces garments (*A&F Quarterly*, 1998a, p. 87; 1998b, pp. 95, 243)

Like the previous videos, "Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays" maintains a primarily young, attractive and white cast. The band members are all white as are many of the "party guests." It's notable that the "homeless" individuals 'N Sync are helping are primarily old and less conventionally attractive than the group and one of the homeless individuals is black. There are few other minorities throughout. There are two children of ambiguous race shown throughout, two attractive women – one black and one Asian – dance with Chasez and Timberlake, respectively, and Coleman appears as a comic elf. As such, the aesthetic reinforcing the Abercrombie style by again highlighting and centering the conventionally attractive, white individuals and marginalizing minorities.

Moreover, the feeling of the video is happy and celebratory, much like that of "Summer Girls" and "Genie in a Bottle." While "Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays" is more realistic in featuring needy individuals, the focus is certainly on the happy-go-lucky Christmas party and the joy in material giving (even to the needy). Further, it reinforces the stereotypes where the attractive, affluent youths can "save Christmas" and give to the poor while looking good and having fun.

8 And the beat goes on

As shown, this can be done with individual videos to see the lifestyles and aesthetics displayed throughout. However, repetition of objects, images and settings provide an important intertextual connection between disparate videos – with their own directors, artists and influences – into something more intelligible and influential. This repetition shows that the Abercrombie's influence was not concentrated in a few videos, but rather widely dispersed throughout videos seen on *TRL*. The next pages look at specific elements that were repeated in different videos of the time.

Clothing makes an obvious starting point since it was the more prominent product for Abercrombie. Two particular examples can be cited here: the camisole tops are sold two editions of the magalog (2000a, p. 76; 2000b, p. 15). Sold in a variety of colors, the shirts had spaghetti straps and made appearances across the music videos of the time. Musicians such as Britney Spears and Hoku wore the shirts in "Sometimes" and "Another Dumb Blonde," respectively, while they also made appearances in Jennifer Paige's "Crush," Backstreet Boys' "As Long As You Love Me," Mandy Moore's "Candy," Soul Decision's "Faded" and Vitamin C's "Graduation (Friends Forever)."

Similarities can also be found with men's ribbed, turtlenecks and sweaters and sold by Abercrombie & Fitch (2000d, pp. 46–47). These sweaters made appearances on Nick Lachey in 98 Degrees' "This Gift," Jordan Knight in the "Give It to You" video, and in Britney Spears' "From the Bottom of My Broken Heart." Meanwhile, videos like 98 Degree's "Because of You," 'N Sync's "Music of My Heart" and "I Drive Myself Crazy," and Mariah Carey's "Thank God I Found You," all featured ribbed sweaters without the turtleneck – a similar style also available in the magalog.

Beyond clothing, other props were repeated throughout, including classic cars, old style microphones and surf boards. People were seen driving classic convertibles in Paige's "Crush," LFO's "Summer Girls" and "Girl on TV," Aguilera's "Genie in a Bottle," Shawn Mullins' "Lullaby," and O-Town's "All or Nothing," while various classic cars were also seen in Hoku's "Another Dumb Blonde," Jennifer Love Hewitt's "How Do I Deal," and Backstreet Boys' "As Long as You Love

Me." Classic cars makes appearances in the Spring Break issue of 1999 (pp. 224, 227, 272, 295); the Back-to-School 1998 edition was dedicated to road trips as was the photospread "On the 101," (2002a, pp. 114–123), both featuring classic cars. Old cars were not the only crossover vehicles. In the Back-to-School 1998 issue, the magalog featured a late model Volkswagen Beetle (*A&F Quarterly,* 1998a, pp. 14–15) similar to the one featured in Moore's "Candy." Meanwhile, a Jeep was gifted in the Christmas 2000 edition (p. 260–263), similar to props used in Spears' "Baby One More Time" and Knight's "Give It to You."

In the *A&F Quarterly*, old microphones seem to be the preferred way to perform live music. This can been seen in a Harlem club in the Back-to-School 2000 edition (*A&F Quarterly,* 2000c., p. 195) and in a New Orleans jazz club (2002a, pp. 69–107). Similar microphones made appearances in Backstreet Boys "As Long as You Love Me," Hewitt's "How Do I Deal," 'N Sync's "Tearing Up My Heart."

Surfboards were used throughout the *A&F Quarterly* (1999a, pp. 65–75, 248; 2000a pp. 174, 204–5, 209; 2000b pp. 21, Back Cover). Meanwhile, surfboards made an appearance in Backstreet Boys "As Long as You Love Me," where a band member uses it as a photoshoot prop, and in Hoku's "Another Dumb Blonde" where a classic car rolls up with the surfboards on top of the car.

Many of these props work hand-and-hand with the settings they appear in. Surfboards, for example, make sense in a beach setting, as in Hoku's "Another Dumb Blonde" and in many photoshoots for the *A&F Quarterly.* However, the reliance on beach scenes is greater than a few videos. Videos that featured beach scenes include, LFO's "Summer Girls," 98 Degrees' "I Do" and "Give Me Just One Night (Una Noche)," Aguilera's "Genie in a Bottle," and Spears' "Sometimes." Spears' "Don't Let Me Be the Last to Know" seems like the closest replica to *A&F Quarterly*, as Spears and her love interest in the video embrace on a secluded beach. The love interest is topless for the entire while Spears is wearing and jean shorts. The scenery, however, features beach huts with palm roofs, recalling various photo spreads in *A&F Quarterly's* Spring Break 1999 (pp. 135, 196) and the Summer 2002 issue, which featured similar amounts of dried palm and nudity as Spears' video (*A&F Quarterly,* 2002b, pp. 2–36).

Two other examples can be seen in a carnival setting and in the city of New York. First, in Knight's "Give It to You," the action takes place at a carnival in a callback to the film *Grease.* Knight's singing and the group dancing takes place directly in from of the Ferris wheel, while other activities can be seen throughout the carnival. In a similar example, *A&F Quarterly* featured a photospread in the Summer 2000 edition (2000b, pp. 74–92), prominently featuring a Ferris wheel as well as activities, such as carnival games.

Finally, New York is a frequent setting for artistic works, the *A&F Quarterly* dedicated an entire issue to the city (1999c). While some music videos touched on New York, including 'N Sync's "Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays," it is worth remembering that *TRL* broadcast from a prominent studio overlooking Times Square, where fans would gather daily. Like the entire issue dedicated by Abercrombie & Fitch, the fact that *TRL* was prominently set in New York City, helping to unite the magalog life, the television show and the music videos.

9 Discussion and future research

The interplay between fashion brands and music videos remains a difficult terrain as neither offer clear narrative structures and their storytelling and meaning creation remains fragmented and contested. There are few clear, direct links between a music video and any specific brand and, as such, textual analyses must be malleable to order to find the links. The above pages offer three different modes of analysis to better understand the transfer of aesthetics between Abercrombie & Fitch's marketing and popular music videos. The first analysis of the "Summer Girls" video explored how a direct call out by a song works to

link the brand and the video aesthetics. The linkage between "Summer Girls" and Abercrombie & Fitch was notable, but also relatively unique as there are few other examples of fashion brands getting a direct call out within a song. The second analysis looked at specific music videos to explore how the self-contained videos replicated the aesthetics of Abercrombie & Fitch through its costumes and other elements. Notably, these videos replicated not only the Abercrombie & Fitch advertising milieu, but also the aesthetics found in "Summer Girls." The final analysis linked specific elements, such as costumes, props and settings, across music videos to show the extent of the repetition.

As with all historical analyses, the above analysis offers a specific cultural linkage for these specific elements. These findings cannot be extended to any general population and any extension of this research needs to be undertaken with its own careful analysis. That said, the above research offers some starting points for future research.

First and foremost, this research suggests that cultural ideas and aesthetics get reproduced and used across the spectrum of mediated popular culture. Specifically, the above pages examined how a the Abercrombie & Fitch brand aesthetic was reproduced within music videos, but this could also be seen in other visual realms, including popular films and television of the time. Future research directions could either continue to interrogate the replication of Abercrombie & Fitch's brand aesthetics, or interrogate if and how other fashion brands have navigated this relationship.

A second vein of research could follow how music videos contribute to the fashion zeitgeist at any particular point. The above showed repeated aesthetics in the videos that aired on MTV's *TRL* between 1998 and 2001, but suggests that on other shows might have similar intertextual references. This goes for other shows on MTV, but also shows from other music channels – i.e. CMT or BET – and in other cultural contexts.

Finally, future research could pursue how particular props, costumes and other elements get picked up and reused throughout the popular culture landscape. While the above specifically flowed from a fashion brand, it is assumed that the advertising is not the only contributor and the aesthetics, costumes and props offered up in music videos could easily be adopted by the advertising world, as well. Moreover, a question remains as to whether the fashion brand's aesthetic came first or whether it latched onto an existing trend.

10 Conclusion

This paper examined how the brand aesthetics of Abercrombie & Fitch could be seen through popular music videos between 1998 and 2001. The fact that the brand's marketing images could have been ripped from popular music videos (and vice versa) helped drive Abercrombie & Fitch's cultural influence and financial success and speaks to a notable symbiotic relationship between fashion branding and mediated popular culture. However, there is still ample work to be done. Acknowledging the influence of fashion aesthetics within music videos calls for a re-examination of the past productions and provides a different critical lens to discuss contemporary and future works.

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What plus-size means for plus-size women: A mixed-methods approach

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Abstract
Western fashion is constantly evolving and in order to obtain notoriety, brands need to positively connect with consumers. Individuals who wear plus-sizes are acutely aware of their reduced clothing choices and rely on language cues to find clothing. Unfortunately, the categorisation of plus-size consumers is fraught with discord and frustration. Fashion communication should consider consumer needs and preferences. However, the language used to classify plus-size consumers has yet to be examined. Plus-size women were recruited online to rate twelve terms associated with plus-size women's clothing. The survey collected a total of 324 responses of age, height, weight and ratings of terms used to classify plus-size apparel, such as Women's, Curvy. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and analysis of variance to compare differences considering age and body mass. This study revealed 96% of the sample ranked the classification Women's higher than Plus-Size. The study offers insights into how plus-size consumers view sizing communications. It also offers a useful ranking of terms that fashion companies can adopt to ensure they are communicating in language that the intended consumer prefers. This study contributes to research on social identity of clothing size, plus-size consumer experiences, and further validates the multidimensional challenges faced by plus-size consumers.

Keywords
plus-size, communication retail strategy, merchandising, narrative, mixed-methods, consumers, apparel, fashion, marketing

1 Introduction

The plus-size consumer has gained attention from retailers over the past decade as apparel companies continue to publicly contemplate the inclusion or exclusion of plus-size clothing. Current estimates suggest that over 67% of American women wear plus-sizes (Garcia, 2015) and as limited retail establishments offer plus-sizes, this issue is now critical and hotly debated in fashion media (Czerniawski, 2015; Kim, Jolly & Kim, 2007; Norman, 2017; Scaraboto & Fischer, 2016). Plus-sizes are loosely classified as women's numerical sizing 14 and above (Bogenrief, 2012). "Size 14 typically caps the size charts of most American-distributed stores and brands" (Christel, 2016, p. 1; see also Alexander, Pisut, & Ivanescu, 2012; Peters, 2015). Meanwhile, "the average American woman, including White, Black and Mexican-American races and ethnicities, now wears between a Misses size 16–18" (Christel & Dunn, 2016, p. 4). Despite the millions of average size customers who are eager to buy, plus-size fashion greatly suffers from marketing and merchandising neglect (Anderson & Simester, 2008).

There is little consensus what qualifies plus-size clothing and as fashion rapidly changes, the way brands communicate with consumers must adapt. Lee and Steen (2015) state, "Women's (plus) is listed as 1X–4X and 14W to 28W" (p. 279). Bubonia (2012) states that "[w]omen's designates full figure adult females using even numbers followed by W's. Sizes in this range typically include 14W–24W" (p. 165). Furthermore, Brown and Rice (2014) define the plus-size category as:

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> Women's sizes fit the adult woman of average height who has a full, mature figure. Women's sizes feature less waist definition and longer sleeves than Misses sizes. Plus-sizes, large size, or Women's departments and specialty stores are increasingly likely to designate Women's sizes for what were formerly Misses size designations, for example, even numbered sizes 16 to 20 or 14 to 24. Thus, it is often unclear whether a garment was designed for a large Misses figure type or a true Women's figure type – the two differ. (p. 207)

An analysis of the top grossing 100 U.S. online retailers found that plus-sizes range in size designations from 12–38W and 0X–6X with variations up to 11.5" in measurements for the same size designation (Dunn, 2016). The vast definitions and differing proportions in plus-sizes, while well-meaning, further muddle the functional purpose of the classification (Norman, 2017). While the term plus-size is viewed as marginalising, it also serves a functional purpose and thus has dual meaning; plus-size is both a social construct that marginalises women and plus-size is a merchandising category that helps women locate clothing sizes (Peters, 2015, see also Christel, 2018). There is anecdotal evidence written about plus-size categorisation, yet no academic or peer reviewed studies have been asserted to determine the usage, opinions or preferences of the plus-size consumer. Furthermore, the designation of plus-size was constructed without accord or consideration of the growing market.

Popular press suggests that plus-size women are marginalised and are frequently treated with less respect than thinner women (Refinery29, 2016). To combat the discrimination, several social movements have emerged. For example, #plusisequal, Dove's Real Beauty campaign, the fat acceptance movement, and the body-positive movement. The body-positive movement encourages people to adopt more forgiving and affirming attitudes towards their bodies, with the goal of improving health and well-being instead of a goal body weight. In conjunction with that movement, popular culture has disputed the term plus-size and some seek to eliminate its use entirely (Garcia, 2015). The term is viewed as problematic because, many women feel the category is marginalising and suggests they are a small group outside the mainstream whose fashion needs are secondary. On the other hand, some women feel the plus-size classification helps them locate their clothing sizes. A popular culture article from 2015 surveyed plus-size women's mixed feelings about the term plus-size. A woman stated,

> "there is an underlying stigma about someone who wears 'plus-size' clothing is also linked to the negative connotations of terms such as 'fat,' 'obese' or 'unhealthy,'" while another stated, "I don't mind it; it makes finding my clothes easier. But it's not the reality of American (especially women's) sizes." (Avilia, 2015)

Newer designers, such as Melissa McCarthy, agree with the sentiment and eliminated the use of any plus-size narrative in their clothing collections (Wang, 2015). Department stores have signage indicating sections of merchandise typically classified by gender and age. For example, the Juniors department refers to females in their teen years and is typically styled for youthful appeal. Other designations include the children's section, misses, women's, and men's departments. However, the plus-size classification groups a demographic by size and does not directly indicate consumer gender or age. This merchandising structure is the first in which a mass market clothing section provides apparel by size without considering gender, style, demographic or psychographic data. Plus-size apparel must consider more than size, because target market spans age, lifestyle, values, interests, attitudes, marital or relationship status, socioeconomic status, political perspectives, occupation, sex, gender, sexuality, social participation, and geography, amongst others (Ryan, 1966). These diverse factors require different styles at a variety of price points. Many retailers consider style preferences that correspond to certain age groups, such as Juniors, but style preference by age group has little consideration for plus-size indi-

viduals. While smaller adult women may shop in Juniors, which has its own assumptions of styles, larger women have no alternative female section to choose from. Further complicating shopping behaviour, and highlighting the social group identity and privilege accompanied with being thin, some plus-size women resort to shopping in the men's sections to find items that fit their bodies (Christel, O'Donnell, & Bradley, 2016).

Collectively, the purpose of this study is to identify terms that plus-size women find desirable for communicating their clothing classification. It is our hope to provide, through empirical research and theoretical analysis, a voice for larger consumers and clear information to retailers about the plus-size market, how language in fashion communication is perceived amongst plus-size consumers, and whether retailers should modify their approach.

2 Literature review

Social identity theory posits that a person's sense of who they are is based on their group membership(s). In this regard, Tajfel and Turner (1979) proposed that the groups which people belonged to (e.g., social class, family etc.) were an important source of pride and self-esteem. "Groups give us a sense of social identity: a sense of belonging to the social world" (McLeod, 2008). Based on cognitive groupings, humans naturally group objects, events and people. This is further recognised as in-group (us) and out-group (them). Therefore, our culture divides people into them and us through a process of social categorisation (McLeod, 2008). Through this natural categorisation, the difference between groups and similarities of each group are exaggerated (see also, Tajfel & Turner, 1979.

Social identity theory speculates that humans are motivated to enhance and protect the self, in order to increase self-image and enhance the status of the group to which they belong (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). It has also been found that in-groups can increase self-image by discriminating and holding prejudiced views against the out-group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The central hypothesis of social identity theory is that in-group members look for negative aspects of people in the out-group, as a way to increase the in-group self-image (McLeod, 2008).

Previous research indicates that individuals have social identities with age (Garstka, Hummert & Branscombe, 2005; Twigg, 2014), abilities and disabilities (Bogart, 2015; Buse & Twigg, 2015), and sex and gender (Pauletti, Cooper, Aults, Hodges, & Perry, 2016). Each of the aforementioned concepts are physical traits as well as socially constructed phenomena. In the same respect, body weight and size is both a physical trait and a socially constructed clothing category. One study found that body weight and size have the properties of a social identity and that overweight and "obese" women have a stronger identity with weight than normal weight women. In this regard, Asbury (2011) found there are cognitive, affective and behavioural components of weight identity which may help explain why women often say, *I am a size* ____, instead of *I wear a size* _____.

Considering weight and size as a social identity; thin consumers would be categorised as the in-group and plus-size consumers as the out-group. The groupings are divided by the many negative character traits associated with "obese" or plus-size individuals (Eisenberg, Street & Persky, 2016). People with a larger body are associated with negative characteristics such as lazy, weak-willed, unintelligent, and non-compliant with diet and exercise (Diedrichs & Puhl, 2016; Durso, Latner, & Ciao, 2016). From social identity theory, the prejudice views of larger people serve to enhance the self-image of thin individuals which maintain the group structures. As clothing is inexorably linked to the body and aids in communicating roles and identity (Allik & Realo, 2004; Celik, 2016; Nagar & Gandotra, 2016; Tiggman & Lacey, 2009), it is critical to examine our communications with plus-size consumers, or in this scenario, the out-group of the fashion industry.

McMichael argues, "While fatter people in contemporary society are often subjected to weight-based oppression, thin people are conversely advantaged by this system of oppression. 'Thin privilege' refers to the unearned advantages conferred to thinner people. It is a key pathway through which fat oppression is maintained. Often invisible, thin privilege fundamentally shapes our lives" (McMichael, 2013, as cited in Bacon, O'Reilly & Aphramor, 2016, p. 42). Having a thin body means that you can turn on the television and see people with your figure, fit into seats and desks comfortably, receive better quality healthcare, are more likely to get a job and promotions, have little educational barriers, and are treated with more respect at restaurants (Rothblum & Solovay, 2009). Thin privilege also includes being able to go to any clothing store, as opposed to specialty stores, and find clothing in your size (Bacon, O'Reilly, & Aphramor, 2016).

There are rarely words used to classify non-plus size clothing because, anything other than plus-size is considered the norm, standard, regular or in-group. The importance of being thin is perpetuated by fewer plus-size clothing options (Christel, 2014), and this practice maintains the power of who can and cannot participate in certain fashions. Words used to define consumer groups remain a critical tenet of fashion communications that studies communication in design through visual branding, trends, culture, styling and imagery, digital illustration, social media, brand development and brand management. This exploratory study examined language used in the fashion industry for plus-size consumers through an online survey. The objective was to determine the terms that plus-size women find desirable or undesirable for the fashion industry to use in communicating their clothing classification and to further analyse the findings within social identity theory and fashion communication. Based on the literature review, the following research questions are posed:

- RQ1. What are the most and least preferred terms for plus-size women?
- RQ2. What are the preferred terms categorised by BMI? Does body mass affect plus-size women's preferred terms for apparel signage?
- RQ3. What are the preferred terms categorised by age group? Does age affect plus-size women's preferred terms for apparel signage?

3 Methods

During the spring of 2016 participants were recruited via purposive sampling with an advertisement posted on a public news webpage of the researchers' institution located in the North West of the United States. The advertisement requested women aged 18 and over, who identified as plus-size and/or wear women's size 14 or higher, to complete a 10-minute survey about plus-size shopping. In order to reach a range of demographics, the researchers and graduate student volunteers posted the recruitment call on their social media. The advertisement also requested participants share and re-post the advertisement on their social media networks in order to increase the reach of participants. This method is also known as a snowball method that assists in recruiting individuals from a target group. A total of 422 respondents initiated the survey, $N=324$ were completed and included in data analysis. Participants were requested to complete a short demographic section and one questionnaire. Demographics included age, height, weight, country of residence, and waist measurement.

The questionnaire, titled Term Preferences, read: "Imagine that you are going on a shopping trip to find a blouse. Shopping stores and retailers have different terms and signs to describe the clothing section for larger women. Please indicate how desirable or undesirable you would find each of the following terms if you read it on a sign to indicate where larger clothing was located." The options were Women's, Large Size, Queen, Plus, Plus-Sizes, Plus Womenswear, Custom, Curvy, Outsized, Women's Plus, Womenswear, and Super Women's. Participants used a five-point

scale (i.e., 1 = very desirable, 2 = desirable, 3 = neutral, 4 = undesirable, and 5 = very undesirable) to rate each of the 12 terms. The researchers selected the terms through an academic literature review and with the assistance of plus-size consumers from the fashion program (who did not participate in the study). The terms were presented in the order listed above.

4 Statistical analyses

Participants were categorised based on body mass index (BMI) and age. BMI is a person's mass (kg) divided by their height (m) squared. It is unofficially the US national system for body size measurement, as "The National Institutes of Health defines normal weight, overweight, and "obesity" according to BMI" (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2013, p. 20). With the rise in larger bodies over the past century (Finucane et al., 2011), body size, or BMI classification, has become a critical concept in discourse and been used in fashion research (King, Shapiro, Hebl, Singletary, & Turner, 2006). There are no official US sizing standards and sizing systems differ in measurements, labelling, and proportions (Dunn, 2016; Reczek & Benson, 2016), making it difficult to classify human bodies by clothing sizes. Furthermore, the average woman has a range of five sizes in their wardrobe (Lubitz, 2016) and arranging participants according to garment size would have been problematic. Participants' BMI was calculated per the Center for Disease Control and Prevention "obesity" classifications: Overweight = 25–30, "Obese"[1] I = 30–35, "Obese" II = 35–40, and "Obese" III = 40+ (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016). Participants were also grouped by age; 18–35, 36–50, 51–64 and 65–78.

First, a multivariate analysis of variance was performed using SPSS. Within the BMI and age groups, the mean rating for each term was compared with that for the other eleven terms using Tukey's range test (Ramseyer & Tcheng, 1973). To control for the number of tests directed, the experiment-wise error rate for each group of comparisons was set at $\alpha = .05$. Descriptive statistics were calculated for all participants. Differences in the ratings of BMI and age groups were further assessed by individual analysis of variance. Difference between groups, for ratings of individual terms, were considered statistically significant at $p \leq .05$.

1 The term "obesity" medicalizes human diversity and do harm to fat people. As fashion and fat studies scholars, "overweight", "obesity", "obese I, II,II" are placed in scare quotes in order to be consistent with the discourse we aim to represent.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of participants ($n = 234$)

Factor	Range	*M*	*SD*
Age	18–76	44.10	13.85
Weight			
Pounds	130–560	226.42	54.33
Kilograms	59–253	102.7	24.64
Height			
Inches	48–83		
Centimeters	121.92–156.82		
Waist			
Inches	29–70	41.56	7.2
Centimeters	74–178	105.0	18.3
BMI kg/m²	17.8–97.6	36.7	9.5
		%	
Race			
American Indian or Alaska Native		2.0	
Asian		1.2	
Black or African America Native		2.0	
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander		1.0	
White or Caucasian		94.0	
Country of Residence			
USA		94	
Canada		>2	
Other: Australia, Asia		>1	

M = mean, *SD* = standard deviation

5 Results

A total of 324 completed surveys were used in data analysis. Demographic data is presented in Table 1. Participants had a mean age of 44.1 (±13.85) years, mean weight of 226.4 (±54.33) lbs., and a mean BMI of 36.7 (±.58) kg/m², classifying the mean BMI as

Table 2: Demographic characteristics of participants in four BMI groups

Group	*n*	*M*	Weight		Height		BMI
			Pounds	Kilograms	Inches	Centimeters	(kg/m²)
Overweight	58	44±15.95	177.05±16.64	80.31±7.55	66.73±2.96	169.5±7.5	27.92±1.33
Obese I	84	44.13±13.78	200.89±20.78	91.12±9.5	66.08±3.31	167.8±8.4	32.28±1.47
Obese II	68	44.25±14.16	234±22.8	106.14 ±10.34	66.12±2.86	168±7.3	37.55±1.45
Obese III	91	42.69±3.29	258.23±54.13	117.13±24.55	64.73±3.29	164.41±8.35	47.92±9.23

Table 3: Demographic characteristics of participants in four BMI groups

Age Group	*n*	*M*	Weight		Height		BMI
			Pounds	Kilograms	Inches	Centimeters	(kg/m²)
18–35	96	27.25 ± 4.48	223.5±48.05	101.38±21.8	65.96±3.54	167.54±91	36.32±8.48
36–50	95	42.29±4.02	240.44±.51	109.1±29.26	66.35±3.49	168.53±8.86	38.73±10.9
51–64	98	56.7±3.24	220.67±50.38	100.1±22.85	65.90±2.67	167.39±6.78	35.82±9.44
65–78	35	68±3.42	208.75±45.71	94.68±20.73	65.56±4.86	166.52±11.88	34.35±8.36

Table 4: Ranking of preferred terms for plus size women

Rank	Term	*M*	SD
1	Women's	1.97	0.93
2	Curvy	2.64	1.23
3	Women's Wear	2.65	1.15
4	Plus	3.17	1.05
5	Women's Plus	3.22	1.15
6	Custom	3.26	1.17
7	Plus-Size	3.33	1.05
8	Plus-Women's	3.56	1.01
9	Large Size	3.88	0.96
10	Queen	3.88	1.03
11	Super Women's	4.41	0.78
12	Outsized	4.69	0.59

Preferred term was assessed using a five-point scale with anchors of Very Undesirable (5) to Very Desirable (1), SD=standard deviation

"obese" I. The largest group (n=91), were classified within BMI of 35–40. Six per cent of the sample identified as minorities (including 2% American Indian/Alaskan Native, 2% Black/ African American, 1.2% Asian, 1% Pacific Islander/Hawaiian) and 94% identified as Caucasian. The majority of respondents were from the United States with small responses from Canada, Australia, and Asia.

Participants' BMI was calculated to determine "obesity" classifications (i.e., BMI >40). Table 2 characterises participants by BMI into ranges set by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. The largest group (n=91) were within a BMI of 35–40.

Participants were also grouped by age. Table 3 demonstrates demographics divided by age into 18–35, 36–50, 51–64 and 65–78. The smallest age group (n=35) represented ages 65–78.

RQ1. What are the most and least preferred terms for plus-size women?

Table 4 demonstrates ranking and mean ratings of each term in all age and BMI groups. Of the twelve terms, the most preferred terms were: Women's, Curvy, and Womenswear. The nine remaining terms were rated as neutral, undesirable and very undesirable. The terms Outsized, Super Women's, Queen, Large Size, Plus Womenswear, Plus-Size, Custom, Plus, and Women's Plus were rated more undesirable than neutral or desirable.

RQ2. Whether or not BMI has an effect on plus-size women's preferred terms for apparel signage.

While there are significant differences between women by BMI, the mean scores indicate that all women, excluding body mass, have similar preferences in store signage. There is a significant difference in the mean scores of terms based on BMI (Roy's largest root=0.001, F (12,242)=2.849, p<0.05). The findings reveal that four terms had significant dif-

Table 5: Demographic characteristics of participants (n=234)

Group	Large Size	Queen	Super Women's	Outsized
Mean ± SD				
"Overweight"	3.61±1*	3.76±.993	4.17±.825*	4.80±.401*
"Obese" I	3.88±.993	3.91±1.08	4.42±.753	4.70±.542
"Obese" II	3.89±8.96	4.09±1.04*	4.58±.599*	4.53±.813*
"Obese" III	3.99±9.47*	3.71±1.03*	4.41±.797	4.69±.610
Sign	.035	.037	.007	.024

Preferred term was assessed using a five-point scale with anchors of Very Undesirable (5) to Very Desirable (1)

*indicates significance p < .05

ferences in preference depending on BMI group. Women classified as "Obese" I are significantly more likely to prefer the term Large Size (p=.035) than "overweight" women. Women classified as "Obese" II are significantly more likely to prefer the term Queen (p=.037) than "Obese" III women. The term Super Women's is slightly more likely (p=.007) to be preferred amongst women in the "Obese" II group than "overweight" women. The term Outsized was more likely to be preferred by Overweight women (p=.024) than "Obese" II women. Findings reveal non-significant differences in the remaining terms. The term Women's was the highest rated option, deemed as very desirable and desirable by 72% of Overweight women, 78% of "Obese" I women, 74% of "Obese" II women, and 72% "Obese" III women. Table 5 demonstrates the significant differences found in term preferences between BMI groups.

RQ3. Whether age effects plus-size women's preferred terms for apparel signage.

The highest rated term by all age groups was *Women's*. Seventy-seven per cent of women aged 18–35 rated Women's as very desirable and desirable with similar ratings of 69% amongst 36–50 aged women, 77% amongst 51–64 year-old women and 73% by women age 65–78. There was a significant difference between age groups when considered jointly on their term preferences for apparel signage, Wilks Δ=.810, F(36, 768.927)=1.579, p<.018, partial η^2=.068. A separate analysis of variance was conducted for each dependent variable and evaluated at α=0.05. Significant differences between age groups on five terms including Queen, Women's, Large Size, Super Women's, Curvy, and Womenswear. The term preference Queen, F(3,271)=1.516, p=.014, partial η^2=.038, is statistically more preferred amongst 51–64 year olds (M=4.09) than every other age group; 18–35 year olds (M=3.60), 36–50 year olds (M=3.96), and 65–78 year olds (M=3.84). There was a significant difference between age groups on the term preference Curvy, F(3,271)=3.131, p=.026, partial η^2=.034, with 65–78 year olds (M=3.00) statistically less likely to prefer the term than 18–35 (M=2.55), 36–50 year olds (M=2.42), and 51–64 year olds (M=2.91). Women's was slightly less preferred by 65–78 years old (M=2.28) than 51–54 year olds (M=1.81). The term Super Women's was significantly less preferred by 36–50 (M=4.47) and 51–64 (M=4.47) than older women aged 65–78 (M=4.12). The last term, Womenswear, was more desired by ages 36–50 (M=.79) than women aged 65–78 (M=2.92). There was not a significant difference between age groups on terms Large Size, Super Women's, Plus, Plus Size, Plus-Womenswear, Women's Plus, Custom, Outsized, or Womenswear.

Excluding age and BMI, 96% of the sample rated Women's, as neutral and very desirable. Indicating that 96% of plus-size women prefer the term Women's over Plus-Size as a clothing size designation. Seventy-eight per cent rated Womenswear as neutral, desirable or very desirable, and 73.44% reported Curvy as neutral, desirable, and very desirable. On the other hand, 99% reported Outsized, 97.04% reported Super Women's, and 91.78% reported Large Size as very undesirable, undesirable, or neutral. The ma-

jority of all age groups and BMI reported the term Queen to be undesirable or very undesirable. While there are significant differences between age and BMI for the undesirable terms, based on the mean scores, Outsized, Super Women's, Large Size and Queen are not recommended for designating women's plus-size clothing in the fashion industry. The terms, in order of desirability, for plus-size consumers is Women's, Womenswear and Curvy.

6 Open-ended comments

At the end of the survey, an open-ended prompt elicited comments or suggestions about language used in the apparel industry. Thirty-eight per cent, or 124 participants commented in response to the query, "Please provide comments or suggestions for other terms to describe apparel for larger women." Five themes emerged from both long and short comments: 1. Questioning current practices, 2. Suggesting new practices, 3. Confirming a merchandising term, 4. Suggesting a new name, and 5. Discrimination, segregation, and separation.

Three coders independently analysed the comments and conducted a binary analysis to calculate Krippendorff's alpha inter-coder reliability estimates for each theme (Hayes & Krippendorff, 2007). Reliability coefficients for each category were as follows: 1. Questioning the current practices ($\alpha = 0.93$), 2. Suggesting new practices ($\alpha = 0.70$), 3. Confirming a merchandising term ($\alpha = 0.91$), 4. Suggesting a new name ($\alpha = 0.77$), and 5. Discrimination, Segregation, and Separation ($\alpha = 0.73$). Each comment was treated as the unit of analysis, with the five themes being coded for presence/non-presence for each response. New merchandising names and new practices for organising or labelling clothing were recorded to look for similarities within those themes.

1 Questioning the current practices

One-quarter of the comments included a question about how or why plus-size clothing is labelled or categorised as plus-size. The sentiments reflected confusion, frustration, and annoyance with the current clothing system. For example:

- One participant commented, Why can't all Women's clothes be called just "Women's"?
- Another participant commented, Why do they even need distinguishers for women that are larger? Why does a 22 all of a sudden become a big X? or a PLUS? Why doesn't clothing simply have numbers to measure the size? I don't understand the need to separate plus size and "normal" size clothing in a store anyways. Women are women regardless of size.
- Another participant further commented, Why does there have to be another term. Why can't stores just have racks with different sizes. We're bigger, not stupider, we can read sizes.

2 Suggesting new practices

Nearly one-third of the comments included a suggestion for a new practice of clothing categorisation or placement. Of these, the two most frequent suggestions included 1) using physical body measurements, as with men's clothing, and 2) organize all women's clothing in the same section. For example;

- One participant commented, All sizes are on the same rack, all styles should be in the same section, regardless of size.
- Another participant commented, It may not be appealing, but ALL clothing needs to be by measurement. No guessing involved. There needs to be a standard across the industry.
- Why not use actual measurements, like they do for men's clothing?

3 Confirming a merchandising term

Nearly one fourth of the comments were a confirmation or reinforcement of the terms used in the survey. The comments appeared to justify or add reasoning to their term selection while also crossing between other themes such as questioning the current practices. For example;

- One participant commented, How about Women's -no qualifier needed.

- Another participant commented, I'm ok with plus size, no need to cause confusion than [sic] it already can be.
- Another participant further commented, I really like the use of women's wear. I don't understand why clothing isn't just labeled [sic] according to size though. Why do they even need distinguishers for women that are larger?

4 Suggesting a new name

Forty per cent of the comments suggested new terms that were not included in the survey. Of these, the most common term recommendations were "full figured", "extended sizes", and "real women". Several comments included the desire for new words without, for example, "loaded values."

5 Discrimination, segregation, and separation.

Approximately one-fourth of the responses specifically addressed feelings of being separated or treated as other. These comments were similar to many of those suggesting a new practice. For example;

- One participant commented, How about just put all the clothes together so we can all shop for the same thing without feeling shamed into finding the large size section stashed behind the shoes where no one can see us.
- Another participant commented, I don't think there should be different sections. There should just be clothes, and the 'regular' clothing should come in all the sizes. Stop marginalising [sic] us.
- Another participant commented, The clothing should not be separate in the women's section. Meaning, it should not be segregated to another section.

7 Discussion

Plus-size women in this study rated the majority of merchandising terms very undesirable/ undesirable for communication in the fashion industry. Respondents felt that many terms are divisive because of the segregation used in merchandising. The majority preferred the term Women's to describe their apparel and many objected to the method of segregating plus-sized clothing. People with larger bodies in the United States accept discrimination with regularity and the findings of this study suggest that women who wear plus-size want to be viewed as women and not as a different group or other.

The examination of language for women who wear plus-size provides critical insight as to how fashion communication further marginalises women and perpetuates elitism in the fashion industry by grouping women in sizing categories. Cultural discourses stigmatise plus-size as unattractive and unhealthy. Perhaps the use of the term plus-size is a method to maintain the status quo of the in-group. The fashion industry has mirrored this discourse and created a clear divide between the attractive/healthy/in-group and the unattractive/unhealthy/out-group. The groups' language and communications vary between clothing brands and maintain the plus-size consumer in a constant state of confusion and in doing so, keeps the power in fashion reserved for the thin. As one respondent asked: "Imagine if plus was the *normal* section, and everything else were *minus* or *straight size*. Wouldn't it feel weird? But we do it to us fat people all the time." This comment highlights one example of how communication in the fashion industry is rooted in thin privilege (Bacon et al., 2016).

Many companies have marketed products for women who wear plus-size with the purpose of embracing diversity, exposing and criticising thin-privilege, elitism, and exclusion which are still at the heart of the fashion industry. While many Americans claim to value equality, the inequality and discrimination in groupings that frame women by clothing size is evident. Whether implicit or explicitly bias, retailers that limit sizes are in itself direct evidence of those companies' view of larger women.

