# Personalisation and fashion design
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The aim of this chapter is to explain personalisation in the context of the fashion industry and its implications for design. Personalisation and more particularly customisation and co-creation have become increasingly significant to fashion brands both through their products, apparel and accessories, their distribution and the location of the customising activity. In this respect online and offline channels create further opportunities for interaction and engagement, blurring the boundaries between virtual and physical worlds and the opportunities for personalisation. These themes of consumer engagement embrace fast fashion and also slow fashion, multiple retailers and high fashion designers. In this context, the chapter will explore the dimensions of personalised fashion and its implications for design in an uncertain and complex environment.

Driven by consumer and media interest, fashion has become increasingly visible in contemporary society. Crane (2012) summarises its four dimensions, first as a form of material culture related to bodily decoration. It can communicate perceptions of an individual's place in society. It can be symbolic, for example through uniforms, and in defining, albeit ambiguously gender and sexuality. Second, fashion can be a kind of language in which clothing styles function as signifiers, distinguishing styles, and fashion from fads. Meanings of some types of clothing tend to be stable and singular, such as  men's suits, while others are constantly changing and plural, for example T shirts and blue jeans.

Third, fashion can be understood as a system of business organisations which create, communicate and distribute it to consumers. Indeed fashion pervades the consumption system as a whole  (Firat, Dholakia and Venkatash 1995). Consequently fashion consciousness concerns not only clothes, but also "every other (re)presentable aspect of consumption that can be rendered as an image-producing act" (p.50). Finally, the social effects of fashion can be seen in the ways in which personal and social identity, of belonging and difference, are expressed and shaped by clothing and accessories. This dimension is closely related to discussions of fashion and its place in modern and postmodern individuality (Lipovetsky 2002). For Twitchell (1999) fashion provides opportunities for emblematic display, exhibitionism in the sense that individuals plan their clothing, but also decor and other consumption-based badges as a strategy for fitting into their targeted aspirational niche of personality and social status.

The concept of personalisation, who is undertaking the personalising and its location contributes to and is formed by this complexity. Personalisation, its origination and ownership, can be found in the creativity and activity of the designer, fashion brand and the consumer. These dimensions are increasingly integrated in co-creative and co-productive engagement and processes. Fashion designers engage with subject matters such as identity, sexuality and gender and their communication through fashion dress, shows, and media. They seek inspiration from an eclectic diversity of sources including history and historical dress, different cultures, politics, economics, and technology (Matharu 2010). Their creativity is diffused through the system and its networks, where it is interpreted or appropriated for retail markets and ultimately re-cycled into street-fashion. From the perspective of the fashion designer,

personalisation is inherent in their designed collections, and through exposure to, and commentary by the fashion and social media.

Designers and the fashion label, and the two have to be considered together, are identified by a personal style. In this sense, personalization distinguishes the designer, the label and the brand with a consistent and recognizable identity. Notably, brand personality has a significant place in creating and maintaining a strong identity. The fashion designer can have a long-standing association or be consciously introduced to transform or reinvent the brand. Ralph Lauren epitomizes the tradition of American sportswear, in which designer and brand are closely identified, while Chloé sought a new design direction by appointing Stella McCartney to re-create the brand. Personalisation can be manifested in a specific approach to design; Yamamoto's style has consistently reflected his interest in shape and the folding of material. It may be defined by a single item and media exposure: Givenchy's black dress worn by Audrey Hepburn in the film Breakfast at Tiffany's epitomized the understated, refined elegance of his designs. More generally British designers have demonstrated a "rebellious spirit" and Belgian designers, a "gritty and perfectionist attitude" while maintaining distinct and varied styles (Matharu 2010, pp.34-5). In these descriptions the sense of personalisation connects designer, events and places in contrast to the consumption of design, which has become increasingly placeless and ubiquitous.

