

Identity, production, consumption: A peek into the wardrobe of women

By
Christy Paula Fiander

A Thesis Submitted to
Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts
(with Honours in Sociology)

April, 2014, Halifax, Nova Scotia

Copyright Christy Fiander, 2014.

Approved: _____
Dr. Darryl Leroux
Faculty Supervisor

Date: _____

Identity, production, consumption: A peek into the wardrobe of women

By Christy Paula Fiander

Abstract:

Neoliberal modes of production and consumption are changing the way women use, reflect on, and live with their clothing. The fashion industry is over a trillion dollar a year business that has countless behind-the-scenes flaws that many of us are generally unaware of, exploitation of workers and stylistic obsolescence are among the few to mention. This study explores women's voices in Nova Scotia to understand their thoughts and feelings around the clothing they wear through open-ended interviews and the use of clothing diaries. By analyzing women's opinions and awareness of the effects of the neoliberal reconstructing of the North American clothing industry findings suggests that women are constantly pressured to update their clothing to remain current and avoid feeling alienated.

Keywords: fashion; identity; production; consumption; neoliberal

April, 2014

Acknowledgements

Much of my gratitude is indebted to the women who participated in my research. They all took the time out of their busy schedules to reveal to me the clothing they wear each day, sharing their stories and revealing their ideas about fashion.

One person who assisted me through every step of this journey is Dr. Darryl Leroux. I would like to sincerely thank him for his tremendous support and guidance throughout this process. He is a devoted and passionate teacher and supervisor, who is constantly putting his students first.

My family and friends have also played an essential role in the completion of my BA. Their words of encouragement motivated me especially on days when things seemed utterly impossible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
 PART 1	
Christy in Real Life	1
THEORY	3
Literature Review	3
<i>Overview</i>	3
<i>Historically</i>	5
<i>Social Identification</i>	7
<i>Modes of Production</i>	8
<i>Consumer society</i>	9
Problem Statement	11
METHODS	12
Methodology	12
<i>Research Objectives</i>	12
<i>Responsibility towards participants</i>	13
<i>Methodological approach</i>	13
Specific methods	14
<i>Data Source</i>	14
<i>Interviews</i>	15
<i>Clothing diary</i>	15
Chapter Summaries	17
 PART 2	
Participants	18
<i>Participant #1: “Claire”</i>	20
<i>Participant #2: “Mia”</i>	21
<i>Participant #3: “Bailey”</i>	22
<i>Participant #4: “Lucy”</i>	23
<i>Participant #5: “Amy”</i>	23
<i>Participant #6: “Sophia”</i>	24
<i>Participant #7: “Emily”</i>	25

CHAPTER ONE**“OH THESE PEOPLE, THEY’RE STARVING, THEY’RE IN POVERTY ... THEY MAKE YOUR CLOTHING”: CLOTHING PRODUCTION**

Analysis of Clothing Diary	28
Made in Canada	32
Quality of Clothing	34

CHAPTER TWO**“I ONLY WORE IT ONCE”: REFLECTIONS ON CONSUMPTION**

Impulse Purchases	37
Clothing Disposability	38
“My red friend”: Credit Cards	39
Clothing Disposal	41

CHAPTER THREE**“I HAVE NOTHING TO WEAR, LIKE THERE’S JUST NOTHING TO WEAR”: IDENTITY IN NEO-LIBERAL ERA**

Web 2.0 & Social Media	44
Social Belonging	47

CONCLUSION	49
-------------------------	----

APPENDICES

1. Pinterest Page	54
2. Participant Consent Form	55
3. Research Ethics Board Approval	58

PART 1

Christy in Real Life

I will begin this study by explaining how I came about selecting my thesis topic. I first began researching topics for my thesis project back in July after I became concerned by an article in the newspaper about the recent rise in teen pregnancy rates in the Maritime Provinces. Upon doing further research on this topic – reading sociological studies and finding additional statistical results – my writing came to a sudden halt. Although I find the teen pregnancy issue alarming and important, it is not something I feel totally passionate about. After spending several late nights researching potential topics I changed my thesis subject to something that I find much more intriguing, something that I think is overlooked in our society – the sociology of fashion. By this I mean an understanding of changes in social structure and interaction in the fashion industry on an individual, social, and global level. I agree with Tansy E. Hoskins (2014) definition of fashion as: “changing styles of dress and appearance adopted by groups of people” (p. 4).

For as long as I can remember I have enjoyed thinking and reading about the latest fashions and selecting my clothing. I love all kinds of clothing styles and fashions, and I truly enjoy piecing together outfits and observing what others piece together as well. I am an exceptionally detail oriented person, so I always notice the things that people wear. I think it is magnificent that in our contemporary society there are so many beautiful and brilliant clothing items available for people to choose from that never existed decades ago. I also think it is fascinating that people create identities with their clothing that can help strengthen a positive social positioning. Besides my detailed eye and love for fashion, I became attentive to the lack of quality and price differentiation in

fashion staples made in our current globalized society. I also became curious about why and how we as consumers fall for the system of signs and codes of fashion. It seems obvious that people need clothes, nonetheless, we do not actually “need” to buy clothing every season and I for one can say that I do not particularly need all of the clothes overflowing my wardrobe. To address these curiosities, I decided to undertake qualitative research that specifically examines women’s thoughts, feelings, and experiences with the clothing they consume and wear on a daily basis.

The world of fashion and clothing is complex. Globally, fashion is a \$1.5 trillion dollar industry (Hoskins, 2014), despite this there are many people oppressed by the fashion system. Fashion is not simply about responding to human needs, but producing corporate profit. Sweatshops in the global economy are unfortunately significant to the world of fashion. In developing countries, poverty-stricken, demoralized, and oppressed sweatshop workers produce the majority of clothing we wear each day in Canada. I use the term “sweatshop” to describe extremely exploitative, and typically unsafe workplaces where clothes are made. Sweatshop workers make an extremely small living wage and often risk their lives due to the conditions of their workplaces, but we may even pay premium price for some of the same clothing items. In addition, industrial production negatively impacts the ecological order, adding toxic pollution to workers’ everyday experiences. Yet, here in Canada we are mostly unaware of the conditions of clothing production. Instead, due to a variety of social pressures, women are compelled to sustain optimal attractive bodies and up-to-the-minute style. In this sense, fashion can be both oppressive and liberating, and is thus inherently contradictory.

To be clear, the purpose of my research is to study the life of clothing by examining how women use, reflect on, and live with their clothes. In the literature, there is a general lack of ethnographic research examining women's experiences with emerging neoliberal modes of production and consumption. Thus, the data collected focuses on the ways women identify with clothing, the effects of neoliberal reconstructing in the global clothing industry, and the ethically and politically contested meanings behind consumption. In order to do so, I address the following research question:

How do identity, production, and consumption influence how women use, reflect on, and live with their clothing?

Now that I have explained a little bit about myself and about this project, in the following section I discuss the theoretical framework for the study by providing the literature review and problem statement.

THEORY

Literature Review

Overview

Much of the scholarship on fashion and clothing enunciates issues around three broad analytical categories – social identification, modes of production, and consumer society. My major framework for this project is formed around these three analytical categories. Each of these three categories link together and offer an understanding of the functions of clothing in society, as I explain below. First, many scholars who focus on social identification argue that women construct themselves through their clothing on a daily

basis, and that clothing is used to reinforce or portray a positive self image (Guy & Banim, 2000; Tiggemann & Lacey, 2009). In particular, clothing enhances body image, self-identity, and social positioning (Venkatesh et al., 2010). Second, changes in modes of production are inextricably linked to corporate strategies such as planning for clothing to have physical and stylistic obsolescence to lure people into buying more (Birtwistle & Moore, 2007; Niinimäki & Hassi, 2011; Cox et al., 2013), cutting costs by using cheap sources of labour and resources, and liberalizing consumer credit. Quality gets cut from the production line and clothing is made not to last. Furthermore, the fashion industry is particularly monopolized, with the majority of brands owned by a few multinational corporations. “We live in a global society where malnutrition causes a third of all child deaths, yet world-wide, sales of luxury goods stand at approximately \$150 billion, 60 per cent of this \$150 billion goes to just 35 brands, most which are owned by just a few conglomerates” (Hoskins, 2014, p. 8).

Third, literature on consumer society focuses on how power inconspicuously operates in and through consumer behaviour. Clothing is seen as a free choice that leads to fun and freedom. However, women are constantly marketed to and told to buy things, this makes fashion as an economic necessity that people must consume to remain current. Low quality of clothing that is produced in today’s society (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2011; Ritch & Schröder, 2012; Joung & Park-Poaps, 2013) is also examined in literature on consumption. Through this literature review I provide a broad overview of the history of clothing; explore how people socially identify with clothing; explain the effects of the change in the economy relating to a modified form of liberalism tending to favour free-market capitalism; and examine neoliberal modes of production and consumption.

Historically

Historically, clothing was used to identify people as belonging to a particular class. According to Patrik Aspers and Frédéric Godart (2013), in premodern society stylish clothes were made locally, but could only be afforded and worn by members of the upper class while the working class wore the bare minimum. In fact, often their clothing looked similar to rags. Moreover, Laura Bovone (2006) states that two types of clothing were worn in premodern society: noble and peasant clothing. The factory production of materials like cotton was first introduced in the Industrial Revolution; factories were unsanitary, unsafe, and small, and had radically low wages and high accident/death rates (Hoskins, 2014). Factories in the Industrial Revolution fabricated bourgeois clothing, which was made for members of the upper classes and uniforms for those in the working classes. Most people in the 19th and the first half of the 20th century dressed as farmers or workers (Bovone, 2006). Until recently, most people handed down clothes from generation to generation, showing their class status by wearing clothing that befit their station in life.

To help the economy and war effort, utility clothing was produced from 1941-1952 by the Neville Chamberlain British government. Raw materials needed to be conserved, production needed to become more efficient, and clothing prices needed to remain low so people could afford fair quality clothing (Hoskins, 2014). Material use was limited by enforcing restrictions on skirt, pant, and sleeve lengths. The government became the sole importer of nearly 90 per cent of all raw materials, including wool, and supplied it to manufacturers. The working class was well dressed and “for the first time in history fashion (such as it was) derived from the proletariat, not the privileged” (Black &

Madge as cited in Hoskins, 2014, p. 18). By the 1950s, Britain's Apparel & Fashion Industry Association (AFIA) oversaw changes to the fashion industry and introduced the ability to mass-produce fashion for men and women through strategic, systematic, and mechanized mass production operating at maximum speed and using minimum labour (Hoskins, 2014). If women had the money to shop, the possibilities would be infinite. A large amount of women were working and middle-class people had disposable income. All this transformed the clothing industry, as now money could be made by selling clothing to people other than those in the upper class.