Some participants commented the word plus-size is acceptable and politically correct. For example, one participant stated: "I'm ok with plus size, no need to cause confusion than [sic] it already can

be". While other participants and feminist scholars feel euphemisms such as heavy, large, voluptuous, and big-boned are only used by people who find the truth distasteful (Wann, 1998). Wann (2009) suggested that plus-size women should embrace the word "fat" and reclaim it as any other adjective such as tall or short. The difference in views can be understood through social identity theory. As humans are motivated to avoid uncertainty and ambiguity (Kruglanski, 2004; Kruglanski, Pierro, Mannetti, & De Grada, 2006) some women prefer to maintain the plus-size clothing group because dismantling it would cause confusion.

Further illustrating social identity with clothing size, participants reported experiencing unfair treatment when shopping. It has been found that even the smallest hint of categorisation, leads people to favour their own groups (Tajfel, Billig, Bundy & Flament, 1971). Group experiments have found that the mere fact of a grouping of people produces ethnocentrism and competitive intergroup behaviour (Diehl, 1990). Through social identity theory, plus-size women are the *out-group* to the smaller sized/normal/regular women's *in-group*, which may be viewed as a major threat to the virtuous nature of the thin in-group. Thin individuals are viewed as having, and thus valuing, willpower, adherence to diets and a superior morale (Bacon et al., 2016). Defending and preserving in-group values against out-groups may be construed as a moral imperative and perhaps drive implicit and bias behaviours (Mummendey & Otten, 1998). Maintaining the distinction between groups functions to protect the thin in-group because group threats are interpreted as individual threats (Thomas, McGarty & Mavor, 2016). For example, stating that plus-size clothing takes up too much valuable floor space (Pinckney, 2014) is an attempt to justify the practice, maintain the groups, and ward off accusations of prejudice and discrimination.

Our findings show that women who are out-group (plus-size), despite age or BMI, simply want to be referred to, and classified with the in-group (women). Social identity theory posits that when there is competition for a positive identity, individuals who already possess the positive identify are motivated to enhance and protect their identities (Rubin & Hewstone, 2004). As we've found, there are many negative associations and experiences as a plus-size consumer, and therefore dismantling the segregated sizing classification is a key motivation for plus-size women. However, the belief of social mobility, leaves some women striving to permeate the group boundaries. Meaning, some plus-size women need the group boundaries to define their success if they are able to join the in-group. Evidence of this attempt to change body size and wear smaller clothing, can be seen in the 60-billion-dollar revenue of the diet and weight loss industry (Williams, 2013). In another example, Gruys (2012) found that plus-size women who talked about wanting to lose weight received better customer service than women who did not. This indicates that the boundaries of clothing size groups are culturally agreed upon as an easy threshold to cross and explain why women who express a desire to lose weight are treated with more respect during clothes shopping.

The concept of clothing size in-group and out-group is a social construction of the *good* and *bad* body. Group status is communicated on clothing size labels and the interpretation of those sizes is culturally bound. Perhaps a shift in language and fashion communication can contribute to identity beyond the physical. In thinking of consumers primarily as women, and secondarily as clothing wearers, we can shift the thought process from *I am a size*_____, to *I wear a size*_____. Aspects of clothing, retail, and consumer experiences affect plus-size women's social identity, and in this examination, we expose the hierarchy of *in-groups* and *out-groups* in the fashion industry. Redefining the social value and restructuring the practices within fashion communications related to sizing, merchandising, designing, advertising, marketing, and retailing for plus-size women is needed. However, restructuring of fashion communication

is unlikely unless the *in-group* recognises their thin-privilege and makes concerted efforts towards equality and inclusion instead of aggressively attempting to maintain the current segregated sizing system (Jetten, McAuliffe, Hornsey & Hogg, 2006).

This study of language and fashion communication goes beyond surface level and reveals the deeper construction of power through social identity in the fashion industry. Plus-size women account for 67 per cent of the US population (Bauknecht, 2014) and addressing social identity could positively impact women's self-image. This study looked at the word plus-size as communicated as a merchandising classification and reinforced the anecdotal evidence found in popular American fashion literature. Generalizing the data beyond North America would not be appropriate at this time and further studies are needed. With a smaller sample size, there is also random variability to consider. With the current sample of N = 324, we can expect 5–7% variability in estimates for generalizing the findings (Fay, Halloran & Follmann, 2007) and the researchers believe the results to be generalizable to North America. While the scope of this paper does not include the logistics of implementing the practice of merchandising all Women's sizes together, it is evident that the overwhelming majority of women who wear plus-size desire to eradicate clothing size segregation. As suggested by many comments and confirmed through anecdotal popular press (Avilia, 2015; Wang, 2015), a switch to measurements as the size designation, similar to Men's clothing, may be a possible solution. Areas of future research include surveying other marginalised demographics and retailers that group consumers by size, such as 'big and tall' stores. Further study of clothing size communication and social identity would be of benefit to understand social belief structures for new and emerging markets.

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Authors note

The term "obesity" medicalizes human diversity and do harm to fat people. As fashion and fat studies scholars, „overweight", "obesity", "obese I, II, II" are placed in scare quotes in order to be consistent with the discourse we aim to represent.

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Communicating seduction. Luxury fashion advertisements in video campaigns

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Abstract
This study examines the different themes of communication that take place in video ad campaigns deriving from the French luxury fashion houses Louis Vuitton, Dior, Chanel, Cartier and Hermès. By using semiology as a method we were able to recognize the themes of adventure, seduction, love and play in the videos. This study explores also how the myth becomes an important meaning-maker of the luxury commodity and fills it with sensations and pleasure. Unlike all other ads, we could see that the meaning of luxury in the Hermès' ones was not directly connected to the objects per se but to the experience of human senses in contact with nature. We could further conclude that the visual communication of the ads has no need to be logical as long as it can seduce with its positive signs. The object of luxury constitutes a strong communication tool helping the viewer to discover new places, to fall in love, to create magic and to experience the amusement of play. Embedded in recognizable social narratives, the objects in the moving image are provided with a seductive meaning able to support the eternal myth of luxury.

Keywords
video advertisement, communication, luxury, myth, seduction.

1 Introduction

"All you need is luxury", says the e-mail ad from the travelling site Secrete Escapes (personal e-mail, 2016) invoking one of Beatle's greatest hit where the word "love" has obviously been replaced by "luxury". Needless to say that the hit "All you need is love" reflected the very foundation of the hippie community ideals of the sixties, facing today a paradigm shift where luxury and self-indulgence represent the new interests of a globalised world.

The fashion industry has had a great role in communicating these material interests with the aim of selling dreams, aspirations and fantasies to the consumer. If fashion is the biological child of a commercial rationale it is largely due to its ephemeral nature. Renewal in styles and trends has been chiefly relying on advertising and marketing strategies. "Advertising has grounds for optimism", states accurately Gilles Lipovetski (1994, p. 156). Optimism in the sense that the consumer can never reach the end of his commercial daily life as he is repeatedly exposed to the seductiveness and the magic of the renewed commodities.

If this logic of profit is characteristic of the fashion industry then we could presume that its luxury sector ought to be directed by different criteria. As we have investigated in "The Myth of Luxury in a Fashion World" (2018), a luxury brand relies by definition on its own cultural heritage sufficient in itself to uphold the reputation of the house. We argued however that communication and marketing strategies of luxury brands have joined the commercial principles of the fashion business, based on increased production and easy access to the products. In this joined business logic of fashion and luxury it is therefore tempting now to examine contemporary visual communication of five French luxury houses. For this purpose, we have selected twelve video ad campaigns for the houses Louis Vuitton, Dior, Chanel, Cartier and Hermès shot between 2006 and 2017. This selection is due to the recognition of these houses as classical luxury maisons with long tradition of craftsmanship and know-how, and therefore good representa-

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tives of the luxury fashion sector. The objective is to explore the semiology of luxury fashion through the different themes of communication in the moving image and consequently, to understand the effects on the viewer. Following Barthes (1990, p. 10), we consider semiology as the analysis of the imaginary objects (in contrast to the real objects) leading us to the perception of the images raised by, in this case, the video ads. This method will enable us to discover the *meaning* that comes out from the collective representations of luxury fashion objects. We argue that this meaning in the luxury fashion world is connected to the myth as significant component of luxury. Claiming a priori that the experience of luxury is intimately connected to sensations and pleasure, we intend equally to look closer on how these two components interact in the "image-speech" so as to uphold the myth behind many luxury brands. Before being an object of premium quality, luxury is an abstract notion that represents the opulence and the refinement of the upper-class. This is, however, the outcome of the *mythification* of luxury as it had been reserved for the very few up to the nineteenth century. That said, the myth has continued to be a fundamental communication tool as it is the *condition sin qua non* of the essence of luxury. Considering the myth as a kind of speech, an oral or written message including any kind of writings or representations like photography, cinema, shows and publicity (Barthes, 2009, pp. 131–132), we intent thus to explore its embodiment in the campaign films.

We argue further that the materialization of the myth takes place through different social practices aiming to reinforce the consumer's craving for luxury consumption. In this regard, we consider the act of consumption as being either subjective or interactive. The subjective consumption revolves around personal indulgence and is connected to sensations of comfort and pleasure. Visits to health resorts, culinary, travel and art experiences for instance are all representatives of this intimate enjoyment that appeals to the human senses and that have been rhetorically celebrated by Voltaire in his poem Le Mondain from 1736 (von Wachenfeldt, 2013). The interactive consumption, on the other hand, follows the logic of social endorsement and emanates from an individual or group embracement of various communication practices where advertising is a powerful feature. This kind of consumption is additionally promoted today by the development of social media and the display of one's material acquisitions on *Youtube* or *Instagram,* to name but a few, becoming hence a global feature of daily activities (von Wachenfeldt, 2012, 2015). Based on this assumption, we will also examine the kind of consumption that is advanced in the video ads and its role in preserving the myth of luxury in the 21st century. We consider the myth as a leitmotiv of communication in the luxury fashion sector due to its capacity to bring into light the collectively unconscious and make it conscious. It is additionally a way to understand advertising as a communication tool and how it affects the consumer's beliefs and behaviour. We will therefore be looking at the "image-speech" of the campaign ads and the socio-cultural practices that it embraces. This "image-speech" is composed of two modes: the picture in motion and the language. Advertising seen from a societal perspective, as it is the case here, draws on different theories including semiotics, literary studies and sociology (Hackley and Hackley, 2015, p. 19). Our investigation of the myth telling in advertising will consequently draw on theoretical perspectives from Barthes' semiotics (2009) and Baudrillard's and Lipovetsky's social theories of consumption (1998, 2005, 1983, 1994).

2 Discovery, seduction and love

2.1 Louis Vuitton

The video ad campaign *The Spirit of travel* from Louis Vuitton Cruise 2016 Collection is filmed in the desert of Palm Springs, California, by the photographer Patrick Demarchelier. "A quest for freedom and adventure on the other side of the world is what the Louis Vuitton "spirit of trav-

el" is all about" says the introductory text on Louis Vuitton's website. In this desert scenery we find the actresses Michelle Williams driving a car while Alicia Vikander, somewhere else in the desert, is walking with a pink Louis Vuitton handbag. A black and white snake is crawling towards her. To her voice saying "I don't walk behind I find new path" the snake is now held in her fearless hands. This scene is followed by others where Vikander is surrounded by many Louis Vuitton trunks, and later on the actress is in a palm forest holding a new model of handbag, admiring the high palm trees that surround her. The whole video is imbued with the spirit of adventure and the excitement of new discoveries. To the voice of Vikander saying "Inspired by the past we make the future" the two actresses are finally united in the same scenes but without any real interaction, except for the handbags that each one of them carries along. In fact, the handbag appears to be the only thing they share in their travelling experience. "Above the ordinary to the extraordinary", say now the two voices.

Many features in this video rely on the primary business focus of the Louis Vuitton house, namely "travel" and "bags" originally related to practical arrangements. But practicality is not a luxury attribute and thus a visionary world has to be created in order to communicate a meaning to the body of the brand. This is where the viewer can dive into the magic of the desert and the palm tree forest, getting hence the sense of adventure. Moreover, using celebrities in advertisement is quite a common feature but we would like to advance here that the personas of Williams and Vikander also correspond to the properties that the house wants to be associated with, namely success, talent and passion. The Golden Globe Award and Oscar nominations for Williams and the Oscar for Vikander can be considered as emblem of these properties. As such, they epitomize the "above the ordinary" embracing the supposedly outstanding character of a luxury house. Connecting further the commodities of the house to the human attributes of passion, talent and success is a way of personifying them. We would like to draw a parallel here between this "humanisation" of the objects and the Voltairian rhetoric on luxury from 1736. As we have investigated in "The Language of Luxury in Eighteenth-Century France" (2013), luxury commodities are valuable because of the physical sensations they provide human beings. In this, the objects become one with the subject. In the same way, the Louis Vuitton handbag in the Cruise 2016 ad campaign is connected to the adventure of two cinema stars, sharing their experience of discovery travel. Abstract notions like adventure and freedom are given a life through the handbags. It is further interesting to see how the scenery of the ad (the image) is completed by the speech saying that the past is the keystone on which the future of the house is built upon. This "image-speech" links together past, adventure, success, celebrity and fantasy to perpetuate the mythical elements of luxury in the Louis Vuitton bag. Thanks to all these attributes, the house does not "walk behind".

2.2 Dior

If travelling is a precious key theme for the French trunk maker from 1854, seduction and femininity can be attributed to the house that created the flower woman. The ad campaign *Lady Dior Grey London* by John Cameron Mitchell from 2010 is the story of attraction, magic and temptation. The French actress Marion Cotillard is a showgirl performing in a time glass before the enchanted public. While the red sand is slowly moving down the glass exposing her body bit by bit, the public is thrilled of excitement. Cotillard grasps her grey Dior handbag looking for something but then, with a tricky smile, puts it back to take out a key holder from her bustier. Slowly strolling with her key from one man to another, her eyes finally fall on the actor Sir Ian McKellen in a wheelchair. Indifferent to his physical disability, Cotillard throws over the key to him, and in the following scene he is in her dressing room. The same grey handbag is once again used to pick up a Dior pocket flask that she drinks from and handles over to McKellen. Cotil-

lard uncovers gently his paralysed legs and caresses them while he is still holding the Dior pocket flask in his hand. The magical touch of the French actress is still present in the next scene by means of a Dior pen that she takes out from the same handbag in order to help a painter to finish his painting. Once her missions are done she reappears elegantly dressed to the same handbag, applauded by the public and heading towards the exit door. The disabled man is shouting out his distress and the painter goes crazy on the canvas. There is a moment of wonder when the disabled suddenly rises up from his chair and the painter looks astonished at his beautiful portrait. Cotillard walks out towards the striking light and the enchantment of the moment is unmistakable. It is all in the handbag.

Dior's ad campaign involves the key elements of magic and seduction to communicate the spectacular character of the house. The leitmotif of the story imbeds the spectators in emotions of empathy, frustration and amazement, crowned by a catharsis at the end of the video. In this atmosphere of emotions and temptation, the Dior objects get a prominent role as they represent comfort and aid: the pocket flask relaxes, the pen provides help, and all of this is contained in the magic handbag carried by a seductive woman. In his analysis of advertising, Lipovetsky (1994) asserts that "Seductivness can […] be freely exploited for its own sake; it shows off as hyperspectacle, displaying the magic of artifice in stagings indifferent to the reality principle and to the logic of plausibility" (p. 158). Indeed, none of the features in the video are credible. Their role is thus to create an ersatz drama with a handbag, a pocket flask and a pen as important signifiers of a luxury brand. What remains by the spectator is a story of wonder where the Dior objects have the power to release. The brand's name is "humanized, given a soul and a psychology" (Lipovetsky, 1994, p. 158). In this context, the luxury objects become indispensable in the illustration of sentiments and in people's contact with each other. This representation of luxury is, once again, connected to the human experience of emotions where the commodities are idealized for their healing power.

Dior's minute-long ad campaign from 2014 *The Future is Gold* by Jean-Baptiste Mondino for the perfume *J'adore* adds another compelling spectacle to the prestigious reputation of the house. Charlize Theron walks gracefully through La Galerie des Glaces at the Versailles palace when a long cloth in silk falls down from an opening in the ceiling, revealing a piece of the sky above. "The past can be beautiful" says Theron and climbs on the cloth towards the opening in the ceiling. "A memory, a dream […] the only way out is up. It's not heaven, it's a new world, the future is gold, j'adore Dior" says the alluring voice of Theron. Unlike *Lady Dior Grey London*, this video does not involve emotions of empathy, frustration or distress. It is a commercial of a fantasy scene shot in a splendid place with a dazzling actress in gold, playing the seductive feminine woman. The colour of the clothing and the surroundings reflect directly the gold top of the perfume flacon of *J'adore*. Moreover, gold as an element represents luxury, chosen and used since ancient times by the royals. The features of palace, gold, beauty and femininity reflect all the qualities and characteristics that the house Dior wants to be associated with. These attributes take us further back to the idea of heritage where "the past can be beautiful". Heritage includes preservation of tradition and Dior as an haute couture house – and thus an institution of craftsmanship skills – can promote its image through the different features of the video. The perfume *J'adore* leads the way up to a new discovery and a new world. The luxury commodity is, de novo, full of sensations and reverie helping the human beings to explore new impressions. Needless to say that this commercial plays on the superlative and can certainly not be taken literally. But this is exactly the point: the superlative becomes a playful element in the ad and can therefore be easily adopted by the spectator. In fact, we are smoothly led to connect the fragrance Dior to beauty, splendour, high tailoring and not least playfulness. And we can almost smell it.

2.3 Chanel

Chanel No 5's commercial *Train de nuit* directed by Jean-Pierre Jeunet and featuring the French actress Audrey Tautou offers another interesting themes of sensuality and discovery. Tautou catches up the train and while standing in the narrow corridor, a handsome young man passes by. A frozen moment where he cannot make a move while breathing her perfume and a mutual affinity arises. Well in her cabin, she poses the flacon of Chanel No 5 on the table. The train passes through different landscapes and the actress seems to be having a pleasant dream as her naked body moves in a sensual way between the sheets. The young man walks down the corridor and is about to knock on her door while, simultaneously, she is awake and can feel his presence. The flacon is shaking and its shadow is on the wall of the cabin. They never meet again on the train. Arriving to Istanbul, Tautou goes on a discovery trip in the oriental city when suddenly, on a boat, she catches the handsome man in the lens of her camera. In the next scene, she is back at the train station but stops suddenly when she feels somebody's presence in her back. The young man approaches her from behind and kisses her sensually on the shoulders and the neck. They are both standing in the middle of a mosaic floor with the Chanel's intertwined C in gold.

Love stories are many times kept alive thanks to the myth that surrounds them and because of the positive feelings they involve, regardless their end. They are therefore easily remembered. Remembrance is further an important element in advertising as the aim is to lead the consumer to the awareness of the product. A sensual meeting between two people is a recognizable feeling from reality or from cinema and by associating Chanel No 5 with it, the consumer can experience a certain familiarity. The perfume is the engine of this encounter revolving around beauty, sensations, and not least the unexpected. Like the commercial of Dior, Chanel pictures the seduction and the playfulness. While the first trait is present in every scene through the emotions of the actors, the second relates to the implausibility of the end of the plot. Let us go back to Lipovetsky (1994) here when he describes the character of advertising that

> does not seduce *homo psycho-analyticus*, but *homo ludens*. Its effective communication has to do with its playful superficiality, with the cocktail of images, sounds and meanings it offers without any concern for the constraints of reality or the seriousness of truth. (Lipovetsky, 1994, p. 160).

In effect this "cocktail" is significant in communicating the message of Chanel's iconic fragrance. The video is shot in an exciting place (the scenes of the train and the sightseeing are charming) to the sound of the train rolling at night and to Billie Holiday's romantic song "I am a fool to want you". Seduction has no need to be close to reality as long as it can nourrish the myth that is embedded in many love stories. Let us emphasize here in, accordance with Barthes (2009, p. 131), that a myth is neither the object (the perfume flacon) nor the idea behind the object (luxury and love) but the mode of signification and the form that create a system of communication (p. XXX). Correspondingly, the ad campaign of Chanel No 5, is the form that contains the speech with its many signifiers conveying the discourse on beauty and sensuality of the luxury object.

2.4 Cartier

Other love stories are to be discovered in *The Proposal* from 2015, Sean Ellis video campaign for Cartier. The inauguration scene displays the recognizable French symbol, The Eiffel Tour, followed by scenes of three young couples that bump into each other hastily and accidently without being acquainted. The scenes of the three love stories succeed each other resulting in a linear narrative: a couple in a taxi car is on its way to the airport, another one is at the Rodin Museum while the third represents a desperate man who is late to his rendez-vous. The girl at the Rodin Museum receives an image of the statue "Suzon" on her cell phone while her boyfriend suddenly disappears. The following

scene takes us to a dialogue at the airport where the woman is wondering why she is leaving and how much he will miss her, and in the next scene we see the desperate man running up the stairs to catch up his girlfriend in the elevator. "Je voulais rendre ton anniversaire plus mémorible", says the young man with an obvious English accent while the elevator doors open up. The comicality of the situation appears here as he is using a non-existing word in French (rhyming possibly with *horrible*) and is therefore directly corrected by a lady in the elevator. Back to the airport scene, the couple is now kissing when the man, on the sly, takes his girlfriend's passport out of her handbag. At the museum, the girl, once has reached the statue, gets another image-message representing this time a part of the Rodin statue "Le penseur". The other young man is still running up the stairs after the elevator and at the airport, before the check-in desk, the woman is seeking desperately after her passport while he is helping her with her search. The tension is rising in the three narratives when, suddenly, the little famous red box of Cartier appears in the statue's hand and is grabbed quickly by the boyfriend (who had placed it there); the other man is at his knee at the airport taking out one item at the time when he, at turn, presents the red box to his fiancée, and the third man finally reaches the right floor saying "je t'aime" while opening the red box. Moments of great surprise and happiness for everyone and the final scene of the video shows Rodin's stunning sculpture "Le penseur" with the Eiffel Tour behind it. The short film ends up where it started, namely with the great symbol of Cartier's national and cultural origin, the Eiffel Tower.

The theme of love is part of Cartier's profile as the company has the iconic collection "Love" since the 1970's. Love is also a strong emotional experience that can be recognized and sympathised with. What more is, these three love stories have a humoristic undertone that can easily mediate the message to the viewer: namely that love can be beautifully expressed and experienced with the help of a luxurious ring. Luxury here is connected to humour, surprise and not least entertainment. The story of three young men offering amazing Cartier rings to their girlfriends might be perceived as a hyperbolic act but would this kind of overstatement trouble the viewer? Hackley and Hackley (2015, pp. 19–20) underline that "consumers are expected to be able to distinguish between untruth and humorous hyperbole, but the advertisers make every effort to blur this distinction" (p. XX). In fact, the viewer is rather seduced by the lovable storytelling and the beautiful jewellery as both features interplay in order to create the effect of seduction. The meaning is created through the charming attempts of the young men to obtain the acceptance for love and marriage through the agency of Cartier's highly recognized aesthetics. This is the "immediate impression" that the myth aims at despite the irrationality of the action (Barthes, 2009, p. 155). In this, the myth encounters the nature of advertising itself since a fascinated consumer can take it for granted (Hackley and Hackley, 2015, p. 14). Also the theme of luxury, embodied in the Cartier objects, is highlighted through the supremacy of French culture as both the Eiffel tower and Rodin's sculptural art figure strongly in the video. This results in a sophisticated view on luxury as high material culture. Cartier can thus firmly position itself as an honourable company with a long sociocultural heritage.

3 The natural and the playful

3.1 Hermès

If adventure, magic, seduction and love have been recurrent themes in the advertising campaigns for Louis Vuitton, Dior, Chanel and Cartier, playfulness and nature would be the ones of Hermès' commercials. The film *La fabrique de la Soie* directed by Craig McDean in 2016 takes us to Hermès' silk workshop where the famous scarfs are produced. A model is either lying or running on the working tables where all the scarves are prepared. Throughout the remainder of the film, the same model plays around with the exquisite and colourful scarves, touching

them and rolling them around her body. This feeling of gaiety is accompanied to a cheerful and speedy music that reinforces the feeling of lightness, play and juvenility. These same sensations are illustrated in the video *Maxi-Twilly Cut* from 2016 where young models are skating in a real skatepark with the famous "carré de soie" bound around their neck, hair and wrists. The ad is groundbreaking as it reverses our view of the scarves as chic and reserved to a specific higher group. The commodity in the ad is part of the freedom of the play and as such, its meaning as luxury item is *naturalized*.

The earlier commercial *Bandanas de soie* from 2014 features the same idea of playfulness. A teenager is guiding her horse through Paris and in the following scene, her horse has been overtaken by other girls. The western theme is added to a Parisian setting with western music and fashion style accompanying the famous Hermès bandanas as horse blankets, flags and headbands. The young girl's ability to interact with the horses and to control them enables her finally to get back her own one, guiding him happily back through Paris, as in the first scene.

Unlike the other houses investigated here, Hermès' commercials do not involve any extraordinary features or intense emotions. The plot is often very simple and does not allude to luxury or opulence, neither does it take place in sophisticated places. The mini films of the perfume *Terre d'Hermès* illustrate well this particularity. Videos from 2006, 2013 and 2016 revolve all around the same features: earth, wind, water and horses. In the one from 2006 the plot takes place in nature with a man grabbing the sand in his hand to the sound of the horse gallop and the wind. The commercial from 2013 shows a man working the land and drying his sweat while a voice saying "From dust you are to dust you will return". In the mini film from 2016 for the same perfume, we see a horse galloping, beautiful rock formations and a man diving in the ocean. The synergy between nature, horses and human beings are central in these commercials. The perfume's name itself, *Terre* (earth), reflects the meaning of the basic element of life and the films represent this meaning by connecting it to human sensations. And the commodity, in this case the perfume, is the bottle containing this synergy.

We can conclude here that Hermès' video campaigns do not display any attributes of magic or seduction. The themes are basic, referring either to elements in nature or to the pleasure of playing. The representation of the Hermès commodities in the commercials above is in fact subordinated to nature or to amusement.

Nonetheless, in the latest commercial for the spring summer shoes collection 2017 the focus is on the feet wearing male and female sandals and other shoes from Hermès. The fast-changing images and the cheerful music create a rapid tempo in the film. But once again, there is no supplementary ornamentation, neither of the objects nor of the framing of the brand.

4 The construction of magic-meaning

We have argued at the outset that sensations and pleasure are intimately connected to the experience of luxury and attempted to show how luxury brands make use of this connection in their video advertisements. We suggested further that consumption of luxury goods can be mainly of subjective or interactive type and in the following we intend to explore the kind of consumption that prevails in our advertising material.

The analysis of the twelve film ads identified different sensations emanating from the themes of discovery, magic, seduction and play. Pleasure, as a personal indulgence, is at the heart of the idea of consumerism and the condition sine qua non for its essence. In this regard, Baudrillard (1998, pp. 34–35) speaks of "le vertige de la réalité" that is realized through the consumer goods. In order to help us escape the "closure" of everydayness, mass communications offer a "simulacrum of the world". This simulacrum, replacing reality, comforts us with the positive signs of security that are imbedded in the images. "Consumption is governed by a form of

magical thinking; daily life is governed by a mentality based on miraculous thinking", states Baudrillard further (1998, p. 31). We have seen how this idea of magic embodied the themes of adventure, seduction and love identified in the ad campaigns. This "magical thinking" can be connected to the type of *subjective* consumption relying on the idea of personal indulgence filled with thrill and joy. Herein, the ads speak to the individual as if he would be specially chosen to experience the pleasure of luxury.

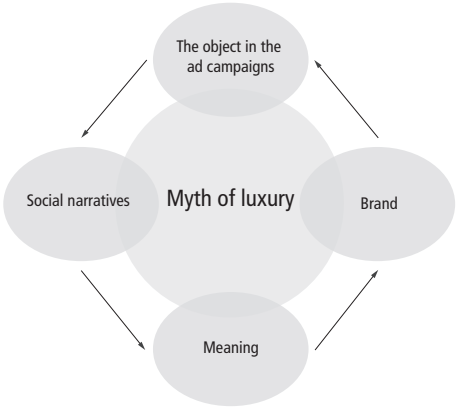
Moreover, since the ads build narratives with recognizable themes and emotions, their meaning can be easily adopted by the consumer. As a powerful communication tool they affect the consumer's attitude and can therefore be associated with the *interactive* consumption. In this regard, they assist people in exploring new sensations through the luxury commodity: The Louis Vuitton bag promotes the discovery, the Chanel No 5 triggers love, the Dior bag does magic, the Cartier rings generate humor and surprise and finally, Hermès' bandanas engender the play. The objects deriving from these houses are idealized for their capacity to create all these vibes and excitement, becoming therefore important symbols of the house's luxury attribute.

We could advance further in the same vein that the "image-speech" represented in the ads supports and maintains the double function of the myth. Following Barthes (2009, p. 140), this double function "makes us understand something and it imposes it on us". Correspondingly, the commodities are fed with meaning that is easily perceived by the consumer. And although this latter is helped through the understanding process of the myth, he still can't distinguish its "semiological system" and sees it therefore as a "causal process" (Barthes, 2009, p. 156). If you carry a Louis Vuitton handbag you will experience magic places, if you use Chanel No 5 you might fall in love, if you wear a Dior bag you could create magic, if you buy a Cartier ring you will surprise and seduce and if you wear the Hermès bandanas you will gain the sense of play. Let us add another example from the exclusive Swiss watch house Chopard. The printed ad "Happy Dreams" represents a young model jumping in the air with a happy smile while pointing out with her index towards the watch on her wrist. The cheerful physiognomy of the model in Chopard's ad is in direct relation with the watch itself. The diamond watch makes people happy as it might realise their dreams. Watch and diamonds lead to or are the equivalent of happiness. That is what Barthes (2009, p. 156) calls "natural relationship" in the eyes of the observer. We prefer to term it as pseudo-natural relationship since it is a constructed one, using the material object to affect the state of mind. Seeing advertisement from a sociocultural perspective, Hackley and Hackley (2015) state accurately that

> advertisers provide the suggestion, and, as consumers, we complete the gestalt. Gestalt psychology refers to the way people complete the circle of meaning from partial cues or prompts. […] Advertising plays with the grey area of meaning, using implicit connotation and suggestion as well as making explicit claims. (p. 18).

We suggest in consequence that the image-speech of the ads form a circle of different components that interact semantically with each other. The luxury object is embedded in different social narratives revolving around the themes of travel, attraction,

Figure 1: Myth of luxury



love and play. Each narrative generates the meaning of the object, connecting it further to the brand behind it. This would illustrate the Barthesian "causal process" as it is perceived by the consumer (Figure 1).

At the heart of this circle, we find the myth of luxury supported and perpetuated by the interaction of these four components. And what is the myth if not this "vertigo of reality"? This vertigo helps us to create an identity through the meaning of the object. Baudrillard (1998) points out that:

> [y]ou never consume the object in itself (in its use-value); you are always manipulating objects (in the broadest sense) as signs which distinguish you either by affiliating you to your own group taken as an ideal reference or by marking you off from your group by reference to a group of higher status. (Baudrillard, 1998, p. 61).

A handbag from Louis Vuitton or a ring from Cartier helps us – at least at a mimetic level – to confirm our belonging to the higher group, both culturally and socially, or in any other case, to socialize with this group. If we moreover cannot purchase a Dior handbag, we can still buy the perfume of the house. "J'adore" is not only the ersatz of the costly dress but also of the lack of sensuality in daily life that can be compensated by the smell. The discourse of advertising consists of this particular ability to rock us in a recognizable security initiated by the narratives. Certainly, the viewer does not literally believe in the message of the ad: A handbag is not the adventure itself, the perfume cannot take us to heaven, a proposal does not require a full diamond ring and scarves do not necessarily entail playfulness. It is neither the rhetoric of the ad nor the information given by it that generate the direct effects on the consumer but the "underlying leitmotiv of protection and gratification" (Baudrillard, 2005, p. 181) that the ad compasses. These leitmotivs of pleasure, attraction, entertainment and love that we have seen and that have been represented through the luxury commodities constitute a social practice that is easy to relate to and to perceive. The myth of luxury that these ads maintain does not have to be reasonable for the consumer, as for him and for her, the real semantic features are not crucial as long as the message in the communication is conceivable and agreeable.

In this logic of belief lies also the strategy of personalization of commodities. *J'adore* talks to me as an individual, it is what the *I* worships. "I don't walk behind I find new path" as Alicia Vikander says in the Louis Vuitton ad, "Je t'aime" as in Cartier's one. The individualization suggests that the *I* is a strong selfhood that needs to be rewarded and responded to. Simply "Because I am worth it" as in L'Oréal's ad.

Interestingly, Lipovetsky (1983, p. 155) in *L'ère du vide* considers mass consumption as a formula where the accessibility of all to cars, television, blue jeans and Coca-Cola coexists with the personalization and the accentuation of singularities. It is not surprising that this formula can be said to characterize fashionable objects. What is more remarkable though is that this communication strategy is even adopted by the luxury industry.

We could conclude from this that there is an ambiguous attitude when luxury brands meet advertising. Luxury is supposedly for the happy few while advertising aims at reaching everyone. Luxury speaks to a higher personal choice while advertising addresses the masses. Indeed, today's communication of luxury plays on the mythical and unique image of the brand whilst adopting the seductive strategy of mass-mediated fashion goods.

5 Conclusion

We departed from the hypothesis that the myth is an important meaning-maker of luxury. The analysis of the video ad campaigns from Louis Vuitton, Dior, Chanel, Cartier and Hermès allowed us to see the recurrent presence of a hyperspectacle featuring adventure, magic, seduction and play, all of them being important units of the mythified luxury commodities. The representations of the objects in the short

films connect their existence to the human experience, giving them the power to discover, to heal, to seduce, to fall in love and to play. In this respect, the objects endorse the expected representation of the idea of luxury as something exceptional. Analyzing the different signs in every video has enabled us to identify the frequency of hyperbolism in the narratives. The ads in focus here were all based on the superlative as a tool to seduce and trigger the fantasy and the need of the viewer.

It is noteworthy that, unlike the other houses, Hermès' ads do not revolve around the extraordinary character of the objects but rather around the human experience, whether it is discovered through the contact with nature or with the elementary act of playing. The significance of luxury by Hermès is not connected to the objects per se but to the experience of senses. In that sense, the Hermès' commodity does not play a relevant role in the relation between humans and nature.

We could further see that every commodity is built on different recognizable social narratives that enable the perception of its meaning. Referring to travel, to seduction or to love is an experience that the viewers can easily relate to. In fact, the "image-speech" of the ads takes place through a circle of different components that secure the double function of the myth, being both understandable and controlling. Dazed by this seductive vertigo, we can effortlessly preserve the eternal myth of luxury.

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Body in fashion films: The new net-aesthetic era

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Abstract
With "fashion film" we mean those online videos that are peculiar to fashion industry and are developing their own language and new types of brand narration. The field of study presented here to is related to language. The objective is indeed to better understand how this new communication tool has influenced the conventional language of fashion images through the development of new codes or a transformation of the existing ones. The object under examination is, in particular, the body as a preferred communication code within this industry. This body is not viewed by fashion as a simple object to dress, but rather as a mediating channel between the individual's individuality and their need for communication, or better to say, their need to establish a relationship within its context. To do so, it seemed appropriate to start with the examination of the history of fashion images by concisely analysing how the body has changed its communicative role over the decades. Further analysis was then conducted in order to focus on the new meaning undertaken by the body in fashion films. As a consequence, the result is a complex and extremely rich picture.

Keywords
fashion film, fashion language, codes, fashion photography, fashion images

1 Body in fashion: codes and languages

Body as *social product* (Bourdieu, 1987) is an important communication tool that builds and conveys its own identity: the body mediates every relationship between the individual and the social context he belongs to, as well as it primarily establishes a self-relationship to gain identity.

In a semiotic perspective, the body reveals the *form* of the individual-signifier also through garments, which then translate the individual-signified's being and essence, that is his values.

In his book *The Fashion System*, Barthes (1967) starts from the question: "… but which body is the Fashion garment to signify?" (p. 269).

Body and garment mutually generate meaning: body and fashion attract and repel each other, in a constant game of new significations for new significances.

French semiologist Greimas (1983) states that body is the place where we find values, which moderate the relationship between subject and him/herself. This relationship results from a process, which therefore leads the individual to live his own body with awareness and self-determination, even more in modern times - the individual is inspired by patterns coming often from images of the various media he is subjected to, so as to feel comfortable in his own social relationships.

In particular, fashion images have interpreted the woman and her body over the years – through these images one can understand how women have been conceived, what has been and is still transgressive and what are the stereotypes related to body.