The designer, the fashion label and brand are influenced, albeit in varying degrees, by their location: the places where designers work, present their collections and communicate through the media. The major fashion cities each demonstrate characteristics built around their fashion system, infrastructure and cultural heritage, which determine and maintain a distinctive style. They host fashion weeks for designers to present their collections twice yearly, typically for spring/summer and autumn/winter seasons. These serve a number of functions to demonstrate changes of style, materials and details, to launch new designers, develop collaborations and for communication and promotion. A designer-led perspective essentially informs the relationships evident in these communities. However other types of relationship between fashion producers and consumers are the discussed in the next section.

**Fashion and personal identity**

Personalisation does not lie exclusively in the domain of the designer or brand. From a consumer perspective, changes in consumption hold implications for fashion design and its location. Fashion expresses personal identity in the sense that the style of the products that people purchase, use and display 'says something about who they are' and serves as an indication of their social identity along with other aspects of their lives.

An awareness of consumers' needs for self-identity and image form an important driver for personalisation. Twitchell (1999) demonstrates how fashion communicates personal identity both to others and to oneself. This can take the form of public display, from shopping bags to clothing, branded by names and visible logos such as Lacoste's alligator and Ralph Lauren's polo pony (p. 167). The connection between fashion and personal identity takes the form of individuals discovering their identity or identities through a process of understanding and interpreting their own responses to the various styles that are brought to their attention. Nevertheless there remains a

state of tension in the construction of identity: between this desire to be different and creative, and safe, easy acts of dressing. There is an ambiguity in fashion between innovation and conformity, revealing and concealing, which influences individual approaches to clothes  (Woodward 2007).

Theory developments in hedonic consumption and consumption experiences (Holbrook and Hirschmann 1982; O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy 2002) have contributed to a new awareness among producers of consumer identity. More macro, cultural perspectives of consumer behaviour conceptualize the consumer as a socially connected being with the focus on consumption (Belk 1995). Further, the essential activity of consumption may not be the actual selection, purchase or use of products but the imaginative pleasure seeking to which the product image lends itself and a desire for novelty (Campbell 2012). Such postmodernist perspectives on consumption explain a preference by individuals to avoid commitment to a specific identity and to remain free to experiment with different identities (Gonzalez 2012). This reflects the development of subcultural, intellectual, and personal differences among consumers and the extent to which such heterogeneity appears in the variety of unique offerings available to their consumption experiences (Firat and Dholakia 1998).

Diversity and pluralistic openness has contributed to marketing-related trends toward the creation of unique offerings targeted at finely segmented groups of consumers. The essence of differentiated segmentation as a marketing strategy can be viewed as one hallmark of postmodernism (Holbrook 1999).  In a consumer-driven world consumers may find the potential to become a participant in its customization, by immersing themselves as an object into the world of objects, instead of trying to maintain a privileged and detached position from an object (Firat, Dholakia, and Venkatash, 1995). The "customising" consumer takes elements of market offerings and crafts a customised consumption experience out of these.

Individual fashion, through a proliferation of choice is evident in eclectic and street-fashion styles, and stands in contrast to the organisation of directed or co-ordinated fashions by fashion designers, their intermediaries and media commentators. An increasing appetite for technology has led to the emergence of the 'prosumer' — someone who demands superior products, that might once have been the preserve of professionals or experts, even for a hobby or leisure activity. Consequently the role of the designer and fashion design has changed, as consumers have become more engaged in informing and co-creating fashion (Holbrook 2001). Multiple consumer identities are enabled by greater variety provided by the growth in fashion retailing, more specialisation and faster fashion. A move from producer-led to consumer-led fashion has resulted in the individualisation of mass produced and standardized fashion.

**Fast fashion**

These organisational and individual perspectives on personalisation are evident in the tensions of fast fashion. While designers continue to present seasonal collections, fashion retailers have moved towards shorter, non-seasonal periods in order to respond to new trends or looks. Fast fashion is defined by affordable prices achieved by sourcing from low cost producers and the use of quick response supply chains, which enable frequent changes to collections and colourways to maintain originality

and style. For example a leading multiple retailer Zara, can bring new designs to market in less than four weeks.