With the advent of neoliberal restructuring in the North American clothing industry within the last three or four decades, several corporate strategies have impacted the way clothing is produced and consumed. Neoliberal restructuring marks a fundamental shift in one's relationship with clothing; we are constantly being told to buy more things that we do not actually need. Currently, most consumers in the Western world believe that they have freedom to individually choose the things they want to buy. Some scholars explain this as a form of "consumer sovereignty" whereby consumers believe they can ultimately control the structure and direction of economic life by expressing their self-defined needs and wants (Soron, 2011). However, this approach mostly benefits powerful corporations who grow from their increased power to comprehend and serve consumer desire. Some consumers may have the freedom to choose the products they buy, but they do not have much freedom in other domains of their social lives such as in their workplace or in other institutions (Soron, 2011). People are drawn into consumer culture because it has become so normal in our everyday lives. Some of the main strategies that companies use to persuade consumers into buying more

clothing are liberalizing consumer credit, planning for products to have fast physical and stylistic obsolescence, and cutting costs by using cheap sources of labour and resources (Soron, 2011). I will explain each of these strategies in the following sections. Now let us turn to an examination of the three analytical themes that I have identified within the literature.

Social Identification

Clothing is used to classify people – the selection of clothing represents an important appearance-management behaviour for people in Western societies.

Classification is fundamental to human meaning-making processes (Jenkins 2000).

Without the ability to classify different orders, we would be severely limited in our knowledge about the world around us. In order to classify, we must identify difference and sameness according to available sets of cultural and social values and knowledge. Jenkins (2000) argues that social identification occurs through self-image and public image. Through similarity and difference we identify ourselves, identify others, and others identify themselves. This is a dialectical process of identification that relies primarily on categorization. According to Herbert Blumer (1969), upper classes try to make their status visible by wearing distinctive fashions. Members of lower classes then start wearing these fashions as a way of feeding their need to claim a higher status. Upper classes lose their separate marks of identity, so they start wearing something new, and this cycle repeats. This cycle is similar to Thorstein Veblen's (1934) analysis of "conspicuous consumption". Conspicuous consumption occurs when consumers buy rare, expensive, and often-pointless products to present their wealth and economic power to

society, particularly to those who are less wealthy. Commodities can act as signs of status and help symbolically outline the relative social positions of people who own and use them (Soron, 2011). Although people from all classes largely struggle to establish some level of conspicuous consumption to escape feelings of incompetence, it is typically people in the upper classes who are in the best position to do so, due to their wealth.

Modes of Production

During the last three or four decades there has been a change in the economy relating to a modified form of liberalism tending to favour free-market capitalism. Manufacturing work in the West, for instance, has moved to offshore countries to exploit low wages, lack of labour standards, and lack of quality control. Canadian companies produce and then import clothing from countries where workers endure terrible working conditions and salaries. According to Danielle Goldfarb (2013), “Canada’s clothing imports from Bangladesh were \$330 million in 2003 and soared to \$1.1 billion by 2012. Similarly, Canada imported \$83 million in clothing from Cambodia in 2003, and over half a billion by 2012” (p.1). In 2013 the deadliest accident in the history of the garment industry occurred at Rana Plaza in Bangladesh when a garment factory collapsed. Thousands of workers fell through the floors and were crushed by collapsing pillars and machinery, killing 1,133 people and injuring another 2,500 (Hoskins, 2013). Workers feared for their lives as the cracks in the building concrete grew larger each day, but if they did not work their wages were cut. Workers lost their lives selling their labour to the tremendously rich business owner. This is just one example of many tragedies that have occurred in garment factories. Another neoliberal strategy is planned stylistic obsolescence. According to

many scholars, this occurs when producers of clothing intend to make current fashions obsolete by introducing new styles that violate existing fashion norms (Birtwistle & Moore, 2007; Niinimäki & Hassi, 2011; Cox et al., 2013). Planned stylistic obsolescence causes consumers to own increasing amounts of short-lived clothing that are purchased without deep thought, and worn only a few times before being replaced. Bovone (2006) notes that “modern society is based on industrial production and innovation, and change for the sake of change still appears to drive consumption, even for those who already have everything” (p. 375). Now, I will move into my section on consumer society.

Consumer society

Consumers have become worshippers to what George Ritzer (2005) calls “cathedrals of consumption”. Ritzer argues that shopping mall settings have successfully developed “magical”, and “enchanted” surroundings for people to develop the full degree of their consumer desires. These cathedrals have privatized one’s pleasure experiences by creating illusory spaces that exploit consumer’s desires. According to Soron (2011), “consumer behaviour is socially embedded, institutionally organized, and enmeshed in complicated ways with prevailing structures and relations of power” (p. 204). In other words, power inconspicuously operates in and through consumer behaviour.

Governments encourage consumers to keep spending to help keep the country from going into some form of “crisis”. For instance, in 2008 Prime Minister Stephen Harper advised Canadian consumers not to “panic” because of tightening credit and rising unemployment, and to firmly “keep spending” so that Canada could continue to be protected from the outcomes of a global economic down turn (MacCharles, 2008; CTV,

2008). As a result of these messages, much of our Western society is based on a throwaway mindset. The low quality of clothing that is produced in today's society is recognized as a consumer concern in several studies (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2011; Ritch & Schröder, 2012; Cox et al., 2013; Joung & Park-Poaps, 2013). Consumers stop wearing clothing for three main reasons: low quality, new fashion trend, or clothes are bought for a one time event (Birtwistle & Moore, 2007; Niinimäki & Hassi, 2011). Furthermore, some consumers feel guilty when disposing of expensive clothing (Birtwistle & Moore, 2007). However, people remain doubtful of the influence of a "fast fashion" society. Fast fashion is defined as "a retail style that consists of expedited production and distribution of short runs of trend-based fashion" (Hoskins, 2014, p. 70). Aggressive pricing tactics move an abundance of low quality clothing at low prices rather than a small amount of high quality clothing at high prices.

Liz Barnes and Gaynor Lea-Greenwood (2006) studied key informants working at different stages within the supply chain in the fashion industry. Their findings show that fast fashion is a consumer-driven process, created by the limitless requests for newness from consumers. This causes product development and quality control to become removed from the supply chain process in order to keep up with consumer demand. Moreover, Jayne Cox et al. (2013) found that consumers are constantly updating their products, they showed little concern for the environmental consequences of a throwaway society, and their products were thrown away before they were broken because they become obsolete and no longer in style. How can consumers be entirely responsible for a fast fashion society when they are bombarded with advertisements everyday, which lead them to an updating mindset. According to Annie Leonard (2010), "Global advertising

expenditures have grown more than nine times in the past sixty years, with over \$276 billion spent on ads in 2005 in the United States alone” (p. 164). In particular, through stealth marketing campaigns, companies secretly advertise products to consumers. As Victor Lebow (1955) said many decades ago:

Our enormously productive economy demands that we make consumption our way of life, that we convert the buying and use of goods into rituals, that we seek our spiritual satisfactions, our ego satisfactions, in consumption. We need things consumed, burned up, worn out, replaced, and discarded at an ever-increasing pace. (p.3)

Lelow implies that advertising in capitalist society has slowly accepted the important institutional purpose of upholding and increasing mass consumer demand by supplying goods with intense social and cultural meaning and understanding and by continually encouraging new needs and desires in the general population. Now I turn to a discussion of the problem statement I identified in the literature.

Problem Statement

Clothing products continue to be important in today’s consumer culture. As seen in the literature review, I have identified three broad analytical categories within the literature on clothing – social identification, modes of production, and consumer society. Each of these interrelated fields have significant issues within them that involve women and clothing in some way. Though in the literature, there is a lack of ethnographic research examining women’s experiences within the emerging neoliberal modes of production and consumption. The research is based primarily on ideas of representation (Guy & Banim, 2000; Venkatesh et al., 2010). Furthermore, many scholars study clothing qualitatively by conducting questionnaires (Tiggemann & Lacey, 2009; Bailey & Seock, 2010; Kim &

Hong, 2011; Lang et al., 2013; Joung & Park-Poaps, 2013). In order to get an enriched understanding of women's social world and the influences on it, I believe it is essential to conduct qualitative research.

Another gap that can be identified in the literature is the lack of new media and internet-based research. Women increasingly are using online media sources to express their ideas and opinions about clothing. Pinterest, for instance, is an emerging form of social media, which I analyze in chapter three. Being a member of Generation Y, I am quite familiar with emerging social media sources, such as Pinterest, Facebook, and Instagram. I particularly think that new media sources are fascinating because they allow people to share their ideas and inspirations globally, creating new ways to understand fashion and clothing. Furthermore, I believe that internet-based research has great potential to assist researchers in discovering additional information about identification and consumption. Now that I have discussed the theoretical framework of my research, in the following sections I discuss the specific methods I used.

METHODS

Methodology

Research Objectives

This study (a) explores women's voices in Nova Scotia to understand their thoughts and feelings around the clothing they wear through open-ended interviews; (b) investigates women's clothing selections over a two-week period through the use of clothing diaries; (c) uncovers the particular drivers that cause women to consume clothing; (d) reviews women's ideas of clothing through Web 2.0, specifically social media platforms (i.e.,

Pinterest, Facebook, and Instagram); and (e) analyzes women's opinions and awareness of the effects of the neoliberal reconstructing of the North American clothing industry.

Responsibility towards participants

I personally obtained consent from all the women participants through a consent form that contained all of the Research Ethics Board requirements (see Appendix 2). The women were told that if they had sensitivities to certain interview questions that they may skip them. Furthermore, participants were free to withdraw from the research study at any time without penalty. If participants choose to withdraw from the study they would be given a choice about how to use their data, if at all. To ensure the anonymity of participants I have changed their names. To guarantee the confidentiality of participants, my data was stored in a locked filing cabinet in Dr. Leroux's office on the Saint Mary's University campus, and in a password protected folder on my computer. The only other person that has access to my data is my supervisor. I stored consent forms and any other documents that identify participants in a separate folder than the documents that ensured confidentiality. All emails regarding the study were stored on a separate email account and this account will be deleted after the research is completed.

Methodological approach

This study employs primary qualitative research methods to examine how identity, production, and consumption influence how women use, reflect on, and live with their clothing. I believe that there is a gendered component to how women consume clothing. Women and men have many different expectations placed on them in today's society; the

media is one of the main influences that drive these expectations. Women are expected to look a particular way, they are constantly being told to update their self and wear the newest colours and trends of the season, while men can predominantly wear the clothing they already own and typically do not get judged. Women's bodies and appearance are exceedingly important to men, the media, and society; hence they tend to be on guard and looking their best. Therefore, the sample of my research includes women's voices exclusively. I have chosen to conduct qualitative research because I believe it will provide me with a rich understanding of how women use, reflect on, and live with their clothes. The research design that I use to support this strategy is cross-sectional. I conducted semi-structured interviews, which took place on the Saint Mary's University campus in McNally South room 421. Participants were asked a list of open and closed-ended questions. The interviews were tape-recorded and later transcribed by me. On average the interviews lasted between 25-30 minutes and they occurred between February and March 2014. The first interview that I conducted lasted twelve minutes, so I did a follow-up interview with this interviewee. In the following section I detail the methods laid out above.