Garments represent the language the body adopts to communicate itself: garments redefine and narrativize the body by contextualizing it. Besides the fashion of garments, there is therefore the fashion of the body, which is continuously re-semanticized as a bearer of quintessential values in different historical, social and costume periods. Indeed, fashion images are not about general but alive clothes – body's aim is moulding and giving fashion world a soul. More specifically, we could say that body in fashion becomes a narrator through the use of images – we can in

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fact experience a dream when looking at those women shown in the pictures from the early 20th century to the present day. Fashion images' primary purpose was to translate the idea of beauty by showing a perfect beauty of a perfect woman for a perfect dress. That body was consequently perfect.

By retracing the history of fashion images, we see how the body interprets this abstract model of perfection over the years and, especially, how these images have always made a dream of perfection come true by codifying the idea of beauty into ever-changing languages. Body is the place of life, experiences, feelings; it is also the object and instrument used to communicate and seduce the others, and it is forced to adapt, at least partially, to a changing gaze.

2 Fashion body through the time: a short history

Albert Liberman, Vogue's artistic and editorial director from 1941 to 1994, stated that fashion photography is not a photo about clothes, but rather a photo about a woman (Angeletti, Oliva, 2012).

Starting off with this suggestion and adopting a semiotic approach, our attempt is to interpret the *body*, which is narrated by fashion photography as *shape* of a (*fashion) content*, both content and shape being seen over the time.

For this reason, we have seen the body as code, which communicates the classic fashion luxury exclusivity and distinctiveness.

It is certainly true that photography is often outlined in semiotics as indexical sign, or just index, due to the so-called *physical continuity* between sign and object

> (…) The current presence of photography informs us that, in a certain moment, the photographed object was in front of the camera lens. (Volli, 2003, p. 28; translated by author)

In my previous study (Buffo, 2012), I have however shown how fashion images have been able to structure an authentic language over time, which is as highly recognizable and clearly characterized by rules, symbols and intrinsic codes as any other kind of language.

In the introduction to this book, we read:

> In order to formulate this opinion, I have spent many days browsing through the pages from the old editions of the premier fashion magazine Vogue Italia, and collecting the yesterday's and today's ad campaigns. Likewise, I have watched the online short movies of the leading brands. This was the beginning of an extremely fascinating and interesting experience which allowed me to outline the journey made by fashion, even if it was not always a conscious path yet clear anyway. (p. 9) (translated by author)

We are considering only one code of this language, because it is probably the most crucial in building fashion brand imageries: the body code and its evolution over time.

Our findings lead us to identify four different ways of living and interpreting the body in the last millennium

a Art Body
b Narrating Body
c Free Body
d Desire Body.

Each of these bodies had its own expressive peak in a given historical, socio-cultural and even artistic context. This is the reason why each body characterizes and is characterized by its period of origin and development. All these categories are however not limited to their development period, but rather they are still enriching the fashion language over the decades, as it is evident by looking at the contemporary photographers. In order to provide a better insight into each category, we will therefore take several contemporary fashion photographers as an example, whose style recalls one of these four interpretations of the body code, and without forgetting that fashion language is so rich and unique thanks to the contamination

and combination of these great masters of photography through the times.

Let's see them one by one.

The first is *Body* as *Art,* which first appeared in the U. S. on the pages of the recently born Vogue magazine.

Indeed, Vogue meant to be the first fashion magazine to serve as trends lover and promoter through fashion images, and it started as a magazine addressed to a special, feminine, elitist, cultured and highbrow audience.

In 1913, Mr. Condé Nast (just a few years after the purchasing of that small magazine, i. e. Vogue), decided to confide in a photographer so as not to simply show garments but rather create trendsetting images in terms of taste, clothing and any other topic to arouse interest in this narrow, selected and exclusive female audience belonging to the American high society. The photographer's name was Adolf de Meyer, the first to establish a close relationship between art and fashion, between pure research and what will be later called cultural industry. He infused not only his photographic skills in fashion images but primarily his sophisticated style, which became firmly popular during those years. Thanks to him, an aesthetic taste took on a broader meaning for the first time, thus allowing us to talk about *aesthetic massification.*

His images depicted imageries where the dream was directly exhibited and women looked ethereal and unreal, unconscious models of the new fashion world. Neither their body nor their garments were the protagonists, but it was rather the dreamlike atmosphere able to turn every woman into a model to create that desire always needed by fashion.

As mentioned before, this photographic signature didn't fade out completely, as we still find the same dreamy environment in some important contemporary fashion photographers: one of them being of course Paolo Roversi (1947). His style is also blurred and surreal and decisively pictorial, where bodies seem celestial and impalpable creatures, noblewomen of past eras deprived of their physicality in favour of a polite and timeless femininity.

Just a few years after De Meyer, Horst P. Horst (1906–1999) will be however the first fashion photographer to celebrate the body by recovering its true authenticity – model of the other great photographer G. Hoyningen-Huene (1900–1968), at the beginning it was only as photographer that Horst turned De Meyer's sculptural body into pure sensuality, a body in constant balance between image and imagery. One of his most famous images portrays a woman on her back, wearing a corset drawn by Mainbocher. This image, structured as a *trompe l'oeil,* shows only the back chest of the girl, without legs, as if she were leaning against a shelf. The light effects and the malicious slip-on corset, with its ribbons lasciviously falling on the shelf, are in harmony with this perfect and tonic (though not too muscular) model's body, thus creating a soft aura of fascination. This is one of the first images to celebrate the body and an idea of beauty as a harmonious balance of shapes.

Begun by Horst, this trend then took on different but always consistent elements through other great fashion photographers' lenses, such as Irving Penn (1917–2009) in the Fifties and Sixties, who completely sacrificed the model's identity and personality in his quest for contemplation and aesthetic gratification – the bodies he chose are therefore the result of an exquisite and formal exercise made up of lines, volumes, silhouettes and chromatic values.

The same pleasure in the body's aesthetic contemplation, still in perfect balance between image and imagery, can be found today in the Peruvian artist Mario Testino, born in Lima in 1954. He was indeed absolutely able to portray celebrities with magistral skills, thus restoring their most authentic identity: his famous exhibition showing the pictures of Princess Diana is an evident example, but we also have to mention his fashion shots where the body shapes (and garments) are celebrated in their harmonious naturalness, which is sensually provocative yet never vulgar.

Continuing our historical journey, we find a new type of body code that was first interpreted by Richard Avedon (1923–2004), who was the fashion photographer that turned models into actresses.

The situations represented by Avedon during the first phase of his career, which we could consider as the most narrative phase, nourished mythological imageries where reality and dream coexisted together and complemented each other, whereas the heroines populating these legendary stories looked like celestial women of a near but distant world at the same time. The goal of his images was

> that of being not so much a picture of a well-dressed beautiful woman as a revelatory glimpse of a feminine psyche confronted with a situation involving action or passion. (Sargeant, November 8, 1958)

His storytelling ability was combined with a style compliant with the ongoing trends of fashion images of the second half of the Twentieth century, which aimed at setting a global style and life attitude rather than showing a simple parade of garments. Thanks to Avedon, the Body becomes in fact a *Narrating Body:* his images displays ever-young bodies with perfect shapes and movements. The body started to develop its own language, fully based on elegance and refinement, exclusivity and luxury. An example is the famous image for Dior (1955), where the model Dovima (acronym of Dorothy Virginia Margaret Juba, 1927–1990) stands between two huge elephants and spreads her arms upward in an extremely elegant gesture. The winding body of the model and her refined composure communicate an authentic sensuality in a surreal context.

Throughout the years, the body exacerbates even more its storytelling aptitude in photography, as it is evident today in photographers who show different styles and photographic personalities, such as David LaChapelle, Peter Lindbergh, Steven Meisel and Annie Leibovitz just to name a few.

It's worth mentioning the American photographer Steven Meisel (1954), and the cover pages he published on Vogue Italia during his 20-years collaboration with the magazine. Through his shots, he narrated many different stories (some related to ethical issues) by showing frames of imaginary and hypothetical movies, such as in "Cinematic" which is focused on the violence against women (Vogue Italia, 2014) or in "State of emergency," focused on the terrorism (Vogue Italia, 2016).

Coming back to the Sixties, we now find a body that changes its social role. In fact, the youth movements, above all, proposed a new role for the body that became subject of several battles for social and sexual emancipation – the body is exhibited and sometimes paraded. One of the greatest interpreters of fashion images was the revolutionary David Baily, who is portrayed in the movie *Blow Up* by Michelangelo Antonioni (1966), a personal friend of Mary Quant (the *terrible girl* who invented the miniskirt) and Mick Jagger, voice of the Rolling Stones. He was the photographer who best interpreted this breathe of fresh air that London was able to express during those years. In his pictures, uninhibited bodies are charged with new expressions and contents, thus resulting strongly erotic and decisively provocative. The body becomes *Free Body,* free to show up, express itself and create a new language while the model shows herself uninhibited under the lens of his camera (Lehndorff – Trulzsch, 1986).

The landmark is therefore the displacement from a dressed body to a materialized body. Fashion begins to enrich the body with more physical vibrancy and sexual connotation so as to acquire more visibility and a completely different social dignity from the past. Fashion photography tends to develop an imagery oriented towards the transgression of sexual behaviours while body becomes object and subject of the *Desire Body.*

Another fashion photographer immediately after the '70s, and very well-known for his strongly erotic images, was the Parisian Guy Bourdin. In his photographs the product is independent – what matters is provoking through sexual allusions mixed with violence and blood doses. His bod-

ies are conscious bodies involved in the scenic fiction that aims at nurturing the desire. A few years later, Helmut Newton made the woman's body a conscious object of voyeurism, a carnal body proud of showing off its materiality. It's worth mentioning a new and forerunner aspect of recent trends, that is the body artificiality: the paraded body is evidently moulded by sophisticated beauty treatments and lined up with the artificiality frontier. A so cold perfection that bodies seem to be almost bionic. He said:

> "In my work we operate a distinction between models and real people. We never consider models equal to real people" (Newton, 1984, p. 13) (*TN). And he also added: "The fashionable woman is this: an infinite amount of gears." (Newton, 1984, p. 10) (*TN)

This strong physicality of bodies visible in fashion images remains also in the Eighties and increasingly extends to male bodies, which become at the same time object and subject of desire – muscle-bound, gym built, perfect bodies.

Herb Ritts (1952–2002) was one of the most iconic fashion photographers of the Eighties and Nineties – aloof from garments and completely focused on both male and female bodies, Ritts shows nurtured and clean-cut bodies with massive workout and expensive beauty treatments. The artificial seems to clash with the natural body look to then perfectly blend together. The 1999 Pirelli calendar is a clear statement of Ritt's approach – the American athlete Alek Wek is covered with a shiny paint overlapping his body which enhances even more its perfection. The body becomes a dress.

If we consider the contemporary photographers, it's absolutely worth mentioning the German photographer Ellen von Unwerth (1954): the most authentic Newton's heir, given her voyeuristic style and the way she treats the female body. Differently from Newton, the location of her pictures plays a greater role and the scene theatricalization becomes much more filmic, but the body is a conscious protagonist pleased with the desire.

> During the Twentieth century, for example, woman's clothing has become more and more reduced and simplified, more dynamic and ascending upwards. If in the early years of the century the female body representations were made up of corpulent silhouettes, which tended to recall the heaviness of the earthly wealth, in the following decades the body has become decisively thinner and lighter. And slimming remedies and diets have progressively become the standard for both genders… (Codeluppi, 2012, p. 7) (*TN)

In this social process, technology plays an important role, also because images show an artificial body that can crumble and then put back together itself.

In the 1999 the movie "Matrix" contributed to imagine a *pixeled body*, in a world where technology is the real protagonist of an unreal life.

3 New millennium: between hyper-bodies and pixeled bodies

In his volume *The Matrix* (2010), the philosopher and sociologist Žižek observes that the innovation of this movie is not witnessing the fortunes of a hero who acts in an artificial, manipulated and controlled universe, but rather that this universe becomes a virtual reality, thus marking a radical reduction of our sensorial experiences and acknowledging the images a huge seductive power.

Images do not simulate reality, but rather hide its incompleteness and inconsistency:

> The film is not wrong when highlighting the EXISTENCE of the Real beyond the simulation of the virtual reality – as Morpheus says to Neo when showing him the ruined landscape of Chicago: "Welcome to the desert of the Real" (…) the function of every single Matrix is to conceal this inconsistency… (Žižek, 2010, p. 16)

The film *Matrix* was able to foresee the current, real trend of 2018 – the dichotomy between real reality and virtual reality. Images mediate between these two *univers-*

es and serve as bearers of new stories and generators of new suggestions.

The individual completes the search for an abstract aesthetic perfection to become a body-image, an envelope that makes use of the aesthetic surgery to achieve its own goal and become a body to be displayed on a shop window, precisely a "*shop-windowed body*" (Codeluppi, 2007).

Today's individual only wants to like himself even more than being liked by others. This absolutely matches with the current post-modern or hyper-modern society, where the individualism trend is fully underway and every choice made by the individual privileges the self to the detriment of the surrounding. Today we seek refuge in ourselves to satisfy personal and immediate pleasures, in a mood of common mistrust in the social fabric and future. Selfies are the apologia of this trend.

Codeluppi also says about the body:

> It is therefore inevitable that individuals feel able to freely manipulate their body to achieve those communication goals they set for themselves. This gives life to the "flow body", namely a body in a state of permanent change, having no fixed boundaries nor identities and attempting at not having to depend on the laws of biology. (Codeluppi, 2012, p. 114, translated by author)

The artificial invades the natural, the body often becomes a hyper-body. Since the beginning of the new Millennium, body has become a *flow-body*: nothing is fixed and body looks like a packaging that can be transformed and manipulated. The body becomes a malleable surface on which to draw its identity. Artificial invades the natural, and the body becomes a hyper-body.

This hyper-body often becomes the protagonist of fashion images – motionless bodies featuring unnatural poses, inexpressive eyes, masks deleting the faces or even covered and hidden faces to cancel their identity.

Slender, hybrid bodies between mannequins and dolls or even puppets that only live virtually weightless, transsexual, feeble creatures. Craig McDean, Tim Walker, Miles Aldridge, Steven Klein are just few of the photographers who mainly contributed to narrate artificial, manipulated, abstract bodies.

These body images animate and motivate the consumption experience by nurturing fictional imageries that escape the uncertainty of what is real, thus translating the individual's fulfilment into the certainty given by the purchased objects. Therefore, the body dissolves into image, in the enchantment of the *mise-en-scène*.

The idea of Beauty has evidently changed and fashion market is exploring new frontiers: five years ago, Miuccia Prada said:

> "Ugly is attractive, ugly is exciting. Maybe because it is newer," she said. "The investigation of ugliness is, to me, more interesting than the bourgeois idea of beauty. And why? Because ugly is human. It touches the bad and the dirty side of people. You know, this might have been a scandal in fashion but in other fields of art it is common: in painting and in movies it was so common to see ugliness." (Duffin, 2013)

In reaction to the New Millennium consumption models and this hyper-modern (or post-modern) individualist individual, fashion suggests an anti-model: fashion does not seek the Beauty anymore, but rather different ideas of beauty (even achieving the ugliness sometimes), because there is not only one Beauty to be inspired by but everyone is free to interpret, mould and express his/her own beauty.

Fashion films play a crucial role in this body evolution, especially because they were born for the web. Moreover, new technologies are so much influencing the body perception and representation that we can easily state fashion films are developing a new net-aesthetics by using new codes and creating new kinds of language.

Indeed, bodies in fashion films do not appear as a model to strive for, that is the idea of a contemplated beauty. Fashion films rather show Post-Modern or Hyper-Modern bodies: they reflect those individuals who are focused on themselves, determined to state their individuality and uniqueness, confident of being able

to be true to themselves without compromises, living for emotions. Therefore, in the fashion film's dreamy world there are no right nor wrong models: what emerges is the possibility to always be authentic thanks to fashion and regardless of age, sex, gender and species. There is no "right beauty" in the represented body as this is a body that is not apparently interested in its physicality.

Showstudio.com, an interactive fashion platform, nowadays famous as *House of Fashion Film*, also investigated the idea of the Ugly in a fashion film. The fashion film title is "*Beyond the glass" by* Ruth Hogben. In this short-movie, woman's body does not appear in its physicality but is rather the simulacrum of itself, continuously committed in a chameleonic metamorphosis – a body that continuously moves, escapes and chases, that is frightened and frightful (bearing in mind numerous Hitchcockian quotations). This body is unreal and pixeled, which leads us into the *Other* cyberspace world ruled by some Matrix.

It is precisely from the fashion films that new images showing moving bodies emerge as interpreters of new fashion tales.

Over the last decade, fashion films have indeed become a strongly relevant phenomenon for fashion industry: we find those made by brands to show their collections, as well as fashion films dedicated to create new brand narration forms (such as the Miu Miu's with the "Women's Tales" saga). Likewise, we also find fashion films made by some fashion e-magazines like Nowness, or fashion e-commerce like Mytheresa.com in collaboration with several fashion brands. Moreover, there are some online created by some novice filmmakers and presented at the worldwide fashion film festivals or simply uploaded on some target websites, such as a Vimeo channel, that is fully independent and dedicated to fashion films.

As Uhlirova (2013) writes,

> Fashion film's recent proliferation on the Internet and beyond has demanded that we seriously rethink what role the moving image can play within fashion (…). (p. 118)

The clear trend (or the need) of fashion communication is therefore to develop a new language for those moving images where the body code is acknowledged a key aesthetic and narrative role.

We therefore try to understand if there are some recurring types of body in these fashion films that affect the world of the fashion images in general, to then re-think at the language of the images in the New Millennium, which can be above all identified as fashion images, whether static or moving.

4 Body in fashion film: the new net-aesthetic era

> (…) fashion media partecipate in the normalization and codification of the body. (Shinkle, 2013, p. 176)

Fashion films are a particular category of online videos, whose origin is really uncertain. "*100 years of fashion film: frameworks and histories"* is one of the Uhlirova's articles (2013), whose name is given to the fact that:

> The article carefully negotiates the fashion film as a form that must be considered within multiple frameworks, namely cinema and the new media, fashion industry, entertainment, and art practice. (p. 237)

However, we will not hereunder consider the fashion industry videos as something outside the web.

In fact, several communicative models (i. e. the Jakobson's in 1963) state that regardless of the communicative flow, the *channel* influences the message production both in the contents and form selection, thus adapting codes and rules to the new context in which the message acts.

We will therefore consider only the online fashion videos in order to understand their features and influences that may directly come from the virtual world of the web.

Based on our previous studies, it also results that fashion films are a separate category of online branded videos, and not only because they have a distinctive name which makes them different from the others but rather because we think (and will try to prove) they were able to develop their own communicative identity to then become a communication tool used also in other industries. It might be worth considering that in 2014 the BMW car manufacturer released the online video starred by Tilda Swinton and named the movie just as *fashion film*.

On the matter Uhlirova stated (2013) "

> As a heterogeneous cultural form with no clearly predefined stylistic criteria or conventions, the fashion film eludes any attempt at a neat classification as genre. (p. 120)

In our opinion, many signals lead us today to consider that fashion films are a full communication gender.

As we already mentioned one year ago (2017),

> Since the beginning of the new Millennium, fashion has developed new types of messages concerning the contents, producing new techniques and showing its ability to use new technologies with a greater eagerness and strength than other markets. (…)
>
> Additionally, in all the main fashion cities in the world we find Fashion Film Festivals. There are at least 4 today considering only London, of which the first in absolute was organized by Central Saint Martins in 2006, Fashion in Film; the second city that hosted this event was Paris, with ASVOFF, organized by the fashion designer and blogger Diane Pernet, and a festival that has today achieved its ninth edition. (Buffo, 2017, pp. 295–296)

Today there is even a fully independent Vimeo channel whose name is, indeed, *A Fashion Film Channel*.

It's however hard to determine exactly the time when the first fashion film was put online. We therefore prefer to consider a timeframe when everything started to take shape, that is the beginning of the New Millennium when the web underwent a considerable development that is still ongoing.

This abovementioned new communicative identity works on two aspects - the first is the new brand narrations, regardless of whether the video develops or not a narrative plot; the second is represented by a new language made up of new codes.

Indeed, fashion films are the natural evolution of the languishing fashion images but, at the same time, they are their revolution. Fashion films have managed to turn the traditional brand communication into bodies' movements, which are often exciting and suggestive and sometimes purely aesthetical.

> The fashion image has been historically seen as static, but digital media offer a departure from the past by introducing a constant flow of moving images and active spectatorship. The idea of "permanent presence" suggests fashion is constantly renewed and at the same time caught in the here and now. (Khan, 2012, p. 248)

What we are about to analyse is how the body is narrativized in these fashion films (whether narrative or not), as the body is often their lynchpin.

> Several fashion films, which belongs to "The Fashion Body", make this connection between photography and history of the moving image through a renewed focus on the body. (…) The cinematic film creates a sense of linear time. The photograph is forever locked in the past and the digital image offers a permanent presence. Fashion is caught in its own reflection – locked in the past, it has begun to move and is part of a new and permanent presence. When we watch the body films inside the frames of "The Fashion Body," we remember that a symbolic notion is created through movement – today fashion is no longer still. (Khan, 2012, p. 249)

For about 9 years (since we started to deal with fashion communication), we have been carefully observing this new communication object: we have looked at the fashion films made by the most important

fashion brands, as well as the online fashion films of Nowness or ASVOFF, the Vimeo section fully dedicated to fashion films, and even the online fashion-mags that often offer their own production, without mentioning all the rest offered by the net. One of the most stimulating aspects for our curiosity is related to how the body is treated and become a fundamental code to produce fashion tales. We are also aware that our observation and categorization cannot fully complete the fashion films supply on the web and, in fact, this is not our aim as we recognize the impossibility of such pretension. The online language in general, and the fashion films language in particular, is living a continuous experimentation and transformation.

As Uhlirova said (2013):

> If we accept fashion film as a genre, we have to accept a notion of a genre not as a static set of stylistic or material commonalities but as an ever-evolving historically bound category which is fluid and at time even self-contradictory. (p. 122)

The result of our observation is however that these types of "bodies" represent the main current fashion trends, as they are mostly recurring and often mark an important change compared to the iconographic tradition of fashion.

We think that this type of interpretation is useful to grasp and handle the fashion communication of the New Millennium. Even less than fashion photos, fashion films do not reproduce clothes but rather offer ways of interpreting the contemporary women and men, thus showing their contradictions and complexities and telling the ways through which the individuals perceive themselves and the surroundings with their body.

Analysing these videos will be also interesting to retrace the important history of the fashion images.

What immediately surprises is that body in fashion films is declined in different and multiple kind of stories. Fashion films have furtherly enriched the value and semantic content of the "body" sign, thus celebrating its communicative potential in a market that more than any other needs to create always new imageries.

The analysis leads us to detect two apparently opposite macro-categories:

A. Concrete Body

B. Abstract Body

As the *code* can influence a *language,* so each of the aforementioned codes mostly belongs to and characterises respective and different categories of fashion films.

A. The first is the *Concrete Body:* we are talking about a real body as it appears in its everyday life, where its individuality – and not its appearance or shape – is shown. These characters do not show always perfect bodies, even though they are models, because their personality is the real protagonist.

This interpretation of body is the equivalent in the filmic language of the previously mentioned narrating body of fashion photography. It's a body that narrates and talks about itself, reveals and shows itself.

Within this category, a further distinction is possible between *narrative body* and *hyper-realistic body*.

A.1. A *narrative body* is typically cinematic: it is a body that walks along the fashion film development, makes the sequence of events possible, sometimes shows its evolution, where the emotions of the character evolve as well. This body is characterised by its actions and the choices that the character makes.

Within this category, body carries out a storytelling project, with or without a narrative plot. First of all, a narrating body shows us an individual's story, be this a woman or man, a personal story with the individual's feelings and interactions with the context, as well as her/his interactions with the others. This individual is sometimes shown while he is living an internal or external conflict, but his moment of redemption is rarely displayed. This body often struggles and fights or simply shows the signs of its weariness, its face does not smile, rather the emerging feeling is that of individuals who are tireless fighters. An example could be the fashion film by Peter

Lindbergh for Vogue, released at the end of 2016. We are talking about *Walking*, the Peter Lindbergh's tribute to the late Editor-in-Chief of *Vogue Italia*, Franca Sozzani.

Its images show some of the most popular models, who are more or less young, such as Mila Jovovich, Carolyn Murphy, Helena Christensen, Isabeli Fontana, Karen Alexander, Karen Elson and Lara Stone while they walk through the streets of New York. They walk among ordinary people and we feel like they want to be common people wrapped up in their thoughts. Their unveiled thoughts, which are not conveyed by their bodies nor by their actions, mostly fascinate the viewer who can be captured by this illusory normality and heaviness of their being wistful. They move and then stray from the camera and again stare at it, thus offering us a close-up that talks about them as women. In this fashion film there is no narrative plot, meaning that no characters' evolution is provided, but these bodies still allude to these women' personal story by staging their different personalities and ways of feeling – the firm lines of the New York majestic buildings are opposed to the softness of their gestures and are sometimes slowed down by an editing that expands the duration of their movements. Thanks to the musical box that accompanies the entire video, this editing choice projects the viewer in a hybrid dimension, between the real and the imaginary.

The *narrative body* is also that body that narrativizes and thematises, as we can see in fashion films with a narrative plot, for example in the Kenzo's fashion film for the SS 2018, *Yo! My Saint*. In this fashion film, the director Ana Lily Amirpour proposes a Japanese version of *Blow Up* (by the aforementioned Antonioni) – it's about the seduction story between the photographer and his model, which is mediated by the camera. On the photographic set, the dressed yet true girl's body is opposed to a mannequin's naked, cold and still body, which is unable to communicate and provoke emotions (even if hostile and dangerous), because emotions can create addiction.

The *narrative body* often develops an idea, which represents a key concept for the brand's visual identity. It's the case of Gucci, Pre-Fall 2018, and again directed by Glen Luchford.

> Michele along with lens man Glen Luchford and art director Christopher Simmonds, have reflected on university campus protest of 1968 Paris for inspiration. That moment was ripe with French Nouvelle Vague of the late Fifties and Sixties – a movement comprised of the inspiration of rebellious filmmakers François Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard. During the month of May 1968, radical change was occurring in Paris as students, hungry for change, marched on the Sorbonne University. This time of immense change was fuelled by the fresh cultural lingual of Jean-Paul Sartre's existential philosophy of rock 'n' roll and a new era of participatory democracy. (Retrieved from www.theimpression.com)

These bodies speak about the history of a generation, about fights, protests and rebellions of the 1968 youth: they fought against traditions and clichés and told their desire to change the world by proving their being different from the past. These stories appear consistent to a brand that wants to address a young and cultured public, which wants to go against the grain. It's a brand that is proposing its revolution in fashion in terms of product, target, and language.

The *narrative body* seems to be the direct emanation of that aforementioned *narrating body* of the fashion photographs starting from Avedon. With fashion films, that body releases its communicative potential and completes the narration with movements and sounds thus becoming story. It could be very interesting to investigate the new kinds of fashion stories.

A.2. Different is the case of the *hyper-realistic body***.**

We consider the term "hyper-realism" in connection to art: hyper-realism means an image so extremely faithful to reality up to the tiniest details, which embraces a technical perfection often comparable

to the photographic quality, yet aggressive sometimes.

In a general backdrop of the routine aesthetisation, which is an attitude that has been lasting for few decades (let's think at Pop art and Op Art of the '60s), we move to a semiotic materialization of art – culture officialises everything in terms of signs and signs circulation and transcribes everything into cultural, aesthetic and museographic terms. Baudrillard warns against this risk and, in *the art of disappearance*, he states*:*

> In the images I see in America or Europe – be they video images, paintings, products of the plastic arts, or audio-visual or synthesized images – are literally images in which there is nothing to see. They leave no trace, cast no shadow, and have no consequences. (…) The only feeling one gets from such images is that behind each one there is something that has disappeared. And they are but this: the trace of what has disappeared. (…) Once freed from reality, we can produce the "realer than real" – hyperrealism. It was in fact with hyperrealism and pop art that everything began, that everyday life was raised to the ironic power of photographic realism. (Baudrillard, 1988, p. 48–49, translated by author)

And fashion seems to have followed a similar path in the New Millennium: a body realer than real is shown in some fashion films, a body dissected, scanned, almost radiographed by the camera, unreservedly and shamelessly.

A perfect example is the fashion film by Rankin for the perfume S&X launched in November 2017. Besides the recent *Hunger,* Rankin is the British artist who co-founded *AnOther Magazine* with Jefferson Hack in 2001, and even before gave life to *Dazed & Confused*.

In his S&X unisex perfume, designed by the award-winning fragrance designer Azzi Glasser, he tells three stories of touching bodies, no matter who they are, because there is always something to share when skin touches skin. In one of the three, the bodies of an old man and woman cling to one another – the camera lingers on these bodies' details and unveils their erogenous zones, as well as their sighs and the desires of these bodies that have changed so much over the years. It dwells with impunity and almost complacently on the folds of their old skin. No full bodies are shown, but rather a puzzle of images to recompose in our mind, thus defiantly giving more room to the beholder's imagination. These two bodies convey eroticism to the limit of pornography and without any pleasure.

A body shown in its hyper-realism, and therefore no beautiful nor ugly (as Baudrillard would say), is what we often find in Saint Laurent's fashion films. In the Winter 2017 film by Nathalie Canguilhem, the male models are shown in a sort of box or squared room with numerous pipes like those of the makeovers scaffolding. Everything is surrounded by the darkness with a metallic blue light and alienating music – the models move in this environment and have an exaggerated skinny body, on the borderline of anorexia. Especially in one frame, the camera lingers on the bony abdomen of a boy by highlighting his bone structure and showing a small scar - the models never smile and their gaze sometimes challenges and invites us to enter in that borderline dimension. We could do plenty of examples (it's worth mentioning the fashion film "Brighton Sorts" made by Nick Knight and Britt Lloyd for a Vogue British Editorial published on April 2018), but what we would like to point out is how today the fashion images in magazines often use the same language. In fact, they dissect and explore the human body from top to bottom to generate types of images that were really rare in the last Millennium. We can think at some Solve Sondsbo's images (such as those published on November 2017 in a Vogue editorial entitled "Utopia") or those by Toiletpaper, a creative laboratory founded by Maurizio Cattelan and Pierpaolo Ferrari, or some photographs by Brigitte Niedermair (Wallpaper Magazine, March 2018 editorial).

Alongside these bodies narrated by the fashion films, whose human aspect and recognizable physicality are however shown, there is another way of narrativizing the body: the abstract body manner.

B. Now we analyse the *Abstract Body.*

The innovative choice is not to show the body as expression of a concept, which was already done by fashion in the past as we have also mentioned, but what's innovative in the *Abstract Body* of the New Millennium is the absence of that aesthetical pleasure typical of the history of fashion images.

The *Abstract Body* is an unreal and dematerialised body whose representation is theatre-like dramatized so as to create an intense gap between the observed and the observer.

An artificial veneer invades the creature and creeps under the skin – in fashion images, the plastic body alternates with the real body, thus triggering a mashup of the skin and the inwardness of the subject.

This body interpretation embodies also some artists and contemporary singers – it's worth mentioning Lady Gaga for example who, even if often naked, has frequently displayed her body as a surface on which to draw her artistic vein. In the fashion film related to her perfume by Steven Klein, *The Fame,* she stages her avatar: a provocative, fame-hungry woman who turns into a monster surrounded by a dreamlike imagery that celebrates the aesthetic criteria of ugliness and grotesque. The bodies belonging to this category do not emerge as bodies to dress but are rather surface-bodies that translate the constant becoming.

We can also define two categories in this sector – the *mutant body* and the *illusion body***.**

B.1. Within the first category we find the *mutant body*, namely a body embodying transmutation rather than disguise and standing elsewhere with a sort of theatrical complacency. The effect on the viewer is similar to Brecht's estrangement (1898–1956) – a "distancing effect" that warns the viewer who no longer identifies himself with what he is witnessing as it is evidently distant from his real world.

A *mutant body,* in fact, is a fake body, an artefact, a sort of man-made avatar. This body reminds us of Surrealism, the artistic movement born at the beginning of the past century. As it happens in Surrealism images, this body seems to be far from any aesthetic-related concern – its ambition is not to show itself as an expression of beauty or reality or an excellence of what is real, it is rather the protagonist of a beyond-reality, in a virtual or dreamlike dimension. This body represents a new subconscious where everything is overtly fake, as it is a product of the creator's imagination. This body is sometimes projected into the future at a high speed, changing constantly like some images of the '20s Futurism. The bodies defined here as mutant bodies belong to imaginary and distant worlds from reality, likewise they seem to set up the fashion dream we are currently experiencing, between the need of running away and the quest for a new balance.

In our view, the mutant body is declined in other two different interpretations: the *doll body* and the *cyber body.*

B.1.a The *doll body* is overtly and intentionally created to be staged for a hyperbolic world – it's the body of the androids who have acquired human traits to replace them. The filmmaker and photographer Tim Walker is certainly one of the best interpreters of this sort of body. In his fashion film *Mechanical Dolls* (2011), a group of models are displayed not just with the look but also the typical movements of the puppets, which seem to be guided by a species of puppeteer who is in turn puppet. They are will-less doll-bodies, incapable of emotions and consciousness. Their hard slap looks like a mask that does not betray their true identity.

In *Like a Doll,* another fashion film for Vogue Italia January 2012, Tim Walker shows us the model Lindsay Wixon making human yet repetitive movements in a sort of dollhouse and evidently pleased in this woman-doll hybrid dimension.

It's worth mentioning Steven Klein, another great interpreter of this type of bodies set in a urban and futuristic context. A perfect example is Kate Moss for Alexander McQueen SS2014, who is shown in a platinum blonde version holding a voodoo doll, which is her duplicate that will be thrown in a bin by herself. The atmosphere is definitely dark: the colours, en-

vironment, feelings inspired by the video accompany a kind of unsolved foreboding, thus reminding us Alexander McQueen's world. It depicts a nightmare where emotions, fears, anxieties of this woman are the absolute protagonists rather than the actions she does, which are instead quite incomprehensible. In this context, it's noteworthy to mention Philipp Plein's fashion films, such as that made for the FW 2016–2017 by Steven Klein where mechanically animated toys mingle with human figures of different genders and ages and seem to join all together what looks like a game. The bodies displayed look mechanical and jerk, also due to an editing choice that wants to highlight this aspect, and some of them are covered in tattoos.

In this regard, the brand Philipp Plein states:

> In a neon-lit future world, filled with turmoil and danger, the battle between good and evil rages on. Under attack from invisible forces, everyone must choose a side in this epic fight to the end. The struggle is real but there is hope. We need to search deep inside ourselves to find the belief, strength and determination to become superhuman. We can harness hidden powers within us all. Regardless of gender, nationality or age, we can be heroes… Starring Chris Brown, Carmen Dell'Orefice, Soo Joo Park and Crystal Renn as the ultimate super team, the Autumn/Winter 2016 campaign features a cast of diverse characters. (Retrieved from Philipp Plein http://www.youtube.com)

B.1.b. On the other hand, the *cyber-body* reveals the merger between man and machine, a body that decomposes and recomposes, it melts and then restores its image, it transmutes and then returns to itself. As in Matrix movie, this body is often pixeled though in these fashion movies it appears as expression of the brand's harmony or disharmony. An example is the fashion film *#asif* by Nick Knight and Simon Foxton (2015) for Vman magazine Here we find a mix and match of moving images with a psychedelic mood where each image appears and disappears in less than a second under our eyes. The result is a frenetic and chaotic new dimension. But this game of shapes can eventually remind us something similar to everyday life where every moment gets rapidly burned, where the online/offline experiences cause the endless and confused mix and match we live in, thus making us unaware victims of a technological pleasure.

It's a body that physically experiences its virtual dimension, as in the fashion film *Amazing and out of control* (2014) by *Love Magazine* starring Cara Delevigne, where the protagonist lays on a bed of candies, sings and smiles while she interacts with the emoji appearing on the screen which however seem to coexist with her inside the screen.

Likewise, in fashion film for Prada *Real Fantasies* by Atlantis Film for SS 2016, or in another one for the FW 2016 collection by fashion photographer and filmaker Steven Miesel, the models move in a space between the real and the unreal. In both movies, the models' physical reality is in contrast with the strong artificiality of the backdrops where their bodies take shape. The frames taken from these fashion films have then become the still images of the two advertising campaigns published on fashion magazines.

B.2. The other main category of the mutant body is the *illusion body* – a body that cancels the human figure and emphasizes the energy and force it gives off in the space it moves in. This body is pure abstraction and is complacent about its shapes in quest of extreme aesthetics. We can define the abstract body as *illusion body*, as it is the expression of a dancing dream or misleading metamorphosis. It is often expression of an amplified and sectioned movement, which is made possible by the latest hi-tech images. This body is fully plunged into a virtual and dreamlike "second life" where everything is a game that everyone can play. These bodies dance and fluctuate, thus supporting the musical notes of the fashion film soundtrack, as it happens in the Missoni SS 2018 fashion film, or better in the latest *Rag&Bone* fashion film. The latter features an industrial shed location where all bodies, who are no longer slaves of the daily life greyness,

unwind in harmonious dances and create synergies with the super-colourful people surrounding them.