Consequently fast fashion has a hedonic purpose, where consumers expect fresh and fashionable offerings, and expectations of frequency and scarcity are reflected in an urgency to buy before the look sells out. With this approach to fashion, there is an absence of ties to the personality of a single stylist or a specific place in a global culture of fashion and brands. Fast fashion enables eclectic personal identity building that combines many different elements that are temporary and unstable. Retailers have been able to exploit original designs and designers, and in this way create competitive space. Zara, H&M and Top Shop have successfully engaged with limited collaborations and concepts of mass exclusivity.

More broadly 'masstige' enables consumers to enjoy the perception of luxury by combining mass produced lines with an additional element of prestige typically through design and branding. H&M through designer capsule collections create time-bound moments of luxury, and introduce scarcity into abundance. Social media provide access to extensive commentaries and images from blogs to designers' runway shows and fashion events. The results of mixing and matching to create individual style preferred by many consumers is reflected elsewhere in the personalisation of their lives. As such, retailers as fashion intermediaries enable consumers to create their own style in a world that is globally interconnected, regionally differentiated and personally individualised all at the same time (Light, 2014).

Fast fashion enables consumers to create their own identity and multiple identities. It is eclectic, provides access to new ideas and products, and focuses on availability at affordability. Consequently design is driven by speed and accuracy of interpretation for specific consumer markets, and less concerned with originality. Indeed multiple media enable fashion to be disseminated so quickly and with so many interpretations that looks and styles follow fast on each; designer collection is replaced by consumer 'mash up'. Not surprisingly, brand logo often creates the point of distinction in a process where fashion brands are designing for the consumer to personalise.

**Service-Dominant logic**

The availability of fashion and the opportunity to engage with the materiality of fashion and its images, has contributed to a diversity of personalising and customising activities. The opportunities for participative individualisation are increasingly significant to fashion brands through their products, apparel and accessories.

From a goods-dominant perspective of the fashion system, suppliers produce products and customers buy them. Market exchange in this view is concerned with transactions, and commoditized outputs based on mass production (Pine and Gilmore 1993; Lusch and Vargo 2014). With service-dominant logic (S-DL), customers engage in dialogue and interaction with their suppliers during product design, production, delivery and consumption. Such interactions are defined by co-creation, to describe customer–supplier dialogue and interaction and recognize the micro-competences of individuals and households (Schembri 2006). S-DL suggests that value starts with the supplier understanding customer value-creating processes and

learning how to support customers' co-creation activities. Thus, the customer "always being a co-creator of value" is a key foundational proposition of this logic (Vargo and Lusch, 2004; Payne et al. 2009).

Effectively S-DL extends the concepts of relationship building. A service centred view of marketing sees a continuous series of social and economic processes and a learning process in which to identify or develop core competences: fundamental skills and knowledge that represent potential competitive advantage; identification of other entities (potential customers) that could benefit from these competencies; cultivation of relationships that involve customers in developing customized, competitively compelling value propositions to meet financial needs. It also requires marketplace feedback by analysing financial performance from exchange to learn how to improve the firm's offering to customers and improve firm performance. The dominant logic of S-DL is " the application of specialized competences (knowledge and skills), through deeds, processes, and performances for the benefit of another entity or the entity itself"(Vargo and Lusch 2104 p.40). Interaction, integration, customization and co-production are hallmarks of this service-centred view.

Four elements condition the co-production process: first, control and the variable domain of experience. Second, temporality, a recognition that meaning and value of the brand changes over time responding to changes in ambient cultural environment and evolution of consumer goals, for example the value of retro brands. Intergenerational contexts show that brands' propositions can become emblematic signs of family continuity. At a more micro level, firms can invoke consumers' repertoires of memories through their brand communication to imbue their consumption with a sense of continuity and connection to the past" (Arnould et al. 2006 p.98). Finally, the existence of multiple customers links brands to other people.

These elements of SD-L and consumer culture theory are reflected in human-centred design approaches. Meroni and Sangiorgi (2011) distinguish twenty-first century design from the predictability of the twentieth-century, with its focus on the development and production of objects. The designing process and outcomes became increasingly influenced by unpredictable factors, characterised by a social economy with a variety of actors and motivations that tie in with the on-going dynamics of social innovation. Objects of design turn into a process of design, something that occurs over time, an activity to achieve results. Service designs are entities in the making, whose final characteristics will emerge only in the complex dynamics of the real world.