Specific methods

Data Source

The women in the sample were required to be at least 17 years of age. I had a pre-existing relationship with the first few participants in my study, then by using the snowball technique they assisted me in identifying other potential participants. I chose to use the snowballing technique to try and obtain a diverse sample. Once the women were

recruited, I set up a face-to-face meeting with them to answer any questions they may have. During this meeting I obtained consent and provided them with a clothing diary. At the end of the meeting I set up an appointment to conduct the interview.

Interviews

During the interviews I asked the women in my study numerous open-ended questions about: their personal style, the clothing they own and wear, their consumer habits, and their thoughts on the manufacturing process. The interviews were semi-structured to have all options open and go deeper into what the interviewee disclosed. Moreover, the questions were open-ended to avoid controlling questions and inaccurate answers.

Kathryn Roulston (2011) speaks on the issues that can arise when transcribing interviews. One of the issues that can occur when transcribing an interview is when the researcher must use their judgement to interpret what the interviewee is saying. With this in mind, I was conscious of understanding the data correctly so participants are not misrepresented in any way. When I completed transcribing an interview I would re-listen to it over again three times, re-read what I transcribed, to make sure the information was accurate.

Clothing diary

One piece of literature that stood out to me during my literature review is Alison Guy and Maura Banim's (2000) study on women's clothing use and identity. The methodological design of their research was to develop techniques that would allow participants to create a complete vision of how they used their clothing – one of their techniques was a “clothing diary.” Participants in the study were asked to keep a clothing diary over a two-

week period. In the diary they were asked to describe the clothes they selected and wore each day, and to jot down their thoughts and feelings about those clothes. I specifically favour the clothing diary technique because I think it is a unique approach for the researcher to qualitatively examine the clothing that women wear on a daily basis.

Similar to Guy and Banim's (2000) study, participants in my study were asked to keep a clothing diary over a two-week period. I provided the women with a journal labeled "Clothing Diary" where they were asked to describe the clothes selected and worn each day, and to note their thoughts and feelings about these clothes. Particularly, participants were asked to describe the style, colour(s), pattern(s), texture, quality, brand, location of manufacture, where they wore it. I predominantly wanted to know as much as I could about the piece of clothing. The clothing diaries were used to help guide the interviews. I instructed the participants to dress as they typically do on a daily basis. As a way to add an element of self-reflexivity, I also completed a clothing diary for a two-week period so I could relate with the women during the interview and understand any issues around the clothing diary. I was also curious to examine where my own clothing was manufactured. In the results, I do not include the clothing from my own diary because I did not want to make the research biased in any way. Once I collected the clothing diaries I recorded all of the data in a spreadsheet document, assigning each participant a colour. 330 clothing items in total were worn by all of the women over a two-week period, and 265 of the 330 clothing items were non-repeats. The document is composed of six sections: clothing item, description, material, place of manufacture, brand/store, and where it was worn. By making these categories in the document I was

able to sort the sections and make generalizations, which I examine in chapter one. I now move on to introduce the participants in my study.

Chapter Summaries

Now that I have provided an overview of the literature and a detailed analysis of my project, in part two I specifically describe the participants in my the study. In chapter one I explore the history of clothing production and the effects of neoliberal production, I analyze the clothing diaries, ideas surrounding clothing made in Canada, and the lack of quality in today's clothing caused by corporate strategies such as planned stylistic obsolescence. In chapter two I analyze reflections on consumption how power inconspicuously operates in and through consumer culture, promoting new types of wants and desires. I particularly examine impulse purchases, clothing disposability, and credit cards to understand neoliberal modes of consumption. Lastly, in chapter three I delve into identity in neo-liberal era by examining Web 2.0 and social media, and social belonging.

PART 2

Participants

Seven women participated in my study. They are all heterosexual and six are below the age of thirty. Claire is fifty and is therefore part of a different generational cohort than the other six women. Despite this, Claire has two daughters in the same generation as the other six women whom she gets a lot of ideas about style from. All of the women except for Claire are currently living in Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), but they are all not originally from HRM. Claire currently lives in a rural area outside of the city, but is originally from the HRM. As I specified in the literature review, fashion leadership is defined as a personal characteristic where specific people influence others in consumption behaviours with their own clothing choices (Kim & Hong, 2011). Lucy can be considered by definition the only “fashion leader” of the group since nearly all of the women (Claire, Mia, Bailey, Amy, and Sophia) said that someone else in their social group takes on that particular role. Chunmin Lang et al. (2013) found that the fashion leadership tendency is positively correlated with frequent clothing disposal, however, Lucy was not the most frequent one to dispose of her clothing of the group of women as I explain in chapter two.

All of the women had similar favourite clothing items. Emily explains about favourites: “I’m very much, I find with my style, I have favourites and only wear them all the time, over and over again”. All of the women identified black stretchy pants (leggings, jeggings [jean-leggings], or yoga pants) as a favourite clothing item. In the clothing diaries, black stretchy pants were worn and recorded seventy-seven times. The

women favour their black stretchy pants because they're snug, comfortable, and go with everything. Emily articulated in her clothing diary: "I wear my black jeggings a lot for work because they are comfortable, but appropriate. I also wear white or black tanks under the majority of my shirts and sweaters." Similarly, Mia, Sophia, and Emily identified tank tops as their favourite items. In the clothing diaries, a tank top was worn and recorded fifty-five times. In addition, participants were asked their opinion of clothing that is currently in style; something they're wearing, their friends are wearing, or that they see others wearing. Leggings and jeggings were identified as being in style by almost all of the women (Claire, Bailey, Amy, Lucy, & Sophie).

In the below sections I specifically discuss each participant, speaking specifically to the stores the women shop at. I grouped the stores mentioned in comparable categories and describe them here. The first category is "a little bit of everything" stores: Costco, Winners, and Joe Fresh. Clothing is among the many items that can be found in these stores and there is typically something for everyone. The price is typically reasonable to high in price. Note that when the participants speak of Joe Fresh they are shopping at the Super Store. The second category is "middle level" retailers: Ardene, Dynamite, Forever 21, Suzy Sheir, Smart Set, Bluenotes, Aéropostale, Sirens, Garage, and Eclipse. These stores generally market to young women and teenage girls, and the price is typically reasonable. The third category is "high level" retailers: Pseudio, Mark's Work Warehouse, Lululemon, Guess, and Le Chateau. The clothing sold in these stores is typically higher in price and commonly targets both younger and older women. Note that in all the stores mentioned, Ardene, Dynamite, Suzy Sheir, Smart Set, Sirens, Garage,

and Eclipse solely sell women's clothing. I now introduce the seven women and give a brief description of each.

Participant #1: "Claire"

Claire is a married stay-at-home mother who is about fifty years of age. She has three children: two daughters in their twenties, and a teenage son. She lives in a rural area outside of the HRM, and always tries to be on top of things. Socioeconomically she is upper/middle class, as her husband and her have been financially successful through the last several years. She receives most of her style ideas from her two daughters. As I explained above, Claire's daughters are part of the same generational cohort as the other six women in the study, I believe this may be why Claire had similar responses as the other women (as I explain in chapters to come). Claire loves all new styles and trends, and particularly enjoys trying a new piece of clothing. Claire finds in a lot of clothing is made exceptionally small, even a large or extra large is made small. However, she says she does not run into this problem in her favourite clothing stores.

Claire shops for clothing pretty much every week, and buys almost every time. One of Claire's favourite stores is Costco, because in her opinion it has a lot of reasonably-priced, high quality clothing: "The price is really good there, and what they have is what you get ... the quality is fabulous ... you don't have to worry about things falling apart 95% of the time." Additionally, Claire enjoys shopping at Winners because they bring in a lot of different items during the week and the prices are quite fair. Now and then she will browse through Mark's Work Warehouse. Claire says that she has always kept up with current fashion, except in her quite younger years when she did not

have much money; this is when she learned to spend wisely in order to purchase as much as she could. Two of Claire's favourite stores (Costco and Winners) are "a little bit of everything" stores, indicating that she likes to shop for other things while she is shopping for clothing. She was also the only one to mention Mark's Work Wearhouse, a "higher level" retailer, as a favourite store. Probably because this store generally tends to target people in her generation cohort. The three stores that Claire mentioned are all middle to high price range this reflects her upward mobile class position.

Participant #2: "Mia"

Mia is a twenty-two year old woman who works in the entertainment industry, and plans to go back to school within the next couple of years. Mia lives in the HRM in an apartment with her boyfriend and socioeconomically is middle class. She is originally from a rural area outside the HRM. Mia tries to keep up with current fashion and shops for clothing on average one to three times a month, and buys on average two out of three occasions. Unlike Claire who favours "a little bit of everything" stores, Mia's favourite stores to shop at are Forever 21, Ardene, Dynamite, and Pseudio. Mia explains: "Forever 21 and Dynamite, and even Pstudio, they all sell similar items, it just comes down to price really I would say". This suggests that Mia likes to shop at predominantly "middle level" retailers. Mia favours Forever 21 because, in her words,

It has a lot of random items that you find for a lot cheaper than you'd pay at a normal store, say Pseudio, or even Dynamite, or those other stores. Where it's so much cheaper, like your tank tops are \$1.80, where at Suzy Sheer you can buy tank tops for \$5-\$7. And Dynamite, I just like some of the things that they bring in.

Mia is “big on quality of the clothes” she buys and wears. She likes to buy clothing that will last her more than a few washes.

Participant #3: “Bailey”

Bailey is a twenty-two year old, fourth year university student completing her BA and is currently is unemployed. She currently lives in the HRM with five other roommates in an apartment flat. She is also from a rural area outside of the city, and socioeconomically is middle class. When she finishes her degree she plans to do more schooling and later become a school psychologist. Bailey usually notices people’s clothes, “I feel like if people wear really eccentric out there things I notice that a lot, but like, I usually notice people’s clothes, like if they’re nice clothes, or if I don’t think they’re nice clothes, or if they’re weird, things like that.” Similar to Mia, Bailey shops for clothing on average one to three times a month, and buys on average two out of the three times. Bailey will keep up with current fashion if she admires it:

It’s if I like it or not, if I like it then I will buy some things, um, but, it’s not like a big huge deal to me if I do, it’s nice to have, but if I don’t have it it’s not like I’m upset about it.

