

**Towards a Conceptual Model
for the Apparel Industry in Thailand Focused
on Domestic Fashion Origination**

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Abstract

This thesis has several strands relating to the future prospects of the Thai fashion industry, which has undergone recent instability in the context of the global fashion system. They presuppose a reorientation and/or development of the domestic economy and culture of consumption of Thailand to favour innovation, originality and personal identity.

The thesis will present an argument based upon the creation of conceptual models derived in part from existing models and theories, from literature surveys and empirical studies. A new framework to conceptualise the fashion process in Thailand called, the Thai Fashion Process Model is presented. Through the process of the comparative studies, the fashion process in the West is set against that which exists in Thailand.

The Western fashion process model integrates much previous research about the fashion process, fills important gaps that the symbolic interactionist theory of fashion omits, and makes a number of new predictions about the translation of social trends into specific lifestyles and individual differences within the commodification process. The model purposes two important fashion forces: the differentiating force and the socialising force. These operate at different levels (macro and micro) and through different fashion practitioners. The empirical studies gathered data for analysis through interview and questionnaire surveys at the micro-level in both the UK and Thailand within the context of the conceptual framework. Additional data for analysis was also gathered relative to the macro-level. The studies provide excellent support for the reconceptualisation and, in particular, suggest that individual psychological factors might be given a new prominence in the overall fashion process and the way in which new fashions emerge.

The new Thai Fashion Process Model presents a different direction in the fashion change sequence, which implies a reorientation of the industry towards a high priority in domestic fashion origination and innovation. The socio-cultural economic changes require a refocusing towards individual or segmented consumers' motivation, needs, and desires as opposed to the conformity that exists in contemporary Thai society in its domestic consumption.

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Dedication

*This thesis is dedicated to my family
and all the Thai people who, with part of their taxes,
sponsored my study in the United Kingdom.*

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Research Questions

This thesis has several strands relating to the future prospects of the Thai fashion industry, seen in the context of the global fashion system. They presuppose a reorientation and/or development of the domestic economy and culture of consumption of Thailand to favour innovation, originality and personal identity. The thesis will present an argument based upon the creation of conceptual models derived in part from existing models and theories, from literature surveys and empirical studies.

In order to develop an argument both for the need for change in Thailand and for the evolution of conceptual modelling of the fashion system, the thesis begins by setting out the circumstances, which have brought about instability within the Thai fashion supply industry. It seems appropriate, therefore, first to introduce the contemporary fashion atmosphere in Thailand.

Thailand and her neighbouring countries in the Far East were regarded as the economic dynamos of the twentieth century, especially from the middle of the 1950s when the old Western industrial economies were slow to recover from the war economy of 1939-45 (Robison and Goodman, 1996). The wealthy economy elevated living standards for people as well as introducing a new atmosphere or microclimate referred to as "rampant consumption" or "consumerism". Over the same period, for Thai people fashion consumption became a new indicator of class, taste, aesthetic sensibility and lifestyle within the narrow constraints and guidelines of government policy. Fashion always easily

penetrates wealthy, socially mobile societies, diffusing from West to East, from capital cities to the provinces, and from urban to rural environments. Fashion exaggerates the self-perception of the wearer's modernity in a dynamic culture. The concept of modernism present in the consumer's mind was a means for achieving particular government policies. Consumption is an essential mediator for capitalist evolution/developments.

What are usually described as the Big Tiger economies, for example, Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong (but excluding Thailand), have found themselves able to initiate technologies of production rather than merely become consumers of foreign commodities, as has been the case in Thailand, and there are several reasons for this.

In the fashion arena, for example, these countries have been able to harness indigenous creative potential and innovation, and are consequently far ahead of Thailand in maintaining and developing their textile and fashion industries. This is particularly apparent in the textile industry of Thailand, where research and technical development in both raw material and fabric lack the high technology productive processes of, say, Japan whose expertise in micro-fibre science and product development has secured dominance of the market. The other tiger economies, likewise, all have their own fashion brands supplying their domestic markets and the region. Many Japanese designers, including Issey Miyake, Yohji Yamamoto, Kenzo and Rei Kawakubo, for instances, are accepted in the international fashion world as icons and major contributors to global fashion (Mendes and De La Haye, 1999). Analysis of the differences between the tiger economies in terms of approaches to consumption and production reveal the weak point in Thai economic and industrial development. Thailand, in common with the other tiger economies, experienced some periods of the fastest and highest economic growth rates in the world in the middle of the 1980s and in the early 1990s (see Table 1.1.1). They had enjoyed a period of great prosperity with high consumption serviced by highly rigorous supply (Dixon, 1999; Robison and Goodman, 1996). During this period the entire domestic fashion market of Thailand was, and still is, supplied by two main sources. The middle to low markets are shared by domestic suppliers, whereas the higher level markets are mostly supplied by imported goods (Suphachalasai, 1994). In common with other countries, the classification of market levels mentioned implies class in the order and accessibility of the consumption process. In other words, Thailand's progress towards becoming a full-blown capitalist country has inevitably resulted in class differentiation based on spending power, which dominates most aspects of everyday Thai life. The acquisition of goods (consumption capability and display) indicates social class and status (Beng-Huat, 2000; Heller, 1984).

Year	Growth of GDP%	Exports (US \$m)	Manufactured Exports (US \$m)
1970	6.6	710	76
1971	5	827	113
1972	4.1	1039	190
1973	9.9	1527	343
1974	4.4	2402	422
1975	4.8	2162	397
1976	9.4	2950	572
1977	9.9	3451	683
1978	10.4	3996	1039
1979	5.3	5207	1402
1980	4.9	6369	1886
1981	7.6	6849	2019
1982	6	6797	2014
1983	5.8	6275	2058
1984	5.5	7279	2583
1985	3.5	7056	2800
1986	4.5	8786	3944
1987	8.4	11629	6125
1988	11	15902	8192
1989	10.8	19976	11453
1990	10	23002	14796
1991	7.9	28324	18903
1992	7.2	34473	21672
1993	7.9	37137	29863
1994	8.8	44611	36618

Table 1.1.1: Key Features of Thai Economy, 1970-94 (Source: Thailand Textile Institute)

Many Thai manufacturers are contracted to international fashion labels to supply high quality fashion products to the world markets and to Thai consumers. Goods manufactured in Thailand for foreign brands can be imported back into Thailand and sold as premium products. This implies that Thailand does not lag behind other countries in terms of capability in manufacturing quality products. The inability to generate brands indicates that brand commodity is not merely about capability in manufacturing. In the case of fashion, as with other branded goods, a specific set of conditions is required domestically before indigenous branding can occur (Farrel, 1998). If Thailand is not initiating fashion, then there must be something missing from or different in the conditions prevailing within the Thai fashion process. Whatever these differences or shortcomings may be, there is a major problem for fashion producers in Thailand, where the higher market levels of consumers are ready to spend money on fashion commodities, but not on any which have Thai fashion labels/brands (Beng-Huat, 2000). Thai fashion brands have failed to develop comparably to those of the other tiger economies to the extent that they have not gained a position of respect nationally or internationally.

Several questions arise from this situation:

- Why are Thai designers unable to dominate even their own domestic markets?
- Why are Thai people subjected to an overload of luxurious imported fashion commodities?
- Why do Thai consumers hold their own branded fashion goods in such low esteem?
- Why do fashions that are successful in Thailand usually emulate from sources external to Thailand?
- What is the nature of needs, motives, and desires that propel fashion consumption and behaviours in Thailand towards foreign fashion?
- What are the strategies that would lead to the Thai fashion industry achieving leadership of the domestic fashion market and establishing an international reputation for fashion?

These are central questions in the minds of Thai manufacturers and fashion suppliers. This research is aimed at providing a conceptual framework, which might enable some of the answers to be discovered.

These questions are based upon evidence gained from research into the Thai fashion industry, which is fundamental to an understanding of the potential for development within the contemporary situation.

Firstly, imported fashion goods dominate the domestic market. Secondly, fashion styles

taken up in Thailand are usually the same as, or similar to, those initiated in the West. In other words, fashions from the West usually diffuse through Thai society. Thai society easily adopts Western fashions at the upper level of the market. Thai manufacturers also provide fashion diffusion, domestically, to the lower level of markets, derived from the same sources. Thirdly, Thai consumers have a stronger desire to possess Western products than those which are made and designed in Thailand. Paradoxically, as previously stated, some of those Western products may have been made in Thailand, exported and re-imported, suggesting that consumption in Thailand is based upon preconception. Fourthly, there must be some force or set of conditions that drive Thai people to prefer the imported products to domestic products. Finally, Thai manufacturers and fashion suppliers have failed to compete with international fashion brands by establishing respect or a perceptual desire in the consumer for their own brands.

It has been a mystery why Thai fashion suppliers have not responded to the needs of their own market. The result has been that most of the high fashion markets are shared by international fashion brands, while the lower markets are left for domestic suppliers imitating Western fashions. It would be desirable ultimately to develop frameworks or strategies, which enabled domestic suppliers to implement a restructuring of the domestic market, segments and share through commercial competition. Policy should focus on developing a domestic market, which involves fashion direction led approaches rather than following western fashion dictates.

Before we can implement such strategies, some critical questions need to be answered, such as:

- Do Thai domestic fashion suppliers have a proper understanding and appreciation of "fashion" and its related mechanisms, such as "fashion process", "fashion diffusion", and "fashion adoption"?
- Do they understand the forces behind a fashion phenomenon?
- Do they concern themselves with the true needs of Thai consumers in fashion consumption?
- What is the significance of the fashion language used in Western fashion to communicate with its consumers?
- Should Thai domestic fashion suppliers concern themselves with social movements, social issues, and other aspects of consumers' concerns?
- Should customer profiling be extended to include data other than merely demographic and economic statistics?

This thesis attempts to question the focus of fashion and fashion consumption in Thailand

in the realms of “how” and “why”. It aims to find a holistic concept to encompass the Thai fashion industry and system, with a determination to move forwards fresh insights.

Research into fashion in Thailand is extremely rare. When it has been undertaken, the approach is invariably from a marketing perspective. Seldom if ever is there any research, which investigates fashion as a progressive sociological phenomenon. Interdisciplinary research or related research projects bringing together the socio-economic, cultural and political dimensions have yet to be undertaken. This thesis goes some way towards attempting to link these different aspects.

Fashion is not solely a supply point issue: it is far more complex and is intertwined with many adjoining twigs and branches, which combine to create its context. The context of fashion, its industry and system, both position and determine the nature of the commodity. Accordingly, commodities and their consumption are viewed in this thesis not merely demographically: they are a source of contemporary perspectives on consumers’ motivations, goals and desires which suppliers, manufacturers and marketers can utilise.

“It is obvious that fashion is more than an economic activity which brings higher standards of living and new trends in consumption. The pursuit of the fashionable entails much more than the simple acquisition of goods.”

Finkelstein (2000, p. 225)

It is hoped that this thesis will ultimately shed light upon two crucial questions:

- “Why is Thai fashion design underrepresented in its share of the domestic fashion market, particularly at the high level? and;
- “How could Thai originated fashion design reach a position of prominence both in the domestic market and internationally?

1.2 Organising the Research

1.2.1 In Search of the Answer

The above questions are raised throughout the research, as if it were being undertaken by or for Thai fashion suppliers, including designers, importers, manufacturers and marketers. Accordingly, these research questions revolve around fashion, consumers,

and their behaviour related to consumption. It is therefore necessary to investigate the roots and origins of such key factors as the emergence of fashion, fashion process, consumerism, class and order in consumption, and background factors of Thai's characteristics of consumption.

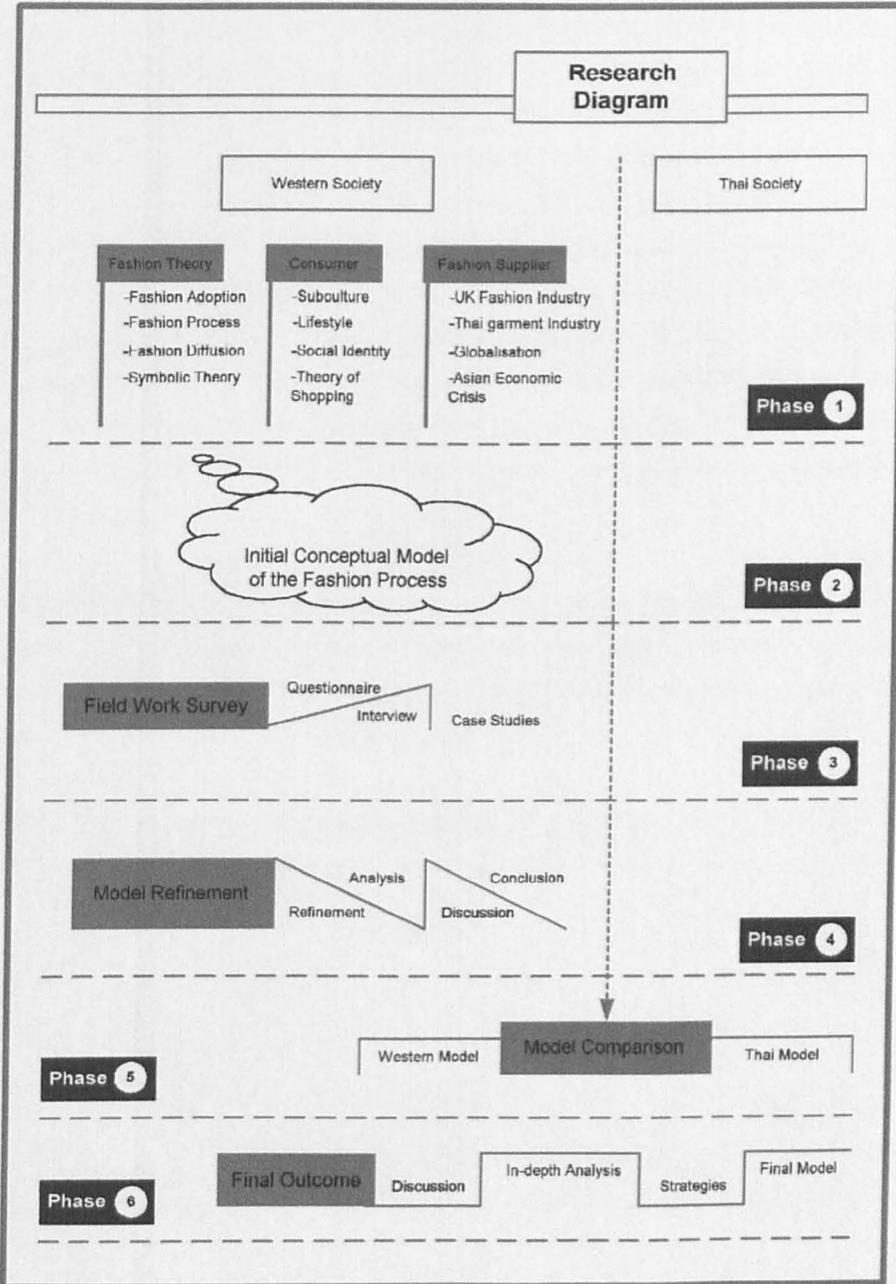


Figure 1.1.1: Research Diagram

An organising framework for the research is shown in Figure 1.1.1. The Figure shows the

core plan of the research, which centres on a comparative study of fashion processes in the West and in Thailand. The research is divided into six stages as follows:

Phase I: Literature Reviews

The first phase of the research was to gather secondary data from sources such as, textbooks, journals, conference papers, and statistical reports of relevant institutions/industries. The data divided into three major areas, namely, fashion theory, the fashion consumer, and the fashion supplier. The impact of global economics is a context within which the three areas operated and therefore to some extent to their context may be understood to be affected by the dynamic of that context. The first area includes a number of carefully selected significant and related fashion theories, i.e., fashion semiology, fashion process and fashion diffusion theories. The second area of investigation is about consumer theory, culture, sociology and anthropology. Theories of shopping, consumption and lifestyle are discussed. The third area of investigation includes manufacturing, marketing, design management and design process in the UK and Thai fashion industries.

A model of the literature review process (Saunders, et al., 1997, p. 37) is adopted in this research. The process consists of eight sequence steps: research questions and objectives; define parameters; generate and refine keywords; conduct search; obtain literature; evaluate; record; and draft review.

Fashion definitions are considered in Chapter 2. Major literature reviews of fashion theories and fashion commodification will be found in Chapters 3 and 4, respectively.

Phase II: Constructing a Conceptual Model of the Western Fashion Process

In Chapter 5 a conceptual model of the Western fashion process is initially constructed, based on the secondary data, i.e., the Symbolic Interactionist (SI) Theory of Fashion (by Kaiser, Nagasawa and Hutton); the Macro-Micro Continuum (by Ritzer and Hamilton); fashion leadership theory; fashion adoption; fashion diffusion; etc.

At this stage, the conceptual model is constructed by the dialectic method. This methodology consists of thesis and antithesis, in which the former is the Symbolic

Interactionist Theory of Fashion and the latter is the Macro-Micro Continuum, and incorporating aspects of details derived from other existing theories. The conceptual model is aimed at providing theoretically an understandable mechanism of the fashion change process.

Phase III: Empirical Research: Fieldwork Survey and Case Studies

In the third phase, after gathering the secondary data by reviewing relevant literature and forming the initial model, it is necessary to search for primary data. Due to the initial conceptual model being divided into two significant realms, the macro- and micro-levels, different research approach and methods are used for investigating these two realms. The research approach, discussed in the introductory of Chapter 6, draws on a combination of phenomenological and positivism methods including quantitative and qualitative surveys. The purpose of the empirical studies is, then, to emphasise, validate and support the theoretical model, either in terms of bridging gaps or of enhancing and refining the initial conceptual model.

At the micro-level, hypotheses are set out based upon the argument central to the construction of the conceptual model. The study aims to ground the relationship, between fashion adoption by individuals and or those identified as fashion adopters, and the psychological impulses that propel them towards the different levels of adoption, through empirical study. The hypothesis that deals with the macro- or society level is more phenomenological, in order that it is more appropriate for it to be examined through observation (Saunders, et.al., 1997).

Discussion and argument in the setting up of hypotheses as well as the survey process and results are in Chapter 6.

Phase IV: Model Refinement

In Chapter 7, the model is further refined by additional theories, in order to provide greater detail in the model mechanism.

Phase V: Model Comparison

Chapter 8, the second half of the thesis, is an investigation of the Thai fashion system, and is divided into three main sections. These are 1) a historical perspective on the development of "fashion" since it was introduced into Thai society; 2) a study of class and its formation of Thai society; and 3) the dominance of the consumption power of the new rich in Thailand.

Chapter 9 is concerned with a comparison between the conceptual framework (discussed in Chapters 5 and 7) and fashion phenomena and the fashion process in Thailand. A conceptual model for the Thai fashion industry is then constructed, based on a comparison between the two fashion industries (Western and Thai). The result of this comparison is the discovery of two divergent pathways. Potentially, there are either different models of the fashion process in Thailand, or a model similar to the prototype constructed on the basis of the Western model.

Chapter 9 aims also to explore some strategies, by which Thai suppliers might re-orientate themselves towards domestic fashion origination and the attainment of international prestige, enable them to exploit global markets.

Phase VI: Final Outcome

Conclusions and an overall review of the research findings are in Chapter 10.

Chapter 2

Terminology of Fashion

The essence of Buddhist philosophy is the cycle of life. Every cycle must consist of four phases, namely birth, growing to maturity, waning and decline, and finally death. This cycle is true for all of us and is a basic template, which governs all human activities. The closest thing to the human body is its clothing and by extension this also becomes our mode of expression. Consistent with the nature of "fashion" is that it traces our life changes. There is another tenet in Buddhist philosophy, which is expressed in the proverb that "Change is a certainty". It seems that for many people continuous change in their human existence is not desirable and they are likely to feel it is uncontrollable. On the other hand, change in fashion, unlike in life, is apt to be desired and controllable. It is controllable in the sense that it is dependent upon people's needs or desires. Seasonal changes in fashion have long been a conventional and useful necessity in Western society, partly because of climate variability. There are very few certainties in life. It can, however, be said that "Change in fashion is a certainty". When discussing fashion, there are many pitfalls because fashion can mean many different things to different people. It is important from the outset of this thesis to establish terms and definitions. This chapter, therefore, is concerned to establish a basic terminology, which will both ensure consistency in meaning throughout the thesis and facilitate a link to concepts.

2.1 Existing Definitions

In general, the word "fashion" can relate to any commodity such as furniture, motor cars,

or electrical appliances as well as, in particular, to clothing (Braham, 1997). Having clearly understood the generality of the term "fashion", it must be more specifically defined to enable us to focus on the particularity of its use in different situations.

Fashion has been defined in various ways, from many viewpoints, by many theorists and from the viewpoint of various disciplines. The following are samples of some definitions of fashion. Each of these definitions stems from the varying perspectives that depend on the discipline of the authorities. The following definitions are therefore grouped under 3 main headings, namely: style, concept and process.

2.1.1 Fashion as a Style

Fashion as a style is defined as:

- "the mode of dress, etiquette, furniture...adopted in society for the time being." (Oxford English Dictionary, 1901)
- "the custom or style of the dressing that prevails among any group of persons." (Fairchild Dictionary of Fashion, quoted in Perna, 1987)
- "the popular style of clothes, hair, behaviour etc at a particular time, that is likely to change." (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 1995)
- "nothing more or less than a prevailing style at any given time." (Nystrom, 1928)
- "a currently accepted or popular style in a given field." (Kotler, 1980, quoted in Orgle, 1985)
- "a style of dress adopted from previously adopted styles." (Jarnow, et al., 1981)
- "the styles...that are socially prescribed and socially accepted as appropriate for certain social roles." (Barber and Lobel, 1952)
- "a style of consumer product or way of behaving that is temporarily adopted by a discernible proportion of members of a social group because that chosen style or behaviour is perceived to be socially appropriate for the time and situation." (Sproles and Burns, 1994)

2.1.2 Fashion as a Concept

Fashion as a concept is defined as:

- "a concept of what is currently appropriate." (Daniels, 1951)
- "the pursuit of novelty for its own sake." (Robinson, 1958)
- "a way of dressing, behaving...that is considered especially up-to-date or

noticeably following the contemporary trend." (Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, 1966, quoted in Sproles and Burns, 1994)

- "that by which the fantastic becomes universal." (Oscar Wilde, quoted in Perna, 1987)

2.1.3 Fashion as a Process

Fashion as a process is defined as:

- "a series of recurring changes in the choices of a group of people, which though they may be accompanied by utility, are not determined by it." (Ross, quoted in Hurlock, 1929)
- "an elementary form of collective behaviour." (Lang and Lang, 1965)
- "a process of social contagion by which a new style or product is adopted by the consumer after commercial introduction." (King, 1964)
- "is to impose and suddenly to accept as a new rule or norm what was, until a minute before, an exception or whim, then to abandon it again after it has become a commonplace, everybody's thing." (Poggioli, 1968, quoted in Finkelstein 1996)

2.2 Main Points of Existing Definitions

It is essential to understand the real meaning of fashion. The main points in the above definitions can be summarised as follows:

- Fashion can be a style, a mode or in the form of an object, e.g. clothing, shoes, accessories, furniture and styles of hair, as well as the manner in which people do things. However, apparel is most frequently thought of in relation to the term fashion. The manner of doing something is usually involved with affectations of manners, thus, in a sense, adorning appearance. Fashion involves the effect of making the idea or commodity or aesthetic perspective into a seemingly inclusive category. In other words, a characteristic of the idea or commodity, which typifies a number of similar ideas or commodities of the same category. This is defined as a style. A style, therefore, may comprise many designs with some features in common.
- A style or a mode of something that is adopted by a number of people in a society. That style must be adopted by some discernible proportion of the whole society. The number of discernible people can be either a small group or a larger group. However, a style adopted by a small group is called a sub-cultural style.

- The adoption is temporary. As mentioned before, change in fashion is a certainty. Fashion is always adopted for some period of time. Once the fashion gains popularity, its value declines. Society is likely to look for a new style to replace it. This adoption period seems to be shorter than in the past, because these days there are many commodities provided in the market. In addition, modern marketing and retailing techniques vigorously and effectively persuade consumers to consume. Ultimately, an adopted style will be quickly replaced.
- Fashion is a process of adoption and also a process of change. As long as new fashion emerges, society will respond. The response is either quick or slow, gradual or immediate, once the process of adoption begins. Once it gains an initial discernible proportion of followers, the rest of the members will be forced by a socialising impulse to conform to the new popular style. It can be called a sense of belonging to the group.
- Fashion is appropriate for a particular society at a particular time. The adoption of new fashion is based on the perceptions and appreciation of fashion leaders and society's willingness to follow. They perceive the new fashion to be appropriate and compatible with their life in certain social circumstances.

Its centre of meaning lies in the idea and ideal of continually changing appearances (Sproule and Burns, 1994). A dynamic process of change becomes a basic need. Polhemus and Proctor stated in Orgle's (1985) work that:

"In recognizing that the increased modernization of contemporary society has institutionalized change, we can also begin to appreciate that, in the context of modernization, change and its symbolic representation in the fashion system are appropriate "natural" expressions of the "process of modernization [which] is a kind of permanent revolution without any final goal."

(Polhemus and Proctor, 1978)

Polhemus also stated in "Street Style" that:

"Fashion is trendy. It celebrates change and progress. Change, because This Year's New Look always elbows aside Last Year's New Look in a perpetual pursuit of novelty. Progress, because of the implicit assumption - one, which characterises modern society - that the New is also - by definition, ipso facto - the Improved. Both a product of modernism and its ultimate expression, fashion

faces resolutely towards the future. It has the capacity to generate the new and fresh, a capacity which has always made it appealing to those who subscribe to the view that change is preferable to the status quo and that tomorrow holds more promise than yesterday."

(Polhemus, 1994: p.8)

Blumer reinforces the notion of fashion change:

"The area in which fashion operates must be one that is involved in a movement of change, with people ready to revise or discard old practices, beliefs, and attachments, and poised to adopt new social forms..."

(Blumer, 1969)

Barnard discussed fashion in the sense of revolution and evolution.

"...fashion may be seen as consisting in a series of changes, but the idea of those changes being a final, once-and-for-all change is surely meaningless. The very idea of fashion involves reference to the idea of constant change and it is therefore incompatible with the idea of revolution as a complete and final change in conditions and circumstances..."

(Barnard, 1996: p. 122)

In which case, consumer behaviour, or the way that people consume fashion, leads to a process of change in appearances. This factor must be taken into account in the evaluation of fashion change and in relating to social change. If a change of fashion is a suitable response to social change, it can be deduced from the initial step that fashion contains a certain utilitarian element, which can variously be described as the fulfilment of an essential social function (Orgle, 1985).

2.3 Fashion & Clothing: the Distinction

Fashion and clothing are seen to have an ambivalent status. Fashion is always used as a term in relation to some material items such as clothing, furniture, shoes as well as ideas and behaviour. As such, many people include newly available commodities, i.e. clothing, furniture and shoes, as new fashion. However, it is not easy to include all commodities in the market place as fashion items. Barnard clearly explained the relationship between

fashion and clothing. But this could easily apply to fashion and any other commodity.

"... while all clothing is an adornment, not all adornments are fashionable. Some adornment might be terribly unfashionable. It could also be said that, while all clothing is an adornment, not all clothing is fashion, for the same reason. And it could be said that, while all fashion is adornment, not all fashion is clothing. Some fashion is tattooing or cicatrisation. Similarly, while every item of dress will be in a particular style, not every style item will be the fashion, as styles go in and out of fashion. And, while every item of dress will be after a certain fashion, not all fashions will be stylish; it is well known that some fashions set out to be anti-style. It could finally be said that, while all fashion is in style, not all fashion is an item of dress; some fashion involves changing the colour or shape of the body."

(Barnard, 1996: p. 9)

Barnard suggests that fashion is entangled with clothing, style and adornment. These can be subsets of each other depending on which point of focus is adopted. Fashion has been variously defined as objects, a consumer product, a component of the product, the symbolic meaning attached to the product, and the process by which the product is adopted by individuals and social groups. Meanwhile, Barnard stated that the Oxford English Dictionary lists several senses of the word "fashion": "the action or process of making", "a particular shape or cut", "form", "manner or demeanour" and "conventional usage in dress" (ibid.). The criticism that fashion is not an object, was also discussed

"Clothing is not an item of fashion until someone wears it to indicate their actual or ideal place in a social structure ... a particular piece of garment is not an item of fashion, but it should be possible to ascertain whether a particular piece of clothing is functioning as fashion".

(ibid.: p. 16)

Flügel had reached the same conclusion much earlier and he also states clearly that:

"to create a fashion, it is not sufficient to make a new design. For the design to become a fashion it must be worn, and not merely at a mannequin parade"

(Flügel, 1930)

From these insights, it is now becoming clear that not all clothing in a market place is "in fashion". Clothing functions as fashion whenever it is worn to express a particular style that represents the social concept of a particular period.

2.4 Arriving at a New Definition

If it can be clearly shown that the style of an object or of a behaviour can be a fashion if it is adopted by a sufficient number of members of society, then an object cannot be an item of fashion until it is used or has exhibited its social appropriateness.

In order to be consistent with the content of the research, the term "fashion" has to be specifically defined and consistently used throughout this study. This study is particularly concerned with the fashion system in which clothing represents the fashion movement. My definition of fashion, therefore, is based on a review of the extracts of various definitions of fashion above, and is as shown in Figure 2.4.1.

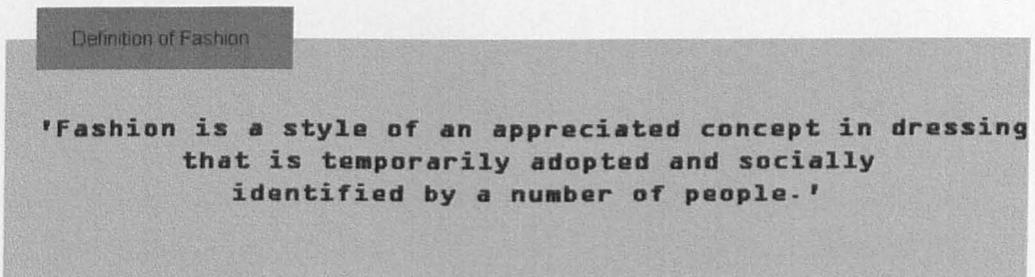


Figure 2.4.1: Definition of Fashion

For my definition, it is assumed that the style of a concept or behaviour is specified in terms of dressing. This implies that in this study fashion involves decoration of the body by clothing to alter appearance. Dressed adornment includes clothing, shoes and accessories. All other items are excluded.

There are, however, other dimensions to fashion implicit or explicit within my definition. It is important, therefore, to clarify several associated aspects of fashion.

2.5 Fashion: the Functions

Although clothing and fashion are inextricably linked, in some respects clothing is subordinate to fashion in as much as it is fashion that gives meaning to clothing. For the purpose of this study, we should explore the variety of the functions of fashion in relation to the wearing of clothes.

Clothing is one of the basic necessities of human existence. It is worn in order to fulfil various motives and functions for individuals and for society (Attfield, 2000). Some of these functions can be fulfilled without the involvement of fashion but others cannot.

Barber and Lobel (1952) listed three functions: the utilitarian, the aesthetic, and the socially symbolic. Similarly, for the purposes of fulfilling the needs of comfort, protection and communication of social meanings, clothing must contain functional, aesthetic and expressive characteristics (Lamb and Kallal, 1992).

In the following subsections, an attempt will be made to clarify those clothing functions, which involve fashion and those, which do not.

2.5.1 Utilitarian Purpose

The most basic product characteristic of clothing is that it should fulfil functional needs and requirements. People wear clothing for many purposes such as for protection, for adornment, for modesty, and for status indication (Rees, 1971; Kemp, 1971; Renbourn, 1971; Slater, 1986). The ultimate satisfaction is comfort. It is really the most vital property of life. Every living creature is constantly wishing to maintain or enhance its level of comfort. The attempt may be either deliberate or instinctive.

Comfort can be divided into physical, physiological and psychological aspects (Tarafdar, 1995). The climatic conditions, activity, a person's state of health and clothing are all important modifying factors in regard to physical comfort. The physiological point of view can be subdivided into specific negative comfort sensations, which are sensory, thermo-physiological and garment-fit discomfort.

The psychological aspect is a subjective response resulting from many stimuli such as fashion, colour, garment style, fabric construction, and suitability for an occasion, etc. Research has shown that the best way to measure comfort is to measure discomfort attitude (Cholachatpinyo, 1998).

If comfort is the ultimate satisfaction in wearing clothing, it can be concluded that comfort satisfaction has two aspects: the physiological and the psychological. It can further be argued that within the usual definition of utility, the physiological dimension of clothing substantially fulfils the comfort satisfaction requirement since it is a clothing to body interaction. Arguably fashion and associated aspects such as colour, relate more to

psychological wellbeing and comfort than to physiological wellbeing and that these are somehow separate. If psychological wellbeing is an aspect of comfort satisfaction, which cannot be detached from the physiological any more than the mind can be detached from the body, then fashion is an integral part of utility or there is a proportional relationship. There are those who think that this question of the separateness or proportional differentness of the physical and the psychological, the body and the mind, clothing and the fashion item, is crucial in determining the role of fashion in a cultural context. Which view is adopted, that they are separate or interdependent, may well be a consequence of individual priorities.

2.5.2 Aesthetic Purpose

Aesthetics is concerned with beauty or the appreciation of beauty, or of pleasing appearance. Human beings feel the need to beautify their bodies with adornment in the form of clothing. Fashionable clothing is currently a form dominated by ornamentation. Ornament as adornment within a garment inevitably becomes more than protection and utility. People think of the latest fashion as a way of being aesthetic, that is to say being appealing or of pleasing appearance. This perception links more strongly to the psychology of individuals to the extent that the wearers of the latest fashion derive mental comfort from the admiration of society. Beauty is to a great extent a social construct which, when linked to individual sensibility, results in a need or requirement for the presentation of the individual according to a prescribed standard. As with all facets of the human condition, socially prescribed standards are subject to change. These changes become fashion style.

Although within a social context visual aesthetics can serve several purposes in relation to fashion and clothing such as those articulated by Flügel (1930) and Laver (1969a), in the context of this thesis it will become apparent why at this stage the minimal definition is sufficient for our purposes. It should, however, be stated that individuals' interpretation of what makes them beautiful in relation to the social standard is highly subjective.

2.5.3 Expressive Purpose

Clothing has long been used as a means of identifying the wearers as belonging to certain status groups (Goffman, 1959; Feinberg et al., 1992). It helps them feel more secure. Conformity is a way of expressing and fulfilling a need. The individual's

appearance, which is mainly created by dressing, functions as a tool in social interaction and communication of meanings in the social world (Stone, 1965; Baudrillard, 1983; Kaiser, 1990).

Similarly, people deliberately and powerfully use clothing to help reflect their self-image and to prepare themselves to deal with business affairs (Grubb and Grathwohl, 1967; Sirgy, 1982).

In a complementary way, the perceiver is likely to infer the subject's background and personality from their clothing and appearance management (Schneider, 1973). As a result, clothing can be described as a high-involvement commodity, which the wearer uses to build up self-image and self-concept (Lamb and Kallal, 1992; Grubb and Grathwohl, 1967). Marx's term "social hieroglyphics" indicates the way we treat those clothes which conceal the social status of the wearer even as they communicate (Barnard, 1996).

The expressive purpose of dressing is discussed further in the following chapter.

Chapter 3

Fashion Theories

This chapter will review a range of existing fashion theories, which will later be employed in the construction and development of a conceptual model of the fashion process as it is understood in the context of Western socio-cultural and economic conditions. The theoretical frameworks selected have relevance to the subjective aspects of fashion and include such topics as the emergence of fashion, its process, and its arbiters and change-agents.

3.1 Fashion & Social Communication

Many fashion theorists discuss fashion as a communication tool (Barnard, 1996). The notion that fashion in some way communicates social values or reflects the condition of society was first expounded through the study of anthropology and sociology. Most people involved in fashion theory would consider J. C. Flügel to be the significant figure in the development of this theoretical approach. In developing the argument in his thesis the author has selected supportive abstracts which lead the discourse rather than choosing to set out a chronology of the history of the idea.

Finkelstein (1996) characterises fashion as a social, economic and aesthetic force, and, more often than not, all three at the same time. Fashion can be used to indicate social change and progress that shape modern life. Fashion, as it has been defined, is something, which is adopted by a discernible proportion of the members of a society,

therefore, it is related to social conditions. The term "society" has been defined, for example, by Polhemus as follows:

"A society or culture is a system of values, beliefs, prescriptions and proscriptions of behaviour, assumptions about social categories, a typology of role models and a model or map of itself. In order that these ideas should be communicated between persons and between generations it is necessary that they be translated into some material of expression."

(Polhemus, 1988)

Polhemus (ibid.) also mentions how members of society are able to communicate. There are two main ways that people use as a means to convey their ideas. These are verbal and non-verbal languages. Verbal expression seems to be the most important and the most popular means of communication. It has, however, limitations, which are evident when it is used to express a concept. In social interaction and behaviour, it is not always appropriate to communicate verbally. This is particularly the case in many formal situations. Fashion in formal dress codes plays an important part in supplementing verbal communication. In semiotic theory (Barthes, 1960), a social concept or idea that is expressed by the use of signs and symbols is called "signified". Meanwhile, the media themselves; the signs and symbols, are called "signifiers". Therefore, it might be concluded that fashion, which is represented as a social concept, is signified. Clothing, on the other hand, which is described as a plane of expression, is a signifier. The roles of semiotics will be discussed in more detail in a later chapter, for now it is sufficient to mention that codification, which is a mechanism of communication, can be understood through this method.

The coding and transmission of meanings through fashion in clothing is one thing, but the perception and reception of those meanings is something else. The social status and role of people are judged on the basis of what they are wearing. Barnard quotes Marx as expressing a view of the relationship between man, thing and society as:

"...commodities, items of fashion and clothing appear to be the clearest example of the way in which a definite social relation between men...assumes...the fantastic form of a relation between things".

(Marx, 1954, quoted from Barnard, 1996: p.7)¹

Since society consists of various groups of people who contribute to the prevailing order in different ways from different disciplines, or perhaps bring different perspectives and

values to the feast, it follows that fashion, if reflective of society, will be involved in many aspects of social activity.

Wasson (1968) and Blumer (1969) suggested that fashion has an effect in the area of the pure and applied arts, entertainment, medicine, industry, business decision making, literature, philosophy, political thought, religious interest and science. Lofland (1981), however, perceives that fashion is involved in items (physical objects), in ideas (philosophy), in the use of words, in activities and in life-styles. On the other hand, Winnakor and Goings (1973) stated that fashion affects nearly every aspect of daily life (Orgle, 1985).

If this is true then fashion is a common medium communicating the complexity of society at any given time, and consequently as society changes so does fashion. The changes in fashion of a society can be small or large. The mechanism through which fashion and social change are communicated is codification, understood through semiotics.

3.2 Fashion & Social Phenomena

As fashion is involved in every aspect of society and its activities, there is an underlying implication that fashion is a major issue in as much as society and people of every group within it communicate with each other via fashion. As previously stated, then, fashion is the meaning and clothing is the medium. Society has many facets, which operate dynamically. Just as society is more than a single element and contains diversity, there is more than a single fashion present at any one time. The various facets of society represent certain concepts with which members of that society freely choose to be involved. Some of these concepts may be generated through social interaction, others may come from culture at large. Society and culture are inextricably linked since one is a tangible realisation of the other, but on closer scrutiny I find that I am looking not at a single entity but rather at a loose affiliation.

The term "culture", a notoriously ambiguous concept, is defined by Williams as:

"...a particular way of life which expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning, but also in institutions and ordinary behaviour."

(Williams, 1965, quoted from Hebdige, 1979: p.6)

As such, ordinary behaviour is included in a particular way of life, a particular culture.

Since I have argued that society contains within itself many groups, facets and concepts which subscribe to a general value system, while at the same time being pre-occupied with other issues, the tangible manifestation of society which I suggested is culture must likewise have sub-divisions. This gives rise to the idea that there is also sub-culture.

As discussed earlier, fashion, a signified concept, can be used as a means of communication. In other words, it is used to express meanings and values. As a result, Barnard (1996) states that it is a cultural phenomenon in that culture may itself be understood as a signifying system. Fashion, in this sense, encompasses both society and identities of individuals within the society in terms of beliefs, values, ideas, and experiences.

Ortoleva (1998) states it is useful to see fashion as a "total social phenomenon" in which society manifests all of its values and conflicts.

"There is a tendency to see fashion as more than the narrow symbols of status: rather, a potentially limitless variety of symbolic universes. One of the most significant consequences of this shift in outlook is the attention now focused on the transcultural aspects of fashion. The role that is played in shaping it and modifying it by the instances of encounter and even conflict between the different cultures that now coexist in the space of the metropolis. Moreover, the emergence of an anthropological analysis has focused attention on the variety of phenomena that can be ranked under the term "fashion", and on the existence in every society of stable differences among groups and subcultures."

(ibid.: p. 64)

A society, especially a metropolis, consists of a variety of phenomena, or subcultural phenomena. The recent trend prediction, from the Premiere Vision 2000-2001, demonstrates a feeling of the movement in a metropolis. It is a feeling of the mixture exemplified in multiculturalism and a movement of cosmopolitan colour. Fashions are nowadays influenced by ethnic styles, shifting from Chinese to Japanese and so on. This raises the question of whether or not the wearers feel their characters changing when they adopt different ethnic styles.

We can summarise this by saying that, in a particular society, a particular culture consists of various subcultural phenomena or subcultural styles. These fashion styles signify meanings, values and ideas through their social communication. The social phenomena of each society are unique.

3.3 Fashion & Emergence

3.3.1 Capitalist Society and Class

Capitalist societies have always consisted of different classes. Classes, by Marx's definition, are divided by economic conditions. In other words, economic conditions separate the way of life, interests and culture. The way of life, interests and culture of a particular class form a particular taste as well as lifestyle, therefore, class, taste and lifestyle are products of different economic conditions.

"Some aspects of social class are variable, that is, they can change due to social mobility. By increasing one's income or acquiring a better job or more education, one can change social class."

(Kaiser, 1985: p.377)

Relative to Marx's observation, in other types of society or socio-cultural systems, such as a pure form of communism or one which has a religious dominant and which is also striving for conformity, fashion is inhibited because the primary function of fashion is to differentiate. This statement may seem self-evident, however when one investigates the micro-aspects of subculture or social diversity within a single society, it is important to differentiate between those subcultural groups which are in a particular sense benign, and those which impact on and change the nature or take over other groupings.

As discussed, individuals and society communicate their tastes and lifestyles via fashion and clothing. In other words, fashion and clothing are the ways in which class identity is represented, constituted and reproduced (Barnard, 1996).

3.3.2 The Birth of a New Fashion

According to the ideology of capitalism, class exists in a hierarchical system where inferior^d classes tend to move upward. The idea of fashion as deception is usually employed by those aspirant groups within a specific class who try to dress as superiors, thus representing themselves as members of a superior class. Alternatively, this strategy can be employed for social mobility in order to disguise the superiors' class origin, which might inhibit fluidity of social interaction.

Whenever a fashion style becomes popular, those in society who perceive themselves as "superiors", reappraise their value of that fashion, which subsequently diffuses. As a result, they seek another new fashion to redefine their differences. A new fashion is born. This tends to happen whether the style becomes popular in the society at large or within the confines of a class or peer group.

Clearly, the demands of exclusivity and variety in purchasing and using fashion as a statement of superiority are more important than those of imitation and social acceptance. To differentiate oneself from others, the "superiors" seek different and unique styles. One way is to adopt a new fashion early. Fashion innovations, which are symbolic in nature, are created by changes in social meaning attached to an existing style. The social meaning assigned to that form is new and makes a style that has existed for a long time new and innovative, even though the physical shape of a style itself may not be dramatically different from previous ones (Park, 1997).

"The consumption of symbolic innovations may be viewed within a sociological context as representing the individual's attempt to assimilate roles and to communicate reference group identification to others."

(Hirschman, 1980)

As a result, an individual, who attempts to become assimilated into a reference group or who is not certain of the meaning of a new style, seeks and imitates styles accepted by the reference group. These fashion followers accelerate, mature and complete a fashion cycle in the fashion process by following already accepted fashion styles. Fashion, which is adopted by a social class, can be seen to supplant the existing norm. As soon as a current item is exhausted, another takes its place, and so on. Consequently, the desire for another latest model is instantly satisfied by the cycle of fashion in postmodernity (Barnard, 1996).

"Fashion replaces the relative stability of custom and costume which codified and prescribed the appearances and forms of presentation of different social groups with a series of models that varied over time and required one and all to move as quickly as possible in adopting these new models."

(Ortoleva, 1998: p. 60)

It seems that to adopt superior style in order to move to superior class is the end of the game. Instead, the fashion seems to move away with no final destination. Fashion is

referred as a "compulsion to innovate signs...apparently arbitrary and perpetual production of meaning – a kind of meaning drive" (Baudrillard, 1981, quoted from Barnard, 1996). In addition, postmodern society is a society "driven to create a perpetual desire for need, for novelty, for endless difference" (Faurischou, 1988).

"It would have been useless to follow the shifting changes of fashion over time, because those changes were considered excessively rapid and substantially meaningless, given the inevitable cyclical returns to a certain sameness. What counted for all these thinkers was to understand the logic of the change, and this underlying logic was substantially always the same."

(Ortoleva, 1998: p. 63)

It seems to be suggested by the literature at this point in the review that the birth of new fashion is as a consequence of conditioned aspiration and discontent within which individuals find themselves.

3.3.3 Two Competitive Forces

According to my definition of fashion and the influence of social mobility, superiors initially adopt fashion in order to explore newness and alternatives. That is because the social mobility or hierarchy system creates a tension between classes.

From a psychological point of view, fashion has been explained as a form of exhibitionism. It conceals the body and simultaneously exaggerates its differences. Consequently, it creates a continual force between the competitive desires to display oneself and to retain a sense of modesty (Finkelstein, 1996; Flügel, 1930). That is a basic negotiation between the need of exhibiting (individualising force) and the need to conform to the social norm (socialising force). Similarly, Simmel (1971) explains that there are two social tendencies involved in the development of fashion. The two tendencies are the need for union and the need for isolation.

"Two social tendencies are essential to the establishment of fashion and, should either of these tendencies be absent from or lacking in a society, 'fashion will not be formed'."

(ibid.: p. 301).

Seemingly, people simultaneously need to be social and to be individual. The complex

set of desires or demands may be negotiated through fashion and clothing.

"In more complex societies, with a number of clearly defined and segregated groups, presumably, the forces encouraging members of that society to submit to the demands of that society are countered more strongly by the desire for individuation, and fashion can develop."

(Barnard, 1996: p. 11)

In addition, Douglas and Isherwood (1979) propose the argument that "goods are neutral, their uses are social; they can be used as fences or bridges". The basic purposes of using clothing as fences or bridges correspond to Simmel's social tendencies of the differentiating and socialising forces.

It would therefore appear that the motivating forces which precipitate fashion change are the direct consequence of the pluralistic nature of individuals within society, which is manifested in the negotiated outcome of the individuals' place in society and recognition by society of their individuality.

3.3.4 The Key Agents of Fashion Emergence

Irrespective of the perception of individuals, there are underlying mechanisms which could be considered as conditioning their actions as participants in fashion. To understand the forces that stimulate and direct changes and the development of fashion, it is essential to understand the vast complexities and mechanisms of our total social, cultural, economic and historical milieu (Sproles and Burns, 1994).

Sproles and Burns state that 5 key agents contribute significantly to the emergence of new fashion. We should fully recognise:

1. The social and cultural context of change
2. The roles of the fashion marketing system as producer of change
3. The special powers of extraordinary events as inspiration to change
4. The creative roles of consumers as agents of change
5. The unique historical context in which change evolves from year to year.

In my view, Sproles and Burns exclude the significant role of fashion designers. In other words, fashion designers have a special role in contributing interpretations of social needs through fashion products. Therefore, it is essential to include:

6. The creative roles of fashion designers as interpreters of social needs.

3.3.4.1 Social and Cultural Context

Fashion is a reflection of socio-economic, political, and cultural changes (Behling, 1985; Bush and London, 1960; Lauer and Lauer, 1981; Robenstine and Kelley, 1981; Wilson, 1985). According to my definition of fashion, the adoption of fashion is a social appreciation. In addition, it is adopted at a given time. Hence, Flügel (1930) and Blumer (1969) describe fashions always evolving towards the latest modernity, or to symbolise the "spirit of the times".

"In every period, costume has some essential line and when we look back over the fashions of the past we can see quite clearly what it is, and we can see what is surely very strange, that the forms of dresses, apparently so haphazard, so dependent on the designer, have an extraordinary relevance to the spirit of the age. ...We touch here something very mysterious, as if the Time Spirit were a reality, clothing itself ever in the most suitable garments and rejecting all others."

(Laver, 1969b)

If clothes truly express the spirit of the age, we can use changing fashions as an indication of a changing society (Lauer and Lauer, 1981). Appendix I shows some examples of the link between social change and the emergence of new fashions.

The process of social change can be examined on several levels: the type of change occurring, the origins of the change, and the channels within a society, which facilitate the change. Within any society there are three types of patterns or units that undergo change: socio-economic patterns, political patterns, and cultural patterns.

"The origins of change and the channels within a society, which facilitate the change comprise three forces: planned change by the fashion industry, unplanned changes where new fashions become an outgrowth of major or extraordinary events in society, and changes inspired by creative consumers ranging from public celebrities to average consumers."

(Smith, 1976).

To recap, the above literature suggested that at the same time as the individual is motivated to change, the context within which he or she exists is also motivated to

change. There are thus parallel dynamic forces for change operating simultaneously.

3.3.4.2 Historical Context

Fashion is an evolutionary development and elaboration of previously existing fashions (Pannabecker, 1997). Fashion may be noticed as a series of changes but the idea of the changes can be considered as continuous rather than completely different or revolutionary.

"From a historical perspective, it appears that the silhouettes and dimensions of fashion objects progress along repeating cycles of change."

(Sproles and Burns, 1994: p.33)

According to the system of historical continuity in change, a dramatic change would be unlikely to occur over a short period. One major reason is that it would seem to be too innovative to be accepted immediately by most consumers if the current style were suddenly abandoned.

"Balenciaga was often extremely advanced – years, and even decades, ahead of his time. As a result his clothing was difficult for many people to understand, and he was most appreciated by a small coterie of fashion connoisseurs, including other designers, such as Hubert de Givenchy, whom he influenced."

(Steele, 1997: p.22)

Indeed, fashion revolution in terms of a complete and once-and-for-all change rarely occurs, and if it is to do so, it needs some extraordinary factors or impacts such as war, economic crisis or political decree (see Section 8.1.1).

3.3.4.3 Extraordinary Events

As we have been seeing, fashion change is a certainty, as also is the fact that changes in fashion can be indicative of changes in society. Some social changes can be exceedingly powerful and pervasive, and this has been particularly true of the twentieth century. Appendix I also demonstrates how social change in the past influenced fashion change.

Moore (1974) concludes that the fundamental characteristics of contemporary social

change are as follows:

- Rapid change is occurring frequently and even constantly;
- Change occurs as sequential chains of events, which reverberate throughout many segments of a society;
- Change is frequently planned, or is a result of deliberate innovation;
- The material, technology, and social strategies for creating change are rapidly expanding;
- Change is a normal occurrence affecting a large number of individual experiences and functional aspects of society and few aspects of life are exempt from the influences of change.

Apart from the above situations, there are some events that are considered as being extraordinary phenomena, which can powerfully stimulate social change. They are, for instance, war, economic recession, political revolution and technological invention.

The massive and sudden change in fashion during World War II was an example of the impact of that event on society as a whole. Fashion turned from luxurious styles into simple design and a minimal use of material.

"Clothes rationing coupons were distributed, with a garment costing a certain number of coupons, So-called "utility clothes", which met government standards, were sold at fixed prices. Additional restriction orders were imposed, limiting the yardage and controlling the styles that could be produced. The number of buttons, pleats, and pockets were all regulated to save both labour and materials."

(Steele, 1997: p. 6).

After the war, the New Look of 1947 by Christian Dior refreshed the fashion situation. The New Look collection served the needs of fashion ladies in 1947 who were ready for a change from wartime austerity. Since then, the changes in fashion have resumed a normal cycle of change, but over a shorter time span.

The economic collapse in Thailand and the Asia Pacific region recently provided a superb example of the social and cultural change phenomenon. It affected many aspects of the Thai lifestyle: from having excessive credit to no credit; from being employed to being unemployed; from having lots of savings to being bankrupt; and from over-consumption to considered consumption.

As a result, Thai fashion changed from opulence to plainness; from using expensive silks

with golden metallic yarn to cheap synthetic fabrics; from buying imported fashion goods to making do with domestic fashions; and, a precipitous drop, from carrying exorbitant Louis Vuitton handbags to carrying "Kipling", a cheap nylon rucksack.

From my survey of the changes in Thai culture and costume (see Appendix V and VI), it is clearly evident that these changes in dress were influenced by government policies and by politics in general. The changes in costume in the period of King Rama IV (the period of "The King and I") and King Rama V were influenced by the threat of Western colonialism. The Kings, as head of state, directed the country towards a more civilised "modernity" (Western capitalist/ Western friendly), by trading and importing Western commodities such as fashion goods, shoes, socks, hats and lace fabric. There were also indirect influences upon the country via the Bowring Treaty of 1855 (see Chapter 8 for details) (Suphachalasai, 1994). From those times Thai costume changed from an wholly indigenous Thai style to a mixed style somewhere between Thai and Western, and finally to an almost completely Western style.

Technology is one of the most important influences on fashion change. Modernism and postmodernism have the development of technology at their core. The technology for producing textiles has been developing continuously. Innovative changes in the characteristics and properties of fabrics and related materials always guide the direction of fashion.

"In the development of new approaches to garment engineering that will potentially change the appearance of fashion, Issey Miyake and Mikiko Minagawa have developed techniques of cutting and bonding thermoplastic fabrics with an electric charge, and their fluid iridescent nylon textile can be heat moulded to form the shape of the garment."

(Crocker, 1995: p. 6)

The invention of "Lycra" is another example. Lycra by Du Pont has been widely and immediately accepted for use in many kinds of sportswear (ibid.). Its extensible and recoverable properties superbly serve the needs of comfort clothing and increase the possibility in creating new shapes in fashion. All kinds of fashion sportswear have been produced with Lycra. In addition, it has penetrated the whole range of fashion materials. Lycra has become a trademark and a value-added addition to brands as familiar as the wool mark.

As discussed above, fashion change can be planned deliberately or unplanned. Changes

are, however, indicative of social appropriateness for a given time.

3.3.4.4 Consumers

Consumers are believed to be more powerful change agents than the industry (Kaiser, et al., 1997). Generally, in the marketplace there are a tremendous number of retailers providing products in various styles. Consumers choose what they want. They also create a new look by mixing and matching the fashion items in the marketplace. For the fashion conscious brands, retailers are aware of the rapid change of fashion direction. During the season the new looks, often created by consumers, cause the industry to produce another supplementary collection to serve the market at the right time and with the right style. As a result, the industry has created some production management strategies such as "just in time", "quick response" and others. Consumers, thus, influence the "looks" and demands while the industry provides the assortment of products.

To exemplify this argument, the fashion characteristic of London is distinctive. Since the 1950s, London has been the centre of a vibrant youth culture in which "the girl in the street" influences its fashion system. A quote from *Women's Wear Daily*, 1950s, reads

"The old guard no longer sets fashion...The mood is youth-youth-youth"

(Steele, 1997).

Nowadays, British fashion is still influenced by street youth fashion consumers. As a result, London Fashion Week has been the place for designers who target the creative youth fashion market. This has led to the atmosphere of the event being simple but creative and weird, contributing to London's being known as the cutting edge fashion city. There will never be any fabulous or luxurious evening dress, as in the French style, presented in London. It is clear that British youth consumers can exert powerful influence as fashion change agents.

In summary, fashion designers and marketers cannot dictate what fashion innovations will be accepted. Consumers themselves become important leaders in the actual process of fashion acceptance. While professional change agents can only offer products for acceptance, the buying and wearing choices of consumers ultimately constitute fashion leadership. Consumer change agents are models of behaviour whose tastes set the standard of excellence that others follow.

3.3.4.5 Marketing System

Marketers and retailers perform business-oriented roles as professional promoters of an innovation on behalf of their employers or other advocating clients.

Kean (1997) believes that industry is the more powerful change agent in the fashion system, rather than the consumer. The industry, from my point of view, includes manufacturing, marketing and retailing. Fashion commodities are edited at each level of the fashion system: from designer's design prototypes to garment prototypes; from a whole range of garment samples to a selected range; from a full range of colour schemes to a minimal set; from an original ideal material to a saleable and profitable one; from buyer to retailer; and so forth. In addition, Kean believed that industry manipulates choice for consumers. Consumers, however, perceive choices at the point of purchase. From Kean's point of view, products in the marketplace are homogeneous. This refers to the same style of garment at different price levels.

On the other hand, Kaiser, et al. (1997) conclude that globalisation influences the degree of heterogeneity of goods available in most marketplace settings. This implies a different viewpoint from Kean, namely that each manufacturer provides a different style of goods for the same competitive market, possibly for the same age group.

3.3.4.6 Fashion Designer

The role of the fashion designer in the changing of fashion is excluded from the viewpoint of Sproles and Burns. A contrary viewpoint is that fashion designers have dominated the evolution and revolution of fashions since high fashion emerged. High fashion is one of the most important components of the fashion industry in which new fashions usually originate from those high fashion designers (Arnold, 2001).

Designers have a key role as interpreters of social needs and creating subsequent expression of that in the form of fashion objects. In support of this statement, the revolutionary fashion change after wartime austerity is an example. The "New Look" by Christian Dior created a fashion revolution, which corresponded to majority needs and the readiness for a change. In the 1980s when the world economy was healthy, fashion designers provided alternative styles different from those of the 1970s. "Dress for Success" was the major theme of these styles, followed by styles of "Too Much Never Enough" (Steele, 1997). In that period, a number of contemporary designers emerged

(such as Karl Lagerfeld, Christian Lacroix and Jean Paul Gaultier). Those designers, who were able to design the right styles to serve social needs at the right time, were the change agents of the era.

Textile designers should also be recognised as change agents. Crocker (1995) points out that designers use textiles as the means to express fashions. Textile designers develop new structures, patterns, surfaces and colour, and fashion designers use these textiles to create styles.

3.4 Fashion Process

After careful study, the fashion process can be observed in four quite distinct contexts. These are:

- The process by which fashion is fed by individual need: **“fashion adoption”**.
- The process by which fashion change is engaged in by an economic/cultural system: **“fashion diffusion”**.
- The process by which fashion is bridged between the diffusion and adoption: **“fashion interaction”**.
- The process by which fashion is driven by the commercial sector: **“fashion retailing”**.
-

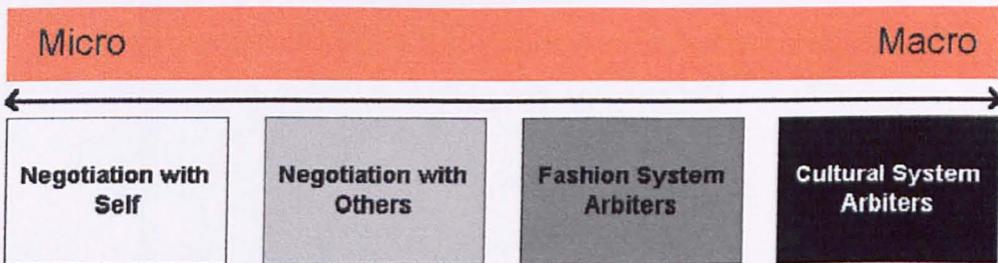


Figure 3.4.1: Macro-Micro Continuum (After Hamilton, 1997)

3.4.1 Fashion Adoption

Fashion adoption is the process by which a new style is adopted by the consumer after its commercial introduction (Forsythe, et al., 1991). In other words, fashion adoption is the

individual decision-making process used for the adoption of any given style. Kaiser (1990) describes this fashion process as the individual level. In addition, Hamilton (1997) argues that fashion adoption is a situation of negotiation with self or at micro-level in the macro-micro continuum of the fashion process as shown in Figure 3.4.1.

Kaiser, et al. explain the idea of negotiation with self as the first stage of fashion process.

"The micro-subjective realm would accommodate the interpretations of the resulting "looks", including negotiations of meaning to make sense of symbolic ambiguity."

(Kaiser, et al., 1997: p. 185)

Many researchers have believed that individualism is influenced by modern Western culture (Kaiser, et al., 1995; Guisinger and Blatt, 1994; Triandis, 1989). Kean explains this point, based on Triandis.

"According to Triandis (1989), an individualistic culture is characterized by complexity, affluence and to a lesser degree, mobility (within and among social classes). The more complex and affluent the culture, the more emphasis there is on individualism, self-reliance, independence and creative self-expression. Self-identity is often reflected through manipulation of possessions such as appearance and dress."

(Kean, 1997: p. 172)

Many researches have tended to focus on the characteristic of fashion adoption led by fashion innovation and innovator. Full references which illustrate this point has been provided by Behling (1992) (see Endnote).

3.4.2 Fashion Adoption Process

Many researchers have proposed models explaining the procedure of adoption process. We may mention, for instance, Rogers (1983), Robertson (1971), and Sproles (1977). Forsythe, et al. (1991), Sproles and Burns (1994) summarise all of those three adoption models in Figure 3.4.2. According to Figure 5.1.1A the adoption process generally starts from awareness of new fashion; then the level of interest is developed either by evaluation, comprehension or trial; and then the last stage is decision-making. Forsythe describes the adoption influences based on Sproles' model that:

"This process is influenced by the adopter's identity, adopter motivations, and influences from the adopter's environment."

(Forsythe, et al., 1991).

On the other hand, Robertson (1971) divides his model into three main stages. These are cognitive activities, affective activities and behavioural activities. The cognitive or thinking activities consists of problem perception, awareness and comprehension. The affective or feeling activities consist of comprehension, attitude and legitimation. The behavioural or "doing" activities consist of legitimation, trial and adoption. There are also two forms of non-rational decision-making influencing individuals to go on to the doing stage. They are psychosocial form and impulse form. One may skip stages of the process, return to previous stages, or reject the innovation at any time.

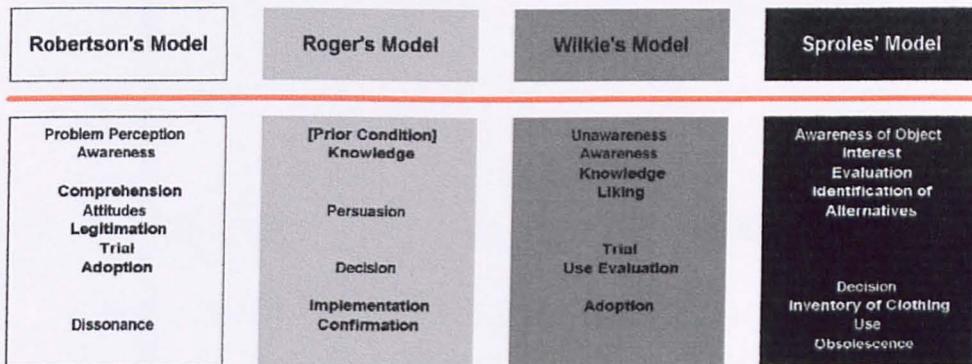


Figure 3.4.2: Summary of Adoption Models (After: Forsythe, et al., 1991; Sproles and Burns, 1994)

3.4.3 Fashion Innovation

Rogers defines an innovation as an idea, practices, or objects perceived as new by an individual, while Barnett (1953) defines an innovation as any thought, behaviour, or thing that is new because it is quantitatively different from existing forms. Sproles and Burns (1994) conclude with a definition of fashion innovation based on Rogers, as a style or design perceived as new by an individual.

In the acceptance of fashion innovation, there are five characteristics of an innovation that confront an individual (Rogers, 1983):

- *Relative advantage.* Consumers perceive a fashion innovation as more

satisfactory than previous fashion by comparison. In other words, they perceive the innovation as more fashionable and consider it as having a relative advantage over the current fashion.

- *Compatibility.* Consumers perceive a fashion innovation as consistent with the existing norms and values. The compatible innovation is likely to be adopted more than one that violates prevailing norms and values.
- *Complexity.* Consumers may feel the innovative style is too complex and difficult to use appropriately in their lives. It may be rejected as the consumers find it difficult to co-ordinate the new fashion item with other clothing and accessories into a total look.
- *Trialability.* Consumers may be offered items by a commercial agent to test the innovative fashion on a small scale or over a short period of trial time. Innovative and inexpensive products like cosmetics, brassieres, perfume and accessories can be easily trialled.
- *Observability.* The innovation is used to ascertain to what degree it is visible and communicable to others. New fashion should be visibly communicable. The communicability characteristics of new fashion influence the adoption and diffusion process.

Several researchers (Robertson, et al., 1984; Wilkie, 1990) added a sixth characteristic: perceived risk.

- *Perceived Risk.* This refers to negative results which a consumer imagines may come from adopting an innovation. New fashion may have economic, social and technological risks associated with it. For instance, from the economic viewpoint, consumers may wonder whether a new style is worth the money. From a social risk viewpoint, consumers may wonder whether friends will approve of, or be impressed favourably by, the new style. Consumers may worry, from the technological viewpoint, whether the style will maintain its attractive appearance through multiple wearings and cleanings.

3.4.4 Fashion Life Cycles

The adoption model was initially conceptualised by Ryan and Gross (1943) and further developed and refined by Rogers (1962). In the study of the diffusion of innovations, Rogers is the most influential in this area. The classic bell-shaped curve or the fashion life cycle curve is one of his contributions. The curve represents stages of adoption plotted over time and corresponding to a normal distribution curve (Behling, 1992).

Additionally, it is a graphical representation of a frequency distribution showing consumers' acceptance of a specific style. Figure 3.4.4A shows the curve, which consists of five ideal types of fashion adopters.

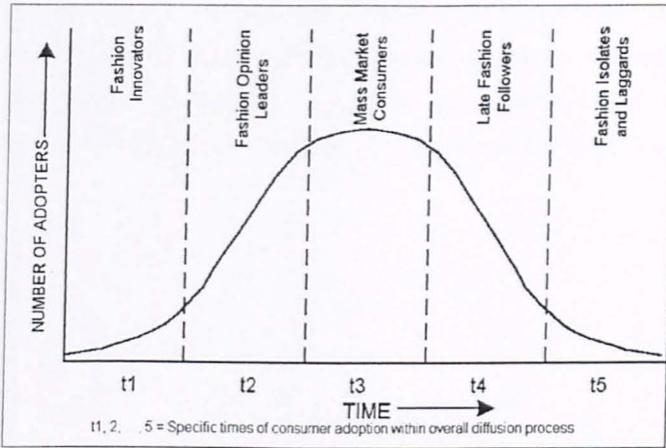


Figure 3.4.4A: Rogers' Bell Curve and Categories of Fashion Adopters (After: Sproles and Burns, 1994)

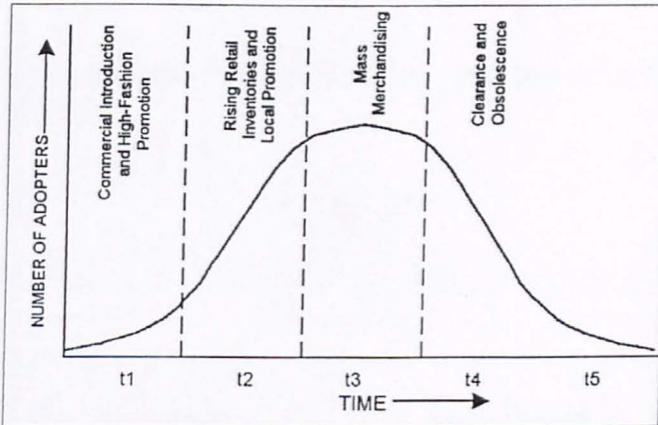


Figure 3.4.4B: Stages of Fashion Marketing (After: Sproles and Burns, 1994)

The axis x represents the length of time, which the diffusion takes. The curve also shows the speed with which consumers adopt the object as time passes, as well as the level of acceptance of the object at each point in time. The curve is constructed by counting the number of consumers who adopt the style at each point in time and drawing a graph of this acceptance. The first group to adopt a new fashion is the innovators, 2.5 % of the total adopters' population. The next group, the early fashion adopters, is 13.5 % of the

total adopters' population. The early majority adopters, 34% of the total adopters' population and the late majority, 34% of the total adopters' population, are the next groups, respectively. The final one is called the laggards, which is 16% of the total adopters' population. The innovations may not be fully adopted, and there would in that case be an additional group, referred to as non-adopters (Rogers and Shoemaker, 1971). According to marketer's viewpoint, the life cycle curve can be divided into four stages which are commercial introduction, inventory accumulation and promotion, mass merchandising, and clearance and obsolescence as shown in Figure 3.4.4B.

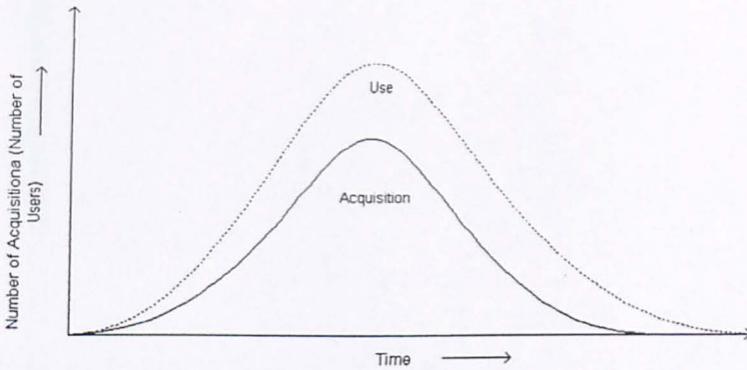


Figure 3.4.4C: Consumers' Acquisition and Use of Fashion (After: Nystrom, 1928)

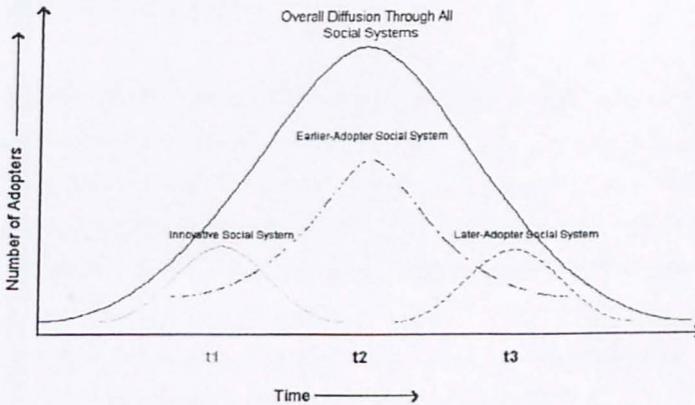


Figure 3.4.4D: Variation in Fashion Diffusion across social Systems (After: Sproles and Burns, 1994)

Figure 3.4.4C shows the two diffusion curves, which are an acquisition curve and a use curve (Nystrom, 1928). Consumers may continue to wear a style for some time after they

have bought it, thus, the fashion use cycle is likely to be longer. Figure 3.4.4D shows the differing diffusion of a fashion within three types of social systems of differing innovativeness. Figure 3.4.4E shows the comparison of curves between a fad curve, an ideal fashion curve and a classic fashion curve.