## Customisation

Organisational responses to changes in consumption and consumer identity and the ascendancy of services and experiences, were partly realized by customisation. Lean production, agile manufacturing, mass-customisation and customisation recognised the need by producers to respond to individual needs and accordingly adapt products and processes. These functions were subsequently extended to customerisation which aims at tailoring a product to the needs of specific customers while delivering the desired product quickly and at low cost (Wind and Rangaswamy 2001). Later, instant customerisation was advanced as a manufacturing paradigm to realise the synergies between customisation, minimal customer lead-time, and low cost. When designing or

redesigning a product, process, or business unit, each approach should be examined for possible insights into how to serve customers best. In some cases, a single approach will dominate the design. More often, however, there is a need for a mix of approaches to serve the business's particular customers (Gilmore and Pine 1997).

Mass customization is defined as "the mass production of individually customized goods and services" (Andrerson 1997 p. 4) specifically aligning customised design and manufacture with mass production efficiency and speed. It was explained as a new paradigm characterised by not only customisation but also variety through flexibility and quick responsiveness (Pine 1993 p. 34). The approach offers the capability for individually tailored products or services on a large scale. It shares the logic of micromarketing and is widely regarded as an approach that can align increased customer satisfaction with higher profitability. In this context, mass customisation provides the facility to "manufacture unique versions of a product in economically efficient lot sizes of one" (Holbrook 1999 p.63).

Focusing on the customer, however, is both an imperative and a potential problem. In their desire to become customer driven, many companies have resorted to inventing new programmes and procedures to meet individual customer's needs. Readily available information technology and flexible work processes permit them to customize goods or services for each customer in high volumes at low cost. However, many managers have discovered that mass customization itself can produce unnecessary cost and complexity (Zipkin 2001).

Mass production implies uniform products, whereas customisation has connotations of small-scale crafts. However mass customization can only be realised through unique operational capabilities. The continuing development of electronic commerce and other technologies can reduce constraints on the system In this respect 'disruptive innovation', of which 3D printing is a good example, provides new business models for individualised production (Baillie and Delamore 2011). Only certain industries can meet these conditions, but the fashion industry has shown that it is well placed to adapt and fulfil them from both consumer and producer perspective(Zipkin 2001).

**Mass customization in fashion**

From a fashion perspective mass customisation can be further explained as the large-scale marketing of designer labels (Smith, 1997). As Skov (2002) demonstrates, the emergence of mass customised designer labels in the 1990s would have been difficult to achieve without access to global manufacturing networks. Skov takes the example of Hong Kong's garment industry since the 1960s. While it originally gained entry to Western markets by manufacturing long production runs of standardized items, it later specialized in shorter runs for all market segments, including multiple retailers and designer labels. With the increase in industrial flexibility, the organization of labour and technology inevitably grew more complex. Factories that used to work on two or three styles at any one time may now work on three hundred, and they may accept orders down to a few dozen items. Such changes allow fashion designers the means to respond to new ideas and creative directions, while fuelling the dynamics of fast fashion and the micromarket of the individual.

Piller and Müller (2004) stress the importance of understanding customers' wants, that they are not buying individuality but rather purchasing a product or service that fits exactly to their needs and desires. Mass customisation concepts, based primarily on the promise of customisation itself, are more likely to fail. Customers '....don't want choice. They want exactly what they want' (Pine 1998, p 14). In the case of sports footwear customers have exact wants for a distinctive style. By contrast, non-sports footwear brands offer their customers fit, comfort, higher functionality, and lower costs of ownership, before style.