Bailey’s favourite stores to shop at are Winners and Smart Set. She also enjoys shopping at Lululemon when she has “the extra cash kickin’ around”. This suggests that Bailey likes to shop at all three categories of stores: Winners the “a little bit of everything” store, Smart Set the “middle level” retailer, and Lululemon the “high level” retailer.

Participant #4: “Lucy”

Lucy is a twenty-seven year old fourth year university student completing her BA and is currently unemployed. She lives in an apartment in the HRM with her fiancée and roommate, she is also from outside of the city, and socioeconomically is middle class.

Lucy can be considered by definition the only “fashion leader” of the group because she is one of the first members of her social group to learn about and/or wear a new fashion when it appears:

Yeah sometimes, and sometimes people will be like what are you wearing that for? and I’m just like ‘this is me! I like it!’ But people that question you, like a month later they’ll be wearing the same thing ... always the way.

Lucy tries to keep up with current fashion and buys things that she knows will carry on into the next season. She wants to look appropriate and classy, and loves sales.

Similar to Mia and Bailey, Lucy shops for clothing on average one to three times a month, and buys on average two out of the three times. One of Lucy’s favourite stores to shop at is Winners because she “can get five or ten new outfits, and it will be like \$100, and it’s a steal”. She additionally shops at Joe Fresh and occasionally at Wal-Mart. “I like sales, but it still looks nice, and people can’t really tell where you got it, like it doesn’t matter about name brands”. Lucy’s favourite stores suggest that she likes to shop predominantly at “a little bit of everything” stores.

Participant #5: “Amy”

Amy is a twenty-four year old fourth year university student completing her BA, and is currently unemployed. She lives with two roommates in the HRM, she is originally from outside of Canada, and socioeconomically is middle class. Similar to Bailey, Amy will

adopt current fashion if it looks alluring but if it does not, she will not bother. Amy describes her style as business/casual and she usually buys clothing maybe three times a year. Her favourite stores to shop at are: Bluenotes, Guess, Aéropostale, Le Chateau, and Sirens. Amy likes these stores because they have good prices and variety, and clothing that is in season. Amy's favourite stores to shop at suggest that she likes both "high level" and "middle level" retailers. Amy buys clothing mostly during the summer, and she typically shops online. Amy's style depends on what kind of moods she is in, as she explains: "It's a mixture, sometimes I'm in style, and sometimes I'm not. It goes with my mood. And what's comfy. And if I have time to go to the store, or watch television, to know what's in or what's not."

Participant #6: "Sophia"

Sophia is a twenty-two year old second year student university student completing her BA and is currently unemployed. She currently lives with her boyfriend in an apartment in the HRM, and socioeconomically is middle class. She also is from outside of the city. Sophia tries to keep up with current fashion, if she can then she will. Since Sophia is a student she finds it difficult to sometimes have the money to buy the latest new styles of the season, thus, if she has some extra money she will shop with it. Similar to Mia, currently Sophia's favourite store to shop at is Forever 21 because "it has all kinds of different styles, and everything that's in, and it's fairly good priced". Additionally, she enjoys Garage, "the prices are decent too, and their styles are always up to date. She doesn't mind Pseudio either because "it's pretty up-to-date". Sophie's favourite stores she mentioned suggest that she predominantly likes to shop at "middle level" retailers.

Similar to Amy, Sophia likes to shop online. Sophia browses online for clothing anywhere from one to four times a week, and she shops at malls or stores once every three weeks and buys almost every time. “Almost every time I go to the mall, I end up buying just something, at least something”.

Participant #7: “Emily”

Emily is a twenty-three year old university student who has a BA and is currently working on another degree. She currently lives in the HRM with her boyfriend, similar to the other women she is not originally from Halifax, and socioeconomically is middle class. She works part-time at two retail stores in the local shopping mall, and has previously worked at others retail-clothing stores. Emily has to wear all black for her job, but she prefers to wear blues, purples, neutrals, and bright spring or summer colours. She is not big on reds, or darker fall and winter colours because they do not look good on her. Emily identifies herself as “mainstream,” she buys whatever is currently in stores and is not eccentric with her style. Since Emily has started working in the mall she browses for clothing a couple times a week, but on average buys once or twice a month. Similar to Claire, Emily sometimes has difficulties with sizing of clothing. “I find sometimes to sizing can be so weird! Like you’ll try a medium on in one shirt and a large in another, or like a small, and they’ll be completely different so you have to try stuff on.” Some of her favourite stores to shop at include Eclipse, Ardene, Costco, and Pseudio, but she is not absolutely specific and enjoys shopping wherever she can find the best deal. Similar to Bailey, Emily’s favourite stores suggest she likes to shop at all three categories of stores. Like Sophia, Emily articulated her frustration with being a student and keeping up with

current fashion, “It’s like ‘oh I really want to buy that right now,’ even simple things, like I find with school it’s just brutal”.

CHAPTER ONE

“OH THESE PEOPLE, THEY’RE STARVING, THEY’RE IN POVERTY ... THEY MAKE YOUR CLOTHING”: CLOTHING PRODUCTION

Before clothing was mass-produced in factories, ordinary people produced it, and there was much less of it. In this chapter I analyze how production influences how women use, reflect on, and live with their clothing. As discussed in the literature review, there has been a change in the economy within the last three or four decades during which neoliberal modes of production and consumption have emerged. Neoliberal modes of production produce sweatshops, child labour, environmental devastation, and alienation. Companies can set up factories in places free from environmental and labour regulations, and by using cheap sources of labour and resources. One example of neoliberal production occurring in our current society can be examined through the Free Trade Agreement that Canada and the United States has with Jordan. Clothing made in Jordan can enter Canada and the United States duty-free. One major clothing supplier in Jordan is a company called “Classic Fashion,” which supplies five major brands – Hanes, Kohl’s, Macy’s, Target, and Walmart. In 2011 the Institute for Global Labour and Human Rights published its investigation into Classic Fashion. In the investigation they found that the all-female workforce had experienced beatings, forced labour, and systematic sexual abuse and rape (Hoskins, 2014). Since the report was published conditions have yet to improve at Classic Fashion, and within the last two years at least twenty-five women have disappeared and their fellow workers report that they believe these women were raped and killed (Hoskins, 2014). Unfortunately this is just one of

many examples of the horrific conditions that sweatshops depend on. Hoskins (2014) articulates:

Under this system, people are forced to sell their labour without any control over what they produce or how they produce it. Few people ever have the chance even to imagine their full potential, let alone reach it, because they too are turned into commodities. Rather than being an end in themselves, people become means for someone else's profit. (p. 64)

According to Liesbeth Sluiter (2009), in 2002 China produced over 20 billion pieces of clothing, which is approximately four for every person in the world. It is commonly understood that consumers in Canada and the U.S. are largely disconnected from the clothing manufacturing process. Participants in my study were no different. Consumers have become completely removed from the production of clothing. We no longer "see" or even think about where our clothing comes from, it just appears in stores without acknowledging the forms of exploitation behind production. In the remainder of this chapter I examine the clothing diaries, clothing that is manufactured in Canada, and quality of clothing.

Analysis of clothing diary

As I discussed previously, participants in my study were asked to keep a clothing diary over a two-week period. They were asked to describe the clothes selected and worn each day, and to note their thoughts and feelings about these clothes. Particularly, participants were asked to describe the style, colour(s), pattern(s), texture, quality, brand, location of manufacture, where they wore it. As I have mentioned, I also completed a clothing diary, however my data is not included in the following results. The clothing diary worked well because it helped the women think more where their clothing was being made. As a

result, during the interviews they had much to say about their daily clothing choices. For example, Sophie explains: “This [clothing diary] really made me more aware. I thought about it a lot more, so now I’ll probably be more aware when I buy clothes, I’ll probably look at it [tag]”. As I elucidated previously, 330 clothing items in total were worn by all of the women over a two-week period, and 265 of the 330 clothing items were non-repeats. Of the 265 non-repeated clothing items, 18 of the items were recorded without a place of manufacture. Of the 247 non-repeated clothing items with a place of manufacture recorded, China was the most common country of origin with 134 items made there (see figure 1).