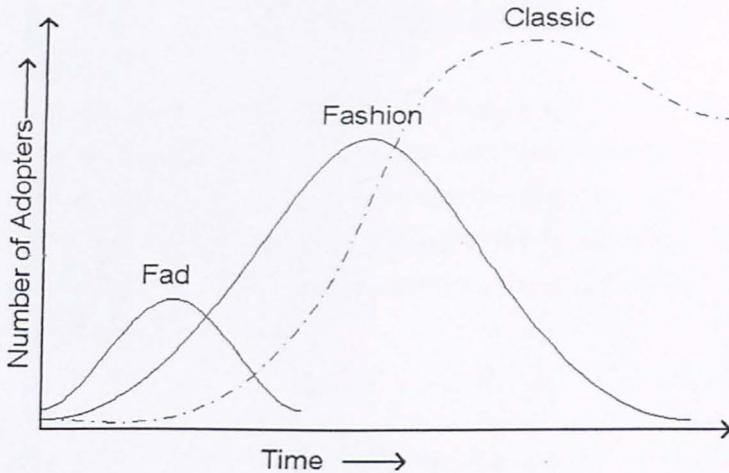


Figure 3.4.4E: Diffusion of Fad, Fashion, and Classic (After: Sproles and Burns, 1994)

3.4.5 Fashion Adopters

Based on Rogers' curve, the fashion adopters are divided into five groups: the innovators; the early adopters; the early majority; the late majority and the laggards. Paradoxically, Sproles and Burns (1994) divide the curve into five groups, but on a different time scale from the adoption as shown in Figure 3.4.4A. The five groups are fashion innovatorsⁱⁱⁱ, fashion opinion leaders and early conformists, mass market consumers, late fashion followers^{iv}, and fashion isolates and laggards (details of definition and researches on fashion innovator and follower in Endnote). The consumer leaders, from Sproles and Burns' viewpoint, are defined and divided into subgroups as follows:

- The Innovators: They are the first group to adopt an innovation. They are also the first to display a new product, thereby bringing attention to it, and they play leading roles in the early history of an innovation's acceptance. Fashion innovators may simply be the first to wear new styles of the fashion industry but often they are creative consumers who invent new looks themselves. This may come from many sources: mixing and matching styles currently on the market,

shopping second-hand stores, or even creative home sewing (see Endnote).

- **The Opinion Leaders:** They influence adoption and diffusion through interpersonal communications and contact with others. Their influence occurs in face-to-face interactions with others, such as during informal conversations with friends or co-workers, where they can socially legitimise the acceptance of an innovation. They may have especially powerful influence as visual communicators of styles.
- **The Innovative Communicators:** They simultaneously perform the roles of innovator and adoption leader. That is, the innovative communicator is both an early buyer of a new product and an interpersonal communicator of information and influence concerning the product. Such a person is of obvious importance to fashion diffusion, since the wearer of a new style can both visually and verbally communicate information about it.

(ibid.: p.87)

In summary, these fashion innovators, opinion leaders and innovative communicators are crucial to the fashion process. Their preferences constitute the basis for new fashion trends. Fashion leadership by consumers is a widespread and diversified form of innovative human behaviour. They can be people who are public celebrities, movie stars, singers or those who are frequently topics of the mass media.

The second group includes the kind of consumer termed an early adopter, who may not necessarily qualify as a fashion leader but who is still an early adopter of the fashion trend. The third group is dominated by mass-market consumers. The fashion by that time becomes widely available in retail stores and is adopted by the largest number of consumers. Consumers who adopt fashion after this stage can be grouped as fashion followers. The final stage is when the fashion declines, thus late adopters are called laggards and isolates may make their first decisions to adopt the fashion.

3.4.6 Fashion Diffusion

The fashion process can be approached at both the individual level, which is fashion adoption, and the collective level, which is fashion diffusion. Fashion diffusion is the phenomenon of the collective movement of styles through a social system. In other words, fashion diffusion is the spread of an innovation within and across social systems. It centres on the decisions of a majority of members of society to adopt an innovation (Sproles and Burns, 1994).

3.4.6.1 Influential Factors

Communication has become an important element in the functioning of the diffusion process (Rogers, 1983). Communication can take place in the mass media, personal communications among adopters and potential adopters, and the persuasive influence of consumer leaders and other change agents. In other words, communications can be verbal and visual interactions.

Information and influence concerning an innovation can be spread through a social system by interactions between individuals. A society also communicates with outside information agents such as the mass media, the marketing system, or contacts with other social systems. Finally, awareness of the innovation is diffused to most members of the social system through the combined influence of external sources and interpersonal communications within the system (Sproles and Burns, 1994). Each person begins the adoption process at the time he or she first becomes aware of the innovation.

The following are the factors influencing the diffusion process.

- ***Geographic Location:*** Geographically accessible areas will receive innovations earlier than will those that are isolated from contact with the outside world.
- ***Mobility:*** Social systems whose members are mobile, or who travel and have other types of contacts with outside social systems, are likely to receive early exposure to an innovation.
- ***Norms Governing Innovativeness:*** Social norms must favour innovative behaviour if acceptance of an innovation is to occur.
- ***The Marketing System:*** A marketing environment composed of many retailing outlets offering many choices is likely to stimulate diffusion of innovations. Innovations will be offered early, and marketing communications are likely to promote interest in innovative behaviour.

The basic kind of fashion diffusion occurs within the social system. The innovations may be invented and diffused first in the most actively contemporary social systems, then as time passes, the innovations will be introduced to and diffused in traditional or less innovative social systems.

"The diffusion of innovations is affected by mass marketing, mass communications, and retail availability of styles in different areas of the country.

Diffusion is also stimulated by the high level of social and physical mobility of the population, which transmits and legitimizes new styles within and across subcultures or social systems. Finally, since the fashion industry and a large part of its clientele are concentrated in Europe and in large cities in the USA, these have become important starting points for fashion trends which then diffuse to the rest of the world".

(ibid.: p. 85)

3.4.7 Mass Diffusion

Mass diffusion is the process of diffusion among larger groups of people. It is explained as a process of collective behaviour among large numbers of people. Lang and Lang (1961) also describe the fashion process as "an elementary form of collective behaviour, whose compelling power lies in the implicit judgement of an anonymous multitude". In a complex and heterogeneous mass society, social contacts between individuals are typically limited and impersonal. Most people have direct associations with small groups, but the vast majority of the society is to the individual an anonymous multitude. Individuals may perceive societal fashion norms from mass media and on the streets. This perception influences individuals to evaluate fashion in the adoption process. This reaction is evident in mass fashion adoption when people perceive and judge the appropriateness of their behaviour by what they see in the larger society.

"Under such circumstances, the style of fashion selected becomes a reflection of a collectively endorsed standard that the individual perceives. This theory implies that the fashion process involves a continuous mechanism of collective conformity to a newly emerging societal norm."

(Sproles and Burns, 1994)

Collective behaviour is based on emergent norms although collective behaviour can occur spontaneously and sometimes irrationally (Turner and Killian, 1987).

"Fashion should be analysed as a process of collective selection of a few fashions from numerous competing alternatives. Innovative consumers may experiment with many possible alternatives, but the ultimate test in the fashion process is the competition between alternative styles for positions of fashionability."

Blumer also identifies three factors that shape the process. The first is the historical continuity of fashion change, and the second is the influence of modernity. The gradual formation and refinement of collective tastes is the last factor. All these factors are reinforced by the continued popularity of fashion magazines, and the coverage of the fashion trends by major newspapers. More than 50% of consumers watch what others are wearing and keep informed on fashion trends (Horridge and Richards, 1986; Sproles, 1977). The most pervasive of massed collective forces of the fashion process lies in the widespread social monitoring of fashion. Hence, the increasing visibility of a new style leads to increasing collective behaviour in fashion, or the more stimulating consumers' awareness of the style and motivation to accept it.

However, it is not necessary that all styles receiving high social visibility will become collective fashion. Consumer tastes are tending to be homogenised by mass fashion marketing and mass communication of information on new styles. Additionally, the styles, when manufactured and promoted, often simulate one another. As a result, the notorious knock-off copying further promotes a similarity in style. New fashions are advertised through the mass media, presenting social status and prestige, consequently building social desirability and encouraging consumers to accept them. In addition, the social visibility of the style can be created by some social forces such as urbanism, the social class system, social mobility, and an increasingly active lifestyle.

Collective behaviour can be found in various circumstances in a diverse society. However, the behaviour relating to fashions is more complex, happens over a long period, and occurs over many different geographic regions. In addition, as many new styles are provided to the innovators and fashion leaders, they are selectively adopted. This leads to a considerable degree of competition and social differentiation in emerging new styles. As such, collective behaviour towards fashion has no uniformity; thus, mass fashion trends embody variety.

3.4.8 Symbolic Interaction

The symbolic interactionist (SI) theory of fashion was proposed by Kaiser, Nagasawa and Hutton in 1991. They point out that many researchers explain the process of fashion diffusion through a society. The SI theory, however, attempted to explain the reasons and mechanism of the social process and the manner in which individuals negotiate with

ambiguity via appearance styles.

The SI theory was constructed based upon the work of three theorists, namely H. Blumer (1969), F. Davis (1992), and G. Stone (1962). Blumer's work has provided the notion of a fashion process from a macro level, viewing fashion as a process of collective selection. Symbolically, fashion helps individuals to adjust to social change. However, Blumer's theory is debated by some theorists who maintain that it is incomplete because of the lack of demonstrable relationship between the expressive symbolism and unconscious meanings in the realm of visual expression. The SI theory picks up this point, specifically the aesthetic sphere of appearance communication.

Davis' work focused on the processes of fashion change from the macro level to the micro level, framing fashion changes in the context of ambivalence. The inspiration in design is provided by a continual resource of social ambivalence.

Stone's work explains fashion at the micro level, viewing appearance as communication. Stone proposes two main ideas that: 1. Appearance is an integral component of identity; and 2. Appearance is a process of interpersonal negotiation of self, which is based on the senders' establishment of programs and any receivers' reviews of those programs. One of the receivers' perceptions is the symbolic ambiguity in the interpretive thought processes.

Figure 3.4.8A shows the linkage of their work at different levels. Blumer's work is on the macro level, Stone's work focuses on the micro level, while Davis' work is in between.

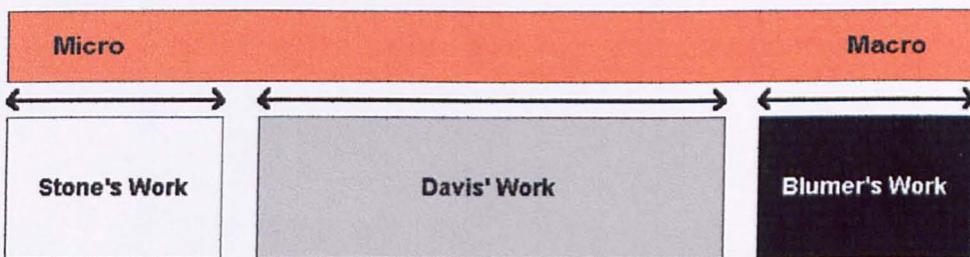


Figure 3.4.8A: Synthesising Three Fashion Theorists' works

The SI theory synthesises the three researchers' works as shown in the above Figure. Blumer's work generates the aspect of negotiation in collective processes. Davis' work, on the other hand, suggests the ambivalence about identity; and Stone's work provides the aspect of symbolic ambiguity.

Kaiser, et al. divide these ideas into two fashion processes: the change in appearance

styles, and the appearance processes in the post-modern context. According to the former, they explain the process of changing in appearance styles as being in five stages as follows:

- Principle of human ambivalence
- Principle of appearance - modifying commodities in the capitalist marketplace
- Principle of symbolic ambiguity
- Principle of meaning negotiation and style adoption
- Principle of an ongoing dialectic: ambivalence and style change.

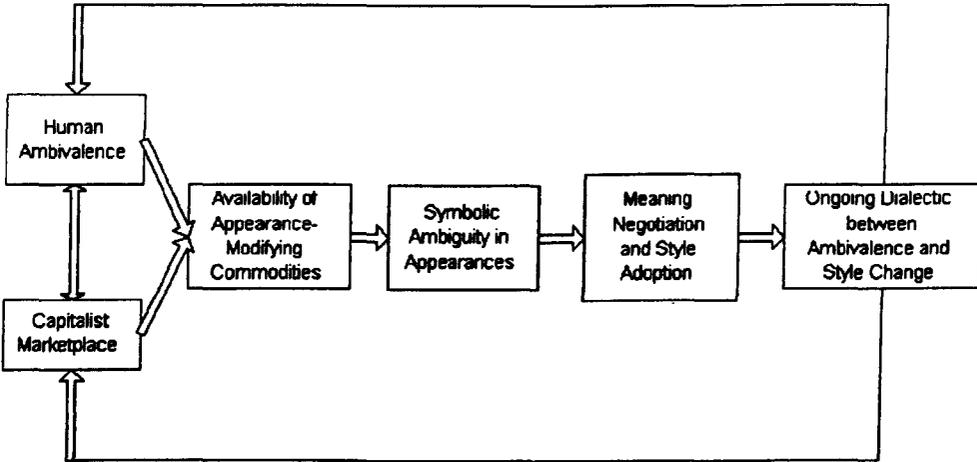


Figure 3.4.8B: SI Theory - Individual scale (After: Kaiser, et al., 1995)

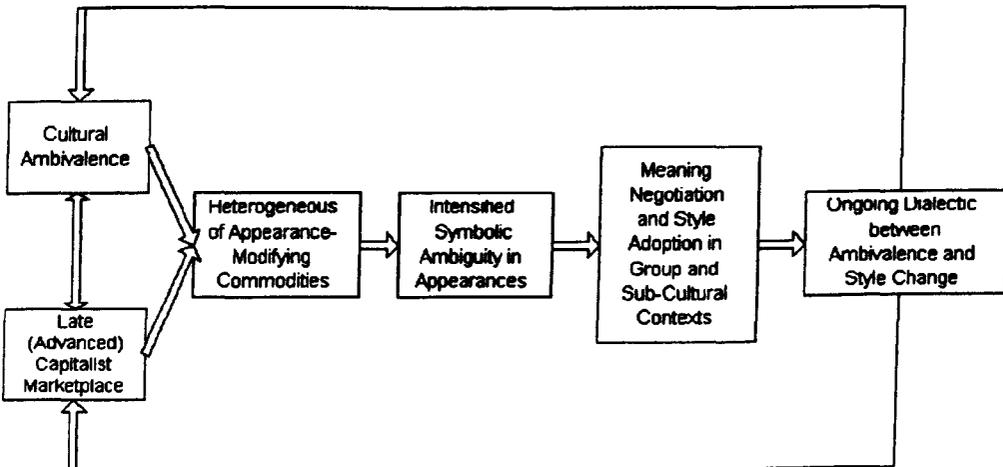


Figure 3.4.8C: SI Theory - Society scale (After: Kaiser, et al., 1995)

Figure 3.4.8B shows the model of the fashion process: changes in appearance styles.

The later process is also described in five stages and is shown in Figure 3.4.8C.

- Principle of cultural ambivalence
- Principle of heterogeneity in appearance-modifying commodities
- Principle of symbolic ambiguity
- Principle of meaning negotiation and style adoption
- Principle of an ongoing dialectic: ambivalence and style change.

The construction of the SI theory is presented in three parts, Parts I, II, and III (Kaiser, et al., 1995a; 1995b; 1996). Part I explains the bridge between macro level cultural forces and micro level appearance processes. Part II presents hypotheses, the verbal statements of fashion axioms and theorems. Part III is the context of explanation.

3.5 Fashion Leadership Theories

This chapter focuses on an understanding of fashion process theories. The four existing theories are: upper-class leadership, sub-cultural leadership, collective selection, and the mass-market theory. The principal difference between the theories lies in who or what is seen as constituting the fashion leadership and the nature of their influences throughout the diffusion process. In other words, the differing construction of society and culture at a particular period of time influences the processes of fashion diffusion in different ways. Leadership theories may be based on a class system, or they may rely on other varieties of social stratification or differentiation.

We now review the literature relating to the four significant fashion leadership theories, which will be discussed in order to set up hypotheses in the following Chapter. Each of these theories attempts to explain the roles of leadership relating to social structure.

3.5.1 Upper Class Leadership Theory

In 1957 a German social philosopher, George Simmel, proposed the trickle-down or upper class theory. The perspective describes the diffusion of a product as taking place in a vertical direction, from initial adoption by the highest socio-economic class to subsequent adoption by successively lower classes. Sociologists believe that a primary factor in this process was the lower classes' motivation to look rich by imitating the upper class (Simmel, 1971). Imitation and demarcation are the two functions in the fashion process. The upper class's style is imitated by the lower classes in cheaper versions.

When the upper class's style is widely copied it loses its symbolic prestige. The styles, thus, are abandoned and new styles are sought to give the influential distinction. This method, therefore, is to develop a line of demarcation between themselves and the lower classes (Kaiser, 1985).

In the light of social class^v, Karl Marx and Max Weber both argued that the ownership of property for exchange and propertylessness are the basic categories of all class situations. The sociological significance of classes, thus defined, is that class relationships are the key to analysis of social structure in general, and economic and political life in particular. Edgell (1993) investigates this point in his book "Class" and puts forward the conclusion that in this sense industrial capitalist nations, such as Britain and America, are still class societies. Also, class rules and classlessness remain a dream rather than a reality. However, class boundaries at present are weakened by the changing of social and cultural structures, in particular the increasing consumer affluence and the faster transmission of information in the mass media (Davis, 1992).

Clothing is a symbol of stratification that symbolises a person's status, affords prestige, represents a form of privilege and influences power negotiations. Two diverse systems of stratification were identified by the sociologist Max Weber (1961): social class and status group systems. Social class is determined by demographic criteria such as occupation, education, and income. Among these, clothing can most reliably indicate occupation. Fashion change is not nearly as dramatic nor as democratic in occupational attire as it is in dress that is symbolic of status group membership. The latter form of dress is stratified by consumption patterns and lifestyle variables, such as interests in sports and other forms of leisure. Thorstein Veblen (1912) identified several forms of consumption patterns that confer prestige on a wearer: conspicuous consumption, conspicuous leisure, and conspicuous waste. These concepts are more applicable today to status groups than to social classes, as they were in Veblen's time.

Most sociologists agree that a social class system is stratified primarily by occupational and economic criteria, and that class membership is largely determined by an individual's amount and source of income. Weber (1961) recognised that an individual's share of social honour is not always based upon social class. Consumers in the same class have common "life chances" with regard to the ability, but not necessarily the tendency, to buy items of similar economic values.

A status group system is stratified according to consumption patterns. This system operates on the premise that individuals with the same income may spend their money in

different ways, depending on lifestyle factors. The implications for symbolism of social class through clothing are tied to individual roles related to the demographic determinants of social class (Kaiser, 1985).

"The true essence of fashion ... was the interplay between the different and the identical, the equal. In short, the interpretation is as follows. The need for identity, for equality, pushes the lower social classes to follow the example set by the upper classes, creating a so-called trickle-down effect, which leads fashions to spread from the top of society toward the bottom. The same process led the upper class, in a quest for markers of their own distinction, to reiterate their class status from time to time, originating an unending series of trends and new styles."

(Ortoleva, 1998: p. 63).

Veblen (1912) proposes in his book "The Theory of Leisure Class" that the increasing wealth of the leisure class gives rise to what he terms "conspicuous consumption" of products symbolising wealth. When people achieve upward mobility they may adopt new patterns of consumption to symbolise their new social position (Barber and Lobel, 1952).

"The trickle-down effect is a mechanism for maintaining the motivation to strive for success...in a system in which differential success is possible for only a few. Status-symbolic consumption goods trickle down, thus giving the illusion of success to those who fail to achieve differential success in the opportunity and status pyramid."

(Fallers, 1954)

In the modern trickle-down theorist's viewpoint, Robinson (1961) reaffirms the trickle-down theory, but adds the implication of a simultaneous horizontal flow of fashion within social classes.

3.5.2 Sub-cultural Leadership Theory

Fashion trends were dominated by haute couture and upper class people until the 1960s. Trickle-down theory began to wane around that time. The power of class structure was very strong. Youth challenged the traditional values and norms of adult society. Anti-class occurred and roles in society changed. Many sub-cultures became highly visible parts of society. These sub-cultures created new forms of status symbolism, which evolved into new fashions (Sproles and Burns, 1994). Thus, modes of dress may be considered as a

means of cultural expression. The dominant culture reflects the positions and interests of the most powerful class, and the major cultural pattern reflects class structure. Sub-cultures are defined as sub-sets of the larger cultural pattern (Hall, et al. 1976). The sub-cultural leadership theory suggests that fashion leaderships can originate with the lower classes of a society.

"The unique style of a sub-culture may be noticed by the larger population and admired for its creativity, artistic excellence, or appropriateness to current lifestyles. By this stage, the style can emerge from its sub-cultural origin and diffuse into the larger population. The style might skip from the originating sub-culture to the upper class and then trickle down. Or, the mass-market mechanism may take control, as mass production makes the object available throughout the consumer markets."

(Sproles and Burns, 1994: p. 133)

Sub-cultural leadership can be found in many groups such as ethnic groups, racial groups, the youth culture and the labour class.

"Lower class consumers have no traditionally honored social position to protect, and therefore, can creatively select any style. They might engage in fashionable behaviour to escape psychologically from poverty, or to appear upwardly mobile. Or, the lower class might have to originate its own styles because it is not catered to by the fashion industry, which emphasizes middle-income markets. Finally, the lower class may have its own standards of living that define a different norm of fashionability from those of the mass population. Such factors can account for the birth of new styles in the lower class, but it will still be necessary for some gap-bridgers to endorse and legitimize the style if it is to diffuse."

(ibid.: p. 127)

Additionally, Orgle (1985) identifies three starting points where fashion can originate from sub-cultures. The first point is that sub-cultural groups may be perceived as having status as early adopters and fashion innovators, and can influence other consumers. The second way is that the upper class may adopt sub-cultural styles, which may then trickle down. The third point is that sub-cultural styles may be taken up by clothing designers and may thus be manufactured and promoted for the mass market.

Adoption may then take place via trickle down or mass market mechanisms. Whatever the fashion, adoption will spread through the population, but the role of sub-cultures in

fashion leadership is the main point of the theory.

3.5.3 Collective Selection Theory

The collective selection theory is based on Blumer's research (1969) and on the sociological theory of collective behaviour. The theorists, Turner and Killian (1987) suggest in their research that:

"There is abundant opportunity for popular selection and for establishment of a partially spontaneous consensus through crowd mechanisms operating within the channels of the established status system."

(Turner and Killian, 1987)

Blumer's theory proposes two principles: the existence of a collective consensus of taste, and that this is more significant than individual leadership. He states that fashion leadership is no longer exercised by the upper class.

"The fashion mechanism appears not in response to a need of class differentiation and class emulation, but in response to a wish to be in fashion, to be abreast of what has good standing, to express new tastes which are emerging in a changing world." "it is not the prestige of the elite which makes the design fashionable but, instead, it is the suitability or potential fashionableness of the design which allows the prestige of the elite to be attached to it."

(Blumer, 1969)

Blumer also suggests two important factors; the significance of the individual's desire for differentiation from society and integration with society. The way in which individuals differentiate themselves from the old and the discredited is the expression of new tastes. On the other hand, a way to conform to society is to adopt the majority's tastes. Blumer's theory was disputed in terms of the fact that the theory seemed to view sociological methods as inadequate when compared to the enormous complexities of the fashion process. In addition, Shibutani (1988) points out that the theory lacks the notion of expressive symbolism and unconscious meanings in the realm of visual expression.

3.5.4 Mass-Market Theory

King (1963) is credited with the origination of the mass-market theory, which was later called the trickle across theory. The first formal statement of the theory presented by King is as follows:

- During a fashion season, the fashion industry's marketing strategy virtually assures simultaneous adoption of new styles by consumers in all socio-economic groups. The new styles, including silhouette, fabric, colour, and detail changes, are usually available to all consumers at the same time.
- Consumers may freely choose from a large variety of existing and new styles in each new season, and freely satisfy their personal tastes and needs rather than follow the lead of an upper class.
- Each social class has its own fashion innovators and opinion leaders, who play key roles in starting new fashions within their peer social networks.
- Fashion information and personal influence "trickle-across" each social class, with fashion influence between social equals predominating over the vertical flow of fashion from upper to lower classes.

The theory emerged as a logical alternative to the trickle-down theory. The mass-market theory suggests that the mass of the public exercises a choice and adopts fashion among those offered by the industry, without the mediation and leadership of the upper class. Sproles and Burns conclude the theory as follows:

"The theory proposed that the system of mass production in the fashion industry, combined with mass communication of fashion information through many different media, makes new styles and information about new styles available simultaneously to all socio-economic classes of the population. This makes it possible for diffusion to occur simultaneously in each class, and the trickle-down process is effectively eliminated."

(Sproles and Burns, 1994)

Robinson (1961) points out the importance of a horizontal spread of fashions from central loci in the social hierarchy. The real leadership of fashion, based on the principle of the theory, comes from within a person's own social class, and especially from peer groups. People look to certain individuals from their own station, instead of looking to a higher-status class. Additionally, modern marketing creates conditions favourable to a process of mass fashion-acceptance. Fashion can be mass-produced quickly and inexpensively for the ready-to-wear market. The instant information about different fashion styles offered

makes the possible rate and level of fashion change far greater than ever before. With all the possibilities of greater style choice offered by the industry, groups or individuals who seek to differentiate themselves must adopt new styles with greater rapidity. In other words, rapid communication about new styles through the mass media and merchandising programmes of retail stores increases consumers' awareness of new styles. A multiplicity of styles is available in the mass market, serving nearly every functional need and life-style within a heterogeneous population. Increasingly, society is becoming a vast and heterogeneous middle-class, with varied lifestyles and vaguely defined sub-classes within it.

"Upper and lower classes remain, but they are a small part of the population. With this contemporary class structure in mind, it is plausible to reason that diffusion takes place in one great mass of social equals."

(Sproles and Burns, 1994)

This is to suggest that the traditional trickle-down process of fashion leadership might have less chance to occur. Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) study the existence of fashion opinion leaders in different social classes. Their research indicates substantial concentrations of opinion leaders in all major social classes, and most relations involving fashion opinion leadership are among people of similar status. In expanding these studies, King (1963) finds that fashion leadership is dispersed across social classes and income groups, rather than concentrated in the upper classes.

"The elite designers and their clientele are watched closely by the rest of the fashion industry, and styles adopted at that level are frequently copied by less well-known manufacturers. When this occurs, the mass-marketed styles are at least "partially distillations of upper class taste"."

(King, 1963)

Sproles and Burns (1994) argue that this does not mean consumers consciously follow fashion from the upper classes; rather, it merely indicates that the styles available in the market have previously been offered by exclusive designers to an elite clientele. Grindereing (1967) finds the same basic silhouettes and design details selling to all classes during the same time period. King's research (1963) finds a distinction between the consumer adoption process, and the initiation or manufacture of new designs. He states that a vertical flow definitely operates within the industry between exclusive designers and their lesser colleagues. The major and prestigious manufacturers are watched and copied by less expert competitors. He also states that design piracy is a

well-established competitive strategy. The trickle-down mechanism can no longer be applied to the consumer adoption process because of the rapidity of modern manufacture. According to the complex processes of present-day fashion adoption, the mass-market perspective would seem to be a comprehensive and an appropriate theory (Orgle, 1985).

3.6 Conclusion

After careful study, it can be summarised that fashion is involved in every aspect of society and its progress. Fashion changes along with social changes inasmuch as it becomes the representative of the social mood, in the way in which it is collectively formed by the majority of the society. Therefore, fashion can be said to be the product of social movement. In the micro scale, fashion acts as a means of individuals' expression. The SI theory of fashion sees individuals sort out their ambivalence through fashion. Their expression becomes a true tool of communication. The symbolic use of fashion can signify social status, taste, subcultural group, as well as a response to social issues. According to the literature, there are two significant ideas explaining the emergence of fashion. Fashion emerges as a consequence of the two social tendencies to display the desires of differentiation and conformity. On the other hand, fashion emerges in response to a new social issue. These two ideas are vital in the understanding and comparison of the fashion change process of both Western and Thai society. However, changes in fashion have to take into account the six key fashion change agents listed in 3.3.4.

Fashion process can be observed in four distinct contexts, including fashion adoption, fashion diffusion, fashion interaction, and fashion retailing. While the Roger's bell curve suggests that fashion is adopted by different groups at different time scales. The fashion spread from innovator, as the leader, is explained by different theories, including the upper class leadership, the subcultural leadership, the collective selection and the mass-market theories. The mass-market theory seems to be the most suitable to explain the present fashion process in the Western society. It is clear that each facet of the fashion system has historically produced different theories. Because of the nature of the fashion industry and the range of specialism required for its effective function, it is difficult to identify a single cohesive fashion system theory, which explains its totality and overtime. This Chapter in identifying and setting out the major fashion theories, in relation to those aspects of the social forces which motivate fashion change, has reviewed these theories in order to provide the foundation for the development of the conceptual model discussed in the following Chapter.

Endnote

ⁱ Barnard in "Fashion as Communication", quoting K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, 1954, Lawrence and Wishart, London.

ⁱⁱ The term "inferior" in relation to class is used in this context to denote the psychological condition, which provides or motivates the aspiration for change.

ⁱⁱⁱ Fashion Innovators have been characterised as people who are more likely to use clothing as a way to express individuality, more interested in fashion, more interested in shopping and more involved with clothing than non-innovators (Darden and Reynolds, 1972; Davis 1987; Lennon and Davis, 1987; Schrank and Gilmore, 1973; Stanforth, 1995). Fashion innovators read more magazines, more fashion magazines, experiment more with clothing and styles, feel more strongly about clothing, exhibit clarity in their decisions about clothing, are more tolerant of ambiguity, and are more socially secure than non-innovators (Baumgarten, 1975; Painter and Pinegar, 1971; Pasnak and Ayres, 1969; Reynolds and Darden, 1973; Schrank and Gilmore, 1973). Innovators in general have been found to be more willing to take risks in purchase of new products (Robertson and Kennedy, 1968). Fashion innovators also have a greater need for variety in the form of mental stimulation, have higher levels of cognitive complexity, and are more inner-directed than non-innovators (Lennon and Davis, 1987; painter and Pinegar, 1971; Stanforth, 1995; Workman and Johnson, 1993). They wear clothing styles for a shorter period of time, dispose of clothing due to fashionability or conformity reasons and spend more on clothing than non-innovators (Baumgarten, 1975; Chun and Davis, 1988). In a review of the literature, Behling (1992) identified six demographic variables (i.e., age, children, education, occupational status, gender, race), five psychographic variables (i.e., sociability, self-confidence, narcissism, conformity, inner-directedness), and one other variable (i.e., interest in fashion) related to fashion innovators. (After: Behling, 1992)

^{iv} Fashion Followers tend to be the most cautious of the fashion consumer groups. Unlike fashion innovators, who are the first to adopt new fashions, and fashion opinion leaders, who influence fashion adoption by legitimising an innovative style, fashion followers are less willing to take risks in the purchase of new fashions and adopt a style only after it has been proven successful and is widely available (Baumgarten, 1975). They have less need for variety than other fashion consumer groups (Workman and Johnson, 1993). (After: Behling, 1992)

^v The followings are the definitions of the three major social classes. Working class individuals are likely to belong to middle or lower positions in terms of economic benefits. They are generally paid hourly wages. The term "middle class" is frequently associated with white-collar workers employed in salaried positions in offices, stores and other businesses (Kaiser, 1985). Sociologists who operate with a pure occupationally-based class model tend to refer to the richest class as the upper class, or the dominant class (Edgell, 1993). In marketing, Socio-economic classification are often linked with occupation in order to identify market segmentation. For instances, senior professional/managerial, managerial, and semi/unskilled manual workers are usually classified as the upper, middle and working class, respectively (Jackson and Shaw, 2001).

Chapter 4

Fashion Commodification and Retailing

4.1 Fashion Industries

This Chapter attempts to clarify the commodification process by describing the interrelationship of the diverse and often separated manufacturing and non-manufacturing based industries, which comprise the totality of what has come to be recognised as the fashion industry. In other words, this Chapter is to distinguish the significant components in the role of fashion supplier that work systematically to support and perpetuate fashion. The well-established supply system is recognised as the significant integral part of the emergence of fashion. On the other hand, this Chapter also defines the characteristics of an industry in the way in which its role is not functioned as a fashion supplier. These will become a conceptual basis, which will be, in turn, experienced by Thailand of what components that the Thai apparel industry excludes in its development towards becoming the regional fashion centre.

4.1.1 Definition and Its Importance

The production of clothing can be found in every country, whether industrialised or not. In a similar pattern of development, most countries begin their industrialisation by building upon their textile and garment capability. The developing garment industry creates an important economic flow, producing wealth in an exceedingly complex and organic

manner. However, there comes a point, decided by internal or external market forces, which requires a transition from the supply of basic garments to a capability to produce fashion items.

Fashion is a hybrid activity consisting of material and immaterial, function of use and function of meaning. Fashion commodities are material products with contents similar in many ways to other creative endeavours, such as film, music or software production. In a single product, fashion commodities are created by combining fibres, yarns, fabric, cutting, shaping, style, signs and meanings (Malossi, 1998).

4.1.2 Differentiation

Industries that focus on producing for the purpose of "function of use" should be called the "apparel industries". The apparel industry produces basic ready-to-wear garments and, to a lesser extent, fashion influenced garments. These kinds of garments are called staple goods, such as basic shirts, jackets, trousers, and underwear. The styles of these basic garments are very slow to evolve and where there is a fashion link it is tenuous or accidental. This sector can be typified as suppliers of basic need.

Industries that aim to produce for the purpose of the "function of meaning" should be called the "fashion industries", i.e. Britain, France, Italy, America, Japan, Hong Kong and so on, all self-consciously subscribe to the doctrine of supply to desire as oppose to need. This is the industry which directs fashion influences from the interaction of change agents, including consumers, designers, and marketers, within the economic and cultural atmosphere. These fashion commodities are changed seasonally, which has the dual function of offering different styles for different climate conditions and providing opportunities for economic activities through an annual cycle. These fashion-leading countries also maintain an apparel industry within their total provisions. This sector is, however, increasingly giving way to importation.

"... the fashion industry adds an important design dimension, which is capable of providing a continual and varied flow of products. This dimension is marked, in particular, by the ability to single out, in an international context, the spirit of the time in all its variability. Thus, the fashion industry provides consumers not only with clothing but also with an existential platform, on which they can find recognition, establish their own identity, and keep that identity up-to-date."

(Balestri and Ricchetti, 1998: p. 160)

Charles Revson, founder of the Revlon Corporation, stresses not only his corporate motto in the statement that "in our factory we manufacture clothing, but in our stores we sell hope", but also a truism, which emphasises the dual function of use and meaning.

4.1.3 Structure

The fashion industry consists of many different industries and sectors, including the design activities, fibre and yarn production, fabric and garment manufacture, wholesale and retail distribution. The role of those industries is mainly the supply of their individual contribution in the form of the right products for the right market at the right time, generally referred to as the supply-chain. The industries have to work together in a co-ordinated and systematic way in order to create products for future need.

The conspiracy in the direction of fashion has to be planned at least eighteen months in advance, linking in to the seasonal cycle. Fashion trends are usually predicted by the sector of industry labelled trend forecasting, which provides information, ideas and concepts and can be considered as the cutting edge of marketing. The trend-forecasting agents convey information step by step, derived from both the industry itself, from sources such as fibre, yarn, chemical dye, and fabric industries, right through to the final industries manufacturing garments, accessories, and shoes, and also from sociological sources (Jackson and Shaw, 2001; Perna, 1987). Conventionally, the fashion trend forecasting is upstream and 1-2 years ahead, while the downstream industries, such as retailing operate 6 months or 1 year ahead.

4.2 Production and Trade

As fashion and apparel industries evolve in the domestic context, that is within the economy of the nation state, there inevitably comes a point when viability dictate supply comes from external sources.

In general, the UK clothing and textile manufacturers produced 16 billion pounds worth of goods in 1997, employed 364,000 people, and accounted for the ninth largest category of exports. However, over the last decade the textile and clothing manufacturers have shed 28% of their workforce, while the footwear manufacturing industry has declined by 50 % since 1987. This trend looks set to continue as demand for competitively priced commodities is maintained in the mass market. The strong pound, combined with slowing domestic demand and increased imports, are the main reasons cited. With a slowdown in retail growth, manufacturers are under pressure to deliver goods at lower costs. Large

retailers have already moved to reduce the number of suppliers they deal with in order to develop higher quality supply chain relationships where they can exert more control. Many are also looking to increase their overseas production in order to reduce costs and are always looking for cheaper labour costs in the third world countries. UK textile and garment manufacturers have in recent years invested heavily in such areas as South-East Asia and the developing former Soviet Union.

Retailers are also increasingly looking for more speedy and flexible forms of manufacture and this could help UK manufacturers secure their future. It is expected that UK manufacturers will increasingly focus on supplying short orders and value added products while at the same time maintaining a long-order sourcing of the rest from overseas.

4.3 Fashion Retailing and Distribution

Fashion retailing and distribution in the UK dominates both the manufacturing sector and consumer choices in as much as it controls and is able to balance competitive price structure (homogeneous range of commodities) and style availability (heterogeneous range of commodities). The fashion buyer in retailing and distribution is one of the most powerful agents determining the style dominance in any given season. Although there is no supportive research on the vital role of the fashion buyer, they are the most welcome and valuable delegates in the world fashion trading fairs, i.e. the London Fashion Week.

"If we try to assess the relative contributions to what is produced and what is consumed in fashion, there is a good case for saying that (major) fashion retailers (and the store buyers who act for them) are more significant than manufacturers, designers and even, the fashion-consuming public itself."

(Braham, 1997: p.149)

Fashion retail can be broken down into several different sectors: from the giant multiples to tiny independent fashion specialist stores and shops. The various types of retail outlets are defined in Appendix II.

Fashion retailing is fragmented and there are many forms of distribution. Clothing and footwear multiples have a leading 28.8% share of the total market for clothing and footwear, followed by variety stores, which have a 19.6% share (led by Marks and Spencer). These two sub-sectors are growing their dominant positions by expanding square footage, adding to the general pressure on independents, who have a receding 13.1% share of the market.

Mail order/direct mail, with a 9.4% share, is expected to expand as a channel of distribution, primarily because of the growth of direct mail and the entry of some of the major retail brands such as M&S and Arcadia. The impact of the Internet as a sales medium has yet to be evaluated.

The department store sector has an 8.6% share, with leading players such as Debenhams and House of Fraser putting fashion at the centre of their offerings.

The influence of sportswear and trainers on the fashion market is reflected in the 7.8% share of sports shops and clubs. After rapid expansion by a number of multiples, a slowdown in sales growth is also prompting this sub-sector to consolidate with the coming together of the two largest players, JJB and Sport Division. The leading players are still expanding, but now that sportswear is a fashion item, the market is more volatile, and the trend is firmly towards clothing and footwear associated with outdoor/extreme/active sports.

Discounters, with a 3.9% share, have not fared particularly well as a group, although there are some highly successful operators, because of a tendency to trade up during the boom years of 1996/97. By the same token, the current economic slowdown has favoured this sector.

Supermarkets have a 2.7% share, but are significantly stronger in childrenswear and smaller items such as hosiery and underwear.

Fashion retailing has seen a well-established trend towards fewer larger businesses. However, the average number of outlets per business is still remarkably small. There were 15,274 clothing retailers operating 33,133 outlets in 1996, or only 2.16 outlets per business.

An additional dimension to the UK domestic retail sector is the introduction of international brand owned high-street outlets. The production supply of garment and fashion items in these outlets is entirely produced outside the UK production sources.

Fashion Market sectors are generally divided into six categories, womenswear, menswear, childrenswear, sportswear, jeanswear, and accessories.

4.4 Fashion Design in the UK

The role of the fashion designer in the commodification process cannot be underestimated. Fashion design not only mediates the diverse requirements of economic viability, manufacturing and production limitation and/or technological innovation, consumer needs/desires, social and lifestyle changes, and marketing strategies, but also innovates creatively.

The British Fashion Council is constantly striving to establish closer links between designers and mainstream manufacturers as well as with the retail sector. It has established teams of representatives to devise effective means to increase awareness of British fashion on a domestic and international level. Its retail committee is dedicated to forging links with designers and persuading British stores to feature British fashion talent in promotional activity, particularly around London Fashion Week. The British Export Council also plays an important role in promoting the UK fashion industry abroad. Attention is focused on two main events in the calendar – London Fashion Week and the British Fashion Awards. Around 50 designers show at the London Fashion Week twice a year.

UK fashion designers have established an international reputation for innovation and creativity in mediation process, previously mentioned. This is in part due to the nature of designers' education. There are estimated to be 88 degree courses in fashion or fashion and textiles at 44 different colleges of art or faculties of art and design in universities.¹ If on average each course has an intake of 70 students at any given time there will be 6160 graduates per year. This critical mass of talent operates at many levels of the commodification process and generates activities, which contribute to the evolution of the fashion industries. It also contributes to the new economic strategic policy called "the creative industries".

4.5 Fashion Marketing and Advertising

The roles of fashion marketing and advertising are as a transmitter and a persuader respectively. Market research is carried out to direct and advise the marketing and advertising of products. Marketing is an integral part of the fashion industry infrastructure, as opposed to advertising, which is a bought in "service" from specialist companies.

"The fashion industry is by nature image-conscious, operating in a fickle consumer environment. In a market where scores of similar products and brands compete,

developing a strong image is crucial and advertising can be the key."

(MTI, 1999)

The importance of marketing and advertising are reflected in the speedy and dynamic movement of market change and in their contributions to maintaining their client organizations in a leading competitive position. Indeed, the increase in advertising expenditure in most product sectors in the UK retail business in recent years, which had risen to £ 118.75 m in 1997, is further evidence of the importance of these activities. It is reported that advertising expenditure on sport shoes alone was the highest of all fashion sectors in 1997. In instances such as this, the marketing sector has to look carefully at the prolonged popularity of sportswear and related products in youth fashion, since it is inevitable that at some point there will be a change in direction or emphasis.

Marketing and advertising operate through various channels, roughly divided into two main areas of indoor and outdoor campaigns, i.e. TV, printed media, radio, and the Internet on the one hand, and billboards and events on the other. Print campaigns are employed in the largest proportion of advertising activities. It is estimated that 64% of total advertising expenditure in 1997/98 was printed media.

4.6 Summary and Conclusion

Beginning with the assumption that the fashion designer is one mediator, we have discussed the mechanism of interaction between all those involved in the commodification process. We have considered whether the fashion designer should be regarded as more or less central to the system; or whether the fashion designer is only one among equals and therefore other agents are no less important to the discussion.

Regarding differentiation between garment and fashion production, we have noted that in garment production all mediation of fashion/style is achieved outside the system. Fashion forecasting agents play an important role in feeding information to the garment production industry. On the other hand, fashion production focuses on providing goods for the function of desire, and mediation of fashion/style is achieved both from outside and inside the system. In fashion production, the fashion designer is the major contributor to the creative process, who either plays a central role or is a part of the innovative process.

Instead of seeing the fashion designer as the most important agent in the fashion industry, Antonelli (1998) views innovative activity as the most dynamic and efficient factor in generating fashion innovation.

"The innovations in the company upstream encourage innovation in the companies downstream – but they do more. ... The relationship among apparel companies that experiment with new models and new products, the textile companies that try new fabrics and new combinations of fibres, the finishing companies that work with new dyeing processes, and the machine-tool manufacturers and chemicals companies that develop new machinery and new intermediate products – all this is fundamental to the maintenance of innovative capacity for each of the subjects involved."

(Antonelli, 1998: p. 188)

In summary, the commodification process as mentioned above is a process of inter-industry modernisation where an innovative fashion commodity is the outcome of collaboration in innovative activities within firms and between sub-industries.

Endnote

¹ This figure is taken from the number of courses listed in "A Guide to First Degree and Post Graduate Courses in Fashion and Textile Design", published by the Association of Degree Courses in Fashion and Textile Design, 1999. It should be stressed that the estimated figure does not include very many B-Tech (HND) and NVQ courses, which also offer training to would-be fashion designers.

Chapter 5

Initial Conceptual Model

The purpose of this Chapter is to construct a new framework within which to conceptualise a general process of fashion in contemporary Western society. Hitherto, there has been no single model in existence, which precisely explained the whole scenario of the fashion process. As can be seen from the literature survey, there are vast arrays of fashion theories from different disciplines that have emerged to describe fashion from different specialists' perspectives. These fashion theories are often not connected to each other. As a result, the fashion process as a total phenomenon can not be fully comprehended through existing fashion theories. Moreover, many of them were first created a long time ago, so that they are unlikely to be compatible with the specific social aspects of present day, so long after the era in which they were devised. This view is supported by Esterik (2000) and Scharfstein (1989), whom she quotes as follows:

"We often assume that theory is totalizing, coherent and authoritative. But its power can be judged by its usefulness to guide analysis and critique previous theory that has claimed too much, gone too far, and been accepted without challenge or observation. Models help us to "see the relatively simple in the intricate, and the relatively clear in the vague". (Scharfstein, 1989: p. 168)"

(Esterik, 2000: p. 201)

After careful study, it has become apparent that not only do many of the existing theories and established findings of previous researchers need to be reinvestigated, but benefit could be derived from linking theory to theory. For example, the trickle-down theory was

devised in the period of haute couture dominance of fashion, aptly called the fashion dictator. Mass-market theory, by way of contrast, established in the 1960s, a period of materialism and conspicuous consumption, more accurately describes the present situation given a certain amount of necessary revision. These examples of earlier theories, devised in a specific period and context, cannot be satisfactorily applied to the present fashion process phenomenon, which is taking place in what might be described as the post-materialist, post-consumption or post-industrial era in Western society.

5.1 Constructing the Conceptual Fashion Process Model

As outlined in the research proposal, the essential purpose of this research is to understand the mechanisms of the fashion system. In order to do this, I have to acquire a perception of the complex balances between the various socio-cultural and economic forces at play and the dynamic of change, which precipitate and perpetuate the fashion phenomenon. We have seen in Section 3.4, the literature survey and analysis, how the roles of fashion change agents have to be taken into consideration. In addition, it is crucial to understand all the existing fashion theories and to apply them to explain the fashion phenomenon systematically. The research must investigate in depth not only "how" a fashion changes but also "why" it changes, at both the individual and the social levels.

There is a relationship between individuals (members of society) and society as a whole in terms of fashion changes. In other words, there is an interaction between the micro-level (individual) and the macro-level (socio-dynamic) forces. Of the existing fashion theories, the Symbolic Interactionist Theory of Fashion (or SI theory, see details in Section 3.4.8 and Figures 3.4.8B and 3.4.8C) is the most recent to encompass both micro- and macro-levels. The theory was established by Kaiser, et al. (1995a, 1995b, 1996) in order to explain the complex relationship of the interaction between individual and society. It is important to stress that it consists of five principles:

- 1). Human/cultural ambivalence;
- 2). Appearance-modifying commodities in the marketplace;
- 3). Symbolic ambiguity;
- 4). Meaning negotiation; and
- 5). Style adoption.

Soon after the SI theory came into existence, there was debate amongst fashion theorists. Kean (1997) argued that the SI theory raises more questions than it answers about why fashion changes and the dynamic of its change.

Kean (*ibid.*) also wondered “what are the forces underlying the increasing range of available appearance-modifying commodities?” Hamilton (1997) raised various issues. For example, SI theory was based on the view that only one underlying factor is responsible for the changing fashion trends. She argued that there are various ranges of fashion commodities presented by the economic/cultural system from which individuals may choose as they construct their individual appearance. Secondly, she argued that SI theory gives insufficient attention to the interaction between cultural arbiters at the macro level. Indeed, the SI theory cannot cope with the question of “how the macro systems influence individual fashion negotiation”. Finally, SI theory is unclear in describing and defining the link between the macro- and micro-levels.

In addition, Burns (1991) argued that the SI theory of fashion has not yet been able to answer the following questions:

- “1 What is involved with the interpretive manner in which symbolic meanings are constructed by consumers?
- 2 What is the process by which consumers associate cultural images with fashion products? What characteristics of the image, product, and/ or consumer contribute to or affect this process?
- 3 Are there differences between fashion innovators and fashion followers in terms of tolerance of symbolic ambiguity, need for uniqueness, and other related characteristics?”

(*ibid.*: p. 43)



Figure 5.1.1A: Division of Investigation

The present analysis does not directly criticise the SI theory of fashion, but tries to offer another perspective on the fashion process by integrating significant existing fashion theories. It is based on the assumption that many fashion theories were constructed to

explain fashion phenomena from different viewpoints. The integration provided here may allow a clearer view and precise explanation of more aspects of the fashion issues raised by SI theory. Therefore, the following discussion, based on existing fashion theories, re-orientates the central aspects of SI theory and has a number of consequential implications of interest.

Basing ourselves on the assumption that there is an interaction between society and its members, I propose a single model consisting of these two levels - the individual and social. Hamilton (1997) suggested linkage of the macro-micro continuum, which had been proposed by Ritzer (1991) as shown in Figure 3.4.1. In addition, Kaiser, et al. (1997) interpret the macro-micro continuum of Hamilton. The division of investigation shown in Figure 5.1.1A is divided into four sub-levels, namely:

- Macro-subjective level (economic values/assumptions that legitimise particular activity)
- Macro-objective level (marketplace and economic activities)
- Micro-objective level (interaction between individual and variety of fashion objects)
- Micro-subjective level (psychological phenomena of individual and of the interaction among individuals)

However, the macro-micro continuum is not a linear continuum from the macro stage to the micro, or vice versa. Rather, it is a mutually reflective fashion phenomenon. Actually, it is easier to view fashion change as only macro- and micro-subjective. The macro-subjective level represents social needs and the overall fashion trend, while the small scale, the micro-subjective level, represents individuals' needs and a particular fashion change via the interaction between individuals and others. This interaction can be either a symbolic interaction of self-demand or a symbolic interaction of social needs. The individuals express the interaction by adopting a fashion.

In other words, fashion objects, i.e. clothing, in both the macro- and micro-objective mode, are tools of individuals in expressing their ambivalence. In the post-modern culture, conflict, occurring in the micro- and macro-levels, creates ambivalence that experienced by individuals. Fashion objects are used to find a compromise resolution of the conflict and thereafter to become an expression of that ambivalence (Davis, 1985).

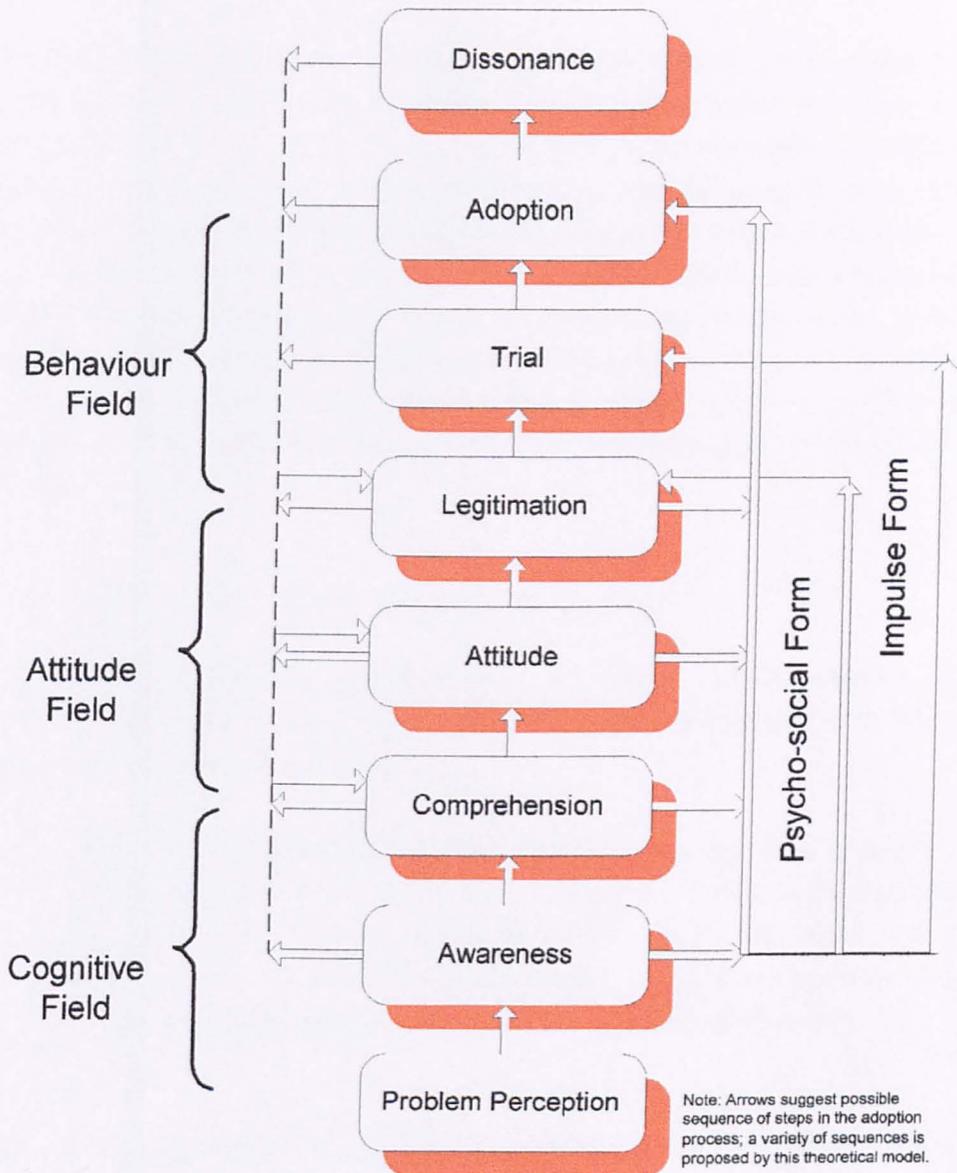


Figure 5.1.1B: Decision-Making Model (After: Robertson, 1971)

The changes of fashions therefore go along together in terms of the subjective and objective realms. In other words, the former is conducted by consumers and the latter is conducted by suppliers. In using the above structure, it is our intention to use the macro-micro continuum as a framework to synthesise a new fashion process model.

5.1.1 The Macro-Subjective Level

It is at this level that fashion change reflects social needs. Social needs emerge in an ambiguous form, which is called "zeitgeist" or "spirit of the time" or "the issue of the changing trend". There are some forces, from the historical documentation and analysis of fashion, which may be seen as being of major importance to emerging social needs. These are the socio-political and economic forces, the historical context, the innovation of science and technology, and other special events. All these factors influence society and bring about change. They are reflected in what society calls "social trends". Since a society comprises a number of sub-social or sub-cultural groups, the patterns of behaviour, attitudes and practices of these entities are known collectively as "lifestyles". This opens up the possibility for the markets to differentiate between different groups of people.

5.1.1.1 Prediction of Social Responses

The nature of modern society is continual change, and lifestyle is a feature of the modern world that differentiates people. However, the distinctive characteristics of each lifestyle are blurred. Chaney (1996) stated that:

"The rigidities of established distinction become increasingly hard to sustain in eras of rapid social and physical mobility. New forms of distinction are continually being elaborated. Therefore the manner of our concern with respect for (or repugnance against) the various possible modes of others' civilisation becomes crucial in constituting the normative hierarchies of structured difference".

(ibid.: p.6)

In SI theory, culture does not send straightforward messages to individuals as to what is appropriate, thus cultural ambivalence appears at this level (Hamilton, 1997). People respond to the cultural ambivalence in diverse ways. Hall (1959) stated that three levels of culture (formal traditions, informal traditions and technical capabilities) contribute different strengths to the emotional resistance to change. Likewise, this section attempts to predict the major responses, which occur when people encounter a new social trend.

In Figure 5.1.1B, Robertson (1971) divided his model of the adoption process into three main stages: the cognitive, attitudinal and behavioural. It can be said that there are two categories of attitudes of response: positive or negative. The following figure illustrates four possible relationships between the three fields: the cognitive and behaviour fields are represented by "interest" and "involvement" activities, respectively, and the positive or

negative reaction takes account of the individual's attitude.

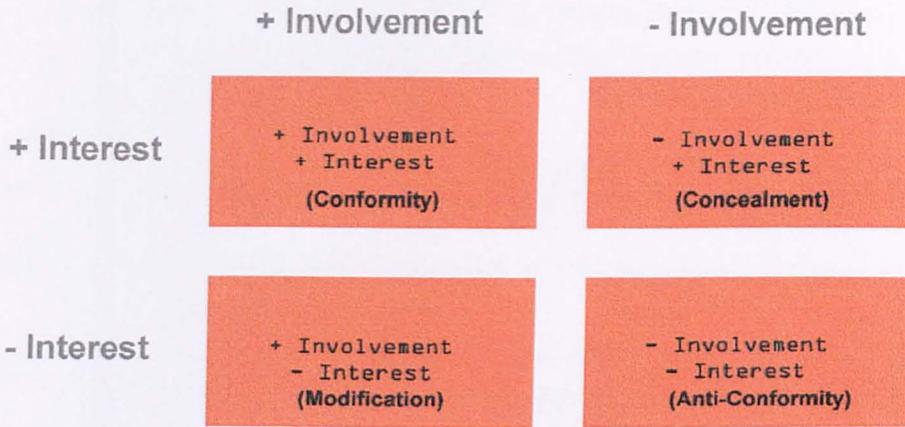


Figure 5.1.1C: Cross Relationship between Major Adoption Activities

Regarding the cross-relationship between the three major decision-making activities as shown in Figure 5.1.1C, the following interactions can be hypothesised:

- **Positive Interest & Positive Involvement:** This is a situation that leads to change. People are able to accept and then pursue a change eagerly, because they have both positive interest and positive involvement. This kind of reaction could be called “conformity”.
- **Negative Interest & Negative Involvement:** These people have neither interest nor involvement in change to the new situation. This pattern of negative reactions could be called “anti-conformity”. Such people wish to behave and express their feelings in the opposite way in order to resist the evolving norms.
- **Positive Interest & Negative Involvement:** These people are aware of change; however, they do not want to become too much involved. They behave in a very basic way in order to meet the minimum requirements of the social norms. They do so with the least risk. They are conservative in their choices. This could be called “concealment”. Indeed, these people largely ignore what is happening in the world and their ways of living change very slowly and imperceptibly.
- **Negative Interest & Positive Involvement:** These people are not really interested in new situations but for whatever reason they have to engage

themselves in the change. Therefore, in order to keep an internal social balance, they cleverly modify the dominant trends (so as not to conform too strongly) and create a middle path which is different from the mainstream. Their adoption is expressed in the modified semi-influenced way that conforms with the new social direction but is different from it. This reaction could be called "modification".

These four possible reactions can be applied to the four clusters of trends illustrated in Figure 5.1.1D, suggested by Cathelat, et al. (1998), in the publication "Social Trend: Fashion Trend", recently presented at Premiere Vision Exhibition in Paris as follows:

- **Conformity is as Accept Dress**

"Accept dress is a way of dressing and accepting the rule of evolution: the socio-waves disruptions are accepted, the main tendencies defined by the socio-trend are accepted, with resignation and conformism. The world rules are played as they are with enthusiasm or resignedly."

- **Anti-Conformity is as Alternative Dress**

"Alternative dress is a totally different attitude to resist the world's evolutions of the socio-waves, and to the directions given by the socio-trends: the dress code is therefore anti-establishment in order to express rejection, and to state the opposite utopia of our dreams."

- **Concealment is as Escape Dress**

"Escape dress does not oppose the world's evolution either. It reflects a strategy of avoiding problems, a tentative to camouflage, a way to take a stand, looking for the zero risk and the maximum discretion. This is often a mass tendency."

- **Modification is as Adapt Dress**

"Adapt dress describes a middle-of-the-road tendency, looking for a balance between submission and protest. This is a positive and constructive attitude which encourages to create a new dress style, in order to go along with the socio-trend without being dominated by it."

(ibid: p. 13-14)

According to the survey by Cathelat, et al. for the Premiere Vision L'Observatoire 1998/99 (ibid.), there were five major issues that "post-modern"¹ society encounters:

- feminine power;
- high tech power
- crisis;
- ultra liberalism; and

- multi-cultural expanding world,

each of which must generate sub-trends or lifestyles. When the four clusters of lifestyle are applied to those five major issues, this implies a very large spread of possible lifestyle trends, all striving to emerge in our global society. Socio-trends or lifestyle trends become fashion trends in the following stage. Many fashions emerge at the same time, as shown in Figure 5.1.1D and Figure 5.1.1E.

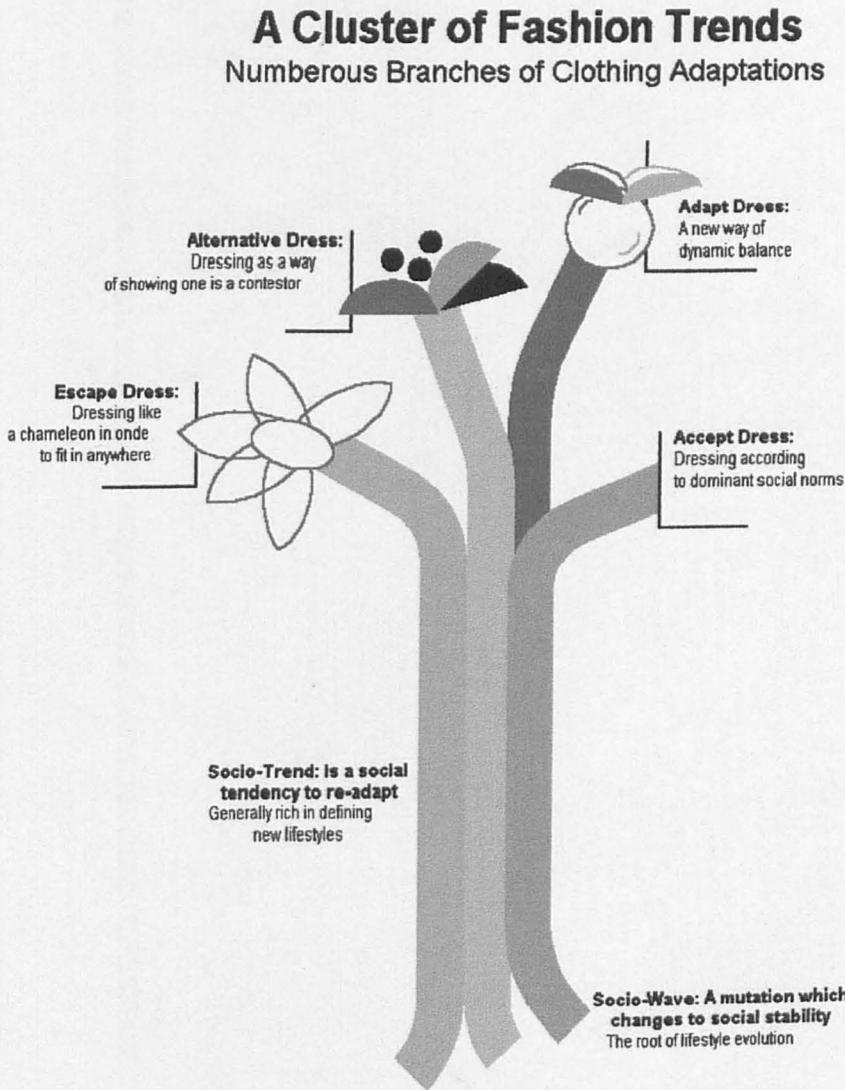


Figure 5.1.1D: A Cluster of Fashion Trends (After: L' Observatoire, 1998/99)

The Tree of 1998/99 Fashion Trends

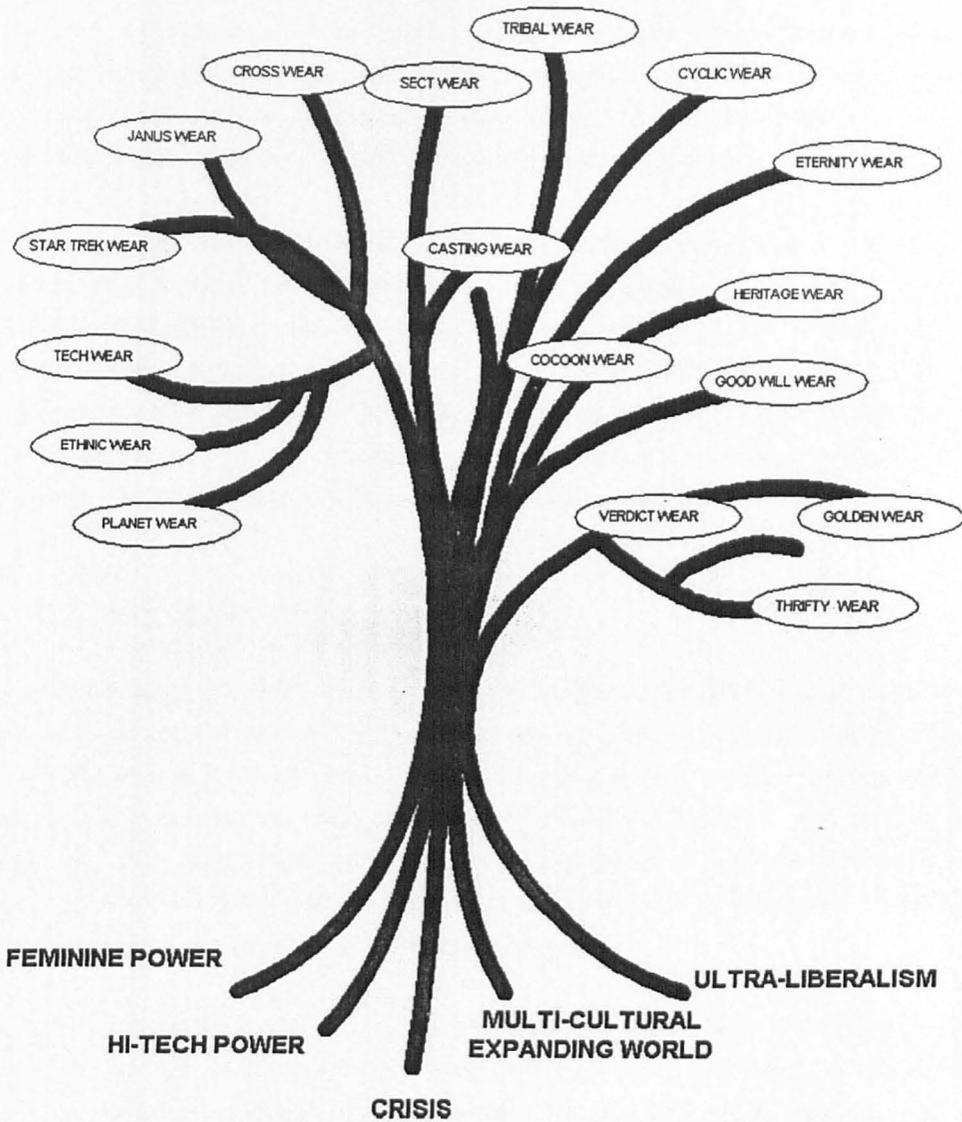


Figure 5.1.1E: The Tree of 1998/1999 Fashion Trends (After: L'observatoire, 1998/99)

In order to illustrate this phenomenon, globalisation and the related, multicultural influences were examined. This attempted to trace the origination and development of a fashion idea from the social trend to the fashion object. Globalisation is a social multicultural trend that can be divided into four separate trends. These were named by the Observatoire (*ibid.*), as Heritage Wear, Sect Wear, Planet Market Wear, and Ethnic Wear.

Premiere Vision A/W 1999 forecast a number of fabric themes. One of these was "multicultural". They presented a range of fabrics to represent the idea. These were, for instance, plain tweed spotted with multicolour novelty yarn, double faced fabric and layered fabric to represent layers of culture. Alongside this, Indigo presented printed design using transparency and layered images to again represent the overlapping cultures. Alexander McQueen in that season's collection designed overcoats made from patchwork leather, and Jean Paul Gaultier created a Pop Art T-shirt printed with contrasting cultural images, one on the body and the other on the sleeves.

Ethnic costumes around the world have become sources of inspiration for designers to pick up as a theme of design every season, moving from one cultural style to another. Burberry, a traditional English brand often using a check design, has collectively hit the British domestic and international markets. Different ethnic styles have become influential and representative of the global citizens who want to be involved in the multicultural theme but within the safe cultural constraints of their traditional English style exemplified by Burberry. The latter is used to balance the invasive influx of the global multicultural styles.

5.1.2 The Macro-Objective Level

This is the stage at which investors, through suppliers, grasp the social needs and interpret the four clusters of lifestyle trends into tangible concepts of fashion. These individuals and organisations include designers, manufacturers, and marketing people. Their roles in contributing, both high or lower market capitalisation and supply, are dependent upon appropriate timing in approaching particular markets. The emerging fashion concepts or trends provide ideas of fashion to consumers. Distributors, especially, play an important role in symbolising particular lifestyles.

The interpretation of the symbolic significance of new lifestyles becomes the most crucial part in the emergence of fashion form. Avant-garde designers get inspired initially and in turn seek to represent those lifestyles in their work. Avant-garde fashion magazines imbue these signs with a function in order to present the emergence of the new lifestyles as well as the new fashion styles. The concept of new lifestyles and fashion styles is as "signified", while the fashion commodities become "signifiers" (Barthes, 1983). Barthes also pointed out that the current forms of fashion commodities decrease in value and are subsequently abandoned when the new signifier readily provides a replacement for the previous signifier. Fashion is an illusion in his opinion.