Mass customisation offers individual solutions to customers' design requirements rather than products, and in this respect sports brands have been particularly successful. Decoration provides a controllable entry point to customisation, a route taken by the Converse brand, where customers can specify an individualised design and wait while a neutral coloured canvas sneaker is colour sprayed to order. The process provides opportunities to engage the customer, add value and provide a unique service. Nike iD offers an online customisation tool that enables consumers to create their own shoe from a limited series of designs. In this case, sports shoes for different activities can be customise from a larger number of components. The aim and appeal of the service is directed towards matching the footwear and what the customer likes: the customer is the designer and the shoe is the customer's identity. Adidas's adiVerse virtual footwear wall customises the product experience and helps guide the consumer to their perfect shoe, or alternatively, lets them browse the entire range of products, with each rendered in real-time 3D.  The experience is defined by the use of technologies: not only the systems to visualise individual designs but also multiple LCD touch screens that use facial recognition to detect a customer's gender. These approaches demonstrate the significance of the brand and designer label in determining the interaction with the consumer. In this relationship, a 'selection of options' process distances the designer.

## Personalisation

Trends in co-creation and customisation by the producers and consumers of fashion are evident in sportswear, casualwear – notably T-shirts – but also in luxury products. These have been amplified by other personalisation initiatives in the twenty-first century. Government and organisational policies have focused on the individual across a wide spectrum of functions and services, for example social care. The use of technology in health services, to afford greater personalisation extends to wearable technology in or on clothing, with many recent developments designed to help monitor individual health and wellbeing.  Personalisation in this context is about empowering individuals, designing with their full involvement and specified to meet their own unique needs.

Consequently there is a growing customer expectation for the personalisation of customer experiences that reflect personal needs, attitudes and situations. Connecting with customers has to be in a manner that suits them in order to achieve the highest possible customer value and protect the relationship between customer and provider (Davey 2014). This is evident in enduring forms of personalised fashion, in made-to-measure clothing to the customer's requirements and increasingly the design of bags and accessories to which the application of initials and motifs are applied. These

personalising activities are particularly evident in luxury fashion brands that enable the customer to engage with the design process.

Within luxury fashion, Prada's approach returns to the tradition of 'bespoke' and the heritage of distinctive personal associations. Bespoke tailoring arose from describing the cloth customers picked out in advance for their suits. The cloth then became "spoken for" or "bespoken" typically for men's suits, and as demonstrated by London's Savile Row tailors, both material and tailoring became important elements of personalisation. The implications for design extend further than this, and contrast with mass-customisation through a focus on limited production capacity, in small batches or limited editions combined with a respect for the traditional skills of craftsmen and artisan production methods (Higgins 2012). Increasingly 'bespoke' has become more widely used in menswear under the influence of celebrity demand - specifically from Hollywood - for different specifications of suits. In general, men have become more knowledgeable and sophisticated in their choices and needs, to which fashion brands have responded: Gucci opened their first men's flagship store to provide their most comprehensive menswear range, including a dedicated area for the Gucci made-to-measure programme (Kansara 2014).

There is clearly a spectrum of personalising approaches, from surface treatments that add the customer's name or initials to more complex co-creative engagement with the consumer. Louis Vuitton launched its personalised Mon Monogram service in 2010, while Hermès created Custom Silk Corner the following year to allow customers to make their own version of its scarves. In leather goods and stationery Anya Hindmarch and Smythson provide bespoke services. Luxury watchmakers, for example Jaeger-LeCoultre and Chopard, seek to expand their sales while preserving exclusivity, by making watches to order with anything from diamond stars to fully personalised shapes and decorations. It is notable in the context of co-creation that established watch brands insist on controlling the final design of the customized piece. Fundamentally, personalisation of appearance is essential to being seen as different from the crowd (Fashion 2.0, 2014).

Personalisation, bespoke and customisation are increasingly important facets of the luxury experience, and retailers too can facilitate this aspect of luxury fashion. Harrods instore bespoke event, "Made with Love" which was dedicated to customisation, provided a platform for brands ranging from Gucci to La Perla to offer their bespoke services (Cochrane 2014). Personalisation as an in-store experience is evident in Burberry's 'One to One' iPad application, that allows in-store sales staff to build and maintain customer profiles complete with global transaction histories and visual wardrobes for each individual shopper.