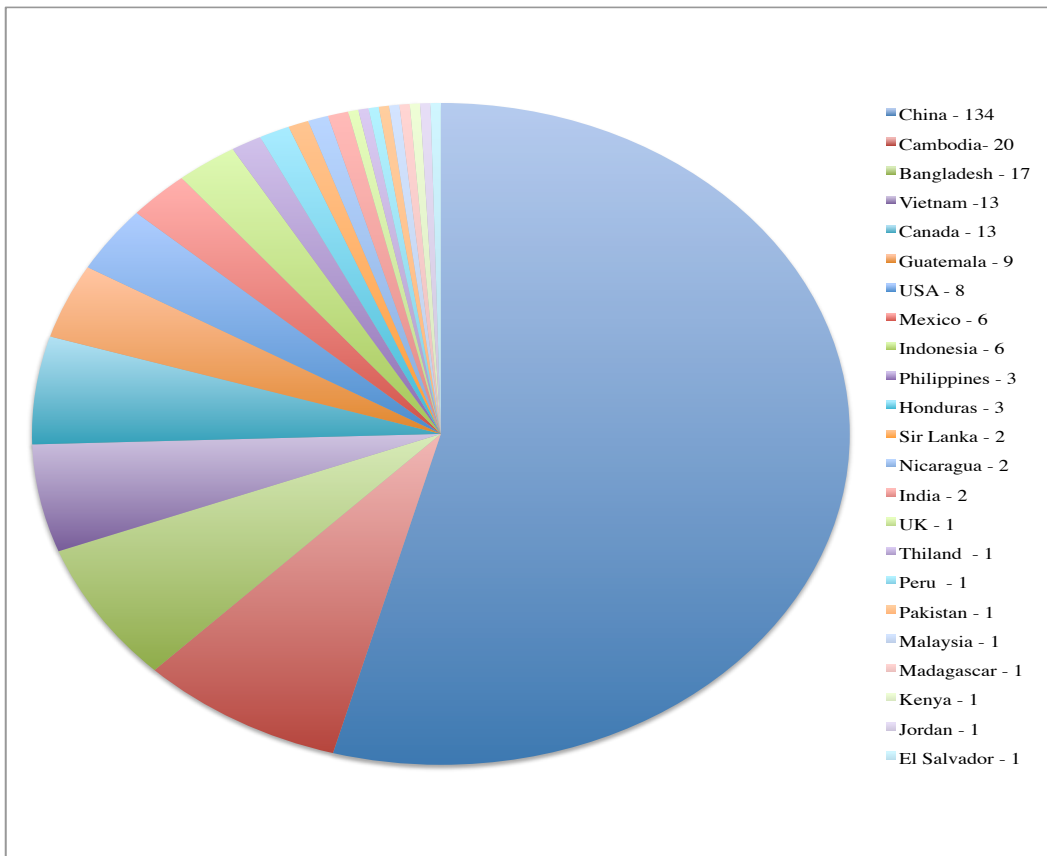


Figure 1

For the most part, the majority of Canadians wore clothing produced in Canada up until the 1960s. Diana Wyman (2006) examines trade liberalization and the Canadian clothing market and discusses three shifts within Canadian clothing imports. The first major shift transpired in 1989 when Canada and the United States established the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement (FTA). This created a flow of Canadian clothing exports to the United States and an increase in imports from American companies. As recently as 1998 the United States was Canada's main foreign supplier of clothing. From 1995 to 2002 the WTO Agreement on Textiles and Clothing lifted quotas on certain products for all World Trade Organization (WTO) member countries. The second shift arose in 2003 when Canada gradually gave an advantage to underdeveloped countries by allowing them free access to the Canadian market, whereas other countries still faced quotas and double-digit charges. Consequently, Canada's imports from Bangladesh tripled between 2002 and 2005 and they are now second place behind China. The final shift occurred in December 2001 when China became a WTO member. The astounding development of clothing imports from China in the final years of the agreement from 2002 to 2005 resulted in many clothing industries (i.e., Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, United States) that were thriving before 2002, to be pushed out by China. According to Wyman, "This is reflected in Canada's overall clothing import increasing only 7% in 2005, while imports from China jumped 47%. A select few, such as India, Mexico, and Bangladesh, managed to hold onto their increased share of the Canadian market for imports." In 2005 China was Canada's top source of clothing imports at \$3.0 billion (Wyman, 2006), imports have since increased, practically doubling as can be seen in the latest statistic available in the month of February 2014 Canada imported over \$468 million dollars

worth of clothing from China (Statistics Canada, 2014).

All women specified that before completing their clothing diary, they had never investigated the production whereabouts of their clothing. Lucy explains: “Honestly no, I just might have learned it in school or something that usually its in China and that’s probably where I had the stereotypical mind of ‘China’, but you know no, I didn’t really know”. Yet, all of the women had looked at the tags on their clothing to see the size and/or for instructions on how to care for the item (i.e., washing, drying). During the interviews, all of the women mentioned China as the predominant place where most of their clothing was made. This is consistent with the results of the clothing diary. Before completing the clothing diary, almost all the women (Mia, Bailey, Lucy, Amy, Sophie, and Emily) said they assumed their clothing was made in China. Claire, the married stay-at-home mother who is about fifty years of age, assumed clothing was made in Canada, the USA, and a little in Mexico. Claire explains: “I thought a bit was done in China but never would have thought most of the items I bought would have been from there”. Claire may be uninformed of where her clothing is being made because of the generational gap that exists. This suggests that education may play a role in one’s view of where their clothing is manufactured.

Almost all of the women (Claire, Mia, Bailey, Sophie, Lucy, & Emily) said they never thought about where their clothing was being made and were not concerned until they completed the clothing diary. While Amy, the twenty-four year old university student is not concerned about where her clothing is being made. Of the women who are concerned about where their clothing is manufactured, they are most troubled about:

unequal wages, poverty, malnourishment, and exploitation of workers. Lucy the twenty-seven-year-old fourth-year university student explains:

It makes me think because we can get it really cheap here, but if it is made in foreign countries where they're living in poverty that's not really fair to them because like sweat-shops, and they work like twenty hour days and they get paid like a penny an hour or something, so it's not really worth it. To us it may seem like a steal because its cheaper but if you think about it it's like do you buy your food at the local Sobeys or Wal-Mart, or do you go to the Farmer's Market to support your local businesses.

Similarly, Sophie the twenty-two-year old second-year university student explains:

And you know, these brands, that are like a big thing, like Forever 21 or Lululemon, they get it made in China, but we pay a lot of money sometimes for it so really how much is that going towards the workers? We don't know, so it is a concern for sure

Emily, Bailey, and Sophie explained that they try not to think about where their clothing comes from because it makes her feel bad. Emily, the twenty-three-year old university student who has a BA and is currently working on another degree, explains:

So yea I mean that does bother me, but I think it's kind of, it's one of those of mine where like you think about it occasionally, and then you just kind of like put it in the back of your mind because you feel so terrible, so I think that's mostly it.

Sophie said she will probably be more aware when she buys clothes and will look at the tags to investigate where her clothing is manufactured. In the following section I explain the women's thoughts surrounding clothing made in Canada.

Made in Canada

Of the 247 non-repeated clothing items with a place of manufacture recorded, there were 13 different items made in Canada (recorded by five different women). I was surprised to

see that thirteen clothing items were made in Canada because when I completed my own clothing diary, I had just one item that was made in Canada. I asked the women their thoughts about clothing made in Canada. All of the women interviewed think there are fair working conditions for garment workers in Canada. Amy and Lucy, the fourth year university students thought workers would be treated more fairly, and there would be a minimum standard wage. Amy explains: “The factory would still have the format of it, like the lines, the whole factory lines...but they have air-conditioning I’m assuming, maybe health care”. As I explain below, the women have ideological thoughts about clothing made in Canada, however very few of them knew of any specific clothing companies in Canada.

Almost all of the women said they would buy clothing in Canada even though the price may be costlier (Claire, Mia, Bailey, Lucy, Sophia, and Emily). For Amy, it doesn’t matter if her clothing is made in Canada, what matters most is if it looks good on her. Similarly, Bailey the twenty-two year old fourth year university student would not specifically go out of her way to buy clothing made in Canada, if she particularly adored how the clothing looked then she would buy it. Bailey explains: “It’s not like I would start buying all my clothes from Canada because it’s kinda impossible because most clothes aren’t made in Canada”. For the women who disagreed, there were various reasons given as to why the women would be willing to buy clothing made in Canada even through the price may. Claire and Emily both mentioned that they would buy Clothing made in Canada because it creates jobs and companies do not outsource, Claire also said that sewing is a skill that is not very difficult. Mia and Bailey the twenty-two-year old women said they would buy clothing made in Canada because the quality would

be better and it would make them feel better knowing their clothing is not produced by children or in bad working conditions. Lucy, the fashion leader of the group, explains that she will be living a comfortable lifestyle when she finishes her masters degree and this will help her buy more Canadian produced clothing. Lucy: "I would rather pay for more expensive clothing knowing it's made here, rather than the negative concept that comes along with 'oh these people, they're starving, they're in poverty...they make your clothing', it's not fair." Sophie and Emily expressed that they find it hard as a student to buy clothing made in Canada because the prices are usually expensive so they can only buy a limited amount of it. Sophie explains:

It's a lot more money and it is hard for me as a student and I probably wouldn't be able to buy a whole lot of it, but yes, I would still have to unfortunately purchase clothes that are not as expensive and probably from China.

Although all of the women have these ideological ideas surrounding clothing manufactured in Canada, they had all previously stated that they never looked at the tags of their clothing to see where it was made and only Emily specifically knew of a Canadian clothing company. The market is essentially not there for women to buy clothing that is made in Canada, and if it were more women would buy it. However maybe there is no market because there simply is not demand.

Quality of Clothing

In the literature on consumption, there are many scholars who examine the low quality of clothing that is produced in today's society (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2011; Ritch & Schröder, 2012; Joung & Park-Poaps, 2013). The fashion industry is largely encouraged by the domination of exchange value over use-value, therefore the industry produces

clothing of poor quality because it does not matter if it fulfills a need or lasts a long period of time, all that matters is if a profit is made. As Hoskins (2014) explains:

Fashion is a deregulated, subcontracted, trend-based industry that relies on selling billions of short-life units every season at a maximum profit. Brands sell clothes not of the highest quality, ensuring that they can make them cheaply, that they will wear out and consumers will be forced to buy new ones. (p.70)

I specifically asked the women to explain the characteristics of clothing that does not last long. Claire, Mia, Bailey, and Lucy all specifically spoke about clothing made of thin material not lasting a long period of time. In my opinion, clothing is increasingly being made thin for two reasons. The first is so the item will rip and tear easier; the second is so the buyer will have to purchase another item to wear underneath it (such as a tank top). In a lot of public areas (professional settings, schools, etc.) wearing a thin, see-through shirt is prohibited. This seems adequate because the company gets to use less material and consumers are going to buy more.

Besides thin material, there were several additional explanations given as to why clothing does not last long. Mia, the twenty-two year old woman who works in the entertainment industry, spoke about poor quality of dress pants. Mia explains: "I find, I wear dress pants for work a lot and I find the dress pants don't last ... like none of them last". Lucy, Sophie and Emily all spoke about tank tops and Lululemon pants getting pills and holes. Mia and Bailey specifically spoke about seams twisting and coming apart in the washer. Nevertheless, all of the women said their clothing does not rip or stretch to often. The problem that all women seemed to face the most with the quality of their clothing is that it tends to shrink. The women specifically discussed that clothing that goes in the dryer shrinks, misshapes, or "shrivels up". Furthermore, fading was a

common issue that the women faced with their clothing. Mia explains: “I buy a lot of dark coloured jeans and dark coloured pants, and I find they fade quite a bit actually, or like the dye will rub off on your skin, your legs, or your hands”. Similarly Claire explains: “I find dark clothes, if you put them in the washer sometimes you see the dye run right out of them, the water is the colour of that shirt”. Aggressive pricing tactics move an abundance of low quality clothing at low prices rather than a small amount of high quality clothing at high prices. As a result the clothing produced in today’s society is not meant to last long periods of time so the quality is generally low. Now that I have discussed neoliberal modes of production, now let us turn to chapter two as I analyze reflections on consumption.

CHAPTER TWO

“I ONLY WORE IT ONCE”: REFLECTIONS ON CONSUMPTION

Power inconspicuously operates in and through consumer behaviour and consumer culture is constantly promoting new types of wants and desires (Soron, 2011). In this chapter I analyze how consumption influences how women use, reflect on, and live with their clothing. Impulsive or expendable consumption is economically beneficial for producers but consumers are essentially undermined to their own subjective and material well-being. The satisfaction of human needs and development of social welfare does not drive the clothing industry, as private profit and the needs of producers are first and foremost (Soron, 2011). Clothing is seen as a free choice that leads to fun and freedom, however how can this notion of consumer sovereignty exist if women are constantly being targeted and told to buy things for every new season. This makes fashion as an economic necessity that people must consume to belong, as I discuss in chapter three. Planned stylistic obsolescence occurs when producers of clothing intend to make current fashions obsolete by introducing new styles that violate existing fashion norms (Birtwistle & Moore, 2007; Niinimäki & Hassi, 2011; Cox et al., 2013). Planned stylistic obsolescence causes consumers to own increasing amounts of short-lived clothing that are purchased without deep thought, and worn only a few times before being replaced. Consistent with results of other studies (Birtwistle & Moore, 2007; Niinimäki & Hassi, 2011), the women in my study stop wearing clothing for three main reasons: low quality, new fashion trend, or clothes are bought for a one time event as I explain in the below section. According to Soron capital has a strong interest in exploiting consumption, however, “ordinary people don’t have any innate desire to ‘consume’ (in the literal sense

of using up or destroying the objects they acquire), and would be open to alternative means of meeting their needs were they practically available” (p. 210). In the following sections in this chapter I examine impulse purchases, clothing disposability, and credit cards and their relation to new types of wants and desires and stylistic obsolescence.