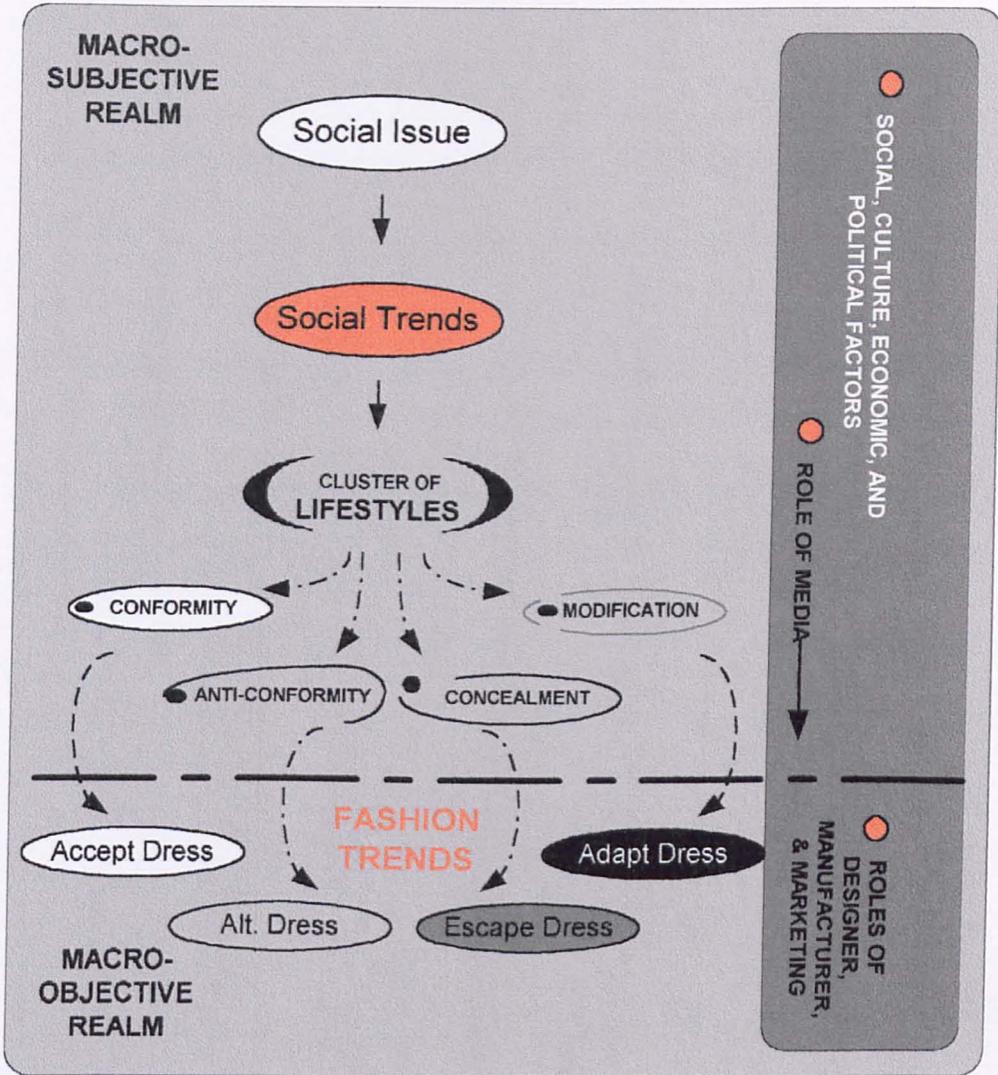


Figure 5.1.2: Fashion Process within the Macro-subjective and Objective Realms

In addition, Baudrillard referred to fashion as a “compulsion to innovate signs... apparently arbitrary and perpetual production of meaning – a kind of meaning drive” (Baudrillard, 1981, quoted from Barnard, 1996). The meanings drive individuals to seek out those new commodities that could signify them. The meaning can be produced perpetually but the forms of clothing are limited and can be used to signify different meanings repeatedly used (Brenninkmeyer, 1962). There are different speeds and degrees of participation in fashion themes due to the degree of negative-positive cross relationships evident for each lifestyle, and also the degree of differentiating and socialising forces of those participants.

Blumer (1969a) stated in his collective selection theory that:

“when fashion trends are screened and manipulated into fashion objects, simultaneously, innovative consumers may experiment with many possible alternatives, but the ultimate test in the fashion process is the competition between alternative styles for positions of fashionability.”

(ibid.)

The collective selection theory can apply to the overlapping of both macro and micro stages. Under such circumstances, the style of fashion selected becomes a reflection of a collectively endorsed standard that the individual perceives (Sproles and Burns, 1994). As time passes, some lifestyles, as well as fashion forms, collectively emerge and become more and more visible. At the same time, others appear with a small but discernible population, although some are eliminated from the system.

The mechanisms by which the macro structures or components present particular forms and suggest particular meanings to individuals to select and reject in their personal negotiation were considered by Hamilton (1997). The above discussion, especially the clusters of lifestyles, which become the fashion trends interpreted by suppliers, and the collective selection phenomenon, are clearly able to explain that issue (see Figure 5.1.2).

5.1.3 The Micro-Objective Level

The micro-objective realm is the level at which individuals interact with fashion objects in the marketplace. It is the level where fashion objects are selected by individuals to create their looks, in order to conform to the social concepts of the time. Hamilton (1997) defined this stage as negotiation with others. The retailing system influences this level of change in terms of offering various categories of looks.

The role of fashion commodity merchandisers is not only to provide assorted collections for individuals to choose and create their looks, but also to differentiate them from other ranges of styles (as if they are the critical representatives of the sub-cultural group). Individuals choose particular fashion shops in the same way they make other decisions and choices in society: the two are highly connected.

Apparently, fashion “brands” become more and more important as they act as signifiers symbolic of values, encompassing certain identities in creating community. The interactions between self and others within a community are the virtual negotiation in

shopping time. Basically, brands provide fashion commodities ranging from the most fashionable to the least in which to serve different levels of need, depending on the degree of fashion-consciousness in customers. If one acts as an informed/sophisticated/streetwise fashion leader, the most fashionable garments will be chosen. Figure 5.1.3A illustrates that consumers access through the homogeneous range of brands or commodities rather than the heterogeneity of all brands. The fashion adoption starts the process within the "homogeneous" consumer choices, commencing from fashion innovators through to early fashion adopters, fashion followers as well as laggards. The classic bell curve of Roger (1962) can be applied to this phenomenon.

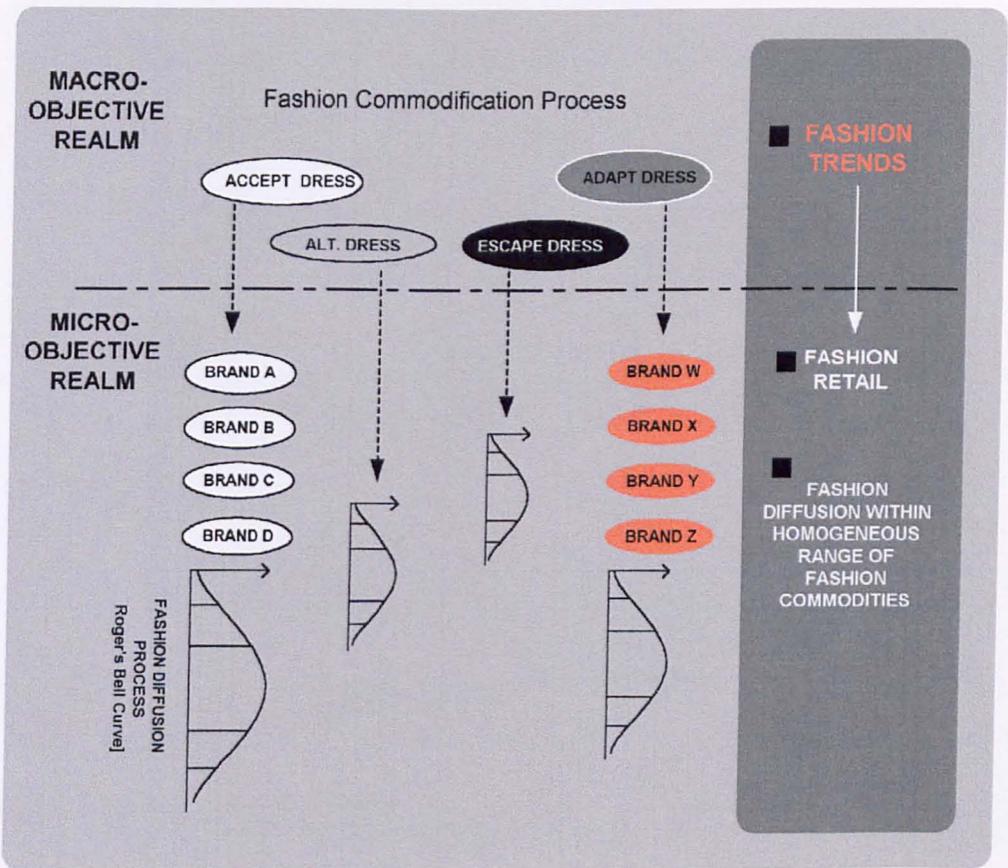


Figure 5.1.3A: Fashion Process within the Macro-Objective and Micro-Objective Realms

Paradoxically, as there is no exact boundary of lifestyle characteristics and some lifestyles may overlap each other, individuals are likely to access other ranges of commodities. In addition, the role of each individual in this dynamic post-modern society is not fixed in a particular way: one might behave differently on different occasions. The heterogeneous

range of commodities in the marketplace does, therefore, serve all kinds of potential-growth lifestyles and/or fashions.

Kean (1997) also stated that competition in fashions is not based solely on price changes, but also on societal interpretation of changes in the environment. At the same level of price (heterogeneity), all different styles are in competition to provide the signifier forms of fashion. On the other hand, within the same style of commodities (homogeneity), fashion products truly compete in price and timing of availability (see “the Fashion Retail Model” in Section 5.1.3.1 and Figure 5.1.3D).

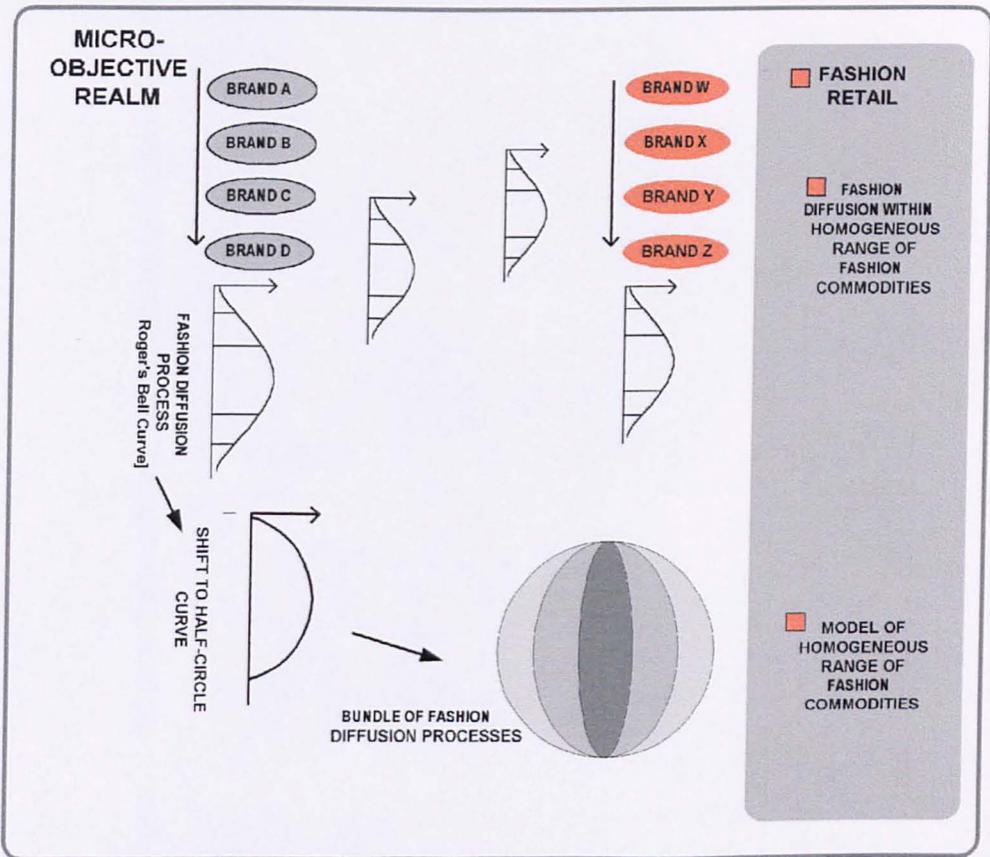


Figure 5.1.3B: Bundle of Fashion Diffusion Process

5.1.3.1 Creating the Fashion Retail Model

From Figure 3.4.4A (the Rogers bell-shaped curve), the process of fashion adoption starting with the innovators is clearly evident. Innovations can be seen to diffuse to the

fashion leaderships, the early adopters, the late adopters and, finally, the laggards. The population of each group relates to the area under the curve.

In order for the curve to conform to a simple geometric model, the bell-shaped curve is compared to a geometric shape, in which the reference axes of the curve can be applied. As such, a half-circle curve is the most suitable one. The area under the curve is equal to the area within a half-circle curve. Each sub-area represents each group of adopters, calculated to a percentage and then relocated to the area within the half-circle curve as shown in Figure 5.1.3C. The half-circle curve represents a life cycle of a fashion style, representing an adoption process from first stage until decline as in the bell-shaped curve. The new curve is represented in the vertical axis.

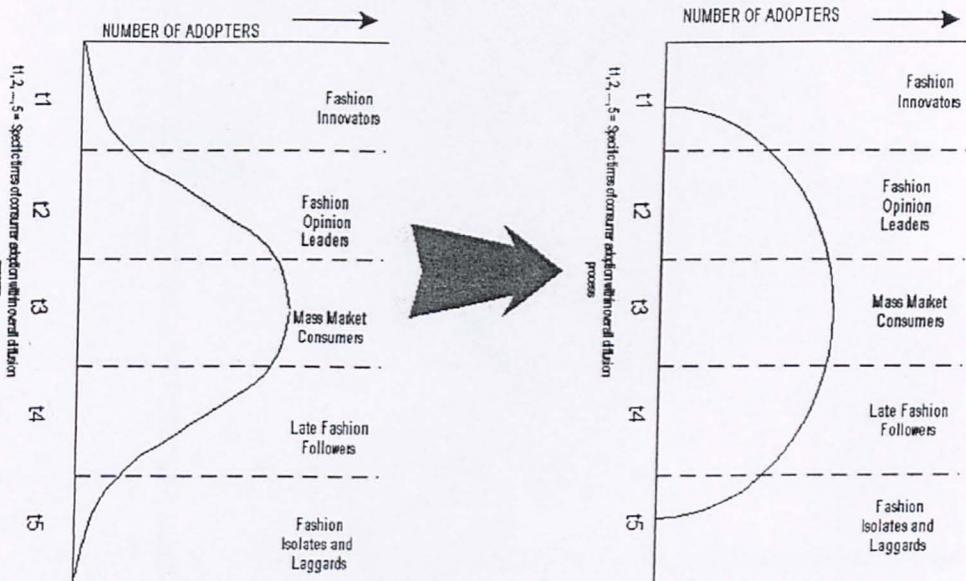


Figure 5.1.3C: From Bell Curve to Half-Circle Curve

According to the collective selection theory, there are many fashion styles emerging and competing at the same time. Sproles and Burns (1994) also state that:

"If one examines any specific time, one might observe some trends beginning their diffusion, others peaking, and some declining. Each of these trends may have different levels, rates, and lengths of acceptance..."

(*ibid.*)

All emerging fashion styles can thus be gathered together in order to form a model of all fashion styles as shown in Figure 5.1.3B. Regarding the half-circle depiction of the cycle, the gathering of all emerging fashion styles appears as a sphere. Every life cycle shares the same vertical axis, which represents time and stages of fashion process. The vertex of the sphere represents the starting point of every style. The colour shading of each section represents position of diffusion stage. It can be seen that the different stages of diffusion of each style are represented.

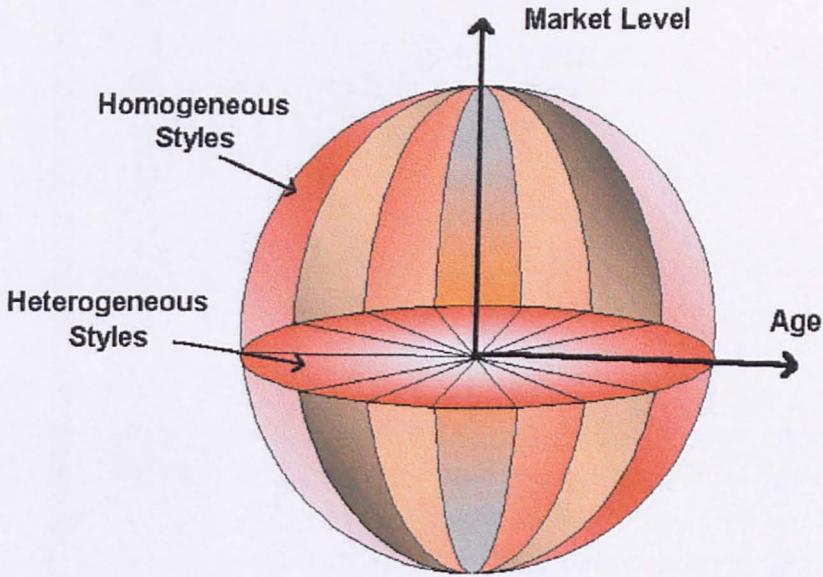


Figure 5.1.3D: The Fashion Retail Model

Kean (1997) argues that “the consumer selects products from a homogeneous assortment of like items at varying price point”. Her statement illuminates the fact that:

- Fashion consumers usually purchase fashion objects according to their individual tastes. Individual tastes can be seen from individual styles, in which tastes hardly change. This means that individuals purchase fashion commodities within the realm of their styles, but they might survey the commodities at a different price point.
- The different price point refers to the market segmentation in terms of income of target consumers. Manufacturers provide similar fashion commodities of the same style, but of different qualities and at different prices to serve consumers from different socio-economic categories.
- A fashion is diffused through the same style from innovators to followers. The particular style varies in price, related to market segmentation.

The above discussion can be absolutely applied to the vertical section of the fashion process model.

According to the SI theory and the collective selection theory, fashion commodities are provided by industry in heterogeneous ranges. Kaiser, et al. (1997) believe that the global nature of capitalist society influences the degree of heterogeneity. The collective selection theory states that a collective taste reflects a collective choice and many competing styles must be available.

The above discussion also sheds light on the fashion process model. It supports the principle that there are many competing styles at a particular time, which are represented by many vertical sections in the sphere model. This can be clearly seen from the cross sections of the sphere model as shown in Figure 5.1.3D.

If each cross-section represents various styles of the same market level, the vertical axis of the model can represent market segmentation in terms of product price level.

From a retail survey in London, Appendix II shows a variety of brands and also a variety of target consumers in terms of age groups. According to the marketing strategy, a fashion of one style can be provided to various age groups, not only for one particular group. This implies that a particular style can be designed for children, teenagers, and middle-aged customers alike. Hence, the radial axis of each style section can represent age range.

The model, finally, is defined in all dimensions. It can consistently describe the movements of fashion diffusion processes. The model is called **“the Fashion Retail Model”**.

5.1.4 The Micro-Subjective Level

It is at this level that individuals interpret the results of looks by “negotiating with self” in order to satisfy their needs (Kaiser, et al., 1995a; 1996). “Negotiating with self” or “selfing” (from the psycho-analysis) in this sense is referred to as negotiating process to achieve the ideal presentation of self. Conflict occurs during the embodying process aspired to the ideal body, resulting in the emergence of human ambivalence (Boulwood and Jerrard, 2000). The differentiating and socialising forces are the basic impulses behind the negotiation.

"In our striving to fulfil both needs, we are driven to seek a compromise. Paradoxically, what we achieve is mediocrity."

(Boulton and Jerrard, 2000: p. 308)

The result of negotiation with self that yields the satisfactory of human ambivalence is expressed through fashion objects as if they are a platform of symbolic display of fashion. Meaning emerges at this stage to make sense of symbolic ambiguity. (Kaiser, et al., 1995a; 1995b; 1996). Meaning negotiation of SI theory can explain this stage.

There are two forces that create a continuous tension between the competitive desires to display oneself and to retain a sense of modesty (Finkelstein, 1996). That is a basic negotiation between the need for exhibiting and the need to conform to the social norm. Similarly, Simmel (1971) proposed that new fashions would result if the two forces were different. In addition, Douglas and Isherwood (1979), and Barnard (1996), also pointed to the importance of two similar forces, the individualising or isolating forces and the conforming or bridging forces.

These two forces are labelled as the **"differentiating force"** or **"DF"**, and the **"socialising force"** or **"SF"**. The meaning of individuality in fashion diffusion is defined by Park (1998) as consisting of two aspects: differentiation and independence. Differentiation is a force that acts on individuals, to a greater or lesser degree, to affect fashion choices. Independence has no action in this regard at all.

Future fashion refers to the need to change or to be different. This is the crucial underlying factor in the fashion adoption process. Fashion innovators are the first to adopt fashion. On the other hand, early fashion adopters and fashion followers who have a lower degree of DF and a greater degree of SF, adopt fashion in the later stages. When fashion becomes popular, adopted by the majority, the late followers are forced to adopt.

Fashion innovators feel uncomfortable when wearing similar styles and colours that many others wear. In addition, the value of newness in possessing commodities decreases. As a result, the inner feeling, influenced by DF, drives them to seek new styles to replace the current one, which no longer serve the inner purpose. In other words, fashion innovators are the first group that adopts the styles that reflect the appreciated meaning. The signals for changes are driven by the DF of most individuals, especially innovators. New social issues provide the basis for change options.

5.2 The Fashion Change-Agent Model

Figure 5.1.2 shows the macro-subjective level to be the fashion change, which corresponds to issues of social needs/desires. The phenomenon of cultural ambivalence would occur at this stage. In order to clarify this ambivalence, the industries, particularly the designers, interpret the blurred issue to form a tangible concept, which becomes a form of fashion object. This further implies that society adjusts itself under acceptable conditions, which might be the persuasion of advertising, for example. Evidence of this can be found in the continuity of changes in fashion rather than the immediate changes (see details in Section 3.4.2). In other words, acceptable fashion usually contains historical background. The historical context is bound up with the cultural appreciation of that time (see details in Section 3.4.1). Hence, Figure 5.2.1 shows the fashion retail model bound within a cultural frame. This also implies that different cultures cannot be described by the same fashion change model.

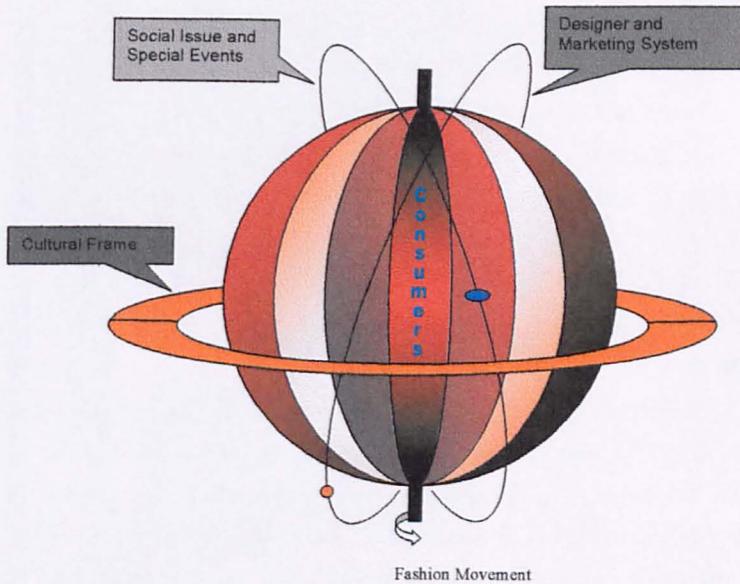


Figure 5.2.1: The Fashion Change-Agent Model

In Sections 3.3.4 and 4.6, it had been suggested that designers and the marketing system are the mediators within and for the fashion industry. They embody crucial tools that industries use to interpret the specific societal needs/desires. They have also to stimulate the distribution of fashion commodities to the right target market. Consequently, whenever designers provide the right products and marketers stimulate distribution of these products to the right market, new fashions are accelerated and carried forward. The roles of designers and marketers are shown in Figure 5.2.1, and are perceived as being the two single most important dynamic agents for change within the fashion process.

The model is finally developed in order to consistently explain the fashion change in a particular society at the macro level. This model, for the purpose of clarity of explanation at this stage in the discussion, is called **“the Fashion Change-Agent Model”**. Obviously, the model emphasises the consumers as a core change agent in fashion.

5.3 Holistic Perspective on the Fashion Process

The previous sections have described many of the components, which needed to be considered in constructing the fashion process model. These might be considered as building blocks in the construction of a piece of architecture. In order to create a cohesive artifice or whole, it is necessary to mix the ingredients for the cement, which bind the building block.

It can be clearly seen that fashion emerges and ends its cycle at the subjective level. However, in its progress it passes through the objective level. Therefore, as proposed in the previous section, fashion progresses from the micro-subjective to macro-subjective levels, then is transformed to the macro-objective and micro-objective level in a way which enables commodities to be represented as or used as a fashion tool in expressing the significant essence of fashion.

The on-and-off transformation between the subjective and objective process of fashion is the essence of the fashion process. It is important to recognise that the current around the fashion entity can be represented either by concept, style, consumption or objects, depending upon the stage of its progress. The transformation is the key link between each realm, facilitating a cohesive whole. It is therefore proposed to entitle this conceptual fashion model, which is shown in Figure 5.3.1, **“the Fashion Transformation Process Model”**. This model will be used to describe the process of fashion change in Western society throughout this thesis.

5.4 Conclusion

In summary, this chapter suggests that the fashion process is better considered as a dynamic process and not as a linear continuum of the kind proposed by Hamilton. I propose here that the fashion process begins and ends at the individual level, but that it is in a perpetual cycle from fashion concept to commodification through lifestyles and social trends, as shown in Figure 5.3.1. The SI theory proposed by Kaiser, et al. (1995a; 1995b;

1996) explains only some aspects of this fashion process (how appearance is modified by social interaction), but lacks an explanation of the transformation from the macro-subjective to objective realms involved in, for example, manufacture, marketing and selling. The benefit of the model presented in this paper is to extend the SI theory and its macro-micro continuum. It also serves to integrate many existing fashion theories in a more holistic manner, thereby removing apparent contradictions in those theories (Cholachatpinyo, et al., 2002a).

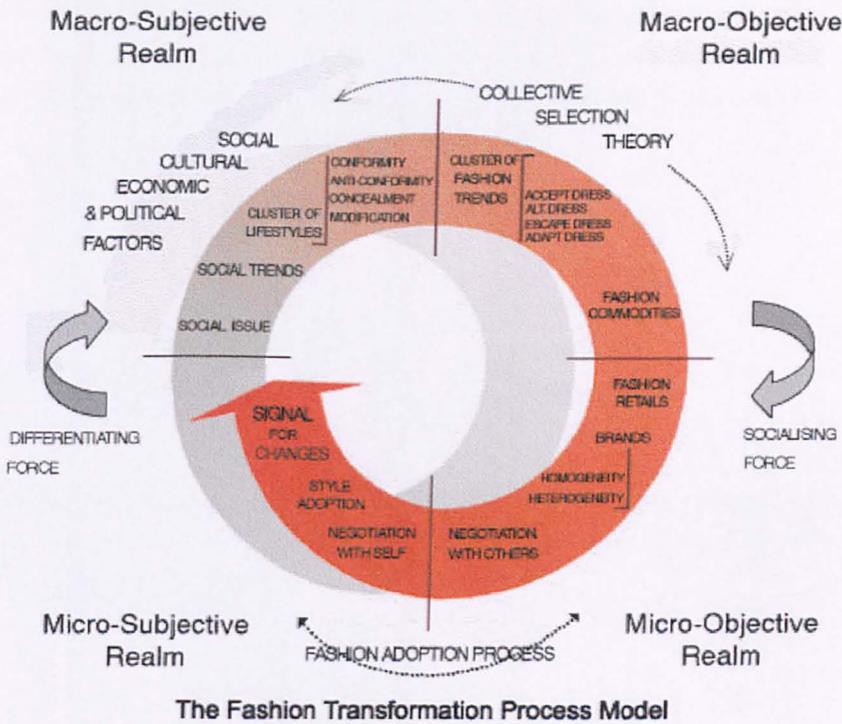


Figure 5.3.1: The Fashion Transformation Process Model

The model may also have applications in predicting aspects of wider debates in fashion such as those that relate to commodification and predicting fashion changes. The conceptual framework offered here does contain certain assumptions, particularly at the micro-subjective level. At this level, specific information can be gathered which may predict future fashion trends. An important contribution of this model is that it recognises the importance of the micro-subjective level factors and acknowledges that fashion (as a concept not a commodity) emanates not from a single stream but rather from a series of

many influences which are convergent at different times. It is important, therefore, to empirically test the status and role of aspects of this micro-subjective level in the fashion process from concept to commodification. This is the subject of empirical research, which will be presented in the following chapter. If this model were supported empirically, it would predict that fashion changes because of continuous micro-subjective level demands for change from fashion innovators, e.g. wearers and designers. How quickly fashion changes and in which direction, depends importantly on these innovators, but will also be determined by social trends, the need to conform, and the various pressures exerted by others on individuals to be either the same or different. These micro-subjective forces should be predictive of all aspects of fashion commodification (ibid., 2002b). Brands will always have brand power but they must also continually evolve to reflect the micro-subjective level forces. Otherwise, their power will be eroded in proportion to their failure to encapsulate the micro-subjective level forces. These forces are, in the end, all-powerful.

Endnote

¹ Post-modernity is an era which, for the purposes of this thesis, has drawn to a close. The transition period we now find ourselves in has variously been described as "post-materialism", "post-consumerism", and "post-industrialism".

Chapter 6

Empirical Studies

Chapter 6 is the empirical investigation of the conceptual model, "the Fashion Transformation Process Model", theoretically constructed in the previous Chapter. The following serial hypotheses are focused on the subjective realm of the Fashion Transformation Process Model. As previously stated, consumers are the core agent of fashion change. The hypotheses are focused on investigating their roles and functions.

6.1 Introduction

In the midst of rampant competition in fashion retailing, the success of each brand, and its adoption by purchasers, depends to a considerable extent on efficient management strategies. These strategies are not only to provide the right products to the right consumers at the right time but also to create the brand and to advertise it to the right target. There are many complicated dimensions to such fashion retailing. Different types of fashion consumers have to be matched with styles of commodities. Generally, from the marketer's point of view, marketing activities can be divided into stages correlated to the behaviours of consumers in terms of fashion adoption as shown in Figures 3.4.4A and 3.4.4B.

Figure 3.4.4B shows a general marketing life-cycle extending from its commercial design and introduction, through inventory accumulation and promotion, mass merchandising, and clearance and obsolescence (Sproles and Burns, 1994). The Figure depicts the

fashion life-cycle and how the marketer matches fashion adopters with marketing activities.

Fashion consumers have been classified into groups correlated to their behaviours by the acceptance of a specific style over a period of time. That classification can be graphically represented by the bell curve in Figure 3.4.4A (Rogers, 1983). Rogers divides fashion adopters into five categories: innovators, early fashion adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards. The curve indicates some variables, i.e. length of diffusion time, speed rate, and acceptance level of that fashion style.

In general, a fashion diffuses from fashion innovators and opinion leaders to early fashion adopters. The diffusion, then, moves into the peak stage where a large number of consumers begin to adopt fashion. Eventually, the number of fashion adopters reduces when the fashion is already established. The adopters at this stage could be called fashion followers. Then, the diffusion process moves to the decline stage where the late adopters, called "laggards", begin to adopt the fashion.

Not only one fashion emerges at a time. The collective selection theory of Blumer (1969a) clearly stated that there are a variety of simultaneous fashion trends emerging and competing at the same time. Sproles and Burns (1994) also point out in the same way that:

"If one examines any specific time, one might observe some trends beginning their diffusion, others peaking, and some declining. Each of these trends may have different levels, rates, and lengths of acceptance..."

(ibid.)

These have important implications for the conceptual modelling of the fashion process. Firstly, one would expect to find many fashions competing for acceptance simultaneously. Secondly, one would also expect each fashion to diffuse at different rates and different levels. Finally, one would anticipate heterogeneous styles rather than homogeneous styles. Fashion is complex and this will be revealed through a diversity of consumer practices and designer outputs.

Whilst I would expect there to be a popular fashion at any one time, I would not predict dominance. The more fashions there are, the more trends. These different consumer groups have to be separated in order to fix the adopter group in a time scale in the diffusion process of a particular fashion style. In fact, each brand has to find only its targeted consumers. There have been many cases when fashion retailers have produced

products and designs that were a financial disaster. One example is the case of the midi skirt in the 1970s in USA, where the manufacturers misjudged the fashion scene. After the popular of hot pants period, the fashion suppliers attempted to persuade their customers to wear long clothes, however, people did not conform to the predicted fashion. Another indirect but good example regarding the lack of brand development is the case of Marks and Spencer. In the end of the 1990s, Marks and Spencer, who had been the leading department store with very high market-share in the UK clothing retailer, failed to achieve its position with huge lost of profit also. One of the major factors was the lack of the modification of the brand, while all major customers have been developing their age, attitude, lifestyle and taste. Marks and Spencer, in a later stage, has heavily invested in the product design and brand adjustment to survive in the retailing. This relationship between adopters' groups, marketing activities, and "fashionability level" of commodities needs to be investigated. The link between fashion adopters' groups and market levels is investigated in two ways. I attempt to provide evidence relating to two questions of relevance to my conceptual model:

- Why do those consumers adopt fashion on different time scales?
- Do adopters follow the same pattern?

I also attempt to justify a new fashion life-cycle curve through the hypothesis, which might differ from the long-established bell curve found by Rogers (1962; 1983). Finally, it is hoped that the empirical investigation will reveal some new facet of the direction of fashion diffusion. The following are four hypotheses that suggest themselves in accordance with the above theoretical discussion:

- Hypothesis 1: Fashion innovators have a greater differentiating force and lesser socialising force, while fashion followers have the opposite.
- Hypothesis 2: The decision-making process of innovators in accepting a new style differs from the process of fashion followers.
- Hypothesis 3: The diffusion life-cycle curve based on the mass-market theory differs from the classic curve of Rogers.
- Hypothesis 4: Fashions diffuse from innovators through all directions of collectivities.

6.1.1 Research Design

The theoretical background expounded above is made explicit in the design of the research. Investigating the complexity of consumer behaviours in the process of decision-making and their inherent psychological impulses needs different research approaches. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (1997) suggest three different ways of approaching

research: positivism, phenomenology, and a combined approach. Positivism owes much to what we would think of as scientific research and has the following distinguishing features:

1. Deductive;
2. Seeking to explain causal relationships between variables;
3. Normally using quantitative data;
4. Employing controls to allow the testing of hypotheses;
5. Using a highly structured methodology to facilitate replication.

Phenomenology, on the other hand, is a research approach characterised by a focus on the meanings that research subjects attach to social phenomena. It is the attempt to understand what is happening and why it is happening. It is more appropriate when studying a small sample of subjects, whereas positivism is suitable for a large population.

It is possible to combine positivist and phenomenological approaches within the same piece of research. Both have different strengths. It depends on where the research emphasis lies.

The hypotheses proposed in the Introduction are of different degrees of importance. Hypotheses I and II are major topics of investigation, while the others are minor. Positivism is the most suitable research approach for Hypothesis I, due to the fact that it is deduced from theories and its emphasis proposes a relationship between two variables. There are two layers of complexity, each layer of which involves two variables. The different levels of psychological impulses in each adopter group, and differentiating and socialising forces, are the first two variables. The other two variables are the relationship between the psychological impulses and the major fashion adopter groups.

Easterby-Smith et al. (1991) suggest eight features of positivism, of which cross-sectional analysis is the one that this research should undertake, where comparison of variations across samples is the major element.¹ Since the hypothesis needs comparative data across fashion consumers, the quantitative method is to be employed. A quantitative survey by such means as a questionnaire can obtain a large amount of data from a sizeable population in a highly economical way. The data are standardised, allowing easy comparison. Given the nature of the comparative data as well as the focus on the level of psychological impulses, a questionnaire instrument using the Likert scale concept seems to be most appropriate.

As regards Hypothesis II, it will best be approached using the phenomenological approach rather than positivism. This is due to the fact that the emphasis of the hypothesis lies on

the way different fashion adopters express themselves, interact and share experience with others in society. It is believed that the decision-making process, as the core emphasis, does not merely function as a result of adopters' psychological impulses. Instead adopters are aroused by fashion phenomena, social issues and trendy lifestyles. This piece of research will be particularly concerned with the context in which the activities take place, i.e. shopping, clubbing, attending a fashion show.

This hypothesis is also seeking the different mechanisms of various adopter groups. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (1997) suggest that one may use both qualitative and quantitative methods, with many cases based on interviews conducted over a short period. Qualitative research is considered to be the relevant methodology for dealing with complex issues. Qualitative research allows the collection of a small number of samples which are, however, of high quality. The Interview method is a purposeful discussion between the interviewer and the interviewee, which makes it possible to gather valid and reliable data that are relevant to the research questions and objectives (Kahn and Cannell, 1957).

Interview methods can be classified into three different types, namely: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews. The semi-structured interview has greater benefits in explanatory and also exploratory study, in that it can be helpful to find out what is happening, to seek new insights, and to understand the relationships between variables.

In semi-structured interviews the researcher will have a list of themes and questions to be covered, although these may vary from interview to interview. The order of the questions may also vary depending on the flow of the conversations. On the other hand, additional questions may be required to explore the research question and objectives given the nature of events within particular organisations (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 1997).

In accordance with the above principle, the semi-structured interview allows interviewees to explain and explore their social interaction and activities in the decision-making process, rather than just give answers to the narrow set of criteria of the structured interview method. The focus of the hypothesis is on the past experiences of the samples when adopting a new fashion. Data should be recorded by note taking and a pre-coded answer list. (See details of the sampling techniques and procedure in Section 6.3.1.3 and 6.2.1.3.4.)

The third hypothesis is minor and is a by-product of the questionnaire survey. It is, however, also significant as the result will show the population of each adopter group. The

fourth hypothesis is also minor, with some supplementary questions attached to the questionnaire survey. Its purpose is to obtain data to support and strengthen the idea of fashion diffusion direction as discussed in the previous Chapter.

In summary, the research approach for the overall research is the method combining positivism and phenomenology. However, each is employed separately for major hypotheses depending on their emphasis.

6.2 Hypothesis 1: Differentiating Force and Socialising Force

In the previous Chapter, the fashion process was divided into four levels: macro-subjective, macro-objective, micro-objective and micro-subjective, inspired by Hamilton (1997) and Ritzer (1991). This Chapter tests some predictions at the micro-subjective level. Kaiser, et al. (1997) suggest that it is this level that "accommodates the interpretations of the resulting "looks", including negotiations of meaning to make sense of symbolic ambiguity". In other words, Hamilton (1997) defines this level as "negotiation with self".

In the conceptual model I suggest that in the process of negotiation with self, there are two basic forces involved. These two psychological processes, I label as the "differentiating force" or "DF" and the "socialising force" or "SF" (Cholachatpinyo, et al., 2002a). Those two forces are seen as central in an individual's self-negotiation between the need for exhibiting and the need to conform to the social norm. I proposed that fashion innovators are influenced much more by the differentiating force than the socialising force. This is why they are the first to adopt a new fashion. On the other hand, fashion followers, when compared to fashion innovators, behave in the opposite way in the fashion adoption process. Consequently, the two psychological forces also affect the fashion diffusion process in terms of the adopting hierarchy. The purpose of this investigation is to test these predictions of the Fashion Transformation Process Model empirically. In addition, the investigation attempts to provide fashion retailers and suppliers with other relevant aspects with which to understand the process of fashion adoption.

6.2.1 Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1: Fashion innovators have a greater differentiating force and lesser socialising force, while fashion followers have the opposite.

6.2.1.1 Theoretical Framework

Fashion is explained by Flügel (1930) as a form of exhibitionism. It conceals the body and simultaneously exaggerates its differences. It creates a continual force between the competitive desires to display oneself and to retain a sense of modesty. Similarly, Simmel (1971) distinguishes between two social tendencies in the development of fashion: the need for union and the need for isolation. In other words, these impulses are always negotiated through fashion and clothing (Barnard, 1996).

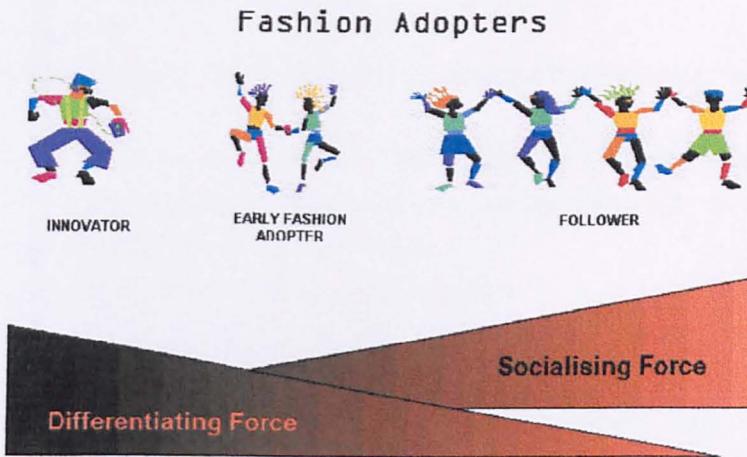


Figure 6.2.1: Scale of DF and SF

Sproles and Burns (1994) point out that apart from intrinsic reasons for adopting fashions (protection, modesty and adornment), some other socio-psychological needs are related to adoption. The needs are to be up-to-date, to adjust to a changing society, to escape boredom, for symbolic differentiation, and for social affiliation. However, those needs can be categorised into two groups: the need to conform to society and the need to be different. Sproles and Burns also point out three roles that fashion adoption plays for a changing society: it introduces order to social change, allows individuals the freedom to move in new directions, and to become accustomed to and prepare for the future. In this investigation, the two forces are labelled the "socialising force" and the "differentiating force". It can initially be anticipated that the underlying impulse that drives individuals to adopt fashion is the balance between those two psychological forces. This hypothesis is based on the assumption that fashion innovators and followers have different proportions of the two psychological forces operating in their fashion choices. Innovators are assumed to carry more differentiating force than fashion followers do.

From the review of texts used, the group that represents future fashion is the innovator group. They influence fashion change. Future fashion refers to change or to differentiation. It can therefore be assumed that innovators have much more differentiating force than socialising force and that late followers tend to the opposite. Figure 6.2.1 shows the scale of the two forces varying from innovators to late followers.

6.2.1.2 Methodology of Investigation

Type of Fieldwork: Questionnaire

Sample Number: 300

Sample Specification: Female University Students across Multiple Disciplines

The survey research method used was data collection. 300 questionnaires were distributed to female university students in London. The samples were divided into three groups relating to their main subject areas of study:

- The London Institute representing art and design;
- London School of Economics and SOAS representing the business and management and social science perspectives respectively;
- King's College and UCL representing pure science and applied science.

The distribution into three major areas was based on two ideas. Firstly, those samples in three major areas were assumed to represent not only a general sample of the student population, but also the national culture. Secondly, it was to assist in obtaining a balanced range of different degrees of involvement or association with groups of fashion wearers and, therefore, a spread of underlying motivational differences.

The questionnaire instrument will be separately discussed in Section 6.6.

6.3 Hypothesis 2: Decision-Making Process

The pattern of the fashion innovators' and followers' decision-making processes in accepting a new style, it is here suggested, must be different. With regard to the fashion life cycle, there is not only difference in the timing of an adoption process, but also in the pattern of adoption itself. To adopt an innovation when nobody else has yet adopted it, or to adopt it while many people have already adopted it, must be different in terms of the timing of the fashion, adopters' classification, social force, and fashion availability. This implies that the psychological situations of each fashion adopter differ from each other

right from the beginning of the process. It follows that an investigation as to whether or not the patterns in innovation adoption of fashion innovators and fashion followers are different, must be undertaken. If the outcome suggests it, this can be used as a guideline towards further investigation as to how we understand what the innovators need. As discussed before, innovators play leading roles in the early history of an innovation's acceptance. They set the direction for significant fashion trends that spread to the mass population. Thus, to understand what innovators need will imply that we are able to forecast future fashions more precisely.

6.3.1 Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2: "The innovators' decision-making process in accepting a new style differs from the process of the fashion followers."

6.3.1.1 Theoretical Framework

According to the literature review in Section 3.4.2 and especially Figure 3.4.2, the adoption process generally starts with awareness of new fashion, then develops to a level of interest either by evaluation, comprehension or trial and error, and then goes to the last stage, which is decision-making. Robertson (1971) divides his model into three main stages as shown in Figure 5.1.1B. These are cognitive activities, affective activities and behavioural activities. These main activities can be derived, as well as some behaviours, from Rogers, Wilkie, and Sproules (see Figure 3.4.2 for details).

The adoption process model of Robertson (1971) has general application to all fashion adopters. However, the decision-making process of fashion innovators and followers may be very different. It may not only be different just in the timing of the adoption process (relating to the time scale in the fashion life-cycle), but also in terms of the manner of innovative fashion adoption. Whether or not a person wears a fashion may depend on the timing of the fashion emerging, social forces, and fashion availability. The psychological situations of fashion adopters may also differ at the very beginning of the process. It is therefore important to investigate the patterns of these different adopters' groups in the adoption process. This may help us to understand what the fashion innovators' needs are in relation to fashion commodities.

The adoption of fashion followers has predominantly been described in terms of social conformity. In addition, many theorists believe that the trickle-down theory cannot apply to the present phenomenon: instead, the mass-market theory is a more appropriate model

for the contemporary situation. Figure 6.3.1 shows all activities that can plausibly occur during the adoption process.

Cognitive [Thinking] Activities	Affective [Feeling] Activities	Behavioural [Doing] Activities	Imaginative [Imagining] Activities
Problem Perception Awareness Identification of Alternatives Prior Condition Knowledge Evaluation Comprehension	Persuasion Attitude Attractiveness Liking Value Legitimizing Comprehension	Trial Decision Inventory of Clothing Adoption Legitimizing Implementation	Conformation Imagination Copying Replication Imitation Simulation

Figure 6.3.1: All Activities in the Adoption Process

To further elucidate this principle, innovators may view an existing innovation as interesting and challenging at first sight or at the first stage. The “feeling” of experiencing the innovation may interact at the first stage, rather than conventional awareness. Fashion followers may see an innovation as a strange item, so that the general process suggested by theorists as to what their reactions might be is generally correct.

6.3.1.2 Methodology of Investigation

Type of Fieldwork: Interview

Sample Number: 20 Innovators, 20 Early Adopters, 20 Fashion Followers

Sample Specification: No fixed age group, career or status

6.3.1.3 Sampling Techniques

Sampling techniques provide a range of methods that enable the survey to reduce the amount of data needing to be collected by considering only data from a subgroup rather than all possible cases. There are significant differences and advantages/disadvantages between the two types of sampling technique: probability sampling and non-probability sampling. The major difference is that in probability samples the chance, or probability, of each case being selected from the population is known and is equal for all cases. For non-probability samples the probability of each case being selected from the total population is not known (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 1997).

The techniques for probability sampling are based on the assumption that the sample will be statistically chosen at random. As a consequence, it is possible to specify the probability that any case will be included in the sample. However, as regards this hypothesis, this is unlikely to be possible and so the sample must be selected in some other way.

Non-probability sampling provides a range of alternative techniques based upon subjective judgement. The research hypothesis, questions, objectives and choice of research strategy, in this case, dictate non-probability sampling. Limited resources of a sample group are an additional reason to choose non-probability sampling.

One of the non-probability sampling techniques is called the purposive technique, which enables the surveyor to use his or her own judgement to select cases which will best enable the research questions to be answered and the objectives to be met. Neuman (1991) states that this form of sample is often used when working with very small samples, and when one wishes to select cases that are particularly informative. The following are examples of the logic on which the strategy might be based for selecting cases.

- Extreme case sampling focuses on unusual or special cases on the basis that the data collected about these unusual or extreme outcomes will enable us to learn the most and answer the research questions and meet the objectives most effectively. In respect of this strategy, the fashion innovator group can be considered an extreme case, where theoretical statistics suggests that they are only 2.5% of the total population.
- Heterogeneous or maximum variation sampling enables us to collect data to describe and explain the key themes that can be observed. Patton (1990) states that any patterns that do emerge are likely to be of particular interest and value and represent the key themes. Patton (ibid.) also suggests that to ensure maximum variation within a sample, diverse characteristics (sample selection criteria) can be identified prior to selecting the sample. Regarding this strategy, please see the details of sample identification in the following section.
- Critical case sampling selects critical cases, on the basis that they can make a point dramatically or because they are important. The focus of data collection is to understand what is happening in each critical case so that logical generalisations can be made. In this case, there are strong beliefs based on grounded theory that fashion innovators are important and significantly view fashion from a different standpoint.

From the above logical strategies it can be assumed that the purposive sampling

technique is the most relevant method for Hypothesis II.

The method employed in the collecting of data inevitably requires us to consider in more detail the subject of research ethics. This has important implications for the negotiation of access to people and the collection of data. This hypothesis provides challenges in terms of data collection. In this case it does not focus on who buys, from whom and why, as in the first hypothesis. Instead, there are different ethical difficulties involved in studying the purchasing decision in the adopting of new fashion. The research design in this matter has to concentrate on data collection from the fashion adopter or the purchaser at a time as distant from the adoption as tactfulness requires. The ideal population, of course, should be the fashion adopter at a time as near as possible to the adoption of a new fashion. This could be, for instance, during shopping time in the high street, participation time at a fashion show, as well as implementation time at a fashion scene (e.g., clubbing). In other words, in order to yield valid data on the decision-making process, the samples should be either in a mood for adopting fashion, being fed fashion information, searching for a new look, or engaged in shopping activity.

The advantage of this research design for collecting data from those in a mood for adopting fashion, is that the research population is unaware of the fact that they are the subject of research. This is due to the fact that they are alert, preparing to adopt, or implementing their newly adopted looks, or otherwise searching for new fashion information. The prospective interviewees are also more likely to participate in the interview as they might feel the topic relates to a moment when they are "in the mood for fashion". It is rather as if the samples are making conversation with others on the topic of fashion in an ordinary manner.

Because of this consideration, the interviewing samples for this hypothesis are people who are found on fashion scenes, such as shopping in a high street, queuing for a fashion show, buying a fashion magazine, and attending a night-club.

6.3.1.4 Instrument and Procedure

The four-stage process of non-probability sampling is as follows:

1. Identify a suitable sampling frame based on the research questions and objectives. The sampling frame uses the same criteria as were employed in the questionnaire survey. This is due to the fact that, firstly, the sample is not in a complete list of all the cases in the population from which the sample will be drawn. In other words, the research objective is not concerned with members of

any organisation. Secondly, where no suitable list exists, it is necessary to compile a special sampling frame. Accordingly, the sampling frame consists of the 4 major questions listed in 6.6.1. The interview instrument consists of two main parts, which are concerned with the classification of fashion adopter groups and the investigation of interviewees' decision-making processes, and a minor part which concerns personal data.

2. Decide on a suitable sample size. It was decided that the size of the population should be 20 for each adopter group (fashion innovator, early fashion adopter, and fashion follower), which makes 60 in total. The sample size of each group has to be equal, however, the target quantity is calculated from the ratio of Roger's bell curve theory, suggesting that there are 2.5 innovators in 100 of the population. In other words, 20 required innovators means that the whole population is virtually sampling from 800 samples.
3. Select the most appropriate sampling technique and select the sample. See the purposive sampling technique described in the previous Section. The procedure of the interview comprises two sequential stages: adopter classification, and the main investigation. The first part of the interview was designed to confirm the interviewees' classification based on the principles employed in Hypothesis 1. In this part interviewees were classified by the established tools (see Section 6.6.2 Adopter Classification Tool). The second part is the main investigation of the interview involving the decision-making process.
4. Check that the sample is representative of the population. The criteria of adopter classification in 6.6.1 can be used to sum up the ratio of representatives of each group. Once the population of any of the adopter groups reaches its target, those excess samples will not be taken into account. The interviewees should be classified at the first stage and if they fit any of the required groups the second part of the interview should be carried out.

The first part of the interview was designed to confirm their classification based on the principles employed in Hypothesis 1. At the beginning of the interview, interviewees were classified by the established tools before proceeding. The total sample of 60 contained 20 of each group. Sample groups from different social settings were selected, for example, from amongst the visitors to Fashion Week, from art colleges and from fashionable areas of London, such as Soho, while fashion followers were found in high street shopping areas.

Following on from the literature review, the second part of the interview was set and focused on three major activities in the decision-making process: thinking, feeling and doing. The questions covered a variety of situations involving the adoption process,

derived from Figure 6.3.1. In other words, the interview was concerned with the sequence of activities in the process of adoption. For instance, the interviewees were asked to indicate their first activity in adopting their present fashion, and to give the order of their activities in the adoption process.

The main interview process was added to by some supplementary questions, i.e., questions derived from the major questions and from the questionnaire of Hypothesis 1. This was due to some interviewees becoming aware of the fact that their behaviours were the subject of this research.

6.4 Hypothesis 3: New Fashion Life-Cycle Curve

The results from Hypotheses 1 and 2 can be demonstrated in the differentiation of each group of fashion adopters in terms of the processes in adopting a new fashion and internal forces and external forces as the factors, which drive a fashion change. These hypotheses can accordingly be used to clearly classify innovators, fashion early adopters and late adopters. If this is the case, it is essential to remind ourselves that Rogers' life-cycle curve is an ideal. It is a contention of this study that fashion diffusion in late post-modernism might have a different profile in terms of quantity of each adopter group, timing in adoption of new fashion and speed of the process. By virtue of the fact that this hypothesis is a derivative of the previous main hypotheses, it is likely that this specific piece of investigation would not yield all the differences in all the parameters.

6.4.1 Hypothesis 3

As discussed above, the hypothesis can be formulated as follows:

Hypothesis 3: "The diffusion life-cycle curve based on the mass-market theory differs from the classic curve of Rogers."

6.4.1.1 Theoretical Framework

According to Rogers, the bell-shaped diffusion curve in Figure 3.4.4A, which was researched in 1962, showed the percentages of each adopters' population. This resulted in a classic curve. In this study, which is based on the mass-market theory, the effects from mass marketing and mass media are taken into account. It appears that consumers' interest in new fashion has increased as a consequence of the impact of the mass media. This has produced changes in the numbers of the population of each group and the

proportion of peaks and troughs relative to the time scale. It is possible that the classic life-cycle curve has changed to either or any of the following potential proportional curves as shown in Figure 6.4.1:

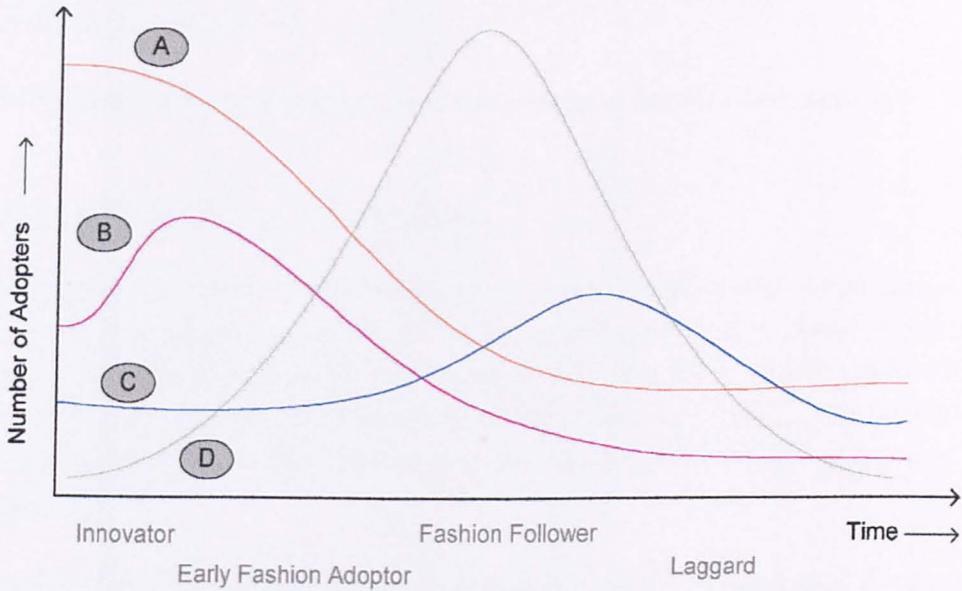


Figure 6.4.1: Potential Diffusion Life-Cycle Curves

- Curve A: high innovator take up, rapid decline;
- Curve B: medium innovator take up, high early adoption followed by rapid decline;
- Curve C: low innovator take up, medium peak in follower take up and decline;
- Curve D: classic bell curve take up and decline.

This is a separate phenomenon to those profiles discussed in Chapter 3. This hypothesis is an extension of and derived from the previous hypotheses, and precisely provides characteristics and conditions of each group of adopters in the present fashion era, the late post-modernism period. In other words, this crucial information can be used as a base to investigate the average population in each category of the fashion adoption process.

6.4.1.2 Methodology of Investigation

Type of Fieldwork: Questionnaire

Sample Number: 300

Sample Specification: Same as for Hypothesis 1.

6.5 Hypothesis 4: Diffusion through the Collectivities

6.5.1 Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4: "Fashions diffuse from innovators through all directions of collectivities"

6.5.1.1 Theoretical Framework

According to the literature reviews in Section 3.5.4, King (1963) summarises the mass-market theory as "each social class has its own fashion innovators and opinion leaders, who play key roles in starting new fashions within their peer social networks. Fashion information and personal influence "trickle-across" each social class, with fashion influence between social equals predominating over the vertical flow of fashion from upper to lower classes."

Sproles and Burns (1994) conclude in the mass-market theory that the system of mass production in the fashion industry, combined with mass communication of fashion information through many different media, makes new styles and information about new styles available simultaneously to all socio-economic classes of the population. This makes it possible for diffusion to occur simultaneously in each class, and the trickle-down process is effectively eliminated.

From my point of view, I agree with the mass-market theory in principle, inasmuch as I support the main ideas that:

- The system of mass production, mass communication, mass media and mass marketing can provide new fashion objects simultaneously to all socio-economic classes.
- Each social class and/or age group has its own fashion innovators and opinion leaders.

However, I do not agree with some points implicit in the theory, and the mass-market theory cannot therefore, in my view, supplant the existing theory. My critical points are:

- Fashion does not diffuse through peers within the class itself; instead, it diffuses through social collectivities. This distinction in terminology is clarified later.
- Apparently, King, Sproles, Burns and others accept that the class system still exists. My critical perspective supports the idea that the diffusion is either through

trickle down or trickle across or bottom up, and can come from any direction.

I also give credence to the ideas of Fallers (1954) in Section 3.5.1, when he suggests that trickle down, in the sense of the transformation of status-symbolic consumption patterns, is a factor. As I show in the mechanism exemplified in Figure 3.5.1, consumption patterns express, reproduce, and potentially transform social collectivities. Holt (1997) created the term "collectivities" in the following context:

"Collectivities are groups of people who have been socialised in similar conditions, are embedded in similar social relations, and so tend to have similar cultural understandings. Collectivities, then, are a particular type of group that is more macroscopic than groups such as families, organisations, or peer groups that are based on sustained interaction. ... Collectivities are constituted and sustained through social processes ... Thus, just because people share a common demographic characteristic does not mean that they form a collectivity."

(Holt, 1997)

I would argue that there are innovators and fashion leaders in all socio-economic classes, but the diffusion process is realised through the collectivities rather than through the peers within the same class. The diffusion spreads in all directions dependent upon the innovators' placing in position or status in a collectivity. For instance, an innovator of a collectivity may be middle class. His style would influence those members of the same collectivity either within the same class, or the lower class or, possibly, the upper class.

If the result is consistent with the idea of Fallers (trickle down via status-symbolic consumption pattern) the mass-market theory must be revised. This might lead to a new version of mass-market fashion leadership theory. As well as the results of the diffusion through collectivities, additionally the principle of my fashion process model, my fashion retail model, and my fashion change-agent model can be supported because of the impact of change in all aspects of socio-cultural and economic activities since the theories were developed.

6.5.1.2 Methodology of Investigation

Type of Fieldwork: Questionnaire

Sample Number: 300

Sample Specification: Same as for Hypothesis 1.

The methodology, sample number and specification of this hypothesis are the same as those used for Hypothesis 1.

6.6 Questionnaire Instrument

6.6.1 Component of the Questionnaire

A questionnaire as the instrument of the empirical studies was developed from the above theoretical frameworks aimed at:

- classifying fashion adopters into four main groups: fashion innovator, early fashion adopter, fashion follower, and laggard;
- measuring their "differentiating force" and "socialising force";
- investigating their fashion arbiters or persons who influence their looks.

The questionnaire as shown in Appendix III consisted of four parts. The first parts were set as criteria to identify the samples in terms of adopter classification. In this part, questions were asked relating to their perceptions of their:

- level of creativity and experience in creativity for self appearance;
- level of consumption of fashionable commodities;
- their perception of themselves as a fashion leader;
- their perception of their image of fashion leader as viewed by others.

Among these four criteria, the level of creativity and experience in creativity for self-appearance is valued as the most important. This is due to the true fashion innovators usually express their response to social issues ahead of the availability of commercial fashion products. Fashion innovators may simply be the first to wear new styles of the fashion industry but often they are creative consumers who invent new looks themselves. This may come from many sources: mixing and matching styles currently on the market, shopping second-hand stores, decorating elements, or even creative home sewing. The third and fourth criteria are also important because these perceptions as fashion leader in the social circle are driven by the differentiating force. The second part was set in 8 questions to measure the level of socialising and differentiating forces through self-expression by looking at various factors, i.e., fashion attitude, confidence, expression, and choices in fashion and in colours. Those questions provided Likert-scale choices on a 5-point scale. The third part of the questionnaire was set in 2 questions to measure the direction of fashion diffusion. The final part asked for personal information.

6.6.2 Adopter Classification Tool

In the first part of the survey, the samples were divided into four adopter groups based upon a scoring system as shown in Figure 6.6.2. Each answer in the first part of the questionnaire was given a score, for instance, 1, 3, 5, and 7 points for the least to the greatest level of creativity, respectively.

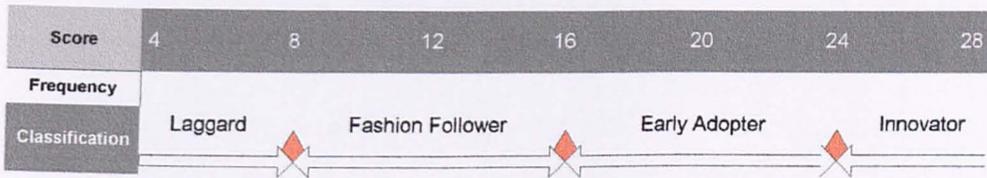


Figure 6.6.2: Scoring Tool

6.7 Result and Analysis

The fieldwork survey was divided into two stages: pilot and actual surveys.

6.7.1 Pilot Fieldwork: Methodology

The pilot fieldwork survey was set up in order to test the questionnaire and interview instrument. These were based on the principles that the questionnaire had to be easily understood, minimal in length and, in terms of involving the psychological aspect, with clear question and answer choices and, finally, an attractive format.

The pilot sample was 22. The method of survey was interview rather than a method involving filling-in boxes. Interviewing can be more interactive inasmuch as during the survey some questions can be altered, explained, and alternative questions can be devised. All of this refines the focus and intention of the questionnaire and impacts on the quality of the subsequent data.

6.7.1.1 Problems

During the pilot survey some problems arose which can be summarised as follows:

1. The questionnaire contained too many repeated questions. For instances, question 4, 5 and 6, each of which was formerly divided into two questions asking the same point, one in colour and the other in style. Therefore, these repeated questions were merged into one.
2. Some of the contents had to be revised, such as question 7 needed current exemplary situation i.e., wearing a glittering outfit for a millennium party.
3. Some questions provided insufficient information and choice of response, e.g., question about the consumers' purchasing location needed to indicate some examples such as Oxford Street, Kensington High St and Bond Street.
4. Choices in some section were too numerous and the format of the question was too long, resulting in either confusion or boredom. There were many sub-divided ranges of age of respondents and ranges of quantity of fashion items purchased per season. The former version of question 8 was "How much would you be concerned if you disagreed about fashion and colour with others in your social circle? and Do you care about a disagreement on your fashion and colour preference?", in which the later part was deleted.
5. It was very difficult to find interviewees who might be considered "fashion innovators".
6. On the day of the pilot, which was conducted outdoors, the weather conditions were bad.

6.7.1.2 Initial Analysis

1. The interviewees were roughly classified in three categories. There were 5 potential innovators, 5 potential fashion early adopters, and 12 fashion followers.
2. The responses from the innovator group supported the hypotheses.
3. The responses from the early fashion adopters and fashion follower groups were likewise supportive of the hypotheses in general. There was, however, a small percentage, which did not conform to expectation.
4. Most of the fashion followers usually buy fashion garments from high street retailers, and most early adopters buy fashion garments mainly from higher market brands. By contrast, there were mixed sources of purchasing fashion for fashion innovators. This is due to the fact that fashion innovators always modify by re-styling, decorating or mixing and matching their garments into their own style rather than totally pursue the style suggested from the suppliers. Most of the responses from the fashion innovators were at the main maximum or minimum in the "Likert scale". While most of high street brands provide popular fashion goods.

- Almost all of the interviewees had had experience in creating their own individual fashion looks.

The notions and experiences derived from the pilot survey were invaluable in revising and developing the final version of the questionnaire. Some of the sample categories, such as fashion innovators, were difficult to locate in the general environment in which the pilot survey took place. It therefore became apparent that this group would need to be specially targeted in some other way.

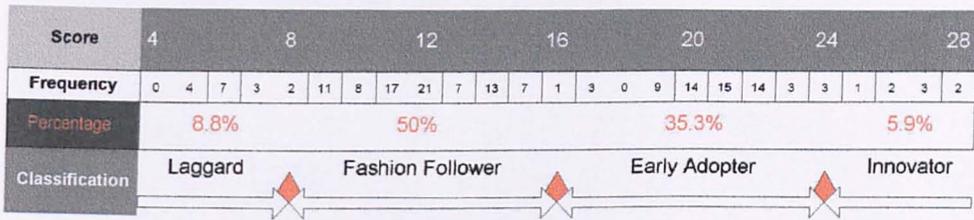


Figure 6.7.2A: Adopter Classification and Frequency of Each Adopter Group

6.7.2 Revised Final Survey: Results and Analysis

The final version of the questionnaire and interview questions is shown in Appendix III, 300 questionnaires, together with a return envelope and a postage stamp, were distributed to the samples (see sample specification in Section 6.2.1). The overall response rate was 57% of returned questionnaires. 5.9 % of the respondents were innovators, 35.3 % early fashion adopters, 50 % fashion followers and 8.8 % laggards. Figure 6.7.2A shows adopter classification and the frequency of each group.

6.7.2.1 Results and Analysis: Hypothesis I

All the results of the questionnaire were set against Hypothesis I as shown in Table 6.7.2A. The collected data clearly showed a good range of respondents in terms of fashion and confirmed the concepts of the differentiating and socialising forces, which was the core principle of the hypothesis.

The degrees of searching for new or individual fashion are shown in Table 6.7.2A /1. Of fashion innovators, 20 % were "always", 30 % "usually" and another 40 % "often", unable to find the right fashion style in the marketplace. The major result of early fashion adopters

and followers are 38.3% "often", and 48.1 % "often", respectively, unable to find fashion styles that they want. It is obvious that all of the major results of those adopter groups are similarly in "often". However, the results of "always" and "usually" descend from innovators, early fashion adopters and followers. Innovators, who keep looking for something new, have always been unable to find the garment, which they want. This is because their primary need is not yet responded to by the fashion industry.

Table 6.7.2A/1						Table 6.7.2A/5					
Have you ever had an idea about your look and not been able to find the fashion garments in the shops?						Wearing a trendy colour or a fashion garment that many other people wear makes you feel...					
	Never	← →			Very Often		Very Confident	← →			Annoying
	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
laggard	26.6%	33.3%	26.6%	6.6%	6.6%	laggard	0.0%	13.3%	66.6%	20.0%	0.0%
Follower	4.7%	55.8%	48.1%	18.8%	2.3%	Follower	0.0%	23.5%	41.1%	28.2%	7.0%
Early adopter	8.3%	33.3%	38.3%	10.0%	10.0%	Early adopter	1.6%	18.3%	31.6%	38.3%	10.0%
Innovator	0.0%	10.0%	40.0%	80.0%	20.0%	Innovator	0.0%	10.0%	10.0%	50.0%	30.0%

Table 6.7.2A/2						Table 6.7.2A/6					
When buying a fashion garment, have you ever felt a conflict between what you like/wanted and what your friends' suggested?						Wearing a fashion garment that is very cutting edge fashion and very different in style from the present makes you feel...					
	Never	← →			Very Often		Not Confident	← →			Very Confident
	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
laggard	13.3%	20.0%	20.0%	33.3%	13.3%	laggard	40.0%	46.7%	13.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Follower	1.2%	20.0%	45.8%	29.4%	3.5%	Follower	8.2%	29.4%	45.9%	15.3%	1.2%
Early adopter	10.0%	26.7%	33.3%	25.0%	5.0%	Early adopter	6.7%	5.0%	13.3%	58.3%	16.7%
Innovator	40.0%	30.0%	20.0%	10.0%	0.0%	Innovator	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%

Table 6.7.2A/3				Table 6.7.2A/7					
What was the outcome, i.e., what decisions do you usually make?				If all your friends agree to wear the Sixties style for one of the millennium party, when you just bought a new glittering millennium style outfit, what would you do					
	My friends usually influenced me in what I bought	Sometimes I was influenced in what I bought	I bought what I liked mostly		Not want to go....	Change to Sixties style	Persuade a friend to dress in millennium style like you	Not care....	
laggard		33.3%	46.6%	20.0%	laggard	6.6%	26.6%	26.6%	40.0%
Follower		8.2%	56.4%	35.3%	Follower	0.0%	21.1%	21.1%	57.6%
Early adopter		0.0%	36.6%	63.3%	Early adopter	1.6%	16.6%	13.3%	68.3%
Innovator		0.0%	20.0%	80.0%	Innovator	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%

Table 6.7.2A/4						Table 6.7.2A/8					
Do you always dress in a different style or colour from others?						How much would you be concerned if you disagreed about style and colour with others in your social circle?					
	Never	← →			Always		Never	← →			Very Much
	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
laggard	26.6%	40.0%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	laggard	13.3%	26.6%	20.0%	33.3%	6.6%
Follower	4.7%	38.8%	41.2%	11.7%	3.5%	Follower	20.0%	47.0%	23.5%	8.2%	1.1%
Early adopter	0.0%	23.3%	48.3%	23.3%	5.0%	Early adopter	33.3%	45.0%	18.3%	1.6%	1.6%
Innovator	0.0%	0.0%	40.0%	20.0%	40.0%	Innovator	40.0%	50.0%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Table 6.7.2A: Results: Hypothesis I

In Table 6.7.2A/2, 40 % of innovators mainly said they "rarely" felt any conflict and 80 % of them bought what they wanted. Early adopters' results are 26.7 % "usually", 33.3 % "often" and 25 % "sometime" felt any conflict and 63.3 % of them bought what they liked. The major responses of fashion followers are downward to 45.8 % "often" and 29.4 % "sometime" and 56.4 % of them were sometimes influenced in what they bought. This means when making decisions, followers have had more conflicts than innovators and early fashion adopters. The outcomes of their decisions are shown in Table 6.7.2A /3.