Given the trend for personalisation in the luxury sector, it would appear that there is scope for more mid-market fashion retailers to fill a gap in the market for consumers who aspire to own a designer brand but can't afford the premium prices. The most obvious opportunity is to offer a service to embroider the customer's initials on to their bags, in order to persuade them that they can have a similar product to a luxury one but for a more affordable price (Mintel 2010). This option is already evident in the monogramming services introduced into both Topshop and Whistles. In other respects, personalisation has succeeded in the everyday wear of T-shirts and sportswear, anyone can – literally - personalise their favourite football team shirt with

their own name. The next stage in the evolution from customisation to personalisation may see further opportunities for customer-driven fashions. 3D printing instore, has a clear application for customer creativity in the specification of personalised accessories (Cochrane 2014). More specifially, the Yr digital printing service, found in Topshop and Topman describes itself as the " world's first all over print fashion brand….. (for customers to) curate and create one-off high-quality garments in minutes" (www.yrsto.re) . The idea of curation of the garment demonstrates the sense of ownership and distinctiveness, something to be looked after over time.

All these features are in keeping with Arnould et al.'s (2006) discussion of the conditions for co-production. However, customisation and personalisation not only change the customer's decision-making process but also the post-purchase phases, where communicating and relationship building through production, delivery and ownership are significant elements of personalisation.

## Fashion design and the Internet

The rapid development of online connectivity, versatility, and computing power has generally extended the opportunities for personalisation. Location in this context increasingly concerns the multichannel mediation of fashion – online, offline and mobile - and the possibilities for interaction with the consumer. By allowing access to customer information to provide consistent, timely and relevant individualised interactions, the processes of personalisation can increase customer loyalty and lifetime value (Jackson 2007).

Mobility and shifts in the distribution of fashion intelligence (Crewe 2013) extend the boundaries of co-creative fashion design. Style trends that are available on instant online runway shows, through fashion bloggers, and celebrity endorsements inspire new design. Online connectivity and communication using targeted data by brands offers new forms of engagement and personalisation. New designs can be co-created as virtual garments, through online postings and feedback online at every level of design complexity up to eveningwear designs.

However, personalisation is not only about communication, whether it is exclusively concerned with information, or integrated with other products or services. It must adapt so that it can 'anticipate relevant intent' of customers at the right time and at the right place. In other words it needs to create a personalised offer that anticipates how customers' needs are changing. While 'big data' provides information to enable personalized products and services, personalisation generally involves people to create personal relationships and provide services. Digital technology provides brands the opportunity to forge a personal relationship with every customer (Marketing Week 2012), which gives rise to the concept of personalisation not as a thing but rather as *a way of doing things*.

These qualities are evident in online fashion brands. Net-a-Porter, a leading fashion retailer, has used a combination of surveys and behavioural data to offer each customer an individualised experience. The company can match new products around designers that the customer has previously signed up for or bought and also products it thinks customers might like. For instance, a shopper in Paris who has bought Lanvin might be interested in Givenchy handbags, while a Stella McCartney customer

in Texas might be shown blouses from Equipment. Burberry uses techniques such as landing page customisation, search re-marketing, dynamic display re-marketing and targeting in social platforms using real-time data insights  (Sherman 2014). Typically, these personalised approaches lead to improved results. Style advice enables people to ask questions about specific looks and purchasing decisions. They can acquire personalised style advice from "fashion insiders" ranging from junior stylists to bloggers who are free to suggest products from any e-commerce site. A growing number of affordable fashion sites offer consumers personalised product selections and customised shopping recommendations picked by "celebrity stylists".

One implication of online connectivity is that fashion design can be extended to use available information and material to support socialization and collaboration in small and large-size communities, and to generate an interest in user-generated content (Ardissono et al. 2012). In recent years online innovation communities have gained popularity in attempting to involve enthusiastic consumers in a company's development processes.  Innovation community members may be invited to contribute to development activities such as generating and evaluating new ideas; elaborating, evaluating or challenging concepts; and creating virtual prototypes. Thus they may generate valuable propositions and solutions, positive word-of-mouth, and collective commitment towards new offerings (Gebauer Fuller and Pezei 2013). In this context, co-creation can be applied to making and the functionality of patterns or materials: a technical pattern is easy to share and allows more technical discussion about its shape and cut for a more comfortable fit.