Impulse Purchases

Robin Pentecost and Lynda Andrews (2010) examine the effect of impulse buying on fashion expenditures. These authors define impulse buying as “consumers’ impulse purchasing of fashion items over and above their planned fashion purchases [describing] this impulsiveness as a consumer’s propensity to buy spontaneously, unreflectively and immediately” (p. 44). Impulse buying is acutely important to fashion retailers because it produces a substantial amount of revenue. For instance, impulse buying in the United States results in over \$4 billion annual revenue each year (Pentecost & Andrews, 2010). All of the women reported that there are a few things that they have only worn once due to impulse buying. The women said that they had bought a clothing item for an occasion or one time event. Almost all said they have clothing with the tags still intact (Lucy, Emily, Mia, Bailey, & Claire) because they are waiting for the right opportunity to wear the item. Emily explains: “Yeah some of them I just really haven’t had the chance to wear yet, but some of them I’ll never wear, it would just be an impulse buy”. Similarly, Sophie elucidates:

I have a couple tops that I never wore because I’m just waiting for the opportunity to wear it, for a certain event or occasion, and I just haven’t, I probably won’t ever wear it, because it will probably be out-of-date.

Furthermore, Mia and Bailey said they have clothing with the tags still intact because

they bought the item because it was on sale, or once they got the item home they didn't favour it as much as they thought they did. Bailey explains, "sometimes when I get them home I don't like them so I'll only wear them once and never at all". The following exchange between Mia and I reveal this last point:

Mia: "Just one of those things where if you need something to wear for that one event or that one time when your going out with people. So you buy something because you need, you feel like you need something to wear. And then afterwards you realize its really not that nice of an item or you just don't like it that much, but you don't want to throw it out just in case you need it for that one night again, so it just sits there, and sits there. Or sometimes you buy something because its on sale, like \$7 shirt, you can't pass up a \$7 shirt."

Me: "So you would buy the \$7 shirt and just wear it once?"

Mia: "Maybe never wear it at all".

Impulse purchases leave women with clothing that is bought for no reason other than to make a purchase. Therefore, unplanned clothing purchases produce an excessive amount of waste because clothing is only worn a few times or never at all before being disposed. In light of this, let us turn to a discussion on clothing disposability.

Clothing Disposability

All of the women in the study said that they buy new clothes for every new season. Mia comments: "I don't think I think about it as every new season, but I'm pretty sure I buy clothes every new season". Most women said that they always buy clothing for holidays, occasions, or classy events through the year. Claire, Mia, and Bailey all mentioned some sort of Christmas related event, while Claire and Mia specifically mentioned vacations or

trips, and Bailey, Sophia, Emily all mentioned Birthdays. Sophia the twenty-two-year old student says: “Yup, um ... I guess it would be any kind of party where you’d dress up, I’d have to buy something new for that every time”. If Lucy, the twenty-seven-year old fashion leader, is going out to a classy event she wants to have a new outfit for it because she doesn’t want to wear the same thing twice:

If I’m going out, or like if there’s a classy event, and um, I want to have a new outfit for it I don’t want to wear the same thing twice, I don’t like to. But I blame it on my mother because she never let me wear the same thing twice, ever! So that’s probably my thing, but I could always stop it, but I don’t.

Since Lucy is a fashion leader, she perhaps does not want to wear the same thing twice because she is continuously influencing others with their own style and clothing selections, and therefore she needs to look current with the clothing she wears.

I asked the women how much clothing they get rid of (donate or throwaway) during a one-year period. When clothing becomes ripped, stretched, shrunk, or faded, the women tend to give or throw it away, or keep it. However, some of the women identified problems with actually getting rid of clothing, as Mia explains: “Probably not that much. I probably should because a lot of it just sits in my closets or dressers and doesn’t move”. Similarly, Emily explains:

Not a lot, one or two items. I’m such a pack rat, like I hold-onto things, like I’m like ‘oh I’ll fit into that’ ...so there’s like a lot of jeans and stuff that I have kickin’ around that do not fit me, but I refuse to get rid of them because I’m like ‘those are \$60 jeans and I hardly wore them, like I’ll sell them’, and then it takes forever to sell them, so there’s a few things I have to go through and just be like I need to donate this, like whatever, but I usually try and donate it before I throw it out, especially if someone can get some sort of use out of it.

Claire, the middle/high class mother of three, reported giving away the most clothing, at about four garbage bags a year (note that Claire identified as the most frequent shopper of all the women as well). Lucy, the twenty-seven-year old fashion leader, reported to give away the second most at three bags a year. Claire and Lucy both donate clothing to the Canadian Diabetes Association. Mia, Sophia, and Bailey all donate about 2 garbage bags of clothing a year. Bailey donates her clothing to her younger sister and charity; Mia donates her clothing to charity, Value Village, or a donation box; and Sophia donates hers to the Salvation Army.

Amy gives away no more than thirty items a year to any donation place or friends. Amy articulated a thought-provoking idea that may explain why women have difficulties disposing of their clothing: “It always, fashion repeats itself, like back then would think ‘ripped jeans throw them away’, now it’s the style to have ripped jeans, or faded jeans, it’s like a style now...Fashion repeats itself. So what’s not in season wait five years and it will be back.” In my opinion I think that women accumulate their clothing and have troubles getting rid of it because they are uncertain about what the future will hold, and what may come back in style.

“My red friend”: Credit Cards

Fashion and clothing have widely become inextricably connected with consumer debt. Consumers, particularly young women, typically acquire debt to keep up with current fashion or buy things that they actually don’t need. Soron (2011) elucidates: “By liberalizing consumer credit, [and] designing products for quick physical and stylistic obsolescence ... reshape consumer needs and develop new standards of normality and

acceptability, so on” (p. 210). Debt has widely been renamed “credit” to keep consumers buying things they don’t actually need with money that they don’t actually have (Hoskins, 2014). All but one of the women in the study own a credit card, while Sophia had one ordered. Of the six women who have credit cards, all of them said they use theirs to buy clothing. Bailey the twenty-two-year old unemployed student explains:

Yes, ‘laughs’, yes um, it’s actually yea I use it a lot, I call it ‘my red friend’, um, yea I use it especially this time of year I find myself using it more just because like it’s the end of school and I don’t work during school so my money is running a little low so I do use it quite frequently.

Sophia said she would also use her credit to buy clothing when she receives it. Claire specifically uses her card for the Air Miles. While Lucy, Amy, and Sophia specifically use their credit card for online shopping.

I asked the six women who have credit cards how often during a one-year period they use their credit card to purchase clothing. Besides Costco, because they do not accept her card, Claire uses her card every time she buys clothing. Similarly, Amy uses her credit card every time she buys clothing. Bailey uses her credit card for pretty much any of her personal type purchases, such as buying clothing. Mia uses her credit card to buy clothing once every two months. Lucy uses her card to buy clothing around four times a year. Emily is usually really good with her credit card because she uses it for emergencies and does not “go on crazy shopping sprees”. Now that I have discussed consumption and impulse purchases, clothing disposability, and credit cards, in the final chapter I analyze the current neo-liberal era and how it has affected the way women identify with clothing. I do this by specifically examining Web 2.0 and social belonging.

CHAPTER THREE

“I HAVE NOTHING TO WEAR, LIKE THERE’S JUST NOTHING TO WEAR:” IDENTITY IN A NEO-LIBERAL ERA

Clothing is used to classify people – the selection of clothing represents an important appearance-management behaviour for people in Western societies. In this chapter I analyze how identity influences how women use, reflect on, and live with their clothing. Women construct themselves through their clothing on a daily basis, and that clothing is used to reinforce or portray a positive self image (Tiggemann & Lacey, 2009; Guy & Banim, 2000). The neo-liberal era that we now live in has affected the way women identify with clothing and fashion. Soron (2011) discusses that gradually over the past few decades’ personal identity has become constrained by the spiral of consumer culture, daily social life has become flooded with images of advertising and brands, therefore expanding socioeconomic inequalities. Hoskins (2014) articulates that “Under capitalism people are locked into a mindset where having is more important than being” (p. 63). Women are locked into this mindset because they are constantly influenced by society. I asked the women what particular sources influence their ideas about style. Social media was the top tool mentioned to develop style ideas; five women (Claire, Mia, Bailey, Lucy, & Sophie) mentioned Pinterest, Sophia and Emily mentioned Instagram, and Mia mentioned Facebook and Twitter. Other sources to get ideas about style mentioned by women include: TV shows, E-mail promotions, and magazines. In the following sections of this chapter I examine Web 2.0 and its significant influence on women’s identity. Since social media was the top tool mentioned to develop style ideas, I particularly

examine three social media platforms mentioned: Pinterest, Facebook, and Instagram. I end the chapter by discussing social belonging in relation to alienation on social media.

Web 2.0 & Social Media

With the advent of Web 2.0 there have been many changes in the fashion world. One major development occurring on Web 2.0 in the last decade is, social media. Social media is a virtual community where users communicate and share information and ideas. Social media causes information and discourse to move faster than ever. Social media networks influence users and create new wants and desires. In addition, companies and brands are in direct contact to target consumers. One reason social media information and discourse has increasingly become fluid is because it's offered on many different technological devices, such as smart-phones and tablets. Now I specifically analyze Facebook, Pinterest, and Instagram.

Pinterest is a new form of social media that allows users to share digital fashion content (i.e., photos and their sources) with each other to gain inspiration and photo sharing on Pinterest is easy for its users. Pinterest is an online community composed of a personal profile of every user and their boards with images they have "pinned" to them; Users can pick from many categories, such as "Women's Fashions", and if they see something they like in this category they can "pin it", send it, or "like" it. If the user chooses to "pin it" they choose one of their boards to place it on, write a description, and choose to post it to Facebook or not (see Appendix 1). Boards are visible to the public unless a user makes it private. Followers and other users then "re-pin" other users content. A "pin it" button can additionally be downloaded to a users computers so

whenever they are surfing the Web and see something they adore or are fascinated in, they can “pin it” to one of their boards Pinterest is a great way for people to learn about all kinds of emerging styles, however, I believe that it is undoubtedly contributing to the relentless consumer mindset, because users are overwhelmed with millions of “pins” that constantly promote new wants and desires.