This is the film *Why can't get along:*

> "Can we all get along?" This question posed by Rodney King during the Los Angeles riots in 1992, which began following the acquittals of the four officers that beat him, remains a relevant question over 25 years later given the political turbulence and turmoil that we are experiencing today in the US. "Why Can't We Get Along," the latest rag & bone film feature alters the quote slightly but asks the same question at a time where society appears to be less in sync. (…) The concept started from the way people spend too much time on their phones and do not really see one another, said Wainwright at the film premiere at The Metrograph. "It morphed from there. We wanted to do something that was cool and creative and fun and visually very impactful. That's all we really cared about." (Retrieved from www.impression.com)

It's worth mentioning the fashion film *Mine all Mine* by Tell No One for Nowness. A wondrous ballet where clothes and music are the authentic protagonist is showed – the music draws the soul of garments and people are just their performers. As in a theatrical performance, a merger of dress and individual is displayed in order to reveal a state of mind. The end is especially interesting as it gives us a possible interpretation – clothes can indeed live without men or women, but men and women are just lifeless without clothes.

Likewise, the numerous fashion films by showstudio.com for Gareth Pugh deserve a mention, such as the film for FW 2009 where women walk and move in a sort of futuristic dance and their bodies look extremely bidimensional.

The illusion bodies remind us the ever-present close relationship between dance and fashion as well as between dance and cinema. This is why the dancing body properly finds its place also in the online fashion film. In *Dance Serpentine* by Lumiere Brothers (1897), Loile Fuller's body enlivens a magic display of colours with a continuous spiral movement, thus making his body abstract. Likewise, it's impossible not to mention Adolf de Meyer, the first fashion photographer as well as the first to make an amazing photo shoot with the great dancer Vaclav Nijinsky engaged in the rehearsals for the *Après-midi d'un Faune* show. This show aroused a huge controversy among the public due to its intense eroticism, which was portrayed by de Meyer's pictures.

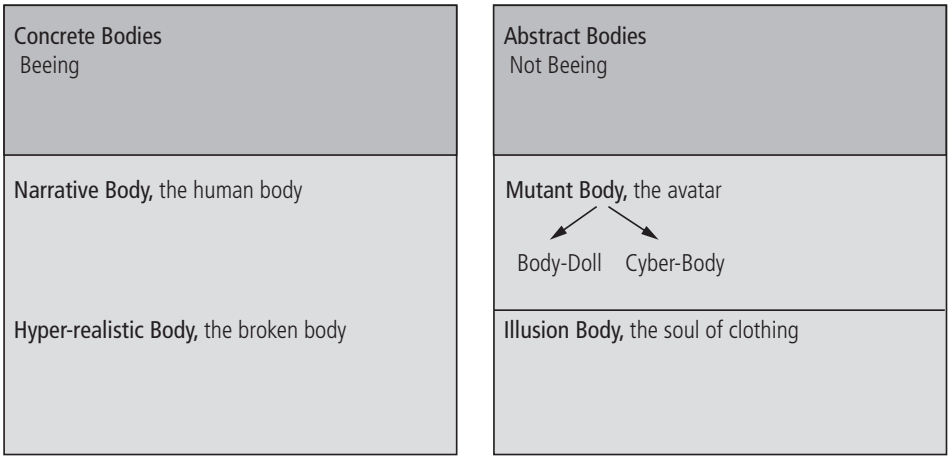
However, some changes in the fashion films were possible thanks to the new media: just as the mutant body seems like an avatar, so too the illusion body is a body that was able to emancipate from the typical static nature of photography thanks to the filmic language of the online videos, and thus becoming expression of that movement and life that both clothes and fashion need. The frames of these short movies are sometimes captured by the fashion mags as static images and the result is a sort of ping pong between the plasticity and dynamism typical of the Haute Couture.

In short, our observations can be summarised in a scheme that we call "Moving bodies in fashion films":

As we previously mentioned, we think that these are the main current trends and we believe that what herein examined could allow us to share some conclusions. What stands out the most is that fashion films' net-aesthetics gives life to different kinds of storytelling bodies which seem to emancipate both women and men from old archetypes or beauty stereotypes. According to us, the greatest novelty is that the new bodies do not want to be admired nor liked as they do not show off flawless body shapes and sizes nor look for acceptance or confirmations. The new body achieves two different goals that are covered in two different ways:

- the first one is the importance of *being*, as it is evident when fashion films show a body that want to state a personality or simply her/his emotions, thus becoming expression of a self-focused, unique and, at the same time, changeable individuality. The message leads us to think that there is not a right way of being as the right choice is just being

Figure 1: Moving bodies in fashion films



human, not perfect but authentic and living for feeling;

› the second one is the free adventure of *not being*, as it is evident when fashion films seem to be a sensory experience: in these films, the body enters in a surreal dimension where everything is possible and the viewer can loose himself/herself.

We fully agree with Uhlirova (2013) who states:

> The fashion film does not always blatantly implicate the viewer as a consumer and has, generally, a greater degree of autonomy from the fashion it displays or connects, as it is less concerned with social and psychological processes of identification, persuasion and reassurance than is the case in more conventional marketing. And therein precisely lies its appeal for brands who are certainly not blind to the new marketing trends that eschew conventional advertising in favor of a more authentic experience. (Uhlirova, 2013, p. 121)

Fashion films therefore sense the current trends in society as well as the hyper-modern consumer's apathy towards the traditional advertising, reason why they develop a new language for the online communication, which is often a decisively avant-garde brand communication as its goal is to produce a distant engagement from the traditional logics of persuasion.

Therefore the body, as the key code of this language and market, is no longer an aspirational model nor a classic idea of beauty, meant as a beauty of shapes. Indeed, it is rather a body that can tell stories about an extra-ordinary personality, as it is evident in the fashion images that often show us old women with a peculiar private history (such as Joni Mitchell, 71, for Saint Laurent; Joan Didion, 80, for Celine; Jessica Lange, 65, for Marc Jacobs Beauty; Charlotte Rampling, 69, for Nars; Catherine Deneuve, 71, for Louis Vuitton; and Anjelica Huston, 63, for Gap).

What stimulates our curiosity, and that should be deepened by further analysis, is the Beauty paradox in the Western countries, which is shown in these interpretations of the body in fashion: nowadays the Real Beauty is extending towards a Transmuting Beauty, which goes beyond the traditional boundary of the known and opts for the new post-modern or hyper-modern aesthetic world where nothing is set nor predetermined. This ever-connected and self-focused generation is producing a new era, which is characterized by new aesthetics (intended as *performed Beauty)* and where the border

between real and unreal is weak: we call it *Net-Aesthetics*.

In our opinion, it is still important to verify if this language, which is so strongly affected by the Western social and aesthetic trends, could be well received by Countries where the consumption society has recently developed. Let's think at Russia, India or China. Looking at the fashion magazines editions in those Countries, we can notice how the models more or less reflect the classic idea of beauty translated in its "local forms" – in fact, in India the models are women with perfect and winding bodies, whereas the girls in China are still beautiful but much less curvy. Looking at those magazines, in fact, you have the impression of coming back to the '90s fashion images in Countries where the consumption society started many decades ago.

Analysing more in deep this topic would be really interesting, also because the language of images (as well as the verbal language) belongs to the culture and history of each population. Besides this, the risk of the Western brands is proposing fashion tales that use an incomprehensible or even neglected iconographic language by some populations.

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Key challenges for the fashion industry in tackling climate change

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Abstract

The global rise in the earth's surface temperature in coming decades will bring with it increased instances of flooding, drought and volatile weather patterns. One of the main industries affected is fashion, which is responsible for some 5% of current global carbon emissions (Bauck, 2017). There is common acknowledgement that every stage in the production of garments for the fashion world creates pollution and emission problems: from sourcing and use of scarce water resources in the production of cotton, to farming processes in the production of leather, from the use of industrial dyes and synthetic textile fibres to the need for ships, planes and lorries to transport the final product globally. This article explores the main challenges facing the fashion industry from climate change. The main argument of this essay is that fashion has grown to be a key exemplar industry of global capitalism, often being associated with the positive and negatives excesses of globalisation. It is also therefore seen as one of the key industries responsible for climate change causing much reflection within the industry as to how this key issue should be tackled. On the plus side, the fashion industry can capitalize on its modern high-profile status to bring real attention to climate change issues through publicity and media attention. The global scale of clothing manufacturing and distribution, and the pollution it helps to create, has led many in the industry to seek ways to promote climate change initiatives in the industry. This aspiration, though, is a most difficult one in an industry with complex global production and distribution chains and one which is so embedded in modern consumer culture, often blamed for the worsening environment degradation worldwide.

Keywords

climate change, global warming, globalisation, modernity, post modernity

1 Introduction

Climate change is a major social issue facing the human race. Expert predictions relating to climate change are extremely bleak with some arguing that global temperatures are likely to rise by about 3°C by 2100, ranging from 2°C to 5°C (Stern, 2006). The global rise in temperature in the coming decades will bring with it increased instances of flooding, drought and volatile weather patterns. This will have a significant impact on basic water supplies and food production especially if, as predicted, the world's population increases to around 11 billion people by 2050. Climate change will impact on all countries, but current advice is that it will have a disproportionate effect on countries in rapid development from agricultural to industry-led economies (Hibberd, 2013b; 2014; 2016 and forthcoming). One of the main industries affected is fashion, which is responsible for some 5% of current global carbon emissions (Bauck, 2017). Every stage in the production of garments for the fashion world creates pollution and emission problems: from sourcing and use of scarce water resources in the production of cotton, to farming processes in the production of leather; from the use of industrial dyes and synthetic textile fibres to the need for ships, planes and lorries to transport the final product globally. And some issues offer a no-win solution to the industry, for example, in the choice of whether to use leather, cotton or synthetic materials as a main fabric in the garment-making production process.

The main aim of this article is to explore the main challenges facing the fashion industry from climate change. For this article, I define the fashion industry as the design, manufacturing, distribu-

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tion, marketing, retailing, advertising, and promotion of all types of apparel from the most expensive *haute couture* and designer fashions to ordinary everyday clothing (Britannia, 2017). The main argument of this essay is that fashion has grown to be a key exemplar industry of global capitalism, often being associated with the positive and negatives excesses of globalisation. It is also therefore seen as one of the key industries responsible for climate change causing much reflection within the industry as to how this key issue should be tackled. Fashion is often celebrated in the media and closely associated with the shiny postmodern world of international celebrity status, conspicuous consumption and global advertising campaigns. The downside to this are the dire work conditions many garment workers still face in parts of the developing world with the debilitating combination of low wages, long working hours and hot or cramped working conditions. Industrial injuries are also a daily risk for many workers. Many of these same arguments are being played out when it comes to climate change. On the plus side, the fashion industry can capitalize on its modern high-profile status to bring real attention to climate change issues through publicity and media attention. The global scale of clothing manufacturing and distribution, and the pollution it helps to create, has led many in the industry to seek ways to promote climate change initiatives in the industry. This aspiration, though, is a most difficult one in an industry with complex global production and distribution chains and one which is so embedded in modern consumer culture, often blamed for the worsening environment degradation worldwide.

This article will be split into five parts including this introduction and the conclusion. The next part of the essay will explore the relationship between global capitalism and fashion. The third section introduces the challenging issue of climate change for those working in clothing and textiles. In the fourth section, we examine broad attempts of using public campaigns, which include fashion involvement, to focus attention on climate change with particular attention paid to two popular British climate change initiatives. This paper is based on interviews with climate change experts and those working within the campaigning industry including 10:10 and the WWF's Earth Hour campaign, the two initiatives examined here.

2 Fashion, consumption and global capitalism

The development of the fashion industry is intimately tied in to the wider economic, political and cultural transformations of the past two and a half centuries, namely the rise of nationalism. The key features of European nationalism are a unitary political authority (the state) and a national culture. Nationhood has also favoured those societies that have evolved similar cultural habits through the slow sedimentation of multi-culturalism and by the emergence of a single political authority (Giddens, 1990, pp. 50–58). As Kate Nelson Best outlines in her history of fashion journalism, fashion has always been laced with nationalism ever since Louis IV. The rise of European nationalism in the late 18th Century constitutes a key period when the processes of nation-building along with industrialisation and urbanisation brought about the reconfiguration of social classes and traditional economic ties (Best, 2017). The emergence of new urbanized social classes and the growth of educational systems and cultural institutions also brought about changes in how societies viewed clothing. In this sense the fashion industry remains tied to national boundaries and cultures, which often play out in ritual clothing events being tied to cities and national occasions. So at one level the relationship between fashion and climate change, the most global of challenges, is mediated through national contexts, especially in the mass media, and one key way for the industry to make the climate change issue visible is via the national consciousness.

But at the same time theorists label fashion as a key player in promoting post-

modern values not modernist ideas of nationalism. Indeed, if the nation-state is a political configuration of modernity, the advent of a postmodern condition has also warranted an urgent rethink on how citizenship and consumerism can be hypothesised outwith the nation-state, especially in relation to fashion. Anthony Giddens argues that in the period of modernity – defined broadly as the age of industrial capitalism – the concept of time-space distanciation has occurred: the separation of time and space through the intensification of worldwide social relations. Social relationships have to an extent become disembedded and disconnected from traditional face-to-face interactions. Instead, social relationships via communications and the mass media have become re-embedded across different social places and physical places (Giddens, 1990, p. 3). The jump to a postmodern condition has occurred through the acceleration in the globalising and unifying tendencies of capitalism. The rapid expansion of global capital accumulation, aided by instant media and communication networks, and a supply of cheap, international labour, has resulted in a further distribution of social relationships across time and space. This has created conditions in which a new social order can emerge. The postmodernist claim is that this new economic, social and technological revolution has impacted on how culture is made and remade. Some theorists have emphasised the increasing economic and political importance of multinational companies and special interest movements, effectively bypassing the nation-state (Melucci, 1990, p. 335; Schlesinger, 1992, p. 13).

The fashion industry is not only linked to modernist concepts such as nationalism but increasingly to ideas of postmodernity. The onset of the postmodern condition through the rapid intensification of global economic and social relationships, mass migration and the development of ICTs and digital media, has given rise to the concept of globalisation. Social relations, in part, have become disconnected from traditional face-to-face interactions and are commonly conducted through social media or other digital forms. As Giddens argues, 'social relations through communications and the media have become re-embedded in various social places and physical spaces' (Giddens, 1990, p. 3). The rise of the western postmodern state has been facilitated by monopoly capitalism and international trading and migration. Concentration of wealth in many countries has created a ready supply of cheap labour, leading to millions seeking work and new lives in other countries, breaking the traditional boundaries of face-to-face relationships. New global diasporas have emerged resulting in the redefinition of cultures including, it is often argued, new global cultures including fashion. The postmodernist makes the claim that multi-national companies and global NGOs have assumed as much importance as most nation-states (Melucci, 1990:, p. 335; Schlesinger, 1992:, p. 13).

The development of giant fashion companies highlights the congruence of financial muscle with cultural hegemony. Global fashion businesses are driven by readily identified brand names. No matter whether a brand is expensive and available world-wide or modestly priced and on sale only locally, it will embody a guarantee of authenticity. That is, it will be what it appears to be and its origins are known, at least as regards the identity of the company producing it. Associated with a brand's authenticity is its consistency, the fact that it can be depended on to deliver a certain quality each time it is bought. A global brand such as Zara can be relied upon to provide a particular range and quality of clothing around the world. The element of trust, born of experience that consumers feel towards a certain brand simplifies the making of future choices for them from among the plethora on offer. Thus it makes possible a saving of time and effort through a reduction of perceived risk. In this respect, the appeal of a brand to a consumer can be said to be rational or functional. But it is also emotional or experiential. As with anything that communicates, there is also a connotative or cultural dimension to consider, i. e. those less easily defined associations which are triggered

in people's values. Some of these effects will be culturally determined, while others will be the result of individual personal experience. The global appeal of fashion brands makes the industry a perfect forum for climate change awareness and promotion. Few global industries have the international recognition like fashion. The argument therefore is that industry-wide initiatives, harnessed by the global brands, could place climate change at the centre of social marketing campaigns.

And, yet, the rise of global fashion brands and multinational conglomerates have met with increasing resistance from the disparate collection of groups opposed to globalisation, most famously exemplified perhaps by Naomi Klein and the No Logo lobby, but increasingly occupied today by environmental groups. Those within and outside the fashion industry have long been aware of resistance or struggles relating to clothing, environmentalism and nationality. The Swadeshi movement in India until Independence in 1948 used clothing as a key symbol of Indian resistance and struggle to British rule. The aim to promote indigenous Indian cotton production and boycott dominant British imports of cotton and garments was also given a strong sustainability agenda by Mohandas K. Gandhi. British-made clothing would be burnt at gatherings, with Indians exhorted to wear Indian-made clothes or make their own. What Gandhi and others preached is what we would today call localism, which is a key idea for many supporting sustainability or environmentalism (Yerra, 2014).

And in other areas, too, the concept of resistance has even played a prominent role in giving the fashion industry increased energy and drive. For example, much of the energy driving the reemerging British fashion industry in the 1960s and 1970s was premised on protest and resistance against the prevailing social order of the day. Clothing was a key part of identity among those groups rebelling against society: mods, rockers and, especially, the punk rock movement of the 1970s. In Dick Hebdige's classic text, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, he argues that:

> The subcultures with which we have been dealing share a common feature apart from the fact that they are all predominantly working class. They are, as we have seen, cultures of conspicuous consumption – even when, as with the skinheads and the punks, certain types of consumption are conspicuously refused – and it is through the distinctive rituals of consumption, through style, that the subculture at once reveals its "secret" identity and communicates its forbidden meanings. It is basically the way in which commodities are *used* in subculture which marks the subculture off from more orthodox cultural formations. (Hebdige, 1979, pp. 102–103)

In essence, therefore, the buying and consumption of clothing, in recent times, has also occurred through the myriad of subcultures within societies, each with its own sets of norms, rituals and values that distinguish it from more *orthodox cultural formations*. In that sense, any alignment of the global fashion industry towards climate change promotion must also understand the complexities of the modern consumer and their sets of values and norms that might often fall at odds with those of wider society. It is no accident, for example, that one of the leading emerging clothing designers in punk rock London, Dame Vivienne Westwood, identified with the political agendas of prominent subcultures, including environmentalism, long before those agendas became accepted by wider society. And it is the sheer heterogeneity of modern fashion styles and tastes as well as of contemporary consumers that may help us understand why it has been so difficult for the fashion industry to unite fully behind climate change in recent years, as we discuss in the next section.

3 Climate change and global fashion

As stated earlier in this essay, the fashion industry is often linked to the various tendencies of global capitalism. According to different political standpoints, fashion can either be seen – positively - as promoting new forms of liberal individual or collec-

tive power in contemporary societies or – more negatively – as instrumental in reinforcing economic and social disparities such as poverty and human rights violations in the developing world through employment contracts. And the latter point is important because climate change is also becoming increasingly associated with global economic and social inequalities and UN Millennium Goals initiative. One argument often cited is that that developing nations will be disproportionately affected by climate change and that a fundamental link exists between environmental damage and poverty. This argument, put forward by the likes of former British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, sees climate change as an issue about justice as well as economic development (Brown, 2008). Linking poverty alleviation to climate change has placed many industries, including fashion, under the spotlight of criticism placing them on the defensive. There is a strong body of opinion, especially among development aid groups, NGOs and charities that many fashion houses outsource production of their clothing to developing nations for purely economic reasons, paying little more than subsidence wages with workers often sub-contracted to smaller companies that offer horrendous working conditions and employment environment. The argument goes that lip service is often paid to the idea of ensuring all workers earn a proper living wage or work in more humane conditions.

One example of this, though not linked directly to climate change, was the response after the Savar Building collapse in Bangladesh in 2013 that saw more than 1000 textile workers die. This was despite calls immediately prior to the disaster that the building in question should be evacuated as unsafe, a call that went unheeded by the building owner under pressure to let companies continue producing cheap clothes. Because the building housed many sub-contractors, many of the main clothing houses in the west, including the likes of Benetton and Walmart, were unaware that their clothes were being produced on site. Some companies even denied claims until clothing labels were pulled from the rubble of the building demonstrating that leading brand names were having clothes produced in the building at the time of collapse (Rezwanul, Waliur, & Gul, 2017). Five years on, support for the victims of the Savar Building collapse has been, at best, patchy. Some companies or national associations, such as Benetton, have made payments to support injured workers or bereaved families of workers or instituted codes of conduct for members producing clothing in the developing world to ensure that any sub-contracting of work does not lead to deterioration in worker employment rights. Other companies, though, have been less forthcoming in support. The main accusation today is that the fashion industry has been unable to work in unison to help workers in one of the poorest countries in the world (Rezwanul, Waliur, & Gul, 2017. So if support is less that complete in such a case directly associating the industry with a building collapse, what chance, if any, is there of concerted industrial support for such countries in the aftermath of some climate change-related disaster, such as flooding or drought? And at this point in time major support is lacking in this area. It can be argued that many industries, not only fashion, need to greatly improve their work with local and national stakeholders in becoming more active with climate change adaptation.

This lack of any concerted or unified response to the Savar disaster might not indicate any lack of willingness for many in the industry to act for the mitigation of climate change and involvement in public awareness campaigns. And, indeed, some fashion companies and prominent individuals have for decades been looking for ways to make the whole garment-making process more environmentally friendly and to mitigate the process of climate change. Initiatives are abound, locally, nationally and internationally, of environmentally-conscious designers, producers, distributors and department stores, initiating ways to make the industry greener. This can range from the recycling of fabric and textile materials, including plastics, or

the use of sustainable materials in the production of clothes, to encouraging consumers to lower temperatures on washing machines. Low temperature washes are less harmful to the environment than high temperature washes. And the clothes tend to last longer too. One prominent campaigner, as cited already in this essay, is Dame Vivienne Westwood. In 2014, in an interview with the *Guardian*, Westwood argued:

> "Do I feel guilty about all the consumption that the fashion world promotes? Well, I can answer that by saying that I am now trying to make my own business more efficient and self-sustaining. This also means trying to make everybody who works in it happy, if I can." … "What I want people to be able to do is to buy well, by first choosing well and then making it last. And I also believe that if everyone wore just a few beautiful things, there would not be such a climate change problem," she said. "In my view it is worse for someone to come out of a shop with an armful of new T-shirts made in a sweatshop, than it is for a rich lady to buy one beautiful dress."

She adds:

> "The designer aims," she said, "to work on areas with achievable goals and she chronicles her activities on the website Climate Revolution." She sees the western economy as "intertwined" with ecological danger, "like two snakes." "I can't speak for the views of other fashion designers. Some of them don't seem to be interested in anything but fashion and they even go on holiday with designers and magazine editors, but they have all been very supportive of me." (Thorpe, 2014)

Although by no means can Westwood be giving a ringing endorsement to the fashion industry here, more and more fashion companies have embedded sustainability into corporate identity schemes, corporate (good) governance, branding, marketing, stakeholder relations, ethical investments and other ways in recent years. These efforts, such as by Professor Helen Storey, British artist, designer and academic, have become more concerted and coordinated, producing positive results while raising levels of encouragement for further action.

There is also evidence that the industry was broadly supportive of international attempts to limit the impact of climate change, most notably through the Paris climate change agreement in December 2015, which many sustainability officers working for the big fashion houses welcomed as a key measure to support fashion companies reduce their carbon footprint. However, there were also those in the industry worried by the additional costs to businesses associated with the agreement and new climate change regulations and who argued that this might deter a more concerted favourable industry response (Abnett, 2015). And the argument of this essay is that industry-wide efforts with climate change have tended to lack comprehensive strategies – see discussion above – with many within the industry recognizing that climate change can be better tackled effectively through broader civil society initiatives.

4 Fashion industry and climate change campaigns

Thus the latter point highlights the fact that for many working in the fashion industry, the only comprehensive way to tackle climate change is to align the industry to broader political and social initiatives such as international climate change agreements, government initiatives to meet lower carbon emission targets and environmental campaigns run by NGOs. There is also support for the greater use of educational and promotional activity is required if global citizens are to be persuaded to change their lifestyles and promote more sustainable forms of living. One such area where the climate change campaigns and programmes are being increasingly encouraged is in Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives (CSR). Jones, Bowd and Tench (2005) define CSR as

> Corporations being held accountable by explicit or inferred social contract with internal and external stakeholders, obeying the laws and regulations of government and operating in an ethical manner which exceeds statutory requirements. This "ethical manner" is placed at the core of the entity's strategy, exemplified by proactive community involvement, philanthropy, corporate governance, corporate citizenship, addressing of social issues, a commitment to the quality of its products and services, human rights, health, safety and the environment and its staff … While all the time this accountability should ensure a continual emphasis on generating growth, revenue and profit for the corporate entity and its shareholders/owners, facilitating this process either directly or through positive effects on the entity's intangible assets, such as brands and reputation. (p. 4)

Much CSR work does indeed have an ethical dimension where businesses go beyond basic economic and legal requirements to do what it sees is 'just' and 'fair', exceeding public expectations of normal business practice. In ideal circumstances, businesses become exemplary corporate citizens working with public and private sectors alike to further community projects or government policies, thereby providing social value-added outputs. CSR, at best, recognizes that environmental degradation and pollution are not inevitable and that opportunities for community consultation and involvement should be maximized. But historical and contemporary practice demonstrates that businesses can fall well short of basic CSR requirements, especially in their advertising and marketing campaigns dealing with environmental claims. Promoting 'green' issues is merely given lip service in the pursuance of greater corporate profits or seen as 'window dressing', as author and advertising executive John Grant put it: "You can't put a lettuce in the window of a butcher's shop and declare you are turning vegetarian" (Quoted in Aitken, 2007. Advertising greenwash is highlighting the growth of marketing spin rather than providing serious credence to corporate ecological credentials. And, as such, it can also form a pernicious barrier to effective corporate behavioural change.

There have however been increasing attempts among companies, including fashion, to adopt green "values" in branding and marketing campaigns. From food and drink producers to supermarket chains, from energy companies to fashion-chains, companies are being asked by social media, NGOs and public about their green credentials. CSR is being increasingly utilised in green debates and campaigns adding, arguably, environmentally-friendly and sustainability as value-added dimensions to campaigns (McGarvey, 2007). The number of green campaigns has mushroomed in the past three decades in line with the growth of CSR and, increasingly, corporate groups are working with leading NGOs, media outlets and other campaign groups on climate change issues. We will now look at two British cases, both of which have received widespread support of the fashion industry. As part of research in to climate change, we spoke to representatives of the 10:10 campaign, London, and the Earth Hour in Scotland, UK, examining instances of fashion involvement.

5 The 10 : 10 campaign[1]

The 10 : 10 carbon emission reduction campaign which, although still less than a decade old, has suggested a number of potentially fruitful pathways for involving ordinary people and organisations at all levels in climate-related behavioural changes. 10:10 is a brainchild of the British film maker, Franny Armstrong, in her response to overwhelming public responses to her climate documentary, *The Age of Stupid*. Its central idea is to encourage and provide the necessary facilities for individ-

1 Research for these case-studies were carried out as part of a project funded by the British Council in New Delhi, India. I would like to thank the Council for its financial support and also my two co-investigators, Alka Tomar and Dr An Duc Nguyen, for their help and support in conducting the research project.

uals and organisations to cut their carbon emission by 10% in one year, and then another 10% in the following year, and so on until it reaches the lowest possible level. Those who sign up are committed to addressing this compound year-on-year 10% challenge and are given practical advice to do so.

By some quantitative measures, the campaign had an early considerable success. Within six months of its launch in September 2009, it had drawn nearly 60 000 sign-ups (including not only individuals but also thousands of organisations such as schools, businesses and local councils) and raised a modest but impressive £400 000 budget from private donors, trusts and funds. One of the earliest supporters of the campaign was Dame Vivienne Westwood. Why such large and high-profile followings within a relatively short time? The answer to this question might require a long list of factors – such as the motivation and creativity of its young team, its diverse and effective use of various media outlets and platforms (including a formal partnership with the *Guardian* from the very beginning), its working tenets and principles and so on. But perhaps the underlining reason lies in the core philosophy of the 10:10 campaign: everyone can cut their carbon emissions as long as it is tied to their daily life in a practical way. Instead of following the usual method of communicating and educating people of the potentially dramatic but still distant and abstract impact of global warming, 10:10 takes a pragmatic stance, endeavouring to drive people from the "what's the point in me in this big thing?" towards the "Yes, I can do it" or "Yes, it is beneficial for me" mindset. As its former director, Eugenie Harvey, explained:

> My mantra is that … you have to meet people where they are, not where you think they should be … Effective CC engagement is about recognising the reality of people's lives and speaking to that reality … People have busy, complex lives and it's not easy. So it's not realistic to expect them to radically change or reengineer those lives to the sort of life styles we know are necessary to start to reduce carbon emissions … One of the mistakes climate campaigns have made over the years has been to think that people would be engaged by doom stage scenarios … The truth is that we … a lot of people are not going to be engaged by being told everything is terrible and the world is coming to an end and it's all our fault. You need to align all your activities to some part of their daily life. Take them through their daily channels and use the narrative and language … which chime with them.
>
> (The other point to engage the less engaged is that) we have to be realistic about the ability of people to change and the time scale that people can change – and that is the good thing about this campaign. Perfect is the enemy of good and perhaps one of the mistakes that have been made, quite likely unwittingly, is to ask people to change their behaviours to such an extent that they become the kind of perfect low-consuming individuals. And I think that it is not realistic and should be sacrificed for being good – lots of people being good rather than a small number of people being perfect. (Harvey, personal interview with An Duc Nguyen and Matthew Hibberd)

In practice, this philosophy translates into promoting and encouraging people and organisations to gradually change the way they live or operate so that they can cut carbon emissions at the same time as saving money (through, for instance, efficient energy or fuel or water use), improving their health (through fruit and vegetable diet), feeling happier and more worthy, and so on. The key objective, according to the campaign's content manager, Malachi Chadwick, is to create a narrative that is "sufficiently catchy and sufficiently inclusive so that people … get interested in it … and do something about … their emission". At a more operational level, this includes practical "down to earth" simple instructions that people can print out from its website and stick on their wall or fridge – such as

- turning down your thermometer
- turning off radiators in hallways
- applying for a grant to insulate your loft and walls

- changing light bulbs
- buying and selling second-hand things
- only running full dishwashers and washing machines.

One of the earliest examples of fashion-related initiatives organised through 10:10 was promoting second-hand fashion. The *Guardian*'s Patrick Barkham's highlighted his own attempts to cut down on new clothes purchasing:

> I have suits for work, shorts for running, boots for climbing mountains, tracksuit bottoms for vegetating, flip-flops for the beach, party shirts for partying and reassuring knitwear for meeting great aunts. I have five pairs of gloves, four hats and two eye-masks. I have most bases, and all extremities, more than covered. Like most people, I find shopping in our soulless malls and tatty clone high streets an increasingly tedious chore. Clothes, however, remain the exception. Retail therapy still works for me in the likes of Zara and H&M, where you can buy a whole fresh look for a couple of hundred quid. As a shy teenager, clothes made me feel better about my crap body; a new shirt still gives me a lift for at least three wears. After that, the shirt is still fine but the buzz wears off. This is a familiar consumerist addiction. But I have almost as many years behind me as shirts; I should grow out of such cheap, confidence-boosting tricks. Giving up buying new clothes has a "hair shirt element which is not appealing to most people," says Chris Goodall, author of Ten Technologies to Save the Planet. "There is something hard-wired within us that makes us desire things even when we don't need them. The idea we have got to consume less is incompatible with the culture of the moment." Rather than go cold turkey, Goodall recommends "I wean myself off this clothes addiction by continuing to buy secondhand." (Barkham, December 31, 2009)

Another prominent campaign by 10:10, and also fashion linked, was holding sewing masterclasses teaching young people to repair clothes rather than buy new ones. This initiative was led by Sophie Barclay:

> There are a number of things that you can do to keep your clothes in good condition for longer. And when they do start falling apart, there's Sophie's mending masterclass with advice on how to repair them … Sophie Barclay has sewn many a pocket and patched a fair few pairs of jeans in her time. As a freelance costume designer and maker, she has become her friends' first choice when their clothes are in need of a quick fix. But she assures me that there's nothing too sophisticated going on "Anyone can do this – it's fun and it's easy. I do it in front of the TV!" (10:10, 2018)

What, then, has been the overall impact of 10:10 on actual behavioural changes on its participants? This, unfortunately, remains to be assessed. 10:10 has not been able to quantify its real impact, since it does not use any mandatory reporting system in which participants provide feedback on their action year. However, voluntary reports from participants show at least a good deal of anecdotal evidence of encouraging and sometimes very impressive changes.

6 WWF Earth Hour

One of the most popular environmental events each year that attracts many fashion companies is the WWF Earth Hour Initiative. Every year fashion events are organised around this occasion. The Earth Hour is a global event organized by World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and is held annually in late March (this year at March 24, 2018). The key requirement of Earth Hour consists of asking households and businesses to turn off their non-essential lights or appliances for one hour to raise awareness for climate change. Earth Hour was started in Australia in 2007, when more than two million residents of Sydney participated by turning off all non-essential lighting and other electrical appliances. Many other cities and countries, including the UK (we study the Scottish initiative for this research) then adopted the event in 2008. WWF argue on their website that

> Earth Hour is a simple idea that's quickly turned into a global phenomenon. Hundreds of millions of people turning off their lights

> for one hour, on the same night, all across the planet. But it's not to save an hour's electricity. It's something much bigger. WWF's Earth Hour is about people coming together to put the focus on this brilliant world we all share – and how we need to protect it. Not just for an hour a year, but every day. Because a healthy planet isn't just good for polar bears or tropical tree frogs. It's essential for us all. It's easy to forget how much we depend on it for food, fuel, water, fresh air… And the truth is our modern lifestyles have been taking a toll on our planet. WWF already tackles a lot of the environmental impacts – like deforestation, endangered species, and the impacts of climate change. But Earth Hour is a chance for everyone to say they'll do their bit. And that's never been more vital. And, Earth Hour is a celebration. It's always a night to remember – whether it's a special candlelit evening at home with friends or family, or a night out on the town, or watching the spectacular global switch-offs from landmarks like the Eiffel Tower, the Pyramids of Giza, Times Square, Sydney Opera House… (WWF, 2018)

The first key point to make about WWF Scotland is its close relationship to British and international equivalents on the one hand, but the importance of the Scottish political agenda on the other hand. As their Scottish communication officer argues:

> Some of our efforts are driven by a result of what we do as part of WWF UK, *but* the very fact that we have an office here in Scotland is because we're meant to look at different ways of doing things, we have our own parliament, culture, you know, so as many institutions in Scotland we will operate and engage in a slightly different way, than say, we would do it at UK level.

The Scottish context therefore guides what WWF Scotland does. An important element to their operations is to lobby the Scotland Government to maintain pressure and momentum on regulatory concerns. The Scottish Climate Act of 2008 has sent ambitious targets for Scotland to reduce its carbon footprint by 2020. As WWF's communication officer argued:

> I would say probably the main reason for us working on Earth Hour at all is because we know that after the Scottish Climate Change Act we still need to keep up the pressure and the momentum to make sure that Act is delivered. So you can have all the best laws in the world, the best targets in the world, but if there's nobody there that keeps pushing them to be delivered then forget it. So I'll be quite blatant for working on this, in Scotland anyway, is because we see the opportunities to keep the pressure, the momentum and the understanding of climate change on the agenda. Whether it's in the media, political, business, whatever it was, we know that it offers a great vehicle to do that. That has meant we have engaged quite heavily politically in Earth Hour, more so than perhaps in other countries and certainly more so than they've done at the UK level because we've wanted to show politicians that people care.

The other key reason for Earth Hour was to raise public awareness and allow participants to take concrete measures lowering their carbon footprint for one hour and then in subsequent weeks and months:

> The challenge has changed every year, so the first year it was just a case of putting it on the map, what was really nice to have was the fact that they had done it so well in Sydney, so we had something to show, there was something visual, there was a buzz. The interesting thing was that even though we didn't do it here that year, different people did participate in the Earth Hour round the world because they heard about it and got excited by it. Some have taken part in Earth Hour on the day, you know, by switching off their building, some of them have said "I don't have a building to switch off, I'll do something else." The backbone for our work in Scotland has actually been our local authorities and they give us an opportunity to communicate with communities in Scotland we wouldn't otherwise get to because either we can't reach them with our advertising or we've got no existing connection with them. One of the most powerful alliances has been with our local authorities.

In 2018 this includes working with Scotland's biggest city council, Glasgow, to

organise a range of initiatives around the Earth Hour day on 24th March. The focus of events in 2018 included highlighting the efforts of the fashion industry to tackle climate change. Among the events organised by WWF and Glasgow Council were:

> "Waste, not Want" – sustainable fashion brand, KPCouturé, will be aiming to encourage conversations around sustainability in the fashion industry as well as showcasing their products including clothing and accessories from donated scrap fabric and jewellery from plastic building waste processed in their on-site plastic processing centre.