Moreover, communities of consumers can exist outside the organisation. 'Collaborative  consumption' is characterised by swapping, sharing, bartering, trading and renting, reinvented by technologies and peer-to-peer marketplaces (Botsman and Rogers 2011). This form of 'social shopping' is particularly suitable for fashion and the re-positioning of the designer in a world of relationships rather than things (Baillie and Delamore 2011) as younger consumers in particular exchange ideas, seek advice and approval. Still more distributed forms of co-creation can be found in crowdsourced design platforms. These are all facilitated by the convergence of physical and virtual worlds: the provision of new ways to access a fashion designer's knowledge and skills, and new environments for co-creative processes and their communication.

While online access provides new opportunities to share knowledge and information of fashion, in another respect it presents new opportunities for a more literal form of personalised fashion through body scanning technologies. These have existed for some time as store based facilities, usually owned by a third party such as Bodymetrics, a leading producer of commercial bodyscanners. However, the devices have failed to scale up, as tailoring products specifically for individuals creates an expectation of an absolutely perfect fit. This can be problematic in a mass market; Levi's introduced a body scanner for an instore customer, which scanned the body and sent the data to be manufactured into a pair of jeans exactly to fit the body shape. However, a fundamental problem lay in customer expectations: customers were disappointed if the garment was just 5mm. out of alignment (Stuart, 2013). The need for personal measurements is more acutely felt when purchasing online. Individual body scanning through mobile phone or computer cameras, and the recording of accurate body size information will enable fashion design to be more accurate and

accessible. It will further allow consumers to co-create designs with more confidence, as they will have control over their precise sizing data in the process of designing.

**Slow Fashion and participatory design**

The discussion up to this point has focused on the producer and consumer, and the design processes involving co-production and co-creation. However, an alternative view of fashion design and its personalisation sees consumers as users in which the designer takes a different role. Co-design defines this collective creativity across the whole span of a design process. Broadly it refers to the creativity of designers and people not trained in design working together in the design development process (Sanders and Stappers 2008). It gathers insights into users' needs, allowing ideas to feed into concept design and product development (Delamore and Baillie 2011). More profoundly, co-designing value propositions that can support value creation processes requires a deep, long-term development partnership (Keränen et al.2013).

Co-design has its foundations in the participatory design movement, which sees designers creating solutions with people from the community and recognises that local value chain actors can leverage local knowledge. It can also lead to innovations that may be better adapted to the context and be more likely to be adopted, since local people have invested resources in their creation (IDEO, 2008). These approaches directly counter the expert-centered approach and actively blur distinctions between researcher, practitioner, and user. They are guided primarily by practical concerns, sometimes are explicitly grounded in stakeholders' ways of knowing, and are often aimed at building local capacity and catalyzing change (Harder, Burford, and Hoover, 2013).

These approaches are evident in the *slow fashion* vocabulary of small-scale production, traditional craft techniques, local materials and markets, which challenge growth fashion's obsession with mass-production and globalized style. It emphasises making and maintaining actual material garments, and re-finding earlier experiences of fashion linked to active making rather than watching (Fletcher, 2010). Slow fashion demonstrates new priorities for the fashion sector such as greater resourcefulness, the fostering of traditions, skills and new technologies; the creation of meaningful work; and improved social and ecological quality (Fletcher 2011). A focus on craft but also the adoption of new technologies can create new, and extend the life of, existing clothes and accessories Slow fashion garments can create "emotional durability" or in other words a personal connection with the wearer, which will ensure its longevity and may even get passed on to the next generation (Pookulangaraa and Shephard, 2013).

Consequently the slow approach offers some alternative ways of addressing issues of fashion design and sustainability at a relatively local level by activating the potential for personal connection to garments to increase their longevity. It offers collaborations that challenge existing hierarchies of "designer," "producer," and "consumer," and provides agency especially to women. Slow fashion engages with the reuse of materials in ways that question the notion of fashion being concerned exclusively with the "new." By focusing on the materiality of fashion it questions the primacy of image, defining "fashion" with making, clothes and identities, rather than only with looking (Clark 2008). Individual personalisation has in many ways been

evident in the adjusting and changing of the size and shape of clothes, for example children's clothes handed down through families and adapting worn-out clothes: personalisation through transforming as distinct from repairing. These qualities demonstrate the micro-specialised competences previously proposed in S-DL.