Facebook is the largest online social community (Flowtown as cited in Hoskins, 2014). Kirsty Young (2011) examined adult social activity on Facebook through an online survey and in-depth research sessions and found that Facebook enhances existing friendships by supplementing conventional forms of communication (face to face, telephone). Moreover, partaking in the Facebook community empowers effective and useful communication with a larger and supplementary diverse group of friends. Furthermore, Facebook can be used to help create social change. For example, “Fashion Takes Action” – a Canadian non-profit organization that focuses on sustainability in the fashion industry – promotes awareness and social change on their Facebook page by updating their page daily and sharing important information and facts about the fashion industry.

There are many ways that Facebook can influence the way women identify with clothing. Women can be influenced by Facebook friends, or by the ads that circulate and target them on the site. As mentioned previously, through stealth marketing campaigns companies secretly advertise products to consumers; this kind of marketing is used on Facebook. In addition, users on Facebook can upload and share photos of their self and others can be influenced by their style. Although Facebook can positively influence people, it simultaneously can alienate them. As elucidated below in Bailey’s interview:

I buy it for a fancy occasion, so you can only really ever wear it the once, cause now I feel like there's Facebook you always have pictures taken of you, so I feel like people might judge you if you're wearing the same thing to different formal events, type thing, because before it used to be just a 'good old-fashion picture' and just you could see it, but now everyone can.

According to Hoskins (2014) "In Marx's words, alienation means a person only 'feels himself outside his work and in his work feels outside himself'" (p. 64). In my opinion, women users can feel alienated on Facebook because they are placed on a pedestal for all other users to see and therefore they feel "outside" of their self, as oppose to when they are not on Facebook they can feel their true self. Therefore, In Bailey's case, she feels alienated if she does not wear a new outfit to formal events because she is constantly being told to update her clothing and wear the latest "thing". Facebook and other social media intensify alienation because women are constantly on display.

Somewhat of a different way Facebook is used is by selling clothing. Emily was the only one to discuss selling clothing on the Internet. Emily has been selling her clothing on a "Facebook online yard sale". She explains: "I find Kijiji is sometimes so hard with clothing to sell, so I've been selling on a Facebook online yard sale thing from back home". The yard sale is a group on Facebook in which users can join and add photos of the clothing they want to sell. If another user is interested in the item they can comment or inbox the seller to get further information. "I'm just trying to sell some stuff, even if I don't make the money back that I put into it, at least I get something back from it, rather than it just collecting dust".

Instagram is an online photo and video sharing, video sharing, and social networking service that lets its users add digital filters to pictures and videos, and share them on other social networking services (i.e., Facebook). Emily particularly discussed

an account that she follows called “Shop Yellow” which sells clothing and accessories through their Instagram account via e-mail. She explains: “It has so many things that I like, it’s weird because everything is on Instagram, they don’t even have a website, it’s just on Instagram. So you send them your e-mail and they’ll send you an invoice, it’s a company out of Texas.” In this sense Instagram can be seen as a combination of Pinterest and Facebook because companies can sell clothing from their Instagram page (like Pinterest) and individual users are placed on display for others to see (like Facebook). Therefore, alienation and a continuous updating mindset could be negative effects that Instagram entails. Now let us turn to a discussion of social belonging.

Social Belonging

As I have elucidated above, social media can cause women to feel alienated if they are not constantly updating and wearing new things when they present themselves on social media. Women want to feel a sense of belonging not alienation when they are on social media, so they update themselves and adhere to norms so they can belong. Vanessa May (2011) defines belonging as “A sense of ease with oneself and one’s surroundings” (p. 368). Therefore, if a woman does not feel alienated on social media she will feel at ease with herself and surroundings. I asked the women how they would feel if they did not keep up with latest new trends/styles of the season or with what the majority of others are wearing. Five of the women (Claire, Mia, Lucy, Sophia, & Emily) expressed that it would bother them if they did not have the latest new trends or styles of the season.

Mia explains:

It would be one of those things like, how girls are like ‘I have nothing to wear, like there’s just nothing to wear’ and the guys are like ‘you have a

closet full of stuff' –laughs– but you really want that one thing, or two things that are the newest.

Nevertheless, Bailey and Amy both said that it does not bother them if they do not have the latest styles or fashions. Bailey explains: "I don't get really torn up about it, I just kinda wait until I can get them or don't get them at all".

In addition, the women discussed their thoughts on how they would think other people would see them if they did not keep up with latest new trends/styles of the season or with what the majority of others are wearing. All of the women said that they think others and society would view them as behind in style and life, and different from the norm. Claire supposed: "I would say they would see me as behind in style, life, and perhaps even not caring about how you really feel about yourself." Furthermore, Lucy explains:

People tend, even if they don't mean to in a bad way, they'll sometimes make fun or, ya know, like 'what are you wearing that for?' and like 'that was from last season, why aren't you wearing newer clothes or styles.

Similarly, Mia assumed: "They would probably wonder if I lived under a rock ... I would probably wonder if I lived under a rock ... it just wouldn't, you just wouldn't fit in I don't think". Hoskins (2014) explains that by ignoring class people often think others consent to wearing 'bad' clothes because they have "given up". "This approach neglects to mention the maelstrom of class, race, gender, and economic crises that contributes to poverty and prevents people having control over their lives" (p. 54). I believe it is becoming easy for people to forget about class if they are caught up in popular culture that encourages glamorous and persistent updating lifestyles.

CONCLUSION

The sociology of fashion is a topic that is fundamentally overlooked in our society. Fashion and clothing are particularly useful to analyze because women construct themselves through their clothing on a daily basis and that clothing can be used to promote a positive body image, self-identity, and social positioning. Changes in modes of production and corporate strategies such as planned stylistic obsolescence lure people into new wants and desires, causing consumers to buy more cheap quality clothing that is worn only a few times, or never at all, before it is disposed of and replaced by the next fashion staple of the season. Producers of fashion cut costs by using cheap sources of labour and resources, and quality gets cut from the production line. Consumer credit has become so liberalized that people increasingly do not see debt as a problem. Women face a constant barrage of advertisements, making fashion an economic, social, and political necessity that people must consume to belong. This process simultaneously alienates women as they increasingly do not feel fulfilled if they are not wearing up-to-date fashions. Essentially, neoliberal modes of production and consumption have influenced how women use, reflect on, and live with their clothing.

Consumers need to ask questions about where their clothing is being made and under what conditions. They need to put pressure on companies to improve safety conditions in factories and equality for workers. Furthermore, consumers need to save up and invest in quality clothing items that are not going to fall apart after only washing them a few times. Producers of clothing need to work together with consumers to meet their needs and find out what they can do to encourage consumption that has the ability to meet the material needs of current and future generations, without causing permanent

damage to the environment. There is an opportunity here for numerous large fashion retailers, including Canadian retailers, to connect sustainable qualities to distinguish their status within the market.

References

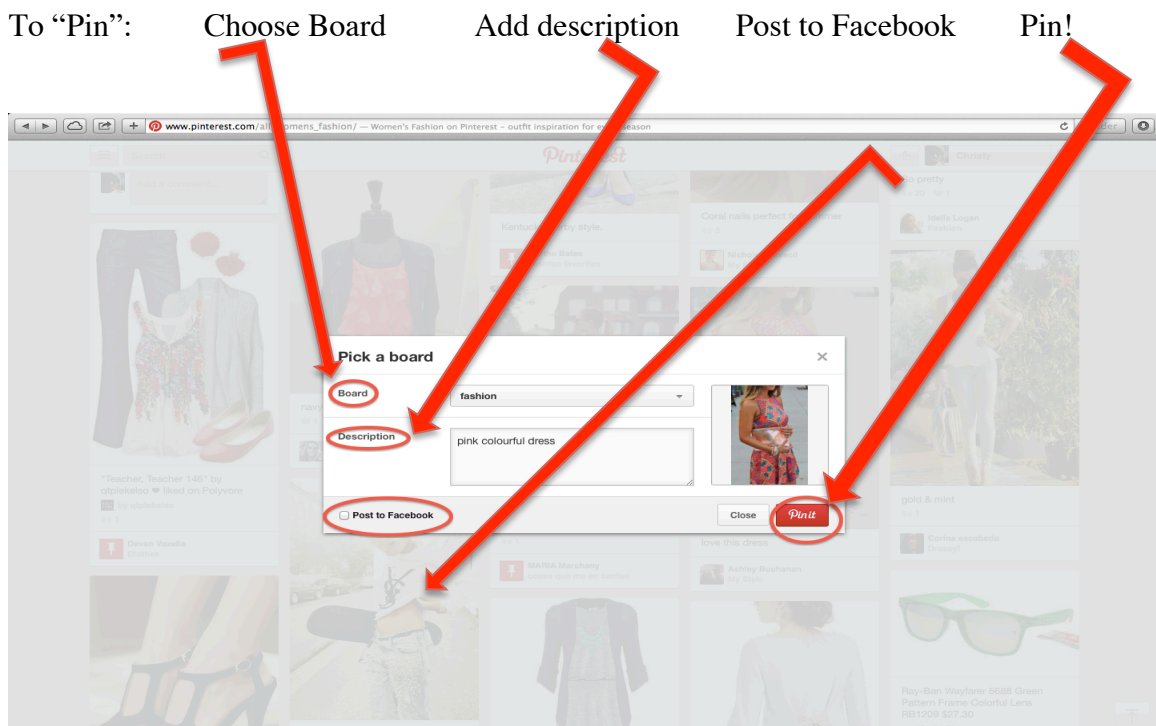
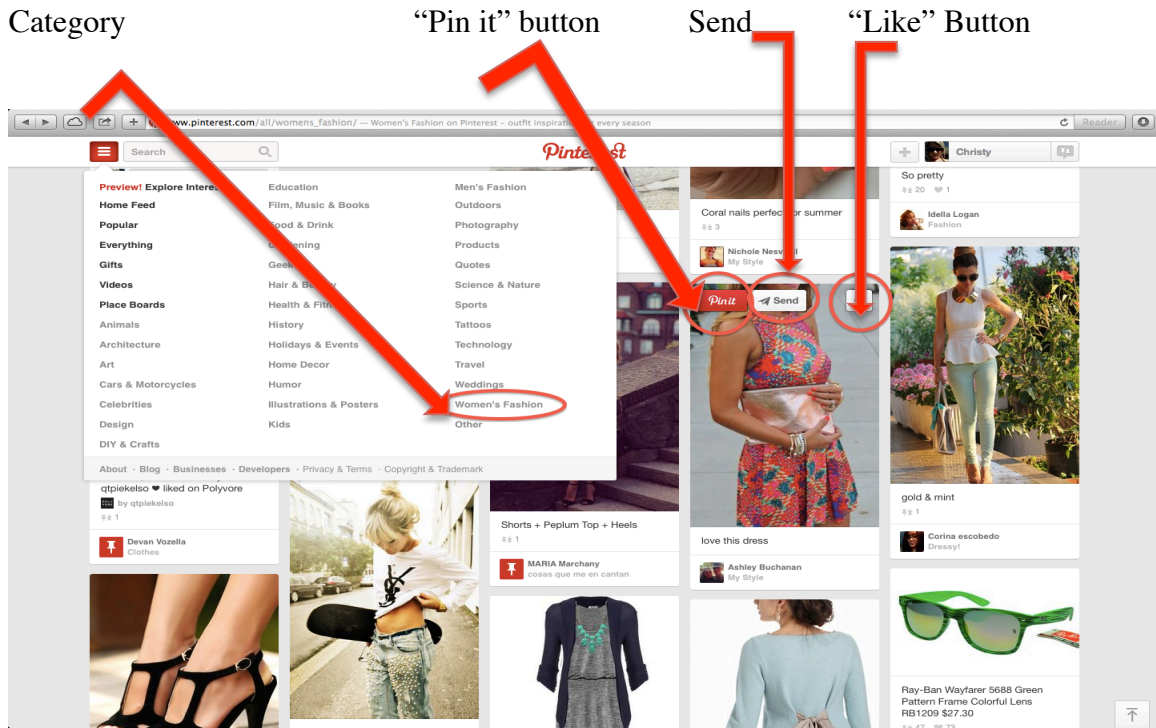
- Aspers, P., & Godart, F. (2013). Sociology of Fashion: Order and Change. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 39(1), 171-92.
- Bailey, L. R., & Seock, Y-K. (2010). The relationships of fashion leadership, fashion magazine content and loyalty tendency. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 14(1), 39-57.
- Barnes, L., & Lea-Greenwood, G. (2006). Fast fashioning the supply chain: Shaping the research agenda. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 10(3), 259-71.
- Birtwistle, G., & Moore, C. M. (2007). Fashion clothing - where does it all end up? *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 35(3), 210-16.
- Blumer, H. (1969). Fashion: From Class Differentiation to Collective Selection. *Sociological Quarterly*, 10(3), 275-91.
- Bovone, L., (2006). Urban style cultures and urban cultural production in Milan: Postmodern identity and the transformation of fashion. Approaches to material culture: the sociology of fashion and clothing. *Poetics*, 34(6), 370-82.
- Cox, J., Griffith, S., Giorgi, S., & King, G. (2013). Consumer understanding of product lifetimes. *Resources, Conservation and Recycling*, 79(0), 21-29.
- CTV News. (2008). Harper to Canadians: "Keep spending". CTV.ca, September 19th. <http://www.ctvnews.ca/harper-to-canadian-consumers-keep-spending-1.326214>, accessed December 17, 2013.
- Drennan, K. (2013). *A Brief History of Canadian Eco-Fashion*, March 2nd. <http://www.ecoparent.ca/article/brief-history-canadian-eco-fashion>, accessed April 05, 2014
- EnviroMedia. (2014). *About Greenwashing*. <http://www.greenwashingindex.com/about-greenwashing/>, accessed April 05, 2014
- Goldfarb, D. (2013). *How Canada Welcomed Bangladeshi Clothing Imports*. Retrieved from The Conference Board of Canada website: http://www.conferenceboard.ca/economics/hot_eco_topics/default/13-05-03/how_canada_welcomed_bangladeshi_clothing_imports.aspx
- Guy, A., & Banim, M. (2000). Personal collections: Women's clothing use and identity. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 9(3), 313-27.