And

> "Rags to Riches" – showcasing articles made from everyday throwaway materials and lantern making. (Glasgow Council, 2018)

Another major partner in 2016 was the H&M clothing group that used the WWF Earth Hour event to launch environmentally friendly clothing ranges:

> All the garments are certified organic cotton, following strict environmental and social criteria. Designs are recognizable by their realistic prints of iconic species at risk. The collection will be available in H&M stores worldwide and online starting 29th of September. 10% of the sales price of the collection will support WWF's work in conserving endangered species. The Kids collection features animal prints of species such as the tiger, panda, snow leopard, polar bear and the finless porpoise, that are facing many threats including habitat loss, water pollution and the impact of climate change. The collection mainly consists of comfortable and easy to wear organic cotton-based items such as long sleeve sweaters, T-shirts, dresses, tights, trousers and pyjamas for babies and kids between 1,5 and 14 years old. The aim of the collection is to inspire H&M's customers to care for the planet as well as to highlight our transformational partnership, which focuses on water stewardship and climate action, as well as strategic dialogue related to both H&M's and the fashion industry's broader sustainability challenges. (WWF, 2016)

Arguably, as argued above, the quantitative effectiveness of such campaigns is unknown and public response in terms of behavioural change can often limited. There are arguably multiple reasons for why people remain resistant to altering lifestyles to in the face of apocalyptic warnings on climate change, but attempts such as the WWF's Earth Hour or the 10:10 initiative demonstrate how individuals can feel part of a larger movement and undertake practical solutions to help cut carbon footprints.

7 Conclusion

During the recent COP 24 Summit on Climate Change in Poland (November-December 2018), a new fashion-related initiative was launched called the Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action. The initiative contains 16 pledges with the broad aims of reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the fashion industry and encouraging policy changes to help combat climate change. While such an initiative is welcome, some have pointed to past failures of the industry to unify behind green issues. As the journalist Victoria Moss argues:

> The current predicament of the fashion industry makes me feel uneasy, partly because I am culpable for being part of a culture that pushes the new in and must-haves, but also because the sea of bad news surrounding the worst practices of the industry is not new: we know that child refugees are being drafted in to work in garment production in Turkey; that fast fashion factories in this country have been paying its workers far less than the minimum wage; that 1 134 garment workers died when the Rana Plaza factory in Bangladesh collapsed on top of them; that farmers in India are ending their lives because they are so in debt to the companies which buy their cotton, but also trap them into expensive deals to purchase GM seeds and fertilisers; that in Prato, Chinese immigrants work at night in basements ensuring luxury labels a "Made in Italy" cache. Not to mention the burning of old stock and unused fabrics, the catastrophe

> of over-production and polluting … but still we want more. (2018)

The main aim of this article has been to explore the main challenges facing the fashion industry from climate change. The main argument of this essay was that fashion has grown to be a major industry, often being associated with the key excesses of globalisation. Fashion is often identified as one of the key industries responsible for climate change and other problems identified with global capitalism, such as poverty. Fashion has a major part to play in climate change initiatives and can attract large-scale publicity. Fashion is often celebrated in the media and generates publicity across the world although little of this exposure ever relates, arguably, to climate change or UN Millennium Goal initiatives. While there are clothing companies and key individuals working to cut their own emissions and promote climate change and international initiatives (Abnett, 2015), this article has argued that the fashion industry as a whole has some way to go to promote concerted efforts in tacking one of the major social and political issues of its day. Previous examples show the difficulties the industry has in uniting in adverse times, such as demonstrated by the Savar building collapse in 2013. Also, the sheer scale of the industry and the very heterogeneous sets of consumers it serves, means that the industry is consistently servicing orthodox and sub cultures, disparate groups, which again may well be difficult to unite around fashion-related themes alone. This article has rather illustrated two climate change campaigns promoted through civil society that have been able to encourage a range of fashion houses to promote the climate change agenda.

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Taste-making in turbulent times: Vogue and its social networks

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Abstract
Vogue is a long-standing taste-making institution, with a reputation for drawing together a selection of the most fashionable people, places, and products in its monthly magazine. In the mass-communication systems of the twentieth century, expert knowledge conveyed through monthly magazines was important and effective. However, the digital context of the twenty-first century enables instant access to fashion information, influences and influencers, allowing us to be as informed as many experts. The paper uses Actor-Networks (Latour, 2005) to examine the evolution of taste-making practices in fashion communication. Content from British *Vogue* May 1967 and May 2017 provides the data for a comparative analysis of changing methods of influence in fashion. This qualitative case study considers how *Vogue* has responded to the networked conditions of the contemporary communication environment and what its digital strategy can reveal about new methods of influence. It identifies how the ongoing structural changes to fashion communications continue to reshape institutional tastemakers such as *Vogue*, online and offline.

Keywords
Vogue, taste, influence, networks, taste-making

1 Introduction

Fashion magazines have been an important method of circulating information on fashion style and taste, with *Vogue* a dominant title in this field for over a century. In the mass-communication systems of the twentieth century, the magazine format was an important and exclusive resource for those interested in fashion. However, the digital context of the twenty-first century has revolutionised our access to fashion information and changed the way we engage with fashion media. Fashion ideas distributed via magazine format now exist alongside a variety of fast moving, interactive competitors.

Despite the demise of some magazines and a decrease in circulation figures, *Vogue* stands as a highly-regarded and influential brand in the fashion media landscape, with the magazine central to its profile. However, to maintain relevance and to compete in these networked and fast-moving conditions, it has had to evolve. This paper uses the magazine as the starting point to explore the changing methods of influence in fashion communication by comparing British *Vogue* magazine from May 1967 with *Vogue* from May 2017.

The fashion magazine has been the subject of analysis in areas of fashion studies, social sciences and cultural studies, used to explore media and communication practices (Moeran, 2004; Rocamora, 2009), commerce and consumer influence (McCracken, 1993; Crane, 2000) as well as gender and identity construction (Jobling, 1999; McRobbie, 1996). *The Fashion System* by Roland Barthes (1967) details a significant semiotic analysis of how fashion magazines produce 'fashion' through word and image. Through this work, Barthes established a foundation for research into fashion magazines as cultural products, and offers insight into the fashion system through the signs and linguistic systems that communicate 'fashion.' The studies undertaken in the twentieth century have analysed the fashion magazine situated in systems of mass communication, before the media communication landscape was transformed by digital networked technologies. Fashion magazines have subsequently been examined at the intersection of so-called old and new media as much

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of society integrates mobile communication into their daily practices (Rocamora, 2012; Moeran, 2015; Lynge-Jorlen, 2012). Inevitably, much of the investigation into contemporary fashion media has shifted to blogs (Rocamora, 2011; Pham, 2011; Titton, 2015 amongst others), fashion film and video (Khan, 2012), as new modes fashion communication emerge.

This paper adopts a socio-cultural perspective on the magazine as a social object and examines both its position in relational networks, and its significance as a node in online and offline networks. It begins by detailing the theoretical positons and methods that have informed the research, before describing a range of findings from content analysis undertaken of British *Vogue* May 1967 and May 2017. The comparative case study highlights the changing characteristics of content, communication channels and message making. The analysis provides new insight on how fashion taste-making institutions (such as *Vogue*) that were established during an era of mass-communication are adapting to contemporary networked conditions. Further, the findings, whilst drawn from limited data, suggest an underlying adjustment to the way concepts of fashionable taste are made meaningful in the twenty-first century.

2 Method

The magazine has been described as 'a bounded entity' (Fuery, 2009), and indeed its covers create the impression of a singular unit. However, this paper explores how the magazine can be understood as the material effect of an interacting network of heterogeneous entities; representing a network consolidation. Underpinning this approach is Actor-Network Theory (ANT) proposed as an alternative social theory by Bruno Latour (2005).

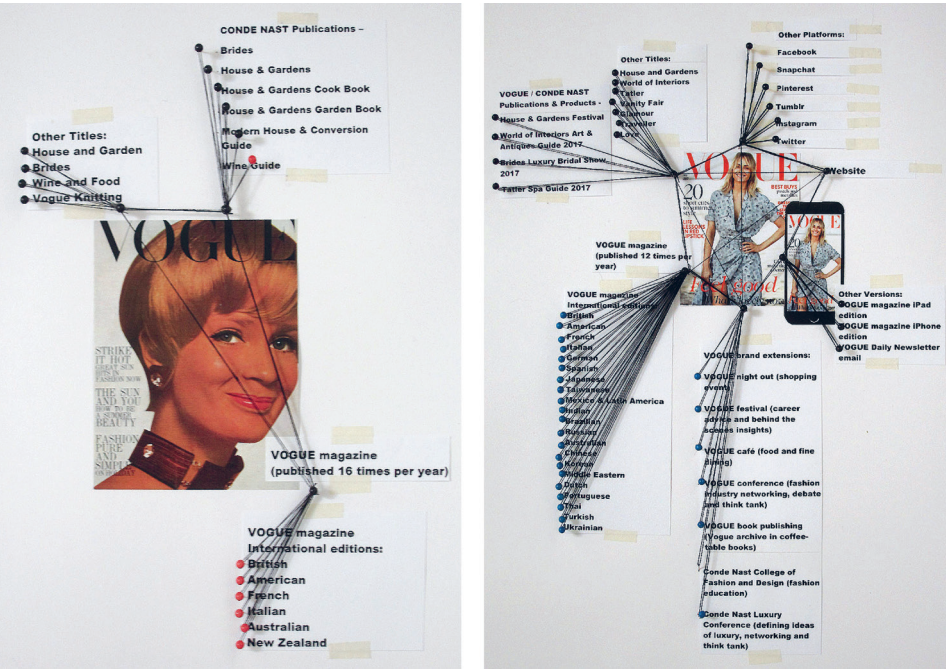
Latour's theory considers the associations and relations of human and non-human 'actants' and proposes a new understanding of the 'social' through a focus on the interconnections that make up collectives, networks or assemblages (Latour, 2005). He uses the term 'actant,' rather than 'actor' to capture any manner of things that play an active role in shaping associations. This is particularly relevant to fashion, where many interactions and communication practices are mediated through objects, situations, bodies and equipment. In this case study, the magazine represents a convergence or consolidation of such a network (Law, 1992). Further, emphasis on the network in Latour's theory provides a relevant structure for the analysis of communication. The characteristics of a network are used to identify the nodes and links that shape *Vogue*'s social networks (beyond its magazine covers), whether through technological processes or as social practices.

In combination with Latour's notion of actor-networks, this research uses discourse analysis to examine the taste-making content within *Vogue*. It adopts Michel Foucault's ideas on discourse and discursivity that propose a broad set of 'statements' converge to form popular discourses that influence what is 'sayable' and 'thinkable' about a topic at a particular historical moment (Hall, 1997, p. 73). Foucault proposes that certain discourse emerges across a range of texts, in actions and conduct, and at a range of institutional sites, thus characterising a way of thinking or state of knowledge. This perspective expands the scope of what is involved in knowledge production and representation and is fitting for the diverse nature of 'fashion statements' made in contemporary fashion communications.

The work of both Latour and Foucault have guided the research strategy here, in order to understand events and effects that occur through interaction, convergence and connection, rather than through separation, boundaries and division. They also bring issues of materiality and practice into the analysis of social behaviour, two important characteristics of fashion communication.

The paper uses detailed content analysis of two British *Vogue* magazines (May 1967 and May 2017), produced fifty years apart, as a way of breaking apart and identifying the taste-making entities assem-

Figure 1: Network mapping and visualisation: British Vogue May 1967 and May 2017



Note. Illustration by Matthews (2017).

bled in each edition. This comprehensive examination classifies all 'actants' as either explicit elements if they are included in editorial features, or implicit elements if included in advertising. Products, people, places and activities make up both the editorial and advertising content. Scrutiny of this content also reveals the shape of *Vogue*'s communication networks, a mesh of interconnections that reaches well beyond the magazine cover. Visual mapping techniques have been used both as a process of data gathering and as a method of data analysis (Cosgrove, 1999). This is an approach adapted from critical cartography and is used as a way to visually document and interpret actor-networks and discursive formations.

3 Results: Content analysis

The comparative qualitative analysis of the two editions of *Vogue* magazine offer some clear physical differences in the production of the magazine. May 1967 has a larger page format, but less pages than the May 2017 edition (1967 = 170 pages / 2017 = 248). The thickness and glossiness of the pages in May 2017 stands in contrast to the matt and rather 'papery' quality of May 1967. There is also a noticeable difference in the quality and quantity of colour reproduction between the two editions, with May 2017 containing vibrant colour saturated images throughout, while May 1967 has colour on covers (front and back), but very limited use of colour in editorial images (with a majority of fashion images in black and white). It is the advertising in May 1967 that brings colour to the magazine content.

There are differences in distribution channels, *Vogue* edition in 2017 is available across a range of formats including mobile phone and iPad. This alters the material quality of the magazine experience, whilst extending accessibility. In 2017 *Vogue* magazine is published monthly and has 21 International editions, whereas in 1967

Vogue magazine was published 16 times per year with six International versions. Figure 1 (Network Mapping and Visualisation: British Vogue May 1967 and British Vogue May 2017) illustrates the changing communication channels of *Vogue* between 1967 and 2017.

The content of each magazine details further communication channels of *Vogue* content. In 2017, *Vogue* content is created and edited for the *Vogue* (UK) website, Facebook, Snapchat, Pinterest, Tumblr, Instagram and Twitter. The magazine also promotes multiple offline, face-to-face immersive *Vogue* experiences to be had in 2017, such as *Vogue* night out (shopping event), *Vogue* festival (career advice and behind the scenes insights) *Vogue* café (food and fine dining) and *Vogue* conference (fashion industry networking, debate and think tank event). In addition to the *Vogue* brand extensions, the magazine publicises Condé Nast (*Vogue*'s parent company) enterprises. These include promotion of other magazine titles – House and Gardens, World of Interiors, Tatler, Vanity Fair, Glamour, Traveller and Love as well as Condé Nast College of Fashion and Design (fashion education), and Condé Nast Luxury Conference (discussing the changing notion of luxury). This cross-promotion of other *Vogue* and Condé Nast publications was also evident in 1967, although to a lesser extent. Titles such as House and Garden, Brides, Wine and Food and *Vogue* Knitting are publicised in May edition of 1967. The details of these extended communication are included in Figure 1 to build a picture of *Vogue's* network connections

In considering the seismic changes that media communications have undergone in recent times, a comparison of these magazines reveals two very different communication networks. Unsurprisingly, the analysis details a much more complex system of links and nodes that reflects a greater (physical and virtual) reach in May 2017 compared to May 1967.

4 Explicit content analysis

The comparative analysis of magazine content in this research sub-divides the material into explicit content and implicit content. In Figure 2 (Visualisation of Content Analysis: British Vogue 1967) and Figure 3 (Visualisation of Content Analysis: British Vogue 2017), explicit content is detailed in the inner circle of the diagrams while implicit content is mapped in the outer circle. This distinction reflects the difference between items that *Vogue* staff felt were important to include, and those items that have paid to be included. Although this distinction provided useful structure for the analysis process, there are some elements, such as advertorials or *Vogue* promotions that are difficult to classify in this way.

Comparison of the explicit content in 1967 and 2017 reveals marked similarities and differences. Although both editions of *Vogue* contain content that details a selection of fashionable products, people, places and activities, the way these elements are framed in the magazine content displays stark differences. The number of product types discussed in the editorial content in May 1967 appears very limited compared to May 2017 (1967 = 15, 2017 = 27; see Figure 2 and 3). In the earlier edition, there are very few images of the products, other than garments, included for discussion and where images are included, these are in black and white. Fashion products (garments and accessories) are discussed using a range of simple descriptors such as beachwear, city-daywear, eveningwear or young ideas. In comparison, all products whatever their type are accompanied with styled colour visuals in the editorial content in 2017. Fashion products are grouped and themed in numerous and creative classifications. So, types of dressing become sub-divided offering multiple options around times of day, attitude, location and colour palettes, in fashion features such as "20 Ways to Summer-ise your Style" and "How to make Pink Chic."

Of specific interest regarding the explicit content, is the way books, jewellery,

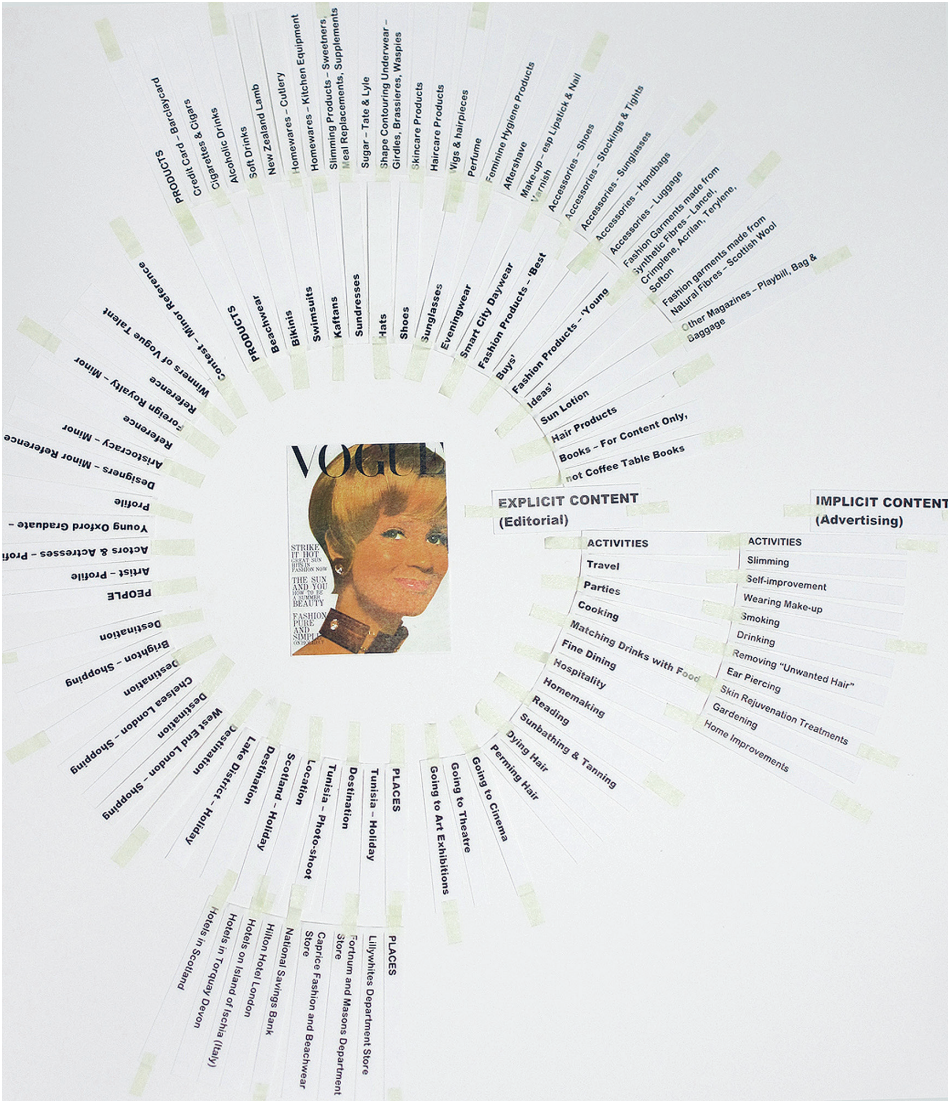
beauty products and the home are treated very differently in *Vogue* magazine fifty years apart. Books feature in both editions; however, in 1967 their inclusion is as a list of book reviews that evaluates the quality of the writer or story. In 2017, the books included are briefly described in terms of their visual appearance and suitability as a coffee table book. Jewellery is framed as an investment by a contributing writer from the Financial Times in 1967, whereas today jewellery (including items with precious stones) is presented as an essential fashion accessory. The beauty content in 1967 lists products that specifically target the outside appearance of the body; descriptions of tanning, hair dyeing or hair perming products are framed as aids to achieving a particular notion of female appearance. Beauty features more heavily in 2017, and the list of products extends to treatments, services and experiences with a focus on holistic wellness rather than perfecting a particular exterior appearance. Nutrition, exercise and meditation emphasise 'natural' approaches to beauty and wellness in this product category in 2017. The home and its products feature in both editions of *Vogue*. In 1967, it forms the backdrop for discussions of hospitality and home-making, for example, in an article that describes how to make alcoholic drinks that will compliment salads (including what type of glasses in which to present the drinks). In 2017, the home is referenced as a place to display tastes and inspirations or as a reflection of identity and lifestyle. This is exemplified in an article that takes the reader inside the home of American designer Tory Burch (The Tory Vote).

However, there is a more significant and over-arching observation from the detailed content analysis of these two magazines, concerned with the people who contribute and converge in these magazines (as network consolidations). In *Vogue* from May 1967, there is little evidence of the people who produce the content of the magazine. There is a discreet list of staff on the contents page, photographers are credited in photo shoots and there are two short profiles of contributing writers. However, there are no credits for the models (even where Jean Shrimpton and Twiggy feature), and no credit for hair, make-up or styling. Notably, many articles do not acknowledge a named author. In 1967, there are only two articles that profile individuals, these are actors and an artist. There is also a short piece on selected social engagements attended by minor aristocracy and foreign royalty, with no-one from the world of fashion mentioned.

In *Vogue* 2017, almost everyone who has contributed to content has both a credit and a short profile. There is a section included after the contents pages dedicated to contributing photographers and writers (with mini biographies). *Vogue* staff are highly visible, with three articles written from a first-person perspective by magazine staff. Throughout the explicit content in 2017, there are a broad range of people profiled from across fashion and beyond. Artists, musicians as well as actors from across film and television are included, with extensive information about their childhood, home life and professional pedigree. In addition, people from across fashion, beauty and lifestyle, ranging from emerging names through to established figures form a central part of the contemporary content of *Vogue*.

Of course, both magazines draw together different types of entities that form notions of fashion because of the perpetual changing nature of fashion. However, there is also a shift in the discourse on "fashionableness" between the two magazines. In May 1967, despite the emergence of new young fashion during this period, the discourse defines certain boundaries of fashion, focusing on appropriate physical appearance and behaviours. In May 2017, pluralistic concepts of fashion emerge, opening up the nature of fashionableness beyond the consumption of products and dressing up. Rather than defining, it suggests multiple ways one can participate in fashion, for example, via experiences and interactions with others and by employing methods of self-improvement that work from the inside as well as the outer appearance of the fashionable self.

Figure 2: Visualisation of content analysis: British Vogue 1967



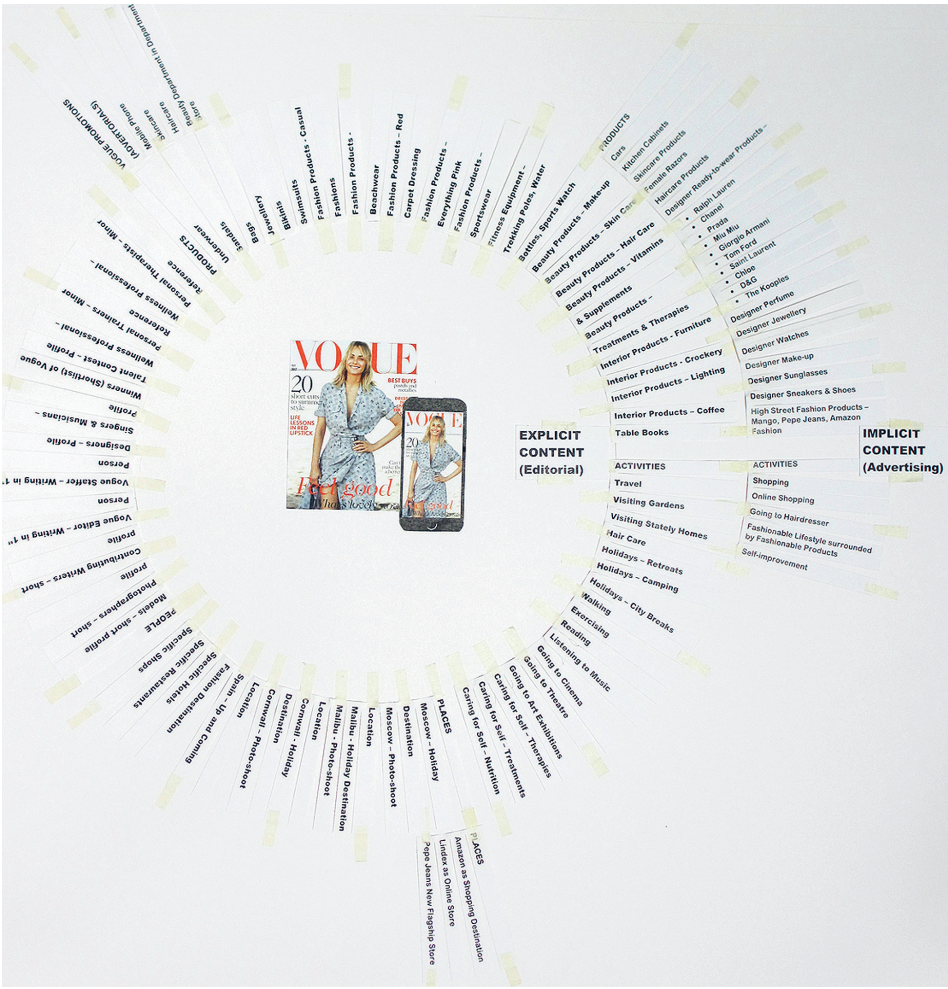
Note. Illustration by Matthews (2017).

5 Implicit content analysis

Analysing the implicit content in the form of advertising provides further insights on the shifting relational networks of *Vogue*. Although this material is included for a fee, the nature of this content reflects research (and assumptions) about *Vogue* readers.

In comparing the advertising content from 1967 and 2017, there are certain differences in format. In May 1967, there are full page colour adverts throughout the magazine, but there are also a large number of small (quarter page or less) text based adverts, with little or no image. In May 2017, there are some strip or half page adverts and all advertising content is in colour with images. Both magazines have an extensive classified section at the back of the magazine, even this has some ac-

Figure 3: Visualisation of content analysis: british vogue 1967



Note. Illustration by Matthews (2017).

companying photographs in 2017 compared to 1967.

Both magazines have full colour multi-page adverts in their implicit content. In the earlier edition, multi-page advertisements are dedicated exclusively to synthetic fibres such as Crimplene and Terylene. These adverts resemble fashion shoots with models wearing 1960s style dresses made of the synthetic fabrics. The contemporary edition has multi-page adverts that also resemble editorial fashion shoots; however, these pages show only luxury designer brands that use the space to promote new collections of garments, accessories, perfume and lifestyle.

The findings of the comparative analysis of the implicit content gives a contrasting picture of product types promoted in the two magazines (1967 = 28, 2017 = 15; see Figure 2 and 3). In 1967, items range from wigs and slimming products through to New Zealand lamb, cigarettes and aftershave. This stands in contrast to the limited product range included in the 2017 edition, which is restricted almost exclusively to fashion garments and fashion accessories with the exception of two adverts for

beauty products. Advertisements found in both editions do employ global locations, such as Paris or Italy, as a signifier of quality and sophistication. They do this in the imagery used as well as including written reference, whether for wine, perfume or as a place of origin for handcrafted accessories and watches.

There are different themes that emerges through the implicit content of these two magazines produced fifty years apart. A large portion of adverts in 1967 promote products for the physical improvement of the female self; wigs and hair-pieces, contouring underwear and slimming products, make-up and 'unwanted hair' removal products that will all help to tame the imperfect female body. There is emphasis on improving exterior appearances in order to please others. However, in 2017 the implicit content focuses on fashion products and accessories and the lifestyle implications of their branding. There is almost no reference to physical self-improvement, rather the emphasis is on fulfilment of the self through brand/product investment.

6 Discussion

Content from British *Vogue* May 1967 and May 2017 provides the data for a comparative analysis of changing methods of influence in fashion. How has *Vogue* evolved in response to the networked conditions of the contemporary fashion communication environment? What can *Vogue* magazine content and its digital strategy tell us about new methods of influence and taste formation in twenty-first century?

This case study provides insight on how *Vogue* has extended its reach in today's networked fashion communication environment. *Vogue* produces multiplatform content and engages its users through all media channels, whilst maintaining the tangible experience of the magazine as part of its communication strategy. *Vogue* has also developed other avenues of brand communication; multiple face-to-face immersive activities that demonstrate the accumulation of creative and cultural knowledge and resources of the brand – education, industry presentations, think-tank conferences, festivals about careers in fashion as well as shopping and retail events. These offline activities offer a way for '*Vogue* the institution' to connect and engender trust through interpersonal means and mark an adjustment in the relational networks within which *Vogue* is situated, in contrast to the bounded or closed experience of *Vogue* magazine in 1967.

Analysis of explicit content notes an expansion in the range of people, products and activities in *Vogue* of 2017, whilst variety of products advertised had contracted. The discourse around the wide assortment of people, products and activities connects fashion with the broad cultural landscape and proposes fashion as something that is accessible for everyone. It addresses its readers as more informed, experienced and discerning than their 1967 counterpart. In 2017, *Vogue* readers do not employ fashion for social competition or conformity; rather they presume contemporary consumers draw on a range of fashion objects, knowledge and experiences for pleasure, empowerment and entertainment, so they propose multiple options. Furthermore, the shift in explicit content towards symbolic consumption of services (through engagement with nutritionists or therapists) as non-material displays of taste, further diversifies notions of fashion luxury and exclusivity in *Vogue*.

Vogue in 2017 draws on a variety of voices to convey its views on fashionable taste. It no longer seeks to send a singular or specific message about what is 'in' fashion or the height of taste each month. The content is distinctly people focused, individuals are made visible, human and relatable through first-person articles, candid self-portraits and personal information. This gives the fashion messages in *Vogue* variation and a level of authenticity. By highlighting the collection of different people whose views are captured in *Vogue*, the fashionable message gets expressed and diffracted. It also has the effect of breaking down "*Vogue* the institution" into

something resembling a collective of individual contributors.

So, what does this tell us about methods of influence and taste formation in the twenty-first century? Recent studies of fashion communication have focused on the power of social media influencers (bloggers, Instagram stars and Youtube vloggers) to command attention and promote fashionable taste. This reflects a social shift, where the fashion consuming public seek out stylish individuals who are able to competently demonstrate a version of fashionable taste on a level that is more accessible to them, in preference to fashion institutions. The examination of *Vogue* magazine and its social networks in 2017, demonstrates how this established institutional tastemaker is adjusting its messages and practices to break down its perception as an institution, by putting people, their lives (including their vulnerabilities and experiences) out for public consumption. Further, by ensuring that all contributors are named and given a profile including a picture and personal details, the monthly magazine becomes more akin to a creative assemblage or forum – rather than a monthly edict from a large organisation.

The shift in consumer preference from institutional tastemakers to the tastes communicated through individual performance suggests a need to consider alternative or changing conception of taste formation. Many studies of taste formation and the impact of media and communications on taste are founded on Pierre Bourdieu's work, *Distinction: A Social Critique on the Judgement of Taste* (1984). Bourdieu's formulations are based on French society during the 1960s and 1970s. For him, taste is a device to create visible difference from other sections of society and to shore up one's own social position, it is about separation and division (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 59–60). The consumption of culturally significant products and the associated performance of consumption are central to his ideas on how taste works as a means of "fitting in" or "standing out" in society. Products (including fashion objects), are given meaning by institutional mediators (such as magazine editors), in order to function as a sign, with the subjects reproducing existing social hierarchies.

The actor-networks and discursive formations analysed in the May 2017 edition of *Vogue* do not promote a clear designation of fashionable taste that, if followed, create visible difference from other sections of society. *Vogue* seeks to present multiple modes of fashionable taste and more plural views on fashionable objects, ideas, settings and activities. To reflect this and the change in public preference away from institutional influences, this paper proposes that Antoine Hennion's ideas on taste formation provides a useful lens on contemporary mechanisms of influence on fashion. In the *Pragmatics of Taste* (Hennion, 2004), Hennion outlines a theory that understands taste and taste-making as reflexive practices performed in and through our attachments to objects and communities, in relations with others and relations with ourselves (Hennion, 2004, p. 131). His ideas have been developed in the social conditions of the twenty-first century and seek to open up taste to a greater diversity of analysis. Hennion shares Latour's focus on the interconnection between subject and object and between the human and non-human proposed in ANT (Hennion & Muecke, 2016, p. 291).

Activities that develop our tastes, are described as acts of tasting or experimental interactions that help to bring forth differences "in" objects and "in" the sensibilities of the taster (Hennion et al, 2005, p. 675). So, our taste emerges through acts of tasting, but is further shaped and advanced by the gestures and behaviours that accompany it, by the support and response it receives from others and on-going adjustments and re-alignments as our associations develop. Many sources and elements inform and influence our subjective experience. His view of how taste develops more closely aligns with multi-layered methods of influence that accumulate through our online and offline interactions. This conception of taste formation enables a consideration of the micro/macro nature of contemporary fashion 'statements.'

Hennion's ideas on taste formation provide a useful perspective in this study. He describes taste as "based on mediations, bodies, objects, situations and equipment" (Hennion, 2004, p. 136) that converge and help to create attachments. This has the potential to capture the way we engage with fashion across media platforms, interacting with different elements in the noisy crowded communication landscape as well as our lived experiences of fashion. In addition, it enables a new perspective on the adjustments that *Vogue* is making to its taste-making practices, breaking down its institutional perception. This perspective enables a clearer understanding of how an interacting network of heterogeneous entities can take effect on our taste in the contemporary fashion communication context.

7 Conclusion

The purpose of this paper has been to explore the evolution of taste-making practices through an examination of *Vogue* magazine as a long-standing and well-regarded fixture in fashion media. It uses two editions of British *Vogue* produced fifty years apart (May 1967 and May 2017) as a starting point, recognising the magazines as the material effect of a network consolidation. Employing the concept of actor-networks as well as content and discourse analysis, this paper has identified certain changes in *Vogue* over fifty years, both as a social object and its role in producing networks of meaning in fashion.

There are a number of physical and visual differences between the two magazines including the quantity and quality of colour image content. As detailed above, there are also changes to the types of products, brands and activities included in the advertising content, notably the growth of *Vogue* and Condé Nast brand extensions. However, the key findings emerge from the comparative analysis of the explicit content. *Vogue* magazine content has evolved over time to promote a breadth of ways to be fashionable. It constructs conceptions of fashion that are not simply concerned with dressing up, but that exist in situations and locations, through services and experiences, also via health and well-being.

In May 2017, the content is distinctly "people" focused. The adjustments in *Vogue's* practices resonate with the working methods of today's social influencers, who have reshaped and personalised the fashion communication and taste-making practices over the last decade. These individuals engender trust and effect influence on fashionable taste through interpersonal communications about their lived experiences.

This paper argues that the shifting communication practices captured in the magazine are a means of changing the perception of *Vogue* as a hierarchical institution that seeks to dominate fashionable taste. Their promotion of a wide variety of fashionable entities depict fashion as a plural domain, down-playing former notions of exclusivity. The multiple brand extensions that facilitate different types of face-to-face or immersive fashion experiences removes the perceived boundaries around fashion defined by insiders and outsiders. These changes create the impression of *Vogue* as a creative collective, with eclectic individuals contributing their own ideas and perspectives on how to be fashionable.

The idea of "*Vogue*, the institution" appears to influence the brand's activities along two very different paths. On one level, *Vogue* plays on its heritage and long-standing reputation to invoke stability and trustworthiness; demonstrated by its venture into fashion education and fashion conferences, for example. On another level, *Vogue* seeks to diminish the idea that it is a well-established and stable institution. Through emphasis on the variety of its creative contributors and operations across social media platforms it encourages readers to see it as agile and adaptable in 2017; to see it as a brand capable of communications that are as fluid and individual as any of today's social influencers.

In the turbulent and digitally disrupted era of fashion communication, it is easy

to overlook the fashion magazine, classifying it as out of date. Nevertheless, if the magazine can be understood as an opportunity to study the convergence of network effects in contemporary communication practices – it still has much to offer.

8 Limitations

The examination of *Vogue* magazine from 1967 and 2017 has undoubtedly provided insights into the changes to fashion communications and the operations of *Vogue* as a taste-making entity over this period. However, the highly selective nature of material examined here makes it unwise to draw broad conclusions regarding other institutional tastemakers or to make wide-ranging assumptions about contemporary fashion communication practices. The data drawn upon here is extremely limited and over a fifty-year span. Further understanding would be gained from exploring the extensive archive of material in *Vogue's* back catalogue and would benefit from quantitative as well as qualitative examination.

9 Future research

The findings of this paper suggest the need for further research into institutional fashion tastemakers and their evolving communication practices. The fashion media environment, with its ability to engage and interact with consumers to produce material and immaterial effects has much to offer investigations in this area. For future research, adopting Antoine Hennion's perspective to understanding taste formation would provide an opportunity to fully explore the increasingly networked nature of taste-making practices that are enacted online and offline. This topic would benefit from a longitudinal study that maps the extended networks of fashion tastemakers and the multiple actants that converge in contemporary fashion statements; this would offer more detailed insights on where and how the tastemakers' perspectives intersect with personal tastes and our lived experience of fashion.