The implications for slow fashion design firstly concern co-design methods that encourage empathy in designers with an aim to improve a person's experience of the object to be designed. The main way to implement this approach is by engaging all stakeholders in the process, and creating a space of participatory culture. With co-design, generative techniques are employed to use the creativity of the participants in order to enable them to be aware of their own experiences, and to express them in a creative and supportive environment (Bush 2014). A range of shared tools emerges that people can use to communicate with designers, and with it a language through which they can imagine and express their ideas and dreams for future experience (Sanders and Stappers 2012). These lead to design proposals that can serve as starting points for designers and/or design teams. Consequently, the role of the designer moves from translator to facilitator, in which the designer offers appropriate tools and expert knowledge to the participants in the co-design process (Bush 2014).

Second, this participative approach references a fundamental principle of service design: to find a balance between what designers should try to fix and what is to be left free (Meroni and Sangiorgi 2011). These may be seen and evaluated differently in each project and the design culture of its proponents, in which the human component of service is seen as a value to cultivate. The role of the designer in this context is as an actor able to listen to users and facilitate the discussion about what to do. Usually the user is seen as an individual, aware and informed, active in proposing but passive in action. By contrast communitarian or individual service encounters, and the user as a bringer of capability typify this approach.

A final insight into slow fashion design draws on design for experience, considering not the only the aesthetics of things but the aesthetics of personal experiences. User needs include the emotional, spiritual, social, aspirational, and cultural aspects of their relationship with products. This approach sees design as a process, and this too requires designing more closely with people as active partners, as 'direct contact brings empathy with users to design teams and positively influences the quality of the product concepts they produce' (Sleewijk et al. 2011, cited in Bush 2014).

**Conclusion**

This chapter has assessed the dimensions of the personalisation of fashion design, moving from personalisation by 'one', the designer, to personalisation by 'many' the engagement of the community with slow fashion. It can be argued that personalisation of fashion lies in the hands of the designer and indeed this is true in part, fashion design reflects the designer's personality and individual style and interests. However as the definitions of fashion and in particular fashion systems demonstrate, personalisation extends beyond the boundaries of the designer and into a broader system of intermediaries and consumers. The growth of consumption and the increasing significance of the consumer in the producer-consumer relationship from the 1980s are reflected in changes towards individuality and individualisation. From different theoretical perspectives, this development is a central component of

postmodernism but also micromarketing: a focus on the individual and the means to individualise.

The response to individualism is seen in the use of different terms that define design ownership and agency and their application in fashion design. However these are used with a lack of precision that in many ways is a cause and outcome of a diversity of discourses. Customisation and more specifically, mass-customisation tends to reflect a producer-led approach to distinctive products. A standard product or garment is customised to the consumer's requirement. Colloquially, personalisation covers some of the same ground but literally can be taken to personalise a garment or accessory and tends to be used by luxury brands and designer labels. Clearly the application of a monogram to a standardised product could also be described as customisation. However the designer's attention to craftsmanship and small-scale production, the brand and the environment in which it is experienced, is a further contributory factor to personalisation. Bespoke both refines the individualisation but also introduces a stronger element of co-creation.

The implications for designers of collaborating with users are evident in the different platforms for co-creation and co-design. The designer-led world of luxury fashion is distinguished from that of the fast fashion of mass consumption and the slow fashion movement of engagement with communities of users. Each of these presents a different perspective on design and the participation between designer, intermediaries such as retailers and customers. While fast fashion appears to offer the least opportunities for personalisation, it offers considerable opportunity for consumer-led individualisation seen most distinctively in street fashion. More knowledgeable, technologically enabled and skilful consumers combine with brands and producers to individualise fashion both online and in store. Consequently, the personalisation of fashion will be increasingly nuanced as it expands through the dimensions of time and location, the individual and organisation.

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