- Hoskins, T. (2014). *Stitched Up: The Anti-Capitalist Book of Fashion*. London: Pluto Press.
- Jenkins, R. P. (2000). Categorization: Identity, Social Process and Epistemology. *Current Sociology*, 48(3), 7-25.
- Joung, H. M., & Park-Poaps, H. (2013). Factors motivating and influencing clothing disposal behaviours. *IJCS International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 37(1), 105-11.
- Kim, H. S., & Hong, H. (2011). Fashion leadership and hedonic shopping motivations of female consumers. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, 29(4), 314-30.
- Lang, C., Armstrong, C. M., & Brannon, L. A. (2013). Drivers of clothing disposal in the US: An exploration of the role of personal attributes and behaviours in frequent disposal. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 37(6), 706-14.
- Lebow, V. (1955). Price competition in 1955. *Journal of retailing*, 31(1), 5-10.
- Leonard, A. (2010). *The Story of Stuff*. Toronto: Free Press
- May, V. (2011). Self, Belonging and Social Change. *Sociology*, 45(3), 363-78.
- Niinimäki, K., & Hassi, L. (2011). Emerging design strategies in sustainable production and consumption of textiles and clothing. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 19(16), 1876-83.
- Pentecost, R., & Andrews, L. (2010). Fashion retailing and the bottom line: The effects of generational cohorts, gender, fashion fanship, attitudes and impulse buying on fashion expenditure. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 17(1), 43-52.
- Ritch, E. L., & Schröder, M. J. (2012). Accessing and affording sustainability: The experience of fashion consumption within young families. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 36(2), 203-10.
- Roulston, K. 2011. Working through challenges in doing interview research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*. 10(4), 348-66.
- Sluiter, L. (2009). *Clean clothes: A global movement to end sweatshops*. London: Pluto Press.
- Soron, D. (2011). "Going Shopping: The Politics of Everyday Consumption", ch10, in Brock, Raby, & Thomas (ed.), *Power and Everyday Practices*. United States: Nelson, 2012, 203-45.

- Statistics Canada. (2014). *Canadian International Merchandise Trade Database*. Retrieved April 28, 2014, from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca>
- Tiggemann, M., & Lacey, C. (2009). Shopping for clothes: Body satisfaction, appearance investment, and functions of clothing among female shoppers. *Body Image*, 6(4), 285-91.
- Veblen, T. (1934). *The theory of the leisure class: An economic study of institutions*. New York: Modern library.
- Venkatesh, A., Joy, A., Sherry Jr., J. F., & Deschenes, J. (2010). The aesthetics of luxury fashion, body and identify formation. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 20(4), 459-70.
- Wyman, D. (2006). Trade liberalization and the Canadian clothing market. *Canadian Economic Observer*, 19(12), 3.1-12.
- Young, K. (2011). Social Ties, Social Networks and the Facebook Experience. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies and Society*, 9(1), 20-34.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Pinterest Page



Appendix 2: Participant Consent Form

“Clothing Speaks Louder Than Words”

SMU REB# 14-132

Christy Fiander
Sociology and Criminology
Saint Mary’s University, 923 Robie Street, Halifax, NS B3H 3C3
fiander.christy@gmail.com, (902) 420-5879

Supervisor: Dr. Darryl Leroux
Saint Mary’s University
Sociology & Criminology Department
Darryl.Leroux@smu.ca, (902) 420-5879.

INTRODUCTION

My name is Christy Fiander. I am an honours student in the Department of Sociology and Criminology at Saint Mary’s University. As part of my honours thesis I am conducting research under the supervision of Dr. Darryl Leroux. You are being invited to take part in my research. It is voluntary and it will not affect your course grade or work status.

PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH

The purpose of this research is to study the life of clothing by examining how women use, reflect on, and live with their clothes. The data collected during interviews will contribute to a better understand of the drivers of fashion, the quality of clothing, and its production. With this understanding I will be able to further examine the life of clothing and planned style obsolescence.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO TAKE PART?

The population eligible for this study is women that are at least 17 years of age.

WHAT DOES PARTICIPATING MEAN? (OR WHAT WILL I HAVE TO DO?)

The study will take place at Saint Mary’s University, McNally South, room #421. You will be provided with a clothing diary where you will be asked to describe the clothes selected and worn each day over a two-week period and to note your thoughts and feelings about these clothes. Particularly, you be asked to describe the style, colour(s), pattern(s), texture, quality, and brand of the clothing, and where the clothing was made.

Following the two-week period there will be an interview (examples of questions that will be asked are: what are your 5 favourite outfits/clothing items in your clothing diary? Where do you get your ideas about style? What are your favourite stores to shop at?) Interviews are typically suspected to last 1 hour, occurring between January-March 2014.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF THIS RESEARCH?

Through this research I'm going to contribute to the literature and the scholarly community of fashion by looking at women's voices in Nova Scotia.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL RISKS FOR PARTICIPANTS?

If you have sensitivities to certain interview questions you may skip them. If new information arises during the course of the study it will be communicated to you to reassess your willingness to participate in the research.

WHAT WILL BE DONE WITH MY INFORMATION?

Your information will be anonymized. Your data will be kept confidential. The only other person that may potentially see and have access to the information collected is my supervisor. Data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in Dr. Leroux's office at Saint Mary's University; I will be the only one to have a key. Once all the data is collected and analyzed for this study, the information will be shared with the department and the University library. Once the study is completed, you will have access to the results via email.

HOW CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY?

You are free to withdraw from the research study at any time without penalty. If you choose to withdraw from the study then you will be given a choice for your data to be used or discarded. After the interview is completed, you will no longer be able to withdraw your information from the study.

HOW CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION? (OR HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THIS STUDY?)

If you have any questions or concerns about this project you can contact my supervisor Dr. Darryl Leroux at Darryl.Leroux@smu.ca or (902) 420-5879.

Certification:

The Saint Mary's University Research Ethics Board has reviewed this research. If you have any questions or concerns about ethical matters or would like to discuss your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Board at ethics@smu.ca or 420-5728.

Signature of Agreement:**Clothing Speaks Louder Than Words**

I understand what this study is about, appreciate the risks and benefits, and that by consenting I agree to take part in this research study and do not waive any rights to legal recourse in the event of research-related harm.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can end my participation at any time without penalty.

I have had adequate time to think about the research study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

Participant

Signature : _____ Name (Printed) : _____

Date : _____

(Day/Month/Year)

Principal Investigator

Signature : _____ Name (Printed) : _____

Date : _____

(Day/Month/Year)



SAINT MARY'S
UNIVERSITY SINCE 1802

One University. One World. Yours.

PATRICK POWER
LIBRARY

Department Office

T 902.420.5534

F 902.420.5561

Research Ethics Board Certificate Notice

The Saint Mary's University Research Ethics Board has issued an REB certificate related to this thesis. The certificate number is: 14-132 .

A copy of the certificate is on file at:

Saint Mary's University, Archives
Patrick Power Library
Halifax, NS
B3H 3C3

Email: archives@smu.ca
Phone: 902-420-5508
Fax: 902-420-5561

For more information on the issuing of REB certificates, you can contact the Research Ethics Board at 902-420-5728/ ethics@smu.ca .