Table 6.7.2A/4, 40 % of innovators said they "always" dressed in a different style and colour from others. While the major results of early fashion adopters and followers are 48 % and 41.2 %, respectively, "often" dressed differently from existing style. The degrees of differentiation in style and colour increase from followers to early adopters and to innovators.

Table 6.7.2A /5 shows the highest responses of innovators, which are 30 % "annoying" and 50 % "a little bit annoying". While the highest responses of early fashion adopters and followers are "a little bit annoying", and "no problem", respectively. Innovators, who want to be different, tend to be uncomfortable when they find the fashion they are wearing is widely popular. According to the principle of differentiating force, they usually feel that fashion has become boring. Early fashion adopters and followers, on the other hand, feel more comfortable when that fashion is widely adopted.

The degrees of confidence when fashion adopters wear cutting edge fashion are shown in Table 6.7.2A /6. Half of innovators said they were "very confident" and the other half said "confident". While 58.3 % of early fashion adopters felt "confident". On the other hand, fashion followers' main responses are 45.9 % "just confident". This question is one of the indicators of how much differentiating force each fashion adopter has.

Table 6.7.2A /7 shows the degree of conformity of each adopter group. 100 % of fashion innovators and 68.3 % of early adopters were strongly confident. They do not care when their styles do not conform to the majority of the group. Meanwhile, the results of followers are scattered, 57.6 % of followers said "don't care", 21.1 % said "change to the 60s style" and another 21.1 % want to "persuade friends to dress like them". This question reveals a combination of differentiating force and socialising force, particularly when these forces operate within a small group. It can be seen that the degree of differentiating force diminishes from innovators to followers.

Table 6.7.2A /8 shows the agreement and disagreement with others' opinions in fashion

and colour concerned each adopter group to different degrees. 40 % and 50 % of fashion innovators said they "never" and "rarely", respectively, care about a disagreement. Similarly, most of the early adopters' responses were 33.3 % "never" and 45 % "rarely". While, most of followers' responses were 47 % "rarely" and 23.5 % "sometimes" concerned with others' opinion in their fashion. The degree of how concerned they were about their style with regard to others' opinions increases from fashion innovators to early adopters and to followers.

According to the analysis of the survey, fashion innovators were classified by the four criteria in Section 6.6.1. The results show very clear distinction of level in every aspect of all measurements. The arrows, shown in the result tables indicate either descending or ascending directions, where innovators' results were always the most extreme. The remainders of the results were incrementally lower through the early fashion adopters, followers and laggards, respectively. Innovators showed their dressing preferences in different styles and colours from others. They were negatively effected the most when wearing similar fashion with others. They are unlikely to be influenced by friends, social circle, commercial strategies or media. Fashion innovators are extremely confident of their standpoints, styles, and preferences, in particular when wearing cutting edge fashion and tolerance to others' persuasion.

The results reveal innovators are characterised by the high degree of tolerance in relation towards all aspects as well as their inherent psychological desire to be unique or different. Indeed, the sense of being different can be manipulated through fashion. In other words, innovators use fashion items to accent their uniqueness. When these two conflicting impulses operate, ambivalence is simultaneously created in which the adoption of new fashion is the solution. It can be clearly seen from the survey results that fashion innovators is driven by differentiating force more than the socialising force

In contrast, fashion followers were likely to be radically influenced by others, marketing strategies and the media. They were less confident and also likely to adopt a new fashion when that fashion had been adopted for a while or when many others were wearing it. They felt more confident when wearing a style similar to that worn by others. They were unlikely to create their own look.

The forces to differentiate and to conform can be seen to be varied in each adopter group, which supports the hypothesis. The more differentiating force and less socialising force drives innovators to adopt fashion. When the new style has been spreading over for a while, fashion followers are driven by the more socialising force and less differentiating force to adopt that fashion.

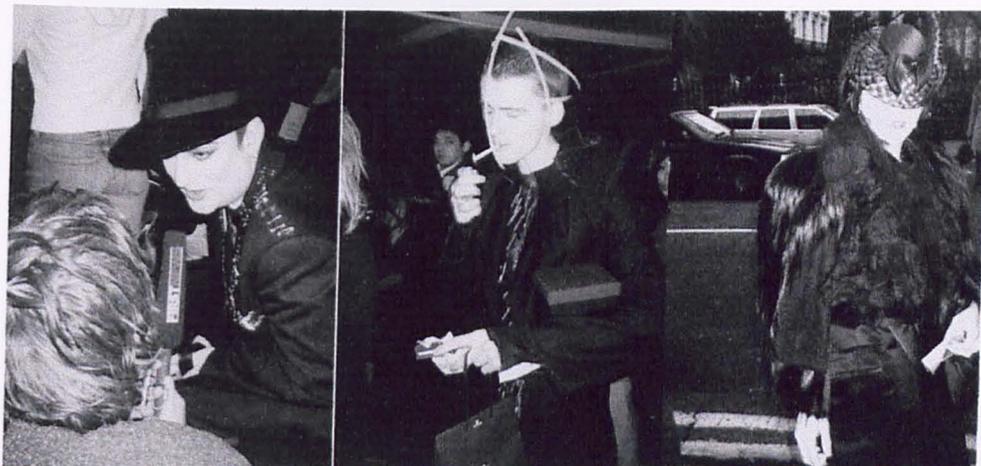


Figure 6.7.2B: Fashion Innovators at the London Fashion Week 2001

6.7.2.2 Results and Analysis: Hypothesis II

All of the interview objectives were briefly clarified prior to the interview session, noting in particular that they did not concern all factors of consumption and/or marketing strategies, i.e. price-point, shop location, sales service, advertising and promotion. Instead, they revolved around the step-by-step reasons or influences relating to how consumers behave when they adopt a new fashion. After interviewing, all the responses were classified by the criteria of adopter classification (see 6.6.1). The 59 samples can be classified into three main adopter groups. These are: 19 fashion innovators, 20 early fashion adopters, and 20 fashion followers. Figure 6.7.2B shows some samples classified as "fashion innovator".

The first question starts with the general issue of the reason or influence that drives consumers to buy a new fashion item. It is the approach question asking "what usually made consumers buy a new fashion garment". It is an open question in which interviewees felt free to talk. As a result, many of them gave more than one answer. As shown in Table 6.7.2B, the results show that fashion innovators strongly behaved according to Answers 1, 2 and 3, their responses being 18, 14 and 7 in number respectively.

None of them said they were "aware" of their look as indicated in Answers 6 and 7. These results give a strong indication that innovators do not dress to impress others, and that they are not aware of what is in fashion. Instead they want new fashion items, either

purchased or self-made, which they use as a means of self-expression. At the other end of the scale, fashion followers tend to use fashion as a way to socialise with their group.

	Innovator	Early Fashion Adopter	Follower
What usually made you go and buy a new fashion garment?			
1. Some new items to be used to express my new-self while old stuffs cannot do.	18	6	7
2. Feeling or the need to change	14	5	5
3. The need to experiment with the way I look	7	8	1
4. I like to try many styles to see what suits me	4	11	2
5. My perception of the need to be fashionable	2	2	13
6. I need to dress in a certain way that is acceptable to others	0	1	12
7. An awareness of the way I currently look	0	0	7

Table 6.7.2B: Interview Question 1

	Innovator	Early Fashion Adopter	Follower
What followings might be the prime reason when you change your look for the next season?			
1. Just the feeling to change the fashion I am currently wearing.	15.8%	10.0%	0.0%
2. Something that does not follow the fashion rule or high street chic.	42.1%	0.0%	0.0%
3. It is the sense that clothes in my wardrobe do not fit my feeling.	31.6%	0.0%	5.0%
4. something that is new to me. I like to explore.	10.5%	25.0%	0.0%
5. Any that will be popular, let's see the mood of people.	0.0%	20.0%	5.0%
6. when I try on any new arrival, to see if I like any.	0.0%	35.0%	5.0%
7. Simple design that can wear last long.	0.0%	0.0%	15.0%
8. Influence from favorite celebrities and my social circle.	0.0%	0.0%	45.0%
9. Design that made me look good and can get along with people.	0.0%	10.0%	25.0%

Table 6.7.2C: Interview Question 2

Table 6.7.2C shows the results of Question 2 which asks "which of the following might be the prime reason when interviewees change their look for the next season". This is a close question and the interviewer showed 9 alternative choices to interviewees. The results of

fashion followers show that 45% got influences from their social icons, 25% updated their style to fit social taste, 15% looked for just a basic or classic style to carry on their social life or norm (shown in Answers 8, 9 and 7, respectively). Meanwhile, early fashion adopters' responses scattered between Answers 1, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 9. The major result, 35%, went to Answer 6 – to try on a new arrival and to see whether they liked it or not. In contrast, fashion innovators' responses were in Answers 1, 2, 3 and 4, which scored 15.8%, 42.11%, 31.58% and 10.50%, respectively. Their major answer was that they wanted a style which differed from "high street popular".

Please place the following statements in an order	Innovator			Early Fashion Adopter			Follower		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
which best describes what you do when you change your style.	First Step			Second Step			Third Step		
My perception of the need to be fashionable	0.0%	30.0%	61.9%	18.4%	25.0%	42.8%	89.4%	45.0%	38.1%
The need to change or to feel differently	73.7%	35.0%	19.1%	18.4%	35.0%	19.1%	0.0%	30.0%	19.1%
The need to experiment with the way I look	26.3%	35.0%	19.1%	63.2%	40.0%	38.1%	10.6%	25.0%	42.8%

Table 6.7.2D: Interview Question 3

Question 3 focuses on the sequence of the decision-making process. The three steps of adopting a new fashion were extracted from Robertson's model (see Section 5.1). These three steps were provided to the interviewees as a jigsaw framework. The interviewees were asked to arrange the sequence of how they usually behaved in the decision-making process when adopting a new fashion. The results, shown in Table 6.7.2D, clearly show that 73.7% of fashion innovators said they change style in accordance with their feeling or the need to be different from others. In contrast, the results for early fashion adopters are quite evenly balanced. In other words, there is no clear pattern for this adopter group. Indeed, the major result for the fashion followers is 61.9%, indicating that fashion followers start their process of adoption with their need to be fashionable.

In order to clarify the pattern of these three adopter groups, Figure 6.7.2C summarises the decision-making process of fashion innovators and fashion followers. It can be clearly seen that fashion innovators' pattern shows a strong trend in all steps with 73.7%, 63.2% and 89.4%, sequentially. In contrast, the fashion followers' pattern can be split into two routes: pattern B1 and B2 as shown in Figure 6.7.2C. Although their process of adopting a new fashion does not show a consensus, this shows a clear result that the starting point in changing their style is to make themselves up-to-date or to be fashionable.

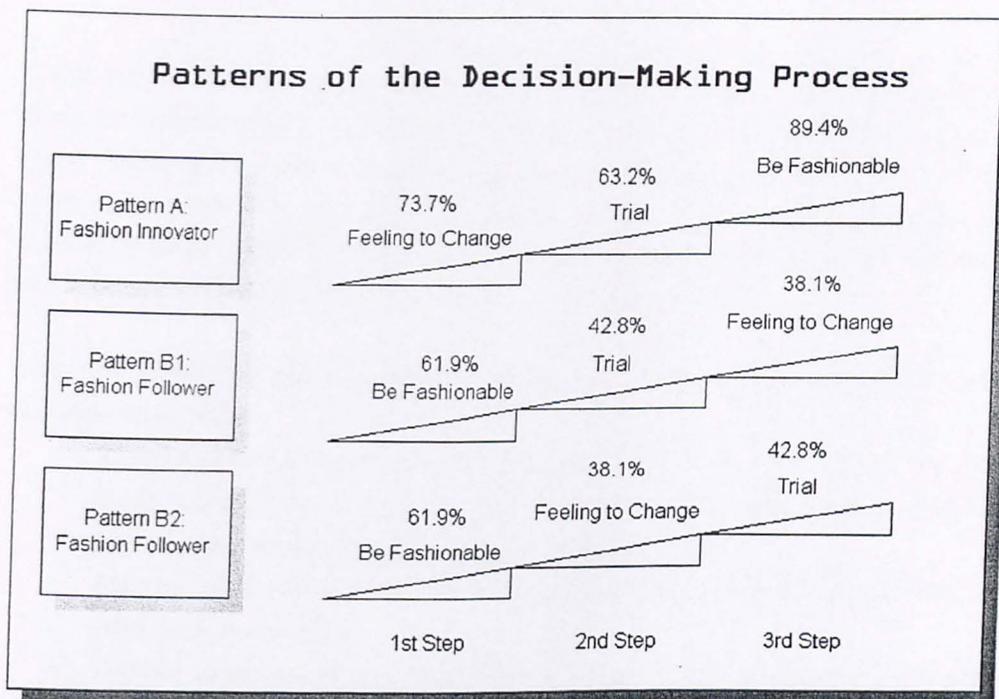


Figure 6.7.2C: Different Patterns of the Decision-Making Process of Major Adopter Groups

The results show that the patterns in the decision-making process in changing to a new fashion of two major adopter groups (fashion innovator and fashion follower) are different. This can be explained by the fact that fashion innovators do not concern themselves with what is in fashion. When the present fashion is saturated and firmly established, fashion innovators are driven by their "feeling" or "differentiating force" to search for a new form of fashion. They search for a new symbolic difference or adopt a new fashion.

There are various possible situations in which innovators change styles. In cases where a new fashion look is unavailable, fashion innovators tend to create new looks for themselves. The survey results also support this idea, as most innovators generally create their own looks, either by cutting and sewing, decorating, re-styling old dresses, or mixing and matching dresses. Alternatively, a newly available fashion, perhaps one which has been recently launched, can make innovators feel sufficiently different to adopt that fashion look.

On the other hand, the fashion followers' pattern of decision-making is clearly different. Both the decision-making patterns observed start from the same point – the need to be up-to-date. It can be said that style awareness is the major step which followers always concern themselves with. Presumably they feel safe when they wear the fashionable style.

At this point it can be stressed that there are two main different inherent psychological forces for fashion adopters at the starting point of the adoption process. Innovators are mainly forced by their internal impulse to change or adopt a new fashion. On the other hand, fashion followers are mainly forced by the other kind of impulse, which is "socialising force", to conform in their behaviour, needs, taste, style, etc. to a basic norm that has been established by fashion innovators and early adopters.

It can be concluded that Hypothesis II is positive. The results and analysis are summarised as follows;

- Fashion innovators have their distinctive pattern in the decision-making process, which is "feeling, trial and then to be fashionable". The first step in their process is confirmed by other results as "feeling the need to change".
- Fashion followers have two similar patterns, with both patterns starting from a need "to be fashionable".
- Fashion innovators change their look because of their internal impulse, the "differentiating force". This internal impulse functions not merely to differentiate their style from others, but also to satisfy the need for self-expression, in which old or current fashion items can no longer serve their present self.
- Fashion followers are driven by the "socialising force" to behave at a certain level in order to satisfy the need to be acceptable to others.
- The results from the rest of the questions were consistent with these findings. The results of the early fashion adopters are diverse, and do not form a significant pattern.
- The results of Hypothesis II are of benefit to all fashion suppliers in the way in which the complexity of fashion adoption by different adopters is now initially clarified. Each fashion adopter group is indeed different in many respects, and these must be taken into account when supplying fashion.
- The results provide sufficient support for Hypothesis II. The model of the decision-making process proposed by Robertson (see Section 5.1) cannot be applied to the behaviour of fashion innovators. However, the model can perfectly explain the process of decision-making of fashion followers, who are the major population.

6.7.2.3 Results and Analysis: Hypothesis III

The populations of each adopter group are shown in Figure 6.7.2A. As previously mentioned, 5.9 % of the respondents were innovators, 35.3 % early fashion adopters, 50 % fashion followers and 8.8 % laggards. Although these four categories are not intended

to simulate the five conventional adopter groups classified by Rogers, the results are shown in the form of a bell curve. The quantity of the major adopter categories does not conform to the ideal. The complete set of the percentages proportionally does, however, create a bell curve.

The results of this Hypothesis suggest the conclusion that the proportion of fashion adopter categories, ranged from fashion innovators, fashion early adopters, fashion followers to laggards, is not much different from the ideal Rogers' profile. However, the profile of fashion diffusion in the present era is significantly changed, in the way in which the new proportion quantity is larger in the initial stage of diffusion and smaller at the end. This new profile can be seen in the imbalance in the curve, where the first half contains more population than the second half.

This reflects the fact that marketing strategy at the present time works much more effectively than in previous eras. Marketing strategy in this scenario is implicit since there appears to be much more heavily stimulated consumption together with retail supply, which provides and distributes commodities in a rapid and accessible way.

Who most influences you in what clothes you buy?					Who do you think you influence in term of fashion?				
	Innovator	Early Adopter	Follower	Laggard		Innovator	Early Adopter	Follower	Laggard
A. CLOSE FRIENDS	5	17	26	3	A. CLOSE FRIENDS	3	35	44	1
B. OTHER FRIENDS	2	5	6	2	B. OTHER FRIENDS	5	22	9	
C. ACQUAINTANCES	1	2	2		C. ACQUAINTANCES	3	6	2	
D. FAMILY	1	8	14	5	D. FAMILY	9	15	23	2
E. COLLEAGUES	2	3	3		E. COLLEAGUES	1	4	1	1
F. BOSS	2	2	6	10	F. BOSS	2	3		
G. SUBORDINATE STAFFS	1	5	4		G. SUBORDINATE STAFFS	3	7		
H. MEDIA CELEBRITY	1	15	10	12	H. PEOPLE WHO SEE ME	4	12	14	1
I. PEOPLE YOU SEE	6	27	36	7	I. OTHERS...		1		
J. OTHERS...	5	3	7	2	J. NONE	1	9	22	6
K. NONE	5	6	5	2					

Table 6.7.2F: Results: Hypothesis IV

These results do not conform either to the ideal principle of the mass-market theory. On the contrary, the new profile of diffusion population reflects the failure of mass-market theory, which actually relies on a co-operation between mass-production, the mass-market and the mass media, which cannot yield the theory's principle. Even though the industry produces mass commodities, the marketplace provides goods simultaneously, and the products are propagandised throughout society, fashion objects are still

purchased, adopted, and used by different categories of consumers in a time sequence. As long as consumers consist of different adopter categories and as long as those different adopters have different levels of socialising and differentiating forces, the mass-market theory cannot be precisely applicable to the fashion diffusion and adoption processes. While mass-market theory is appropriate for standard or basic commodities like clothing items, its uses in explaining the phenomena of fashion are limited.

6.7.2.4 Results and Analysis: Hypothesis IV

Hypothesis IV is undertaken together with the main hypotheses. The Hypothesis is supported by the results as shown in Table 6.7.2F. In general, the results show various directions of fashion diffusion from which individual adopters were influenced or influenced others. In other words, diverse directions, both to and from higher status, peers, family and lower status groups can be seen in the results. The scattering around of the responses indicates that fashions may be diffused in and from any direction of the class system. Regarding class structure, the directions at any time can be trickle-down, bottom-up or trickle-across, and it is possible that fashion might diffuse in all directions at the same time.

The other important point is that fashion is mainly diffused through "collectivities". As described earlier, collectivities are not a group of peers or all people at work, but are people who have the same interests and preferences in, for example, hobbies, movies, music, social issues, politics, etc. Because of this, close friends who are most likely to join the same activities can be best categorised as "collectivities". Another significant group, "people you see in leisure and socialising time", which shows very good results, is also considered as a "collectivity", in the sense that leisure and socialising times are believed to be one of the main situations in which social interaction amongst people in a particular sub-society truly occurs.

6.8 Conclusion

All the Hypotheses are supported overall by the results obtained empirically. Firstly, the pattern of adopting a new fashion is different for innovators compared to followers. This explains "how" particular groups of adopters behave differently when a new fashion emerges. Secondly, Hypothesis I confirms that psychological factors play a part in "why" fashion followers display less self-expression than fashion innovators. The proportion of the number in each fashion group is consistent with the general fashion-retailing marketplace. For instance, 50 % of our samples were classified as followers, which is

consistent with the fact that about half of all the brands in the marketplace are targeted at those followers. Thirdly, fashion is diffused through collectivities from any direction of origin. The direction is started by fashion innovators to early adopters, followers and finally laggards, and the innovators may be located in any class or position in the class system. Hypothesis III was not, however, supported by the results in a way that suggests that marketing theory is not applicable to the present era. To put it another way, it is shown that fashion diffusion at the present time has a profile similar to the ideal bell curve, but occurs more speedily and the population of each adopter category is slightly different.

Based on the foregoing discussion, the crux of the issue in this section was to investigate the complicated mechanisms operating when individuals negotiate with self. The study reveals both the "how" and the "why" of the underlying factors in the fashion adoption process. In the emerging of a new fashion, the results of negotiation with self of fashion innovators, which create symbolic ambiguities, are the most crucial. Fashion innovators create ambiguity that paves the way for a new fashion direction. As a result, fashion designers and suppliers always search for a new sense of fashion from innovators. This activity is known as "cool hunting" (Armstrong, 1999; O'Brien, 1999). The results shown here suggest that:

- New fashion always has to be different (although it evolves) from firmly established fashion;
- New fashion makes innovative consumers feel differently, thus enabling the fashion to begin;
- Our understanding of the direction of fashion is refined by the collective popularity suggested by Blumer's collective selection theory (1969a). Popularity is indeed driven by a socialising force and can be generally found in "collectivities";
- Fashion followers try to conform to the new conditions determining social approbation by increasing their awareness of "how to be fashionable";
- High street brands are unlikely, therefore, to provide cutting edge commodities.

It can be concluded that fashion innovators are at the centre of generating new social fashion, as well as providing the basis for fashion change options.

Endnote

¹ Features of positivism include independence, value-freedom, causality, hypothetico-deductive approach, operationalisation, reductionism, generalisation, and cross-sectional analysis.

Chapter 7

The Fashion Translation Process Model

This is the final stage in the development of the Fashion Process Model as discussed in this thesis. Previously, the Fashion Transformation Process Model divided the area of investigation into four realms, which were designated as being the macro-subjective, macro-objective, micro-objective and micro-subjective realms, respectively. The process starts and ends at the subjective level and moves through the realms perpetually in a spiral direction.

7.1 The Garment of Fashion

The motivation for further development of the model was precipitated by the observation of Roland Barthes, whose work in semiotics relating to the fashion system is as significant as it is controversial.¹ In his book "The Fashion System", Barthes (1983; 1985) studies the semiotics of fashion and reveals the distinguishing structures of fashion representations.

"To study the garment of Fashion would first be to study each of these three structures separately and exhaustively, for a structure cannot be defined apart from the substantial identity of the units which constitute it: we must study either acts, or images, or words, but not all these substances at once, ..."

Barthes (1983: p. 7)

The above quotation refers to his study of various structures in fashion but is not truly about the “fashion phenomenon” per se. Barthes clarifies constructions of fashion in three different forms, which he suggests are technological, iconic and verbal.

“These three structures do not have the same circulation pattern. The technological structure appears as a mother tongue of which the real garments derived from it are only instances of “speech”. The two other structures (iconic and verbal) are also languages, but if we believe Fashion magazines, which always claim to discuss a primary real garment, these are derived languages, “translated” from the mother tongue; they intervene as circulation relays between this mother tongue and its instances of “speech” (the real garments).”

(ibid.: p. 5-6)

However, there are some significant key notions from the above quotation, which are worth further consideration, in respect of this thesis. These are:

- fashion is viewed as some form of language;
- fashion can appear in different forms of language: technological, iconic and text garments;
- forms of fashion can be derived by the process of translation.

There are some arguments and discussions regarding the above key notions, which are aligned as follows.

7.1.1 Fashion as a Form of Language

Barthes views the fashion structures as a form of language. There has been a paradoxical debate regarding the issue of whether language is a derivative of semiotics or vice versa. However, whether it is language (linguistic) or visual representation (semiotic), or both, fashion is perceived by many as a means of communication among people. It is agreed that fashion and clothing can be used as ways of communicating class, gender, sexual and social identities. Barnard (1996) explains that fashion and clothing are also accepted as a form of non-verbal communication although some words, like the “brand name”, can be found on the fashion item. The slogan and brand name on clothing and fashion contain far more meaning than its being or its abbreviation. This, however, is the development of the fashion language in the late 20s century.

Eco (quoted in Barnard, 1996: p.26) suggests that “clothes are assembled into something like sentences, the outfit or ensemble, in much the same way as words are assembled

into sentences". This idea is supported by Lurie (1992), in the way in which clothes can be words and can be assembled into sentences as the language of clothes has its own vocabulary and grammar. Figure 7.1.1, a cartoon drawing by R. Chast in the *New Yorker Magazine*, ironically illustrates the communication ability of fashionable clothing.

*The Decoded Fashion Statements
of Rhonda Perlmutter III.*



Figure 7.1.1: Language of Fashion (After: R. Chast, 1998)

From another point of view, it can be said that each detail in clothes can be significant of something, but only as much as the level of the symbol (symbolic order) can achieve. An evening dress can, for example, say something in the way in which the details in the dress are combined to make sentences. Further to this for instance; a red colour is usually agreed to refer to hotness, confidence and power; shiny textured fabric refers to luxury, bias-cut that clings to the body is said to signify glamour and self indulgence; a slit from the hem to the hip on one side of the skirt can be a symbol of sexuality; fur and animal

skins were representational of sophistication: more recently they have come to suggest predatory female sexuality. (Fur or skin simulations by contrast have come to represent the ironic or humorous critique of the previous perceptions.) Each detail plays its role as a symbol, which refers to a specific point of meaning, but not to a guiding principle or direction. The sentence emerges when these symbols are gathered together by individuals in a particular way and presented through the gesture of the wearer. Those symbols work like vocabulary and combine in a syntactical way in one dimension of fashion as communication. Therefore, the fashion item is considered as a means of communication and its ability in communicating is equal to the spoken and written language forms.

In another significant dimension, fashion is about sending and receiving messages. However, Fiske (1990) and Blumer (1969b) distinguish two significant frameworks of thought in the communication mechanism, which are "communication as a process" and "communication as a social interaction".

7.1.1.1 Communication as a Process

The first mechanism considered is "communication as a process", in which the sender intends to send a message to some receivers via a medium.

"The garment, on this account, then, is the medium in which one person sends a message to another person. It is by means of the garment that one person intends to communicate their message to another person. The message, on this account, is the sender's intention and it is this that is transmitted by the garment in the communication process. The message is also, of course, what is received by the receiver."

(Barnard, 1996: p. 28)

In this sense, the effect of the sent message on the receiver creates social interaction. In other words, social interaction is the final result where the communication starts with the sender communicating via a medium to a receiver. Barnard (ibid.) further discusses the question of who is the sender, the designer or the wearer? It can be a sort of collaborative sending, whereas the fashion item is pre-signified by the designer. For the purposes of developing the argument within the confines of this thesis, we shall adopt the standpoint, especially relating to the conceptual model, that designers interpret what consumers want at the initial stage of the design process and provide so-called "pre-signified" products to the market. Fashion commodities are then selected by consumers to form assemblages

aiming for their individual looks. Accordingly, fashion objects become the symbols that represent what the wearers want to communicate. In this sense, the credit of being the sender goes to the wearer rather than the designer.

Barnard suggests or implies, when he raises the question of who is the sender between the designer and the wearer, that a fashion object is a piece of spaceⁱⁱ. According to Lefebvre (1991) in "The Production of Space", the third element of space is "Space of Representation", suggesting that a fashion object can be understood as a space, where representation is yet to be determined. If this is the case, then the wearer or the body determines the representation, or rather the representation is only achieved once it is worn.

7.1.1.2 Communication as a social Interaction

Communication perceived as a "social interaction" contradicts to some extent the assertion of communication as a "process". The principle of this framework is laid down through an opposite mechanism in the way in which people are already social members of a culture or community and social interaction is the beginning of the communication process, not the result as suggested by the former framework. Douglas and Isherwood (1979) imply that communication via everyday goods is a communicative phenomenon, or the production and exchange of meanings.

"... the structured system of meanings, a culture, enables individuals to construct an identity by means of communication."

(Barnard, 1996: p. 29)

"It is the wearing of the baggy, rolled up trousers, puffa jacket, baseball cap and expensive trainers that constitutes someone as a Ragga rather than that one is a Ragga and then goes out to get the clothes."

(ibid.: p. 30)

In this framework, the negotiation of meanings is the central locale, where the members of a community interact and negotiate either with self or with others by focusing on the exchange of meanings. Indeed, this framework of communication can be applied to the Fashion Transformation Process Model.

7.1.2 Three Forms of Fashion Language

Continuing this discussion, the same existing fashion can be exemplified by three differing forms. These can be a real garment, a photographic icon, and a text or verbal description. The technological structure defined by Barthes is the real garment, while the other two are instances of it. The latter two structures are understood as representatives of the real or technological garment in the way in which the fashion garment has to exist at first and then there follow the two subsequent forms. Those latter forms, therefore, exist afterwards and are usually used for publicity in the mass media, i.e. fashion magazines and newspapers.

It is agreed that the latter two forms, iconic and text, are instances of the technological garment, but it can be argued that these three different forms are not the "fashion" per se. Fashion is, as defined in this thesis, a style of an appreciated concept in dressing that is temporary adopted and socially identified by a number of people. The real garment can be said to be just a fashion object. Therefore, all these three different forms are actually true, objective fashion instances, attempting to simulate and provide the entity of fashion. The real garment is then, an object that is available to be used to represent the wearer's concept of living. Meanwhile, the iconic and descriptive garments become a tool to visually realise some idea of what the fashion entity is.

7.1.3 Process of Translation

Barthes also points out that the instances are derived through a process of "translation". However, it can be argued that the derivatives of fashion from the real garment to the iconic and verbal garment are not "translation". Instead, there is just "transformation" in the way in which its form changes from one to another. In other words, they are copies of reality.

7.2 Sociological and Semiological Fashion Process

However, "translation" becomes a significant keyword when Barthes distinguishes two processes of the fashion phenomenon.

"Nonetheless, the objectives of sociology and semiology are, in the present case, entirely different: the sociology of Fashion (even if it remains to be constituted)

starts from a model of imagined origin (the garment conceived of by the fashion group) and follows (or should follow) its actualisation through a series of real garments; it therefore seeks to systematise certain actions and to relate them to social conditions, standards of living, and roles. Semiology does not follow the same path at all; it describes a garment which from beginning to end remains imaginary, or, if one prefers, purely intellectual; it lead us to recognise not practices but images. The sociology of Fashion is entirely directed toward real clothing; the semiology of Fashion is directed toward a set of collective representations."

(Barthes, 1983: p. 9-10)

Fashion from the above perception exists in two distinct arenas: sociological and semiological. Although their origins (imaginary) are the same, their destinations (the real garment and the imaginary garment, respectively) are different. The sociology of fashion is manifested by the response of wearers to social conditions, lifestyle, status and position in society, which differ from the semiology of fashion. Blumer (1969b) calls the sociological process "joint or collective action".

"Joint or collective action constitutes the domain of sociological concern, as exemplified in the behaviour of groups, institutions, organisations, and social classes. Such instances of societal behaviour, whatever they may be, consist of individuals fitting their lines of action to one another."

(*ibid.*: p. 16)

"The typical sociological scheme ascribes behaviour to such factors as status position, cultural prescriptions, norms, values, sanctions, role demands, and social system requirements; explanation in terms of such factors suffices without paying attention to the social interaction that their play necessarily presupposes."

(*ibid.*: p. 7)

The process of sociological fashion of the wearer is a process of being, becoming or aiming to become a member of a community in a certain position, for instance, to be a manager, a designer, a skateboarder, a football fan, etc. The only form of fashion that can respond to this function is "the real garment", which is designated by wearers towards the sociological functions.

On the other hand, semiology of fashion is about images and representations. In other words, the functions manipulated by wearers are not about practical considerations such

as protection, modesty and adornment (Barthes, 1983; p.8). Consequently, the fashions that relate to imagination and beyond the sociological functions are of semiological fashion. Other theorists, for instance, Blumer (1969b), Barnard (1996), Kaiser, et al. (1995), altogether agree that meaning emerges from the interaction among members in a society and is called the study of "symbolic interactionism". Blumer accepts in general the three fundamental premises of symbolic interactionism. He does, however, have reservations.

"The first premise is that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them. ... The second premise is that the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows. The third premise is that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters."

(Blumer, 1969b: p. 2)

Blumer's view is that: firstly the meanings are social products or creations in the way in which they derived from and through the defining activities of people as they interact; secondly the use of meanings by people emerges through "a process of interpretation"; and thirdly the interpretation is a formative process (ibid.: p. 5).

Indeed, the process of the semiology of fashion is a process of communicating, speaking, dealing, talking, signalling, coding, encoding, etc. The garment of fashion in this case is not servant to the practical considerations. It is, however, used to signify those practical purposes. The garment becomes a "signifier" of a "signified" concept. The wearer and observer are involved in the coding and encoding processes. However, coding and encoding the meanings becomes the most important role of the semiological fashion process. Fashionable clothing in this sense is true communication. Fashion as fashionable clothing is used to communicate through the process of translation throughout the symbolic representations.

Both consumers (who employ fashion for either sociological or semiological purposes) and fashion objects are in a continuous process of change. In one sense, consumers who are involved in the changing process of fashion are themselves a factor of fashion change. Fashion objects become a medium that consumers use to send messages to the receiver. The objects are exploited, whereas other objects are waiting to be exploited, and so on as in a chain, as in a process. Fashion form and detail are continually being changed. In this context, this change is intrinsic to the sociological process.

Consumers, on the other hand, are themselves in the changing process. "Themselves" in this case refers to their subjectivities or identities. In other words, their subjectivities or identities are the subject of change, in which case one's subjectivity is changed and evolved by the fashion to become a new version identity of the person. This latter account is the semiological change process.

7.2.1 Constant Repetition Process versus Dynamic Diverse Process

Heraclitus (quoted in Popper, 1998) states that "there are no things ... there are only changes, processes".

"All things are like flames, like fire. A flame may look like a thing, but we know that it is not a thing but a process".

(Heraclitus, quoted in Popper, 1998: p.156)

It is fascinating to introduce this idea into this account. Fashion is always a continuous process, not a static thing, despite what many fashion magazines may say: for example, that "This summer fashion is a pair of trainer shoes, twisted jeans, and sleeveless shirt", devoid of any sociological or semiological implication. If this idea of Heraclitus applies to fashion, then fashion might be seen as a thing at first glance, but as continuous fleeting things and/or images. Consumers are stimulated by the commercial sector to pursue and possess and consume the fashion object as if their consumption could make sense of everyday life and solve the problems that surround them.

Identity is not stable in the sense that it is carried by its entity. One obvious way that identity can be perpetuated, which illustrates my previous statement, is that the individual identified or proclaimed, as a virgin must continue that virginity. Unfortunately, people in "everyday life", as proposed by Lefebvre (1971) would have difficulty in keeping up their purity. They need to be shut down or cut off from outside influences or context to maintain their original state. Identity needs, therefore, to be in a process, in order on the one hand to retain an entity, and on the other hand to seek for a new identity in order to go along with social change. Once a favourite identity is established (or found), one tends to carry it on forever or at least as long as possible. The teen years seem to be the most dynamic time (or period) in terms of changing identity, whereas identity in mature years is likely to be established or fixed. To exemplify this, there can be found older women who still wear their favourite styles, with the same hairstyle and make-up, as when they were young.

As explained earlier, sociological fashion is a process of being at some position in the

society. "Being" is static inasmuch as it refers to a process of making oneself continuously consistent with one's entity. For the timescales relevant for the purposes of fashion, it is a "consistent process" as long as its function is for the purpose of reaching its destination. It is "consistent" because the behaviour of being is a kind of routine sameness. Buying fashion items to maintain one's leadership, or to join the crowd (be a follower), is routine behaviour, which is rarely changed but repeated. Hence, at any time when the fashion marketer surveys the market target, the result shows a similar ratio of fashion adopter groups.

Fashion items bought to sustain one's level of fashionability or to position oneself in the group is a different stage of fashion than that worn to express messages. As described previously, semiological fashion is a process of coding and encoding or negotiating meanings. It is not a static process because its production or effect is varied, depended upon time and space of the point of the process taking place as well as the message of the wearer and the translation of the observer. This becomes the most dynamic situation in the fashion process. This process is not constant because it is not for the purpose of being, in other words, because it is a shifting stage whereby identity is constructed. Layer upon layer of identity is accumulated and becomes total in its subjectivity. Moreover, because the meanings emerging from this dynamic process are temporary, fashion objects, as the medium employed, are similarly temporary.

7.3 Incorporating Barthes' Idea into the Conceptual Model

In the light of the above discussion, which will lead to the development of a new version of the Fashion Transformation Process Model, it will be necessary to selectively map specific aspects of Barthes' ideas into the spaces available. Fashion in the model is not a kind of structural object but rather a concept, and it is located in the process of transformation. Hence, the three different structures of garment of fashion (the real, iconic and text) cannot directly be merged with the model because they were previously stated to be a representative of the actual fashion. They can be located in the fashion process somewhere, however, and this will be argued in the ensuing discussion.

Meanwhile, the two different areas of fashion, sociology and semiology, help to create a clearer picture of the fashion process. When these two areas are mapped onto the Fashion Transformation Process Model, it could initially be pointed out that all the four realms (macro-subjective, macro-objective, micro-objective and micro-subjective) are solely sociological processes, but later it will become clear that the location of the semiology of fashion is a key factor in fashion change.

7.3.1 Sociological Process

With regard to the macro- and micro-subjective realms, these are normally classified as sociological processes in terms of the way in which fashion is used as a tool to participate with others in society, either confirming the conformity of or distinguishing individuals from the group. In other words, people use fashion to negotiate their need to position their status in society. Subjectivity is expressly based upon the degree to which the socialising force and differentiating force are emphasised.

The process is social evolution and the specific or individual method is semiotic encoding. The social process is the process resulting from negotiating the DF and SF, which is used to participate in the evolution of social change. The semiological fashion is the mechanism that individuals negotiate the DF and SF with, to contribute within their new position.

In regard to the macro- and micro-objective realms, these are normally classified as sociological processes also because they are involved with the process of commodification and distribution in order to supply all levels of fashion consumption. These realms become the opposite pole of consumption, whenever their purposes in commodification and distribution reflect the need of the other side. They produce and provide objects to be consumed by subjects. These are therefore parallel processes of the sociological fashion process within the subjective realms.

To exemplify the sociological process of the objective realms, Jackson and Shaw (2001) point out three key elements in the fashion designer's contribution to the overall package of benefits in a fashion product. They are product function, added value, and fashionability (an objective function). It can also be argued that those three key elements are a consideration of the sociological response to the needs of the market.

Jackson and Shaw (ibid.; p. 48) also exemplify some product functions that satisfy the intrinsic purpose of the fashion product. Designers frame their creative range of fashion goods based on the occasion of their use, for instance:

- Jacket to keep warm outside;
- Trendy outfit to go clubbing;
- Suit for work;
- Leotard to wear at the gym;
- Bikini for the beach.

Moreover, added value features are a special influence and stimulus in the decision making process. The features include, for example, foldaway hoods, secure internal

pockets, and detachable linings. Therefore added value can be categorised in a similar way to that of product function.

The third key element, fashionability, is designed by the designers or specified by the fashion buyers at the commodification stage. Fashionability is the customer perception of degree of fashionableness or stylishness of the product.

"The level of fashion in the product needs to be appropriate for the customer according to their life-style, personality, fashion attitude and the degree of fashion innovation they are comfortable reflecting."

(ibid.; p. 49)

It can be clearly seen that the level of fashionability is deliberately considered or produced and becomes compatible with the level of fashion consciousness. In the previous chapter, the fashion consciousness of consumers was divided into four major groups, which are fashion innovator, early fashion adopter, fashion follower and laggard. The degree of fashion consciousness is driven by a combination of impulses between socialising and differentiating forces. These two impulses drive fashion consumers to present themselves to society with different levels of intention. Hence, the third key element is also served that is the sociology of fashion.

Fashion change process in the realm of sociology is tangible and statistical. It is tangible because consumer behaviours are understandable, observable, noticeable and predictable. It is statistical because consumption patterns can be researched and surveyed. Their consumption can be categorised based upon their collective patterns. Although consumption patterns can be radically changed when there are substantial and powerful factors involved, for instance, economic crisis, war and political instability, normally consumption patterns basically evolve rather than change abruptly. The premise is found in the ratio of fashion adopter groups proposed by Roger in 1962, which is still being used as the major framework of fashion marketers. Many other marketing strategies are used repeatedly and also successfully.

Fashion change process can be said to be basically understood by fashion distributors and marketers in the terms of sociological process. When fashion suppliers undertake market research, they usually focus on the sociological point of view. The results each year shift up and down in the minutiae, depending upon the variation of population, but mostly the results are stable or at least similar results pertain. In general, fashion suppliers know how many garments of each range are to be produced, how many colours in each line are needed to serve the market, what ratio of sizes, as well as timing of launching

each sequence of the whole range are appropriate. In other words, fashion garments are produced and are available to the market corresponding to time (season and occasion), place (market and location) and quantity of goods (volume) that are expected to meet the need of consumers or "everyday life" (Heller, 1984; Lefebvre, 1971). In a clearer example, Western fashion retailers always stock more party dresses than usual in a particular period like Christmas, while Chinese retailers provide more red colour garments during a Chinese New Year celebration.

7.3.2 Semiological Process

The critical point in mapping Barthes' idea onto the Fashion Transformation Process Model is where the semiology of fashion should be located. The above discussion clearly states that all the four realms in the changing process are sociological processes. A question arose when considering the enigma of transformation from one realm to another as to what kind of mechanism is at work bridging between the realms?

There are four shifting stages in the fashion changing process including:

- Zone 1: from the macro-subjective to the macro-objective realms;
- Zone 2: from the macro-objective to the micro-objective realms;
- Zone 3: from the micro-objective to the micro-subjective realms;
- Zone 4: from the micro-subjective to the macro-subjective realms.

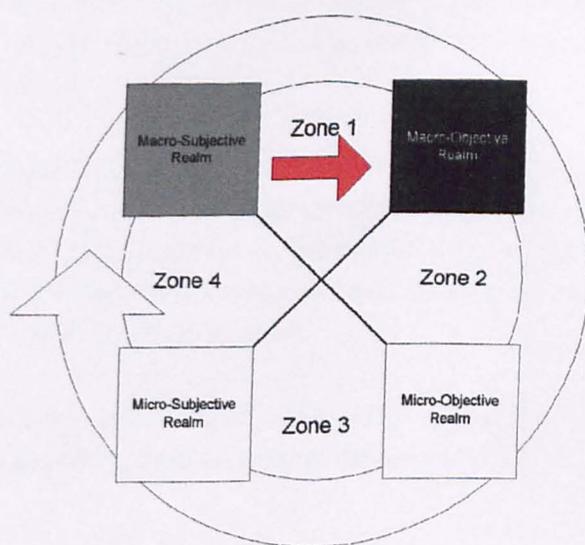


Figure 7.3.2A: Zone 1: From the Macro-Subjective to the Macro-Objective Realms

7.3.2.1 Zone 1

Zone 1 is the process by which a particular issue has emerged and confronted society's constituent members, resulting in collective responses. Cultural ambivalence appears in the initial stage in this zone due to the fact that culture does not send straightforward messages to its members as to what is considered appropriate. The members, therefore, respond to cultural ambivalence in diverse ways. These responses might be, as predicted in the previous chapter, conformity, concealment, anti-conformity and modification. But there are also diverse gestures concerning "interest", "attitude", and "involvement", which come into the equation, resulting in a common solution which is "manifested in expression".

Expression is not stated in straightforward language. For instance we might say, "We hate globalisation". Those who remove themselves from the multi-cultural expansion movement may express their messages via some sort of medium, usually their lifestyle. Fashion, one of the conventional constituents of lifestyle, is inevitably employed. In this case, wearing indigenous or national costumes, textiles and accessories might be conceived as a strong message to say something against globalisation issues, because many popular perceptions resulting from the issues are focused upon exploitation. National costumes have appeared in many fashion situations over many consecutive seasons. When worn by these individuals, clear national isolationist messages are transmitted. However, when worn by foreigners, the message may become the opposite, i.e., "We love multi-culture".ⁱⁱⁱ Expression in fashion is, therefore, dependent on the messenger, observer, time and space. There is no guarantee that messages are correctly decoded by the receivers.^{iv}

As a result, "expression" in the macro-subjective realm is a coding message. In order to gain the initial start of the commodification process, the fashion suppliers, including designers in particular, have to encode or interpret those messages. The first designer that can catch the expression is the first who can claim to be the change agent. This role is always engaged in by cutting edge designers.

The semiological fashion can be found hidden within the shifting process or at the interface between the macro-subjective to macro-objective realms.

7.3.2.2 Zone 2

The macro-objective realm is the process of commodification, messages from society translated and transformed into fashion products. The end of the commodification process

is the beginning of the micro-objective realm. There is a system to transmit the massive volumes of fashion products to the heterogeneous fashion retailers. It is a system in which a homogeneous range of fashion objects is distributed to particular retailers in a consecutive time scale based upon the structure of the retail model in Chapter 5. At the same time, there can be observed the distribution of heterogeneous commodities, spreading out through the whole structure of that retail model.

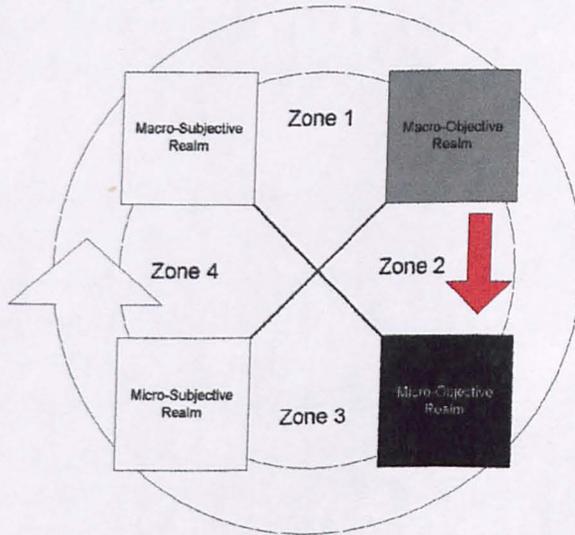


Figure 7.3.2B: Zone 2: From the Macro-Objective to the Micro-Objective Realms

For marketers and retailers, it is at this point that the process of transformation usually becomes something of an enigma. Commodities have to incorporate messages, meanings, or codes as such, in order to distinguish one class from another, one price level from another, and one style from another. (This is because different adopter groups express their fashion messages at different times.) Similar products can be found at different prices and market levels and in different styles. These codes, meanings or messages are built under campaigns known as “branding”. Branding at this stage is not about “Who I am”, but merely about “Hey, man! May I say something?” In this stage it can be said that there are two layers of brand identity: whereas the first identity is personal, the second is dynamic. Personal identity will be discussed in Zone 3.

The dynamic identity refers to a seasonal message or seasonal concern of a particular issue. The medium to signify the dynamic identity at this stage is of any kind that is able to convince consumers to identify with the message via the products. The media can be

window display, in-store display, or mass media, especially fashion magazines and media celebrities.

The three fashion garments of Roland Barthes (1983) can be fitted into this stage. These different forms are simulations of the actual fashion. The real garment is produced and displayed in the shop or the window, while the iconic garment appears in the fashion magazine display on the ideal stereotype, and the text garment is propagandised throughout newspaper, magazine and other visual media. These three forms of garment emerge for the ultimate purposes, which is to "exemplify the message" and then "stimulate the sale".

Fashion marketing and advertising professionals for individual companies or brands try very hard to distinguish their messages from others targeted at the same market where similar ideas are being expressed. The signified details on the garments produced each season have to gain popularity collectively. Popularity is immediately established when a critical mass of the media pick up those signified details which represent the next important fashion. For instance, it used to be the case that the British flag was used as the signifier of national unity, The "Union Jack" these days is used as signifier by a political minority group nostalgic for a past mono-culture. The political intention is opposition to the reality of Britain as a multicultural state and seeks to suggest that their reality, which is unreal, is somehow a desired state.

The flag image has also been exploited by many British fashion designers and marketers when proclaiming the supremacy of British commodities. It often appears on T-shirts, in knitwear, printed fabric and even on shoes. The flag is redesigned in various forms and sizes and has been used as a logo. This evidence is an example of "a temporary and transitional message change" that utilises the same icon as is used to refer to British nationalistic society's need to signify the issue of a distinctive and separate social statement of identity.

This also serves to exemplify the so-called "dynamic identity". This kind of identity is like a fleeting image which continuously changes in time and space, and is stated by Weyl as follows:

" The objective world simply is, it does not happen. Only to the gaze of my consciousness ... does a section of this world come to life as a fleeting image in space which continuously changes in time".

(Weyl quoted in Popper, 1998: p. 166)

Popper (ibid.: p. 166) summarises Weyl's statement as being that "Change is illusion. ... There is no change in the four-dimensional objective reality, but only in the way in which our consciousness ... experiences things".

Dynamic identity is the crucial stage that brings fashion to eternal change. Also, as long as the signifier can be accepted by society to be significant, timeless and essential, the messages can be recreated and represented perpetually. Details in garment construction can be repeatedly used to signify. For instance, the use of red, white and blue related to the British flag can be permuted in the fashion process, enabling a never-ending supply of new ideas.

Both dynamic and personal identity products can be found in a retail shop, where the dynamic one is always put in the window display or in-store display, whereas the products of personal identity are usually on the shelves. The personal identity product is provided as a kind of bread, while the dynamic identity product is any spread, such as butter, jam, chocolate etc. Each brand has to choose to be one kind of bread but spreads itself with any seasonal favourite topping. Once the brand has established its static identity, it is difficult to change. Radical changes in a static identity can have disastrous result. The Laura Ashley Company, for example, failed to provide alternative products as it expanded its productive capacity and retail distribution. After its initial expansion, the market became saturated with the products, which had initially distinguished it in the marketplace. Thereafter, the brand's popularity declined. A change in personal identity might by the same token have had a beneficial effect, as in the case of French Connection. This company has always kept pace with and initiated fashion change, but in the arena of fashion follower at a level of inexpensive commodities supplier. Their re-launch was oriented at repositioning themselves in the high street with regard to price and quality level while, at the same time, allowing a change of image to that of trend-setter. This is further helped by the new logo "fcuk", which is an ironic graphic representation aimed at appealing to affluent youth.

In summary, Zone 2 involves the transformation process of fashion objects from production line to the market. The bridge, which brings commodities to the market, is indirectly transferring things from one place to another. In fact, the commodities need to be manipulated in a deliberate manner in conjunction with targeted channels and the encoding of messages. The rule in this stage is to achieve "encoding for society": that is, it attempts to meet the right needs of consumers (while the message in the previous stage is "coding from society".) Hence, fashion suppliers search for the coding messages and transform them into the encoding messages, in turn to serve the consumers. It can be said that the encoding process in Zone 2 is a semiological process.

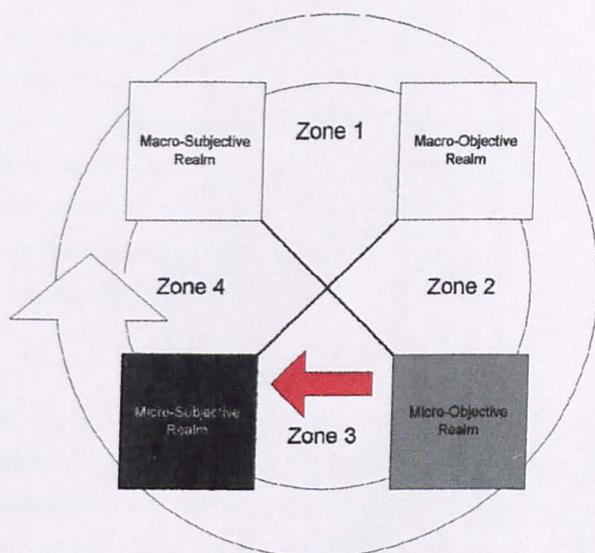


Figure 7.3.2C: Zone 3: From the Micro-Objective to the Micro-Subjective Realms

7.3.2.3 Zone 3

Zone 3 contains the shifting process from the micro-objective to the micro-subjective realms. There is a thin area between negotiating with others and negotiating with self (which are the sociological processes of the micro-objective and the micro-subjective realms, respectively). This thin area or enigmatic stage occurs between the two realms and is the "human ambivalence", which is proposed by the SI theory of fashion (Kaiser, et al, 1995a; 1995b; 1996). Human ambivalence appears when there is an imbalance between the self and the others, between the differentiating force and socialising force. Negotiating between being the self and being the others is the process of creating or seeking for an identity. The message built at this stage is concerned merely with being, not with sending a fashion issue message.

However, "being" in this case is a seasonal being process that is unlike the permanent being process which was described in the sociological approach to fashion. Here "being" oneself concerns communicating a fashion message about "temporary status" rather than about "issue". When one finds a solution in the negotiation stage to becoming somebody else apart from the true self, one needs to express this scenario through some medium or other, i.e. fashion.

"Instead of the individual being surrounded by an environment of pre-existing objects which play upon him and call forth his behaviour, the proper picture is that he constructs his objects on the basis of his on-going activity. In any of his countless acts – whether minor, like dressing himself, or major, like organising himself for a professional career – the individual is designating different objects to himself, giving them meaning, judging their suitability to his action, and making decisions on the basis of the judgement. This is what is meant by interpretation or acting on the basis of symbols."

(Blumer, 1969b: p. 80)

Fashion in this stage is about coding and encoding consecutively. It is coded by fashion marketers and retailers in a form of communal identity, which is called "brand identity". It is possible for any of us at any time to become a temporary member. Brand identity acts like a community that encompasses all possible characters that subjectively link to an ideal identity of the tribe. The ideal identity of one brand usually differs from another. The market target of many brands such as Nike, Adidas, Puma and Reebok are similar and overlapped, but their identities can be distinguished. For instance, the garments that are made by Next and Paul Smith (which are different targeted communities) must be signified differently, where the former is signified "I am a conservative semi-contemporary middle class person" and the latter is "I am a funky yuppie modern-conservative person". Consumers who seek for their personal identity might take several seasons to sort out their solution. It can be found that many customers cannot make decisions when choosing similar products from two different brands of the same market level. Meanwhile, loyalty is the greatest contribution from consumers, which can be given to the brand because it provides the right identity for them.

The encoding process is a process whereby consumers employ some fashion style created by any fashion brand to encode their identity. To dress in order to fit the career and societal role is sociological fashion, and is the first layer of identity to be laid down. On top of this layer is the layer of identity that indicates a particular tribe, a sense of belonging to a particular community. An outward appearance of a young man may send some messages such as, "I am a young manager" (on the first layer), and "I am funky fashion-conscious" (the second layer). The third layer of identity, a seasonal fashion issue, might be "I am a global citizen who is broadminded and will accept other cultures".

In the encoding stage of individuals, some difficulties can be seen in coping with complexity. Conflict resolution between many conditions is however possible. The solution of negotiation with others in the micro-objective realm may not balance with the one of the micro-subjective realm. In this case, individuals have to swing their decision-making

tactics backward and forward between the two realms before creating a message in the encoding stage.

The above discussion sheds light on the classification of identity. Identity can be differentiated into 3 layers, which are: societal, personal and seasonal fashion issue. In summary, the societal layer is concerned with dressing in order to fit function, social role and career. The personal layer is a sense of belonging to a particular tribe, club, activity and hobby. The seasonal fashion issue is a superficially coated identity that fulfills individuals' needs for a particular time. When the social issue declines, a new one is available to replace it. This might be the reason why fashions are volatile and keep changing every season, while the styles of static commodities evolve much more slowly. If individuals live in a capitalist society, where status can be moved up and down, even the basic layer, societal identity, can be changed. None of these identities is fixed perpetually.

Collective fashion does not mean that members of the society have to dress exactly the same. Instead, the society comprises multi-careers and multi-roles. As a result, the societal identity layer is excluded from the concern of fashion. Fashion is, therefore, merely concerned with the second and the third identities, which are the personal and seasonal fashion issues, respectively. Consequently, members of the society, such as a secretary club, might dress differently (conservative, contemporary, funky, or modern styles) because their personal identities are different. However, their third identity layer might be the same. For instance, they might choose to dress in a manner indicative of "feminine power", however subtly it is expressed. Although identity at this stage is multi-layered, to become someone else can be temporary. In the world of modernity, dynamism stimulates people to have many statuses at a time. In the world of capitalism, one's status can move upward and downward uncertainly. As Weyl (1998) suggests "There is no change. ... only our consciousness experiences things": to be loyal to one brand cannot fulfil the reality. Consumers, therefore, are faced with the negotiating stages "with self" and "with others" all the time. Hence, coding and encoding in this stage can be stated as semiological processes.

7.3.2.4 Zone 4

This is the most crucial stage of the fashion process where the real message created in the previous stages is sent out or communicated among communities. In the previous stages there can be seen a chain of translation, coding and encoding by the two poles, demand and supply. The translation chain creates some messages that are finally ready to be sent out. The messages are sent out to other members in the community in the

forms of fashion communication. The interpretation of the fashion look, the interaction between members, the interconnection among groups and other kinds of communication through the clothing, which produces "fashion communication", are all possible channels of communication. Barnard (1996) states in his book "Fashion as Communication" that communication emerges through the interaction of a wearer and an observer. The wearer may be individual or a group or many groups, while the observer can be deliberately specified or any unspecified person either within the same tribe or from others. Fashion communication is thus directly involved with the coding and encoding, transmission and reception processes and this stage could be classified as a semiological process.

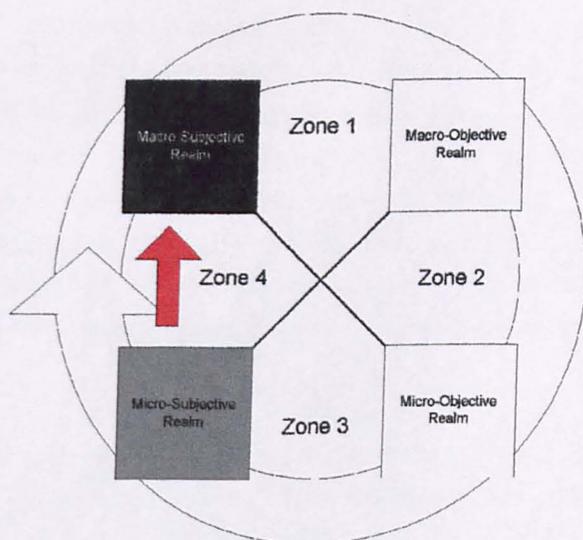


Figure 7.3.2D: Zone 4: From the Micro-Subjective to the Macro-Subjective Realms

This is the actual stage where fashion communication starts: we can consider the previous stages as pre-communication stages. Fashion in this sense is merely involved with the intellectual process of interpretation and observation of social interaction, ways of living, the playing of social roles, etc. Fashion is thus not totally about popular objects that are massively successful in the commercial sense. In other words, fashion is not a Japanese kimono shape, or twisted-seam jeans, or shiny-glittering embroidery. It is a meaning hidden in those fashion objects, which needs to be interpreted.

The meaning of the communicated messages is varied, and unlikely to be fixed due to some significant factors relating to wearer, observer and spatio-temporal in nature. These factors become the major concern in the research on consumption (Miller, et al., 1998). The interpretation of each observer might not be the same, whereas the differing behaviour of the wearers within the group and those outsiders may create different

degrees of meaning. Time and space are the other major factors in the communication.^v Fashion worn at a specific time and in a specific place can create a strong statement, while it might be meaningless when spatio-temporal changes occur. For instance, the 60's fashion was the youth revolution statement, whereas wearing the 60's style nowadays can be interpreted only as nostalgia. Space and place are usually misunderstood to be the same meaning. In fact, their meanings are totally different. Place is an area that provides some sense of tangibility. Space can be both a tangible and an intangible area. Space in this thesis is defined as "an entity, which can be arranged to represent value, meaning and form".

In a previous paragraph in Zone 3 it has been explained that a garment worn by members of two different communities might be signified in different ways with different meanings. However, if this is true then a standard item of clothing, which might be said to be more or less meaningless or neutral, can in certain circumstances have a specific socio-cultural or sub-cultural meaning. The emergence of meaning is dependent upon the wearer and observer in a particular time and space or is devoid of a cultural framework. In that case, clothing in this sense might be understood as a "space". In other words, a fashion item is an entity, which can be arranged to represent value, meaning and form of any social issue and context.

Consequently, the "production of space" (Lefebvre, 1991), or in this case the "production of fashion context", is communication and interpretation as expression via wearing fashion items. The production of fashion is the creation of "fashion context" and atmosphere by the use of fashion items, subjectively and objectively, to give a medium of social interaction. It becomes a phenomenon where a substantial number of members adopt the same fashion and use it as a means of expression, interaction, interconnection and communication.

"All the world's a showroom, every man or woman an advertisement for himself or herself, aiming to "impress" and please his or her consumers."

(Bowly, 1993: p. 95)

Fashion language is, then, emergent and people talk the same issue. The social issue, which is the topic of that moment or "zeitgeist", becomes clearer. The more the fashion objects are adopted and worn, the more the "fashion context" is produced. Fashion in this sense is truly a concept of living or social appreciation, which corresponds to the fashion definition in the initial chapter of this thesis. The semiological process in Zone 4 is likely to be the end of the chain of translation and the place of final reception. However, when the fashion process moves into the macro-subjective realm, it can be observed that the

conversations in society appear as an echo effect. People are not talking simultaneously. In fact, somebody has to start the conversation and there are replies or responses subsequently. The originality of first fashion expression comes from fashion innovators, subsequently followed by early fashion adopters, fashion followers and so on. The differentiating impulse forces fashion innovators to go to some lengths in responding to a new social issue in the first stage. The chain of the fashion process has not ended completely, rather it has turned one revolution resulting in an overlap with the next subsequent cycle. People are perpetually driven to respond to social issues. No matter what the circumstances, people can only respond to issues by acceptance, opposition, adaptation or avoidance. These are the four possible choices that are readily set down and catered for by fashion suppliers, who presume to fulfil the appropriate responses to the social needs. Only those, who manage to live alone in non-influenced space, can live outside the fashion chain.

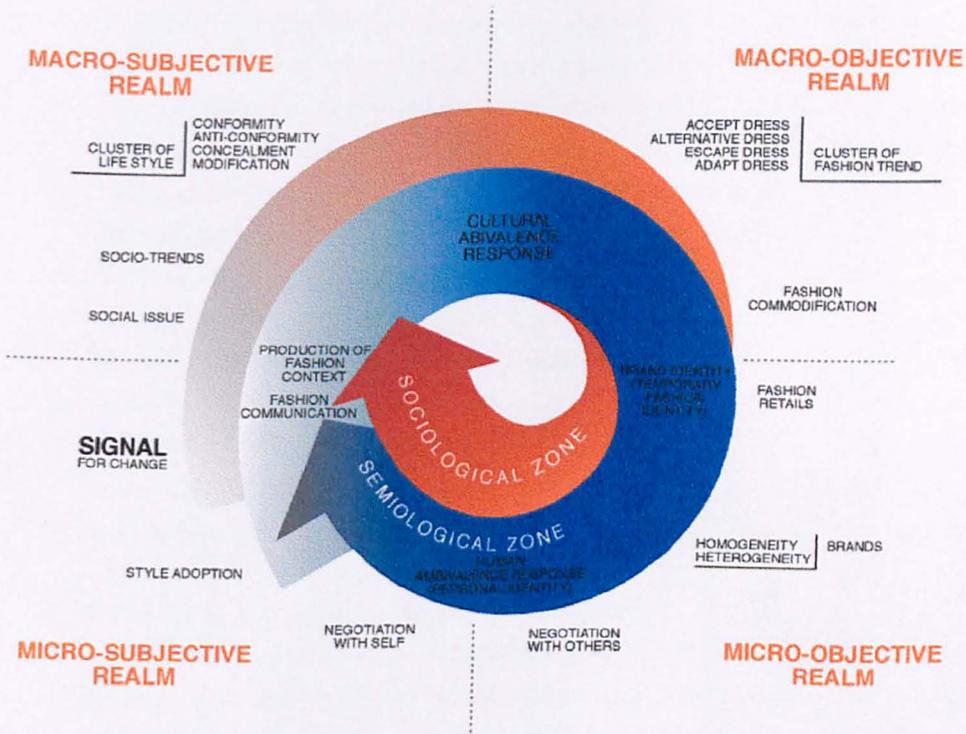


Figure 7.4.1: The Fashion Translation Process Model

It is relevant to Hebdige's modern consumer (1993) that fashion consumption, as discussed above, is a complete social and psychological mess, a bundle of conflicting drives, desires, fantasies, appetites, of choices to live in the messy everyday world. This may also apply to Rosalind Williams' idea (1982: p.3), which can be paraphrased as "those who have tasted the fruits of the fashion have lost their innocence – identity".

7.4 Conclusion

After careful analysis of Barthes' and others' ideas, justifying their application in and relevance to the construction of this developed fashion transformation process model, which is labelled "the Fashion Translation Process Model", the significant evolved differences can be summarised as follows:

1. The discussion above has shown that a close investigation of the relationship between the sociological and semiological details within the fashion model reveals some differences in contexts relevant to the whole fashion process. My approach is rooted in the distinguishing of fashion as a continuous process between the sociology and semiology principles. Figure 7.4.1 shows the modified model, which is more informative than the previous model insofar as it indicates that the sociological process simultaneously operates in parallel with the semiological process. As a result the four realms in the previous model have been separated by the insertion of a link, the semiological zone, at the transforming point of the process. However, the separation is artificial. In order to rectify the situation, it became apparent that the model should be re-conceptualised to present fashion change in terms of social phenomenon, whereby the mechanism of the change is dynamically evolved through symbolic (semiotic) interaction in society.
2. The semiological zones, however, are dynamically mysterious in terms of long term forecasting. On the other hand, a short-term fashion vision can be obtained for those who are ardent followers of social trends and social interaction among the group of fashion innovators.
3. The model confirms that consumers and their consumption are not separate from commodification, instead they mutually reflect the entity of each other.
4. It is clearly seen that the fashion process is one of the ways in which individuals' identity and also social identity are constituted.
5. Fashion phenomena can be said to be a characteristic of modernity in the way in which fashion needs to be new in its essence through a re-combination of existing material. If the fashion object is used as a medium of communication and the context of communication is changed periodically, therefore, the fashion object has to be changed to accommodate the new context. Material abandonment is unavoidable when the fashion object no longer serves the need of the communication process.
6. The emergence of fashion communication is constrained by co-operation among wearers, observers' perception, time of transmission and social space. The "production of fashion context" is communication and interpretation as expression via wearing fashion items. It can therefore be considered to be the ultimate fashion phenomenon.

7. The analysis has also attempted to ground an understanding of the relationship between subject and object in the realm of symbolic interaction. The model suggests that an object is produced to be available for individuals to subjectively express the result of their negotiation through social interaction.

Finally, the model also suggests that the process of fashion is a continuous process of coding and encoding as a chain of translation. The chain of translation is shown in the model in such a way as to indicate that both parallel processes, the tangible and intangible, are dynamically interlinked and interactive in time. By this it is suggested that some aspects of communication are tangible, those that constitute the physical object, while others that should be regarded as intangible inasmuch as they determine the meaning of an object.

"There isn't a reality on the one hand, and a representation on the other. Rather, there are chains of translation. Chains of translation of varying lengths. And varying kinds. Chains which link things to text to things, and things to people, and so on."

(Callon and Law, 1995: p. 501)

Endnote

ⁱ As a part of "structuralism", semiotics has been one of the movements of thought and analysis in the science of symbol and language during the twentieth century.

ⁱⁱ Lefebvre suggests that space has three different elements: representation of space, spatial practice, and representational space.

ⁱⁱⁱ This is no guarantee those messages are correctly decoded by the perceivers.

^{iv} This lack of guarantee is exemplified later in the comparative model, investigated in Thailand, where the semiological process is either misunderstood or totally ignored; or there is a gap/difference for culture reasons between the coded intention and the received perception resulting from decoding.

^v "In particular, space and place are seen as crucial elements of consumer identities." (Miller, et al., 1998: p. 7)

Chapter 8

Fashion in the Context of Thailand

An aim of the research is to examine the inter-relationships between the Western-dominated global fashion system and regional needs in maintaining and promoting identity, and to create a conceptual model, which explains these relationships. For the purposes of this research, the regional focus for the analysis and development of a model is the Thai fashion industry and process.

The first part of the thesis took diverse existing fashion theories and simply melded them into a single construction or conceptual model of the fashion process. The "Fashion Translation Process Model", as it has now become, is proposed as a structure representative of the changing process within the Western fashion arena.¹ As discussed in the introductory Chapter, the research questions and the major interest are focused on the mystery of the fashion context in Thailand, which is usually influenced by Western culture and its commodification processes. Kulick and Wilson stress why Thailand has been influenced by Western ideas in so many aspects.

"Thailand is unique, not only in Asia but in the Third World as a whole, in never having suffered colonial rule by another country, never having seen violent revolution of the kind that shattered China and never having been occupied by foreign armies as China, India and Japan were in the 1940s. This has allowed Thai society to undergo the buffeting of Western ideas without interrupting the

authority of its own institutions."

(Kulick and Wilson, 1992: p. 5)

The present Chapter will provide a general, holistic picture of Thai fashion, identifying it as being governed, both in the areas of supply and demand, by Western culture but also affected by lifestyles and identities indigenous to Thai society. In this way, it is hoped to create a significant scenario of the fashion change process in Thailand which will reveal some links and similarities between both the Western and Thai fashion industries, systems and processes.

The structure of the investigation in this Chapter replicates that used in the investigation of the Western fashion process model in as much as it divides into two major realms, which are supply and demand; moreover, demand as the subjective realm encompasses the macro- and micro- realms, while the supply side includes the macro- and micro-objective realms. However, as the Chapter progresses, part of the discourse will inevitably be cross-referenced in discussion to both the subjective and objective realms.

8.1 Scenario of the Subjective Realm

This first part seeks to identify Thai fashion in the macro and micro subjective realms through the social and cultural change process. The key theme of this Chapter is the identification of the "lifestyle and identity" of Thai people, which connects with consumption and perception of fashion. Somers (1994) suggests that identity can be examined through a narrative of self-development of a person in spatio-temporal experiences.

"Narrative identities are constituted by a person's temporally and spatially variable place in culturally constructed stories composed of (breakable) rules, (variable) practices, binding (and unbinding) institutions, and the multiple plots of family, nation, or economic life. Most importantly, however, narratives are not incorporated into the self in any direct way; rather, they are mediated through the enormous spectrum of social and political institutions and practices that constitute our social world."