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Communicating material characteristics in a digital age: Three case studies in independent fashion

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Abstract
This article focuses on the intersection of the material and the digital in the independent fashion sector, with a focus on ways in which digital media and contemporary communication tools are being used to unite them. It explores the tension between the opportunities provided to small business in the contemporary media landscape and its use in a sector closely associated with a nostalgic valorisation of material qualities related to nature, artisanship and luxury. It further examines ways in which the communication of material characteristics through technological platforms contributes symbolic value to independent fashion as a cultural product. Thematic analysis was conducted of online texts and images related to three contemporary American independent labels in a three-year period (2014 –2017). The study finds that instead of being viewed as a threat to the independent fashion sector's driving ethos, technology has been embraced as a tool allowing independent fashion producers to amplify their voices as they challenge existing fashion paradigms.

Keywords
independent fashion, independent cultural production, fashion communication, digital media, mediatization

1 Introduction

Los Angeles-based independent fashion designer Jesse Kamm runs a small business with a big online presence. An internet search for her eponymous label returns results in the first two pages for her business website, her Instagram profile, stockist pages and interviews with bloggers, media outlets and retailers. Kamm has over 70 000 followers on Instagram, with whom she shares content on an almost daily basis. Posts range from updates about new styles and product launches to images, videos and stories of her family, home and office. Interviews profile her tastes in clothing and passion for surfing, share images of her self-made furniture and offer insight into her design philosophies. Information about the label and opportunities to purchase items produced by Kamm are readily available and abundant, though Kamm employs just a handful of staff and had still been working from a home studio until mid-way through 2017.

Technology has amplified the voices of independent fashion businesses. Though on the one hand it is acknowledged that this creates global competition in the sector, it is argued on the other that contemporary technologies are empowering and provide new opportunities for small-scale designers to engage with a broader audience (Webster, 2016). It has simultaneously been argued that production in the independent fashion sector may rely on an industry niche emphasising material concerns related to garment construction, provenance, textile quality and fit (Leslie, Brail, & Hunt, 2014; Molloy & Larner, 2013). This article focuses on the intersection of the material and the digital in the independent fashion sector, with a focus on ways in which digital media and contemporary communication tools are being used to unite them. It explores the tension between the opportunities provided to small business in the contemporary media landscape and its use in a sector closely associated with a nostalgic valorisation of material qualities related to nature, ar-

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tisanship and luxury. It further examines ways in which the communication of material characteristics through technological platforms contributes symbolic value to independent fashion as a cultural product.

2 Defining independent fashion

Independent fashion is a broad term lacking definition. The term is often linked to a business structure or economic status. For example, in his study of branded fashion retailers, Aspers describes independent retailers as "private shops" (2010). However, financial independence is a nuanced concept. For example, does part-ownership or the financial involvement of a business partner or personal partner disqualify a business as being considered "independent"?

Others have suggested that independence is strongly connected with an attitude that expresses itself aesthetically, ideologically or in some combination of both. Australian fashion curator and historian Danielle Whitfield writes that independent fashion is situated at the intersection of "art, craft and fashion" and writes that it may be provocative or radical (2010). Leslie, Brail, and Hunt's (2014) study of the independent fashion sector in Toronto highlighted the importance of authenticity for those businesses and their emphasis on cultural values associated with sustainable or "slow" fashion, including high quality, reduced consumption, ethical production and localized supply chains. Other researchers have suggested that independent fashion businesses emphasize a local perspective, but also actively oppose the mainstream (Cuba, 2015). Together, these studies suggest that the perceived creative control of the designer or business owner – and the resulting independence of attitude of the business – is what is important, rather than a financial arrangement or formal business structure.

Research into independent cultural production in music and film seems to support this perspective. In independent cultures in these fields a distinct authorial voice, perceived as direct and unfiltered, is highly prized (Dolan, 2010; Hesmondhalgh, 1999; Newman, 2009, 2011; Reilly, 2007). Importantly, research also suggests that independent cultures can be elitist given their drive to exclude mainstream practices and connect with a narrow, knowledgeable audience that possesses the requisite amounts of what Bourdieu would term cultural capital (Hesmondhalgh, 1999; Newman, 2011). The role played by the consumer in identifying and categorizing independent culture is central and divisions between "mainstream" and "independent" are created and mapped not only by producers but by networked participants (Newman, 2011). It is also important to acknowledge that independent businesses may not be entirely separate from the mainstream models they oppose, but rather operate from within the same broader system (Crewe, Gregson, & Brooks, 2003; Gauntlett, 2011).

For the purposes of this study, independent fashion businesses are classified as those in which the designer-owners have a prominent presence and could be perceived to have creative control. They are also businesses that offer products demonstrating an attitude of independence from the perceived dominant characteristics of mainstream fashion models in the early twenty-first century (rapid turnover of styles, overconsumption, opaque supply chains and unpredictable quality).

3 Technology and fashion consumption

Technology has provided new ways for participants in cultural fields to connect and consume. In fashion, technology and social media platforms such as Instagram play an increasingly central role in the industry, facilitating the literal and figurative consumption of fashion on a newly wide-ranging scale. Online shopping has been embraced by consumers following a tentative start, and businesses such as Asos, Net-a-Porter, Matchesfashion.com, Amazon, Yoox, Shopbop, Garmentory and Farfetch continue to be globally influen-

tial. Large traditionally bricks and mortar retailers such as department stores, luxury brands or chain stores continue to build their online presences. Consumers can shop using websites or apps, and some retailers use widgets to allow consumers to purchase goods through social media platforms like Facebook or the photo-sharing app Instagram.

Instagram has become highly influential since its launch in 2010 and bloggers with large numbers of followers are paid to wear clothing by labels they promote; models or celebrities are sometimes said to be selected for work based on the size of their Instagram following (Gallagher, 2016; Hope, 2016). It has also been suggested that fashion retail store design is being influenced by Instagram photography tropes such as posing in front of walls for "outfit of the day" photos (McDowell, 2017). Rocamora suggests that digital media has become so deeply embedded in contemporary life that it may actually shape the practices of fashion industry participants, including in instances such as those listed above (2017). She draws on the concept of mediatization to consider this. For example, Rocamora discusses the way in which fashion parades are increasingly focused on social media content development, particularly as bloggers have become influential participants in the industry. Rocamora also cites the example of one of (UK luxury brand) Burberry's stores whose "digital-first" design reflects that of its website and features digital multimedia offerings such as fitting room mirrors that suggest complementary items for purchase or provide additional product information (Cartner-Morley, 2012; Rocamora, 2017).

The material aspects of clothing remain relevant and physical connections with consumers are important communication channels and sales tools. Free shipping and free returns is a common offer for many large retailers and some small ones too, as they work to overcome one of the key challenges of selling clothing online: it needs to be worn on the body and, by extension, needs to fit and feel a particular way. Businesses with significant online presences draw on physical initiatives for a multi-faceted and holistic approach to sales. Net-a-Porter offers a print magazine available at newsagents and by subscription. Matchesfashion.com is the online arm of a chain of pre-existing London boutiques, where private shopping and styling services are offered. Retailers or designers without permanent physical retail presence may also create pop-up events or host travelling trunk shows so that consumers can see, touch and try on their clothing. This is a popular practice for independent fashion businesses too. They may offer a limited pop-up experience in a store with a similar audience or may operate a stall at a high-end craft and design market. However, they struggle to compete with the scale and scope of activities undertaken by larger businesses and digital workarounds are important, where they may collaborate with other creative businesses on videos or blog posts that showcase their clothing in a range of lifestyle situations and aesthetic settings.

4 DIY, independent and alternative: Making things outside of mainstream models of production

As technology and online shopping have flourished, some consumers are drawn instead to what they perceive to be more authentic products such as handmade, small-batch or artisanal goods. As Luckman writes, "when you are a 'digital native', analogue is new" (2013, p. 50). Luckman's study of the contemporary craft movement and the rise of online craft marketplace Etsy suggests that handmade, artisanal goods have acquired new meaning in a culture in which most goods are mass-produced. She also suggests that participants in the independent (she uses the terms "indie") crafts sector position it as an alternative to "mainstream consumer culture", noting that this continues a trajectory originating from the British Arts and Crafts movement at the turn of the nineteenth century through to the counter-culture movements of the 1960s and 1970s (2013, p. 264).

Importantly though – as Luckman's focus on the online craft marketplace Etsy would suggest – this is not occurring in isolation from technology, but rather in tandem with it. The contemporary fashion industry has been characterized as prioritizing speed, overconsumption and low prices (Webster, 2016). It has been suggested that the contrasting position put forward by small fashion businesses offering artisanal services and high quality at mid-range price points and who take advantage of technology to do so, enables them to carve out a niche in which they can survive, and even flourish (Webster, 2016). Relatedly, Anderson argues that technology allows makers to be both local and global and "artisanal and innovative"; he calls the makers movement a new industrial revolution (2012, p. 16). "DIY" culture and the makers movement have been closely linked to "indie" or independent movements and research has shown that technology is being used to highlight the voices of these cultures and connect their participants in a newly amplified way. Brent Luvaas says the concept of DIY is a central proposition in independent cultural fields and credits the internet with making it more popular and more widely accessible since the 1990s (2012).

David Gauntlett discusses connections between making, DIY and craft. He notes the complexities of the word craft, which is sometimes used as an antonym for art; art being perceived as more superior, more elite (2011). After detailed exploration, he defines craft as "the careful, thoughtful process of making something with the hands" (2011, p. 80). He argues that products made using digital tools or for online consumption qualify equally as craft, because of the making process behind them. In fact, Gauntlett suggests that the internet offers the potential to challenge dominant models of consumerism because it allows alternative voices and independent cultures to not only create, but "be effectively heard" (2011, p. 231).

Regardless of classification as DIY, indie or maker, what these cultures appear to share is an attitude towards production and consumption (and most likely, notably, a combination of the two) fuelled by a desire for products and connections with consumer communities not available in the mainstream. It is not a rejection of capitalism or its drive towards consumption, but rather a way to operate within that system in what participants perceive to be a more authentic way. In addition, contemporary technologies are allowing the voices of these independent communities to be more globally audible than ever before, and to provide potentially powerful alternatives to dominant or traditional models of consumerism.

5 Method

For this study, a thematic analysis was conducted of images and texts describing the work of three independent fashion labels: Shaina Mote, Jesse Kamm and Elizabeth Suzann. The data sources were texts and images produced by the designers themselves, by retailers who stock their products and by fashion journalists. Materials cover an approximately three-year period (2014–2017). The designers chosen were purposively selected because they advocate for an understanding of the materials from which their clothing is made and the impact of those materials on the wearer's experience of their designs. Additionally, they each have a self-declared interest in high quality, natural or hard-wearing materials. Selecting designers who have located themselves in secondary fashion cities (Los Angeles and Nashville) rather than the established fashion center of New York is also deliberate. Though their businesses differ in size and age and embody different lifestyles, these designers share what could generally be termed a minimalist aesthetic sensibility and in the case of Kamm and Mote share stockists.

This study has limited generalizability. A focus on American designers provided a broad range of data, but risks a geographic bias particularly important to note given that country's historical association with the types of textiles used by the contemporary designers in question. The history of American fashion highlights a tradition

of hard-wearing natural textiles. For instance, Claire McCardell, described as "the most important American ready-to-wear designer of the twentieth century", often used linen and cotton and advocated for clothing that was practical and comfortable as well as feminine (Steele, 1991). However, this study is not intended to be an exhaustive one, and represents a pilot study for a larger project aiming to provide a more detailed examination of consumption in the independent fashion sector. Instead, it is hoped that this study will initiate discussion about how fashion's material characteristics are expressed through technology, and the central role the material qualities of clothing play in attributing symbolic value in the independent fashion sector.

6 Shaina Mote

> In Japan, there is great respect for the process and how things are built. It was fascinating to observe the impact of time on the creative process. For instance, the brush and broom maker's family has perfected their product over the course of three generation (sic). When you hold their items in your hands, you feel where each curve has been carefully considered and designed with specific purpose. (Shaina Mote qtd in The Dreslyn, 2015)

Shaina Mote is based in Los Angeles and creates clothing that can be worn in multiple ways. She worked in various roles in the fashion industry before starting her own label, including as a vintage buyer and pattern maker. Her website lists the textiles she uses and their provenance. For instance, the tencel used by the label is described as being made from "sustainably harvested eucalyptus trees" and the wool they use "comes from a family-run mill in Italy that has been weaving cloth for decades" (Shaina Mote, n. d.). Her clothing ranges in price from around USD 300–500. Her website states that "the Shaina Mote woman eschews the reign of the trend in favor of timeless self-expression" (Shaina Mote, n. d.). Mote's work is described by *Vogue.com* as not being "outwardly crafty", but nonetheless showing "a definite hand to pieces like the almost-textural, mottled coloring of a sweater inspired by [textile artist Anni] Albers's sketches" (K. Anderson, 2015); a retailer writes that her pieces are characterized by "fine tailoring and high-end construction; all hand made in the USA" (Need Supply, n. d.).

In interviews and profiles such as these, Mote and her work are often connected with ideals associated with maker culture. "Maker" has become a popular catch-all term in the worlds of fashion, design and food in recent years, and is associated with values including authenticity, quality and a rejection of the perceived toxicity of mainstream materialism. It primarily seeks to highlight the presence of the maker and promotes handmade, artisanal products over mass-produced ones. These types of products offer a "reprise" from contemporary life and suggest a nostalgia for times gone by (Luckman, 2013, p. 254). A tactile, hands-on approach is also reported as extending to other areas of these designers' businesses and lives, further consolidating the portrayal of highly personal and hands-on work practices of a "maker" deeply connected to her craft. Rocamora suggests this type of practice is part of a process of "transubstantiation" in her analysis of Bourdieu's writings on fashion, writing that "the way designers decorate their houses, their life and lifestyle […] enter the objects of material production to invest them with symbolic value and become an integral part of the fashion these designers produce" (Rocamora, 2002, p. 350). For instance, Mote describes the décor of her home to Austin-based boutique Kickpleat in a profile from which readers can click through to purchase Mote's garments:

> My home is very laid back and typically smells like Palo Santo wood or Copal. I am starting a mini collection of Brahms Mount cotton blankets – I love the idea that they are handwoven in the US. My boyfriend and I have made a lot of the furniture together. Our space is very wabi sabi, (a lot of natural wood), neutral in tone with a solid collection of plants. (Kickpleat, n. d.)

In this instance, the aesthetic is one that relies not on items of great monetary value, but items aligned with maker culture, including handmade or personalized pieces and earthy, natural materials. However, what is suggested is not an unfiltered natural world, but a selective, curated vision of what nature can provide. Another profile of Mote by a fashion journalist notes that: "Art is a perennial inspiration […] and for Fall she looked to a desert landscape and Donald Judd's Marfa, Texas, studio, which lent the collection its palette of neutrals and a muted red" (K. Anderson, 2016). For the uninitiated, the details may seem boring or monotonous, but for those in the know they reflect carefully appraised detail and imagery drawn from the natural world and merged with references from the world of high art.

Mote's website features a clean, minimal design in which the neutral toned clothing is photographed on a pale background. She features a film – also shared on *Vogue.com* – in which her clothing is seen on a cellist in addition to models; they stand under a blue sky at the Chateau Marmont hotel in Los Angeles while birds chirp and sheer fabrics sway in a gentle breeze ("Shaina Mote Fall 2017: Video Fashion Week," 2017). There are numerous cues here for consumers who can read them: a water glass placed by the cellist suggests purity and health; the inclusion of a cellist links independent fashion with high culture fields like classical music; and the framing of the Chateau Marmont together with billowy, sheer and feminine fabrics brings to mind Sofia Coppola's films (known for her feminine stylistic devices) rather than grittier Hollywood stories of drug overdoses or wild parties. This type of multimedia marketing tool relies on multiple, overlapping practices that depend heavily on the idea of hypertextuality Rocamora discusses (Rocamora, 2012). Elements related to the video are connected in a web of meaning in which *who* is doing the sharing (*Vogue* and Shaina Mote), *where* it is being shared (websites and social media) and *what* is being shared are equally important. *Vogue.com* has a dedicated video series entitled "Vogue Video Fashion Week" in which they share "ready-to-wear concept films curated by *Vogue.com* editors" ("Video Fashion Week," n. d.). It could certainly be argued that print media's thirst for online content has driven this trend, though these types of shareable, click-friendly videos have become increasingly common for independents like Mote as consumers seek online content that extends the consumption experience.

7 Jesse Kamm

> I remember something Thoreau wrote that resonated so deeply with me about how a man who mends his own clothing and builds his own dwelling is a contented man. I think this is why I am so content in my life. I feel like I don't need that much stuff […] In our modern society we've lost that ability to enjoy home [economics] or wood shop. Nobody has those skills anymore. We're out of touch with things that are basic and important. (Jesse Kamm qtd in Hartman, 2015)

Jesse Kamm is a Los Angeles-based fashion designer who focuses on menswear-inspired tailored clothing in natural fibers. She describes the textiles she uses as "fine and sturdy… because I want the pieces to last a very long time" (Jesse Kamm, n. d.). She is best-known for her 1970s-inspired high waisted sailor pants, known as "Kamm Pants". These are available in a range of colors, including denim and some limited-edition colors. She is "committed to making everything in the USA, because it is important to me to support my community" (Apiece Apart, 2015). Her designs are sold through Kamm's website and by international independent fashion boutiques. Her clothing ranges in price from around USD 300–600.

As suggested by the above quote, from Kamm to a *New York Times* fashion writer, as a designer she promotes a simple lifestyle and is often portrayed as possessing a "can-do" DIY attitude. This attitude is supported visually by the designer, a lanky former model, who shares images on her Instagram account of herself wearing her

designs as well as the house she and her husband built in Panama, where they go on annual surfing holidays. She occasionally shows her own sparsely furnished interiors (noting Donald Judd as a source of inspiration) and they are sometimes used as incidental accompaniments to a photograph of a sunset or other natural phenomena. Suggestions of a DIY or maker culture ethos in texts and images recall all that the ethos suggests - authenticity, quality, provenance – but could also be seen here to invoke nostalgic pastoral ideals. There is a sense of an idealized lifestyle in which vast spaces, outdoor living, good health, honest work and independence from industrialized life feature strongly.

Participants in the independent fashion sector often refer to the places in which these businesses are based, which in this case is outside the US fashion industry's commercial center of New York. Provenance is important. By noting Kamm's location in Los Angeles, her creative independence is already suggested. Kamm's studio is located "at the top of a quiet LA mountain, after the winding steep streets and amongst the urban wilderness" (Makinson, n. d.). She tells one journalist that "I don't feel like I'm in 'fashion.' I mean I do, but I feel like this is just a craft and it's been fulfilling me for almost ten years and I love it and I love that other people love it, but I don't live and die by it" (Makinson, n. d.). By describing what she does as a craft, Kamm aligns herself with other makers, rather than with the fashion industry. A *Vogue.com* journalist writes:

> [Kamm is] the go-to designer for a community of L. A. Eastsiders (think Brooklyn with palm trees), creative types such as photographer Hilary Walsh, jewelry designer Annie Costello Brown, and textile designer Heather Taylor, who appreciate how her pared-back aesthetic translates into versatility. 'I can wear Jesse Kamm to a wedding or the farmer's market,' explains Taylor. (Crowley, 2014)

Statements such as these and their inclusion of references to other creatives serves to validate and further celebrate the work of these designers. They elevate them and contribute symbolic value to these garments for in-the-know consumers.

Los Angeles facilitates the referencing of ideals and values that are surprisingly pastoral given its sprawling urban environment, notorious smog and the municipal struggles of any large city. This is not the Los Angeles of Hollywood trivialities, riots or packed highways. Instead, it is a version of that city in which a thriving maker culture is foregrounded and where there are palm trees, beaches, healthy eating, outdoor lifestyles and mid-century modernism. California also carries strong connotations of counter-cultural traditions. A *New York Times* article about the resurgence of artisan craft fairs describes Los Angeles as the home of "California-style spirituality," where "the look and language of spiritual seeking… goes back to the origins of the state" (Hartman, 2014). Kamm sunbathes and discusses her passion for surfing during one interview (Makinson, n. d.). She is described by *Vogue.com* as recalling a memory "over a mid-morning snack of dried apricots at her Mount Washington studio, flashing a grin that emphasizes both her Joni Mitchell cheekbones and Midwestern bonhomie" (Crowley, 2014). The accompanying image shows Kamm and 18 friends and creative colleagues wearing her designs, standing outdoors in dappled sunlight. The colors are neutral, except for some muted watermelon pink and lime, and their stances are strong.

The lifestyles portrayed are not unlike the sunny, unreal world inhabited by Barthes' "woman of fashion", unburdened by everyday concerns and trivialities (Barthes, 1990). This kind of communication could be dismissed as trivial marketing hype or a fashion version of the over-the-top language found in the television satire *Portlandia*, with its parody of hipster culture (Armisen et al., 2011). However, this would be too readily dismissive of independent business enterprises being run by women – many of them from home while also balancing family commitments – that have been successful over a number of years in spite of global economic instability. Instead, it may be more useful to

think of this fantastical language as exactly the point. It is fashion, after all, and though they provide products outside of the mainstream system these designers still participate in it by producing and selling fashionable clothing. These interviews and product descriptions are used to communicate with like-minded producers and consumers and not to engage with individuals outside of that circle. There is a sense that sector participants are speaking with one another in something of an echo chamber, mediated through technology. Just as the fictional characters of *Portlandia* may share an unspoken understanding that organic chicken is preferable or that jewelry should be locally handmade, consumers interested in purchasing clothing from Kamm or her stockists identify with the lifestyle (however idealized) she embodies and recognize the cues about it in texts and images as they are passed through various communication channels.

8 Elizabeth Suzann

> I don't want to make anything I can't take a nap in. (Pape, 2016a)

In contrast to the glamour of Shaina Mote's Chateau Marmont cellist or Jesse Kamm's "Joni Mitchell cheekbones," the Elizabeth Suzann label by Nashville-based designer Elizabeth Pape seeks to offer clothing fit for the challenges of quotidian life and her label provides an emphasis on lived experience when talking about fashion's material characteristics. Pape began her business selling on the online craft marketplace Etsy and at craft fairs including the Renegade Craft Fair in Chicago and the Porter Flea Market in Nashville. Her business has an online-only, direct-to-consumer model and clothing is made to order in her own warehouse. The brand's website says they use "only the highest quality, natural fiber cloth [which is] significantly more durable, feels better against your skin, and gets softer with each wear" (Elizabeth Suzann, n. d.-g). A dedicated page on her website lists every textile used and its qualities, including its provenance and how long it takes to biodegrade (Elizabeth Suzann, n. d.-e). Clothing available on the site ranges from around USD 150–400.

Pape is active on social media, particularly Instagram, and actively seeks consumer feedback on her work. Her designs are mostly cut to stand away from the body and she produces them in neutral colors in wool, silk and cotton. Instagram photos reflect this and often show a product at close range, with a description of the item and a suggested outfit or a benefit of that textile. Through various digital platforms, Elizabeth Suzann clothing is portrayed as being hard-working, versatile clothing that can be worn on a variety of occasions. The label's blog is a critical online tool used for communicating detailed information with consumers about product launches and changes to garment designs as well as demonstrating ideas for how to wear the clothing. There are also profiles of staff members and features on Pape. One blog post on the brand's website shares Pape's experience of her clothing as she packs a selection of her designs for a family holiday (Pape, 2016b). The post explores in close detail what she wore at which occasion and not only how she looked, but how she felt in each outfit. She admits to wearing the same outfit several days in a row and notes her height, weight and size. Another post provides tips for mothers and "moms-to-be" on which items from her collections would best suit them: they are advised that black is great for hiding stains, linen is durable and stain-resistant and pockets are crucial. Another post offers ten ways to style six items and create a versatile travel wardrobe, noting that "you can pack only these pieces, and easily dress for any occasion on a week-long adventure" (Pape, 2015). Claire McCardell designed a six-piece travel wardrobe in the 1930s - hers in "denim and black butcher cloth" (Steele, 1991, p. 104) – and Pape could be seen as carrying on in the American fashion tradition of easy-to-wear sportswear separates cut from sturdy textiles. Says Pape in one post, "comfort, versatility, ease of mobility, and washability – those are the essentials" (Pape, 2017).

This is not the imagined, idealized world that Kamm or Mote's consumers may inhabit, but one that expresses alternative desires: in this case, an easy, uncluttered wardrobe. The subtext of many of Pape's blog posts and social media posts is one of a well-constructed wardrobe that avoids potential complications in moments of what Sophie Woodward calls "assemblage"; it is a vision of the streamlined wardrobe as significant achievement (Woodward, 2007). This reflects a broader interest in contemporary culture with ideas of minimalism and reduced consumption, seen in documentaries like that of bloggers "The Minimalists" or in books like Marie Kondo's "The Life Changing Magic of Tidying" (d'Avella, 2015; Kondo, 2015). Like reflecting on times gone by as being more "simple" and hence more desirable, wistful references to minimalism, reduced consumption or slower lifestyles may seem ignorant of the realities of those for whom material abundance is unattainable. Nonetheless, it reflects the anxieties of affluent cultures and what appears to be fetishized here is an ease of living. Many popular fashion blogs or stories by fashion journalists offer advice on how to minimize one's wardrobe, how to develop a personal style "uniform", how to build a "capsule wardrobe" or how to free oneself from the time and energy spent on deciding what to wear each day (Collings, 2015; Kahl, 2015; Lau, 2015; Rector, n. d.; Vazquez, 2015). While the notion of a uniform is a complex one with broad social and cultural applications (Craik, 2005), in this context it refers to a repetition of dressing representing the discovery of one's own personal style and a kind of self-affirming self-discipline.

Pape often mentions the idea of "wardrobe building" and her designs are not trend-driven. The simplicity and timelessness of Pape's designs is conveyed through descriptions of the fabrics and their hardworking qualities. The Patti Shell is made of "washed linen knit […] cool and slinky like soft, fibrous chain mail" (Elizabeth Suzann, n. d.-f). The silk crepe she uses is "meant to be worn, not coddled" (Elizabeth Suzann, n. d.-a). She envisions a longline linen vest being "covered in paint, dust, chalk, well-worn and used, paired with trusty denim and clogs on an artist like long-time favorite Eva Hesse" (Elizabeth Suzann, n. d.-c). A wool dress description reads: "the wool/alpaca blend is incredibly soft and warm, and light on the skin. It strikes me as something my favorite strange artists from the 1970's would wear on a chilly desert night in Marfa" (Elizabeth Suzann, n. d.-b). Product images on the website show models captured in movement: arms held above heads, with legs kicked out or caught mid-stride; one campaign shows the model in socks, with minimal makeup and hair styling.

The quality of the fabric is often linked with longevity and a sense of style that is "beyond" fashion. Designers like Mote, Kamm and Pape construct a version of fashionability whose allure is drawn from a rejection of popular trends and the perceived ills of mainstream fashion. Sustainability is not the primary focus, rather the focus is on buying fewer, better things to which one can form a lasting attachment. "Slow has never been this chic," writes one *New York Times* fashion writer in a profile of designers including Pape (Phelan, 2017). There is a suggestion that wearing timeless designs like these offers freedom from the dictates of fashion while still rendering the wearer fashionable. These pieces are, in many ways, "anti-fashion" in the way that Elizabeth Wilson uses the term: elegance that never draws attention to itself; simplicity that is "understated" (Wilson, 1985, p. 183). In a way, this type of clothing also represents what Wilson calls "oppositional fashion," which actively opposes the mainstream. Further consolidating this is the fact that Pape has eschewed seasonal collections for a set of three core ones: the signature collection, cold weather collection and warm weather collection. Additionally, of the three labels examined for this study, Pape's is the only one to offer an extended sizing range. The label has previously run a "diversity campaign" in which women of various sizes, shapes and ethnicities from around the United States were flown to Nashville to participate in a photo shoot for the website (Elizabeth Suzann, n. d.-d). Photographing these wom-

en wearing the label's designs allows consumers to see the clothing on bodies that more closely resemble their own.

Timeless designs that reject traditional collections or industry cycles allow the consumer to picture themselves in the garments and to consider how they would fit in to their lifestyles. It recalls the process Findlay writes about when she suggests that in moments when particular items of clothing appeal to us they may "offer the possibility of metamorphosis in their wearing" (Findlay, 2016). As Findlay writes, this imagining can occur through both the worn and unworn garment: through both the imagined self and the sensory experience of clothing. Woodward writes, following Hansen and Tarlo, that "clothing is not defined by what it has been in the past, but what it can be in the future" (Woodward, 2007, p. 13). The loading of these items of clothing with symbolic value makes them desirable tools through which independent fashion labels can encourage consumers to enact their desired futures, whether highly idealized like Mote's and Kamm's or grounded in (elevated) daily experiences like Pape's.

9 Conclusion

Independent fashion producers are communicating with a broader range of consumers than ever before, facilitated by advances in technology and the use of contemporary digital media tools. Though these high-tech, rapid and globalized methods of communication could be seen to be at odds with the priorities of the sector related to nostalgia, small-scale production, and handmade or artisanal products, some labels have embraced these new opportunities and found ways to use technology to promote these aspects of their work. Images, interviews, social media posts, videos and blog posts are used to suggest luxury, individuality, vitality and creativity related to material qualities, and these are positioned in opposition to the speed, low quality and anonymously produced garments associated with the mainstream system. The ever-present hand of the maker in the garment's construction is shown through intimate Instagram posts or personalized videos; the good health and good vibes sewn into every piece are demonstrated using references to fellow creative producers and images of nature; and beautiful, natural, high quality fabrics that will find a home in the wearer's wardrobe for years to come are shown in blog posts with holiday snapshots or are worn by musicians and artists and captured in ethereal short fashion films. Rather than being seen as a threat to the independent fashion sector's ethos, technology has been embraced as a tool allowing independent fashion producers to amplify their voices as they challenge existing fashion paradigms. Future research could identify and trace commercial outcomes for these designers that are directly linked to their digital communication methods; it would also be beneficial to better understand how the various communication channels available to independent cultural producers may be used to complement one another.

Extending on this aspect, future research into the ways in which these (often very small) businesses gain, use and share the skills required to use contemporary communication tools would offer valuable insight into the nature of entrepreneurial work in the creative industries. This suggested area for future research is further indicated by findings in this study that support Rocamora's assertion that fashion producers and consumers are adopting new methods of consuming and retailing fashion at the same time as they are adopting technology and digital media (2017). In the independent fashion sector, material characteristics are used as a way of separating the sector from the mainstream and independent fashion labels have found new ways to convey these symbolic values using multimedia technology. Some uses could be seen as reflecting a mediatization process, for example Shaina Mote's video or Elizabeth Pape's bloggable packing lists or diversity campaign models. Others, like musings on where one might wear a Jesse Kamm dress or sharing images of the designer's home, are more reflective of

mediation rather than mediatization. This suggests that producers in the independent fashion sector are flexible and willing to adapt to new technology and changing modes of communication, despite the nostalgic focus on nature, artisanship and material luxuries at the core of the sector's driving ethos.

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Fashion influencers and Instagram. A quasi-perfect binomial

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Abstract
Influencers, thanks to their ability to connect with the public, have revolutionized brand communication, making it less invasive and at the same time attractive and dynamic. This research explores the behavior followed by the main Spanish fashion followers, focusing on the strategies and resources used in their communication through Instagram profiles. The gradual incorporation of men into this sector requires identifying whether the publication of habits in this social network vary or not with respect to the author's gender. In addition, compliance with Spanish legislation on advertising is monitored, which obliges the authors to explicitly indicate any message that promotes a product or service from a contractual agreement.

Keywords
influence marketing, instagramer, social networks, brand communication, millennial

1 Introduction

Social media 2.0 enables the user to narrate in first person both the consumer experience and the treatment received by the brands. At the same time, and through these tools, the user has the possibility to approach the evaluations provided by their peers. The word of mouth, far from disappearing, has been increased with social media as the circle of confidence of people who no longer have to necessarily be physically close increases (Li & Bernoff, 2011).

If there is a collective especially linked to this way of proceeding, it is the young public, the so-called Millennials (Bolton, Parasuraman, Hoefnagels, Migchels, Kabadayi, Gruber, Loureiro & Solnet, 2013) who find in the digital space the perfect platform to make known their way of life, their knowledge or opinions on the subject they feel very familiar.

However, only a small percentage of them demonstrate the ability to influence, that is, to generate a reaction in their followers and, consequently, that their recommendations, experiences and opinions are positioned as a preferred option over the rest (Freberg, Graham, McGaughey, & Freberg, 2011). This quality, together with the interest that its communication provokes, and which translates into a voluminous community of users, gives rise to what is known as a social influence.

This clear leadership in a large number of young people causes that many commercial brands, and especially those linked to the fashion and beauty sector, find in the profiles of these leaders the perfect showcase to enter, in a non-intrusive way, into the imagination of its target audience and become infected with the credibility and trust that they radiate. Through influence marketing, the conditions that regulate the professional relationship between brand and prescriber are established (Uzunoğlu & Kip, 2014), making direct reference, among other issues, to actions, times or remuneration. However, the Spanish legislation is clear in this regard, the recipient must be able to distinguish paid messages, and consequently of advertising nature, from those that are not, even if they are signed by individuals (Martínez & Gaona, 2016).

This research focuses its interest on the fashion industry, one of the most profitable in the world and with the greatest attraction power among young people

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(Ribeiro-Cardoso, Teixeira & Santos, 2016; Pérez, Clavijo, Luque, & Pedroni, 2017). In this context, the main objective is to examine how the main fashion influencers in Spain carry out a brand communication in their Instagram accounts, the social media network that has seen its users aged between 16-30 years increase as well as appreciation, especially among women (IAB Spain, 2015; 2016).

If the formula of the social influence is summarized in having a large community of followers and the ability to interfere in the decisions of third parties mainly related to tastes, interests and/or desires (Booth & Matic, 2011), this work is interested in identifying the strategies developed by these opinion formers (igers[1]) aimed at increasing their community and their ability to influence. Likewise, and in a transversal way, it is intended to observe if the communication (themes, language, tone, images, etc.) differs between men and women influencers or if on the contrary there is a homogeneous behavior valid for both genders.

Consequently, the resolution of these objectives invites us to answer the following research questions:

- To what extent do you identify the messages in accordance with the brand (influence marketing) of those which are created through initiative by the fashion prescribers? The purpose is to find out if these opinion former's inform their community of the establishment of a professional link – punctually or continously – with a brand and how it is evidenced.
- How important is the image and text in the influencer's communication through Instagram? Through this question, how the role played by each of these components in this eminently visual social network is valued.
- Are there differences between the techniques employed by fashion prescribing women and their male counterparts when using their Instagram channel? It is about knowing if the communication and way of proceeding of the influencers varies depending on the gender.

2 The evolution of the *influencer* phenomenon

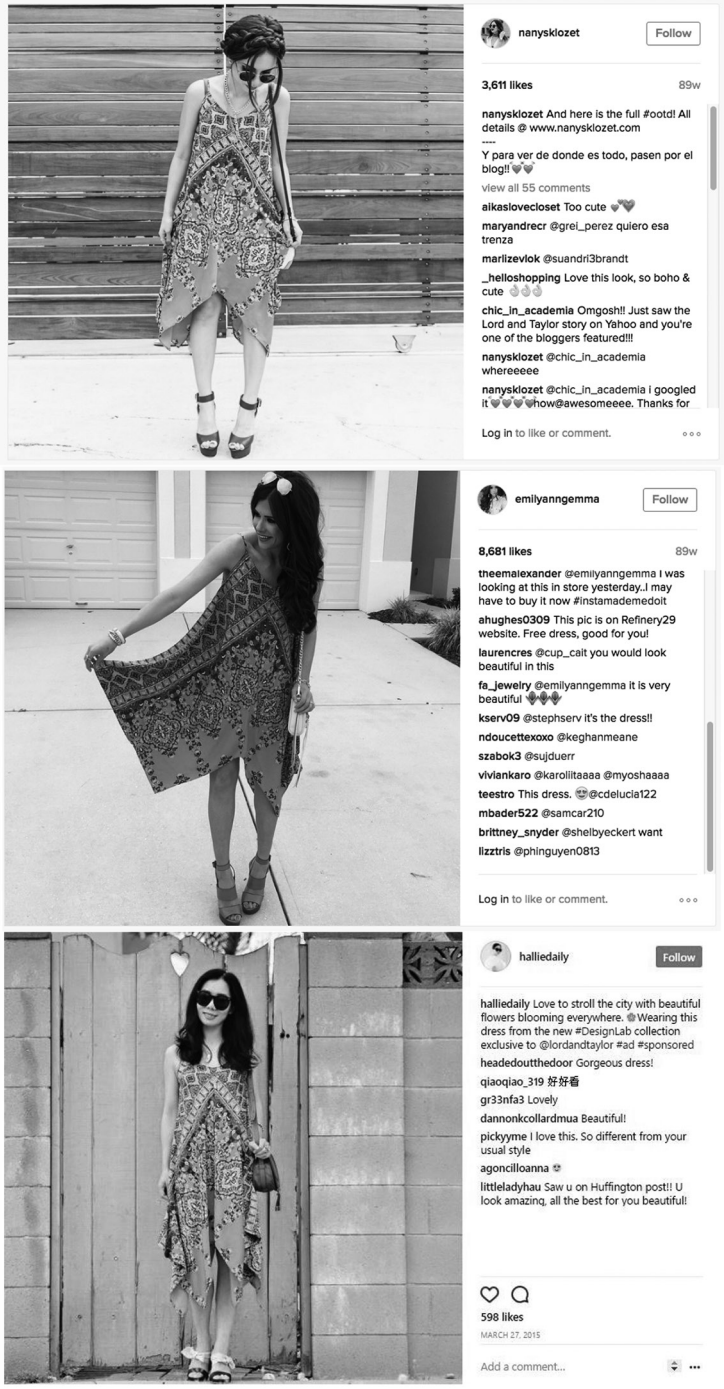
The figure of the social influence is born with the emergence of Web 2.0. The forums were the first digital scenario open to the exchange of opinions but soon the conversation was moved to the blog, a better structured space that cultivated all kinds of themes and interests and that incorporated other expressive possibilities besides the text (Martínez-Sanz, 2013). The variant of the ego-blogger –logbook dedicated exclusively to publicizing the personal experiences carried out by its author- resulted in the advancement of some of the characteristics of younger fashion influencers (Uzunoğlu & Kip, 2014).