(ibid.: p. 635)

A "person" in the following investigation is the "Thai people" rather than an individual Thai person. The reason for this will become apparent as this Chapter progresses.

The development of Thai society can be studied through the ongoing social process that shifts and swings like a pendulum according to social development and the effect of a variety of significant factors. Du Gay (1996) also suggests in a similar way to Somers that the study of identity can be discursively constructed through "contingent and rational" factors. Identity in the above quotation is bound with rules, practices and binding institutions of everyday living. In fact, the actuality of living of a person involves encounters with a heterogeneous range of options to be chosen.³ Hence, as hinted by Somers in the above quotation, rules, practices and binding institutions are not rigid and manifest to one life, but resilient and manageable. A certain spectrum of influences affects a person in a particular time and space, whereas the response to those influences is also unique. One's identity, therefore, is unique and cannot be duplicated. In other aspects, identity is not static but dynamic, and emerges from a kind of ongoing process. Every single person in a society is in an evolving process, as stated by Heraclitus.

"I searched myself, ... what he found was not a thing, but a process: a burning fire, a flame. ... the more alive, the more fully ourselves, the more we are awake. If we are asleep, if our life processes are reduced, our souls are hardly any longer a living fire – we are almost dead."

(Heraclitus, quoted in Popper, 1998: p. 156)

The identities of an individual social member and the whole of society in the era of capitalism continue to evolve via consumption practices. Shopping is viewed by Chaney (1996) as connections between goods and post-traditional identity, which in turn creates a pattern of consumption. Members of a society differ from others and socialise with their group in a significant pattern of living, called "lifestyle". The trilogy of relationships between identity, consumption (shopping) and lifestyle are tied together in capitalist society. In other words, the activity that ties people together in society today is consumption (Baumann quoted in Beng-Huat, 2000). Shields (1992) stresses the relationship between social exchange and shopping activity.

"... shopping for goods remains a social activity built around social exchange as well as simple commodity exchange".

(ibid.: p. 102)

The processes of building up or adding in new versions of identity of individuals in society take effect in the changing or shifting process of the whole of society. On this account, the micro-subjective realm (i.e. individuality) connects with the macro subjective realm (i.e. society). One realm is mutually dependent upon the other.

In this Chapter, therefore, Thai fashion is approached as a discursively constituted social relation, articulated through narratives of the progressive society, aspects of (fashion) consumption in Thailand, and the collective characteristics of Thai people through their fashion expression. The following investigation is divided into 3 epochs: pre-industrialised, industrialised and the present era.

By understanding the past and present situation of fashion consumption in Thailand, Thai lifestyles and identities can be investigated. Throughout, reference will be made to the following key aspects:

- Firstly, it is important to investigate the level of consumption practices, particularly those of the new Thai middle-class.
- Secondly, the ways in which changing objects and images have been employed by the modern, mobile Thais have, likewise, to be studied.
- Finally, the cultural development and previous governmental policies, which moulded modern Thai culture and, therefore, consumption, have to be established.

8.1.1 Pre-Industrialised Era

This section of the investigation is based upon the hypothesis that "Western colonisation throughout the history of Thai politics is the major root of consumption and lifestyle of the Thai people". This hypothesis presupposes that different strategies in reaction to or interaction with Western colonisation are probably the major cause of a variety of social changes in each South-East Asian country.

As mentioned earlier, the investigation may be placed within the discursive space delineated by the interaction of the development of Thai political history since the aggressive invasion of colonisation into South-East Asia, and the public practices impacting upon identity adjustment. This delineation will draw together the different aspects of colonisation as a general process, transforming it from its "engagement form" manifested through politics, to its economic or cultural forms. The outline of this discursive space may be located in the following manner:

- Firstly, the investigation will focus on the major events and political policies reacting to the attack of Western culture that affected Thai society, especially in the realm of identity.
- Secondly, the adaptability of Thais in terms of maintaining their identity throughout their changing history until entering the newly industrialised economic era is established.

- Finally, the picture will show current identity and taste, which, it is hoped, will explain the issues of fashion consumption behaviour in Thailand.

8.1.1.1 From “Missionary Impossible” to “The King and I”

It is generally accepted that Thailand was first contacted by the West at the time of King Narai Maharaja in the Ayuttaya Dynasty (the early 18th century). Holland and Portugal were the first nations that sent missionaries to Thailand for the religious conversion of its people, and also initiated and facilitated trading (Dixon, 1999). That initial contact did not significantly impact on Thai culture, apart from the subsuming into Thai cuisine of certain Portuguese dessert recipes. Thais, then, had realised that there were other, different kinds of human beings on this earth, with different religions and other cultural determinates; they did not, however, admire them to the extent of significantly changing their existing traditions.

The crucial threat of Western colonisation to the tradition of Thailand seems to have been in the period of King Rama IV (or the “The King and I” period), Ratanakosin Dynasty.

From the time of King Rama IV, the development of Thailand has followed Western lines[■] (Numnonda, 1978). The real globalisation started when Thailand was forced to sign a treaty in 1855 on threat of colonisation by Sir John Bowring, a British envoy of Queen Victoria (Hoskin, 1986; Patana, 1993). The “Bowring Treaty” aimed at opening up trade between Thailand and Britain, but was backed up by the implicit threat of colonisation, which had already befallen neighbouring countries. Since then, Thailand inevitably became part of the world economy. Many treaties with other European powers and with the U.S. followed in quick succession (Hoskin, 1986).

Patana (1993) stresses that one of the results of signing those treaties was increasing numbers of foreign residents in Thailand. The King of Thailand quickly adapted to the changing situation. He exercised diplomacy to prevent physical colonisation by allowing a veneer of cultural colonisation. He seemed to pursue what the West wanted, but resisted the full impact of enculturation. It was a victory of content over a style.

“At the same time as this expansion in international trade, there grew in Bangkok a community of Westerners, which included diplomats, businessmen and missionaries. Of these, the missionaries were the most active agents of Western civilisation, due to their concern about the linking of Western civilisation with Christianity. ... In respect to women, Victorian cultural attitudes to women were

presented to Thai society as a symbol of Western civilisation, and moreover, as the symbol of Westernity."

(ibid.: p. 2)

The image of Western countries at that time could be defined as "civilisation" because they appeared to come from a different culture, with higher technology and dangerous weapons. Thai people had to adapt their lifestyle and social norms to the Western style in order to favour Western people, as shown in the film and musical "The King and I", inspired by the novel written by Anna Leonowens. Mrs Leonowens was ordered by the King to train some of the palace women in Western etiquette and to dress them in the Western style for the formal reception of Lord John Hay's visit (*ibid.*). She was employed by the King to be a governess to teach English to his children and one of them, Chulalongkorn, later ascended the throne as King Rama V. Chulalongkorn was thus educated not only in English language but also in Western thought. Consequently, in his reign there was an increase of Westernising cultural forces, both in internal workings and outward appearances. Navigamoon (1989) observes that King Rama V appeared in many photographs in Western costumes, and that he was an innovator in adopting Western dress. He also decreed that civil servants should change their dress for formal occasions, i.e. wearing socks and shoes, the "Raja-pattern" shirt (invented by the King), and Western hair styles (see Appendix V and VI showing the evolution of Thai costume).

8.1.1.2 First Nationalism Campaign: Propaganda via the Elite with Western Elements of Appearance

As King Rama V had visited Europe a couple of times and been educated by a foreign governess, he sent most of his children and many Thai students to study in Europe, especially in England. One of his sons, Vajiravudh, who ascended the throne as King Rama VI in 1910, was the first Thai monarch to have been educated overseas (Hoskin, 1986). The first nationalist policy was implemented by King Rama VI.

"He (King Rama VI) viewed the monarchy as the key to nationhood. His official elite nationalism sought to impose a standardised, homogeneous, centrally sustained high culture on its subjects."

(Esterik, 2000: p. 98)

The degree of civilisation of the country was viewed and symbolised through the lifestyle and the status of elite women in particular. His concern for civilisation was for appearance, as noted by Vella (1978), as is evident in his writing "please understand that others are taking our measure". One of the three major restrictions on Thai women identified by the

King related to their appearance. Although it seemed to be a minor problem, women were induced to change their appearance by prohibiting betel chewing (which caused black teeth), changing their dress and hair styles (see Appendix V) to differentiate the outward appearance of males and females.

"Vajiravudh was particularly concerned because the West did not view elements of Thai dress simply as examples of cultural differences in fashions, but as deliberate strategies to keep women unattractive, and thus in bondage."

(ibid.: p. 154)

Female friends and relatives were encouraged by the King to wear their hair long and more stylishly and to wear skirt-like garments as well as hats in public (see Appendix V and VI). From this time the Thai elite learnt the meaning of fashion. Fashion was thus originated by the court and widely adopted among the urban elite (Esterik, 2000).

"On his grand coronation in Dec. 1911, the reception party was arranged for representatives from various royal families and governments. All of the ministers were informed that eligibility for invitation of government officials and their wives would depend not only on the ranks of the husbands, but also on the wives' appearance and the ways in which they dressed, in order to make a good impression on the foreign guests."

(Patana, 1993: p. 6-7)

Not only were Thai people encouraged to change their appearance (fashion), but also their culture and lifestyle. Many private and public activities borrowed from Westerners, the English in particular, were introduced to the elite and then spread throughout urban practice. For instance, women were encouraged to appear in public with their spouse at events such as parties or when visiting the theatre (Witayasakpan, 1992). Balls and parties and ballroom societies emerged to simulate Western lifestyle and were readily adopted. Thai society was like Edwardian England. Indeed, "socialising" was encouraged in Thai society and became the norm.

Western colonisation was the major cause shaping many aspects of Thai history (Streckfuss, 1993). Thai people adopted and adapted to the colonial rules in a very quick process. There were three advantageous aspects to the social changes introduced during the nationalist campaign by King Vajiravudh. The king abolished three major restrictions on Thai women, namely their limited freedom to socialise with men on equal terms, their limited access to education, and the practice of polygamy (Esterik, 2000). Thai women themselves had no opportunity to be directly involved in the nationalist campaign, other

than by changing their appearance and socialising activities. Western elements of femininity were thus imposed on Thai women's identity, rather than reinforcing Thai femininity (ibid.).

8.1.1.3 Symbolising National Unity

Another form of King Vajiravudh's nationalism inspired by the British was the trinity of "God, King and Country". Witayasakpan (1992) note that the British trinity was adapted to "Nation, Religion and King", and at a later stage the old national flag was replaced by the tricolour flag signifying this Thai trinity. The love and sacrifice of Thais for the nation is found in Witayasakpan's writing (ibid.):

"It was important that Thai people fulfil their duty by being loyal and obedient to the King and by refraining from opposing or criticising him".

(ibid.: p. 71)

Thai people were influenced to follow the leader. Although the idea of nationalism was promoted through royal orders, elite propoganda, and literary works, the feudal Thai hierarchical system from royalty to commoner and from elite to lower class was the crucial factor in actualising the campaign (ibid.).

8.1.1.4 Phibun's Nation-Building: Re-Emphasis of Westernisation

Six years after the end of absolute monarchy, Prime Minister Phibun Songkhram was, during 1938-44 and again in 1948-1957, a powerful nationalist leader in Thai political history (ibid.). One of the influences motivating Phibun to implement a nationalist policy was his experience of being treated as a "slave" of Western colonial powers while he was a military student in Europe. Phibun was bought up in a military context and was educated in France, which left its mark upon him both in terms of his dictatorial attitude to his conduct of affairs of state and of his attitude to women as icons of modernity. According to Witayasakpan (ibid.), Phibun's nationalism^{iv} was a different concept from that of King Vajiravudh. Phibun conceptualised the nation from Thai commoners, whereas King Vajiravudh created the new nationhood from the elite group downwards. Phibun, however, also based his modernisation of the country on Western models in order to win the respect of Western powers (Numnonda, 1978). Western culture in such matters as dress styles, social codes and etiquette were accordingly transmitted to ordinary Thai people. The name of the country was changed from "Siam" to "Thailand" in order to represent a unity

of ethnic Tai, and the word "land" was added because it sounded more Western.

Phibun attempted to decree people to follow the leader, the government, via promulgation of laws as found in Witayasakpan's literature (1992).

"To be Thai, i.e., a "cultured" Thai, was to dress properly in public. Wearing only underpants, or no blouse, or a loose-ended wrap-around cloth, common attire of Thai people at the time, was considered impolite, and people so dressed were discouraged from appearing in public. The choices allowed were uniforms, and proper Western or traditional dress. To ensure that Thai people complied with this guideline, a law was issued that stipulated that dressing properly was the patriotic duty of Thai people for maintaining national prestige."

(ibid.: p. 115.)



Figure 8.1.1A: Afternoon Tea Dress, a Fashion during the Nation-Building Campaign

Phibun modernised Thailand after Western models in lifestyles and appearance. His policy was criticised for being pro-Western but anti-Chinese and anti-monarchist. He considered that the adoption of Western dress was indicative of the cultural level of the nation. Men were required to wear Western-style trousers, shirt, jacket, bow tie, socks and shoes, while it was suggested that women should wear a skirt, blouse and shoes, and also gloves on formal occasions (see Figure 8.1.1A). Both men and women had to wear hats (Numnonda, 1978, Punyaratabandhu, 1971, Witayasakpan, 1992). An article from the Bangkok World newspaper indicates, however, that many people were not at all happy to follow their leader in all this:

"Thinking of going to market made her [an old housewife] sick at heart, but not because she was too lazy to walk to the Giant Swing area where her favourite market place was located. A conservative woman, she had done all the shopping herself every day for years since she had married, and she had been happy to do so without complaint. Now, however, she was reluctant to go out. She had had such a feeling for the past several weeks because she was now required to be "dressed up" before appearing in public places. ... She could not help feeling embarrassed appearing among people in her "new look" fashion."

(Punyaratabandhu, 1971: p. 16)

8.1.1.5 The Zenith of the Loss of Identity

Witayasakpan tells us that women wearing full Western-style costume came to symbolise society at the zenith of civilisation (1992: p. 9). It can be argued that Thai identity had sunk to its nadir as far as appearance is concerned after Phibun's period of nation-building. "The Thais are a well-dressed nation", was one of the definitions of Thai national characteristics in Phibun's campaign. Thai women were promoted as "the Flower of the Nation". The expression "properly dressed" in relation to time, space and occasion was developed as part of the strategy.

"Women received particular attention for the implementation of these dress codes. Far from being invisible, women were the public embodiment of Thai culture, and the state made use of women's bodies in a number of ways. Many of the innovations in the construction of Thai identity concerned women, their dress, appearance, and demeanour."

(Esterik, 2000: p. 103)

Although the above quote is a feminist's viewpoint of the changes of Thai women's appearance, changes in men's appearance were simultaneously introduced.

It is worth remarking at this point that, when developing a model of the Thai fashion process, the considerations suggested by Esterik (2000) in "Materialising Thailand" must be taken into account. She writes:

"How do we integrate these disparate pieces into a framework for interpreting the complexity of the Thai gender system? Each provides a part of the story. But how are the parts related to each other and to the past? These examples call for integrated theory, compatible with indigenous approaches to gender, rather than piecemeal ad hoc interpretation of isolated problems."

(ibid.: p. 201)

She goes on to develop a model or analytical framework for examining Thai gender, which will be taken into account when developing our model of the Thai fashion process.

Conforming to concepts of "civilisation", Thai costume had been replaced by Western dress. For most of the nineteenth century in Europe, fashion and its manifestation were focused upon women. This was because men were preoccupied with the wearing of military uniform, which was a consequence of regional conflicts. Implicit in the notion of fashion is the concept of newness, of what can be interpreted as modern, which was particularly significant in the 1930s. The profound changes in women's fashion, which took place immediately before and after the First World War reflected a new-found freedom for women and a new social positioning.

"Like Vajiravudh, he wanted them to dress, and wear their hair and make-up in a manner that would appear modern and Western to foreigners. Particularly during the Second World War women were encouraged to dress in European style to remind the Japanese and the Europeans that Thai were like Westerners, not like Japanese. Women were required to wear hats ("Wear a hat for your country", "Hats will lead Thailand to Greatness"), stockings, and phasin rather than chongkraben."

(ibid.: p. 103)

Consequently, the "socialisation" policy negated previous social values and customs of family and lifestyle and supplanted them in the main by the values of English etiquette. Thai people, both male and female, wore a complete set of Western fashion. Social behaviour as conducted in previous generations was re-classified as "uncivilised", not

cultured and impolite.

Phibun's second period in office, from 1948, continued his modernisation policy, which both consolidated and embedded Westernisation into the culture and perpetuated it beyond his term in power.

"Political changes and World War II strengthened efforts to develop a Thai national identity, and selectively borrow Western paths to modernity and progress."

(ibid.: p. 9)

These political and economic changes were not without effect upon the nature of the selection of fashion clothing made by consumers. There developed from the very beginning a hierarchy or elite in fashion purchases. Patana (1993) cites from a Thai magazine, "Sattrisan", issued in July 1958, which characterises the interest of Thai women in Western fashion as follows:

"A woman who has not looked at a fashion magazine, has not attended a party or has not gone to the cinema for six months will be out of date. This is because trends in Thai women's fashion follow those of the West, often with little regard to the suitability of these Western styles."

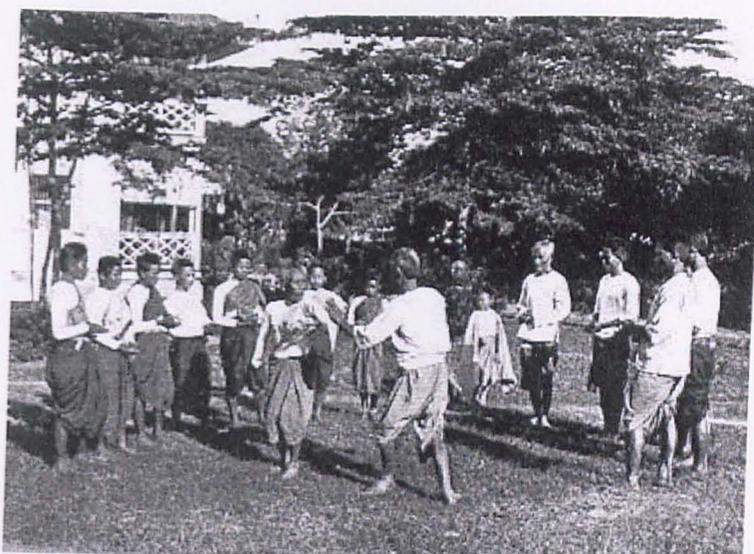
("Sattrisan", quoted in Patana, 1993: p. 11)

The above quotation implies that by 1958, at the end of Phibun's Nationalism, Thai people and society had completely adopted the campaign. After World War II, the increase in development of transportation facilitated the spread of Western fashion to women in remote areas more quickly.

"Western fashions were copied by upcountry dressmakers from magazines and newspapers. Village women also wore Western style blouses with their traditional phasin (skirt-like) while working in the fields."

(Patana, 1993: p. 11)

Figure 8.1.1B shows the original version of dress contrasting with an embarrassing "new look" of a group of Thai farmer singing and dancing after the harvest season. Young farmers in the picture wore Western style dresses with white socks and shoes, and their indigenous style of dress is no longer in evidence.



Indigenous Style



Western Style during Phibun's Period

Figure 8.1.1B: Illustrations of the Thai traditional Dresses of Rural Farmers before and after Phibun's Nation Building Campaign

By contrast, the constraints of changing appearance towards a Western style, were realised by the elite in Thailand in a more sensitive manner because of their urban lifestyle. There were instances, for instance at international meetings such as the United Nations, when Thai delegates found that other Asian delegates were wearing their national costumes while the Thai delegates appeared in Western fashion ("Chao Thai" Newspaper, 17 Jan 1961). Thai people abandoned their indigenous lifestyles and costumes, and looked forward to consuming what was called "fashion".

Within what may seem to have been a catalogue of continuous social and cultural change, drifting ever closer through adoption of desirable influences towards the Western manifestation of modern culture, there still remained many anomalies.

"Thailand sells itself abroad by commodifying its culture and tradition (Reynolds 1991: p. 15). Heritage and tradition, materialized as Thai culture, are simultaneously trivialized, celebrated and exploited. Similarly, Thai women in their essentialised Bangkok guise have been used both to represent tradition, at times an invented tradition, and as signs of civilization with their high heels and hats."

(Esterik, 2000: p. 124)

Indeed, the continual changes of Thai fashion during the post war were still influenced by the "civilisation campaign", in particular through the practices by Thai women. The increase of foreignship during the post war brought in diverse foreign cultures, as well as tourists into Thailand. The role of tourism in the preservation of original Thai style has not been directed to get along with the way the Thai modern life developed. On the other hand, culture and tradition became commodities providing in particular for tourists, while the new version of Thai culture were separately developed. Since then Thai culture can be categorised in two styles including original and modern. Esterik (2000) states that Thai culture and tradition was conceptualised by Thais as something that existed in the past but could be awoken to revive their spirit in a modern society.

"The destruction of the regional traditions as part of the pan-Thai movement in the 1940s under Prime Minister Phibun is paralleled today by the reinvention and repackaging of these same regional traditions for tourist consumption."

(Esterik, 2000: p. 124)

These anomalies seem to persist because they are somehow deeply rooted in aspects of the cultural tradition, which are constantly being reinforced. For example, the state religion is still Buddhism, practised by the majority of Thai people. To most outside observers, the King has equal status and authority to the "Sangkaraj" (head Buddhist monk) and the

Prime Minister (head of state).

"Buddhism is important to Thai identity because it is part of the logic of everyday life, not only because its texts and rituals structure gender hierarchies. Ideological orientations toward non-self and impermanence discourage essentialism,..."

(ibid.: p. 6)

This last observation also has resonance in relation to the proposed model of the fashion process, particularly in the area of the "micro-subjective", which will be discussed later.

The legal system, in its content and codes of practice, stems from tradition (the Buddhist moral ethic), although in ritual structure it owes much to the British system. Whilst many people speak English as a second language, there is not a single Thai person who would only be able to speak English.

Fortunately, the present Queen (Sirikit, consort to King Rama IX) has directed the design and development of a range of traditionally linked national costumes. They are now internationally recognised as the "national costumes" of Thailand. Many organisations in Thailand in art, craft and culture are specifically under her patronage. Her position and responsibility underscore and reinforce the necessity for continuation of a policy of nationhood represented through dress.

"Her cultural promotion activities date back to 1960, when she accompanied His Majesty the King on a state visit to Europe and the United States. She noticed at the time that there were no national dresses for Thai women, unlike the Indian Sari or the Japanese Kimono, to name only two. She concluded it was time to create such costumes for the sake of national identity. With this in mind, Her Majesty made a research into traditional costumes that Thai women had worn in different historical periods, from the Sukhothai and Ayutthaya to the Ratanakosin (Bangkok) Periods. Then she set out to adapt and modify these different modes into Thai national costumes for present-day use."

(<http://www.thaimain.org/eng/monarchy>, 1 April 2001)

The undercurrent of preservation of the indigenous is a facet of Thai contemporary history much neglected but one which we shall return to later. The significance of what might be called regional identity is an important factor in both economic development and any analytical comparisons between cultures.

8.1.2 Industrialised Era

8.1.2.1 Political Colonisation "Fades Out": Economic Colonisation "Fades In"

As shown in the above reviews, English thought and etiquette had been transmitted to and imitated by Thai culture. The main recurrent factors established by King Rama V spread or were emulated throughout the various levels within Thai society. For example, King Rama V sent his children and some other students to study in England; several Thai generations graduated from some of the most established of British universities. All of these graduates came back to Thailand to take important roles in the development of the country. Thai politics and the Thai education system, for instance, were based on the English model. The Bangkok transportation system was another organisation in which the logo of the institution declares its origin.

"The establishment of the National Economic Development Board was accompanied during 1959-60 by the setting up of a series of other developmental institutions, notably the Board of Investment, the Budget Bureau and the office of Fiscal Policy. These were headed by a small number of Western trained "technocrats" who came to play major roles in the Kingdom's development policy."

(Muscat, 1994: p. 65)

Those consecutive generations of students who had been educated abroad were also influenced by English etiquette, as can be seen in many popular Thai novels of different periods. Particularly good examples of the genre are "Si Phaen Din" (Pramoj, 1981) and "Ban Sai Thong" (Surankhanang, 1955).

Thai students graduating in England have long been categorised as belonging to a higher class than those graduating in countries and/or from domestic institutions. Their career progress accordingly unfailingly placed them in positions of power and authority within the political and economic system of Thailand.

Dixon (1999) clearly concludes that the role of the British, who left their influence upon Thailand, was as assertive as if Thailand had once been one of their colonial possessions, which it never was.

"From the mid-nineteenth century until the 1930s the integration of Thailand into the global economy and the related development of capitalist relations of

production took place very largely as an informal part of the British Imperial structure. During this period Thailand came to exhibit many characteristics common to the neighbouring colonial economies. In general, Western control of the Thai economy appears to have been less complete and less intense than in the colonial possessions. In particular Western economic activity was not supported by the establishment of a colonial state which promoted infrastructure, access to resources and controls over labour. A considerable measure of indigenous control remained which inhibited Western activity and, to a degree, controlled the nature and speed of economic and social change."

(Ibid.: p. 240)

After World War II, development in the South-East Asian region was dominated by America (Chiengthong, 2000). Thailand and America became allies in terms of anti-communist political philosophy, and subsequently Thailand provided a support base for the Korean and Vietnam Wars. Thailand was in turn supported by the U.S.A., specifically in developing its economy, financially, technically and in human resources (Kulick and Wilson, 1992). The number of Thai students funded by the U.S.A. increased markedly in the post-1945 period. As a result, an American-trained generation has replaced the British-trained individuals in key decision-making positions resulting, for instance, in a huge change in the Thai education system.

"Through the 1950s and 1960s, Thailand was transformed from a subsistence-based agricultural economy to a market-oriented rice economy and by the eighties, to an industrialising economy. Meanwhile the Thai military with American support provided the stability to make this economic transformation possible ..."

(Esterik, 2000: p. 9)

Where once the Oxbridge intellectual canon was the orthodoxy, now the American Ivy League version replaced it.

Foreign loans, again particularly from the U.S.A. in 1946 and the World Bank in 1950, were mainly used to develop the infrastructure of Thailand. Consequently, in 1960 the first National Plan was set up on the recommendation of the World Bank, whose main benefactor is the U.S.A. Dixon (1999) points out that since 1960 Thailand has developed the kingdom with foreign loans, grants and overseas investment. These were regular features of its development and Thailand was accordingly closely related to and influenced by the World Bank and the U.S.A. Thailand was accordingly hastened into becoming a capitalist-based economy aimed at maximising economic growth and fostering the manufacturing sector (Chiengthong, 2000).

"The Third National Plan (1971-76) emphasised the development of an export-oriented sector and in 1972 the industrial promotion scheme was revised to give support to exports."

(Dixon, 1999: p. 89)

Despite the fact that the Thai economy grew at an annual average of 7 percent during the 1970s, behind this growth imbalances in the process were indicating serious problems. Muscat (1994) classified the Thai economy during the latter part of the 1970s as "debt sustained". The IMF and World Bank were the sources of the loans. The Fifth National Plan (1982-6) was inevitably directed by the World Bank.

Thus the period 1980-98 is summarised by Pinches (1999) as demonstrating how the economy had achieved its dramatic economic growth (see Table 1.1.1). The restructuring of exports and the opening up of the economy were the strategies. During that period, the growth rate of GDP reached 11 percent and was among the highest rates in the world. However, most of the Thai National Plans so far have focused on the acceleration of the rate of growth of exports, moreover encouraging the country to become a capitalist-based economy with little increase and concern for domestic investment. The social evolution of urban and rural areas has been separate and diverse.

"...the developments have been heavily concentrated in and around Bangkok, thus bypassing the majority of the Kingdom and its population. Indeed, the rapid internationalisation can be depicted as exacerbating the Kingdom's already remarkably uneven pattern of national development."

(Dixon, 1999: p. 139)

The unevenness of development in Thailand has caused serious problems, such as the abandonment of land, migration of rural population to the capital, and a partial collapse of all levels of society. Dixon (ibid.) emphasises that Thailand's present situation is more typical of a Third World country than a Newly Industrialised Economic entity in the Asian region. In the countryside the majority of the population, the rural people, are left behind in the modernisation process. It is one of the reasons that this thesis proposes to focus on the consumption of urban people, in Bangkok in particular, where the dynamic of over-consumption has exploded. Later on it may be that the rural majority may have a role to play in the regeneration of the economy.

8.1.3 The Aftermath or the Present Era

The Asia Research Centre on Social, Political and Economic Change, established at Murdoch University, Western Australia, focuses the research analysis of the newly emerging classes of the Southeast Asian countries. Its book series, titled "The New Rich in Asia" and edited by Robison and Goodman (1996), provides many significant and invaluable suggestions for further analysis of the consumption phenomenon in South-East Asia in general and in Thailand in particular. The general concept employed by this research centre for analysing the consumption phenomenon lays emphasis on the social, political and economic construction of a new middle-class or the new rich, which impacts on the developmental direction of each country in the region. The same framework is applied in this thesis. With regard to the impact of the emergence of a middle-class, Beng-Huat sheds light on the link between the consumption of the middle-class and the fashion phenomenon as follows:

"The emergence of the middle-class in every nation meant they began to acquire status or positional goods, such as imported fashion, cars and foreign education for their children. The regional expansion of consumption coincided with the rapid globalisation of marketing of "designer" consumer goods."

(Beng-Huat, 2000: p. xi)

Most countries in the South-East Asian region have been systematically transformed over time and through many political epochs into capitalist countries in the same time period. At a later stage, all have achieved amazing economic growth rates. However, the direction of their growth and the social changes in these "tiger economy" countries differ very much in detail one from another, as revealed in the volumes of the "New Rich in Asia" series. The impact of the subsequent economic collapses in 1997 spread all over the region; however, the direction of social change of each country in the South-East Asian reflected its historical background and context, thereby impacting upon the recovery period. Thailand's particular differentness is a direct consequence of its unique non-colonial history, culture and governmental system.

Since the policy decision was taken that Thailand should aim at developing itself towards newly industrialised economy (NIE) status, the rapid expansion of consumerism as part of daily life has been the most powerful and dramatic phenomenon influenced by capitalism in the region. "Consumerism is not a by-product of capitalism but a self-generating economy" (Chambers, 1990: pp. 47-48). Rampant consumption in Thailand was inevitable but was nonetheless unexpected and could not avoid the consequent economic melt-down.

On the other hand, one of the by-products of being a relatively newly industrialised economy has been the emergence of a new middle-class in Thailand (Ockey, 1999; Robison and Goodman, 1996). Naturally, economic growth greatly improved the income of Thai people who had the opportunity of becoming actively involved in the changing economy. The unevenness in distribution of income to individuals, based upon economic growth, promoted a significant proportion of the Thai population into a new middle-class or "new rich".

"The Thai middle-class is a combination of independent entrepreneurs, which mostly are Chinese-Thai [Sino-Thai], and white-collar bureaucrats, i.e., government and professional employees."

(Skinner, 1957: p. 307)

This new rich was subsequently responsible for the boom in consumption. What follows, therefore, is necessarily an investigation of class differentiation, particularly as it relates to this "new rich" Thai population.

8.1.3.1 Theories of Class Classification

Marx and Bourdieu provide two major ground theories pertinent to the argument which best explains the structure of class within the context of a capitalist system. Marxist theory states that the formation of class within capitalist society can be analysed on the basis of ownership of economic capital as a major factor. In other words, the possession of class can be explained by the ownership of economic capital and its relationship to the means of production.

In the 1950s, the Thai government was constrained by America and the World Bank to abandon state monopolies and encourage private entrepreneurs (Kulick and Wilson, 1992). The role of government shrank and the private sector increased proportionately. Since then, the situation in Thailand has developed in such a way as to encourage "absolute capitalism", which is to say that the mode of production becomes industrial. That is, the mechanism encouraging capitalised investors to accumulate capital as way of controlling the means of production becomes dominant and governmental participation is reduced to fostering the correct supportive context and/or trading environment. Meanwhile those people without capital have to survive by their own personal and individual means of production, which is usually their own labour (Barnard, 1996).

The Newly Industrialised Economy (NIE) era for many Thai people, whether or not they take the opportunities offered by the changing economy, has provided many opportunities to enhance individual economic control, thereby improving upon their previous capital status. Previously, individuals sold their lands (which used to be their mean of production) in order to use that money/capital to change their class (becoming the "new rich") and establishing a new means of production. In other words, they subscribed to membership of capitalist society by changing the basis of their control of the means of production and progressing to industrialised production status. The credit system proliferated, bringing in the opportunity to change status and enhance control still further. A cycle has been perpetuated to the present time whereby the rich get richer, the poor are still poor, but yuppies emerge (the "new rich") and increase dramatically in number and asset value. Wealth is spread more widely, but only in the urban area where the middle-class is concentrated.

Building on Marx's idea, Bourdieu (1995) explains that class can be acquired by "various kinds of capital" or "the relative accumulation of resources". These can be economic (economic wealth and income), cultural (aesthetics and taste) and educational (education). Hence, capital according to Bourdieu is used to signify the acquisition of status, which characterises differing positions in a series of social fields (Wynne, 1998).

These two ground theories are employed throughout our explanation of the emergence of the new Thai middle-class.

In order to define this new class emergence in modern Thailand, Wynne (1998) suggests that based on Bourdieu's theory we need to be concerned with two important features. They are, firstly, the differences involved in the acquisition of upward social mobility; and, secondly, the degrees of heterogeneous characteristics of the occupations in which those new middle-class have engaged. Likewise, Ockey (1999) divides analysis of the development of the Thai middle-class into structural approaches and historical approaches.

The middle-class in terms of structural approaches is defined according to its position in the structure of society. The approaches are, therefore, based on structural criteria. According to the literature, positioning criteria flow from the occupational groups classified specifically by Ockey (ibid.), Pinches (1999), and Robison and Goodman (1996) who seem to be mostly concerned with the occupations that are sacrificial to capitalist society. These occupations are, for instance, banker, architect, engineer, entrepreneur, manager, marketer, sales representative, etc. and are to a greater or lesser extent employees of the system and thereby expendable as and when required. The pre-capitalist social structure,

in contrast, ranked the middle-class by general professional features, such as university lecturer, bureaucrat, police officer, military person, doctor, nurse, and teacher who can be regarded as permanent guardians of the system. The acquisition of the latter status group rank is inevitably through the process of educational achievement, some might say the indoctrination process. It might be thought ironic that those who once were outside the system now are vital in its perpetuation. The culture of educational capital has, accordingly, spread markedly throughout Thai society.

To exemplify and extend the discussion, we can cite a specific case from Thai education. The entrance examination to universities in Thailand has become the ideal pathway to success in future life, but has drastic consequences for the family if success is not attained. Beng-Huat (2000) points out that children's education has always been both an investment in their future and a symbolic display of the parents' ability to pay. High quality, equating with as good an education for their children as can be is perceived by affluent parents as a sure ticket to at least retaining their family status and, at best, achieving a better status in the future. The path believed to lead to acquisition of secure status can be seen from the ranking of the most sought-after subject areas in the entrance examinations in Thailand, namely Medicine, Engineering, Business and Architecture, which are in the highest demand from modern society in order to display its level of sophistication and affluence. Whether the Thai student really wishes or suits the specific study, they are forced by market demand and social movement to choose those most desirable subjects defined by the system as having the first priority. Students who are high achievers or who have high ability progress easily and are readily accepted in the desirable subject areas. By contrast the less able student is consigned to subject areas such as Education, Social Science, Agriculture, Fishery and Humanities. No matter how well they do, however, a high proportion return to the examination system again and again in order to make their best effort to progress to the socially desired subject areas. One of the consequences of this competitiveness for status is intensive, commercially run tutorial courses for the preparation of entrance examinations, which are a must for every student and more importantly for their family (who have to pay). These essential courses are seen as an insurance policy guaranteeing a university place in the most desirable subject areas, and thereby avoiding the costs involved in returning to the education process later in life. Education is regarded as a commodity both by the state and commercial sectors and by parents, and becomes an ideal pathway to the acquisition of status, which in turn reinforces the system.

The historical approaches are described by Frykman and Lofgren (1987) in whose concept "self-created classes" are those new classes, which have defined themselves by creating alternative criteria to those of the higher and lower classes. The purpose of this is

to place themselves in an advantageous position relative to others and relative to their own efforts at improvement. The emergence of the middle-class in this context proceeds from a base of principles of aspiration [towards the upper class] and pride in and of itself [of the affluence of the class]. In terms of the principle of "pride in oneself", this middle-class constructs a distinct consumption pattern in order to set itself apart from both aristocracy and the lower classes. As Beng-Huat (2000) said, when they are able to afford more consumption they begin to acquire status. The aspirational status can be virtually obtained through adopting the upper class's lifestyle. However, the emergence of the middle-class in these cases is based on their consumption capability rather than their inherent change in behaviour.

Whenever an integrated capitalist society exists, mobility in society also exists; consequently flexibility in the boundary definitions of the strata of society inevitably must exist. The class mechanism of capitalist society allows people to freely move upward (and downward if desirable), depending on their abilities. The capability of displaying status, power and position in every class can be exhibited through consumption (and, therefore, fashion). Hence, people employ the use of consumption as a tool to enable them to exhibit their status and to move upward within the total class system. On the other hand, people usually judge others in terms of status, class and wealth through their outward appearance, which is the consumption of clothes or fashion (Barnard, 1996; Kulick and Wilson, 1992). This concept can be applied to the consumption phenomenon in Thailand, where the new Thai middle-class exhibit themselves through consumption in order to move upward and to claim to be members of the upper class, while the actual Thai elite consumes more and more in order to be superior. These circumstances generate a huge consumerist phenomenon in Thailand. This phenomenon appears to be focused more upon the use of fashion to display wealth and status in the new middle-classes (in relation to history) rather than in say the building of new private property or the acquisition of expensive motor cars.

When considering the political dimension of class change related to displays of consumerism, Thailand give us two examples, which mark the beginning and end of a class boundary change.

The political evidence seems to indicate that the new middle-class becomes ever more powerful as it becomes more numerous and through its improved education. In the recent history of Thailand, the uprisings in 1973, 1976 and especially 1992 saw the middle-classes gradually becoming involved in constructing a new era of democracy. This began in 1973 with the first university student demonstration, and then again in 1976. The latter disturbance inhibited an attempted military takeover. Although effective it made use of

traditional civil disobedience techniques. The uprising in 1992, by contrast, was called "the automobile mob" or "the mobile phone mob" (Kulick and Wilson, 1992; Ockey, 1999), where the mob was full of car and mobile phones owners and the protestors were predominantly classified as middle-class. Nowadays, many of the new generation of young and educated Thais automatically become involved in political parties, supplanting the older generation's notoriously traditional or corrupt manifestos or policies. This change in attitude was especially pronounced in the election of 2000.

Figure 8.1.3 shows that status or position in society acquired by the middle-class through political influence is one of the channels for the new Thai middle-classes to exercise their power.

Ockey (1999) summarises that there are diverse fragments and diverse constructions of the middle-class. It encompasses qualifications in terms of education, occupation, status and income, to which Bourdieu's concept of class structure is relevant.

"The differences in the middle-class fragments are most clear between the consumer middle-class, many of them new rich, and the occupational (status) middle-class, many of them in the media and academe. Despite considerable overlap, these two groups are fairly distinct in terms of income and education. Many in the consumer middle-class are relatively well off, but not highly educated. The owners of medium- and small-size enterprises often fit into this category. By way of contrast, academics, teachers and social workers are well educated and enjoy high occupational status, but have income at the low end of the middle-class."

(ibid.)

The emergence of the new Thai middle-class, then, shows three main factors: education, occupation and income as shown in Figure 8.1.3. The high occupational middle-class engages high status leading to the exercise of political power, while the affluent middle-class engages the power of consumption. Latterly, circa 1976 to 1992, a small proportion of the educated middle-class has appeared to be moving into the political arena.

8.1.3.2 Consumption Practices of "the New Thai Middle-class"

Even though the economic growth rate Thailand achieved was faster than most other developing Asian countries during the early 1990s (Kulick and Wilson, 1992), and the revenue of the country increased to its highest point in the mid 1990s, the total value of

foreign goods imported was in excess of the value of exports. Thailand imported more than it exported, which simply indicated excessive consumption over the successful period. "The Nation" newspaper (1989) anticipated and warned of the danger of emergence of mass consumerism in Thailand.

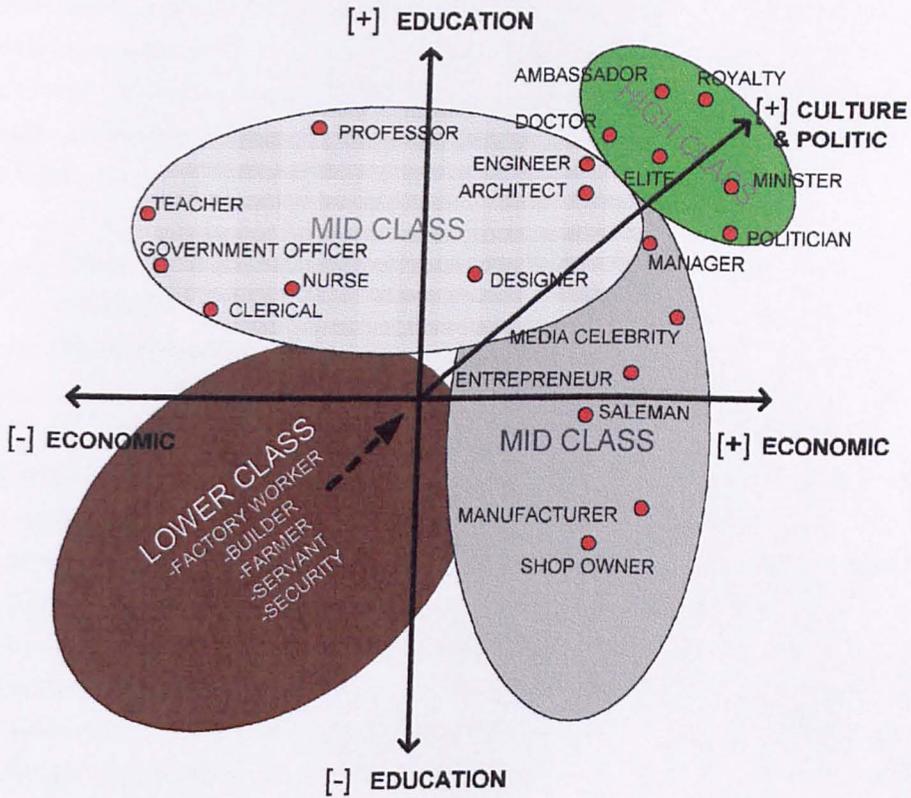


Figure 8.1.3: Class Structure Diagram of Thai Society Relationship

"The winds of change in the Thai lifestyle are sweeping across this nation with a speed that awes even the keenest observers. The vibrant economic growth has brought this country to a new level of affluence and with it a degree of Westernisation. Now it looks good and feels good to live and consume with style - the Western style...The era of mass consumerism is upon us...The globalisation of consumerism transcends cultural differences and leaves the value of restraint as expounded by Buddhism a relic of the past. Consumerism puts the whole show on stage."

(The Nation, 1989, quoted from Hewison, 1996)

8.1.3.3 Bangkok: Centre of Everything

The major and increased consumption of goods by Thai people occurs solely in the capital city. Urban life is now totally different from rural life. Bangkok is Thailand, as many people say to the extent that everything is concentrated there due to the better facilities and infrastructure. Industries have become congested in Bangkok and its immediate suburbs, which have expanded in all directions and continue to do so. Bangkok has become larger and larger, and has become the source of all sorts of pollution, not only environmental (traffic, air and water), but also mental and social (crime and social deprivation are on the increase).

"Most industry is clustered in and around the capital, making the area highly productive. ... Millions of them migrate in search of wage-labour throughout Thailand, and especially to Bangkok."

(Hewison, 1996: pp. 146-7)

Like other capital cities, Bangkok is the best place to find a job, for investing, for travelling to other places, for shopping, studying and so forth. TV programmes are produced mainly for urban tastes. Magazines and newspapers mainly report urban lifestyles. The top five universities and best schools are also located in Bangkok and plenty of modern department stores and shopping centres are scattered around its precincts. Although a white-collar middle-class is emerging across the whole of the country, the major proportion of the new rich entrepreneurs and professional employees are situated in Bangkok, where production, markets and consumers meet each other.

8.1.3.4 Urbanisation or Westernisation

Urbanisation appears as a significant trend, due to most of the business facilities congregating in the Bangkok metropolitan area. Living in the capital has become a necessity. It is predicted that by 2005, about 60-70 percent of the Thai population will live in the capital and in the major cities (of which only 3 or 4 will be equal in size to say Birmingham or Bristol) while the rest reside in rural areas. Between 1983 and 1989, around 340,000 new housing units were built in Bangkok (Hewison, 1996). Many of these were second homes in suburban areas. The expansion in housing during the period has been reflected in land prices, which have increased markedly. Land has become commodified and changes hands from one owner to another easily and very quickly. The profit from land disposal provided one of the major opportunities for the new middle-class to emerge. Additionally, The Nation newspaper (1989) reported that about one third of Bangkok's population in 1989 owned a vehicle. In other words, by 1993 Thailand was

ranked the seventeenth largest automobile market in the world.

"A third of Bangkok income earners are now classed as white collar, and 54 percent of Bangkok's population are considered middle or higher income. Bangkok's population also owns considerable numbers of major and expensive consumer goods such as computers, air conditioners, TVs, hi-fis, refrigerators and, of course, mobile phones."

(Prateepchaikul, 1993)

Since the 1980s, the influx of Western lifestyles has spread dramatically all over Bangkok and other major cities. Affluent urban Thais adopted anything in the Western style and perceive it as modern and therefore valuable and desirable. Visible evidence can be seen for example in the variety of housing styles: in the same area of Bangkok there can be found a Spanish-style house juxtaposed with Californian-style villas, opposite a New England house. Nowadays, it is difficult to find a Thai person living in a Thai-style house in the capital city of Thailand. Hewison quotes from Scott (1989) as follows:

"Economic good times have a way of transforming cities and obliterating their pasts as ruthlessly as war...Bangkok's boom...has spawned a style of architectural excess unrivalled in Asia. Bangkok's fantasies in three dimensions are notorious: office towers which mimic gothic cathedrals or Roman temples; gargantuan Corinthian columns clinging to the sides of glass-sheathed skyscrapers; condominium developments stuffed with miniature Tudor mansions and rococo villas."

(Scott, 1989, quoted in Hewison: p. 40)

Thai people did not only abandon their housing and traditional living styles, but also their shopping style. The disappearance of open-air local markets (now relegated to shopping places for the lower classes) was supplanted by shopping centres, department stores, and convenience stores. Shopping in an air-conditioned place becomes the most significant leisure activity for Thai people. It is fun for the Thais to have shopping experiences provided in an infinite number of shopping places, which do not demand particular allegiances. There are only a few department store chains in the UK, it could be said, because by contrast in Bangkok alone there are so many department stores from so many different countries and on such an enormous scale. These include Central, Robinson, The Mall, Big C, Justco, Carrefour, Macro, Tesco-Lotus, Yao Han, Merry King, Imperial, Dimaru, etc. Several of them have two or more branches, while many of them, such as Central and The Mall, have more than six branches in Bangkok. Table 8.1.3 (Bangkok Post Year Review, 2000) shows the rapid growth of discount stores in Thailand, with most

of them located in the capital. Moreover, there are so many non-chained shopping malls, including World Trade Centre, Siam Centre, Siam Centre Discovery, Maboonkrong, Kesorn Plaza, Amarin Plaza, Emporium, Seri centre, Secon Square, etc. The proliferation of shopping places indicates a wealthy economy and the consumption capability of an "affluent society".

Number of Discount Stores Global Operation in Thailand								
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001 E
Big C-Casino	4	6	11	18	20	20	23	29
Carrefour	-	-	2	6	6	9	11	5
Auchan	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-
Tesco-Lotus	1	2	5	12	14	17	24	30
Makro	9	10	13	15	16	17	19	21
Total	14	18	31	52	57	64	77	80

Table 8.1.3: The Number of Discount Stores in Thailand between 1994 and 2001 (After Bangkok Post, 2000)

Bangkok has a unique role in establishing cultural hegemony for the whole country (Esterik, 2000). Shopping at a department store has become equivalent to leisure time for urban people. One of the reasons may be because there are just a few parks and open public spaces. Unlike the "squares" in London or "piazzas" in Italy, or Central Park in New York, Bangkok lacks social/cultural meeting places and or places owned by the public.

"Department stores have become the parks of Bangkok, with fast-food outlets, mini-movie theatres, fashion stores, and discount merchandisers providing much entertainment for the population. As air-conditioned pleasure-domes, at evenings and weekends see them filled to overflowing with family groups and young people, dressed in the latest youth fashions, who meet in the fast-food shops. A recent survey has shown that 48 percent of 21-30-year-olds prefer shopping in department stores rather than small shops or open markets."

(Hewison, 1996: p. 151)

The weather in Thailand is always hot, in some cases too hot for being outdoors, so

people prefer to spend free time in places with air-conditioning, such as shopping plazas. Whatever the reason, everything can be conveniently found in the shopping places, i.e., fashion shops, fast food, restaurants, cinemas, games shops, etc. Even affluent rural consumers have to come to Bangkok for shopping because there is insufficient variety and complete facilities in their own rural area.

The process of urbanisation in Thailand has been focused upon Bangkok, which is perceived as almost the only source and destination of modern life. Lifestyles of the Thai people in Bangkok these days differ from the rest of the country so as to marginalise its rural people into an insignificant minority⁹.

Consumer commodities are roughly classified into two markets: high and low, but also by style and utility according to whether they are perceived as urban or rural. For instance, music, fashion style, architecture, art and craft, shopping style, etc. can be used to exemplify this issue when discussing taste. Urban or rural Thai people can be roughly judged or distinguished by the differences in their levels of taste, lifestyles and outward appearance.

In summary, the consumption practices of Thai people, especially the new rich in Bangkok are tied in inextricably with highly fluid and heterogeneous channels of consumption, which are engendered by the wealthy economy. Newly available commodities are perceived as newer, better value, and modern, irrespective of the reality of their origin, which in some cases could be Western surplus. Every aspect of consumption, such as houses, cars, shopping places and so on, is treated, in a similar way to fashion clothing. Consequently, the abandonment and re-possession of commodities ensures a rapid turnover. In other words, materialism is inevitably a by-product of consumption as practised by Thai people.

8.1.4 Change of Image through the Object

As previously stated, consumption is not a by-product of capitalism but rather a symptom of it, inasmuch as it is a self-generating economy. "Capitalism powerfully generates an affluent impulse in individuals and society, driving them to possess things in order to find their position in their everyday life" (Beng-Huat, 2000: p. 4). This argument is reinforced by close analysis of the contemporary shopping syndrome in South-East Asia.

"The neutralised status of shopping has made plenitude seem normative, and this legitimization of possessive desire has displaced other more remote concerns

which appear in the history and politics of the mass turnover of goods, namely, a salient concern with resource consumption, environmental degradation, chronic inflation, differential standard of living, economic inequalities and poverty. The emotional currency circulating around shopping, fashionability and consumption installs in these cultural practices as ethics of desire which appears to promote the view that living well is a virtue. And this sensibility persists even when larger-scale economic circumstances move through the boom-and-bust cycle endemic to late capitalism."

(Finkelstein, 2000: p. 227)

It seems that consumption under the philosophical umbrella of capitalism promotes the idea of achieving a better living standard, and thereby "stimulates impulses" to consume. Once one possesses a complete set of basic or durable objects, one is forced by the "stimulated impulses" to have new versions of those objects which supersede or update or fulfil some social function related to a sense of progress or improvement. It can be inferred that there are two steps within the mechanism of consumption. The first step is to possess basic items in order to make life complete, which is a response to need. The second step begins when an "aspiration need" occurs and basic possessions cannot serve that secondary need, which is a matter of social esteem. This could be regarded as a state of desire and/or a specific personal psychological condition. It is in this context that these two steps of consumption have a relevance to the "three layers of identity" (see Chapter 7).

"The material and ideational dominance of fashion as a consumer force is important because it promulgates more than a propensity to consume and be receptive to marketing campaigns for new products. It is obvious that fashion is more than an economic activity which brings higher standards of living and new trends in consumption. The pursuit of the fashionable entails much more than the simple acquisition of goods."

(ibid.: p. 225)

"Goods are in this context neutral, their uses are social; they can be used as fences or bridges" (Douglas and Isherwood, 1979). Consumer culture can be seen as a signifying system through which a social order is communicated and reproduced by individuals.

"Each item in the constantly expanding array of goods and services which modern urban individuals and households have to consume routinely in order to reproduce their everyday life is surrounded by its own systems of production, distribution, marketing, procurement and, finally, consumption. Each of these systems is in turn constituted by its own multifaceted and segmental economies in an

increasingly globalised capitalism."

(Beng-Huat, 2000: p. 4)

The level of sophistication or evolution of the system in the South-East Asia is not quite the same in its details as Beng-Huat suggested in the preceding statement. Furthermore, there is as yet no consensus of opinion, which may in part be due to the short time period of expansion in what has come to be known as the tiger economy of the region. The question needs to be asked of what the impact has been upon the economic cycle (pattern) of the rapid industrialisation process, which has occurred and what its implications and influence are for or upon consumerism.

"I argue that the expansion of a consumer ethic instantiates identifiable patterns of sociality and public conduct irrespective of location in either the West or Asia. This appears to contrast with Robison and Goodman (1996: 3-4), in the first volume of this series on Asia's new rich, who emphasise the specific historical circumstances that characterise each developing capitalist society."

(Finkelstein, 2000: p. 225)

The social and political evolution and context of consumerism in South-East Asia (Thailand) is usually discussed as following the developed Western models and usually understood as Westernisation. It cannot be assumed, however, that a retrospective analysis will hold true for the future or be asserted as a given in respect of the Thai economy. The wealthy economy stimulates people to consume. Moreover, consumerism's idea that "living well is a virtue" is another catalytic concept. Consumption practices in Thailand are nevertheless inevitably heading towards consumerism and Westernisation at the moment.

"Every urban individual and household, whatever the lower income, was likely to consume a range of what might be called "discretionary" consumption goods that had become constitutive elements of their every day life. However, the roots of the culture of consumerism remained relatively shallow in the region, unlike the situation in the developed West or Japan."

(Beng-Huat, 2000: p. 8)

The question is, will this continue or is something else happening?

The cultural development of Thai society has aimed at Westernisation since the period of King Rama IV. The idea of Westernisation was imposed on Thai society in different ways. Firstly, it was imposed by decree and law during the period from the reign of King Rama

IV to the administrations of Prime Minister Phibun. The development of Thai society carried on in the direction of Westernisation even though the role and power of the state declined after Phibun's nation-building campaign finished. Although the state has withdrawn this policy, there are some other factors that have encouraged this direction of development. They are, firstly, the liberation of class when Thailand abolished the absolute monarchy. Secondly, the possibility and desire created by that liberation for the Thai lower class to move upward and change class. The major factor that facilitating this circumstance was the National Development Plan. All these plans paved the way for Thailand to become a NIC, and Westernisation resulted not only in the import of etiquette, but also of technology and finance.

The development towards an industrialised-based economy created some new classes, especially the new rich and the labouring class. The classification of class in Thai society is more complex when considering many criteria simultaneously. The possession of means of production is one aspect, whereas the accumulation of capital, education and culture are other features (see Section 8.1.3.1). In fact, although Thailand has changed from the Sakdina^{vi} system, this system still influences the classification of class. Thai culture is very strong in respect of seniority. When these factors get mixed up, we can see the most complex network of class. This complexity is probably the major reason preventing Thailand from freeing itself from the culture of corruption.

The crucial point here is the perception of development as Westernisation or modernisation. Thai people have confused these two ideas, and understand all the methods employed in social development to be modernisation. In fact, modernisation lies in self-motivation in creation, development, improvement and enhancement. The adoption of Western idea, on the other hand, without any consideration of their suitability to regional criteria, is best called Westernisation.

The social evolution of Thai society, as mentioned earlier, has been under the control of the Thai monarch, the state, and elite groups. The adaptation to Western ideas by those authorities to define and re-define the essence of Thai-ness could be called a historical palimpsest. Thai-ness in terms of tradition, etiquette, culture, and dressing, for instance, has been superficially overlaid by Western elements and ideas. Thai society is identified as archetypal presentation (Mulder, 1992). The borrowing skill of Thai people to enhance their civilised image in order to put it forward in political situations is the factor that chimes with the idea of modernism. When comparing the definitions of modernism and post-modernism^{vii}, however, Thai society has been post-modern rather than modern, as Esterik (2000) remarks.

"(Thais) ... creating images of themselves based on their own Orientalism, and representing themselves to others with consummates skill. Thus national identity was constituted internationally from free-floating signifiers from Thailand's past, but responsive to global pressures and opportunities."

(ibid.: p. 96)

Ironically, O'Connor (1997) stresses that the modern invention of the Thai elite was the Westernisation strategy to save the country from colonialism.

The recent popular Thai song "Khun Lamyai" exemplifies the consumption perception of beauty, image and its practice by Thai people. Suwatnawanitch (2002) criticises the hit song in an article titled "Khun Lamyai: a confused woman in the era of consumerism". The theme of the song is about a Thai woman upset about her image. She cannot get rid of her countryside image although she consumes many Western products such as a Crocodile bag, Levi's jeans, and imported fashions. She is also concerned about her physical body and has surgery to make her nose more prominent, and highlights her hair. The only problem for this woman is her name, "Lamyai", whose sound and meaning suggest a Thai girl from the countryside. She prefers male friends to call her some other Western name: Eve, May, Punch, Cherry or Vine. She asks these men to find out whether her value depends on her image or her heart.

This is the point of confusion: she needs others to see her heart, not just her superficial image. On the other hand, she tries to be a good-looking, urbanised girl dressed in Western fashions with no link to her heart at all.

This song reveals the perception of Western values that Thai people usually understand as "civilisation" and "modernisation" or "urbanisation". Lamyai uses Western fashion as a medium to signify her urban life. The way she denies her original name, "Lamyai", reflects the way Thai people usually abandon their original cultural roots and adopt the values of Western culture.

8.1.4.1 Fashion and Consumption Formation in Thailand

The hegemony of Western fashion impacts throughout the rest of the world and it has spread through Thai society as earlier mentioned in this chapter. Thai fashion has been dominated by the West; by the English in the beginning, then by the world fashion leaders at a later stage and until the present time. Thai fashions are currently led by Western fashion trendsetters.

Both Thai and European fashions before the twentieth century were located in the court society. Since capitalism was introduced to society, the possibility of changing status has been feasible. Intermediate classes emerged at a later stage as the rationale of capitalism is focused on the acquisition of status in socio-economic terms. In other words, capitalism generates a plenitude of desired statuses, which are ranked by socio-economic situation. Objects become a tool to be used to represent that socio-economic situation, hence represent status. In other words, the ability to consume or to possess objects becomes necessary in capitalist society.

"The middle-classes imbued the experience of modernity with the values of capitalism; thus, shopping became a way of life, solutions to problems could be thought of as purchasable, the art of living was equivalent to knowing where and what to consume. Accordingly, fashion as an aspect of modern consumerism is not limited to the economic sphere but can be seen to impinge upon the development of cultural practices and everyday habits."

(Finkelstein, 2000: p. 226)

As Finkelstein says "shopping became a way of life". Suppliers try to serve consumers' needs by creating shopping atmospheres. The strategy "solutions to desire can be purchased" has been used to stimulate sales. Regarding the fashion domain, aspirational image and identity are the major concern these days. Williams (1982: p. 34) stresses that "consuming is about aspiring to be something other than what we are". Fashion consumers seek new items in order to locate themselves in a tribe to secure a sense of belonging, thus, life can go on without emptiness. Meanwhile, suppliers try to create aspirational images and identities through the media in order to provide an aspirational site. It is a virtual site by means to which marketers devote a lot of effort and thought in order to stimulate fashion consumers. The desired ideal image and identity seem to be able to be attained by consuming.

"The ideal consumer as deduced from contemporary advertisements is not a "he" or a "she" but an "it" ... It is young but powerful ... The ideal consumer is not the ideal productive worker of an earlier epoch – a sexually repressed nobody, alienated from sensual pleasure, subjected to the turgid, life-denying disciplines of the working week and the nuclear family. Instead, the ideal consumer ... is a complete social and psychological mess. The ideal consumer as extrapolated from the barrage of contradictory interpellations from advertising billboards to magazine spreads to TV commercials is a bundle of conflicting drives, desires, fantasies, appetites ... The subject of advertising is not the rational sovereign

subject of Descartes ... It is Deleuze and Guattari's "body without organs" – the absolute decentered subject, the irresponsible, unanchored subject: the psychotic consumer, the schizophrenic consumer."

(Finkelstein, 2000: p. 238)

The schizophrenic consumer became a critical phenomenon in Thailand, particularly before the economic crisis in 1997. "Schizophrenic" needs to be defined in the way in which it is not in a clinical psychoanalysis way, rather in an ambiguous or contradictory characteristic of a certain group of consumers.

There are some differences between Western and Thai when considering schizophrenic consumers. Firstly, Thai economics in the 80s-90s was extremely prosperous, allowing a large population of the new rich to declare their status. In light of this Thai new rich consumers had more spending power and simultaneously were driven by their status force to show-off their ideal and new aspired class. Secondly, those pre-meaning commodities were produced to serve Westerners as they have been aligned Western concepts and were ready to assist consumers in sorting out their ambivalence. In contrast, Thai fashion consumers fail to relate styles, tastes and their real needs in a coherent way. They do not have a culture of self-expression, in other words, no self-subjectivity, a lack of true self-reflection. Instead Thais have relatively more receptive minds according to the literature cited at the beginning of this Chapter. The brands previously mentioned are not desired identities. They can be just a temporary image to satisfy power and order aspirations in material consumption. This poses two questions: Is this phenomenon due to a desire to acquire status, which overrules their true needs? Or is it a symptom of a need for freedom by demonstrating a detachment of the self from traditional cultural values? Finkelstein (2000) describes this as an "anomie world of high consumers".

There are two different stances in discussing this point in the Western fashion when comparing to Thailand. Fashion in the 80s, for instance, exercised through the theme "excessive" and "dress for success" styles (Steele, 1997) is on one hand. The pursuing of power of spending due to the prosperous economic or over-consumption is on the other hand. The first point can be explained by the principle of self-expression, where fashion is usually exercised by Westerners. However, the second point is not the significant evidence found in the West.

Anomie is defined by the Chambers Dictionary (1993) as "a condition of hopelessness caused or characterised by breakdown of rules of conduct and loss of belief and sense of purpose". In other words, it is a condition of the collapse of awareness of the connection

between self and cultural values. The results when consumers are perplexed in a virtual reality, is the illusionary power of "conduction", which is an inability to control the rules of conduct.

"It occurs when individuals are too free to remake themselves, when they are deregulated from society through a weakening of their ties to social groups. It signifies an indefinable discord, an absence of a sense of proportion, as when the ethical dimensions of social life are mystified. Anomie, like charivari, signals a world out of joint, a misalignment which is subsequently naturalized and then passes unnoticed."

(Finkelstein, 2000: p. 229)

In Finkelstein's literature (ibid.), Emile Durkheim is referred to as the first sociologist who proposed that an anomic environment was created by rampant consumerism. Paris was the first place to have such an environment, and many countries in the Far East replicated it at a later stage. Bangkok, it would appear, can be included in this category of society. It is a society, according to Durkheim (1952), of which social dysfunction is the most significant feature.

On the one hand, their purchasing power allows consumers to screen out the undesirable/unfulfilling product through trial and error. On the other hand, their propensity to follow marketing strategies causes an unhinging of this. Likewise, Hebdige (1993: p. 82) further explains that "the authority invested in fashion, the receptiveness with consumer items, makes the ideal consumer into a modern schizophrenic".

The critical problem of schizophrenia has emerged due to a number of concomitant situations. Firstly, there is the rampant competition of suppliers striving for market share. These suppliers are driven by the capitalist system, whereby one who stays steady can easily be eliminated from the competition, thus losing market share. Turbulent competition provides a basis for consumers to express their power. Secondly, modern information technology and mass media imbue consumers with the fantasy that a dream can become real with little effort. Plenty of aspiring image categories are created. Thirdly, the impulse of socialising force stimulates consumers to concurrently ascribe more value to items chosen by the fashion leader or superior. Finally, it is the nature of human beings to display power and order to superior and/or inferior others in order to categorise themselves within a desired tribe. The possession of fashion objects can, therefore, signify a moral order.

The schizophrenic reveals his or her symptoms through over-consuming. The unhinging

condition stimulates the subconscious and makes them susceptible to prominent marketing strategies. A bundle of conflicting desires is driven by over-abundance of choices. Unconscious schizophrenia makes consumers feel free from rigorous conditions, including a limited budget, true need, self-reflection, cultural value, etc.

"Although the desires which propel us to shop may appear psychological or atomistic in their expression, they are simultaneously properties of a specific moral order which has elevated the material over the abstract, the system over the subjective. Anomie is the result; it is a by-product of a particular moral order."

(Finkelstein, 2000: p. 231)

The anomie emerges in a materialist society where the material object can directly represent subjective desires. The aphorism "I shop therefore I am" coined by Kruger (1994) can perfectly demonstrate the dominance of the material over self-reflection. In fact, the self cannot be truly or entirely fulfilled by those materials in a long lasting manner. This is due to the social context, which changes continuously. In other words, the materials serve desires but not true needs and the materials are subsequently abandoned. This can be noticed in the marketplace where there are stable goods available for basic needs and fashionable goods for desired needs. Thus, the essence of material abandonment is the inability to fulfil and fix individuals' subjectivity with objects in the dynamic fashion frame.

The most recent economic crisis in Thailand and its surrounding region has caused a slow down in the frenzy of consumption, affording an opportunity to re-evaluate the direction of the economy and the required style and pattern of consumption. The formulation of economic policy is the privilege of the political class; however, consumers themselves will have a role to play in the process. As stated earlier, the consumer is receiving mixed messages inasmuch as guidance and or aspirational values come from differing vested interest groups, for example magazines, the elite, the royal family and government. This new situation could have many outcomes depending upon how you evaluate the characteristic of the Thai consumer, and not simply in terms of supply and demand, reflecting social aspiration, but also in the global context of how they wish to be perceived by the rest of the world.

8.1.4.2 Consuming and Exhibiting "Beauty"

"To understand Japanese traditions takes centuries...to enjoy their culture takes hours". That is an advertisement of an airline, seen in London in March 2001. Indeed, culture is

not something easily understood at first glance. Tourists can acquaint themselves with Thai culture from tourism advertising campaigns. Thailand likes to promote itself to tourists through Thai culture (Esterik, 2000). Thais proudly display their costumes and classical dances to foreigners by means of postcards, in souvenir shops and through performances in tourist locations. Unlike Indians or Malaysians, most Thais never feel any desire to wear national costume in daily life nowadays. They rarely see the Thai classical dances, but they like to show their guests how proud they are of what they think is Thai culture. The only aspect of Thai culture that remains entirely Thai is the national cuisine, although some Thai recipes have been modified to suit urban lifestyles, and also to compete with or provide variety alongside the influx of international fast food. However, in daily life Thais never prepare such beautifully carved [and time consuming] vegetables and fruit as are always shown in tourist brochures and at Thai food festivals around the world.

Thais like everything that is beautiful, especially in terms of physical appearance.

"The appreciation of grace and elegance, and the evaluation of beauty, is deeply entrenched in Thai culture."

(ibid.: p. 155)

Thais like beautiful women and are proud of their two Miss Universes. Beauty contests have become a major cultural event throughout the country and provide a shortcut for the winners to become media stars. Most of the movie stars, TV stars, fashion models and even singers in Thailand have successfully passed through beauty contests at some earlier stage of their career. Once they have won a crown, they have many offers to promote them from media agents. Most actresses in Thai TV drama are gorgeous, which is more than can be said for the British TV soap opera "Coronation Street", for instance, where the drama looks real as it encompasses a variety of ordinary-looking actors suitable to their roles. Many music albums of those media celebrities are really not so remarkable for the quality of the vocals and rely on marketing and aim merely to make as much money as possible. Most of media celebrities will have made at least one music album when his or her popularity was at its peak. Ordinary Thai people have no chance of joining the TV game shows, because these are prime advertising time for media celebrities to promote their new single or TV series.

The aftermath of the Vietnam War left a young generation of half-breed Thai-Western children, particularly Thai-American. The beauty ideal of a mixture of Thai and Western features has been accepted socially nation-wide, especially in the media business. In major beauty contests the winners have often been "imported" from either America or Europe and win because of their Western looks, language ability and Westernised

personalities. This generation dominates the media industry and provides the fashion icons nowadays. Surgery and beauty businesses proliferate, providing simulacrum looks of a prominent nose, whiter skin, double eyelid, etc.

What do Thai people actually consume?

Gender practices and beauty concerns can be embodied on both the individual and the national scale (ibid.). Thai women are exploited to enhance the image of events, organisations, businesses, and society. During the nationalism campaign under Prime Minister Phibun Songkhram (1938-44, 1948-57) women were promoted as the "flower of the nation" or as "mothers of the nation" (Esterik, 2000; Reynolds, 1991; Rutnin, 1983). In the latest Asian Games in Thailand, many beauty queens who had won major competitions, dressed in a variety of Thai costumes, were assembled to carry the title of each nation and lead the groups of athletes in the opening ceremony.

Thai people are very much concerned with having a civilised face and image. When they appear in public, they have been taught to behave and dress cleanly, tidily and properly, as suits the occasion. The Thai expression "Ka-la-te-sa" is subtle in meaning and means suitable to time and place. Mulder (1992) stresses the appreciation of beauty, that for Thai people things have to be beautiful before they can be regarded as property in order, yet this order also requires hard work and dependability, which is why it is women who are at the heart of Thai life. Whether or not they are ready for a situation, they have to be ready. The Thai expression for this is, "Coriander on top of the food". This means something is decorated in a meaningless and useless way in order to present it as being well prepared.

The appreciation of aesthetic appearance is very embedded, underpinning the construction of what modern civilisation is in Thailand. Esterik (2000) comments that a casual attitude to appearance would be anathema to Thai sensibilities. Thai sensibilities were dominated by the desire to be civilised citizens. Thai leaders perceived that the adapting and adopting of the superior or higher culture of Western people was a short cut to being cultured and also a good way to avoid Western colonisation. Meanwhile, Thai people were forced by laws and regulations and also by social pressures, to adopt and pursue the political movements. Thai people have an embedded culture of following the leader. As a result, self-confident and progressive thought has been hidden under the control of adopted norms and culture.