As Gillin (2009) explains, the appearance of Google AdSense in 2003 marked a turning point when introducing the economic and therefore lucrative variable in the activity of blogs. The advertising put under its spotlight the most visited and best positioned blogs, thus initiating the competition of brands by appearing in the most demanded web spaces according to the related themes. The segmentation of the public became a necessity and a clear success factor in any advertising campaign (Rojas & Redondo, 2017). Blogs also served to relaunch content marketing when they discovered that updated comments, based on the focus of the subject and the concern to cover practical needs of the public, made its author a reference source.

However, it has been the social networks that have taken the influencer phenomenon to its peak, serving as a professional springboard for many young people whose outfits, suggestions and purchases serve as inspiration for the rest (Ribeiro-Cardoso et al., 2016; Colliander & Marder, 2018). From a commercial point of view it is fully understood that the recommendation from a trustworthy source is a decisive factor when purchasing a product or service (Bigné, Küster, & Hernández, 2013; Benítez-Eyzaguirre, 2016). In

1 Iger is used as a synonym of instagramer and refers to the most active users of this social network

Figure 1: Posts of several instagramers with the dress distributed by Lord and Taylor



Sources: @nanysklozet; @emilyanngemma; @halliedaily

addition to this, we must add that social networks are not understood without interaction, without the active participation of the recipient. This causes that the consumer can assume at the same time the role of creator, contributing with his reactions to mold the evolution of the brand (Castelló, 2010).

One of the first and most outstanding cases of influence marketing in the field of fashion was launched in 2015, encouraged by the American firm Lord and Taylor (image 1). This brand asked 50 leading instagramers to upload a photo on the same day and at the same time with a particular dress from their new collection, making the garment run out after a few days. With this initiative, the brand achieved that the dress was seen by consumers as a must-have, stimulating them to acquire it. With this example the industry understood that the capacity for conviction is powerfully superior if it comes from a close voice, in which it has trust and may have a trademark despite its advertising efforts.

3 The attractiveness of the prescriber

If there is something that characterizes all the influencers, it is their active presence in social media networks, which leads them not to limit their activity to only one, but to expand and adapt their message to the different platforms (Martínez & Berrocal, 2017). The domain and specialization of each one of them has derived in well-known users like: instagramers, youtubers, tweeters, etc. to refer to the user generating content of each space.

Likewise, the social influencer is a person with a wide community of followers who trust the information provided by them and to whom they share common interests. With regard to their communication, the possibilities are very varied: from purely informative messages, including recommendations or practical advice, to the story of experiences, lifestyles or opinions. Even the language has a wide range of possibilities: text, photographs, emojis, videos, etc. In short, what is involved is connecting and providing the public with what they are looking for.

The research carried out by Wiedmann, Hennings and Langner (2010) points out the most determining qualities of the profiles that aspire to achieve social influence in the fashion sector.

- Tuning in with users in terms of age, gender and location. Internet users tend to interact and establish social relationships with people with whom they share common characteristics.
- Linked with fashion.
- Specific experience and knowledge.
- Innovative behavior. The appeal in being the first to try, go or experiment and then narrate it in the first person.
- Risky. They do not fear changes and do not place limitations when applied to inflcuening themselves.

A significant percentage of the followers of these opinion formers are young people (IAB, 2016), members of the so-called Millennial Generation (Ruiz Cartagena, 2017). This group, born between 1981 and 2000, does not understand the world without Internet. Moreover, the Web represents one of its main sources of information, in addition to being the main drivers of online consumption. Regarding this McCormick (2016) determines that the millennials associate with each product a brand (burger – McDonalds, cereals – Kellogs, luxury car – Ferrari, etc.) establishing with them a relationship of self-representation and favoring that the brands become an extension of themselves.

However, as Pedro Rojas and María Redondo (2017) have discovered, young people do not talk to brands; they are hardly interested in interacting with them. Hence the need to find other mechanisms for companies to impact their target audiences. To fill this gap, influence marketing has proven to be an effective and profitable tool to generate engagement (Aswani, Ghrera, Kar, & Chandra, 2017; Castelló & Pino, 2017). The figures support it: 65% of fashion professionals say they have carried out actions or campaigns with influencers in 2016 (Launchmetrics, 2017). It is no coincidence that the influencer phe-

nomenon was born in the midst of an economic crisis, demonstrating that it obtains better results than traditional advertising and at a lower cost, without forgetting the possibility of brands controlling the return on their investment and keeping track of their derived sales.

4 Plan and guide influence in networks

Influence marketing consists of the contact and link established by a company with influential users of the network-bloggers, instagramers, youtubers, celebrities, etc. Previously identified to multiply the reach of its brand communication. Influencing marketing fuses corporate communication with advertising by extracting the best from each one, in order to ultimately generate a link with the user that ends up making him loyal (Castelló & Pino, 2015).

In addition, this relationship supposes a mutual benefit for all the parties: while the brand is impregnated with the credibility and confidence radiated by the prescriber, he/she sees thier work rewarded by strengthening his/her position and professional relevance since all the content, of an organic nature – and therefore, not paid-, together with the interaction of the users, contributes to improve the web positioning and with it its visibility. To achieve such optimal results, it is essential that brand and influencer share values and ways of doing and thus provide naturalness to communication. It is about that the effort is channeled towards the same direction and contradictions do not occur.

In most of the occasions, the first encounter with the brand occurs when the company, convinced of the quality of its products or services, is open to impartial people, specialized in the sector, to prove, manipulate and/or experience it. It is not strange, therefore, that many influencers receive free samples or are invited to certain presentations or events in order for them to make a subsequent mention in their networks, transferring to their community of followers the experience, the treatment and / or the impressions experienced (Venegas, 2015). The purpose is not only to get a comment that recommends the acquisition of a particular item or complement but to convince the opinion former of the benefits of the brand and, naturally, to become its ambassador.

The professional relationship with the company increases to the next level and adjoins the advertising when the influencer agrees, in exchange for a fee, the type of message to be published, the bias that must be applied to his comment -clearly positive-, and the regularity; all in order to strengthen the attributes of the product. This new status suppresses the freedom of the influencer to make an objective judgment of his opinion. In this regard, Spanish legislation is clear: the recipient must have obvious signs that separate the informative messages from the advertisers; otherwise, misleading advertising occurs (General Advertising Law, 1988, Unfair Competition Law, 1991).

According to Luis Díaz (2017), when advertising agencies contact an influencer to create a campaign, they are sent a brief in which they specify what the brand expects to obtain. Subsequently, everything related to the communication that the influencer must issue is agreed, including the characteristics of the images that will accompany their messages. The depth that can be achieved in the negotiation is such that it can include aspects like the application or not of filters, the aesthetics of the image, the elements that have or not to appear or how to highlight the promoted product. It is usual for the brand to request the explicit mention of its name or the use of a specific hasthag in textual messages. To avoid misunderstandings, the brief can include a section called *mood board* with illustrative examples that serve as inspiration to influence and ensure the harmony between brand and the prescriber.

5 Methodology

If as explained, the influencer tries to build loyalty and expand its community of users through social media, this work aims to analyze the specific techniques

used by different opinion formers in fashion through their respective Instagram accounts. For this, it has been used the empirical method of investigation called "case-study" (Yin, 2009; Stake, 1995) recommended particulary when the next circunstances happen; attempt to provide and answer for the questions "how" and "why"; the researcher has weak control over the events and when the interest is about a current phenomenom bound with the real life (Yin, 2009). This method, reinforce the explanatory character of it versus the exploratory or descriptive.

The investigation focuses on the study about the publications and interactions achieved by 13 leading Spanish fashion influencers are studied from a quantitative and qualitative point of view. According to the method choosen the tecnique for research is the content analisys technique for the objective posed by its ability to combine observation and data production, with its interpretation (Krippendorff, 2004). To ensure it's rigorness, an analysis template was developed that emphasizes both the visual and textual aspects of the message and the interactions received. The creation of this tool about collecting data has been base on Castelló and Pino's investigation (2015); and Selva and Caro's proyect (2017) and searching posts on Instagram. On this fase we established the most relevant indicators according to the goals and hypothesis showed at the beginning of the research and the cathegories of the answers (close/open) that are explained next.

The template was composed of four sections:

- *Composition:* It is derived from the element the publication is articulated and include three variables: a) type of photography: unpublished, image of file, gif or video; b) at what time of the day the user used Instagram: in the morning, in the afternoon or at night; and c) the day of the week.
- *Repercussion:* In this section we measure the impact made by each publication and record a) the number of *likes* and b) the number of comments received in the first 24 hours is quantified.
- *Visual content:* Describes the elements that are represented and clarifies how they were captured. In this section, there are nine variables: a) the influencer is identified in terms of presence or absence; b) the condition of the presenter: person, object or landscape; c) the type of plan used: general, medium, selfie, American or detail plan. Next, explain the implications that this type of plane entails; d) how the image is captured: spontaneously or with preparation; e) what the scene reflects: personal moment, state of mind or professional life; f) esthetic: if the composition is careful or careless; g) if commercial brands appear explicitly and which are

Table 1: Main features of the fashion influencers analyzed

Gender	Name	Profile	Followers	Agency	Publications issued/ analyzed
Female	María Turiel	@meryturiel	391 000	Go Talents	47/14
Female	Inés Arroyo	@ines_arroyo	342 000	Okiko Talents	22/9
Female	María Valdés	@marvaldel	263 000	Go Talents	33/7
Male	Luis J. García	@lewisonn	224 000	Influence Code	5/3
Female	Marta Soriano	@msorianob	145 000	Go Talents	34/10
Male	Alejandro More	@alejandrojamo	135 000	Influence Code	12/1
Female	Adriana Boho	@adrianaboho	115 000	Influgency	31/7
Female	Marta Vidaurreta	@martavidaurreta	108 000	Go Talents	19/4
Male	Aarón Fernández	@aaronfernandezmoda	74 100	Hamelin	16/5
Female	Sara Domenech	@saraemdi	73 400	Influgency	31/6
Male	Miguel Carrizo	@miguelcarrizo	39 500	Okiko Talents	37/7
Male	Gaby Rope	@gabyrope	31 700	Influgency	5/1
Male	Fernando Montoya	@montoya_nando	28 500	Influgency	18/3

mentioned; h) if labels are integrated within the image and of what type; and i) it is verified if there is explicit allusion to the location and which are the most repeated.

› *Textual content:* This category monitors the text with five factors: a) the language(s) used is indicated; b) if emojis appear in the configuration of the text message and c) if there is mention of other profiles and what percentage corresponds to brands and which to people; d) quantification and classification of the semantics of the hashtags are quantified and classified and e) checks if the commercial collaborations between brand and influencer are clearly expressed.

Finally, and valuing the message as a whole (image plus text), intentionality is specified.

To carry out the selection of the influencers, three aspects were taken into account: 1. Membership in an influencer agency in Spain 2. Direct and tangible link with the fashion sphere 3. The volume of their digital community. The selected sample included the two genders: women (54%) and men (46%) with a non-parity percentage since the presence of women in the field of fashion prescription is considerably higher. In spite of everything, it is observed that the incorporation of the male gender is progressive. This situation motivates that our study, among other issues, is interested in recognizing if there are strategies of differentiated influence between men and women to connect with the community of followers.

As shown in Table 1, the final sample was constructed as follows:

The study of the profiles took place in the month of April of 2017, analyzing in detail all the messages published along seven non-correlative and random days. To guarantee these premises and, in addition, to avoid coincidences on the day of the week, the selection of the multiples of four days was adopted as a criterion. Consequently, the dates in which the corpus of analysis was collected were the following: April 4 (Tuesday), April 8 (Saturday), April 12 (Wednesday), April 16 (Sunday), April 20 (Thursday), April 24 (Monday) and April 28 (Friday).

From a total of 311 publications issued by the 13 specialists in April 2017, the study corpus was composed of 77 messages whose impact – number of comments – was recorded 24 hours after being published through screenshots. Reassuring the reliability of the inter-encoders a book about codes has been designed and a preliminary test was done for the measurement of the matches.

6 Results

From a quantitative point of view, it is observed that the influencers with the most followers were those who published most of the messages, although it is necessary to clarify that the volume of activity was much higher – almost double – in the profiles of women than men. For them, the average relative to the entire month was 31 entries – one per day – while they published 16 messages per month, which represents approximately one publication every two days.

The messages, in 98.7% of the cases, were configured by unpublished images, which means prioritizing the photography and the personal style of each author, but at the same time, relegating the experimentation to the rest of the available formats such as videos, gifs or memes, of great social acceptance. Fashion experts choose Sundays and the night time slot as the preferred time to upload content.

With regard to the scope achieved by each publication, although it is true that it is not possible to indicate the number of visualizations obtained, it has been possible to record the number of *likes* that each message reached in the first 24 hours, confirming that it was not only seen but it was enough of the follower's liking to deserve the gesture of clicking on I like it. The 77 publications received a total of 580 503 compliance samples, with @meryturiel being the most acclaimed by far.

Figure 2: Photography with labels that identify brands

adrianaboho • Seguir

adrianaboho Take me back... Bikini @treshoponline #relax #weekend #Andorraworld #VisitAndorra #inúu #caldea #spa #easter #Andorra #AdrianaBoho

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cocahh8 Que abdominaleeeeeeeesssss😁😁😁😁😁😁😁😁😁♥♥♥♥♥

isabel_rodrigzz Qué maravilla

sylviascloset Cuerpazo que te gastas bombón!! 😻 😂😂

flequillospostizos Se te ha olvidado ponerte el cuerpo amiga ♥♥

1000manerasdevestir Tipazo ♥♥♥

twinsforfashion Cuerpo⛱

banuta1974 Bonito foto

missmar_avillas eres una diosa amore

16 DE ABRIL DE 2017

Inicia sesión para indicar que te gusta o comentar.

Source:https://www.instagram.com/p/BS8ob9hjsKc/?hl=es&taken-by=adrianaboho

Table 2: Composition of the title according to the gender of the profile

Title	Female profiles	Male profiles
Entirely in Spanish	48.2%	50%
With some expressions in English	5.4%	5%
Entirely in English	34.0%	20%
In Spanish and English	0.0%	25%
Composed only of emoji(s)	12.5%	0%
Composed of text and emoticon(s)	78.6%	70%
Includes hashtags	46.4%	90%

6.1 Visual aspects

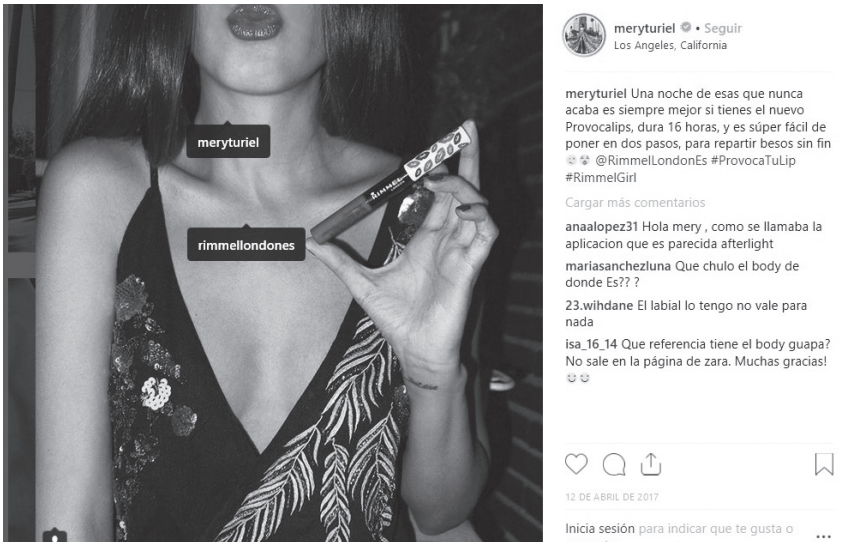
As for the photographs – the central core of the Instagram message – the influencer appears in nine out of ten images. Data that goes down slightly if we only look at the male profiles (85%). In addition, the prescribers studied appear as absolute protagonists of the image in 88% of cases. In the other situations, either they share the protagonism or it falls entirely in a landscape or an object. For the latter, the most common are the fashion accessories: wristwatch or sunglasses. In the images in which the influencer was absent, values such as relaxation and calm applied to places or landscapes and qualities such as elegance and comfort for objects were promoted.

The type of plan most commonly used is the general one, identified in half of the images and aimed at showing the full-bodied influencers, allowing them to show their complete looks. In 21%, the plan is of medium type, one of the most used in fashion photography because it discovers up to the waist, allowing seeing the face up close and the upper garment that is worn. In the same proportion (21%) you opt for the American level that lets you perceive up to your knees, so it is a good option when you want to give importance to accessories such as bags or backpacks. Selfies (self-portraits) only appear in 3% of the images. This format, which only has room for the representation of the face, barely allows the display of clothes or accessories

Figure 3: Publication that reinforces the location

Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/BTWTLy9F-bN/?hl=es&taken-by=montoya_nando]

Figure 4: Repeated mention to a brand that suggests a professional relationship between the parties



Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/BSy2VxRACzG/

so their use is very residual. The remaining 4% corresponds to the detail plan used exclusively to show specific objects such as watches or bracelets worn by them.

A feature present in all images, regardless of the gender of its creator, is its evident prior preparation. With the aim of not diverting the Internet user's attention, a good part of the photographs are made on basic backgrounds – generally walls or doors – concentrating the interest in the influencer's outfit. His position tries to convey spontaneity and naturalness, although nothing that appears is casual. In spite of everything, and with a clear intention to connect with the followers, daily and simple situations are staged, linked with the day to day of the young people as an excuse to show what clothes they wear.

Women's profiles abound with photographs that capture personal moments such as makeup, walking or enjoying a drink. The simulated movement of arms or legs and above all, orienting the gaze towards the horizon transmits the sensation of having been captured in full action. In the case of men, the pose is more evident by directing his gaze towards the objective of the camera.

The fact that all the instagramers analyzed are part of a specialized advertising agency allows to deduce that they are interested in the promotion of brands. While it is true that we can not ensure that at the time of the analysis the influencer received a financial consideration for it, it is noticed that most of the publications (82%), in addition to exhibiting clothes, fashion accessories or physical spaces, they name brands through labels inside the image, to reinforce the message and eliminate any type of doubt about the origin (image 2). It must be recognized that if it does not do so, only in 18% of the cases would it be possible to recognize who markets the product exhibited through the identification of the isotype, isologo or imagotype representative. For example, the appearance of a polo shirt with a crocodile to automatically associate that garment belongs to the firm Lacoste. Therefore, it is observed that most of the influencers, both men and women, perform a double promotion: visual and textual.

In spite of everything, if there is a common pattern in both genres, it is the care for the staging of their images, even when they do not appear, which is manifested especially in the placement and order of the elements and in the chromatic harmony, being able to get to see images that stand out for their artistic quality.

6.2 Textual aspects

Although Instagram is an eminently visual social network, it admits spaces for writing, such as the title of the publication, photography labels and comments.

All publications had their own title: Nearly half (49.1%) written entirely in Spanish while 5.2% also incorporated some Anglo-Saxon expression throughout the message. 27% was written entirely in English and 12.2% in both languages, circumstance, the latter, only present in profiles managed by men (table 2). In any case, the appearance of a second language gives the profile a more professional and accessible image. In the remaining 6.3%, and present only in the profile of women, the title was composed only by icons. Despite this, it is observed that emojis are a common resource used by influencers of both genders, since in 76.3% of the messages the presence of at least one is appreciated.

Another valuable resource that Instagram admits in the titles of the publications is to mention another profile – value as an example: "Thank you very much to @ Converse for these shoes" – which allows the user to be redirected to a new space. It is observed that male profiles are more inclined to use it, since it is present in nine out of ten publications, while in women we only find the reference to another account in half of the messages. This feature is used by fashion influencers to redirect commercial brands and, to a lesser extent, personal profiles.

An equally uneven use presents the mention of the location from which the photograph was taken. This information is located in the header, next to the name of the author of the publication and is visible

in the case of boys in 80% of their entries, while in the case of girls it does not exceed 18.2%. For the latter, it is evident that the physical space is an accessory element although when it is insinuated it is always to praise it explicitly. Positive bias that also translate male profiles. Circumstance that is one more indication to suppose that a professional relationship has been established. For example, the photo session done by @montoya_nando in the Forecast clothing store.

With regard to intentionality, and taking as a reference the message as a whole, it is observed that the objective of 80% of the publications of male influencers and 49% of female publications is to explicitly promote a garment, a fashion space or a product. The way of proceeding in this situation is quite similar in both genders: the article or physical space appears in the image monopolizing the maximum attention while the text does not skimp on flattery including, in addition, the direct mention to the brand by hashtags and / or your Instagram account (image 4). In these cases, those closest to the professional link between influencer and brand, there were no explicit signs that confirmed a possible paid collaboration between the two parties. Fact that if proved would be in contravention of Spanish law.

The rest of publications – 20% for men and 51% for women influencers – aims to maintain the link with their community of followers by showing their day to day. This circumstance serves as an excuse to describe their outfits and detail, usually through labels, the clothes they carry. In this category there is also room for advice, recommendations or draws: technique that allows to quickly increase the number of followers and the visibility achieved, since, generally, it requires participants to upload an image and label the product.

Seen all this, we can identify that most of the entries published by the influencers on their Instagram profile have a commercial objective aimed at promoting and improving the image of products and brands linked to the field of fashion and / or beauty mainly, although there are also examples linked to leisure, gastronomy and tourism.

7 Conclusions

With the aim of delving into the figure of the fashion influencer, this research analyzes the communication resources used by the main Spanish fashion prescribers on Instagram, paying special attention to their use of the image and the text. Likewise, it is investigated in the possible differences between genres and in the fulfillment of the law in matter of Publicity, verifying if the messages include any kind of elements that distinguish the commercial publications – the previously agreed – , of the free and autonomous recommendations of their authors.

The careful observation of the publications of 13 influencers concludes that none of them specified explicitly having a professional relationship with a brand despite identifying behaviours such as the following, which, although they are not unequivocal proof of cooperation, do represent a sign: constant compliments, repeated reference to specific brands and their Instagram profiles, and use of hashtags that either explicitly contained the name of the same brand or had been created by them following the slogan of their last campaign. It was observed that all these procedures converged in the same message in 80% of the male publications, while the female influencers were more subtle combining the most commercial intentionality with the care of their community of followers present in 51% of the publications. Purpose, the latter, which materialized through the detailed description of their outfits; the offer of suggestions or advice; or with the announcement of discounts and promotions in certain brands.

They were more prolific during the month analyzed – they published about twice as many messages as their male colleagues – and less interested in identifying the geographical space from which the photographs were taken. Despite these differences, very similar behaviors were identified in both relative genders: the

concern for the aesthetics of the images and their framing, the prominence of the influencer and their constant presence; and the preference for the Castilian language to express themselves.

The data collected leads to conclude that the predominant purpose of the publications that appear on Instagram by the main fashion influencers in Spain is to promote: publicize and / or improve the image, mainly of clothing, products or fashion accessories by who say they feel sympathy and affinity. The question that remains in the air is whether, at some point, the publications were guided by a prior commercial agreement, because as indicated, there is no clear communication on the part of the influencers despite the evidence found. This situation prevents us from assuring with forcefulness that the law has been broken, which encourages us even more to continue delving into the subject.

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The impact of attitudes towards influencers amongst millennial fashion buyers

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Abstract
The aim of this paper is to identify influencers and the way they affect the behavior of millennial buyers in the process of consuming fashion goods. The paper examines the literature on opinion leaders, ranging from the origins of the concept to its developments within the context of the Internet. The shift from influential to influencer and the different types of influencer are examined and certain hypotheses regarding the role of influencers (including all the influential players) regarding fashion-buying millennials are presented. The paper presents the results of qualitative and quantitative empirical research based on focus groups and in-depth interviews with 22 university students. Findings from this research and their implications regarding the different stages of the millennial buying process are discussed.

Keywords
buying behavior, influencer, opinion leaders, millennials, fashion.

1 Introduction

The first two decades of the twenty-first century have witnessed a number of key revolutions in the digital world. The widespread use of the Internet, the development of virtual communities and the creation of multiple devices (Castells, 2001) have transformed the way in which individuals interact and consume (Sádaba, 2015). Social media users can now connect with people from all parts of the world, establish real-time conversations and share opinions on products purchased around the five continents (Mir-Bernal, 2014).

In recent years, the social media has become a realm for participation and collaboration, one in which users have taken over the role of companies in the generation of content (Castells, 2001). Consumers live on the Internet and spend an increasing number of hours throughout the day surfing the net, leaving traces of everything they do, the things they like most or the sites they frequent. In the fashion industry, the Internet presents some significant benefits regarding development, growth and business internationalization and marketing strategies (Guercini and Runfola, 2015; Guercini *et al.*, 2018).

Most fashion items become fads by a contagious effect. They are transmitted both by recommendation and by imitation, in a similar manner to an epidemic. Social media play a fundamental role in this transmission, whilst technology helps us to capture them. The fashion consumer is increasingly informed, prepared and connected to the online community (Sádaba, 2015). In this new scenario, the dissemination of fashion trends "does not exist as a force or an abstract idea, but is materialized through the actions of different agents and the mutual interaction amongst all of them" (Martínez Barreiro, 2006, p. 201).

Today, consumers have the ability to express their opinions, share their experiences and make recommendations, not only within their immediate circles, but within the entire online community thanks to the arrival of blogs, social media and smartphones (Sádaba & SanMiguel, 2014; SanMiguel & Sádaba, 2018). Some *influentials* (who previously only influenced their closest social circles) become

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influencers, featuring a status and form of recognition amongst a community of followers. So, with the generalization of the Internet, new kinds of definitions regarding *influencers* have appeared (Gillin, 2007; Johnson & Young, 2012; Ranga & Sharma, 2014).

Nowadays, when we talk about influencers, we mean celebrities, sportspersons, bloggers, Instagramers, Youtubers and consumers who can help companies broaden their reach and brand awareness for a specific target audience that follows their content in an active way. Their influence is based on the knowledge and passion they have regarding a specific theme. The frequent and continuous use of social media allows them to create a community and generate bonds of trust (Brown & Hayes, 2008). In the case of celebrities or athletes, their influence is also due to the interest and admiration they generate amongst consumers.

As has been shown in previous studies (Sádaba & SanMiguel, 2014), fashion influentials and influencers occupy a key position in the fashion industry through their blogs and social media. They assume the role of references, advisors, disseminators and models of behavior regarding the use and consumption of fashion products.

This study addresses the impact of influencers, including all the influential players, on fashion consumption and analyzes the role of these opinion leaders in the consumption process in relation to millennials. The paper include two main parts: 1. Review of literature on influencers, from the origins of the concept to its developments within the context of the Internet.; 2. Qualitative and quantitative empirical research through sample of focus groups and in-depth interviews based on university students from Madrid (Spain) born between 1999 and 1991.

2 Research objective and hypotheses

Most current studies surrounding the influence phenomenon are largely limited to highlighting the role that influencers have as opinion leaders in relation to brand awareness and the dissemination of new products. These studies are usually carried out by communication and marketing agencies that evaluate their communities of followers and the engagement they generate, analyzing case studies of products with high sales volumes due to their relationship with influencers (Brown & Hayes, 2008; Mediakix, 2016).

In academic terms, with the advent of the Internet, most studies that address the topic of opinion leaders have focused on the identification of influentials on the Internet (Agarwal et al., 2008; Akritidis et al., 2009, 2011; Song, et al., 2007). These studies have largely been carried out within the fields of the Information Sciences, Web Searching, Web Intelligence, etc.

Few studies have attempted to analyze the influence process through a more qualitative perspective. There is a gap in the literature regarding the role that influencers play during the buying process: what is the influencer's role in the generation of needs and product searches, regarding the evaluation of alternatives and in relation to purchase and post-purchase phenomena? And how can we typify influencers and the way they influence consumers?

2.1 Objective

The objective of the present study is to analyze those players that influence university students during the process of buying fashion products (clothing and accessories) and the ways in which this influence is exercised. To do this, we analyzed the following: 1) the fashion consumer profile of young university students; 2) how the purchase process of young university students works; 3) the different players that influence each stage of the process; and 4) the type of influence exercised by these players.

Before explaining the hypothesis of the study, it is necessary to clarify the following:

First, we shall understand the purchasing act as a process: the stages that a consumer follows once he has a need or creates a need and until he buys a product and uses it.

Second, We shall focus on influential players: those people, media or brands that exercise influence by changing opinion or behavior in individuals. Third, we shall consider young university students: individuals residing in Madrid, between the ages of 18 and 25, who are studying a degree (postgraduate, master's or doctorate) at a university in Madrid, Spain.

2.2 Hypotheses

The general hypothesis of this research is that young university students are influenced throughout their buying process by different influential players. This hypothesis is made up of the following subhypotheses:

- H1: Despite the increase in influencers, close circles still play a key role in the evaluation and purchase decision stages.
- H2: The social groups that young people belong to continue to exercise a significant influence, despite growing individualism and the social trends that fashion proposes with the expression of a unique and personal identity.
- H3: Access to and purchase of products on the Internet is mostly through the mobile devices that young university students possess.
- H4: Instagram emerges as the new social media *par excellence*.

3 The emergence of opinion leaders in the online age

Internet has provided consumers with a new channel to disseminate their opinions, reaching a greater number of people than traditional word-of-mouth could achieve (Mir-Bernal, 2014). These conversations occur especially on social media such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, where consumers provide or seek information and advice about products they wish to buy (Choi, Chiu, & To, 2011).

Users share their opinions and experiences, having an impact on: 1) consumers, who can advise or discourage the acquisition of a product; and 2) brands, with which they can collaborate through the creation of brand values and the dissemination of messages (Harris & Rae, 2009).

Multiple authors point out that eWOM (Electronic Word of Mouth) has a positive influence on the adoption of products, impacting consumers' awareness, interest and decision-making stages (De Bruyn & Lilien, 2008, p. 153). Individuals need to support their shopping experience with information from peers, with other personal experiences (Yoon & Han, 2012). However, not all individuals share information and influence consumers in the same way.

Web 2.0 has allowed the creation and distribution of content generated by users and it is within this context that the influencer phenomenon has emerged. According to the "Annual Social Networking Survey" produced by the Interactive Advertising Bureau (2017), 85% of Internet users between 16 and 55 years of age state that they are still influenced through social media. They follow the profiles of those they consider to be "ahead" and they identify with the group, seeking inspiration or imitating their style.

Opinion leadership studies began in the 1940's with research by Katz & Lazarsfeld and Merton and Weiman, and have continued up until the beginning of the second millennium. Since the 1950's, there has been talk of two types of leadership: formal leadership, which is assigned by the position of power held by certain people due to their social status or profession; and informal leadership, associated with people with "almost invisible and certainly unconscious leadership from person to person, intimate, and daily:" what are known as *influentials* (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 2011, p. 140).

Internet enables consumers to take on a central role in spreading trends and opinions about brands (Zhang, Zhao, & Xu, 2016) and, consequently, studies on the role of consumers as influencers have increased. In fact, some researchers have talked about the return of influence (Schaefer, 2012). Therefore, the Internet represents a boom in influence and a diversification of the types of influencers.

The diversification of influencers is a consequence of the characteristics of the Internet, which 1) democratizes the message dissemination channels (creation of blogs and various platforms to share content), 2) trains individuals to create contacts with people from anywhere in the world, expanding networks and 3) increases the speed of message dissemination and increases the power of virulence (Jove, 2011).

Within this context, the term "influencer" has begun to be used to designate all those people who have the capacity to influence the online environment and whose power of influence is recognized by a community of followers and a large number of Internet users. The Internet transforms influentials (unofficial leaders) into influencers, opinion leaders with a public and official status within their communities of followers on social media.

In view of these changes, companies have had to adapt and find other ways to reach consumers, taking into account the fact that consumers increasingly demand close and transparent communication with companies (Cabosky, 2016). Within this context, the role of influencers is essential for spreading trends and bringing brands closer to consumers (Zhang et al., 2016). Consequently, new marketing strategies known as *influencer marketing*, which stands for "the art and science of involving people who are influential on the Internet to share brand messages with their audience, in the form of sponsored content" (Sammis *et al.*, 2016, p. 12). That is to say, it is the means by which companies send messages to their audience through other consumers who share their story and generate interest.

It should be noted that popularity can be a by-product of influence or authority. But influence cannot be measured solely by the size of a community. Influence means having the ability to cause an effect or change a form of behavior (Solis & Webber, 2012).

Research about the role of influencers regarding the decisions of consumers has continued to develop (Danny Brown & Fiorella, 2013; Kiss & Bichler, 2008; Song et al., 2007). It should be noted that many studies have been carried out by digital marketing companies that specialize in influencer marketing (Klout, 2013; Solis, 2016; WOMMA, 2017). Studies in the academic field have also been developed. Most have focused on what influencers are, marketing strategies with influencers and types of collaborations between brands and influencers (Galeotti & Goyal, 2009; Uzunoğlu & Misci Kip, 2014; Watts & Dodds, 2007). However, there are few studies that analyze how influencing impacts from the point of view of consumers, as opposed to the perspective of marketing agencies or the influencers themselves.

In 1999, the RoperASW and Burson-Marsteller companies conducted a study of online opinion leaders in the USA and called them "e-influentials" (Smith, 2007). A few years later Burson-Marsteller (2005) developed new research on opinion leaders in the field of technology: *Next Generation of Influencers*. The company Tapinfluence analyzed the effectiveness of sales through marketing with influencers and published a report entitled *The Future of Influencer Marketing* (2016). Mediakix, an influencer marketing agency, developed *The COM'S Guide to Influencer Marketing* (2016), in which it classifiedinfluentials through social platforms. The Altimeter company published *The Influencer Marketing Manifesto: Why the Future of Influencer Marketing Starts with People and Relationships Not Popularity*. This study notes: "the difference is, and this is important, that influential people have the same weight as their peers or 'people like me', which is among the highest forms of influence that are mentioned among consumers in one study after another" (Solis, 2016, p. 1).

The Word of Mouth Marketing Association, in its *The WOMMA Guide to Influencer Marketing* (2017), defines influence as the ability to cause or contribute to another person taking action or changing opinion/behavior. "An influencer is someone who has greater than average potential to influence others. The people who influencers affect are influencees, defined as a person or group of people who take

action or change opinion/behavior as the result of exposure to information provided by an influencer. Influencer Marketing is the act of a marketer identifying and engaging influencers to share information with influence in pursuit of a business goal" (WOMMA, 2017, p. 4).

With the arrival of the Internet, influence began to be measured through "Big Data." Although there are multiple variables, an analysis of influentials usually focuses on three variables (Armano, 2011; Burke, 2016; Klout, 2013; Solis, 2017):

- *Reach*: the size of an influencer's following or audience size on any given social channel. Within that reach, the engaged reach is the size of audience within this following that will actually engage with the posts.
- *Relevance*: the alignment of the interests of an influencer – content that is published and what it offers – with the brand, the sector and its audience.
- *Resonance*: the quality of the influential-follower connection and its ability to influence the behavior and purchases of the community of followers.

Influencers are usually categorized into four groups according to the size of their community variables (Burke, 2016; Klout, 2013; Solis, 2017):

- *Celebrities:* actors, artists, sportspersons and other social media stars, they are also called mega influencers. They usually have more than one million followers.
- *Mega influencers*: bloggers, instagramers or experts in a subject who reach more than 1 million followers.
- *Macro-influencers*: executives, journalists, bloggers, Instagramers and YouTubers who reach around 1 million–10K followers.
- *Micro-influencers*: customers or employees who reach around 10K–1K followers.