8.1.5 Analysis: Characteristics of Thai Identity

After carefully investigating the macro- and micro-subjective realms, the above narrative of the self-development of Thai society reveals many facets, characteristics, and social patterns of Thai people, particularly of the middle-class. There can be seen the impact of political, economic and religious factors affecting Thai society. We can discuss and summarise some of the major features of Thai identity as follows.

8.1.5.1 Social Conditioning

In common with many other aspects of modern capitalist societies, the hegemonic phenomenon of fashion diffusion can rarely occur on its own; instead it appears along with the cult of consumption. Thailand is no exception to this rule and, therefore, its brand of consumerism is expressed by means of fashion phenomena. During the tremendous economic boom in Thailand, a new urban middle-class emerged and became a catalyst for consumerism via the economic power of spending disposable income. Fashion was promoted by the over-consumption of that healthiest of socio-economic classes. Fashion in Thailand can, accordingly, be observed mainly through the consumption phenomenon of the middle-class.

Thailand gradually became a full-blown capitalist society after the establishment of the National Economic Development Plan in 1961 suggested by the World Bank (Dixon, 1999). Walking in the shadow of the World Bank's policy direction seems to have been a safe option and one, which met the aspiration to become an economically successful country. The World Bank is sometimes thought of as a new colonial power. The National Economic Development Plan was guided by the World Bank to lead Thailand into a new era of industrialisation. Whether intentionally or not, the World Bank seems to have guided its new colony (Thailand) into a developing economy situation, which impacted upon or induced social changes. In terms of social policy, the direction of Thai cultural evolution and social change neglected to assist a smooth transition to greater prosperity for a broader class of people. On the one hand, the economy boomed and achieved the highest growth rate in the world during the 1980s. On the other hand, some sectors of Thai society exploded in protest, inducing the beginning of what could have become a chaotic, dysfunctional society in terms of civil disobedience and economic collapse. Hence, in 1972 the word "social" was added to the title of the National Plan, which reflected the concerns of demonstrators and indicated an understanding of the necessity for governmental intervention in the process of capitalism to protect the interests and cohesiveness of the culture (ibid.).

There were many layers of new classes emerging in the society: not only the new rich, but also an industrial labour class (Bello, et al., 1998). People have striven energetically to move upwards through the class system. The fashion and consumption environments were accordingly stimulated by the essence of capitalism, which is "status".

Thai society is becoming much more chaotic and lacking in cohesion as the individual identifies class and status as synonymous with capital accumulation and aspirant success. Education, together with other essential elements of culture and identity, was given over to Western countries who inculcated values and knowledge alien to the tradition of Thai culture. For instance, an individual who graduated with a Western educational qualification was classified as higher in the social order than another individual with the same degree gained in Thailand. Likewise, one who is able to consume Western fashion is likely to be more fashionable.

According to 8.1.3.1, regarding the accumulation of three types of capital, the new middle-class strives towards cultural accumulation by consuming commodities usually targeted at the higher class. The consumption of ready-made high taste can act in favour of the acquisition of cultural capital. Chan (2000) explains how taste can be significantly contributed to social reproduction via the consumption of higher taste commodities.

"First, possession of certain consumption tastes enables entry into occupational fields where taste is recognised as a form of cultural capital and is utilised for work-life mobility. Second, taste can be used as criteria against which entry into high-status social groups is evaluated. And third, by investing in the cultivation of taste in one's offspring, cultural capital can be instilled and incorporated into the habitus."

(ibid.: p. 117)

Because of the rampant striving to move towards the upper class, Thai people easily abandon their background or connection to the past. The situation whereby the connection between self, background or upbringing, traditional value system and other cultural mores are weak or are completely severed by the class transition process, is a symptom of a socially dysfunctional condition.

8.1.5.2 Receptiveness or Passivity

As previously discussed, Thai society has been constructed and reconstructed by the idea of borrowing models from others. The country's aim of reaching the rank of civilisation in a

short space of time, led to short cut developments being employed. Ready made civilised models have been mapped into the country without any realisation of the differences in background and context between the West and the East. The two nationalism campaigns, for instance, were the most difficult times for Thais to adopt and adapt themselves to new norms and cultures. Those sudden changes occurred in short periods especially in the urban area, forcing people to adopt them either by law or elite propaganda. Those major revolutions along with many minor social changes repeatedly shaped Thai society towards receptiveness. This characteristic receptiveness became endemic and brought passivity to the process of social change. This raises further issues for debate, focused on what the differences are between "Westernisation" and "modernisation".

The receptiveness circumstance started when King Rama IV was forced by Queen Victoria's envoy to sign the Bowring Treaty. Since then Thailand has had to trade with Western countries. Thais have, for instance, had to produce crops not only for domestic consumption but also for export (Hoskin, 1986; Malloch, 1852).

"As a non-colonised but "informally colonised" nation, Thailand benefited from not having to fight old enemies who were now under colonial rule. As Anderson says, their old enemies were too weak to fight and their new enemies, too strong (Anderson 1977: p. 21). This allowed Thailand to be more selective and open to Western and European influence than her colonised neighbours whose exposure to the West was structured and controlled through colonial institutions."

(Esterik, 2000: p. 96)

The receptiveness reached its mature level in the 1960s when Thailand became fully incorporated into the world economy. The growth of the manufacturing sector during the 1960s and 1970s was the period when many established technologies and much know-how were imported into Thailand (Dixon, 1999). The manufacturing sector has largely achieved its undoubted success because the continuous process of adopting Western technologies and know-how has become routine. Thai manufacturers rely on these ready-to-use intellectual packages, disregarding the necessity of modernising the industry on their own. The result of constant borrowing is a lack of intellectual properties and a lack of ability to achieve a form of independent economic and industrial progress based upon indigenous initiative.

The country has been being developed into an almost industrialised economy under the guidelines of the capital creditor, i.e., the World Bank. The transmission of knowledge from outsiders to Thailand has been in the form of packages. Technology for developing countries is never, however, transmitted in a single package, so Thailand has to import it

continuously. Capitalism keeps Thailand stimulated in order to exploit the country continuously, especially when labour is cheap and resources not yet exhausted. Shortcuts in learning and adaptation by both the manufacturing sector and the social infrastructures have been a necessity. Lessons learnt in the industrial sector have taught people shortcuts to success in other aspects of life: education, politics and the economy have followed in the footsteps of the West, moulding Thai society into a so-called "receptivity".

This issue of receptivity dominates the potential and opportunities in creativity. This issue will be discussed at a later stage.

In summary, social dysfunction occurs readily when a society is weak. Thai society is weak in the sense of lacking the ability to protect itself. It lacks curiosity and analysis and support for critical dissent. The propensity to pursue indiscriminately whatever is marketed leads to detachment from or an impersonal short-term relationship with what has been purchased. The purchasing of objects or commodities become a means to an end rather than an end in itself. Western commodities are perceived as better than domestic made ones from the point of view of their signification of change of status. When people are faced with an unhinging situation created by the influx of Western commodities, their decisions radically conform to the fashion leader, whoever that is. The receptive mind inspires them to follow onwards and upwards.

8.1.5.3 Palimpsest

Another social phenomenon, which seems to have proliferated in Thai society is the perception that Thai cultures and rituals have little value and are should increasingly be abandoned, only to be rewritten and reformed, resulting, in short, in a "palimpsest society".

"The term palimpsest refers to parchment or slate from which old writing has been erased to make room for new writing. The act of writing over an earlier draft version of something that has been wiped out suggests that the original version has disappeared. But palimpsests are never completely erased."

(Esterik, 2000: p. 41)

As previously stated, the history of Thai culture, especially the Thai identity, has been wiped out many times. First, Kings Rama IV and V introduced European apparels to replace traditional Thai costume and military uniform. Thai people in those days had to dress in a Thai version of Victorian style. Secondly, this evolved into an Edwardian style when King Rama VI launched his nation-building campaign utilising elite propaganda.

Until that period, only urban Thais had worn Western fashions. Thirdly, traditional Thai dresses were swept away throughout the country by nationalism laws promulgated by Prime Minister Phibun Songkhram (see Appendix V and VI).

Thais have had to adopt, adapt and then completely change their appearance into the Western style. It can be argued that this process of acceptance, adaptation and transformation was as general as colonisation would have been: that Thailand as a nation and Thais as citizens have been unofficially colonised. The development of the Thai nation and its identity has been dominated by "Westernisation".

The idea of progress based on imitation is central to the nature of Westernisation. Hurh (1968: p. 448) explains a social process via the idea of a sociologist (Tarde) that "society is imitation and imitation is a kind of somnambulism". Somnambulism implies that imitation is a process conducted in a semi-controllable situation. Imitation itself refers to being passive rather than active, so that it is a process performed by an inferior to conform to a superior's model. However, according to Cuvillier (1954: p.119), the selection of a stereotype can be active and deliberate. Hurh sums up his definition of imitation as follows:

"Imitation is a process of learning, and yet we cannot equate imitation simply with "same behaviour" due to similar socio-cultural facilitation or the "same response" to identical conditioning."

(Hurh, 1968: p. 449)

The two identical conditions between the model's act and that of the imitator cannot actually exist simultaneously. There is, therefore, always some gap in between before the imitative action is enacted.

"The imitator can transform his actions so that they become similar to those evolved by his model, yet this transformation can never be total, but only segmental. ... However, in order to become identical with the model, the imitator would have to possess identical dispositional properties or the same life history and this is impossible in reality."

(ibid.: p. 452)

The above explanation is the crucial essence of the reason why one has to perpetually carry on imitating the model. This is due to the fact that the inferior lags behind the superior's model, in terms of property or life history. The two will never be identical at the same time. This mechanism can be used to explain fashion diffusion, where the followers

strive to be identical with their ideal models, innovators or fashion leaders, i.e. media celebrities. On the other hand, on many occasions those fashion leaders are stimulated by the fashion suppliers to occupy new looks. Fashion innovators, fashion leaders, and fashion followers are all involved in the imitation process. They have to run after the new looks. Imitation is, therefore, a kind of catalyst of material abandonment.

The history of Thai nation-building declares its Westernisation through imitation. The mechanism of imitation implemented by King Rama VI was vertical diffusion from the court to the urban Thais and to commoners, while that managed by Phibun was horizontal diffusion from the state throughout the nation.

"At the turn of the century, members of royalty and the Thai elite travelled to Europe as students of civilisation, and took from the experience not a critique of how they were represented by the Europeans, but a blueprint for how to represent themselves to others."

(Esterik, 2000: p. 118)

The blueprints of Western etiquette were repeatedly imposed on to society without concern for the differences between the model's and the local context. The lack of Western cultural context caused shock to the society, but because of the critical situation from the colonial threat and because of the imposition by law, Thai society had no choice but to adopt these ideas. The mapping of those superior models on to Thai society could not make them result in their being identical, as discussed above. On the contrary, the result was social dysfunction.

The perception of Western culture, technology, knowledge, etc. as invaluable has become firmly embedded. Western commodities are likely to be adopted easily. Thais radically abandon the past and readily accept something new to replace it. This is due to their living with superficiality or cultural emptiness, which the Western cultures cannot fully replace.

"Thais deal with the threatened disappearance of the so-called authentic Thai past by selecting pieces for retention, recollection, and adding them on the palimpsest that is Thai culture."

(ibid.: p. 109)

The palimpsest situation is ongoing, even as Thais look back at what is disappearing. As a result, those parts of the past culture, which are retrieved are put together like a jigsaw in which the whole incoherent picture of the past fails to add up to an identity for the present day. They are living with a conflict of identity in the sense that the incoherent past identity

is a proud one but no longer appropriate to everyday life, while the Westernised identity is more suitable to the modern urbanised lifestyle but cannot satisfy their need for self-reflection. The palimpsest syndrome is another major factor of the social dysfunction and cultural dislocation. Sequentially, it is a dimension of the characteristics of Thai society generated by the prior factor of receptivity.

8.1.5.4 Subjectivity

Subjectivity seems to be the ultimate individual and social destination in the quest for modernity. In a capitalist society, people establish their subjectivity through consumption. Abundant choices from various styles of commodities are, therefore, provided. This is the basic reason why there are heterogeneous ranges of fashion commodities in the fashion world in which the variance in style is manipulated to serve different but stereotypical identities.

In Western society there are many minor identities that are not served by the commercial sector. Westerners are, however, obsessed by the sense of individuality (Hoggart and Johnson, 1987).

"A self-made man, another European concept, is an arrogant, worldly and individualistic phrase. It has links back to the spirit of Protestantism, and implies that the individual must make his own way, both in the world and with God."

(ibid.: p. 84)

When religious and civil laws are not compatible, ambiguity emerges. Westerners respond to the ambiguous situation by directly relying on their subjectivity. Their character is usually independent, confident, and expressive. Thai society, in contrast, is constituted from an all-embracing tripartite coalition of monarch, religion and nation manifested, and some say supplanted, by a kinship of consumption and capital acquisition. The community as a whole is the main concern, and the individual is always absent or subject to the direction of the herd. Hoggart and Johnson (*ibid.*) argue of the characteristics of Oriental people:

"It is received rather than considered, argued about, analysed, thought through. It implies a weak sense of individual responsibility or of rights, a strong sense of communal action and obligation."

(ibid.: p. 87)

This characteristic is further reinforced by the dominance of Buddhism in the formative years of the education of Thai people.

"Buddhism is important to Thai identity because it is part of the logic of everyday life, not only because its texts and rituals structure gender hierarchies. Ideological orientations toward non-self and impermanence discourage essentialism ..."

(Esterik, 2000: p. 6)

Indeed non-self and impermanence are the essence of Buddhism, and of Buddhist Thais. Thai people are more receptive, conform and believe in society. These characteristics lead to an unbalancing of the socialising impulse and differentiating impulse. This situation is argued by Simmel (1971) as typical of a primitive society. Fashion has hardly emerged in Thai society, where the socialising force is greater than the differentiating force.

"Thus Simmel argues that, in societies where one of these forces is absent, there is no fashion. Societies in which the "socialising impulse" is more powerfully developed than the "differentiating impulse", what Simmel calls "Primitive societies", will have little if any fashion."

(Bernard, 1996: p. 11)

In summary, Thai subjectivity is characterised by a lack of objectivity in the make-up of individuals, which is in the main because of the three major socialising forces (tripartite coalition) which operate within the culture itself.

8.1.5.5 Cultural Discontinuity

Fashion as a concept of living, which is socially identified, is defined accumulatively throughout this thesis. In relation to this Chapter, fashion emerges as part of everyday needs of a number of members of society. Fashion can be said to emerge along with the evolution of the social context. This indicates that fashion changes when social context changes. In turn its entity must carry some cultural value of the social change context in the way in which the observer or participant has some sense of cultural continuity running throughout the orderly continuous fashion scene.

"In practice, as part of our everyday repertoire, we readily map identity onto appearance in a promiscuous fashion, giving a high premium to exteriority, the body surface and the look. The dominant assumption is that dress is thick with anthropologically significant meanings. To choose a particular garment, hairstyle

or make-up is simultaneously to express a cultural viewpoint. It is as if clothes represent complex ideas; as if there were discernible connections between the visibility of one's appearance and the invisibility of one's political and social values."

(Polhemus, 1994: p. 15)

When considering the recent history of fashion in Thailand, much of which has diffused from the Western fashion system, it is important to note that since it was not specifically designed for Thai consumption, it carried only Western cultural values. None of the previously imported fashions carried any Thai cultural reference or reflected any Thai cultural values or any of the social context change necessary to enable cross-cultural interaction and/or the evolution of a regional style. The latter will be discussed later in this thesis. However, Finkelstein (2000) raises a critical question.

"This may seem a contradiction at those recent sites of fashionability where the new rich of Asia are ostensibly consuming foreign commodities from the West, which do not appear to carry much cultural continuity. Yet the dynamic of fashion itself is self-maintenance. The continuity it is supporting is its own. And the ease with which material goods are accumulated encodes the ready promise that desires can be gratified with each discerning purchase. By being fashionable, by supporting the fashion system, we are also meeting our own needs."

(ibid.: p. 238)

Thai people in the recent period of economic boom were mad with the frenzy of shopping, consuming and spending on Western commodities to exercise and display their new-found economic power.

"... once manufactured and imported goods become abundant, which is the case for the newly industrialised societies throughout Asia, any direct correspondence between social identity and appearance becomes increasingly weaker.

(Mckendrick, et al., 1982, quoted in Finkelstein, 2000: p. 237)

Being fashionable is one discernible aspect, while adopting Western values perceived as superior is another vital aspect or key phenomenon, which must be considered separately. A significant symptom of the madness of shopping frenzy is the condition of subjectivity, which is a state detached from the truth of need. It is a situation where self-identity is lost when consumers are aroused by marketing strategy, bundles of commodities and bundles of illusionary images.

The point when the relationship between self and society is weakened is the point where consumers become passive towards marketing strategy and their fantasy aspiration towards that strategy is maximised. To be upper-class is such a general aspiration, and is distinct from the desire to become a member of civilised Western society. As discussed earlier, this is due to Western values having been defined by many Thai generations as superior to any other values in class classification.

Material wealth generates abundance of commodities, which in turn generates abundance of meaning; various suggestions of precise gestures, and tremendous choices of desire achievement, create situations whereby the heterogeneous ranges on offer simultaneously create social ambiguity.



Figure 8.1.5A: The Popularity of the Kipling Bag in Thailand

This social ambiguity, which originated from the oversupply of Western commodities, is very much different from the ambiguity in the macro level of the conceptual model in this thesis described earlier (see Chapter 5). The former ambiguity contains no local cultural value, but purely status arousing impulses. It emerges from a conflict of too much choice and offered aspirational potential. On the other hand, the latter ambiguity emerges from social issues, beginning with the stage of nothingness in terms of commercial representation. This situation of social ambiguity is not, therefore, merely about status aspiration but about regional problems and interests. At a later stage people seek media to express their "gestures", as opposed to identity or opinion and solution, throughout social interaction. Commercial commodities, then, emerge as nuance reflection in relation to social ambiguity.



Figure 8.1.5B: Thai shopping web Sites: Kipling and Louis vuitton

Fashion, which responds to the latter ambiguity, seems to contribute to the formation of self-subjectivity (illusory) and social identity at the same time as reflecting cultural movement. Fashion of the former situation by contrast seems to carry nothing except some global issue, which only a small number of objective Thai people/consumers are aware of. Meanings contained within pre-existing and available Western designer products are inevitably ignored by Thai consumers. Most consumers don't even understand the simple significance of the pre-signified detail. An obvious example is the

nation-wide popularity of Kipling, a Belgium brand of nylon rucksack and bag, which in terms of its adoption is found across all age groups and genders and has become a must have. This item was originally designed for the adolescent and displays a representation of a monkey. Figure 8.1.5A shows the popularity of Kipling that diffuses to the lower market level as well as spreading throughout all age range consumers.

Likewise, the Louis Vuitton handbag is another extreme phenomenon of snobbery and paradoxical devaluation of a commodity, which became available *en masse* but which in its original manifestation was supposed to be exclusive with limited availability. The Louis Vuitton shop in Paris, for example, does not allow Thai customers to purchase more than two items at a time. In some cases, passports need to be shown with a valid French visa. This is to protect customers in Thailand from exploitation by Thais who bring the products back to Thailand for re-sale, and also to retain its status as a rare product within the Thai market. It has been the experience of many when shopping in exclusive high class Western stores that being well dressed and groomed and possessing the right credit card will secure the purchase of any amount of goods, while less groomed individuals are prevented from making similar multiple purchases.

These desired goods could be purchased either in a specific market stall or in the Thai web site. Figure 8.1.5B shows some samples of Thai shopping web site that provide new and second hand commodities of Kipling and Louis Vuitton.

A jet-set millionaire Thai lady revealed her hobby in a recent issue of a Thai fashion magazine: she has an almost complete collection of Louis Vuitton products. Mass availability and/or conspicuous consumption undermines exclusivity and debunks snobbery. However, this has to be a conscious act. If it is not, it becomes something else. If accompanied by geographical or cultural displacement the result could be "kitsch" or bricolage. In either case, the original is in some way diminished.

"European items were easily adopted as markers of status by royalty, elite and increasingly middle-class urban and rural households. But luxury objects from exclusive stores are limited almost as soon as they become symbolic markers of elite status. Instant antiques and fake Rolex watches are prized by tourists who willingly butt into this recycling of status symbols."

(Esterik, 2000: p. 124)

Figure 8.1.5C shows a sign in the Thai and Japanese languages at a duty-free shop in Paris. They read "special section for Thai customers on the 2nd floor", and presumably "Japanese section on the 3rd floor". It is good evidence to support the above discussion of

the mad shopping frenzy, not only in their own country but also in some major shopping capitals.

In the light of the previous discussion, we should ask the question whether there is any Thai cultural value or meaning in such products, apart from an aspiration to possess a certain Western image.

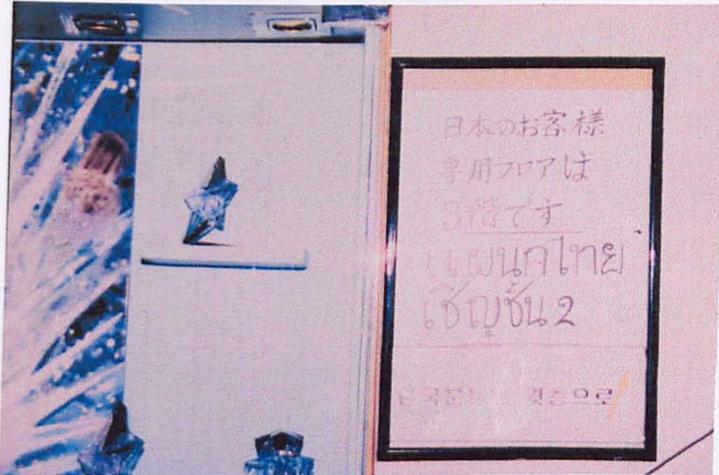


Figure 8.1.5C: Shopping Sign "Special Section for Thai Customers on the 2nd Floor" in the Thai Language Found in a Shop in Paris

The answer is probably negative. Thai people may be less concerned about the in-depth value of a product than about its use as a transition object for social repositioning. The only ultimate aim in Thai urban life is to exercise power, declare ability in consumption and move status. A façade of identity is accordingly built, a second skin is worn, a shell is decorated. The fashion function is truly deception, as quickly discarded as it is adopted once it has served its purpose. On the other hand, it may be argued that the new rich, particularly Thai people, still eat Thai food, watch Thai soap operas, speak the Thai language, place their family at the centre of their social and economic relationships, etc. and therefore maintain and continue their own traditions and identity irrespective of the Western fashion consumption process. Language, along with religion, law and ritual, were identified by Hegel (Mure, 1965.) as the rudiments of or defining principles of culture. More to the point, fashion as a carrier of culture is only significant if it emanates from an indigenous or common culture. With regard to this aspect, the following observation on the whole of South-East Asia has a resonance when studying Thai culture.

"Most of their people are dressed in Western suits; many of them speak English; a good portion of them travel, study and do business abroad. In their outward appearance these East Asian nouveaux riches are Westernised. Yet behind this

facade the people of these countries pursue a way of life that remains essentially Oriental."

(Tai, 1989: p. 1-2)

In some cases, although the houses they build are Californian or European in style and the furniture and interior decoration may be, say Louise XIV or Scandinavian contemporary, the way of living and exercise of living space remain in Thai style. Thai people feel comfortable sitting on the floor, on the mat, and that expensive furniture is for receiving guests. Display cupboards in the living room are filled in with luxurious Western objects, such as crystal models and glasses, limited edition dinner-sets, and designer ceramics as if they are displays of the house owner's taste, whereas in reality they are merely a facade.

Thai people are superficially Western but essentially Oriental. Pinches (1999: p.30) translates the above quotation as "the new rich of Asia have achieved all that Western modernity has to offer, but more than that, they have done so while maintaining their own cultural distinctiveness". The new rich are described by Pinches as the "West's Oriental Other".

Thai society does not lack cultural continuity. The culture is evolving behind the scenes. It is not what those foreign visitors initially notice. "Amazing Thailand", a Thailand tourist campaign in 1999-2000, is an example of façade aesthetic that sells to visitors as though "beauty" is the national taste prerogative.

"Thailand encourages an essentialism of appearances or surfaces. These surfaces are gendered, and easily materialized and transformed through display, presentations, and everyday practices focused on women as visual icons. Gendered practices such as beauty contests and state rituals fetishize national images, which serve both to exoticize and reify the essence of Thainess, enhancing the country's international reputation and tourist appeal. That is why the surface is so effective, the essence quickly grasped; the real is hidden and unchallenged. The surface is taken for the real. In the absence of critical examination of the discourses constructing these gendered surfaces, we all feel we know the real "Amazing Thailand"."

(Esterik, 2000: p. 4)

Indeed, Thai people are concerned only with the "façade" or the outward appearance that is directly linked to status and class. With regard to fashion and clothing, Thai people do not use fashionable clothes to signify anything other than class status. In other words,

Western fashion in Thailand does not respond to cultural evolution or reflect the changes within the Thai social context. We cannot find any major significant social value and cultural form represented in fashion. We might, however, find some trace of Thai culture in the way they use fashion, the gesture when wearing it and the expression through its design, which seems to be detached from the pre-signified design and the original purposes. Western fashion serves Thai consumers in another dimension of use. Probably, the pre-signified designs are re-signified by the Thai consumer façade construction, which is a transient means to an end.

Although Western fashion in Thailand does not respond to cultural evolution or reflect the changes within the Thai social context, it can be assumed that the Western cultural context is part of the Thai social and cultural entity. The level of Western culture found in the environment of the younger generation should be expected to be greater than for their ancestors simply because of the era of globalisation. Due to the fact that Thai society is in a period of transition influenced by Westernisation, it can be assumed that there is a mixture of both local and global contexts in the evolving identity. Therefore, cultural change is not coming to an end, but rather it is continuing into a new entity that is neither original Thai nor exactly Western. It is a hybrid of globalisation.

This account leads to the further issue of what is the future direction of Thai social change. The process of social change in Thailand in the pursuit of Westernisation brings some anxiety and tension to the notion of the self and the question of self-identity. This situation is named by Giddens (1991) as ontological security, which combines three main processes: globalisation, de-traditionalisation and re-traditionalisation.

"He sees the effects of globalisation as de-traditionalisation and re-traditionalisation: processes whereby local customs and traditions are being attacked and reconstituted in different forms. The process of reconstituting new values and traditions is only emerging, it is therefore bound to be experimental and uncertain."

(quoted in Giddens, 1991)

Indeed, Thailand has gone through all three processes of "ontological security". Thais continue their experimentation, resulting in the emergence of a new hybrid between global and regional context.

8.2 Scenario of the Objective Realm

This is the second main part of this Chapter, which is investigating the development of the Thai fashion industry. The investigation is again approached through a narrative of discursive social relations and the response from the industrial sector. The sub-sections are divided into three stages: pre-industrialised, industrialised, and the present era, which duplicates the pattern of argument and sequence established in the first part of this Chapter.

8.2.1 Pre-Industrialised Era

The Thai economy can be defined as having been an exchange economy long before the Bowring Treaty of 1855. One of the important results of the treaties signed with England, France and other European powers, was a rapid expansion of international trade. From the late nineteenth century there was a sharp increase in the production of agricultural products, including raw cotton and cotton goods (Malloch, 1852). In the beginning of the Ratanakosin dynasty, Thai royalty and elite individuals preferred to order woven textiles from India, which could be specially made and designed for particular use in the palace. The sophisticated woven and sometimes print designs were far different from the textiles found in rural Thailand. It is important to remind ourselves that up until this period, the system of hierarchy from King to peasants followed the model of Mogul India. Likewise, the majority of cultural attitudes, values and rituals, including those related to food and costume, were imported through the Buddhist faith.

After signing the treaties referred to, Kings Rama IV and V were the innovator adopters of Western style dress for special occasions, i.e. meeting with Western diplomats. The need to import Western textiles, costumes and accessories grew rapidly. In that period we can be find from historical records that female Thai royalty and the elite wore a mixture of the Thai Chongkraben and Victorian blouses made with lace (see Appendix V and VI). When England turned to what is now termed the Edwardian style of dress, this coincided with a new monarch in Thailand, King Rama VI. King Rama VII like his predecessor was determined to follow prevailing Western styles. Appendix VI shows the mixed style incorporation of Edwardian blouse and Thai skirt-like Pa-sin.

In the provinces it was traditional for rural Thai women to learn to weave from their mothers or female relatives (Patana, 1993). The weaving techniques were gradually absorbed from early childhood because the weaving processes usually took place at home and around the village. Thai people in the rural area at that time were keen to produce cloth for household use but did not know how to make garments. This is due to

the fact that the earlier Thai traditional costume was made from a single piece of flat cloth, which was worn by wrapping it around the lower part of the body for both men and women. Women sometimes used a second piece of cloth to cover the top part of their body.

When Western fashion was adopted, it is generally assumed that palace servants firstly learnt how to cut and sew garments from European missionary instructors. The increasing demand for Western dress created a new role for Thai women, especially housewives, who had to develop these new dressmaking skills.

8.2.2 Industrialised Era

The investigation in this section is split between the micro- and the macro- levels.

8.2.2.1 Micro Level

During World War II, with foreign imported cloth no longer available, the "civilised dress campaign"¹⁴ of Prime Minister Phibun Songkhram continued, now urging Thai women to dress well by using the local hand-made cloth to make Western-style costumes (Patana, 1993).

After World War II, the "civilised dress campaign" achieved its objectives by enshrining in law the requirement of adopting Western dress. As a result of the consequent increased demand for Western fashion, factory-made cloth and clothing were imported once again in large volumes. Patana (1993) points out that because the transportation was better and the price of goods lower, factory-made cloth spread throughout the country.

"Provincial people did not want to spend time weaving for their families as they had in the past. The villagers accordingly mostly bought cloth from the market for their daily clothes. This situation was repeated in village after village, to the extent that in some villages hand-made textile production disappeared completely and girls no longer learned the weaving techniques."

(ibid.: p. 16)

The former situation, which had prevailed for centuries, was transformed during this period from Eastern dominance to Western dominance in preferences for most things. Whereas in the former period the majority of cultural attitudes, values and rituals, including those relating to food and costume, were imported through the Buddhist faith. This new period

had cultural attitudes and values derived from the West, but strangely maintained a significant undercurrent of Eastern values well disguised.

8.2.2.2 Macro Level

The 1930s are considered the initial stage of the modern textile industry in Thailand, when the ministry of Defence imported German spinning machines in order to produce yarn for the military's use (Unger, 1998). Many of the early Thai industrialists got their start in business as importers and distributors. They later set up joint venture factories with foreign businesses, mostly Japanese, partners when the state protected the local market with higher tariffs and quotas.

The successful exporting of textiles and garments in the second stage, during the 1960s, was contingent upon several conditions, including macro-economic and state policy as stated by Unger (ibid.).

"A successful textile industry can emerge in an institutional environment like Thailand's with good macro-economic conditions, a rich array of trade institutions to finance operations and spread risks, and entrepreneurship."

(ibid.: p. 110-111)

The industry's decentralised structure and independence from the state was the other major factor. The government paid more attention to heavy industry rather than to small-scale industries like textiles and garments. The low levels of social capital^{*}, and the low level of collaboration between textile and garment firms and the state, enhanced the decentralised condition. The industry was fairly free and independent from state control. These factors as well as low capital in investment, standard technology needs, labour intensiveness and potentially huge export markets were conditions favourable to the expansion of the industry (ibid.).

Thailand embarked on its third national development plan from 1971-76, which emphasised the development of an export-oriented sector. In 1972 the industrial promotion scheme was revised to give support to exports where joint ventures with foreign investors were seen as an important part of the overall picture (Dixon, 1999; Unger, 1998). Japanese investment has played a key role in the textile industry's development, particularly since 1960s. This had some ramifications for textile mills in Thailand.

"The rapid expansion of the textile sector was similarly accompanied by the

emergence of large corporations, notably Sukree and Saha-Union. These both developed broad interests in the textile sector closely linked to (principally) foreign capital. These developments were the most prominent part of the general increase in the size of manufacturing concerns."

(Dixon, 1999: p. 102-103)

In the 1970s a number of garment factories started to export. Many know-how technologies and much technical expertise came from neighbouring countries such as Japan, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. Most of the garment manufacturers were Sino-Thai family businesses. The techniques and management were developed locally and matched the requirements of the small family enterprise. In the early stages the Thai government did not pay much attention to the shortcomings of such a system of management, until import/export taxing procedures highlighted them. Little was done to improve the businesses in the beginning until the garment industry reached the first rank of highest export value in the mid-1980s. State policy lagged behind the self-development of the textile and garment industry. The success of the industry can be credited to the macro-economic environment rather than state policy or promotion.

"A lack of clear goals, reliable data, or an overall policy framework, however, ensured that in Thailand regulatory decisions were more or less arbitrary and driven at times by rent-seeking objectives. While the Thai state could solicit information and advice from textile associations, conflicts of interest within the latter as well as between them made such consultation problematic."

(Unger, 1998: p. 124-125)

There is considerable evidence of saturation of domestic markets and over-capacity during the early 1980s (Dixon, 1999).

"The acceleration of the rate of growth of exports appears to have taken place with little increase in domestic investment. ... There is indeed considerable evidence of saturation of domestic markets and over-capacity in Thai manufacturing during the early 1980s. For example, in 1984 the Thai Textile Association reported that there was serious over-capacity in the industry which neither the government nor the trade association were capable of reducing."

(ibid.: p. 123)

Dixon further explains that it was this excess capacity that was utilised by a dynamic export-marketing sector in the initial stage of the boom. Many small companies accordingly reoriented their activities towards the export market.

"It is apparent that some textile producers were beginning to become more export oriented during the early 1980s despite the less than conducive policy environment. ... The export-oriented sector was from the early 1970s the most rapidly growing manufacturing activity. However, because of the low base from which it started it was not until the early 1980s that the export sector began substantially to increase its share of manufacturing output."

(ibid.: p. 123)

Figure 8.2.2 shows the dramatic figures of the successful period of the garment industry during the 1980s to the middle of the 1990s. Over the 1980s exports expanded elevenfold, with an average of well over 20 percent a year between 1988 and 1991 (Unger, 1998). The Thai textile industry ranked twenty-first globally in terms of exports in the early 1990s. It was Asia's third leading exporter of garments (after China and South Korea), with over \$4 billion in 1994.

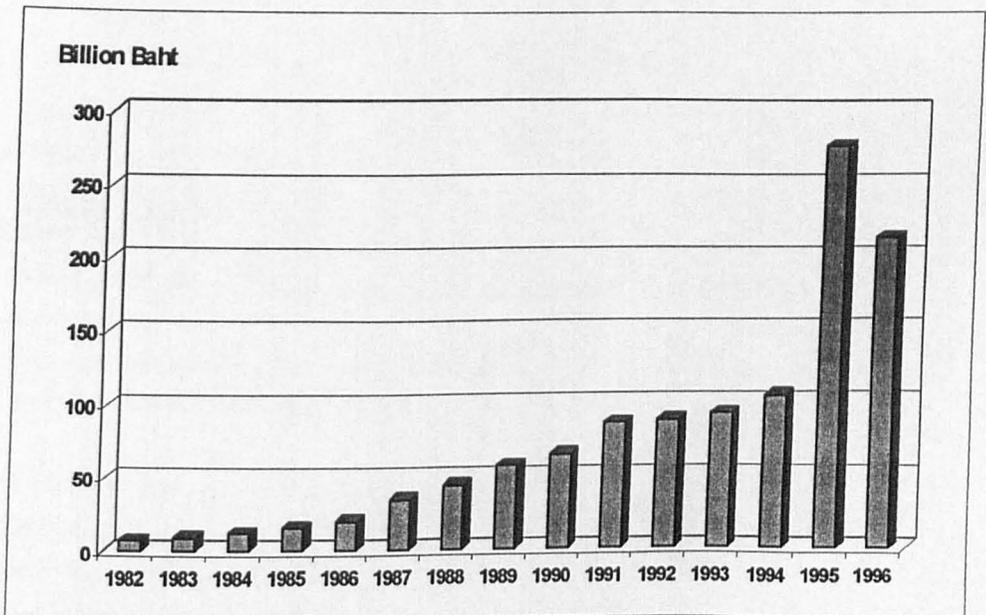


Figure 8.2.2: Thai Garment Export value 1982-96 (After: Thailand Textile Institute)

"Several factors help to account for this regeneration. Many of the problems that worried textile executives were not specific to the industry but were associated with the economic slump of those years. Macroeconomic factors, mainly the

devaluations of the baht in 1981 and 1984, bolstered the industry's competitiveness. Smoother and more rapid implementation of duty drawback schemes were also important. Large infusions of new investment in the mid-1980s, much of it foreign, strengthened the industry. Finally, the increasingly dominant garment sector, including newly established foreign investments from Taiwan, was especially well positioned to exploit rapidly emerging opportunities."

(Unger, 1998: p.121-122)

The export boom during the 1980s (and consequently continued through to the mid-1990s) owed a great deal to shifting factor prices within Asia. The garment sector gained enormous augmentation, but upstream industry was unlikely to gain from that change (ibid.).

"With the spurt in growth during the late 1980s and early 1990s, garments' share of total textile exports increased from less than half in 1980 to about 74 per cent in 1993."

(ibid.: p. 124)

During this golden age for Thai garment manufacturing, no high-quality producers would want to produce goods for the local market. To assure product uniformity in terms of quality and production line or style of garment, exporting manufacturers tended to reject domestic orders, which were usually of cheaper quality and a lower standard. This circumstance favoured the influx of imported goods, which nowadays share the major portion of the middle- to high-end market, and have become the leader in terms of retailing, marketing and particularly fashion direction in Thailand.

At present, the apparel and textile industries employ 1.2 million labourers, of whom 800,000 work in apparel manufacturing. DesMarteau (1997) also reports that there are approximately 3,000 registered apparel firms. It is assumed that there are many cottage garment industry operations of less than the standard factory size, that is, with less than 30 machines. The export manufacturing sector covers all ranges of the market from the high end market such as Prada, Calvin Klein, Pierre Balman, and Tommy Hilfiger, to the middle market such as Nike, Levi's, Liz Claiborne, Marks & Spencer and Next, to the lower market such as Middle East and Asian markets. To restate, all this was achieved with the structures and systems appropriate to family businesses. Signs of stress were, however, beginning to show.

8.2.3 The Present Era

The structure of Thai garment production is roughly divided into two markets, the export market and the market for domestic consumption (see Figure 8.2.3A). More than half the manufacturers in Thailand produce garments for export. Some of them produce for both markets, and the rest produce for domestic consumption. Exporting manufacturers are mostly medium and large-scale producers linked together through the Thai Garment Manufacturing Association (TGMA), which is the body that works with the government to distribute quotas proportionately to its constituent members^x. Thailand has shifted contract manufacturing for the export market from mass production merchandise to high quality and high price branded products. One of Thailand's customers, Mr. Bart Bresky, an international buyer, reveals that Thailand is no longer his production source due to the less competitive prices.

"Making charges as well as quota charges are such that only quality designer branded apparel items can and are being made. There are no longer those "special buys" available that in years gone by more than paid for one's trip to Thailand. Thailand has evolved the way of Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong, in that manufacturers only cater to high quality, high price branded product. In prior days, I bought merchandise there to sell to the mass market retailers. Today, this is almost impossible to do."

(Bresky, 1997: p. 40)

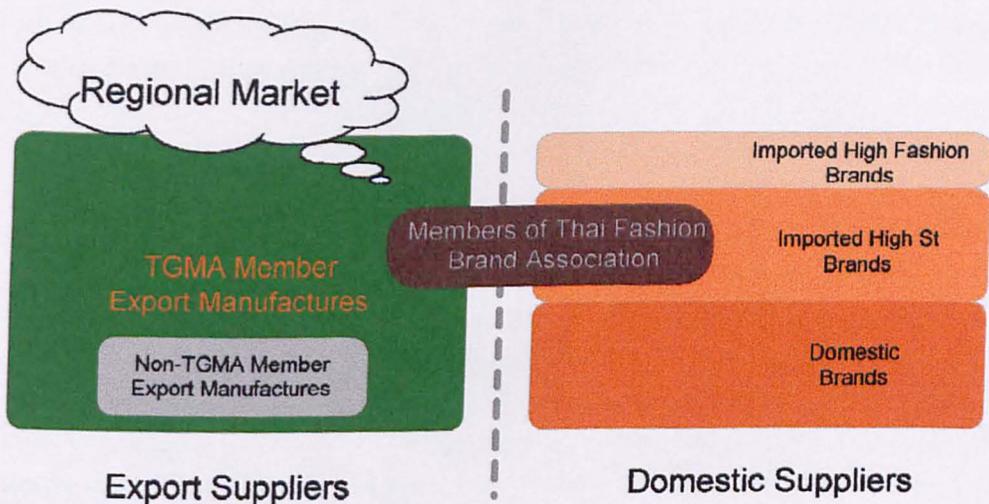


Figure 8.2.3A: Structure of Garment Producers and Suppliers in Thailand

For the domestic market, there are only a few large-scale manufacturers and the others are on something of a cottage industry scale, with fewer than 30 sewing machines. This fact reflects the picture of retailing in Thailand as shown in Figure 8.2.3A. First of all, there are only a few large manufacturers that engage with the domestic market, providing standard garments, stock items and foreign-licence middle-market brands. Secondly, the cottage industry scale manufacturers tend to supply goods for fashion labels, either to the middle or lower sections of the fashion markets. Meanwhile, some high-fashion boutiques run by Thai designers share the middle to high market with imported fashion brands.

The development of the Thai fashion industry is quite peculiar compared to the Western system. European fashion brands are usually popularised within the domestic market first and expand their target market to the regional and international markets when the brands are strong and well set-up. The Thai fashion industry, by contrast, is structured so that exporting manufacturers, who have never had their own brands in their own local markets, try very vigorously to invade the regional market, sometimes with inappropriate products. Although they have the capability to produce high quality garments, this alone does not guarantee their success in creating a brand and thereby penetrating the regional market and beyond. Inexperience in branding, and especially the lack of in-house designers, are two major factors, which can thwart their ambitions.

Thai exporting manufacturers conceded a long time ago that they had to move upwards to position their manufacturing, being not only the channel for CMT production but also to sell their products with the added value of design, since cheap labour costs no longer provided a competitive edge. Branding, therefore, became the hot issue for Thai exporting manufacturers in a competitive decade, with a heterogeneous range of commercially viable solutions. In fact, the manufacturers have gained a tremendous amount of experience in exporting but not in branding. It can be argued that Thailand is still far from becoming a fashion centre for the region, which is its ambition, because some of the following issues are still to be resolved. So far Thai manufacturers cannot originate their own distinct style, and to date they have been unable to win the domestic market and become to some extent consumer driven by understanding what local people need. Further, since Western products imported by retailers dominate most of the domestic markets, how can Thai exporting manufacturers control the variables necessary to enable them to reclaim their dominance of the domestic fashion system. Their readiness to participate in the production of fashion lines, thereby orienting themselves towards the objective of becoming a fashion centre for the region, is frustrated by tariffs, trade agreements, and internal restructuring.

Having said that, major manufacturers concentrate on exporting, with the advantages of

non-involvement in terms of designing, branding, advertising, marketing and retailing, thereby maintaining low overhead and/or cost structures. The smaller manufacturers, as a result, focus upon the domestic market. Garments produced by small Thai manufacturers are usually targeted at lower-income consumers and tend towards a lower quality standard. Also operating in the lower sector of the market are some limited numbers of large-scale manufacturers, who may or may not be oriented towards exports that supply the same low quality standard items.

Many of the mid to high domestic market products are also produced by medium to large Thai manufacturers under licensing arrangement with the original brand owner. The style, image, and presentation of these products is, of course, fully Western. Figure 8.2.3B shows the structure of domestic retailing of the Thai market in relation to manufacturing supply.

Due to the fact that most of the economic reviews only report export figures, while domestic consumption and production are omitted, a clear picture of the true nature of patterns of production and consumption with specific, detailed brand information is difficult to obtain. This is probably because manufacturing for the domestic market tends to feature cheaper goods of lesser quality (DesMarteau, 1997), resulting in less interesting statistics. During the 1980s and 1990s, however, there were a number of local fashion brands including Fly Now, Anurak, Greyhound, Mae Fah Luang, Nagara, Senada, Jaspal, etc. which emerged and represented a significant factor in the supply of domestic taste within the urban market. These brands recently formed the Thai Fashion Brand Association (TFBA), ultimately aiming to go, in the first instance, regional, and later international, in the development of their markets. Among them, Fly Now seems to be the leader of the group as it is the first brand to have shown a few collections at London Fashion Week. Low-middle market manufacturers like Saha Group, who usually produce licenced goods, also launched a brand, BSC, to attack its market and to fill a gap at the bottom of the domestic market (Asian Reports, 1998).

Bangkok Fashion Week 1999 was the first actual event where leading local brands grouped together to show their collections and fashions for the domestic market. This annual event, which is usually held in November, is organised by ELLE fashion magazine in Thailand. Its most recent show, the third in its history, showed a considerable improvement in its standard and was generally agreed to have been elevated to an international standard comparable to Paris, New York, Singapore and Hong Kong (Kosiyanon, 2002a).



Figure 8.2.3B: Structure of Domestic Retailing in Thailand

As stated earlier, the retail industry is dominated by the department stores. The retailing system in Thailand, particularly in Bangkok, is by and large the department stores. Although there are a number of bespoke tailors and dressmakers, ready-to-wear commodities are far more convenient to purchase from the stores. The Thai fashion brands previously referred to have again departed from the usual practice inasmuch as they have created their own outlets in shopping plazas, although they do also operate from some leading department stores (see Figure 8.2.3B).

Most of the domestically produced brands found in department stores or outlets are given Western sounding names. This is due to the fact that, to Thai consumers, Western names sound more modern or convey a better fashion image than would be the case if they were given Thai names. No matter what the quality or style of the goods, this unfortunate association continues to trouble Thai brand names.

Almost 100 percent of ready-to-wear commodities in the domestic market follow the Western fashion trend, with some minor adjustments to suit local taste, in terms of colour, material, size and degree of modesty. Such is the legacy of national planning.

Only international brands and leading Thai fashion brands (members of Thai Fashion Brand Association) advertise their fashion products and images in the mass media, i.e. fashion magazines. Local brands found in department stores are unlikely to invest in advertising campaigns. Leading fashion brands usually employ mixed race Western-Thai models. In some cases the brands want to upgrade their image by employing supermodels or international models for their presentations because, once again, West is best. Jaspal, for example, recently employed Cindy Crawford to enhance its international reputation.

8.2.3.1 Heading towards the Regional Market

It is significant that at this time two groups of manufacturers have tried to push themselves towards the regional market: the exporting manufacturers and the leading Thai fashion brand companies. The former group subscribes to the Thai Garment Manufacture Association (TGMA) and the latter are members of the Thai Fashion Brand Association (TFBA). The former group is equipped with high level modern technology and large-scale production lines with skilled labour as well as managerial experience in exporting. The latter group is usually small- to medium-scale, with an in-house design team, skilled labour and branding experience.

For the purpose of positioning the Thai textile and garment industry within the Thai economy as a whole, the export figures for 2001 ranked its exports as being within the top ten wealth generating sectors. Indeed, an estimated 130,000 million THBnd worth of clothing and textiles was generated from an industry of some 3,000 SMEsnd with 1,200,000 employees. It is of considerable importance to the maintenance of the Thai economy that this substantial segment of the market is not lost to neighbouring economies such as China, Vietnam and Indonesia. These competitor economies are at the present time receiving tremendous inward investment from the USA and Europe, a substantial amount of which is regenerating their textile and garment industry.

The worsening situation for Thailand will be compounded when GATT removes all quotas and duties, thus creating a truly open market. Being in the circle of world garment producers is like climbing the stairs, where the newcomers such as China and Vietnam start from a lower mass market supply position, which is the step formerly occupied by Thailand. This means that Thailand either is pushed down the stairs or has to move higher up the stairs. There are not many choices for the industry in stepping up the staircase of economic development in manufacture. A relative position on the staircase has been established related to cheap labour and the evolution of the market. The bottom of the staircase represents the cheapest labour costs and the mass-market supply, the top of the staircase represents a smaller market, quick response to fashion requirements, higher added-value, reduced labour, and investment in automation. At the moment, Hong Kong is top, followed by Korea and Taiwan, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, and with China at the bottom. Without any change in the relative positions of these economies on the development staircase, a "value added" strategy becomes the obvious main direction for any economy below first position. This suggests that only one in three will move up; the other two may well be squeezed from the staircase. In order to avoid this disaster the other two economies must develop dual strategies which enable them to advance while, at the same time, maintaining their relative position.

8.2.3.2 The Regional Fashion Centre Project

The TGMA and TFBA in co-operation with the Thai government have launched the biggest ever project that aims to secure Thailand the lead position and establish it as the "fashion centre of the region" within a period of five years (Kosiyanon, 2002b). A recent brainstorming seminar was held with many Thai experts as delegates, including people from the textile and garment industries as well as leading Thai designers and industrial managers. The outcome was the phased strategy shown in Figure 8.2.3D (Policies for rebuilding the Thai textile and garment industry), and generally characterised as a knock-on effect illustrated in Figure 8.2.3C.



Figure 8.2.3C: Reforming the Industry (After: Thailand Textile Institute)

In order to establish the fashion centre, the seminar identified three key factors that were obstructing the project. First, Thai firms are weak in capability in delivering good design with high quality product finish. Second, the linkage management within the firm and among the supply-chain industries is poor and usually consists of a private, subjective and personal relationship system. It is unlikely that any family owned business would give priority in its dealings or contacts to an unconnected business over businesses within the family circle. Finally, the poor image and lack of capability in fashion design and original creation has to be addressed. The seminar did not suggest clear answers or practical

economic imperatives or mechanisms surmounting these obstacles. It only produced a strategic policy statement "Shift the Industry". Figure 8.2.3C shows a diagram of the strategic requirements relating to the four significant areas of dynamic forces in the fashion garment and textile economy:

- world design brand;
- commercial brand;
- wholesale and mass brand;
- OEM.

At the moment the TGMA members are mostly classified in the third and fourth groups, while TFBA members are in the second group. Each group has to shift the industry upwards. The second group is encouraged to move upwards to become an international brand with "trend setter" as the task leader. The third and fourth groups are to launch commercial brands instead of merely producing to contract orders. The reward for this reform will be an expansion of market share in the region, with a subsequent increase in world share at a higher value level than at the moment.

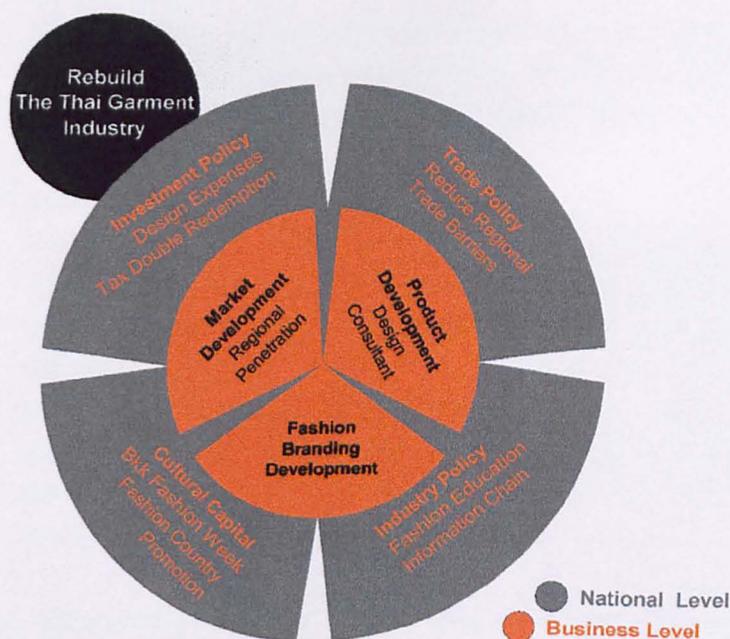


Figure 8.2.3D: policies for Rebuilding the Thai Garment Industry (After: Thailand Textile Institute)

In closer detail, support for the "reform strategy" divides into two levels: micro and macro. The micro-level represents local business, and the macro-level represents the total national business resources. The micro-level contains three sets of development requirements, which are market, product and branding developments. This means the

task of each firm, on the micro-scale, is to set up a new brand or brand image with a new range of product development that suits the regional market. However, as discussed in Section 8.2.3, the inexperience in branding and the lack of in-house designers become the major considerable concern to this strategy. The Thai fashion industry has to provide some intensive training courses in "branding and product development" to their members. Alternately, there can be a close collaboration with established international brands or an importation of foreign designers. However, in order to achieve this strategy, not only substantial marketing and consumer research but also the domestic research on socio-style need to be undertaken.

While on the macro-scale, the firms are supported by the Thai government and their associations. There are four sets of policies that will pave a clear way for the whole of the industry to move forward as shown in Figure 8.2.3D.

1. *Trade Policy*

The Thai government should negotiate with neighbouring countries to reduce trade barriers between and within the region or trading block.

2. *Investment Policy*

The Government will provide a specific investment loan resource, at the same time continuing to encourage inward investment. Facilities will be developed for design consultancy and forecasting, the cost of which and access to which will be shared across the industry.

3. *Industry Policy*

The whole industry needs to establish an information-chain system and supply-chain management system. In order to support the industry, all aspects of fashion education in terms of human resources will be stimulated.

4. *Cultural Capital Policy*

The associations together with the government should invest in promotional events such as the Bangkok Fashion Week and the International Fashion Fairs in order to create a high fashion profile for Thai fashion products within the regional and global market context.

Figure 8.2.3E shows the master plan of the Thai Textile and Garment Industry Association seminar, indicating that the Thai government and commercial sector are implementing a reform strategy from contracting to value-added manufacture. Categories of suppliers are shown in the horizontal axis, while the main vertical axis indicates the process by which each of the suppliers is involved. The middle of the graph reveals strategies and activities of each supplier, i.e., upgrading, branding and marketing. On the right vertical axis are a group of three strategies, including the creation of fashion people, the promotion of the country's fashion, and the information chain, all of which emanated from the supportive

strategies devised for the government by those associations. The ultimate aim is to elevate local brand names to the international level in order to create an environment conducive to a developing ethos of Thailand as a centre of fashion supply of the highest standard and excellence in the region. Thus, the new dynamics created by the strategy will both maintain market position and expand market share. The Thai Textile and Garment Industry seminar estimated that export value should reach 180,000 million THB in the year 2006 (see Figure 8.2.3F).

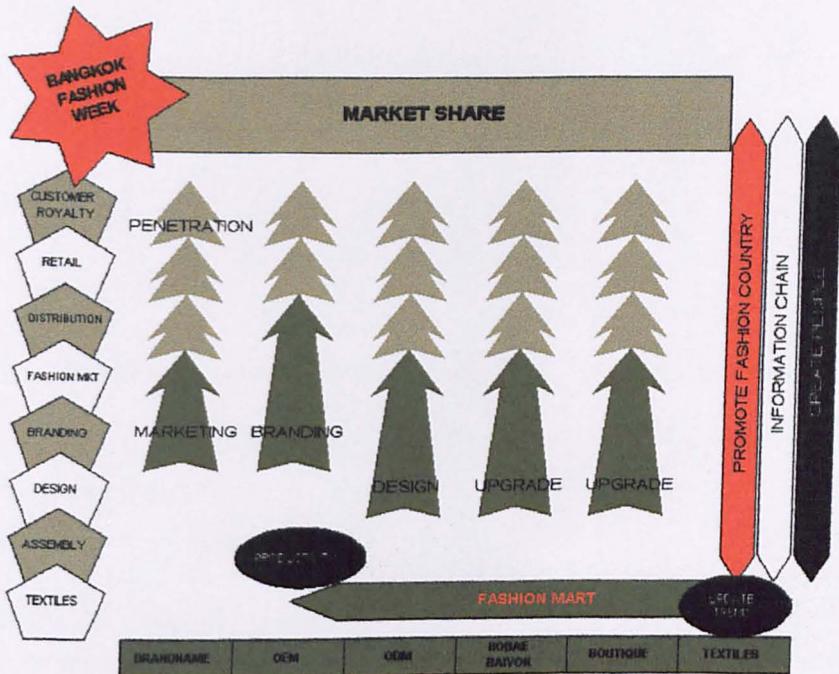


Figure 8.2.3E: Master Plan of the value-Added Reform Strategy of the Thai Textile and Garment Industry (After: Thailand Textile Institute)

8.2.4 Analysis: Characteristics of the Thai Objective Realm

8.2.4.1 Fashion Object as the Initial Basis of the Thai Fashion Industry

It is significant that the reform strategy involves design and branding as crucial to its aim of establishing Thai fashion brands in the regional market. A major factor in the success or

failure of this strategy may be the extent to which the definition of fashion is interpreted in terms of "fashion branding". Fashion-led industrial and commercial policy implies fashion origination. Market-led fashion carries other implications.

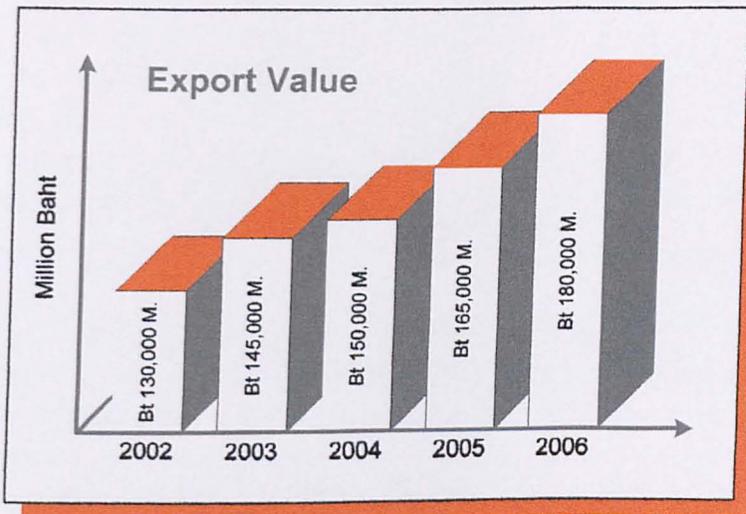


Figure 8.2.3F: Estimated Export value after Implementation of the Reform Strategy (After: Thailand Textile Institute)

Thailand has developed its industrial policy to date based upon the contracted supplying of manufactured goods designed to the specification of clients. This is described as OEM^{xiii} supply. The next stage of development has already begun and is manifested in companies, which not only supply goods to clients' specifications but also offer design services. These are ODM^{xiv} companies, and the customer base remains by and large the export sector. Surpluses of in-house designed commodities from the ODM are often sold and promoted in the domestic sector of the market. This implies that a segment of the domestic market has been opened up to Thai designed fashion commodities. As it develops, this wedge will be vital to the third stage of industrial policy, which poses its own set of problems. These could be summarised as how to supply the right fashion for the market, and how to supply a market as yet to be defined.

These factors are not directly concerned with or related to sub-factors such as marketing, branding and distribution. Instead they relate to concerns such as the mystery of fashion, how to lead the market with fashion leadership ability. If leadership ability cannot be acquired or developed internally, how else can international buyers be persuaded to take up Thai fashion products? What will be the "unique selling point"? Thai garment

commodities are no longer cheap when compared with Chinese and Vietnamese, and are not of very high quality. Neither does the industry have an advantage in higher efficiency when compared with Hong Kong, Korea and Taiwan. In terms of supply-chain management, the logistics from Thailand to major world markets such as America and Europe, when compared, for instance, to South American and East European producers, are less competitive in terms of transport costs and time. Given these factors, the significance of fashion origination becomes a major strategic issue. Analysis undertaken by the policy makers would seem to suggest only one course of action for the Thai fashion industry: fashion design and origination supported and manifested in a regional fashion centre could strengthen the Thai manufacturing sector and embody in its products and commodities the "unique selling point" much sought after in global marketing.

The Thai government and the garment associations are encouraging the industry to establish brand names with a fashion image through a package of budget measures which enable manufactures to employ foreign design consultants and fashion forecasting agents in an initial stage of the industrial and development plan. I would argue that these actions and initiatives are insufficient as they are currently being interpreted.

My argument is that Thai garment manufactures have for some time experienced design input attached to their customers' order specification. The lack of innovative experience in creative design may lead to a catching up with fashion trends already established as "objects of fashion" (see The Fashion Transformation Process Model) and follow these world trends without considering the future beyond current popularity. The root of fashion, of consumer needs, and of world issues governing fashion change may be ignored. It is my analysis that the essence of the mystery in strategy of the Thai garment industry is the understanding of the mechanism of the fashion process, particularly the point of "transformation" from the macro-subjective realm to the macro-objective realm. In other words, it is the interpretation from social issue to lifestyle to diverse needs pertinent to a segmented market where relevant fashion style has to be matched or negotiated. This is what lies beyond the brand, and is the underpinning of marketing strategies which must be taken into account in the second priority and embedded in the third stage of development.

Regarding the employment of foreign fashion consultants and forecasters, this indicates a mechanism, which would lead the Thai fashion industry further into dependent territory dominated by Western fashion know-how. Previously, the Thai fashion industry was considered a subset of the world fashion system, whereas some parts of the industry responded to domestic needs. As witnessed recently, dependence is fine in world trade only when trading conditions are good. In the event of a downturn, manufacturers need to have secure domestic bases, which take up their productive output.

The guidance from foreign fashion experts might reorient the industry away from the natural balance of domestic demand and export supply to a position where it can only respond to the international market. It would accordingly shift not only the industry but the whole local cultural movement in the direction of Western hegemony.

8.2.4.2 Infrastructure and Re-structuring

It can be argued that no industry that relies on labour costs alone for its economic advantage is stable. Although the Thai garment industry has been more successful than other countries with the same or similar cost base and consistent economic conditions (allowing for fluctuation throughout its history) this does not mean that the industry has achieved a permanently stabilised situation. World price fluctuation usually brings in new participators to the fashion and clothing supply chain, eliminating the least competitive from the game. In other words, any country in the world with lower production costs is able to join the world community of garment producers, regardless of their geographic position, skill development level, industrial history and requirements of capital investment. World sourcing of fashion and clothing commodities will reach out when the time is appropriate to secure supplies, which will yield a profit irrespective of the consequences, which befall their previous suppliers.

For example, many British retailers recently asserted that the price of their products within the British market remains constant, while their profit margin has continued to grow even though their market share has not. These odd results if investigated will indicate a relationship between price changes from product origin together with fluctuation in origin of supply. This suggests that over time a huge number of countries of origin have participated in the history of sourcing of the retailer branded goods. The purchase price to profit fluctuations, which are to the advantage of the retailer, are the consequences of retail sourcing policy rather than random economic or industrial development in countries, which have a cheap labour reservoir. Whilst opportunism is a factor, sourcing policies are carefully evolved plans, which closely follow geo-economic and political policy.

Thailand was inevitably invited by the world market (through the geo-economic and political powers) to create a clothing manufacturing industry without developing their own initial perspective plan, proper policy or support system. Since then many manufacturers have striven on their own to exploit their own means of production.

"... weaknesses in state textile promotion did not stem from a dearth of

appropriate policy instruments but from a lack of planning, inadequate co-ordination, uneven policy implementation, and the absence of data on which informed policies could be based."

(Unger, 1998: p. 127)

However, as stated earlier, the macro-economic environment in Thailand did enhance the industrial boom. Moreover, the low level of "social capital" or collaboration or control from the state, in turn, became advantageous to the free expansion of manufacturing capacity. In fact, the low level of collaboration both between firms and between the firm and the state was an appropriate state of affairs in the beginning, when markets needed cheap Thai labour and low costs. As world trading conditions have changed, however, the cheap-competitive advantage has deserted Thailand.

The new situation required a key policy shift to the new age where government intervention in terms of strategic support mechanisms is an essential for sustainability. The low level of "social capital" is now a major hidden factor, which, if not addressed, could cause problems that might thwart the total ambitions implied in the third stage of the Thai industrial development plan.

The "Reforming the Industry" policy is probably the first serious short and long term plan for collaboration between the commercial sector and the state. The policy needs not only the support from the government, but also a high level collaborative network of structures or systems between the business sector itself and state officials. The crucial question in the new policy is how to reach the ultimate goal of a "regional fashion centre", whose essence is fashionability, innovation and creativity. It is known that the fashion industry relies on creative material from upstream industry, whereas innovation and creativity usually come from the client or customer.

The lack of collaboration between businesses or a formal network in the whole industry was seriously damaging to future prospects during the boom. The weaknesses of the weaving and finishing industries, for example, caused a lagging of development behind the requirements of the rest of the industry. This became a major economic difficulty because of the high level of imports of finished material, while textile goods were exported in grey form.

"Many small firms specialising in weaving or dyeing were unable to produce high-quality textiles or to make deliveries on time. As a result, the large local and foreign vertically integrated firms that dominated production, and especially exports, continued to ship mostly gray textiles. In addition, spinning and knitting

operations had far outgrown the weaving sector. These imbalances across different sectors of the industry ensured continuing high dependence on imported textiles."

(ibid.: p. 127)

Unger further reveals that Thai firms were heavily dependent on imports of cotton, cotton yarn, fabric, man-made fibres, knitted fabrics, machinery and parts. This significant fact reveals, firstly, the limited capability of Thai industry as a whole. This situation is exemplified by small margins from the labour cost advantage left for each sub-industry, less collaboration within the discontinuous process, and the failure of state support and promotion. Indeed, the first factor became the crucial reason and motivation for the whole industry to reform its policy, targeting a different market level in order to gain benefits other than the diminishing labour cost advantage. Meanwhile, as previously mentioned, the second factor becomes the main plank of the strategy, with the final factor becoming the navigator for the entire policy.

8.2.4.3 Definite Western Prototype

There are three aspects that Thailand has developed their process towards the would-be fashion industry, including the industrial structure, and retail structure and consumer perception. Indeed, these three aspects follow and adopt the Western pathway as a model. Developing from labour-intensive towards quality-oriented and then management know-how manufacturing is normal process. Thailand foresees the future market, not any more as the garment supplier but to become a fashion supplier with branded goods. This jump, with the "fashion regional centre project", would take itself to close of the ideal pathway. Regarding the UK fashion industry in Chapter 4, the Thai fashion industry needs to differentiate their roles and functions from previously being apparel industry to the would-be fashion industry.

The present loose structure of association within the fashion supply chain servicing the domestic market has arisen spontaneously rather than being a consequence of planning. It should be explained that during the boom period Thai manufacturers chose to concentrate their efforts on supplying the export market. The few who did not follow this path supplied the domestic market, but at the mid- to lower levels, leaving a gap in supply to the higher level of the market which was fulfilled through the importation of fashion commodities, mainly from the West. However, this state of affairs also corresponded to the domestic demand for imported commodities in so far as imported goods were

considered superior to domestically made commodities in terms of quality, status perception and fashionability. This situation consolidated the structure of both fashion supply and retailing throughout the boom and was to everyone's advantage. The retail industry has actually been dominated by Western commodities from the beginning of the industrial period, because the Thai kings, and later the government, decreed that Thai people must adopt Western dress. From the times when society was innocent of fashion, Thailand has adopted Western fashion and etiquette as a prototype in which the standard of fashionability is supreme. Thai society has now become more prosperous and more discriminating in its taste. However, discriminating taste can only operate within the boundaries of what is available. In other words, Western commodities were automatically perceived as standard for superiority.

The adoption of Western fashion in the form of fashion as an object, therefore, started right at the beginning of the enforced introduction of fashion to society. The fashion prototypes keep coming into Thai society without the necessity of any Thai cultural input or an appraisal of needs or responses of the consumer. In part this is because the consumer has long been pre-conditioned to accept automatically the dominance and superiority of Western fashion commodities. Once a sudden change was imposed, a new culture was registered and this culture became part of the main culture. For the purposes of this account, Thai culture remains continuous. Any discontinuity should be regarded as being located in the realm of society where change is readily apparent. The social practice of fashion consumption progressing ever more towards global/international style, was adopted in the first instance by a tiny and elite group favoured by royalty. This has now become a major trend and part of everyday life of ordinary people to the extent that pure Thai-style dress has become a minority taste. One who dresses in Thai style might be asked by neighbours, "What's the special occasion?" or "Are you going to a formal festival or event?"

8.2.4.4 The Position of Design within a Network of Collaboration

The weak collaboration between firms and the state and within the commercial sector combined with the new initiative in the Thai textile and garment industry needs some form of co-ordination. This is not a movement devised by a single firm but rather the beginning of a unification of the whole industry. The declaration of Thailand as a regional fashion centre needs structure and unity, policy and the pursuit of every single firm to enmesh them in a new, interdependent network. The new trading conditions make it impossible for all but the biggest and richest companies to take and maintain a share of the global market.

Fly Now is a leading Thai fashion brand name which has had some experience in spearheading an attempt to expand towards establishing a share of the London fashion market. At the end of the 1990s, Fly Now presented some collections in London to the fashion buyers who showed a willingness to purchase. The subsequent results in terms of repeat orders were seemingly not very impressive. Fly Now was unable to secure a reliable supply chain to their customers at the right quality, price, and delivery time. The brand at that time needed more support from many sources, such as material, which should have been obtainable from domestic production. Because of the lack of good co-ordination during the process of production, there were time delays impacting on cost and margins. Creativity also could not be found in the Thai industry during the days of the boom, because all the manufacturers were concentrating on production devoted to foreign orders. The few manufacturers who had research and development departments were likewise focused on exports to established clients. Fly Now's avant-garde initiative, although not successful, was basically the correct approach and in the right direction. Its failures in collaboration with domestic material suppliers, coupled with a lack of government support, highlighted the necessity for some kind of restructuring of the industry.

More recently, Fly Now has become the most influential agent in the "Reforming the Industry" project. The firm leads the policy, focusing on the need for unity and co-ordination, resulting in the forming of commercial power towards maximising industrial potential.

The other significant aspect importantly highlighted by Fly Now is the requirement of a system for the Thai textile and garment industry which will integrate the creative process of fashion innovation. This established system is called "design management" and is an integral part of what makes Western fashion perpetually successful. Design management is a system, which is focused on maximising and enhancing the creativity of every single unit in the system. It is a system that views the mechanism of creativity not only as a solution from the designer, but rather as something stemming from every part of the production process. The designer is no longer perceived as an absolute authority, but as a mediator in a complex system linking every unit of production, from material sourcing to packaging and distribution. Everybody and every step of production is part of a creative teamwork facilitated by the design management activity. This will be discussed further in the final chapter.

Endnote

ⁱ By which I mean fashion in the context of Western Europe, America.

ⁱⁱ The heterogeneous range of needs mutually reflects in the diverse options as shown in the fashion retail model in chapter 5.

ⁱⁱⁱ King Mongkut and Chulalongkorn (Rama IV and V, respectively), had tried to accommodate the Western powers at a time when their aggressive colonialism threatened Thailand's survival. On this basis, a policy of adaptation was of prime importance to Thailand's independence (Numnonda, 1978).

^{iv} Pibun's (or Phibun) nation-building programme (or natinalism) was aimed at a new and grater Thailand for the Thais who "would possess good culture, good etiquette, good health, good clothing, good accommodation and good profession". However, Pibun was determined that his most important objective was a cultural revolution. The Thais had to appear "civilized" to the outside world (Numnonda, 1978).

^v This means minority in the engagement of power, where the massive population of rural people is less effective.

^{vi} "Sakdina" refers to a system of feudal ranking based on the amount of rice land and manpower under one's control (Esterik, 2000; p. 126)

^{vii} "The effacement of the boundary between art and everyday life; the collapse of the distinction between high and mass/popular culture; a stylistic promiscuity favouring eclecticism and the mixing of codes: parody, pastiche, irony, playfulness and the celebration of the surface "deftlessness" of culture; the decline of the originality/genius of the artistic producer; and the assumption that art can only be repetition". (Featherstone, 1991; P.7)

^{viii} Civilised Dress Campaign: Ironic term used to describe dress code aspects of the Thai nation-building policy introduced by Prime Minister Phibun Songkhram, during 1930s and 1940s.

^{ix} Social capital is referred by social scientists to a collaboration among groups, firms, and between firms and state.

^x Quotas are allocated through each country in developing economy via the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

^{xi} Baht is Thai currency. In the year 2002, \$1 and £1 are approximately equal 40 and 60 Bath, respectively.

^{xii} SMEs is an abbreviation of "Small and Medium Entrepreneurs".

^{xiii} OEM is an abbreviation Original Equipment Manufacturer (The manufacturer who produces products by supply all materials (made to order, does not offer designs) This also applies to manufactured goods.

^{xiv} ODM is an abbreviation of Original Design Manufacturer. The main point, which is different from OEM is these organisations offer design in the products to their customer.

Chapter 9

Model Comparison and Construction of the Thai Fashion Process Model

This chapter compares and contrasts the theoretical and empirical research findings, which were undertaken in the context of Western and Thai fashion consumption. It is hoped that the collection of research information together with its subsequent analysis can provide an appropriate conclusion relevant to the objective of the thesis. This research has been undertaken on the basis of different cultures, nation states, economic conditions, etc., and the comparison highlights correlation and differences, making possible the construction of a new model. As with any research, which looks at aspects of development, whether separate and distinct or in parallel and related, the outcome is dependent on the vantage point from which such developments are viewed.

"Without any comparison group, it is hard to know how good the results are, whether the results would have been as good with some other program, and even whether the program has any effect on the results at all."

(Fitz-Gibbon and Morris 1987: p. 26)

In the above quotation Fitz-Gibbon and Morris are speaking about comparative studies. They suggest that: 1) the empirical research must be undertaken in both comparison sites; and 2) in order to evaluate the results, it is necessary to create a programme or conceptual model to test the finding consequential from the hypotheses or concluded in the thesis. At this point it should also be remembered that the base concept was derived from the SI theory, from which the subsequent initial conceptual model for the research

was created. In the developing of the initial conceptual model, a stage was reached where it appeared to be universally applicable to all fashion systems; however, since the empirical surveys undertaken to test the model were simultaneous, the preliminary analysis revealed significant differences, suggesting that fashion systems in different cultural frames need different models.

This Chapter accordingly seeks to present the second empirical study undertaken in Thailand. At this level of analysis I make comparisons between the influence of the variables from the questionnaire results or accounts in interview transcripts, from documentary sources and field notes in observational settings. As pointed out by May (1993), it is in this way that we are able to compare the results from empirical studies within societies (intra-societal comparison) and between societies (inter-societal comparison).

At the end of this Chapter it is hoped that the analysis will lead to the construction of a Thai Fashion Process Model, based upon the Western conceptual model created in Chapters 5 and 7, but represented in a distinctive regional and cultural context, which distinguishes it clearly from the Western model.

9.1 Comparison of the Micro Level

9.1.1 Empirical studies in Thailand: Methodology and Results

The empirical studies undertaken in Thailand were set within the same parameters and conditions as those for the UK. The Thai empirical study, therefore, used the same hypotheses, questionnaire and interview instrument, as well as the same criteria and method of evaluation.

Three hundred questionnaires were distributed to random samples in some major universities in Bangkok, Thailand, with a total of 134 returns representing a 47 % response rate. The populations of classified adopters in each category are 1.5 % innovator, 18.7 % early fashion adopter, 64.2 % fashion follower, and 15.7 % laggard. The major results are shown in Table 9.1.1.

All major responses strongly supported the hypotheses in the same way as did the results of the survey in London. There are some different profiles of the Thai adopter groups,

particularly the Thai fashion innovators and fashion followers, which are discussed in the following Section, but which are highlighted and of significance, and should therefore be kept in mind when reading through this Chapter.

Table 9.1.1A

Have you ever had an idea about your look and not been able to find the fashion garments in the shops?

	Never ←-----→ Very Often				
	1	2	3	4	5
laggard	0%	0%	20%	14%	0%
Follower	15%	19%	48%	23%	9%
Early adopter	4%	20%	20%	48%	8%
Innovator	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%

Table 9.1.1E

Wearing a trendy colour or a fashion garment that many other people wear makes you feel...

	Very Confident ←-----→ Annoying				
	1	2	3	4	5
laggard	19.0%	32.0%	38.0%	10.0%	0.0%
Follower	12.0%	14.0%	48.0%	26.0%	2.3%
Early adopter	0.0%	20.0%	32.0%	48.0%	4.0%
Innovator	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%

Table 9.1.1B

When buying a fashion garment, have you ever felt a conflict between what you liked/wanted and what your friends' suggested?

	Never ←-----→ Very Often				
	1	2	3	4	5
laggard	10.0%	26.0%	24.0%	24.0%	14.0%
Follower	14.0%	23.0%	34.0%	29.0%	6.0%
Early adopter	16.0%	31.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Innovator	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%

Table 9.1.1F

Wearing a fashion garment that is very cutting edge fashion and very different in style from the present makes you feel...

	Not Confident ←-----→ Very Confident				
	1	2	3	4	5
laggard	0.0%	30.0%	19.0%	0.0%	10.0%
Follower	20.0%	27.0%	31.0%	13.0%	6.0%
Early adopter	12.0%	4.0%	33.0%	33.0%	12.0%
Innovator	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%

Table 9.1.1C

What was the outcome, i.e., what decisions do you usually make?

	My friends usually influenced me in what I bought	Sometimes I was influenced in what I bought	I bought what I liked mostly
laggard	35.0%	45.0%	33.0%
Follower	5.0%	39.0%	57.0%
Early adopter	0.0%	40.0%	60.0%
Innovator	0.0%	0.0%	100%

Table 9.1.1G

If all your friends agree to wear the Sixties style for one of the millennium party, when you just bought a new glittering millennium style outfit, what would you do?

	Not want to go....	Change to Sixties style	Persuade a friend to dress in millennium style like you	Not care,...
laggard	5.0%	38.0%	24.0%	33.0%
Follower	3.5%	32.5%	26.0%	37.0%
Early adopter	0.0%	36.0%	12.0%	52.0%
Innovator	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%

Table 9.1.1D

Do you always dress in a different style or colour from others?

	Never ←-----→ Always				
	1	2	3	4	5
laggard	14.0%	26.0%	38.0%	0.0%	10.0%
Follower	10.0%	35.0%	48.0%	3.5%	0.0%
Early adopter	0.0%	25.0%	38.0%	12.0%	0.0%
Innovator	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%

Table 9.1.1H

How much would you be concerned if you disagreed about style and colour with others in your social circle?

	Never ←-----→ Very Much				
	1	2	3	4	5
laggard	14.0%	33.0%	38.0%	14.0%	5.0%
Follower	14.0%	38.0%	33.0%	15.0%	3.5%
Early adopter	12.0%	38.0%	32.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Innovator	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%

Table 9.1.1: Results of the Questionnaire Survey in Bangkok

Table 9.1.1A shows the degree of searching for new or individual fashion. Of fashion innovators 50 % were "always", and another 50 % "often", unable to find the right fashion style in the marketplace. The major result of early fashion adopters is 48 % "usually", while

40 % of followers are "often" unable to find fashion styles that they want. It is obvious that innovators, who keep looking for something new, have always been unable to find the garment, which they want. This is because their primary need is not yet responded to by the fashion industry.

In Table 9.1.1B, all innovators said they rarely felt any conflict and all of them bought what they wanted. Early adopters' results are scattered. This implies that the degree of self-confidence of early adopters varies. 30 % of them bought what they like while 40 % got influenced sometimes. Similarly, the results of fashion followers are also scattered but the high responses mainly go to 34 % "sometimes" and 29 % "often". This means they have had conflicts when making decisions. 57 % of them bought what they wanted to buy but 44% of them sometimes got influenced in what they purchased. The outcomes of their decisions are shown in Table 9.1.1C. The distinct response of innovators is 100 % of "they bought what they like". The major results of the rest go to "sometimes influenced".

Table 9.1.1D clearly shows that the degrees of differentiation in style and colour decrease from innovators to early adopters and to followers, respectively. 50 % and 50 % of innovators "usually" and "often", respectively, dress in a different style from others. 68 % of early adopters replied "often", while 55 % of followers replied "sometimes". Innovators' styles usually differ from existing styles.

Table 9.1.1E shows the highest responses of innovators, which are 50 % annoying and also 50 % a little bit annoying. While the highest responses of early fashion adopters and followers are a little bit annoying, and no problem, respectively. According to the principle of differentiating force, innovators, who want to be different, tend to be uncomfortable when they find the fashion they are wearing is widely popular. They usually feel that fashion has become boring. Early fashion adopters and followers, on the other hand, feel more comfortable when that fashion is widely adopted.

Table 9.1.1F shows the degree of confidence when fashion adopters wear cutting edge fashion. All innovators said they were confident, while 36 % and 32 % of early fashion adopters felt "confident" and "just confident" respectively. On the other hand, fashion followers' main responses are 37 % "just confident". This question is one of the indicators of how much differentiating force each fashion adopter has.

The degree of conformity of each adopter group is shown in Table 9.1.1G. 100 % of fashion innovators and 52 % of early adopters were strongly confident. They do not care when their styles do not conform to the majority of the group. However, 36 % of the early fashion adopters would like to change their dress to conform to the majority. Meanwhile,

the results of followers are scattered, 37 % of followers said "don't care", 35 % said "change to the 60s style" and 29 % want to "persuade friends to dress like them". This question reveals a combination of differentiating force and socialising force, particularly when these forces operate within a small group. It can be seen that the degree of differentiating force diminishes from innovators to followers.

The agreement and disagreement with others' opinions in fashion and colour concerned each adopter group to different degrees, and are as shown in Table 9.1.1H. 50 % of fashion innovators said they did not care about a disagreement and another 50 % of them were sometimes concerned about disagreement. Most of the early adopters' responses were 40 % "sometimes". While, most of followers' responses were 33 % "sometimes", 28 % "rarely" and 28% "quite concerned". The degree of how concerned they were about their style with regard to others' opinions increases from fashion innovators to early adopters and to followers.

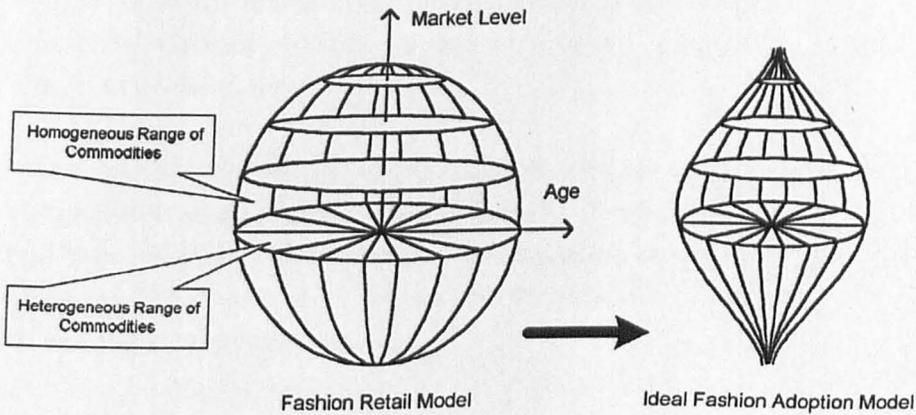


Figure 9.1.2 Fashion Retail Model and Ideal Fashion Adoption Model

9.1.2 Comparison of the Fashion Adoption Models

The different models presented in this Section, each of which is developed from collected data of the same quantitative survey conducted in London and Bangkok, are constructed in the same method as the initial fashion adoption model. In the previous Chapter, the initial fashion adoption model called "the Fashion Retail Model" is presented in the form of a sphere. This fashion retail model was intentionally presented in the ideal graphical sphere shape for the purpose of simplicity in representation. The retail model representation contains some of the diffusion mechanisms that are located in the totality of

the fashion adoption processes, and the structures are therefore similar.

In this Chapter the results from the surveys in Bangkok and London are to be compared, enabling the initial fashion adoption model to be reconstructed in a form as near as possible to the ideal fashion adoption processes. The ideal fashion adoption model, therefore, can be a prototype for further comparative models derived from specific data in differing fashion situations, locations or processes.

The ideal fashion adoption model of the Western fashion industry shown in Figure 9.1.2 is developed from the bell curve proposed by Rogers but without the compensation built into the idealised half-circle curve. It therefore appears as a lantern shape, representing our "ideal fashion adoption model".

The ideal fashion adoption model represents, as stated, the ideal classification of all fashion adopters in terms of timing of adoption, level of fashion consciousness and level of fashion leadership, in which each vertical section represents each fashion style. In other words, the proportion of fashion adopters and the timing of adoption precisely conform to the law of the bell curve.

The comparison between proportions of fashion adopters from the surveys in London and Bangkok is shown as a percentage in Appendix IV. In order to present a clearer picture of that data, the ideal form is developed resulting in two distinctive forms. Moreover, the models of both surveys are compared with the ideal fashion adoption model at a later stage, resulting in a third model.

9.1.3 Forming the Model from the Surveys

The data from the questionnaire surveys in both locations, London and Bangkok, is shown in Appendix IV. Here the original data is converted into percentages and is also shown in percentage blocks overlaid with a profile curve. The curve of the London survey is shown in Figure 9.1.3A in comparison with the curve of the Bangkok survey, which is shown in Figure 9.1.3B. The curve line of each survey becomes a representative curve line of fashion adoption in each site. In the same way, the principle of forming the ideal three-dimension model, a curve line, is assumed to be representative of the fashion adoption process of a fashion style. Since there are many fashions emerging at the same time, all the curve lines (fashion processes) are gathered to form the entire fashion adoptions at a particular time and place. The actual fashion adoption models of the London and Bangkok surveys are, therefore, shown in Figures 9.1.3A and 9.1.3B, respectively.

9.1.4 Comparison with Rogers' Bell Curve

The appearance of both curves is quite similar to the ideal bell curve of Rogers (refer to Figure 9.1.2). There are, however, some significant differences. These differences can be clearly seen when the curves are formed into three-dimension models and compared.

When both curves are compared to the ideal bell curve of Rogers, the fashion process curve of the London survey is closer to the ideal curve than that of Bangkok. The former curve starts from an innovator group whose figure is double that of the ideal proportion. However, the take up curve to the pinnacle has a very good angle of proportion of early fashion adopters and fashion followers. The peak of the curve is not much different from the ideal bell curve. The curve falls off to a well-balanced percentage of laggard adopters as well.

With regard to the Bangkok survey, comparison starts with the figure of the curve, which seems to be of similar appearance to a bell shape. The start up figure of the curve, 1.5 %, is almost less than half the ideal figure of 2.5 %. The take up curve is very steep due to the huge difference between the proportion of fashion innovators and fashion followers, even though the figure of early fashion adopters, 18.7 %, is close to the ideal figure of 13.5 %. However, the downturn part of the curve is a good shape.

9.1.5 The True Innovator

As previously mentioned, both curves emanating from the London and Bangkok surveys seem to be similar. The major differences between the two are:

- a very high figure in respect of fashion followers in Thailand;
- a small proportional figure of fashion innovators in Thailand.

5.4 % of fashion innovators in the UK is almost four times the 1.5 % of the innovator population in Thailand. Considering the huge difference of both innovator groups, there might be some differences in specific detail. The results of the questionnaires of both innovator groups are therefore re-investigated. Regarding the innovator group in Thailand, analysis found that they were cutting edge consumers in terms of high consumption of high fashion rather than "high creativity". In the assessment of high creativity in the questionnaire, all the responses reveal that they never create their own fashion look by cutting and making dresses for themselves. However, their looks were mostly created by mixing and matching new and old clothes. According to the scoring system, their total scores certainly reach the level of innovator rank; they are then classified as innovators, but at the bottom level of that rank.

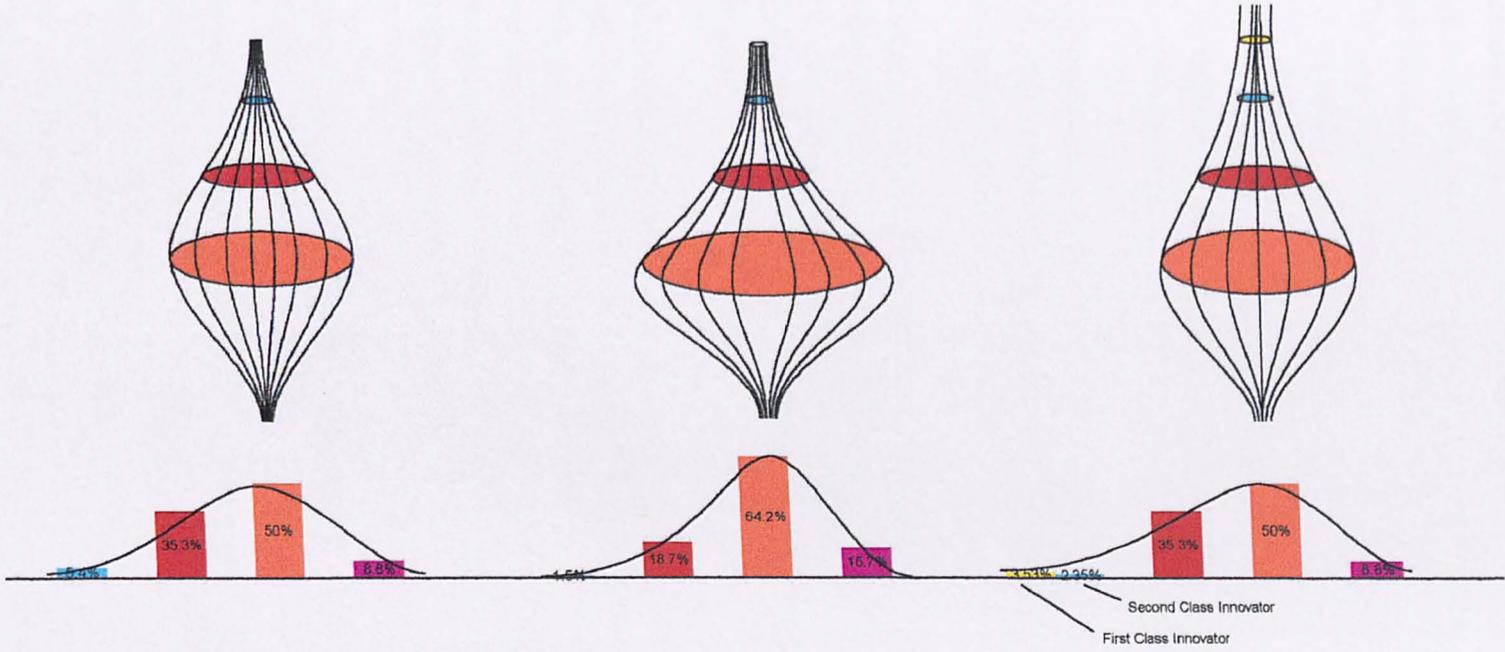


Figure 9.1.3A: London Survey

Figure 9.1.3B: Bkk Survey

Figure 9.1.3C: New Curve of London Survey:
Innovator 1 & 2

The innovators in the UK, on the other hand, have diverse responses with different characteristics, insofar as some of their profiles are similar to the innovators in Thailand, while the rest seem to have more creativity. In the classification of fashion adopters, it is important to restate that they are judged upon four criteria, which are:

- the level of creativity and experience in creativity for self appearance (for example, cutting and sewing is the highest score, while mixing and matching is the lowest);
- the level of consumption of fashionable commodities;
- the perception of themselves as a fashion leader;
- the perception of their image of fashion leader as viewed by others.

The first criterion can be considered the most important of all in that it refers to the level of fashion involvement in the pre-time of fashion emergence as a fashion commodity, rather than merely consumption in the initial step.

In some cases innovators are classified as such mainly on the basis of their creativity in creating their fashion looks. UK innovators can be differentiated into two distinct groups. The group whose responses in the survey showed the same behaviour and whose assessment scores fell in the bottom of the range could be called "second-class innovators".

The "first-class innovators" are those samples whose creativity for self fashion looks is more than mixing and matching; for example, decorating clothes with something, re-styling old clothes, and making new clothes in particular. Their total score should be in the range from middle to top. After carefully re-classifying the UK innovators, there are 4 second-class innovators and 6 first-class innovators or 2.4 % and 3.5 %, respectively. The new graph is plotted and shown in Figure 9.1.3C.

9.1.6 Comparing the Bangkok Curve and the New London Curve

Figure 9.1.3 shows a comparison of the fashion adoption model of the Bangkok survey and the new model of the London survey. It can be clearly seen that the major differences between the two models are:

- the proportion of fashion followers;
- the proportion of fashion innovators;
- the length of time of fashion diffusion within the initial process.

9.1.6.1 The Proportion of Fashion Followers

The proportion of the fashion follower population in Thailand in comparison with the UK is quite different. From the survey, half of the populations of each fashion adoption group are, in the UK, fashion followers. In Thailand, however, the proportion is two thirds of the group. The factors influencing the numbers of the follower populations can be investigated through the mirror side of consumption, which is the supply side. The retail industries of both countries are very different. As a result, we must regard supply as a variable factor. Different retail systems naturally determine the mode and type of fashion diffusion and fashion adoption in different ways.

It is known that the retail industry in the UK is powerful and competition is high between a limited number of fashion outlets. That is to say that the majority of British "fashion followers" buy fashion commodities from the high street, which comprises both department stores and national chain stores, some of which have brand labels. Most of the retail outlets can be found in the major high streets such as Oxford Street, Regent Street, Kings Road, and High Street Kensington, as well as in other major shopping streets in local areas of the capital.

The British retailing system as represented in the high street is monopolised by a limited number of British retailers. Each of the British brands accordingly finds it is easy to target their customers, since they are well established and are large conglomerations represented in every high street in the country. A few have further extended and obtained branches in other countries. In other words, each brand has its own fashion styles which supply the target market and compete with some others in a vertical competitive atmosphere at varying price points (see the fashion retail model in Chapter 5).

British fashion retailers are able to systematically control the supply of fashion commodities to a clearly segmented market. In other words, they are able to monitor and manipulate the diffusion of fashion. However, at the moment the British retail industry has to contend with many global fashion brands invading and taking a share of the market, i.e., such newcomers as The Gap, H&M, Mango, Zara and others.

Many domestic retailers, including Marks & Spencer, Debenhams and Arcadia Group, have to renovate their images and identities in such a way as to present a more acceptable contemporary fashion appeal in terms of style, display of product and advertising, thereby enhancing their brand value. This strategic approach to maintaining market share is a continuous process. It should therefore be restated that, as the high street includes chain and department stores and international brands, retailers can be

regarded as the main and most significant supplier of fashion commodities for "fashion followers".

Unlike the UK, the fashion retail industry in Thailand has long been dominated by department stores. Department stores in Thailand roughly divide into two market levels: high and low (see Chapter 8 and Appendix VII). The lower level provides space for domestic brands, while the higher level provides space for both domestic and imported goods in the higher price range. Many department stores locate within shopping plazas, where there can also be found leading domestic fashion brands, such as Fly Now, Jim Thompson, Jaspal, Greyhound, Anurak and Soda. Some shopping plazas in central Bangkok gather many international brands such as Louis Vuitton, Kenzo, Armani, Versace, The Gap, Next, Chanel and DKNY. These international brands or imported commodities are perceived by Thai consumers as the most fashionable, even though Next and The Gap, which are middle-market mass producers for West, are of a different fashion value order.

This perception and its accompanying consumer demand create many small businesses located in market stalls, which sell imported discounted fashion items from the latest collections in correct sizes and the same quality. Alternatively, there are counterfeit goods, either almost identical or nearly the same as items made available to customers who cannot afford the original price level. Counterfeit goods can be found almost immediately after the original designer products have been launched into the market. Some of them are made in the country, but many are illegally imported from Korea and Hong Kong. In either case, the consumers of original or counterfeit products can be classified at the same level or in the same group of fashion adopter. In evaluating the research findings in Thailand, it therefore becomes necessary to classify fashion adopters on the basis of the timing of adoption that shows their fashion leadership in expressing fashionability earlier or later than others in their social circle. A more precise way of classifying the fashion adopters in Thailand should perhaps rely less on the level of consumption in terms of price and quality, and instead mainly on other criteria.

From the retailing situation in Thailand it can be seen that fashion followers have a vast array of choices in consuming fashion. They can choose either from domestic brands in department stores and shopping centres, or imported commodities which either emanate from original imports, in the high-class outlets, or counterfeit goods on the market stalls. The oversupply of hit fashion goods stimulates consumers to participate in a specific current fashion. By nature Thai people unconsciously adopt something that is established by fashion icons. This is one of the reasons why the population of Thai "fashion followers" quantitatively reaches two third of the whole of the population of fashion consumers in the

fashion adoption system.

The above information also reflects another aspect of fashion classification. Thai fashion adopters adopt or buy fashion products not solely because they admire the concept of that fashion statement, but also in order to exercise their power of purchasing or consuming, and their socialising impulses. The possession of newly arrived goods, regardless of their suitability for lifestyle, age or occasion of use, is taken up by the majority of consumers. Individuality, appropriateness and subcultural divisions are not concepts, which have any place in a predominantly uniform culture. The issues surrounding "brand differentiation" referred to here will be discussed in the following chapter.

9.1.6.2 The Proportion of Fashion Innovators

The situation above also affects the level of creativity of fashion innovators in Thailand. This is due to the perception that there are too many ways of achieving a high profile of fashion leadership based upon the vast amount and speed of availability of fashion commodities. The latest fashion commodities are available to the market at the same time as the counterfeit products catering to lower budget customers. The result is that Thai fashion innovators, either those who are wealthy or others with lower disposable incomes, are not necessarily inspired to create and/or modify clothes for themselves. In the unlikely event that these small percentages of consumers need specially made clothing, there are numerous made-to-order/measure shops available at various levels of price and quality with very quick turnaround times. These fashion adopters can have clothing made quickly, either to their own design or as a reproduction from something seen in a magazine.

Appendix VI shows the hit fashions of 1960-1999 randomly selected from the fashion page of a well-known woman's magazine in Thailand, "Kwan Reun". After investigating and comparing Western fashions with Thai fashions, most of the Thai fashions appearing in Thai fashion magazines seem to be copies or adaptations of hit fashions from the West. The dresses were made by leading fashion boutiques, which also provide a made-to-order service in a similar way to the made-to-measure shops previously mentioned. Fashion enjoyment or fulfilment for Thai women is usually obtained by realising international hit fashion designs, which suit their taste and figure through made-to-order services. When there are so many easy ways and shortcuts to achieving fashion leadership, self-creativity of fashion innovators is less exercised and replication is the preferred route. The lesser concern with self-identity of Thai consumers is another issue, as discussed in the previous Chapter.

Unlike fashion innovators in Western societies like the UK, who try very hard to express their self-identity through fashion, Thai consumers do not. Economic forces exert differential pressures on the two socio-economic and cultural systems. For example, the price differential in the market for expensive cutting edge fashion commodities, combined with the illegality in the UK of cheap counterfeit products, means that British fashion innovators with low budgets are forced to create their ideal clothes for themselves. High budget innovators, on the other hand, can afford to purchase the unique cutting edge items. The diffusion of fashion, then, carries on through less fashion conscious consumers where commodities are manipulated to serve the less fashionable market. There can be seen to be a good balance between the supply from the British fashion industry and the demand of British consumers.

According to Armstrong (1999), O'Brien (1999) and the BBC television programme, "Cool-Hunter", broadcast on 7 and 14 November 2001, it can be said that fashion in the UK emerges from a group of cutting edge fashion innovators. Commercial fashion then starts with the second-class innovators, along with the availability of high fashion ready-to-wear commodities. The consumption of high fashion commodities is considered innovative by the second-class innovators. On the other hand, the first-class innovators initiate fashion concepts by creating fashion looks for themselves owing to the unavailability of the commodities they desire. "Cool-Hunter" revealed that many international fashion brands like Nike, Levi's and Phillips, are searching for future fashion concepts from these people, the first-class innovators. No first-class innovators are found in the survey in Bangkok. Fashion in Thailand starts when commercial fashion commodities become available to Thai consumers, with the exception (a tiny percentage) of bespoke (made-to-order) consumers previously mentioned.

9.1.6.3 Length of Fashion Diffusion within the Initial Process

Fashions in the UK gain popularity quicker than fashions in Thailand because in the UK the population of early fashion adopters is greater than in Thailand. On the other hand, in Thailand, when a fashion is accepted by innovators and early fashion adopters, the popularity of the fashion increases very quickly after an initial and rather long delay, resulting in a huge number of Thai fashion followers (64.2 %). Meanwhile, fashion take up in the UK will normally increase to a level of mass adoption at 50 %, or half of the fashion adopters. The statistic of 64.2 % of Thai fashion followers indicates that nearly two third of fashion adopters are fashion followers.

This is probably the reason that there are a lot of department stores and market stalls in

Thailand, especially in Bangkok, which provide mostly mass products for the mass consumers or fashion followers. In addition, most of the fashion products are made by domestic suppliers operating in either large or small factories.

9.2 Comparison of the Macro Level

The literature reviews in Chapter 8 explain the scenario of the development of Thai society, as well as the consumption phenomena initiated by the Thai middle-class. This sheds light on the differences of consumption between Western and Thai societies. From my point of view, the differences in class systems, the even and uneven roles of each class in consumption, and the distribution of income are all major factors, which dominate the mechanisms of all aspects of consumption. The perception of fashion is the result of these factors reflected through the historical context and the development of class throughout Thai history, relative to other class systems. The analysis, which follows focuses on the macro level of the middle-class impacts on consumption.

9.2.1 Class, Authority and the Reproduction of Self through Consumption

9.2.1.1 Class and Middle-Class Consumption

The class structure in Western society has long been developed to the point at which, for some, it seems to have reached its ideal state of balance. Inasmuch as the gap between each class in economic and cultural access terms is not too wide, the populations of each class are proportionately distributed to facilitate a functioning society. There does not appear to be any hindrance in theory to individual mobility between the classes, which indicates the potential for maintenance of a dynamic aspirant culture, by which is meant a society and culture which are evolutionary and progressive. This balanced proportionality between the classes will have advantages to some and disadvantages to others. For those who find themselves disadvantaged, the system may be seen as dysfunctional; however, for the majority, who are to a greater or lesser extent advantaged, the system will be seen as functional. Whatever the individual perception it has to be remembered that in the context of a representative democracy, the majority view is the one, which needs to be maintained. A minority can, however, be influential in the evolution of society and culture insofar as those who are regarded as the intelligentsia can come from any class and can operate at the margin. Any other powerful influences, such as that of a president or constitutional monarch, would be deemed democratic if they maintained

support for the majority view, and dictatorial if they did not.

By contrast, the class structure in Thailand is not as far developed towards the ideal described by the West as representing a state of balance according to Western criteria. Economic growth has greatly improved the incomes of the population across the country as a whole. In spite of inevitable unevenness in the distribution of incomes, rapid economic growth has raised a very significant proportion of the Thai population out of poverty, promoted others into a new middle-class, and transformed a small minority into the rich and famous (Beng-Hust, 2000).

At this point the class boundaries have become weaker and much looser than ever before in Thai history. Exceptional social mobility for some liberates limited power, not only for employment but also consumption. Consumption by the new rich in Thailand is accordingly the way to exercise and demonstrate the power of their new status, rather than consuming for basic needs. Beng-Hust (*ibid.*) further states that everywhere among the new middle-class, over-consumption is evident.

"The regional expansion of consumption coincided with the rapid globalisation of the marketing of "designer" consumer goods, which flooded the regional market. Everyone was transformed into a "walking billboard" of luxury brands ... Every act of consumption was by way of an announcement that the buyer had "arrived"."

(ibid.: p. xi-xii)

The over-consumption of the new rich merely signifies status but excludes self-expression in terms of personal taste, distinguished lifestyle, and any meaning in particular. We should remind ourselves that Thai society is conditioned by authority to act collectively: the personal for most Thai people is a secondary consideration. Personal preference becomes less dominant when compared with social preference and matters of taste as it relates to fashion consumption but also to many other aspects of life. Status acquisition generates what comes to be known as the "must-have" fashion item phenomenon. Social expansion of the middle-class keeps pace with the influx of foreign designer goods. Whatever item becomes a hit fashion, the majority of Thais "must have" it. Conformism is the underlying reason for its success. The conspicuous consumption of products symbolising wealth facilitates an atmosphere of status change opportunity, whether real or imagined (see Section 7.1). Imitating the consumption pattern of the higher class in any level of society gives rise to a feeling of upward movement (see Figure 3.5.1), whatever the practical problems of realising these feelings.

The "must-have" atmosphere instils in consumers a high degree of unreliability or

disloyalty or inconsistency in relation to any standard except status through consumption. Many international brand names, which achieved popularity among the Thai new rich were quickly devalued and dispensed with, failing to achieve brand loyalty status. In any economy, a supplier's fortunes ebb and flow, but in Thailand the period between the two can be exceptionally short, causing international brands to change premises and images in order to follow the crowd (see Section 8.2). Brand loyalty requires a commitment, which the nature of Thai society inhibits. Thai consumers never feel they belong to a brand's community. In other words, they do not consume fashion commodities because of the meaning attached to them through brand identity or lifestyle signified, rather their motivations are different.

The new rich consumption requires what society defines as "classy", "cool" and "must-have". Beng-Huat (*ibid.*) suggests that Thai consumers in the context of South-East Asia reconceptualise themselves from "passive automaton" to "active creator". This suggestion is to some extent contentious and not fully supported by the finding of this research, whereas I do agree with the point made that the consumer is an "active" participant when they can liberate their power through consumption to a pattern pursued with vigour. However, consumers, especially in the Thai context, actually become "passive" towards social preferences as well as marketing strategy. In summary, it can be said that Thai individuals are dominated by their society in terms of their preference, lifestyle, choice, desire and taste. Consumption in Thailand is determined by social preferences as the facilitator of common spirituality. The "reconceptualisation of themselves" referred to is only partial and fleeting, because in reality they do not exercise individual choice as understood in the Western context.

To develop the analysis, the Thai fashion industry has been dominated by the West since "fashion" was introduced to Thai society as a way of modernising the country (see Section 8.1). This domination has continuously led not only to Thai society looking to the West for its evolution but has also affected the way in which fashion suppliers and the retail industries are constituted (the infrastructure of fashion supply). The transformation of the Thai economy and the impact on the social system, which followed it took Thailand from its former feudalism to contemporary capitalism. Regarding the market-led policy of governments in the industrial era, all have allowed Thailand to freely develop economic conditions that support the current industry. Thailand created macroeconomic conditions with a rich array of trade institutions to finance operations, spread risks and encourage entrepreneurship, resulting in one of the world's most rapidly expanding textile and garment industries (Unger, 1998).

The abandonment of domestic demand during the boom time was the major factor, which

created and perpetuates the domination of Western suppliers over and within the Thai retail system. The domestic market was and is led by imported goods. The mid- to high market is mainly supplied by imported merchandise, while the lower is shared by a number of domestic suppliers who simulate foreign commodities. Just as the social change from feudalism to capitalism allowed a Thai middle-class to emerge and allowed people to move into the upper classes, so class mobility has been reflected in the expression of power, i.e., consumption, dressing and behaviour reflected through objects. Thai industry, the supply infrastructure and system are all in place to facilitate social change. The ultimate goal, motive and desire of Thai people is merely confirmation of "status" manifested in the appearance of Western modernity. Inevitably, Western and imported commodities have become icons of "high status". Status-mania mediated by Western and imported goods in Thailand has been boosted and stimulated by fashion suppliers and buyers. Domestic manufacturers and importers/suppliers responses have resulted in the emergence of counterfeit goods and imitative design at the margins of middle and lower market levels. Thailand has notoriously been the world's biggest producer of fake commodities.

"Malls and markets are filled with objects which cannot be authenticated. Eight local and international organizations named Thailand as the world's biggest producer of counterfeit goods, with Italy coming in second. French luggage and fashion accessories are the main target of counterfeiters who copy the kind of luxury products that the Thai elite have been bringing back from Europe since the turn of the century."

(Esterik, 2000: p. 123)

Esterik further argues that "European items were easily adopted as markers of status by royalty, the elite and increasingly by middle-class urban and rural households". Esterik directly criticises the link between the establishment of Western fashion icons via superior social status and the resultant diffusion through local availability.

The influx of newly imported fashion diffuses through the Thai fashion industry in the form of fashion commodities. Fashion, in the perception of Thai society, is as an object of status, taste, aesthetic discrimination and power of consumption. The imitation of new fashion forms can be found as soon as these become symbolic markers of elite status (ibid.). Louis Vuitton and Kipling counterfeit products, as mentioned earlier, together with other well-known brands are readily available in a general shopping plaza.

The perception of fashion as an object by Thai fashion suppliers and consumers can be observed at two levels of the supplier and retailer scales. On the first level, TGMA¹

employed foreign designers to produce original fashion collections for presentation at the Bangkok International Fashion Trade Fair in the mid-1990s. The purpose of this exercise was to stimulate fashion commissioners from abroad to appreciate the competence and flexible capability of the manufacturers to produce contemporary fashion commodities. Members of TGMA facilitated their production and materials. The collection was superbly shown. However, there was no "fashion" attached to the collection, as those items were designed to follow the market and to be a prototype of commodification capability of each sponsored manufacturer. The employment of foreign designers was intended to showcase Thai fashionability, however this was not really achieved because the international buyers could not see the fashion concept embodied in the collection. Instead, the buyers realised the potential of Thai manufacture in terms of higher quality standards and improved materials. This may have been because Thai manufacturers were not accustomed to creating "design briefs" and/or managing the design and innovation process.

The second level in the retail sector can be observed through the Thai media and fashion consumption through fashion information. Thai fashion magazines usually report the latest fashion trends with a multiplicity of pictures of Western designers' catwalks. When the iconic fashion is supplemented by verbal description referring only to form and colour, fashion is constructed in terms of features and appearances rather than of fashion themes or subjective feeling underlying the trendy fashion items.

9.2.1.2 Social Hegemony and Authority

The previous section alluded to the incomplete semiological process in fashion adoption in Thailand. According to the Fashion Translation Process Model created in Chapter 7, Thai consumers do not exercise their fashion consumption in the same way as Westerners do. The complete semiological process of Western consumers' self-expression through fashion lies in individuals' responses to social issues.

It is the awareness or interest in the atmosphere of present currents of social movement, surrounded by the evolving perception of aesthetic and ethical values and goals responded to by individuals, which is missing from the Thai perception of fashion. Ironically, it is this very aspect of fashion, which originates what becomes the fashion icon over time, and which the Thai consumer adopts without knowledge or interest. This strongly suggests that the trickle-down theory has considerable significance in the Thai fashion system.

From evaluating the situation described, three points emerge:

- fashion for Thai consumers is not a true medium of individual self-expression;
- there is a specific manner in which Thai individuals exhibit their goals, motives and desires; and
- there may or may not be a semiological process hidden in fashion interaction with consumers.

The research so far indicates that status acquisition via the consumption of fashion is the major factor, which drives Thai individuals to consume fashion, regardless of the meanings attached to commodities by suppliers. The lack of awareness or interest in social issues encoded into commodities imported from or originated in the West paves the way for the dominance in Thai society of fashion as object, resulting in a "pragmatic fashion phenomenon"^d. It is an acceptance of the direction of social norms without any curiosity or desire to influence them through individual action.

Belief or acceptance without question is a reflection of social "authority". Thai people have been governed by a central authority manifested in the king or monarch. Although in the relatively recent past authority has been partly devolved to a representative democratic system in which the monarch maintains some powers of veto, total political liberation is some way off. As mentioned earlier in the literature reviews, for instance, Prime Minister Phibun Songkhram imposed new ways of socialised behaviour, etiquette and dressing. "Faith in the leader" was the strategy hidden in the nationalism campaign, eventually embedded in the heart of Thai society.

"... a common theme in the Asian transition it is that the state has generally played a central role. The new rich in Asia emerge, not from societies where the tradition of the urban burgher and merchant and trade guilds were strong, ... but from agrarian pre-capitalist and colonial bureaucracies and sometimes from communist party rule."

(Robison and Goodman, 1996: p.4)

This theme is further amplified by Robison and Goodman (ibid.) that the state has acted as a midwife of capitalism in the way in which it has provided the political conditions for the flourishing of the new middle-class.

Many aspects of everyday life in Thailand, including education, politics, art, religion, ritual, etc., are manifestations of transmitted "authority". Hierarchical systems, either at the macro level, such as social class and social environment, or the micro level, such as the family unit and the relationship between teacher and pupils, is where authority is implicitly embodied.

Social interaction among members of Thai society is not purely about an interpersonal contact in a group as occurs in the West (see Chapter 7). It is rather that Thai people directly conform or interact with the social norm or social authority as a first priority and interact between individuals as a second priority. The powerful cultural frame over Thai individuality becomes another conflict that all Thai individuals experience. The force of social conformity makes life difficult for Thai individuals as it is attached to a package of gesture, desire and attitude. The conflict creates ambivalence in the macro-scale in which the process of solving the conflict in this level could be called "negotiation with society". In a smaller scale, i.e. a social circle, human ambivalence emerges as the same as it is explained in the Western fashion process model, consisting of two separate processes, namely "negotiation with others" and "negotiation with self".

To recap, Thai people have 3 negotiation stages in their responses within social ambivalence, namely;

- negotiation with others (objective social interaction through fashion objects) (see also Section 5.1.3);
- negotiation with society (subjective social interaction with social authority);
- negotiation with self (see also Section 5.1.4).

The domination of Thai society over individuality is the major force prescribing the absence or suppression of individual subjectivity (see Section 8.1.5.4).

To exemplify the issue of social authority in respect of imperatives, a recent observation of cosmetic commodities in a leading Thai woman's magazine revealed that the common significance or social appreciation of women's complexion is "white", signifying the Western icon authoritative dictum. Of 15 advertisements for make-up commodities in the same magazine, 14 have a common hot spot campaign labelled "whitening", while the other one targeted skin treatment. The cosmetics were all Western originated and branded products representing a transient Western fashion statement, which paradoxically was concerned with the issue of decadence images, promoting health care. In terms of Western culture, this paradox represents a complexity of post-modern discourses, whereas in Thailand the issue was dark complexion bad, not progressive, non-status: white complexion good, wealthy, healthy status.

Regarding Figure 3.5.1, "the upward movement of status-symbolic consumption patterns" explains the consumption process of the lower class adopting the "consumption pattern" of the upper class, while fashion commodities are provided in relation to market level within Western culture. In the case of Thailand by contrast, Thai consumers adopt Western

fashion commodities rather than adopt their consumption pattern. It can be noticed that Thai consumers use the imported fashion items but in different consumption patterns.

Because society imposes a ready package of gesture, symbol, motive, and goal, the process of interpretation and negotiation among individuals can be omitted. The manners and objectivity through which individuals exhibit their goals and motives are also delivered within the frame of authority. Meanings attached to fashion commodities are, therefore, ignored at the beginning of the adoption stage. Commodities are purchased because of their suitability for social definition, or are significant for social aspiration. The way Thai people utilise fashion commodities is, therefore, detached from what the designer may have suggested or encoded into the products.

9.2.2 Production of the Fashion Context

This section discusses an aspect of the limitations of how Thai people exercise and reproduce the fashion context.

Although fashions usually originate from the West, especially the world fashion capitals, and are diffused throughout the rest of the world at a later stage, their concepts are consumed, reproduced and exercised in different ways.

"A shirt or skirt bought as a part of an expedition to the big city can have a quite different personal meaning from an identical item bought locally or over the Internet."

(Gilbert, 2000: p. 11)

Foreign fashions in Thailand are not well exercised. Their symbolic meanings are not recognised, accepted or given credence because of the domination of social authority. Commensurate with this is the lack of social space.

Social space in the view of Gilbert (ibid.) refers to shopping space. Indeed, experiences of shopping in significant sites might be valued more than the commodities themselves (see discussion about brand identity and its community in Chapter 7). Shopping sites become the most extreme and delusional forms of commodity fetishism. Gilbert seems to be suggesting that the delusional forms of commodity fetishism when considering fashion are in reality the myth underpinning brand identity. This might have a particular relevance to our understanding of the "negotiation with others" in the micro-objective realm, which is missing from the Thai fashion consumption process.

Figure 3.4.4C shows comparison curves between acquisition and use of fashion. This refers to the fact that fashion consumption consists of two stages: acquisition and use. The acquisition, especially from fashion outlets surrounded with the symbolic significance of brand identity and the atmosphere of brand community, is the process of "negotiation with others". Fashion brands act as sub-cultural communities where consumers are able to negotiate their position in that virtual sub-society through the commodities of the brands.

A heterogeneous range of brands, or styles or outlets can be found in London high streets. These are potentially available for all segmented consumers. Bangkok, as mentioned earlier, is dominated by department stores and shopping plazas filled with a limited selection of imported goods which are copied by local producers, thereby maintaining rather than augmenting the limited range of styles available. Superficially it might appear that both shopping resources are the same, a kind of international standard; however, under closer inspection the London high street has heterogeneity, whereas the Bangkok shopping plaza has homogeneity.

The acquisition of the fashion object is one thing, but in fact, there is another side of the coin in fashion consumption, namely, the use or practice of fashion through a fashion object (Nystrom, 1928). It is at this stage that the process of "negotiation with self" takes place. Fashion communication is fully functioning when consumers wear, use, practice and exercise their expression through fashion objects.

Fashion emerges within a parameter of factors including time and place. Out-of-date fashion items worn by laggards cannot be fully functioning in terms of communication because of the time lag. Fashion objects must be used to express at the right time. Evidence of this imperative can be noticed in the volumes of discounted garments from the immediately preceding season, which are out of the time frame.

Place is another significant factor in the constituting individuals' relationship between their practices and identity formation (Crewe and Beaverstock, 1988). London can be considered one of the perfect sites of fashion practices due to certain circumstantial factors:

- London is a cosmopolitan city with mixed races and cultures, where fashion practitioners feel less constraint than in their original cultural frame;
- there are many specific spaces for particular sub-cultures;
- there are also many special events created for people to participate and exercise their fashion expression.

Bangkok, by contrast, lags behind in terms of public space availability for its residents, particularly for young people. Consumerism dominates the Thais' lifestyle, and indiscriminate consumption has become a constitutive element of their everyday life (Beng-Huat, 2000). The significant public spaces in Bangkok are only department stores and plazas.

"Department stores have become the parks of Bangkok, with fast-food outlets, mini-movies theatres, fashion stores and discount merchandisers providing much entertainment for the population. As air-conditioned pleasure-domes, evenings and weekends see them filled to overflowing with family groups and young people, dressed in the latest youth fashions, who meet in the fast-food shops."

(Hewison, 1997: p. 151)

Although department stores provide some small public space within the shopping centre, those spaces are usually used for commercial promotion of new merchandise launches (Vanaspong, 1997). There is accordingly limited access for use determined by the public. Other public spaces usual in Western society, such as art galleries, museums, parks and so on, are not available as spaces for the exercise of fashion. Bangkok night-life, which might have been another available space, is a leisure activity and the space is notoriously dominated by the sex industry. Recently, however, some new areas of night-life entertainment for young people, such as pubs, clubs and karaoke bars have become available. Unfortunately, these youth night-life businesses are now restricted by a rigid government policy called "reordering society" in order to control the level of drug sales and inappropriate sex. The regulatory framework established to implement this new policy restricts age range, opening and closing entry time, limits drinks, and bans drugs and prostitution. The policing and penalties are very strictly enforced. The limitation of social space and opportunity to exercise young people's subjectivities in public space is controlled by state regulation. This is significant to the discussion, because young middle-class fashion consumers are confined by circumstance and lack of space to the orthodoxy of authority.

A notorious example of confinement by circumstantial social orthodoxy was the youth public space, which was in the first instance sanctioned by social norms, known as "Centre Point". This was a shopping space for teenagers in the heart of Bangkok. It was not intentionally destined to become a boom place, but had an appropriate atmosphere, due partly to its hidden location between two buildings within a vast shopping area, which satisfied teenagers as a small, semi-closed community. It became a good place for young people to exercise their fashion, as the space was not too much exposed to the general public. A huge number of teenagers dressed in creative styles, some of which could be

considered cutting edge, would gather there. Many of them changed into their weird dress in a public toilet before entering Centre Point. Their activities were no more than a liberation of their creative design ability and their initial expression of developing sexuality. It was at this place that a particular type of fashion emerged and its fashionability spread through a large sector of Thai urban society. It was also a place where "first class fashion innovators" within Thai society could be found. The fashions that emerged from Centre Point were rapidly regarded by the authorities as indecent because too much was revealed of the teenage body (see Figure 9.2.2) and the space also became notorious as a meeting place for minority groups such as homosexuals.

It became a big controversial issue, exploited by all types of media. At a later stage the reality of the self-expressive sexual liberation of young people, which each generation must grow through, was subjected to a hysterical campaign of distortion implying drug use and prostitution (Bangkok Post, 2000). Centre Point eventually came under police surveillance, its popularity declined and it is no longer an available space.



Figure 9.2.2: Centre Point, Bangkok

The incident discussed in the above paragraphs reveals both social and state authorities' attitudes towards the use of public space. The lack of public space and the opportunity to freely exercise fashion within it may be considered to be a radical impediment to the emergence of regional fashion.

The arrangements for social space and encouragement of activities and use of it are fundamental to the emergence and proliferation of fashion because it is usually led by the young. The production of fashion context is accordingly dependent on the availability of appropriate public space that tends to encourage fashion consumers to participate and communicate, either at an interpersonal or intergroup level.

9.3 Construction of the Conceptual Model of the Thai Fashion Process

A conceptual model for the fashion industry in Thailand is presented in this Section to describe the whole scenario of the fashion process.

As mentioned earlier, the Thai fashion system should be considered a subset of the Western fashion system. The long domination by Western culture manifested in fashion styles imported into Thailand should over time have resulted in there being no alternative fashion style, i.e., a total adoption of both Western culture and its manifestation in fashion styles. However, based on the assumption of diverse social responses (see Section 5.1.1.1), "anti-conformity" is one source from which possible social responses can emanate, which could play a leading role in resisting the total adoption of both Western culture and its manifestations.

"Conformity" and "concealment" are the major social responses that lead Thai society to accept the influences of imported fashion. "Modification", on the other hand, is so ambiguous that it can either be viewed as conformity, concealment or even anti-conformity.

The above ground theory can be used to argue that Thai society might not be completely hegemonised by the West. Thailand as a subset of the Western fashion system differs in the way in which its appearance simulates Western fashion, but its function in so doing is a response to the four diverse reactions possible.

The literature review in Chapter 8 supports this idea in its conclusion that "superficially Western and essentially Oriental" represents external conformity and internal modification. In short, Thai fashion superficially changes towards or along the Western direction in fashion, but the internal modification is different. This means that the Fashion Transformation Process Model for Western society cannot precisely explain the mechanism of the fashion transformation process in Thailand. The necessity is, therefore, to construct another transformation process model for the Thai fashion process.

9.3.1 Construction of the Thai Fashion Transformation Process Model

The model is constructed by using the same four fundamental divisions, which applied in the construction of the Western fashion process model. These are the macro-, micro-subjective, and the macro-, micro-objective realms, respectively.

9.3.1.1 Macro-Objective Realm

From the literature in Chapter 8, it can be argued that the Thai fashion process starts from the macro-objective level. This is because the historical context suggests that it is at this advanced stage of Western fashion and culture importation that Thai society's readiness to adopt has been so reinforced by its governing forces that it would be unthinkable to reject the adoption of Western fashion and culture. Historically, adoption of the commodities of Western civilisation was seen as a mechanism for resisting colonisation, especially in the era of Kings Rama IV, V, VI and Prime Minister Phibun Songkhram. Decrees, either by propaganda or by law, legitimised Western looks and abandoned indigenous Thai styles. It became the starting point of a totally new socio-cultural impact on Thai people. Fashion suppliers initiated the process with Western or foreign imported commodities.

In the contemporary Western fashion model, the process begins at the micro-subjective level, which is the individuals' signal of future needs.

It is important to remember that the macro-objective level is the third stage in the contemporary Western fashion model. It is at this stage, where fashion suppliers grasp social needs and interpret the diverse social responses into concepts of fashion trends for the process of commodification that the two cultures deviate.

Due to these clusters of lifestyle trends having been interpreted by Western suppliers, Thai fashion importers and suppliers can skip stages one and two of the Western model. The process is actualised by imported trends and commodities. In other words, importation of fashion trends to Thailand is not responding to domestic consumers. The fashion objects are introduced with tangible concepts of fashion forms.

Since Thai suppliers in this instance are not manufacturers but importers, they do not need to interpret the symbolic significance of new global lifestyles. Other suppliers who are manufacturers, likewise do not concern themselves with the initiation of symbolic significance. The process by which a Thai designer narrates his "signified" concept through fashion commodities as "signifiers" can be omitted. In fact, Thai leading designers get inspiration from these ready made "shapes and forms" of new fashions and just vary their designs to suit their markets.

Baudrillard (1980) referred to fashion as a "compulsion to innovate signs ... apparently arbitrary and perpetual production of meaning - a kind of meaning drive". Fashion in the Thai context, on the other hand, can be said to be a kind of popular "shape and form

drive". With a shallow use of sign and symbol in the design process, popular shapes and forms are found across the heterogeneous range of fashion goods available in the Thai market. In other words, Thai consumers usually respond to a popular object, form or shape regardless of its classified market or Western social value signification.

The lack of initial response by fashion design to inherent domestic social issues and lifestyle has synchronised with the development of the orientation of the textile and garment industry towards exports. The abandoning of domestic supply for the high market has widened not only the gap between high and low markets but also the value of fashion designed by domestic designers. The uneven development of domestic fashion supply gives the fashionability of their product little importance. The effect is that Thai fashion suppliers and designers tend to follow Western fashion as a prototype. This following of Western fashion can be found in various forms, including following a style, making variations on an imported original design, mimicking or copying, and faking products.

The sufferers in this internal diffusion process are not only high-fashion importers but also some leading Thai suppliers, for instance Jim Thompson, the most famous Thai silk manufacturing and retail company. Due to the limited number of dyeing and printing factories in Thailand, almost all printed fabric designs are produced utilising the same printing factories. Many print designs of Jim Thompson are copied by the lower market suppliers, who may introduce small changes in the colour scheme, sometimes using the same silk-screen blocks.

The copying habit has long been established in order to secure sales, but it reflects two major aspects of market conformity. Firstly, due to the fact that the market had plenty of growth potential, manufacturers felt it unnecessary to develop future markets. There was thus less concern to adjust or improve their capability, quality and design. Secondly, there has been a lack of research and development and especially in-house design capability in the firms. It was the fortunate situation for the industry in Thailand that fashion commodities sold regardless of design ability. Also, design input as interpretation of social meaning was not a feature in a market whose requirement was primarily for object shape and form.

9.3.1.2 Micro-Objective Realm

The above discussion of a "shape and form driven" fashion industry which serves popular taste by providing garments similar to those of proven sale success is a significant feature of "market-led" policy and is driven by established trends. Indeed, those companies who

employ designers do so to adjust their brand concept or style to suit the direction of fashion trends rather than initiate fashion to lead the market.

The structure of retailing in Thailand can be found in two systems that parallel each other. The difference between the two retail systems is the level of brand value. The first level and major structure is shown in Figure 8.2.3A, which leads the high market through high-fashion imports. This level is followed by the high-street fashion imports together with leading Thai brands. The lower market, in contrast, is shared among Thai domestic producers. This retail structure encompasses proper brand policy, targets particular markets, and attempts to annex imported brand concepts.

The market-led fashion process can be exemplified in Thailand by a huge number of market stalls found in most shopping plazas in Bangkok, which sell locally-made popular fashion garments and which are not innovative. The parallel retail system includes small retail businesses, which attempt to serve all levels of fashion goods whether imported or domestically produced. Thai fashion consumers with lower disposable incomes eagerly purchase the latest fashion commodities, reinterpreted to the required price point, with no need for brand values (copied or fake products). Their commercial policies are quick turn around, low price, in trend fashion and rare products that are unavailable locally. Market stalls are able to cater for fashionable product demand at the same time as the international brands do because of the rapid turn around times.

It is in this retail system that consumers can buy fashion items that are not available in the franchise fashion outlets, or fashionable items that are copied and very similar to original designs but reasonably priced, or fake branded goods. It is also in this system that consumers can behave like "fashion innovators". They differ, however, from their Western counterparts inasmuch as they use affordable items to exhibit their leadership in fashion through high and quick consumption.

Since the commodification and design processes do not recognise local inherent demands and domestic social trends, commodities pass through the retail system with a full complement of Western signifying schemes. Communication from brands to consumers is therefore shallow in its focus on tangible concepts of global issues, but deeply promotes the goods in terms of status and class (shape and form drive).

Fashion perception in Thai sensibility is not concerned much with signified concepts provided by the products and brands. Instead, Thai consumers purchase fashion garments because new fashion items are newer, more modern, fresher, and internationally more popular than the previous style, regardless of the suitability to their

personal styles, codes or meanings. The more friends and/or people in the buying circle, the greater the stimulus to produce the commodities.

Brand loyalty in Thailand is often weaker than the impulse for fashionability. The status of Louis Vuitton decreased considerably when Kipling reached its peak of popularity. The Louis Vuitton case supports the view of the dominance of the status impulse in Thai consumption patterns. When Louis Vuitton, one of the most expensive handbags, became a "must-have item", particularly for female university students, those who possessed it were considered to be high class and tasteful. The shifting taste from Louis Vuitton to Kipling bags is an example that reflects the erratic fashion perception changes in fashion purchasing behaviour, which sometimes goes to extremes. The Kipling monkey bag was described in the previous Chapter.

It is important to remind ourselves that this stage is equivalent to the micro-objective realm in the Western fashion process, which is classified as "negotiation with others". At this stage, fashion brands provide symbolic meanings through their seasonal advertising campaigns, which suggest gestures and lifestyle concepts through the use of their commodities. Consumers deal with commodities in order to select the best description of their status, role, social issue interest and communication function, which synchronises with their position in society.

The purchasing behaviour of Thai people, on the other hand, is less concerned with the communication function and social issues that attach to fashion goods and more concerned about a good, classy look and reflection of status. In this context, the fashion process equivalent stage in Thailand lacks the major part of the semiotic mechanism from the very beginning. Simultaneously, on the demand side Thai consumers do not require much symbolic function apart from appearance and status. This can be labelled as "negotiation with status" rather than "negotiation with others", and also classified as solely a sociological process. Although the global issues which are attached to imported fashion trends are a minor part of semiotic response/recognition or impact in the choice and take up of fashion items, the degree of negotiation with them is greater than the excluded local issue. Thai people are, then, inevitably dealing with "others", which in this sense is the "global issues" of what constitutes class and status in the world.

9.3.1.3 The Macro-Subjective Realm

In moving through the Fashion Transformation Process Model, this Section is concerned with the objective to subjective level, and other differences begin to emerge. According to

the Western fashion process, the following stage, which is the micro-subjective level, is "negotiation with self". It is at this subjective stage that ambivalence appears at both social and individual levels. People arrive at their solution of how to react to a new social interest. Western individualities tend to be subjectively independent in their thought and behaviour from social influences. On the other hand, Thai individuality is dependent upon social authority. In other words, Thai subjectivity is submissive towards social influences. Thai people are more careful of the cultural frame and social order; they tend not to be subversive.

In this account, accordingly, at this point the fashion process in Thailand moves from the micro-objective realm to the macro-subjective realm, unlike the Western fashion process, which moves from the micro-objective realm to the micro-subjective realm.

As mentioned above, Thai society as a whole is a consensus force, which responds to the imported social ambivalence emerging from a new fashion trend. In other words, the current around social responses, known as a "social trend", emerges in reaction to the incoming trend from abroad en masse. Thai people respond to the cultural ambivalence in diverse ways, corresponding to the major four possible reactions shown in Figure 5.1.1C, Chapter 5. Similar to the Western model, a cluster of social trends is transformed into a cluster of lifestyles, including conformity, anti-conformity, concealment and modification. These lifestyles, formed by the social responses, suggest or pave ways for Thais as individuals to act upon what is appropriate.

9.3.1.4 The Micro-Subjective Realm

According to Section 9.2.1.2, the process of negotiation with self of Thai individuals consists of three steps which are: negotiation with social authority, negotiation with others, and negotiation with self. The process changes from the macro-subjective, offering a ready made package of gesture, defined taste, appreciated form, etc to micro-subjective. It is at this stage in the Western Fashion Process Model that human ambivalence occurs and needs to be negotiated through two psychological tendencies: differentiating force and socialising force. Instead, Thai individuals encounter a less ambivalent situation because society has already defined what is appropriate with a suggested package of goals, motives and desires. The only minor task that Thai individuals need to sort out is to match up their preferences with bundles of commodity choices.

Thai fashion innovators, as discussed in Section 9.1.6.2, act as an active fashion leader rather than innovator in the sense of creativity, and they are the first persons who respond

to social issues. Their earlier consumption of new fashion contributes to the fashion process as the initiator of adoption. Their differentiating force is merely to separate their looks from the previous fashion. Instead of giving a signal for new change or a new issue, the Thai fashion innovator group is not able to signify any further direction of future socio-mood because way to their response to the fashion is paved by society and their consumption is merely about speed and level of adoption. Neither does their consumption respond to domestic social issues. The fashion process then ends and a new fashion process begins again at the macro-objective realm with a new cargo of Western images. This situation can be recognised in the rapid changes of fashion (merchandise) in the Thai markets, regardless of the seasonal collection of Western fashion culture.

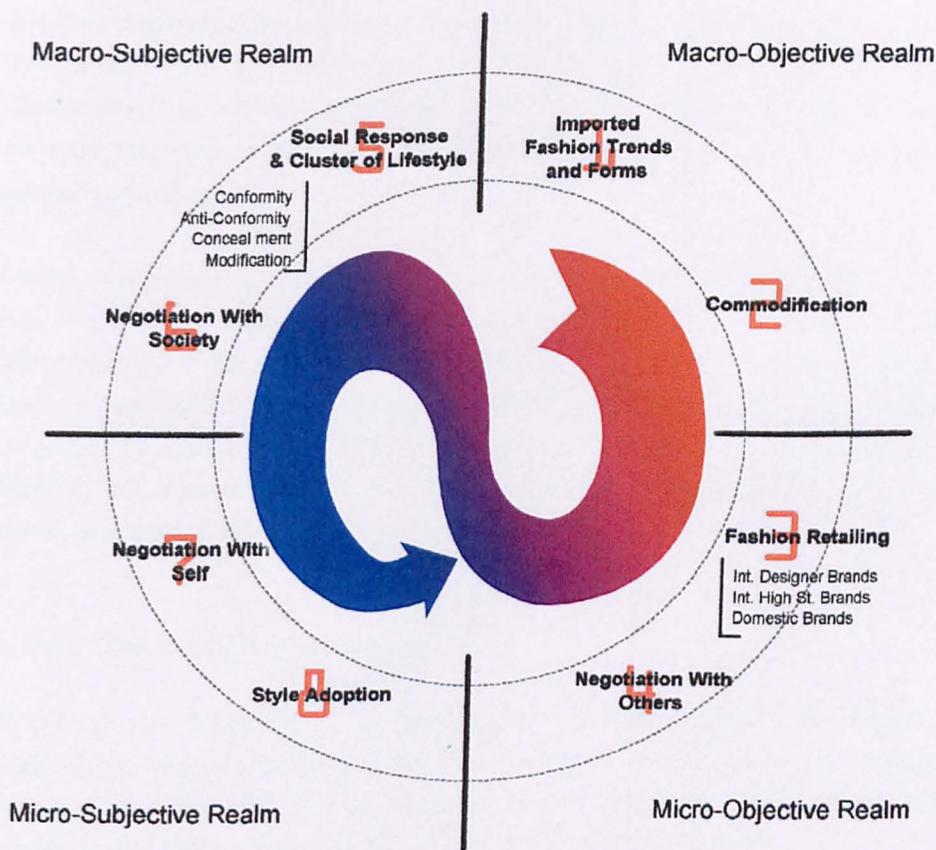


Figure 9.3.1: Thai Fashion Change Process

Figure 9.3.1 shows the eight-step process of fashion transformation of Thai society, starting from macro-objective to micro-objective, shifting to macro-subjective and ending at micro-subjective.

9.4 Strategies

The ultimate aim of this thesis is to create a conceptual model for the apparel industry in Thailand, which will focus on domestic origination. The emergence of domestic fashion has to take the above mentioned six fashion change-agents into account. At the same time, literature reviews and empirical studies suggest that the Thai fashion system lacks innovation either by consumers or by suppliers, since both are passive to Western fashion, commodity and marketing strategies. Meanwhile, the Fashion Translation Process model suggests that Thai fashion diffusion and adoption lack a complete process of semiology and their process starts from the objective realm.

It is accordingly my prime concern to insert some strategies to enhance and maximise the "semiological zone" in the Thai fashion process as shown in Figure 9.4.1. The following conclusion will be discussed and linked to the roles of change-agents together with the activities that lead to and enhance the emergence of "innovation" and true fashion symbolic interaction.

Finally, as this thesis is undertaken from the supplier side that attempts to attain a holistic view of the fashion system, in which consumers and society are categorised as the major factors in fashion changes, the strategic suggestions in the following conclusion are the ideal concepts for the Thai fashion suppliers as if they have virtual authority to manipulate or reorient the system. The aim is to find a way in which they are able to penetrate market share at the top-end market and in the end are able to originate their own fashion significance that ultimately serves domestic needs and desires.

9.4.1 The Subjective Realm

One of the main arguments of this thesis is that Thai social authority hegemonises the social norm, condition, perception and also expression of individualism or subjectivity (Esterik, 2000). The idea that social action plays a significant role in the innovation process is supported by Borras (2002), and Sundbo and Fuglsang (2002).

"First, by setting the context where innovation takes place through important public functions like regulation, the generation of knowledge, the element of connectivity. And second, by inducing a collective reflexive process where a self-perception of the innovation system/context can emerge."

(Borras, 2002: p. 223)

Indeed, the postulate provided in the literature reviews in Section 9.2 supports the idea that the constituting of individual self-perception of innovation is shaped by the process of negotiation between individual and social context. This process resembles the process of "negotiation with others" in the conceptual model. In slightly different detail, the latter is forced by the need and in order to internally balance the two psychological impulses and the purpose of negotiation is to position oneself in society. The former, on the other hand, is aimed solely at differentiating.

However, the above principle suggests that the degree of innovation in Thai society, in this case, the innovative expression of fashion innovators, can be varied depending upon the social context and the intensity of social authority. In the light of this principle, social authority can actually contribute an encouraging atmosphere, instead of discouraging innovative competencies. The mechanism can be enhanced in either of the following ways:

- By reducing social authority
- By enhancing interpersonal communication.

9.4.1.1 Reducing Social Authority

Social authority is the primary and major condition that authorises or facilitates the process of innovation. Social authority, according to Section 9.2, consists of state control and a cultural frame. The cultural frame is the more difficult condition to change, as it is constituted by a collective formation. State control, on the other hand, is dependent upon state policy, as exemplified in Section 8.2, and is more easily implemented. During the economic boom of the 1980s, state policy shaped the macro-economic conditions that directed the development of the textile and garment industry into a passive-role world-supplier. Likewise, "Reordering Thai society", as mentioned in Section 9.2.3, controlled or shaped the way young people exercised their leisure time. Rules, regulation and policy are the means through which social authority is able to dominate innovative activities at different levels, as well as limiting and setting standards, roles and gestures for individuals in dealing with social issue.

If the Thai government or society understands this significant point and reduces or balances its role and regulation, this could contribute greatly and encourage innovative activities.

The best way to encourage the formation of innovative fashion is to provide "space" and "activities" for individuals to exercise their innovative expression and collectively form the

so-called "fashion". Social space and activity provide conditions for collectivities to gather to form a subculture. In fact, if a society consists of diverse subcultural groups, this is likely in any case to reduce social authority, because the responses of these groups are unlikely to be unified. This also creates a heterogeneous cultural living style, providing abundance of marketing opportunities, and in turn creating innovative activities for individuals in the forming of self-subjectivity.

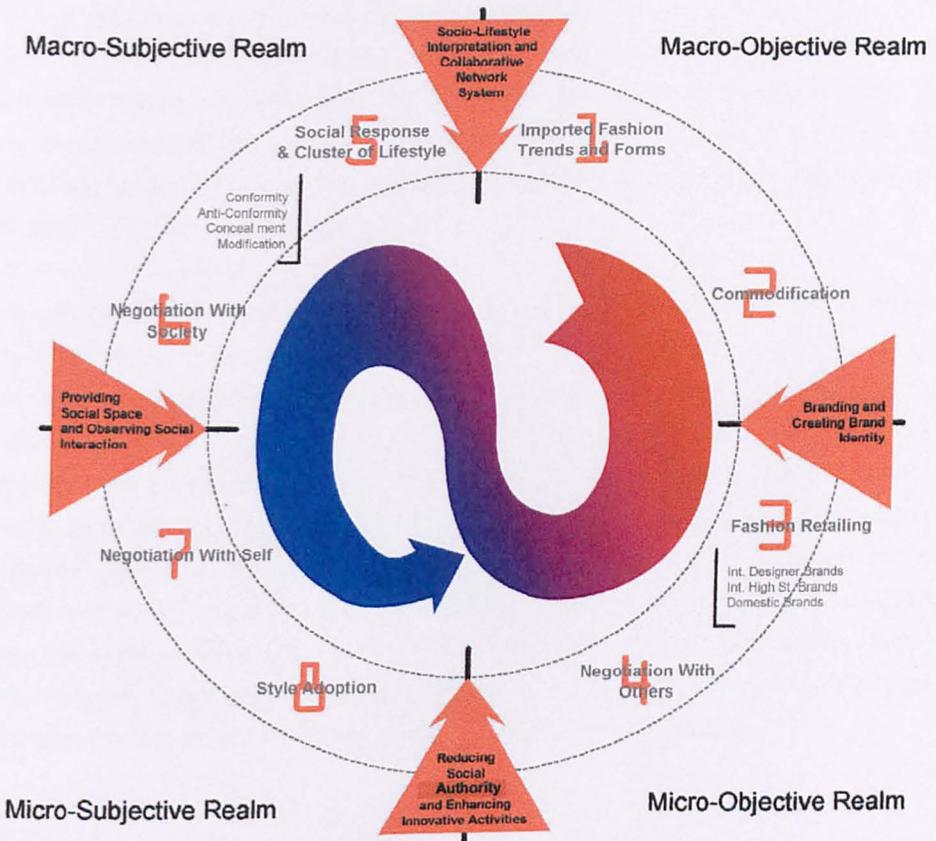


Figure 9.4.1: The Thai Fashion Process Model with Strategies

Fashion, then, would be produced by members of society and would proliferate through the fashion practitioners who use fashion as a means of constituting their self-subjectivity relative to their subcultural lifestyles.