In order to analyze the impact of the different players that influence consumer decisions, the influence of the media and surrounding circles was also analyzed. We understand "close circles" to mean friends, colleagues and neighbors who share opinions and advise. These close circles would be the influentials defined by Lazarasfeld anf Katz.

Nowadays, the dissemination of fashion trends occurs through a process of "virulence", which is an idea also suggested by Wiswede (1971). "It is a pattern of fashion dissemination 'by contagion' and a form of propagation such as AIDS or epidemics" (Martínez-Barreiro, 2006, p. 189). This process of dissemination by contagion was explained in a meticulous manner by Gladwell (2014), who emphasized the existence of individuals that accelerated the processes of dissemination. Literature has called these opinion leaders "influentials" (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955; Keller & Berry, 2003; Weimann, 1994).

The fashion process is understood as a form of collective behavior and a social mechanism of change, through which an object or trend is transmitted from its creation and introduction to society as a whole, accepting that product or tendency, until its obsolescence (Weimann, 1994).

In the course of these creations and disseminations, many players are involved (Crane, 1999): brands, designers, advertisers, agencies, magazines, etc. However, in the present study we will focus on the role of influencers, which are currently of great importance in the new consumer paradigm. Influencers are especially important amongst millennials and post-millennials.

Therefore, the present study is focused on the younger members of Generation Y, Spanish university students born between 1999 and 1991. Members of Generation Y, often called Millennials (Cantoni & Tardini, 2010; Oblinger, Oblinger, & Lippincott, 2005; Reeves & Oh, 2008), frequently they are defined as people who were born between 1982 and 2002. We should point out that, as noted by Reeves and Oh (2008), there is no agreement regarding the range of years that defines millennials, so some authors talk about post-millennials when referring to those born at the beginning of 2000.

Millennials are the first generation to grow up surrounded by digital media and are accustomed to buying and socializing

online (Howe & Strauss, 2009; Reeves & Oh, 2008; K. T. Smith, 2011). Millennials are the largest generation group since the baby boomers, constituting a key target for fashion companies (Portolese Dias, 2003; Smith, 2011; Smith, 2012). It should be noted that this generation has been denominated in multiple ways: Digital Natives; Gen.com; Generation Next; Generation Tech; Generation Why; Generation Y; Generation 2000; Instant-Message Generation (Cantoni & Tardini, 2010; Rapetti & Cantoni, 2013).

The massive advent of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has significantly impacted people everyday life (Rapetti & Cantoni, 2013). This impact produces differences between Millennials and older generations, therefore Generation Y has been analyzed by several researchers. The implications of the adoption of new technologies in everyday life and education have been analyzed mainly from three points of view: 1) enthusiasts, who think that new technologies make young people more capable and have different cognitive abilities; 2) stakeholders, who analyze the effects of ICT on young people, as they can be more violent and suffer addition or harassment; 3) critics, who criticize the lack of localized studies and analysis (Cantoni & Tardini, 2010). This research can provide data on the testing of this generation in the case of Spain.

Several studies describe millennials as: happy, optimistic, confident, accepting of authority, cooperative, happy to play as a team, hopeful, goal- and achievement-oriented, civic-minded, inclusive, self-sufficient, technology savvy, connected, and open to change and diversity (Cantoni & Tardini, 2010; Howe & Strauss, 2009; Portolese Dias, 2003; Raines, 2002).

Smith (2011) points out that millennials are an essential ingredient in the development of electronic commerce, as they have grown up socializing and buying online (Smith, 2011, p. 489). Millennials consider computers and mobile phones to be essential tools. Through them they communicate, access digital newspapers, use social media and can buy anywhere in the world, which is why they are identified as a driving force of online shopping (Fromm, Butler & Dickey, 2015; Howe & Strauss, 2009; Smith, 2011).

Millenials are a key target of influencer marketing (Pophal, 2016; Solis, 2016). Due to the great use of social media (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter), especially amongst the youngest millennials – those born in the late 90's-, the influencer marketing phenomenon has impacted in a special way on these consumers. Some research highlights how social media have become their main source of information, which means they look for information created by consumers like them before making a purchase (Raines, 2002; Howe and Strauss, 2009; Smith, 2011; Smith, 2012).

4 Methodology and results

The present study features a qualitative and quantitative methodology based on focus groups and in-depth interviews.

- First, the data from the focus groups are presented where the role of influencers is most focused.
- Second, we analyze the in-depth interviews from a qualitative perspective.
- Third, we analyze the in-depth interviews from a quantitative perspective in order to offer a fashion consumer profile and some initial data in relation to influencers.

The present research differentiated between the buying process of men and women, which is why the focus groups were carried out separately, one with women and the other with men. The results of the analysis are shown comparatively between the genders. From a historical, sociological and marketing point of view, the use of, interest in and consumption of clothing and accessories shows great differences between both sexes, men and women. These differences were especially evident during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but have been present throughout history (Kruger & Byker, 2009; Mitchell & Walsh, 2004). Researchers such as Browne and Kaldenberg (1997), Auty and Elliott (1998) and O'Cass (2004) have shown that wom-

en are more involved and more interested in fashion than men. The decision-making behavior of men and women in relation to fashion goods and style presents considerable differences (Mitchell & Walsh, 2004).

Rocha *et al.* (2005) pointed out how gender was a key factor in fashion consumption studies; gender had a high impact on lifestyle attributes because women and men had different expectations about fashion products. Inequalities regarding consumption were also analyzed by Catalá (2007) and Crane (2012). Recent AIMC research (2015) points out that men prefer quality and brands, while women give greater importance to trends and sales.

4.1 Focus groups

Focus groups are a research technique preferably used in the field of social sciences. It is a "non-directive" technique whose purpose is the controlled production of a discourse by a group of subjects that are brought together for a limited period of time in order to discuss a certain topic proposed by the researcher (Gil Flores, 1993, p. 120). The technique of focus groups began in the 1940's, with Paul Lazarsfeld and Robert Merton (Onwuegbuzie *et al.*, 2011), researchers who analyzed and discovered the key role of opinion leaders or influencers in the transmission of messages.

This research technique has been used frequently in market studies in order to define the social images of products and brands and analyze the opinions, assessments and reactions of consumers, especially before introducing a new product onto the market (Gil Flores, 1993; Morgan, 1996).

This qualitative research technique may be used to obtain information about products or even about a concept, service or institution. The researcher seeks to discover the focus group's perceptions, feelings, attitudes and ideas.

4.2 Sample of focus groups

As has been shown in multiple studies, the consumption of information and fashion products is very different between both sexes (Auty & Elliott, 1998; Browne & Kaldenberg, 1997; Crane, 2012; Kruger & Byker, 2009; O'Cass, 2004). Therefore, in order to obtain quality information and facilitate discussion in the focus groups, individuals were separated by gender. Two focus groups were held: one with only young female university students and the other made up of young male university students.

Table 1: Data regarding the research focus groups

Data regarding focus groups
Number of focus group conducted: 2 (one with men and another with women)
Number of participants in the focus group: in the first 10 women, in the second 9 men
Dates when women group were held: Thursday, May 4, 2017, at 7:30 p.m
Dates when man group were held: Thursday, April 27, 2017, at 7:30 p.m.
Duration: 60 minutes each group

Data focus group university women			Data focus group university men		
Women Code	Age	Education	Man Code	Age	Education
W 01	21	Law	M 01	23	Business
W 02	22	Pharmacy	M 02	19	Psychology
W 03	20	Teaching	M 03	24	Labour Relations and Human Resources
W 04	19	Tourism	M 04	23	Fashion MBA
W 05	19	Advertising and Public Relations	M 05	25	Corporate Communication
W 06	22	Management	M 06	19	Managment
W 07	20	Psychology	M 07	19	Advertising and Public Relations
W 08	21	Protocol and Organization of Events	M 08	20	Marketing
W 09	24	Political Science	M 09	23	Agricultural Engineering
W 10	19	Sports Science			

Source: Compiled by authors

The selection of the sample was carried out in a standard manner, appealing to the convenience of obtaining a sample that represents multiple profiles: fashion-lovers and non-fashion-lovers; age range; different universities and degrees. Within the homogeneity, a certain heterogeneity was sought in terms of sociodemographic characteristics, areas of study and interest in fashion, in order to increase the breadth of experiences, perceptions and opinions that could be contributed by the participants.

The focus groups were held in a meeting room at the University of Navarre in Madrid, an open space that facilitated conversation amongst all the members of the group and permitted the participants to see one another. The discussion group was recorded with a tape recorder and filmed for only 15 minutes, with the aim of not inhibiting the participants, since they might feel thatvideo was an intrusive medium, as indicated by Morgan (1996). The characteristics of the focus groups that were held are summarized in Table 1.

4.3 Analysis and results of focus groups

The analysis is situated at a descriptive level and is presented through a narrative report, as advised by Gil Flores (1993). Following the recommendations of Onwuegbuzie *et al.* (2011), the analysis was expounded in three stages: 1) the data was fragmented into small units, assigning them descriptors; 2) the fragments were grouped according to the established descriptors; and 3) a report was developed expressing the content according to the established themes and descriptors. Furthermore, based on the guidelines and recommendations of Morgan (1996) and Onwuegbuzie *et al.* (2011), some microanalysis of the gathered data was carried out. For this reason, on occasion our presentation of the data includes certain statements such as "the whole group agreed…," "all but one use…," "the majority buys…" These statements were made during the group discussion, with the moderator also carrying out a microanalysis of some variables that were being discussed.

The descriptors were linked to the categories discussed during the session: what fashion is and its importance at a day-to-day level; ways of consuming fashion; brand preference, platforms, styles; influential players in everyday fashion consumption; and the use of social media and their relationship with influencers. Subsequently, comparisons of the answers were made within each discussion group and between the two focus groups of different genders, in order to identify the consumption processes,profiles of consumers, and the influence path.

The most significant data extracted during the focus group dynamics emphasized the relationship and differences between both genders and the different characteristics of the participants (Table 2).

Today both men and women give importance to fashion. It represents their own image and the way of presenting themselves to the world: *"I like fashion, it's a way of expressing myself"* (W04). They are concerned about the opinion that others may have of their dress and personal style. Women give more importance to the differentiation of their personality through fashion: *"I have my own style, I do not like to dress like the rest of my friends"* (W10). Most men dress like their group of friends does and do not have as much need for differentiation.

The influence of negative comments is greater amongst women than amongst men.*"Most of the time we dress in a similar way, although if I buy some shoes and my friend doesn't like them, I don't care"* (M07). They buy fashion alone in a physical manner, but accompanied in an online manner. *"I tend to be alone when I buy something, but most of the time while I'm buying I send a picture to my sister or my best friend; they know me well and they usually advise me"* (W08).

Regarding social media: men, in general, are more passive users and spend fewer hours on them, but both see content daily through this application. Men follow some female influencers because they like to see images of pretty girls: *"I don't follow many influencers, although from time to time I see profiles of the best-known influ-*

Table 2: Main results from the focus groups

Theme	Main result	Male behavior	Female behavior
Interest and importance of fashion	For both genders, fashion is important; it is a way of expressing your personality	Some men dress out of necessity, but do not give importance to fashion	Women give more importance to fashion as a symbol of belonging to the group and differentiation of their personality
Influenced by	Close circles		
		Family and by the group more globally.	The pressure of the group is greater for women. Friends can determine the use or not of a certain look
Why do you buy clothes and accessories?	On impulse, I create a need	Only when I really need something	On impulse, because I like it or because it's fashionable
Visit online stores or fashion related websites?	Weekly	Only when I need to buy (except for those men who really like fashion, who would visit websites more frequently)	Daily or weekly
Buy online	Once a semester	Specific products (such as sneakers)	Once a month, in sales and promotions. Buy more than one product in each order. Websites: ASOS, Wallapop, Amazon …
Go shopping	Shop alone. What influences them the most is the price	When they want to buy a necessary product or replace a garment. Buy for special occasions – with someone close or somebody familiar	Usually alone, sometimes with a close friend.
Social media	Instagram main social media Daily use	Passive users and spend fewer hours than women	Active users
		Follow some influencers	Follow many influencers as a source of inspiration
Sharing information about purchases	To ask for an opinion, through WhatsApp	With mothers or couple	With close friends or sisters
Regarding influencers	Follow influencers on Instagram and YouTube. Influencers are sources of information. Massification of influencer Little consumer loyalty towards the influential	Follow few influencers, but especially related to sports or some passion such as fine food, cars or photography. They do not have much impact when it comes to buying clothes	They follow many influencers in all areas. Influencers influence them by inspiring them, generating new needs and serving as role models

Source: Compiled by authors

encers… they are very pretty girls" (M08). Only those men with the greatest interest in fashion and lifestyle claimed to follow profiles of male influencers frequently; but, in general, influencers don't make any impact when they buy. Women follow influencers for inspiration, to be informed of the latest trends or for gossip. Men and women both believe that many influencers work with brands as if they were models and that they wear clothes from some brands because they are paid to do so. Men do not care much if the influencers have contracts with brands and do not show much interest in the personal life of the influencers. By contrast, most of the women indicated an interest in the personal life of the influencers. Women follow influencers of all kinds, related to fashion, lifestyle, sports, gastronomy, travel, actresses… They believe that many influencers lose their personal style because of their collaborations with brands and that they become advertisements: *"some influ-*

encers have lost their personal style, brands give them a lot of money, but they lose their personality and they all end up being the same" (W03). They follow important influencers in order to stay up to date. They like photographs, but they know that they will not be able to buy many of the products that influencers wear. They like to follow small-scale influencers that look more like them and have a style that they can imitate more easily. For them, influencers are a source of inspiration and information about new brands or trends.

Men and women emphasize that, today, there is a certain massification of influencers due to social media: *"Many people want to be influential to get brands to give them products or earn a bit of 'money', not everyone gets to be influential, I guess it depends on luck, a nice body and skill using social media"* (W06). Among the skills to be influential, the following aspects were highlighted: the importance of being photogenic, the quality of photographs, having an attractive and fun personality for videos, and being well connected with other famous influencers. Participants in the focus groups emphasized two ideas: 1) they do not always follow the same influencers or pay them equal attention; they often get tired of seeing the photos or the life of the same person for a long time; 2) the consumer seeks creativity and authenticity in the contents published by the influencers, which is why each person follows certain influencers that they like and are often not known, although they also continue to follow famous influencers because everyone talks about them.

It should be noted that impulse purchases and the acquisition of garments that are not necessary are increasing. The majority of these impulse purchases are caused by continuous visits to the websites of brands and by the impact of influencers on Instagram, the result of generating a constant desire for products and new ideas. In addition, the appearance of new pages or apps such as 21Buttons (www.21buttons.com) facilitates finding information more easily and results in the consumption of the same products as those posted by influencers on social media.

4.4 Qualitative analysis of in-depth interviews: focus on influencers

After the focus groups were held, some 22 in-depth interviews were conducted in order to analyze and deepen our understanding of the opinion held by young university students regarding influencers and the different players that influence them during the process of purchasing clothes and accessories.

In-depth interviews are a qualitative research technique "in which one person (the interviewer) requests information from another or from a group (interviewees, respondents) to obtain data regarding a particular aspect. It presupposes, therefore, the existence of at least two persons and the possibility of verbal interaction" (Gil Flores, 1993, p. 167).

The steps regarding this qualitative access to our knowledge of social reality can be determined by the following points (Olabuénaga & Ispizua, 1989, p. 30): 1) entering the process of social construction, reconstructing the concepts and actions of the studied situation; 2) describing and understanding the detailed means through which subjects embark on meaningful actions and create a world of their own and of others; 3) knowing how to create the basic structure of experience, its meaning, its maintenance and participation through language and other symbolic constructions; 4) making use of in-depth descriptions, reducing analysis to areas limited to experience, through immersion in the contexts in which it occurs.

4.5 Characteristics and sample of in-depth interviews

The in-depth interviews proposed for the present study were semi-structured interviews Each interview lasted between sixty and ninety minutes and they were divided into two parts. First, a broad conversation took place regarding the participants' interest in fashion, the fashion concept, the ways young people buy things, their personality and their environment (how their friends, hobbies, characteristics of their social environment were defined, groups, friends, etc.). In addition, they talked about the question of influencers (what they

Table 3: Data regarding the in-depth interviews

Data in-depth interviews			
Number of in-depth interviews conducted: 22 in-depth interviews (11 with women and 11 with men) Dates: The interviews were conducted in the month of May 2017 Duration: between 60 and 90 minutes			
Case	Gender	Age	Education
W01	Woman	22	Journalism
W02	Woman	23	Architecture
W03	Woman	19	Civil engineering
W04	Woman	24	Political science
W05	Woman	25	Teaching
W06	Woman	22	Law
W07	Woman	22	Journalism
W08	Woman	21	Protocol and organization of events
W09	Woman	25	Pedagogy
W10	Woman	20	Children's education
W11	Woman	22	Nursing/Telecommunications
M12	Man	21	engineering
M13	Man	25	Marketing
M14	Man	24	Architecture
M15	Man	21	Literature and philosophy
M16	Man	21	Law
M17	Man	19	Advertising and PR
M18	Man	23	Industrial engineering
M19	Man	21	Economics
M20	Man	24	Business management
M21	Man	20	Medicine
M22	Man	23	Industrial engineering

Source: Compiled by authors

thought of them, what they served for and who they followed). Second, more specific questions were asked, obeying an order (pragmatic level), content (semantic level) and general guidelines (normative level) required in a standard questionnaire, with the objective of obtaining systematized and equal information in the form and order of all the interviewed cases (Berganza & Ruiz, 2005). The interviewer was a similar age to that of the interviewees, an aspect that may have helped to overcome the distance between the researcher and the interviewee and may have favored communication (Guercini, 2014).

For this purpose, some 22 persons, 11 female university students and 11 male university students residing in Madrid, were selected. The selection of these 22 cases was carried out for convenience. The sampling of typical cases provided information from certain cases judged representative of the whole (Estrada & Deslauriers, 2011), with the aim of obtaining profiles that broadly represent university students. In this respect, the respondents featured different ages, areas of study and different degrees of interest in fashion (Table 3).

4.6 Findings from the qualitative analysis of the in-depth interviews

The following is a summary of the results and findings from the interviews and a brief comparison of different aspects regarding men and women.

With regard to the activities that most young university students pursue in their free time, we might highlight the following: listening to music, surfing the Internet, and being with friends and family. We can confirm that the Internet plays an essential role in their day-to-day lives. All the university students interviewed claimed to constantly use their mobile devices, and heavily use WhatsApp and the social media, Instagram. In most cases the participants claimed that the latter is their favorite social media and they also stated

Table 4: Main results from the in-depth interviews

Theme	Main result	Male behavior	Female behavior
Instagram	Favorite social media Average of 5 hours a day	They like to see photos; it entertains them	Generates wishes and needs
Opinion about influencers	Opinion about influencers	They don't have an opinion about influencers; they do not care much for influencers because they do not help them at all	Influencers are a showcase for brands, although they are becoming more superficial They like how they dress and they find them inspiring Through influencers they discover new trends and ideas about how to dress
Impact of influencers regarding purchase	Generates needs and a desire to be like them	Influencers have no influence on them when they go shopping	They would like to look like their influencers, because they always wear the latest fashion
Favorite fashion influencer		Jon Kortajarena, Mariano Di Vaio, Sergio Carvajal and Marc Forné	Maria Pombo, Lovely Pepa, Dulceida, Mypeptoes, Inés Arroyo, Marta Lozano and Mery Turiel
Influence of their close circles	Take their opinion into account and come to them for advice They trust their opinion and value the fact that they tell them the truth	Mother, Couple	Mother, Sisters, Best friends

Source: Compiled by authors

that they spend an average of 5 hours a day using the app. Most young women interviewed declared that "Instagram often generates wishes and needs."

During the in-depth interviews the types of influencers were explained and examples of Spanish influencers were put in place so that they could identify what type of influencers they followed and which influenced them the most.

Women believe that influencers are becoming more superficial and the content seems to be very similar amongst all of them. Despite this, through influencers women discover how to dress successfully and this influences them when they buy. Men do not usually have any opinion about influencers because they do not care for them much. Men state that influencers have no power over them when they go shopping.

When asked about the influence of their close circles, two ideas stood out. On the one hand, mothers, sisters and closest friends advise them the best, because they already know them. They state this because "as they love us, they would never let us go poorly dressed on the street" (woman interviewed) and so they take their opinion into account and come to them for advice. On the other hand, it is a desire to belong to the group that makes them look alike and influence one other. In addition, two of the cases analyzed declared that they almost never ask for advice and, if they do, it is not to question if something is attractive or ugly; they are more interested in whether a garment suits them or not.

All but one of the men interviewed were influenced by the opinions of their close circles, because they consider that they are people who care about them and always want the best for them. Within this circle, the role of mothers and girlfriends as influential people is highlighted.

4.7 Quantitative analysis of the interviews: focus on purchasing processes

As a result of the quantitative analysis of the 22 in-depth interviews, through a set of closed questions we were able to discuss the following: A) behavior on the Internet; B) profile as fashion consumers; C) impact of influentials on the purchasing process.

A Behavior on the internet

Interviewed university students use computers or laptops mainly at home (68% only use it at home). Some 64% stated that they use a laptop or PC around 1 to 3 hours a day. Some 68% of the cases analyzed do not use tablets, and when these are used, it is mainly at home. Regarding the use of Smartphones, 100% of cases stated that they always have them with them and 77% use it actively for over 6 hours a day.

Social media. Only four individuals stated that they did not have Instagram and 73% were dynamic users of this social media, actively interacting and sharing content. Some 50% stated that they use Instagram between 3 and 6 hours a day. Regarding Facebook, only one individual claimed not to have an account, whilst 54% were dynamic users of this social media. Some 18% declared that they use Facebook between 3 and 6 hours a day, while 45% used it for less than an hour a day.

In relation to Snapchat, 86% of cases claimed not to use this social media and only two of the cases did so in an active manner. The use of Twitter was also limited, with 77% of cases claiming not to use Twitter and only two doing so actively. Finally, 64% watched videos on YouTube, although only four of the respondents used this platform in an active manner, interacting with the content. When asked about their favorite social media, 68% claimed that it was Instagram, whilst 27% claimed it was Facebook.

B Profile of fashion consumers

To operationalize the consumer profiles in relation to the Roger model, we constructed sentences to define each of the five profiles and then asked the participants to define themselves by selecting one of them (self-definition) and explain why they identified with that profile. The sentences to define the Roger's profiles were the followings: "Innovative" I wear what I like and I usually wear things that later become fashionable; "Adoptant early" I am one of the first in my group to wear something new that nobody has yet, but who has seen it in magazines or influencers; "Early majority" I am one of those who bought things in stores before sales and still do not carry everyone; "Late majority" I am one of the latest trends when I already have many people from my environment and I buy in sales; "Lagger" I wear things that have been in fashion and in stores for a long time, and I find it hard to carry new things and risk.

With respect to the adoption of trends in relation to the Rogers curve (2010), only 4% of the cases were defined as innovative, 13% of them were early adopters, 36% formed part of the early majority, 18% were part of the late majority and 27% were laggards. In relation to the interest that fashion produces, seven of the respondents (32%) declared that it generated little interest and the remaining 68% stated that it generated interest or considerable interest. Half of the sample (50%) claimed not to be fashion-lovers, whilst 40% of the respondents stated that they gave little importance to fashion.

Some 27% buy clothes and/or accessories every 15 days and highlight the periods of discounts and promotions as key purchasing moments. With regard to expenditure on clothes per month, ten of the cases spend between 0–50 euros, seven between 50–70 euros, three between 100–150 euros and two more than 150 euros. The majority of students (64%) buy clothes and accessories with their parents' money. Sometimes parents give them money and other parents go shopping with their children and pay for the products. 36% of the students claimed to purchase most of the clothing and accessories with the money earned from their work. They usually work in part-time jobs or sporadic jobs (eg, some women claimed to be nannies or waitresses). Although the most expensive products or clothes for special occasions, such as weddings or parties, are paid by their parents. The most frequent moment for buying is during the weekend (82%) and the purchases take place mainly in high streets and with the brands of large retailers.

Only three of the cases stated that they did not buy online; the rest bought online, especially during sales or promotions, at night or from their laptop. Only a minori-

Table 5: The impact of fashion influence players on the purchasing process

Stage	Action	Influencer
1st – Need (or generation of the desire to buy)	Help me build my own personal style by inspiring me	Close circles Macro influencer Mega influencer
	Copying their looks	Close circles Mega influencer Macro influencer
	Help me discover new brands or products	Close circles Macro influencer Mega influencer
	Generate new needs	Close circles Micro influencer Macro influencer
2nd – Product search	When I look for a product I look at the clothes and brands people wear	Close circles Macro influencer Micro influencer
	Who do you ask fashion advice from?	Close circles Macro influencer Mega influencer
3rd – Evaluation of alternatives	When deciding on choosing to buy one thing or another what influences you the most?	Close circles Macro influencer Mega influencer
	Changing your opinion based on your advice or photos you see	Close circles Macro influencer Micro influencer
4th – Purchase	How much their opinion influences when it comes to buying	Close circles Macro influencer Mega influencer
5th – Post purchase	Who do you tend to compare and ask for opinion your purchases with?	Close circles Macro influencer Micro influencer
	You would change some of your purchases because of the opinion they give you or the images you see	Close circles Macro influencer Micro influencer
	Who do you tell or show what you usually buy?	Close circles Micro influencer Macro influencer

Source: Compiled by authors

ty of the respondents (31%) bought online through their mobile phones.

We can highlight the fact that 82% buy most frequently in physical stores. Some 59% stated they bought for reasons of necessity, and mainly in stores and shopping centers. 36% because they were looking for products, or they were visiting a store or they were looking at websites and decided to buy a product in a more impulsive manner; only 4% declared that they purchased fashion in order to socialize. It is noteworthy that 55% declared that they gave importance or considerable importance to the opinion of other individuals. Some 50% of the cases could be defined as customers who researched online and shopped, this online research being carried out mainly through their Smartphone (60%). Most of these cases (86%) granted considerable importance to the price and they defined themselves as loyal to the brands they like. On the contrary, only 22% gave importance to the method of production of the garments and whether these methods were sustainable.

C Impact of Influencers on the Purchasing Process

The processes of identification-creation of a need, desire to buy whimsically, the search for products and payment, are stages that are mainly performed alone. On the contrary, the stages of evaluation,

purchase and post-purchase, are carried out in the company of other individuals, emphasizing evaluation with friends, and the purchase and search for feedback with the couple.

During the stages of the purchasing process, different aspects were analyzed and those players who were most influencial at each moment (media, celebrities, mega influencers, macro influencers, micro influencers and close circles) were identified, as indicated in Table 5. We operationalized the influence using a 1–5 scale, where 1 means no influence and 5 completely influenced.

The results obtained were present in all stages and circumstances analyzed: respondents were most influenced by their close circles, followed by medium influencers and small influencers. All data and tables are presented in Appendix 1.

5 Conclusions, limitations and future research

Interviewed, both men and women, are consumers strongly influenced by social media and influencers. Through these channels they generate wants and create needs throughout the time they spend viewing content online. They are hyper-informed, constantly discovering new products and seeking information about them through social media, leading them eventually, in many cases, to the store. In relation to the hypothesis of the investigation we can point out:

Hypothesis 1 and 2 has been validated. The influence of the close circles (family and friends), the ones that Lazarsfeld and Katz (1955) analyzed explaining the role of influentials, is stronger in the entire purchasing process of the analyzed young millennials than the influence of digital influencers.

By contrast, small influencers, especially people from close circles, are associated with a passion for fashion as a hobby, not as a profit-making exercise. Their recommendations are made with genuine sincerity and they make them in your best interests. They know and advise you and do not have the end goal of wanting to sell you a product.

Although all university students find confidence in the recommendations made by their group and imitate their style, it is important to note how women also receive confidence from what they see amongst influencers, who serve as a point of reference and an indicator that something is fashionable. On the contrary for men, influencers do not provide a source of confidence and self-esteem. Men prefer the advice of their mothers or partners.

Regarding influencers players amongst millennials, both influencers and people in close circles (family and friends) have a great deal of weight in decision-making before young people consume clothing and accessories. When analyzing the stages of the purchasing process or the customer journey, we can observe that influencers have a greater role in the stage of inspiration and during the search for products. On the contrary, close circles are the ones that influence more clearly in the stages of evaluation, purchase and post-purchase.

Hypothesis 3 and 4 has been validated. The most commonly used devices are smartphones. Smartphones are used throughout the day, especially to be connected through WhatsApp and social media. Among the latter, Instagram is the most popular social media used. University women use it more actively by posting pictures and stories, while men use it in a more passive way. Both genders spend an average of 5 hours a day using this means of social media.

Following our analysis of the interviews and focus groups, we can conclude that the great influencers are linked with monetary arrangements with brands and are seen as a new advertising media and as models of aspirational behavior.

In terms of managerial implications, communication companies and fashion brands must make the right choice of influencer when creating a campaign to boost their marketing strategy, since each type of influencer plays a greater role in each of the different stages of the purchasing process.

The prodigious influence of close circles and micro- and macro-influencers seems to be key. This idea confirms the studies regarding opinion leaders conducted in the 1950's and 1960's: the Internet, the processes of virulence that the social media entails, the importance of one to one, and the importance of WOM or e-WOM in close circles.

The limitations of this study are focused on the sample. The study has focused on millennials so their conclusions can't be extrapolated to other generations. In the same way, the study has focused on Madrid (Spain), the conclusions can be applied to the whole country but it would be necessary to analyze the influential players in other nations. Finally, this study has focused on the purchase of fashion products, in the future other research should analyze the power of influencers and close circles in other sectors.

The same limits can be overcome through future research. This study faces issues related both to defining the influential players and the generation to which the influenced buyers belong. In this paper we focused on influencers and millennials, but a more inclusive perspective is suggested, including other influential players and post-millennials. This is in part discussed in the paper but can be part of future research paths.

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Appendix

Table A1: Statistical analysis of the position of Influencers/players in the different stages of the purchasing process

Stages of the buying process	Action analyses	Value scale (1=never; 5=Always)	Types of influencers: Mass media		Celebrities		Macro influencers		Mega influencers		Micro influencers		Close social circles	
			n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1st. Necessity (Generating the desire to buy)	They help me by inspiring and forming my personal style	Never	13	59.1	11	50.0	9	40.9	8	36.4	15	68.2	3	13.6
		Sometimes	1	4.5	2	18.2	6	27.3	4	18.2	2	9.1	3	13.6
		Often	3	13.6	2	18.2	4	18.2	4	18.2	3	13.6	3	27.3
		Almost always	5	22.7	2	9.1	1	4.5	5	22.7	2	9.1	9	40.9
		Always	0	0.0	1	4.5	2	9.1	1	4.5	0	0.0	4	18.2
	I copy "looks"	Never	15	68.2	15	68.2	12	59.1	10	45.5	14	63.6	6	27.3
		Sometimes	1	4.5	3	13.6	2	9.1	6	27.3	2	9.1	6	27.3
		Often	3	13.6	3	13.6	2	9.1	0	0.0	5	22.7	5	22.7
		Almost always	3	13.6	0	0.0	3	13.6	4	18.2	0	0.0	4	18.2
		Always	0	0.0	1	4.5	2	9.1	2	9.1	1	4.5	1	4.5
	They help me to discover new brands and/or products	Never	9	40.9	11	50.0	9	50.0	8	36.4	12	54.5	4	18.2
		Sometimes	4	18.2	3	13.6	3	13.6	1	4.5	3	13.6	2	9.1
		Often	5	22.7	3	13.6	5	13.6	4	18.2	2	9.1	4	19.2
		Almost always	2	9.1	4	18.2	3	18.2	4	18.2	1	4.5	7	31.8
		Always	2	9.1	1	4.5	2	4.5	5	22.7	4	18.2	5	22.7
	They create new needs for me	Never	11	50.0	14	63.6	11	50.0	10	45.5	14	63.6	5	22.7
		Sometimes	5	22.7	5	22.7	4	18.2	2	9.1	1	4.5	5	22.7
		Often	2	9.1	0	0.0	4	18.2	4	18.2	3	13.6	4	18.2
		Almost always	3	13.6	3	13.6	2	9.1	5	22.7	2	9.1	6	27.3
		Always	1	4.5	0	0.0	1	4.5	1	4.5	2	9.1	2	9.1
2nd. Product search	When I look for a product I focus on the clothes and the brands that are worn	Never	19	86.4	17	77.3	14	63.6	13	59.1	15	68.2	3	13.6
		Sometimes	0	0.0	2	9.1	3	13.6	2	9.1	1	4.5	3	13.6
		Often	0	0.0	2	9.1	2	9.1	2	9.1	2	9.1	3	13.6
		Almost always	2	9.1	1	4.5	2	9.1	4	18.2	1	4.5	9	40.9
		Always	1	4.5	0	0.0	1	4.5	1	4.5	3	13.6	4	18.2

Continuation of the table on the following page

Continuation of Table A1

Stages of the buying process	Action analyses	Value scale (1=never; 5=always)	Types of influencers: Mass media		Celebrities		Macro influencers		Mega influencers		Micro influencers		Close social circles	
			n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
3rd. Evaluating alternatives	Who do you seek fashion advice from?	Never	19	86.4	20	90.9	17	77.3	18	81.8	18	81.8	3	13.6
		Sometimes	1	4.5	1	4.5	1	4.5	0	0.0	1	4.5	0	0.0
		Often	2	9.1	1	4.5	3	13.6	0	0.0	2	9.1	6	27.3
		Almost always	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	4.5	4	18.2	0	0.0	7	31.8
		Always	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	4.5	6	27.3
	When it comes to deciding to choose one particular thing or another to buy. who influences you the most?	Never	18	81.8	21	95.5	14	63.6	14	63.6	17	77.3	3	13.6
		Sometimes	2	9.1	0	0.0	2	9.1	2	9.1	1	4.5	2	9.1
		Often	0	0.0	1	4.5	4	18.2	2	9.1	2	9.1	8	36.4
		Almost always	2	9.1	0	0.0	1	4.5	3	13.6	1	4.5	4	18.2
		Always	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	4.5	1	4.5	1	4.5	5	22.7
	Do you change your opinion as a result of being given advice or through photos that you may have seen?	Never	17	77.3	19	86.4	13	59.1	13	59.1	15	68.2	4	18.2
		Sometimes	2	9.1	1	4.5	3	13.6	0	0.0	2	9.1	4	18.2
		Often	2	9.1	1	4.5	5	22.7	6	27.3	2	9.1	4	18.2
		Almost always	1	4.5	1	4.5	1	4.5	3	13.4	3	13.6	4	18.2
		Always	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	27.3
4th. Buying	How much are you influenced by opinion?	Never	16	72.77	18	81.8	14	63.6	12	54.5	17	77.3	3	13.6
		Sometimes	3	13.6	2	9.1	2	9.1	3	13.6	2	9.1	2	9.1
		Often	2	9.1	0	0.0	4	18.2	3	13.6	0	0.0	7	31.8
		Almost always	1	4.5	2	9.1	1	4.5	3	13.6	1	4.5	5	22.7
		Always	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	4.5	1	4.5	2	9.1	5	22.7

Continuation of the table on the following page

Continuation of Table A1

Stages of the buying process	Action analyses	Value scale (1=never; 5=always)	Types of influencers											
			Mass media		celebrities		Macro influencers		Mega influencers		Micro influencers		Close social circles	
			n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
5th. Post purchase	Who do you usually compare your shopping with?	Never	19	86.4	20	90.9	17	77.3	16	72.7	17	77.3	3	13.6
		Sometimes	1	4.5	1	4.5	1	4.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	4.5
		Often	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	9.1	3	13.6	3	13.6	6	27.3
		Almost always	1	4.5	0	0.0	2	9.1	2	9.1	1	4.5	9	40.9
		Always	1	4.5	1	4.5	0	0.0	1	4.5	1	4.5	3	13.6
	Would you change some of the items you bought due to the opinion you were given or because of the images you may have seen?	Never	17	77.3	19	86.4	16	72.7	15	68.2	18	81.8	5	22.7
		Sometimes	1	4.5	2	9.1	2	9.1	3	13.6	0	0.0	4	18.2
		Often	2	9.1	0	0.0	3	13.6	1	4.5	3	13.6	3	13.6
		Almost always	2	9.1	1	4.5	1	4.5	3	13.6	0	0.0	5	22.7
		Always	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	4.5	5	22.7
	Who do you usually tell or show the things that you buy to?	Never	19	86.4	21	95.5	19	86.4	19	86.4	19	86.4	6	27.6
		Sometimes	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	9.1	2	9.1	0	0.0
		Often	2	9.1	0	0.0	2	9.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	22.7
		Almost always	1	4.5	1	4.5	1	4.5	1	4.5	1	4.5	5	22.7
		Always	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	27.3