9.4.1.2 Enhancing Interpersonal Communication

In Section 8.1, fashion was proliferated when King Rama VI encouraged his people to have a more socialising lifestyle. Balls, parties, the theatre, clubs, etc., were not just social spaces, but also activities that people could use as an "excuse" to dress up and display

their individual style. Among Thailand's Asian neighbours, fashion in Hong Kong is one of the most rapidly changing and fully exploited areas of consumption due to the abundance of outdoor social activities and events. Hong Kong's higher class have long enjoyed dressing luxuriously at the colonial clubs and horse races, where the middle-class like to socialise outside their own homes owing to the lack of indoor living space. A huge variety of activities are supported by society and the government.

Thai individuals need not only social space but also a heterogeneous range of social activities where people can arrange themselves into subcultural groups. Bangkok is full of shopping spaces where people can initiate the vital acquisition of fashion, but these spaces cannot perfectly act as space to process their "use" of fashion. In the light of this principle, fashion cannot be investigated, only its consumption, which refers solely to the acquisition of fashion commodities.

Interpersonal, interconnection and communication among members of a subcultural group are functions and also results of the production of fashion entity. When we take account of the factors of adopting time and categories of adopter, fashion emergence needs initiatives. Fashion innovators are the initiators and needed to be encouraged with opportunities to express their attitudes towards new social issues. Social space thus needs activities for heterogeneous ranges of people, cultural organisations need to stimulate them with new social events, issues, activities, etc. This is the way to create social interaction, where individuals will arrange themselves into their subgroups with a common sense of belonging, resulting in the confidence to form their tribe's characters and manners. These results require a decreasing of social and state authority in order to enhance the "negotiation with others" and "negotiation with self" stages.

9.4.2 The Objective Realm

The literature reviews develop the notion that the fashion process in Thailand starts with the importation of foreign ideas of new fashion in the form of tangible concepts such as fashion form, silhouette, texture, line, colour, etc. This means that Thai fashion suppliers process the commodification without any realisation of real domestic needs. They are passive to external innovation, resulting in the need to import innovation continually and perpetually.

Thai fashion suppliers need to build a system of "innovation" that involves two layers of activities. First is an internal collaboration among supply firms and between firms and institutions such as the Thai Fashion Brand Association and a governmental organisation.

I suggest setting up "design management" as a flexible collaborative network among the above, with the ultimate aim of maximising design innovation at every step of the commodification process (see Section 8.2.4). The innovation in fashion design should not be focussed solely on fashion designer, but should be implemented in both the up-stream and down-stream industries, from fibre to yarn, fabric, finishing, printing, garment assembly and garment finishing. This kind of network can create not only innovative quality in design but also in the supply chain system.

Secondly, fashion suppliers need to be good observers and sub-society creators at the same time. Suppliers need to keep monitoring social movements and public actions and to try to catch the incipient mood of each sub-society. This has become a universal method, used by such leading international fashion suppliers as Levi's, Prada, Nike and Reebok (Armstrong, 1999; O'Brien, 1999) who view the world population as a single community. It is believed that regional or domestic social movements create social moods, which need fashion objects to represent their entity and context. The observation of social movements and social interaction is therefore the original and ideal research that brings the freshest ideas for innovating regional commodities, and in turn enhancing the status of supply to a competitively "active" role.

The most successful strategies of world-fashion suppliers are the creation of brand identity and brand community. Consumers do not acquire goods only to serve their functional needs but also their subjective desires. It is one's desires that deal with external forces to position oneself in the dynamic social movement. The negotiation with others through fashion objects becomes the initial crucial part in fashion consumption, when fashion retailers must be able to give suggestions or provide sufficient symbolic fashion objects for customers to have their desires served. Providing substantial choices and precise symbolic goods can be considered as a passive commercial role. The active role is to suggest the creation of a brand community with identity and suggested gestures, characteristics, and attitudes to other members of the community. This proactive strategy also pulls in new members and creates consumer loyalty.

To summarise this section, the semiological zones inserted into the fashion process at this stage are: first, the observation of social interaction and social movements to catch subjective societal moods, resulting in an interpretation of real domestic needs; and second, building up a flexible collaborative network of innovation among firms, and between firms and organisations. Finally, what is needed for the creation of brand communities is to create a virtual space for individuals to interact with society via fashion commodities.

The strategic conclusion in Sections 9.4.1 and 9.4.2 will be effectively achieved if there is systematic co-operation between the state (e.g., the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Industry, and the Ministry of Culture), the commercial sector (e.g., the Thai Fashion Brand Association), fashion designers, manufacturers, retailers, and the media.

These suggestions can be realised if they are mutually reflected in each other, and if a sufficient level of interaction occurs between eager and collectively involved fashion change-agents and a set of heterogeneous social action functions.

Endnote

¹ TGMA is the Thai Garment Manufacturers Association

² Pragmatic fashion phenomena is fashion as a means to an end

Chapter 10

Conclusion

This final Chapter focuses upon the research findings, stressing the key features of the various models developed, reviewing fashion change process mechanisms and discussing these in relation to the models. The significance of innovation is also discussed and, prior to the Conclusion, further research is suggested which is needed in relation to the main models developed. Since the reinforcement and support of the development of the Thai fashion industry is a motivation for the research, analysis of the data underlying the models directs the final discussion towards a definitive conceptual understanding of the ideal fashion system.

Firstly, the major conclusion of the previous chapters and empirical research will be reviewed. Secondly, they will be reviewed in terms of their roles and functions, providing a holistic and insightful intermingling within the mechanism of the fashion change process. This should conceptualise the universal process of fashion change. Finally, we shall review the application of the universal model, as a framework in the formation of a conceptual model of the fashion process in Thailand, aimed towards fashion origination for the Thai domestic market.

Although the main discourse of this thesis lies in its purpose, which is to provide a conceptual model for the apparel industry in Thailand, focusing on domestic fashion origination, the major contribution to knowledge is not merely the amalgamated model modified for Thailand. It is important to emphasise that the major contribution to knowledge is also the Fashion Process Model that becomes a universal framework,

providing a holistic mechanism for the fashion change process. Because of this, the Universal Fashion Process Model becomes the theoretical model, while the research in Thailand is the case studies. This explains and supports the necessity for regional variation. In other words, the Thai Fashion Process Model is the result of an adjustment when local factors and variances are incorporated into the universal model.

10.1 Research Findings

Throughout this thesis I have attempted to conceptualise the mechanism in the fashion change process of Western society and extend my understanding of Thai society as it relates to the fashion process through detailed empirical and literature researches. My findings have enabled me to create three main conceptual models and a number of subordinate models as follows:

- the main models;
 - the Fashion Transformation Process Model (shown in Figure 5.3.1)
 - the Fashion Translation Process Model (as shown in Figure 7.4.1)
 - the Thai Fashion Process Model (as shown in Figure 9.4.1)
- the subordinate models:
 - the Cross-relationship Model between attitude, interest and involvement (as shown in Figure 5.1.1C)
 - the Fashion Retail Model (as shown in Figure 5.1.3D)
 - the Degree Scale of Socialising and Differentiating Forces as applied to adopter groups (as shown in Figure 6.2.1).

10.1.1 The Fashion Transformation Process Model

This thesis presents a new perspective on fashion process by the mechanism of symbolic translation throughout fashion transformation. It sees fashion changes transform from subjective to objective to subjective, or from concept to commodification to object of individual expression and to collective social-identity formation. It can be seen that fashion starts from social concepts and ends as a reaction against that social concept as a loop. Actually, there is not only one loop, but many at any time because the adoption and diffusion of fashion is participated in by different groups of adopters at different times. The sequential loops of fashion change process start at different times because each adopter group has a different level of psychological impulse driving them to adopt fashion. The empirical studies provide supportive evidence confirming that the fashion innovator has a greater degree of differentiating force and a lesser degree of socialising force, whereas the relative degree of these two forces in other sequential adopter groups decreases

and/or increases in opposite directions. The investigation found that the proportion of each adopter group resembles the form of a bell curve. Although the bell curve is a general representation of fashion proportions in the thesis, the curve indicates that fashion is started by a small population of innovators and reaches its peak in fashion followers. Fashion innovators need new fashion objects that differ from the existing and popular ones. This is not merely because of materialism or because they have got bored of the previous fashion, but also because they need new forms or concepts of fashion objects to respond to new social issues. It is because innovators have the greatest degree of differentiating force: this is why they are the first group of adopters to start a new loop of the new fashion process. The condition of newness in concept and form of new fashion required by fashion innovators is matched up with a new range of commodities that differs from the current hit collection. That new concept of fashion is later on redefined and simplified by suppliers to suit the differing degrees of psychological forces of the rest of the adopters. In the light of this, fashion innovators and innovative commodities are the most important factors in the emergence and continuation of the fashion process.

The other aspect of the discourse is that innovation, whether in consumption or production, needs reflection, and through their reflection they mutually respond to each other. This thesis creates a framework for predicting social responses when society encounters a new issue. The four potential responses shown in Figure 5.1.1C explain the diversity of the dynamic nature of fashion.

The prediction framework shows four major potential concepts of new lifestyle versions. One fashion can possibly be diversified into four different styles. *Premiere Vision* by Cathelat (1998) demonstrates in Figure 5.1.1D the transformation of social issues as the root of fashion into socio-trends and finally to a number of different fashion styles. A fashion style in that range of diversified fashion styles is adopted by a number of people who, whether a large or small population, are called a 'subcultural group', whose living preferences, perception of values, reaction to social issues and pattern of consumption and behaviour are recognisably similar and unique. In this framework we can see a range of heterogeneous lifestyles adopted by a range of heterogeneous subcultural adopters. This framework also demonstrates that fashion suppliers segment their target through this idea of heterogeneous lifestyles. On the other hand, the classification of each adopter group based on their degree of differentiating and socialising forces segments another dimension of the market in terms of price and level of fashionability. In this light, one fashion brand is usually marketed for a very specific lifestyle preference, providing a certain level of fashionability commodities, with a specific fashion style, at the right price and particularly at the right time. Any fashion brand that fails to clarify this complexity, usually confuses its customers and is likely to be eliminated from the retail competition.

At the time a fashion mood is incipient among fashion innovators and fashion leaders, fashion suppliers need to observe and forecast future fashion on the assumption that the fashion initiated by innovators will reflect the tastes of the majority. Fashion commodification is processed by transforming the subjective concept into a tangible concept, and finally into fashion form and detail in order to manufacture goods in advance. The collective forming of a popular fashion by initial adopter groups is simultaneously responded to by the launching of high-market commodities. The newly launched commodities at this stage are usually targeted at early fashion adopters. The observation of fashion suppliers through the formation of fashion style preferences in the initial commercial stage helps designers and fashion buyers in the lower market to design and select a safe collection for the mass market. The more the fashion develops, the more the style is simplified and homogenised in order to suit the general preferences of the mass fashion follower population. At this level of market strategy it can be seen that most brands try to provide dominant popular features and details, although those features are sometimes borrowed from other fashion styles. For commercial purposes, we sometimes notice some particular features dominating the mass middle and lower markets. At this fashion peak, fashion followers are likely to follow the popular mood and pursue the marketing strategy, supported by their high degree of inherent socialising force.

Homogenisation of a global style can be manipulated at this stage when a fashion has been adopted by the mass of fashion followers. Global brands such as The Gap, Benetton, Levi's, Diesel and Nike are all marketed internationally, and their styles are usually simple, wearable and suitable for the majority. When these brands want to expand into the higher level market, they cannot simply launch a more highly fashionable range of goods into the same brand atmosphere. Some of them, such as Diesel and Levi's, affiliate their higher fashion range in a different scheme, such as Diesel Style Lab or Levi's Engineered Jeans.

The conceptual model sees it as crucial that brands are able to maintain their power over a certain group of customers if they can maintain their brand identity while evolving new fashion features. Brands have to provide the right fashion commodities for a suggested lifestyle to guide their customers. In other words, the brand has to act as an agent who provides an ideal sense of community, which encompasses attitudes, identity, motives, goals and desires. Because of this, brands are likely to have a limited space for appealing to their particular targeted lifestyle or subcultural groups. In order to reposition the brand target for a new market, brands have to redefine their identity or ideal sense of community. This is likely to lead to the loss of old customers as well as the gaining of the new targeted customers.

The thesis argues that there are two stages in the fashion phenomenon: the acquisition and the use of fashion. Shopping for homogeneous style commodities can be considered as the first stage, and can be termed 'negotiation with others'. The use stage is the moment when 'negotiation with self' comes into operation. The fashion phenomenon is complete if consumers can exercise both their 'negotiation with others' and their 'negotiation with self'. In other words, the popularity of fashion cannot be measured by the volume of production or commercial sales. Instead, fashion becomes a phenomenon when it is used to enable the wearers' to express themselves at a particular time and space. To exemplify this, the return of the 1980s style at the present time could not fulfil the context of its original entity, as the use of fashion differs in both time and space. The fashion phenomenon needs the right time and a particular space. It must be a space where members of a subculture feel supported or encouraged to express their fashion context in the company of each other. Through correct calculation by fashion buying and merchandising departments, commercial commodities must be available at the time that customers need them, otherwise they are ignored, resulting in a management disaster.

In this complexity, the Fashion Transformation Process Model is able to clarify and provide both a holistic view and also a specific division of each stage of the fashion change process.

10.1.2 Critical Review and Limitations of the Model

The fashion transformation process model is intended to provide a conceptual framework in or upon which to base theoretical propositions based upon empirical data might be developed, and it is universally applicable to any fashion change process if the correct and or appropriate analysis of regional/local fashion culture based empirical data is made. The model contains no structural safeguards against incorrect assumptions made in the development of theory based upon it or the inadequacy of the empirical data collected.

Although the model is universal and provides a holistic mechanism, it is important that there should be a critical understanding of the assumptions underlying the creation of the model, as listed below, and of what the appropriate ways are for it to be employed by an analyst who wishes to make use of it. Accordingly, it seems necessary to stress again here the key features that are important to and which underlie the construction of the model. These include:

- At the micro level, fashion is a tool of self-expression;
- At the macro level, fashion is a social product;
- Fashion is a formative process or a process of collective selection;

- Fashion is a tool for social interaction, and this interaction in turn influences human conduct;
- The chain of translation or interpretation is a vital process of fashion communication and expression;
- Changes in the model are the development of the fashion context.
- The model consists of several layers of processes in which fashion change that adopted by fashion innovators is the initial layer.

When one wishes to make use of the model to explain fashion change in any particular case, the model's limitations are not to be found in terms of whether it is able to explain the fashion change process. Rather, its actual limitations will be found to arise from the scheme being used to make the analysis. In other words, outcomes from different applications through the conceptual model might be diverse. Indeed, diversity of outcomes is to be expected as the result of differing schematic approaches.

When applied to the empirical world, as represented by the assembled data evaluated to its correct analytical collusions, the conceptual model, acting as a resultant theory, should not primarily become an interpretation, which forces the real world to fit into its mould. Rather, what is needed is a studious examination and consideration of empirical facts to see if the theory fits therefore the data analysis as, subsequent theory permitted by the model framework, must be an accurate reflection of reality. It is important that we should cast the model in terms, which are testable, rather than indulging in the practice of merely interpreting phenomena to fit the model. In other words, we have to adapt the model in the light of vast bodies of accumulated research findings reflecting the proportional deference's in the relationships established in the elements and cycles given in the model, and to develop theory in the light of such empirical findings.

We can see on the basis of the case study of the Thai fashion context that the final outcome does not exactly follow the pathway of the original conceptual model. Instead, it is necessary to be flexible and adaptive in the way theory (is developed based upon the facts on the ground) and applied to distinguish the Thai model (adaptation) in order to analyse it in a manner appropriate to the empirical facts and findings of this research or future change situations relative to the Thai fashion change cycle.

The model therefore can only be regarded as a blueprint or archetype upon which to base other models, which are culture or circumstantial specific to given situations.

It is necessary to analyse the relationship between the conceptual view and its expectations and the actual empirical observations resulting from work in the field in order

to discover what may have to be done if that relationship is to be improved and made to correlate more closely. The vagueness of a fashion context can have the effect of making it difficult to observe clearly the thing to which the context is presumed to refer; the difficulties of knowing what to observe, of being able to observe it, and of knowing how to observe it, are a crucial obstacle to bringing the concept into the realm of empirical science.

Indeed, we need to clarify the factors that play the major role in affecting fashion change. These are, firstly, the fashion context; secondly, the people interacting with and being acted on by the fashion context; and, thirdly, the results of the interaction.

The model gives no guidance as to underlying factors for consideration other than those stated features listed above, upon which the analyst can base the theory development. Nor offer safeguards against miss use, because the rational and evolutionary logic for the creation of the model is integral to this thesis and have not been presented as a discreet and separate set of model advice guidance for use. The entire thesis must be read to fully comprehend the implication of the model and even then there is an implicit presupposition that the experience of the analyst/analysts who might adapt the model for specific application are to some extent experts in the local or regional field of fashion change.

Therefore since fashion context becomes the centre of investigation because of the way in which it is developed, actively and passively, throughout the process of change. I should stress that the fashion change process as presented in the model is the development of a fashion context from the vagueness of the influence of social issues until these give birth to tangible forms and details. All other ingredients, such as inputs from the media, fashion suppliers, designers, marketing, retailing and advertising, etc., are only minor change agents in the formation of the fashion context. Each of them plays a role or roles at different stages of this. As a result, the way for us to be able to see the development of fashion context clearly is to investigate the influence of each of these minor change agents on the fashion context at particular stages of its development. These agents and the impact exerted upon context are proportional variants which are detectable in differing ratios in the different locations where in the fashion context is found and subject to a required analysis relative to the use of the model. The model dose not offers variant proportional ratios but rather acknowledges their existence.

As far as the concerns of issues relating to people interacting with or operating in fashion contexts are a consideration, its importance lies in the fact that social interaction is a process that forms human conduct instead of being merely a means for the expression or

release of human conduct. It is a very challenging matter to understand this mechanism, and the basis for doing so is to be found in terms of symbolic and social interaction. In reflecting upon the fashion translation process model in Chapter 7, the roles of fashion consumers participating in the chain of translation shift from active to passive and vice versa. As a result, it is possible for us to come to the conclusion that fashion context is formed by fashion consumers and that, simultaneously, the consumers' attitudes and behaviours are formed by the context of fashion. These are not separate and independent factors, but can be seen to be mutually interacting influences.

The essence of this conceptual model is that it is not static. Instead, it is important to understand that it is both dynamic and transformable. Accordingly, it would not be appropriate for us to attempt to view this model in the same light as we might view and apply a mathematical formula, where one seeks to isolate a definitive and stable relation between the main factors. In other words, one may say no more than that a specific influence acting on a specific type of population will lead to a specific outcome. The conceptual model should not be regarded as a way of automatically applying established mechanisms in a static environment, but as a formative process in which fashion context is used and revised as an instrument for the guidance and formulation of action. Therefore the model does not offer guidelines for the dynamics of fashion change only the fixed constraints or governing factors in principle but rather a framework structure, which can be adapted for dynamic situations if constructed in digital or some other space in such a way, which allows for the dynamics of new or different data, refreshment input.

As we have stated above, there are many stages in the process of fashion change, and each stage may see the involvement to a greater or lesser degree of a whole range of different change agents. The result of a fashion context which has been altered as a result of interaction from the previous stage becomes a new version of the fashion context which will play its part during the next stage of the process of change. To study such a world implies the following:

- *The items used for study and analysis should not be treated as discrete but should be recognised as being in a state of interlacing. The aim should not be to isolate them cleanly as separate items, but to handle them with full awareness of their lines of attachment;*
- *The items must be construed not as qualitatively constant but recognised as undergoing a dynamic process of formation;*
- *People must be viewed not as responding to stimuli but as forging definitions within their experience;*
- *The network of relations must be seen and taken as being involved in a developing process, and thus moving out in new directions.*

The process of analysis is accordingly not a simple addition or combination of single lines of influence coming from discrete and fixed items, acting on a fixed and neutral audience and leading necessarily to specific changes. Instead, the underlying features acting on this process of analysis, and needing to be taken fully into account, would seem to be:

- the variant and changing character of the fashion context;
- the variant and changing character of the sensitivities of people influenced by the fashion context;
- a process of interpretation that intervenes and affects all the minor change agents;
- the fact that minor change agents, and fashion consumers find themselves in a dynamically developing world that imparts an evolving character to each of them.

What seems to be needed is a different scheme of analysis. In other words, the process of fashion change does not conform to any single formula. Instead the process itself can be diverse and require formulae peculiar to it which relate to space, time and the roles of change agents at each stage. Each particular change process needs different ways of investigation. For instances, fashion change in the macro-subjective realm is a kind of phenomenon and rather abstract, and the more suitable research approach will be phenomenological observation. The phenomenological research approach is characterised by a focus on the meanings that research subjects attach to social phenomena (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 1997).

The fashion change process in the micro-objective realm, on the other hand, is founded on the way in which fashion consumers interact with fashion commodities, seeking their identity through negotiation with others in the group. The research approach can be positivist here, meaning that a hypothesis can be deduced by relating theories (ibid., 1997). This stage can be examined using the techniques either of quantitative or of qualitative research, depending on the focus of the hypothesis.

The model therefore does not offer separate or individual frameworks or structures for the analysis or determination of these discrete part but rather endeavours to suggest indicators, (methods?) or locations where integration takes place. Much of this is indicated in this critique however but is integral to the thesis and not separated out for the user application of the model for the development of situation specific theory.

To accommodate these features satisfactorily is clearly going to require a different type of approach, a different way of setting hypotheses, a different scheme of sampling, a different selection of data, and a different form of relating diverse data. At this stage the construction of an appropriate analysing process can only be presented as a hope for the

future. I wish merely to enumerate some of the principal considerations that should guide the task.

- The approach is going to require the provision of a historical dimension in order to trace the line along which people become prepared or sensitised to respond to fashion context-influence;
- The approach is going to require also an extended spatial dimension if it is to be able to catch the way in which people are defining to one another the content of the given fashion context-influence under study;
- The approach is going to require the treatment of the fashion context-influence not in isolation but in relation to other sources of communication, which challenge, oppose, merge with, or reinforce its play;
- The scheme of the sampling should represent the population as a dynamically developing organisation and not as an array of differentiated individuals. The data would have to be selected to reproduce a dynamic process and not to isolate disparate and simple, static relations.

In summary, although analysis may start off with the same fashion context, or social issue, a different group of people (meaning here, people from a different culture, a different time or spatial location) interacting with or being acted on by that fashion context, can diversify the outcome and produce quite different, new versions of fashion context. This is why a fashion originated in a world fashion capital can evolve into something quite different in a different part of the world. Different cultures respond, interact and interpret a fashion context in different ways, resulting in the adoption of different values. The most important people in the evolving of a fashion context are the fashion innovators, who initialise the pathway of response and value-perception, and who guide the attitude of others in the indefinite ambience of the fashion context. The different schemes of approach, which have been discussed above do, however, provide the key idea of adaptability in application. The process of fashion change will not, if this is borne in mind and implemented in practice, prove to be beyond the analytical reach of which the fashion transformation process model is capable.

10.1.3 The Fashion Translation Process Model

The previous model explains the fashion change process in a holistic manner, whereas the Fashion Translation Process Model demonstrates a more detailed mechanism. The development of the model was prompted by Roland Barthes' (1983) idea of the fashion system, where he suggests that the fashion process can be seen as consisting of two layers of the mechanism, which are the sociological and the semiological. These two

layers play different roles, but their functions are correlated and intertwined throughout the change process. It is important to emphasise that it is at the semiological level of the mechanism that the change process is interpreted or translated. In other words, 'signify' becomes 'signified' or vice versa. It is also at this stage that fashion is transformed from subjective to objective, or from objective to subjective. The model sees the mechanism of change as a chain of translation. The sociological level of the mechanism, on the other hand, has the function of positioning members of society among their peers, superior and inferior.

The chain of translation also declares the interchangeable role of subject and object between passive and active throughout the process. For instance, in the negotiation with others at the micro-objective level, fashion consumers are passive to commodities because consumers require fashion objects to signify their need. The need of consumers makes them become passive to marketing and especially brand identity in the way in which consumers tend to conform to the implied lifestyle. In this context, a brand acts as a community suggesting to its members (buyers) how to act, behave and conform to the brand's identity. Once consumers acquire those fashion objects, their role is swiftly transformed from passive to active. The mechanism of the use stage encourages consumers to be active in expression and communication via the fashion objects worn on the body.

In the light of this, for fashion consumers who are able to manipulate their roles in an appropriate position, either passive or active, fashion becomes their reflection. By contrast, consumers who are passive at the acquisition and use stages become victims of fashion, because they fail to distinguish themselves from the brand identity.

10.1.4 The Thai Fashion Process Model

It needs to be stressed again that the above two models are universally applicable to all fashion phenomena. However, when the different change-agents of different social contexts become influential in fashion emergence and its changing processes, the model may require local adjustment to produce an alternative version, which while appearing similar, on closer reading reveals radical differences. To exemplify this, the fashion change process in Thailand is perplexing to the outsider. Its fashion processes start, continue and end at different points, all of which are contained within the universal model, but the direction or routes through the model combine with addition elements which displace others in the original model, all of which conspires to confound us. The major difference factors lie very much in the key fashion change-agents, particularly the political

and social conditions, and the formation of the Thai individual and collective characters.

The Thai Fashion Process Model is based on and constructed against the specific conditions and discourses of the history of Thailand, its political and economic development, class system, and the collective fashion formation revealed by the new middle classes. These fashion change-agents shape fashion through a different process within the universal. The Thai fashion process starts from the macro-objective level and moves to the micro-objective level, then, prompted by macro-subjective forces, finally responds and diffuses to the micro-subjective level. Although there is a signal for change from some Thai fashion innovators (1.5% of the total fashion population), the need is not fully served by suppliers because the new loop of fashion starts at the macro-objective level as a consequence of foreign fashion imports leading the market. It can be seen that the domination of the starting point, from the macro-objective level or the importation of foreign fashion, constructs the Thai fashion in its commodification and retailing as well as desires, goals and motives of Thai life. The importation of English and other Western etiquette, which at one time supplanted Thai culture, and the importation of Western and foreign fashions nowadays, can be said to be the same. The responses from Thai people opposed to the importation of the hegemonic culture was to instantly form a culture of façade identity, which is perplexing both to observers and to Thai self-subjectivity. The lack of self-subjectivity of Thai people is problematic where fashion is considered to be a medium of self-expression.

From the literature search into the history of Thailand, it is observed that the power of the macro-level i.e., political, economic and cultural governance of the direction of Thai life, has resulted in high levels of passivity in Thai society. This thesis strongly suggests that the only way to redirect the fashion change process in Thailand is to withdraw the elements which perpetuate macro-power dominance, i.e. socio-political dominance. Simultaneously, the tiniest ingredient of the fashion system, which is individuality, needs to be enhanced and encouraged. Individuals should explore their new role in fashion consumption in terms of active consumer participation, alternative to the current passive acceptance of the commodity and marketing forces. Once Thai individuals freely use fashion as a tool of communication, relating to their sub-groups (rather than the whole of society), while at the same time society becomes less dominant, it is believed that fashion will emerge in its local context as a unique system.

10.1.3.1 Lack of 'Innovation' in the Thai Fashion System

The theoretical considerations and empirical studies developed throughout the thesis

argue that a lack of innovation is the major key problematic aspect of the Thai fashion system. Innovation as defined in this thesis occurs at the two poles of the fashion system, demand and supply, but consumers as fashion innovators and suppliers as leading fashion brands do not exist within the system.

From the literature reviews, the lack of fashion innovators and cutting edge suppliers is not the cause of the failure of the Thai fashion industry to dominate the domestic market. Instead, it is a result of the development of the Thai fashion context throughout history since Western fashion was introduced to Thailand in the colonial era. The context of fashion in Thailand has developed in accordance with its history and tradition, tempered by specific political and economic imperatives. These imperatives have changed and are changing as a consequence of the partial collapse of the regional economies and forces of globalisation.

A new perspective when dealing with the complex facets comprising domestic fashion origination was discussed in the previous Chapter. Innovation needs to be encouraged in the fashion supply process as well as in the consumption process. Each link in the fashion process chain is affected by the position and nature of every other link. If one link is changed, it impacts upon all the rest. This thesis suggests that the issue focused on, the lack of innovation, can only be resolved through attending to its root cause. Its roots are seen to be embedded in the many-sided domination by the state and Thai society over the behaviour of Thai individuals, together with the policies and regulations, which govern the fashion supply industry. This is further emphasised in the thesis by the conclusion that fashion is not solely about the acquisition of fashion objects, as perceived by Thai fashion suppliers, but also about the use of those objects as a medium for expressing one's subjectivity. The latter is highlighted by the shortage of fashion commodities in Thailand which reflect Thai character, combined with recent sub-cultural events suggesting the desire of young people for social change, allowing greater individual expression.

What then are the significant changes required in order to transform an objective-led model of fashion to a subjective-led model, and the consequent changes in government/fashion supply policy to accommodate innovation as a response to social change and consumers' requirements? Firstly, the creation of a collaborative network between textile and garment firms and state organisations would help the whole industry to maximise its design capability and develop policies encompassing the new perspective of globalisation. Secondly, a development of the domestic market which fosters the desire for individuality in fashion as self-expression and communication. Thirdly, to facilitate the second requirement, government social policy needs to focus on design education, social change, movement towards the creation of a liberal society where individuality and self-

expression are perceived as beneficial and contributory to the future of Thailand rather than as deviant activity. Finally, it should be stressed that the key to revitalisation of the Thai fashion system in terms of its transformation from the objective-led to the subjective-led lies in the adoption of the mechanism of the successful model of Western culture, at the same time fostering the Thai context of cultural subjectivity. That is to say fostering and questioning the notion of Thai identity within the dynamic of modern national and global culture.

10.1.5 The Various Response Model

The Various Response Model, which relates to new social issues, is constructed in the context of the investigation of the mysterious mechanism when fashion is transformed from the macro-subjective level to the macro-objective level. It is at this mechanistic level that the SI theory of fashion shows its gaps. Consequently, the debate resulting from Burn's question (1991), 'What is involved with the interpretive manner in which symbolic meanings are constructed by consumers?', has considerable significance in cross-linking theories.

The way in which consumers construct symbolic meanings in relation to a new social issue is indirect. In other words, messages by consumers are not sent straightforwardly to fashion suppliers. Instead, future needs observed through diverse responses collectively formed when society encounters a new issue are noticed and communicated via market research to fashion suppliers. The Various Response Model, based upon the three main activities implicit in their decision-making process, has been distilled by Robertson (1971) to suggest a linear process. The model of the process based upon this research, however, suggests that the process consists of a cross-relationship between interest, involvement and attitude, which is multi-directional.

This trio amalgamation suggests four possible outcomes, which are interpreted into conformity, anti-conformity, concealment and modification. At the initial stage of fashion emergence, fashion innovators as the forefront adopters signify their potential responses; cutting-edge designers meanwhile catch the mood and transform it into commodities. Subsequently, the following adopter groups collectively signify their choices of responses, while different levels of fashion suppliers serve consumers with suitable commodities.

Fashion prediction need not be shrouded in mystery if observation is promptly undertaken, focused on a social issue, and attention is paid to the responses of fashion innovators. The four possible responses from the trio relationship can be a guideline for prediction.

10.1.6 The Fashion Retail Model

The Fashion Retail Model is one of the significant conceptual models, although it is subordinate to the Fashion Transformation Process Model. The model gives a holistic structure to fashion retail, encompassing all fashion diffusion processes in the same model. Positioning each retail business in its place and distinguishing homogeneous and heterogeneous target markets is not an easy process. Since retailing is a dynamic entrepreneurial process subject to many changes, such as relocation of outlets, closure, expansion and new outlets, databases, which inform the model need constant updating if accurate monitoring is to be achieved.

In the construction of the model, each fashion diffusion is represented by an ideal bell curve in which a bundle of all diffusion curves represents all fashion pathways from innovation to obsolescence. Each diffusion curve indicates that the same fashion style is diffused, starting from the high market level to the lower level. In other words, a homogeneous range of commodities at different price points serves different market levels with the same fashion style. It can thus be seen that a number of homogeneous ranges of commodities are provided for the same targeted market. Commodities of the same fashion style compete with each other on price. Alternatively, the cross section of the model shows a range of heterogeneous fashion styles at the same market level or price level. These different styles of products compete with each other not on price, but in style.

The fashion retail model is also useful for locating new entry retail and positioning the brand to fit a gap in the model created by the failure of other retailers. In other words, the structure of the model reveals, after a survey has been undertaken, the market share of each brand, gives guidance to a brand on how much market space is available for expanding its business and/or to fill gaps in the market left by others.

10.1.7 The Degree Scale of Socialising and Differentiating Forces

The Degree Scale of Socialising and Differentiating Forces of three major adopter groups: fashion innovator, early fashion adopter, and fashion follower, is presented in Figure 6.2.1. The model is conceptualised through empirical studies linking and suggesting that there is a range of specific forces that drives fashion to change and proving the notion that fashion innovators are one of the fashion change-agents.

In the light of this research, different adopter groups and different kinds of forces are merged for the purpose of conceptualising and hypothesising 'why' and 'how' fashion is

adopted at different times by different adopter groups.

The survey results shows excellent support for the hypothesis that fashion innovators have a greater degree of differentiating force and a lesser degree of socialising force. The subsequent adopter groups have lower profiles conforming to the descending degree scale as shown in Figure 6.2.1. The survey also reveals different patterns of how different adopter groups adopt a fashion.

One advantage of the survey results might be to guide fashion forecasters to a closer inspection of specifically the adopter group of fashion innovators, in order to observe the very first responses to a new social issue.

10.1.8 Patterns of the Decision-Making Process

The study of fashion adoption focuses on the micro level and explores individual behaviour in relation to the acceptance of new styles unlike the study of fashion diffusion, which involves a macro analysis of fashion as collective behaviour. In order for fashion diffusion to occur, styles must be adopted by individuals. By studying individuals' levels of personal involvement with fashion, and the stages of fashion adoption, we can increase our understanding of individual differences in orientations toward new styles.

This thesis has established that the decision-making process of fashion innovators and fashion followers in adopting a fashion are different. The finding has been surveyed through an empirical study; a semi-structured interview of 59 fashion adopters in London (see Section 6.3.1 for details).

The significance of the finding supports Hypothesis II, where the innovators' decision-making process in accepting a new style differs from the process of the fashion followers. The significant processes of fashion adoption can be categorised into two different patterns, in which the pattern of a fashion followers' decision-making process can be sub-categorised into two similar patterns, as follows;

Pattern A: Feeling to Change → Trial → Be Fashionable;

Pattern B1: Be Fashionable → Trail → Feeling to Change;

Pattern B2: Be Fashionable → Feeling to Change → Trail.

Regarding pattern B1 and B2, 'to be fashionable' is the starting step in the process for fashion followers while the second and third are quite similar to be either 'trial' or 'feeling to change'. On the other hand, 'feeling to change' is significant as the starting step of the innovators' process. These distinguishing patterns shed light on the new notion as follows;

- The decision-making process model (see Figure 5.1.1B in page 69) proposed by sociologist Robertson (1971) can not be universally applied to all fashion adopters. In other words, different fashion adopter groups have different pathways and do not conform to the same pattern. Basically, the Robertson's model is the linear eight steps commencing from problem perception to adoption and then dissonance in which this thesis has grouped those eight steps into three groups of field or activity, namely, cognition, attitude and behaviour. I would argue that although sociologists are able to understand consumer behaviour through empirical research, in many areas it does not mean that every consumer, in this case fashion adopters, would conform to the same behaviour or pattern especially in the field of fashion. The Robertson's Model proposed quite a number of steps with a precise linear pattern, in which I would argue that consumers might skip some steps and might return to the previous step and finalise their decision-making process. For instance, one might skip 'trial', or one might not start the process from 'problem perception'. Also, one might have his mindset legitimated by branding and marketing strategies of a favourite brand, hence when a new fashion is launched by that brand, one might skip 'comprehension', 'attitude' and/or 'trial'. This problematic linear process sheds light on the thesis in the way in which the empirical research should minimise the linear multi-steps to three simple but essential field groups as stated at the beginning. The three major groups of activities became the framework for the investigation.
- Basically, Pattern B2 is the minimised pattern of the Robertson's model. In other words, it starts from cognition (to be fashionable) to attitude (feeling to change), and then behaviour (Trial) fields. While Pattern B1 starts with cognition but goes on to behaviour and then attitude. The significant point of these two similar patterns is that the similar decision-making processes of the fashion followers start exactly at the same step as the Robertson's model. Regarding the fashion adopter classification by Rogers (1962), fashion followers are the major fashion population which is 68% (consisting of 34% of early majority adopters and another 34% of late majority adopters). It can be stated that major fashion adopters do, more or less, conform to the linear multi-steps process of the Robertson's model.
- Fashion followers commence their pattern with the perception that there is a need

for a product, perhaps for a specific occasion or function. Rogers would say that individuals do not always perceive the need for a product but nevertheless are exposed to it at the awareness stage. The awareness stage in the model refers to the individual's first exposure to the product intended to fulfil a stated need. During the comprehension stage, the product is better understood. Then an attitude is formulated toward the product, and the fashion followers may seek further legitimization of the style by obtaining further information or by picking up cues in social interaction. During the trial stage, the innovative style is tentatively adopted on a small scale in order to examine its suitability for one's own situation. Another form of a trial may be the actual purchase of a style, after which one may wear the clothes for the first time and be particularly attentive to any social feedback. If the feedback is negative, the clothes may be put away and never worn again. Fashion followers decide to continue or discontinue the full use of an innovative style during the adoption stage. Adoption means that the trial results have been favourably evaluated, and the person is prepared to wear the clothes on at least a semi-regular basis. Similar clothes, in the same style, are then likely to be purchased. During this stage fashion followers also may decide to reject the style, due to the decision-making processes resulting from the previous stages.

- Fashion innovators, on the contrary, do not start their pattern in the way in which they are exposed to a new product. Fashion innovators start with the attitude in the attitudinal field that represents their reaction toward an innovative style. For many fashion innovators, they need some tools or a medium to react to or respond to or to express a social issue, socio-trend or socio-lifestyle. Clothing is automatically the medium for one's self-expression regardless of any stage of 'problem perception', 'awareness', and 'comprehension'. In other words, fashion innovators express their 'feeling' and it is the 'feeling to change'. This is because existing clothes in the wardrobe can no longer be a signifier to the extent to which fashion innovators would like them to be. For the true fashion innovators, this stage often emerges before the commercial fashion products are available in the marketplace. As a result, fashion innovators have to create their own look or innovative style through the use of their own clothes or re-styling, mixing & matching old and new clothes. Many innovators often create their new style by using their cutting and sewing skills. There is very strong support for this discussion from the questionnaire survey in London. The survey result shows that all fashion innovators have experience in creating a look for themselves. The same survey in Thailand shows that Thai fashion innovators have less activities, opportunities, and experience in doing so. It might be the fact that world fashion capitals like London, Paris, Milan, New York and Tokyo are the prime locations for

the trend forecasting agents to conduct their 'cool hunting' activity. This notion of self-styling creation of the fashion innovators superbly links with the first stage of fashion adoption, 'feeling', together with the in-depth monitoring activity over the 'cool look' of the innovators by the trend forecasting companies.

- Therefore, it can be concluded that fashion innovators are the earliest communicators of a new style for other fashion consumers. They provide both visual display and the initial exposure of the style. With regard to social-psychological characteristics of fashion innovators, they appear to be more inner-directed than non-innovators. That is fashion innovators are not likely to need or seek conformity with others to as great an extent as other fashion consumers. Fashion innovators underconform with social norms. It takes some inner-direction and individuality to dare to be the first to adopt a new style. Moreover, fashion innovators feel more socially secure than no-innovators. The results from Hypothesis I also support that fashion innovators are driven by the high degree of psychological differentiating force.
- A fashion context that emerged from the creation of the fashion innovators is more extreme, strong and straightforward reacting to the issue than the one that is produced by other fashion consumers. When a new fashion diffuses through the mass-market, consumers, elements, silhouette and details are usually simplified by the fashion suppliers in order to provide the commodities to suit the mass-market. The context of fashion, as a result, is automatically altered and declined. This is the reason why Pattern B, starting from 'awareness' or 'to be fashionable', is suitable to the majority of adopters. They do not need to originate the context in fashion, but, consume it as it is already simplified into a ready-made package in a fashion context. On the contrary, the fashion innovators are more independent and unlikely to be dominated by the ready-made fashion context. Their starting point of fashion adoption is not like the pattern of the majority.
- In summary, the two major different patterns of fashion adoption or decision-making processes are one of the research findings in this thesis. It finally sheds light for the sociological and psychological fashion researcher showing that the investigation of a fashion adoption process has to be separated into specific and distinguishable pathways depending on the category of the adopter.

10.2 Further Research

What has become apparent as a result of this thesis is that two parallel systems have been researched. One has to be considered an established standard; the other is an analysis-based response, set against that standard at a particular stage of economic development. All the research conclusions referred to in Section 10.1 are presented as conceptual models in terms of a holistic view and ideal mechanism. The investigation into the complexity of fashion has been limited in this thesis in accordance with the research proposal, which directs us towards a problem existing in the Thai fashion industry rather than within world fashion per se. To uncover the complexity of fashion is not an easy task, but this thesis has originated holistic conceptual models that might be useful for further researches.

The need for further investigation is highlighted in this thesis through its focus on the application of the holistic fashion change process model as a universal standard with which an individual region can interact. Further research might continue to extend these research findings in order to achieve plausible and applicable usage potential in the Thai fashion system. Additionally, other individual regions could conduct research using the same framework, methodology and models. Alternatively, the existing models could be dynamically developed through information technology and used as monitoring or predictive tools.

10.2.1 The Fashion Process Model

The fashion industry is desperately seeking for a model that can precisely predict the direction of fashion. Although the conceptual models created in this thesis are unable to precisely predict fashion changes, the overall idea of the mechanisms indicates a common route for the direction of change. This means that if further empirical studies are undertaken in depth, i.e., qualitative and quantitative researches, we may be able to catch up with and precisely identify the triggers of fashion change. The semiological and sociological processes within fashion change suggest that fashion is not a stable entity. Instead, fashion change is a chain of translation. Its most vital precipitators are accordingly the change-agents and it can assist fashion prediction by anticipating each interpretation of fashion at each step of change or link in the translation chain.

The conclusion arising from analysis and the subsequent conceptual models is that fashion forecasting appears unable to predict effectively from demographic profiling of consumers. On the contrary, forecasting must be based on monitoring, observing and, in particular, interpreting the movement of social moods and the consequential innovation of

fashion concepts as they emerge, relative to the disappearance of the previous fashion innovation. The developed model clarifies the mechanisms and significant points of change which are useful in the predictive process. Further, the results and analysis can be forwarded to those fashion suppliers who have established modern production management systems such as "quick response", "just-in-time", and "supply chain management", and who have the ability to respond to market needs promptly.

We need to undertake a series of observations and empirical studies of the prime signification of fashion innovators in reacting to specific dominant social issues. A further in-depth investigation with full statistical significance as suggested above is believed to be capable of creating a much more precise mechanism for converting subjective movement into an objective reality embedded within a refined model.

10.2.2 The Fashion Retail Model

The Fashion Retail Model created in this thesis is very much conceptual in form. This ideal sphere shape model can, however, be very useful to fashion suppliers if all the necessary data and information are entered. This needs a set of fieldwork surveys for a particular market, such as the British fashion retail market. Each retail company must be investigated in terms of style, time of product launch, level of fashionability, brand identity, and targeted customers' profiles in terms of age range, disposable income, occupation, or consumption patterns. These parameters are useful in positioning and categorising them in a specific space in the sphere shape model.

At this first stage of fitting each retail brand into its place it is possible to see the density and gaps within the totality. It is useful for suppliers who are seeking an opportunity to penetrate a new market or to reorientate their brand into the vacant space of a less competitive market.

The Fashion Retail Model will be much more useful if it is able to indicate the movement of fashion from high-end down to middle and lower markets. This means that we need to computerise the model, feeding it with a regular report of the sales volume of each style, colour and size, as well as consumers' profiles. In this way, the model will be able to show the movement of each fashion direction in terms of its speed, direction, and the population of each fashion adopter group.

This ultimate ideal computerised model would enhance the Fashion Change Process Model and make possible more precise fashion forecasting.

10.2.3 The Thai Fashion Process Model

Coincidentally, the Thai government is launching the biggest ever-collaborative project with the Thai textile and garment industry, aimed at establishing Thailand as the fashion centre of the South-East Asian region. Apparently, the project is focused on the supply side, investing in and facilitating options and opportunities for the Thai textile and garment industry, but omitting the demand side of the system. However, to create a fashion centre needs more than solely stimulating the market with an abundance of fashion items from which to choose. This may lead to over-supply and rejection by consumers. Consumer demand is inextricably linked to social change and spending power, without which economic progress is limited at best and stagnant at worst.

This thesis is primarily concerned with the demand side of fashion consumption, suggesting a series of strategies to enhance the emergence of fashion via innovative responses to social needs as opposed to the industrial imperative. The reorientation strategies discussed in the previous Chapter can accordingly be of much benefit to the government project.

Practical problems of the implementation of such reorientation strategies may require further research. If the analysis contained within this research thesis is correct, Thailand and the region need to secure the future of their manufacturing industry by managing fashion. Further, by becoming truly a medium for social mood change and by creating a strong domestic market for its own brands, it is suggested that manufacturers should influence people to define themselves through brand identities. In this context, regional fashion emerges and ends within its unique system as a subset of the world fashion system, not dominated by world fashion but rather engaging in global fashion exchange.

On the macro scale, interest in the reorientation strategies requires further studies focusing on the proactive input roles of all fashion change-agents within the Thai system. Their contributions, it is hoped, will lead to domestic fashion change in a proper process starting and ending in the subjective realm.

On the micro scale, it can be expected that the effect of the macro level will change the fashion consumption behaviour of Thai individuals. This is potentially the most interesting investigation, since it would look at how Thai fashion consumers acquire and use a new version of fashion. The conflict or liberation associated with the emergence and exercise of fashion within the present strict cultural frame are a prerequisite transitional stage on the way to a new and stable system.

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Appendix I

Fashion Evolution and Social Changes

Decade / Evolving Fashions	Social Environment and Social Change
<p>1900 (Start of Century) Fashion began twentieth century with styles carried over from past century. Women's styles were lavishly designed, emphasizing bust, hips, and waist. Men's business suits have become a symbol of industrial progress.</p>	<p>Women were primarily in traditional home roles, though a number of women's activist movements seeking reform have occurred in the past decades. Women were dependent on men. Status symbolism was a major fashion function.</p>
<p>1900s Women at work in male styles—shirtwaist and skirt similar to men's "sober suit and white collared shirt". Ready-made, mass produced clothing industry continues major growth started in late 1800s. Shirtwaist dress was first ready-to-wear fashion. New York becoming a major fashion center, and an American style of dress was emerging.</p>	<p>Typewriter used in offices. Women at work in basically clerical jobs. Five million women in the labor force. Beginnings of mass manufacturing, communications, and retailing. Women working in fashion and textile industries. Beginning of the century of "expressionism, activism, dynamism, and new technology".</p>
<p>1910s Hobble skirts—tight and close fitting. Fuller and more mobile skirts began to replace the hobble skirts about 1915. World War I began, imposing economy and simplicity on clothing. Movie clothes became an emerging influence which would "crystallize in the 1920s". European art trends, Cubism and Futurism, as fashion influences.</p>	<p>Automobiles emerged late in the decade, beginning to change women's patterns of lifestyles, freedom, and mobility. Movie provided "glimpse of fantasy-elegance" rather than real world style. Idealized fashion images from movies a new influence on dress and grooming. Movies as influence to spread established rather than new styles.</p>
<p>1920s Clothing fitted to body shape, but in an increasingly loose and un-restrictive way. Skirt lengths getting shorter. Style variety becoming more apparent.</p>	<p>Increasing interests in sports, avant-garde lifestyles, women's rights. Women's interest in activity and freedom increases. The roaring Twenties, jazz, nightclub life.</p>
<p>1930s Increased emphasis on careful and precise grooming. Daytime, evening, street dresses—variety of dress lengths.</p>	<p>Movie influence on styles increased. New fibers—rayon, acetate, and later nylon—appearing in fabrics. Effects of the Depression being felt as a moderating influence on change.</p>
<p>1940s Fabric rationing and fashion simplicity forced by World War II. The "New Look" of 1947, longer and fuller skirts, a Dior designer influenced. Fashion-interest and rate of fashion change increased.</p>	<p>Women worked in factories during war. Women ready for change from wartime austerity.</p>

<p>1950s</p> <p>Increasing youth interest in fashion. California youth-fashion influenced. Male fashion interest increasing. "Unisex" fashion trend began. Women wearing pants. Diversity in clothing styles, colors, and fabrics. Abstract and modern art influenced. Many well-known designers in Europe and United States.</p>	<p>Young people had financial ability to pursue fashion interests. Families becoming child-centered. Interest in fashion by age groups began to displace traditional status symbolism functions. New roles for men and women emerging. Man-made fibers becoming an important clothing functional component. Growing influence of the mass marketing and retailing economy. Rates of social and technological change increasing. New occupations, inventions, communications (television), population mobility, entertainment, sports interests.</p>
<p>1960s</p> <p>Continuing trends toward unisex styles, Youth ("Hippie") styles emphasized comfort and practicality rather than status symbolism. Fashion emphasized on young styling in general. Pants became an important women's fashion. Miniskirt lengths grew in acceptance. Durable press clothing arrives.</p>	<p>Changing roles in society. Youth challenged to traditional values and symbols a contemporary active movement. Increasing emphasis on individualism. Communal living in certain population sub-segments. Generally, a decade of social reforms.</p>
<p>1970s</p> <p>Increasing fashion interest among men. Future of business suit challenged. Diversity in women's styles was the greatest in fashion history-pants suits, many dress lengths, variety in color and fabric choice. Men's leisure suits and sportswear trends.</p>	<p>Relaxing of social and sexual norms, greater belief in individuality and freedom of choice. Changing marriage and family patterns. Highly developed mass marketing and communication system. New concerns with environment and conservation of resources. Thirty-eight million women in the labor force.</p>
<p>1980s</p> <p>A wide range of fashion trends was prominent. "Dress for success" reached new heights of acceptance. Growth in designer label and private label goods. Birth of new design houses (e.g. Donna Karan, Michael Kors). Rock stars and supermodels became new fashion leaders. Offshore production and importing of apparel and accessories increased rapidly (imports accounting for half of the domestic market), stimulating mass diffusion of fashion trends. Quick Response technology created "pull" system within the industry.</p>	<p>Diversity in lifestyles and cultural groups-became a central feature of society. Individualism and acceptance of difference was widely promoted. Career advancement for women became a norm. U.S. trade deficit increased as global manufacturing and marketing increased. Growth in mass merchandisers and off-price retailers. Merging companies within the fashion industry. MTV starts. Purchase and use of VCRs led to increase use of video technology.</p>
<p>1990s</p> <p>Variety in fashion trends and powerful influence from the 1980s carried over to the early 1990s. Environmental concerns led to new technology and "green marketing" of environmental safe apparel lines. Cultural diversity spurred growth in ethnic goods. Will fashion change be influenced by growing economic conservatism and lower materialism among consumers?</p>	<p>Collapse of the Soviet Union and emerging of European Economic Community created avenues for export or expansion of companies overseas. Economic recession created caution among consumers, a potential influence on fashion change.</p>

Plate 1: Fashion Evolution and Social Changes (After: Sproles and Burns, 1994)

Appendix II

Targeted Age Chart

Core Customer



	Brands	15-20	20-25	25-30	30-35	35-40	40-45	45-50	50-55	55-60
1	M&S	←					←	→		→
2	Dorothy Perkins		←					→		
3	Top Shop	←		→						
4	Evans		←					→		
5	Principles			←				→		
6	Richards				←			→		
7	Miss Selfridge	←	→							
8	Wallis		←					→		
9	Warehouse		←			→				
10	Next			←			→			
11	Austin									
12	Benetton	←		→						
13	C&A	←								→
14	Littlewoods	←								→
15	Bhs			←	→			→		
16	Alexson G.				←		→			
17	fcuk		←		→					
18	Nicloe Farhi			←	→					
19	Episode			←			→			
20	Gap	←		→						
21	H&M	←	→							
22	Hobbs		←					→		
23	Jaeger							←	→	→
24	Viyella							←	→	→
25	Jigsaw		←		→					
26	Joseph		←		→					
27	Karen Millen	←		→						
28	Kookai	←						→		
29	Laura Ashley				←			→		
30	Monsoon		←							
31	Morgan	←		→						
32	Oasis	←	→							→
33	Talbots				←					→

Appendix III

Fashionnaire

English Version	Thai Version
<p>Which age range do you belong to?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 15-18 ▪ 19-25 ▪ 26-35 ▪ 36-45 ▪ More than 46 	<p>มีกี่ปีจนถึงคุณเกิดอยู่ในช่วงใด</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 15-18 ▪ 19-25 ▪ 26-35 ▪ 36-45 ▪ มากกว่า 46
<p>What best describes the kind of work you do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Student ▪ Academic ▪ Employee ▪ Specialist ▪ Managerial ▪ Administration ▪ Engineering ▪ Sale ▪ Retire ▪ Unemployed ▪ Others 	<p>มีกี่ปีคุณทำงานประเภทไหน</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ นักเรียน ▪ นักการศึกษา ▪ ลูกจ้าง ▪ ผู้เชี่ยวชาญ ▪ ผู้จัดการ ▪ ด้ยธุรการ ▪ ด้ยเทคนิค-วิศวกรรม ▪ ด้ยขาย ▪ เกษียณอายุ ▪ ลางาน ▪ อื่นๆ
<p>What best describes your educational background?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ GCSE ▪ A Level ▪ Higher Education ▪ Degree ▪ Postgraduate ▪ Professional Qualification ▪ Others 	<p>คุณมีระดับการศึกษาสูงที่สุดของคุณคืออะไร</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ การศึกษาระดับมัธยมศึกษาปีที่ ๕ ▪ ปวช. ▪ อนุปริญญา ▪ ปริญญาตรี ▪ สูงกว่าปริญญาตรี ▪ ปริญญาโทหรือปริญญาเอก ▪ อื่นๆ
<p>Do you think how much do you spend on Fashion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Very little ▪ Moderate ▪ Too much 	<p>ปกติคุณคิดว่าคุณใช้จ่ายเงินมากน้อยแค่ไหนในเรื่องแฟชั่น</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ น้อยมาก ▪ ปานกลาง ▪ มากเกินไป

<p>When do you usually buy new fashion items</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First launch • During the season • During the Sale 	<p>ปกติคุณมักจะซื้อเสื้อผ้าแฟชั่นเมื่อไหร่</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ออกวางจำหน่ายใหม่ๆ จะซื้อทันที • วางจำหน่ายไปแล้วถึงระยะ • รอซื้อตอนครหา
<p>How many fashion items do you buy per season</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 • 2 • 3-6 • 6-10 • More than 10 	<p>ปกติคุณซื้อเสื้อผ้าแฟชั่นกี่ตัวต่อฤดูกาล (เช่น หนึ่งเดือน หนึ่งปีหนึ่งครั้ง)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 ตัว • 2 ตัว • 3-6 ตัว • 6-10 ตัว • มากกว่า 10 ตัว
<p>Where do you usually buy new fashion items?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Street Shops, e.g. Oxford St. • Designer Label, e.g. at Harvey Nichols or shops in Bond St. • Cutting Edge or New Designers' Shops, e.g. Covent Garden, Soho or Canals St. • Market Stall • Made by Myself • Others..... 	<p>ปกติคุณซื้อเสื้อผ้าแฟชั่นจากที่ไหน</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • เสื้อผ้าในห้างสรรพสินค้าทั่วไป เช่น Central, The Mall, Zen • เสื้อผ้ามีชื่อตามร้านขายย เช่น KooKai, Guess, Jaspal, Beeton, Morgan, U2, Armani, Versace, DKNY • เสื้อผ้าแฟชั่นราคาถูก ทั้งจากต่างประเทศ หรือจากดีไซเนอร์ชั้นนำเมืองไทย • ตลาดเสื้อผ้า • ตัวเขียนเอง หรือ กัดคัทตามทาสีเสื้อผ้างาน • อื่นๆ
<p>Which of the following best describes your fashion?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the Cutting Edge of Fashion [Wearing Fashion Garments that Others are not yet Wearing] • Very Up-To-Date [Wearing what is in Latest Fashion] • Wearing of Popular Fashion which is Widely Available • Not Concerned about Fashion [Wearing Basic Garments] 	<p>ข้อใดต่อไปนี้สามารถอธิบายระดับแฟชั่นของคุณได้ดีที่สุด</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ขณะแต่แฟชั่นนำสมัยๆ ไม่จับตามันใคร และไม่ค่อยตามคนอื่น • ทันสมัยเสมอ ไม่ค่อยแต่หัวรอง • แต่งตัวตามความนิยมส่วนใหญ่ ที่ใครๆ ก็แต่ง • ไม่ค่อยใส่ใจแฟชั่น แต่งแต่หัวรองเสื้อผ้าธรรมดา
<p>Have you ever tried to create a new look or new fashion idea for yourself?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tried at Least Once [e.g. for a special occasion] • Have Tried Sometimes or from Time to Time • Always or Often Trying to do so • Never. Please go to Q.5 	<p>คุณเคยคิดที่จะทำภาพลักษณ์โดยใช้เครื่องแต่งกายให้ตัวเองหรือไม่</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • บ่อยๆ • บางครั้ง • มีบ้าง อย่างน้อย 1 ครั้ง • ไม่เคยเลย
<p>In what ways? [Tick as many as apply]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut and Sewn • Decorate with Something • Buy Second Hand Clothes to Re-Style • Mix and Match New and Old Clothes, or Different Style • Others..... 	<p>คุณได้ลองทำหัวขี้คิดบ้าง</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ตัดเย็บ • ตกแต่งเสื้อผ้าด้วยวัสดุต่างๆ • ซื้อเสื้อผ้ามือสองมาดัดแปลง • ผสมผสานเสื้อผ้าเก่าใหม่ ผสมกันเป็นสไตล์ใหม่ • อื่นๆ

<p>How fashionable would your friends or colleagues say you are?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cutting Edge ▪ Very Fashionable ▪ Fashionable Sometimes ▪ Not Fashionable ▪ Strange 	<p>เพื่อนของคุณหรือเพื่อนร่วมงานของคุณอยู่ในระดับใด</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ระดับผู้นำแฟชั่นสุดขอบ ▪ ระดับทันสมัย ▪ ระดับความนิยมของคนส่วนใหญ่ ▪ ไม่ทันสมัย หรือ เจ็บ ▪ แปลก
<p>Have you ever had an idea about your look and not been able to find the fashion garments in the shops?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Yes, Very Often No, Never</p> <p style="text-align: center;">5 4 3 2 1</p>	<p>บ่อยแค่ไหนที่คุณเคยมีความคิดไว้เกี่ยวกับเสื้อผ้าของตัวเองแต่ไม่สามารถหาซื้อได้ตามที่เห็นที่หน้าร้านเพราะตามหาตามร้านไม่ได้</p> <p style="text-align: center;">บ่อยมากที่สุด..... ไม่เคยเลย</p> <p style="text-align: center;">5 4 3 2 1</p>
<p>When buying a fashion garment, have you ever felt a conflict between what you liked and what your friends' suggested?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Yes, Very Often No, Never</p> <p style="text-align: center;">5 4 3 2 1</p>	<p>ในการซื้อเสื้อผ้ามีช่วงเวลาที่ไหนที่คุณพบว่าคุณลังเลใจและต้องคิดทบทวนใจระหว่างความชอบของตัวเอง กับคำแนะนำของเพื่อนที่ไม่ต่อตรงกัน</p> <p style="text-align: center;">บ่อยมากที่สุด..... ไม่เคยเลย</p> <p style="text-align: center;">5 4 3 2 1</p>
<p>What was the outcome, i.e. what decisions do you usually make?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ My friends usually influenced me in what I bought. ▪ It depended, sometimes I was influenced in what I bought. ▪ I bought what I liked mostly 	<p>ผลการตัดสินใจเป็นอย่างไร</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ซื้อตามที่ได้ฟังของชอบเสมอ ▪ บางครั้งก็ซื้อตามใจชอบ แต่บางครั้งก็ซื้อตามเพื่อนแนะนำ ▪ ซื้อตามคำแนะนำของคนอื่นบ่อยๆ
<p>Do you always dress in a different style or colour from others?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Always Never</p> <p style="text-align: center;">5 4 3 2 1</p>	<p>ปกติแล้วการแต่งตัวของคุณแตกต่างไปจากคนอื่นอย่างไรบ้าง</p> <p style="text-align: center;">มากที่สุด..... ไม่เลย</p> <p style="text-align: center;">5 4 3 2 1</p>
<p>Wearing a trendy colour or fashion garment that many other people wear makes you feel...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Very confident as I am in fashion ▪ Confident ▪ No problem ▪ A little bit annoying ▪ Annoying 	<p>ใส่เสื้อผ้าที่ทันสมัยกับคนอื่น รู้สึกอย่างไร</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ มันใจมากกว่าคนอื่น ▪ มันใจ ▪ ไม่มีปัญหา ▪ รู้สึกเงินเสียมือ ▪ ไม่ชอบจำคนอื่น
<p>Wearing a fashion garment that is very cutting edge fashion and very different in style from the present makes you feel...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Very Confident Not Confident</p> <p style="text-align: center;">5 4 3 2 1</p>	<p>คุณรู้สึกอย่างไรถ้าคุณใส่เสื้อผ้าที่ทันสมัยและแตกต่างไปจากคนอื่นมาก</p> <p style="text-align: center;">มันใจมาก..... ไม่มันใจ</p> <p style="text-align: center;">5 4 3 2 1</p>
<p>If all your friends agreed to wear the Sixties style for one of the Millennium party, when you had just bought a new glittering millennium style outfit, what would you do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Persuade a friend to dress in millennium style like you. ▪ Change to Sixties style, it's good to be in a group. ▪ Not care, it's good to stand out. ▪ Not want to go, no proper dress 	<p>ถ้าหากเพื่อนทั้งหมดของคุณจะแต่งตัวดูจำพวกยุค 60s เพื่อไปงานฉลองปีใหม่นั้น คุณจะทำอย่างไร</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ไม่ทนใจ ถึงแม้จะเป็นจุดเด่นในกลุ่ม ไม่เหมือนใคร ▪ เปลี่ยนไปใส่สไตล์ยุค 60s ▪ ขวนขวายสักคนมาแต่งตัวดูจำพวก ▪ ไม่ไปดีกว่า

<p>How much would you be concerned if you disagreed about style and colour with others in your social circle?</p> <p>Very Much Never</p> <p>5 4 3 2 1</p>	<p>คุณกังวลมากน้อยแค่ไหนกับการที่ผู้อื่นคัดค้านการแต่งกายของคุณ กับ คำแนะนำจากเพื่อนๆ ไม่ตรงกัน</p> <p>มากที่สุด.....น้อย</p> <p>5 4 3 2 1</p>
<p>Please place the following statements in an order which best describes what you do when you change your style.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My perception of the need to be fashionable • Feeling of the need to change • The need to experiment with the way I look 	<p>กรุณารียงลำดับข้อความตามที่คุณคิดว่าจะทำเมื่อจะเปลี่ยนสไตล์แฟชั่นตัวเอง</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ฉันต้องการแต่งตัวทันสมัย • ฉันรู้สึกว่ามีเสื้อผ้าใหม่จะให้ความรู้สึกที่แตกต่างไปจากเดิม • ฉันทดลองหาสไตล์ที่เหมาะสมกับตัวเอง
<p>Which of the following best describes the starting point for you to change your look?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As awareness of new fashion trends • Feeling the need to change what I am wearing, irrespective of what is fashionable • The need to try out different alternatives to find the style that is right for me 	<p>ข้อใดอธิบายจุดเริ่มต้นที่ดีที่สุดในการที่คุณเริ่มที่จะเปลี่ยนสไตล์ของตัวเอง</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ความสนใจในแนวโน้มแฟชั่น • รู้สึกต้องการเปลี่ยนแปลงสไตล์ตัวเอง โดยไม่ได้คำนึงถึงแฟชั่น • ต้องการลองหาสไตล์ใหม่ๆ เพื่อค้นหาแบบที่เหมาะสม
<p>Who most influences you in what clothes you buy?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close Friends • Other Friends • Acquaintances • Family • Colleagues at Work • Boss or Line Manager • Subordinate Staff • Media Celebrity • People You See during Leisure Time (e.g. in Caffe, Pubs, Clubs or in the Street, etc.) • Others..... • None 	<p>ใครคือผู้ที่มีอิทธิพลต่อการแต่งกายของคุณ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • เพื่อนสนิท • เพื่อนทั่วไป • คนรู้จัก • ครอบครัว • เพื่อนร่วมงาน • หัวหน้า • ลูกน้อง • ผู้มีชื่อเสียง • ผู้คนที่พบเห็นทั่วไป • อื่น ๆ • ไม่มี
<p>Who do you think you influence in terms of fashion?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close Friends • Other Friends • Acquaintances • Family • Colleagues at Work • Boss or Line Manager • Subordinate Staff • People Who I don't Know but Who See Me • Others..... • None 	<p>ใครคือผู้ที่คุณมีอิทธิพลต่อการแต่งกายของเขา</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • เพื่อนสนิท • เพื่อนทั่วไป • คนรู้จัก • ครอบครัว • เพื่อนร่วมงาน • หัวหน้า • ลูกน้อง • ผู้คนที่พบเห็นทั่วไป • อื่น ๆ • ไม่มี

Plate 3: Questionnaire in English and Thai Versions

Appendix IV

Fashionnaire Results

London Samples [300]

Total Returns: 170[57%]

INNO	EARLY	FOL	LAG
5.90%	35.30%	50%	8.80%

Bangkok Samples [300]

Total Returns: 134[47%]

INNO	EARLY	FOL	LAG
1.50%	18.70%	64.20%	15.70%

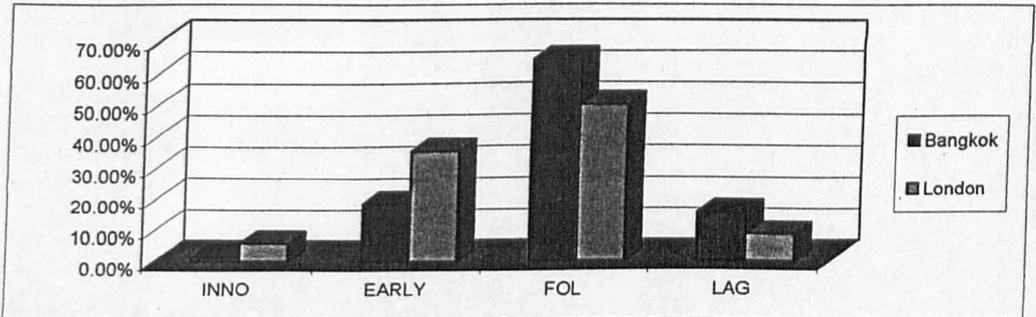


Plate 4.1: Population of Fashion Adopter Groups in London and Bangkok

Plate 4.2: Results of Questionnaire Surveys in London and Bangkok

London Results

Bangkok Results

Have you ever had an idea about your look and not been able to find the fashion garments in the shops?

	Never ←————→ Very Often				
	1	2	3	4	5
laggard	26.6%	33.3%	26.6%	6.6%	6.6%
Follower	4.7%	25.8%	48.1%	18.8%	2.3%
Early adopter	8.3%	33.3%	38.3%	10.0%	10.0%
Innovator	0.0%	10.0%	40.0%	30.0%	20.0%

Have you ever had an idea about your look and not been able to find the fashion garments in the shops?

	Never ←————→ Very Often				
	1	2	3	4	5
laggard	24%	33%	29%	14%	0%
Follower	15%	19%	40%	23%	9%
Early adopter	4%	20%	20%	48%	8%
Innovator	0%	0%	50%	0%	50%

When buying a fashion garment, have you ever felt a conflict between what you liked/wanted and what your friends' suggested?

	Never ←————→ Very Often				
	1	2	3	4	5
laggard	13.3%	20.0%	20.0%	33.3%	13.3%
Follower	1.2%	20.0%	45.8%	29.4%	3.5%
Early adopter	10.0%	26.7%	33.3%	25.0%	5.0%
Innovator	40.0%	30.0%	20.0%	10.0%	0.0%

When buying a fashion garment, have you ever felt a conflict between what you liked/wanted and what your friends' suggested?

	Never ←————→ Very Often				
	1	2	3	4	5
laggard	10.0%	29.0%	24.0%	24.0%	14.0%
Follower	14.0%	23.0%	34.0%	29.0%	6.0%
Early adopter	16.0%	24.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Innovator	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

What was the outcome, i.e., what decisions do you usually make?

	My friends usually influenced me in what I bought	Sometimes I was influenced in what I bought	I bought what I liked mostly
laggard	33.3%	46.6%	20.0%
Follower	8.2%	56.4%	35.3%
Early adopter	0.0%	36.6%	63.3%
Innovator	0.0%	20.0%	80.0%

What was the outcome, i.e., what decisions do you usually make?

	My friends usually influenced me in what I bought	Sometimes I was influenced in what I bought	I bought what I liked mostly
laggard	19.0%	48.0%	33.0%
Follower	5.0%	44.0%	57.0%
Early adopter	0.0%	40.0%	30.0%
Innovator	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%

Do you always dress in a different style or colour from others?

	Never ←————→ Always				
	1	2	3	4	5
laggard	26.6%	40.0%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Follower	4.7%	38.8%	41.2%	11.7%	3.5%
Early adopter	0.0%	23.3%	48.3%	23.3%	5.0%
Innovator	0.0%	0.0%	40.0%	20.0%	40.0%

Do you always dress in a different style or colour from others?

	Never ←————→ Always				
	1	2	3	4	5
laggard	14.0%	29.0%	48.0%	0.0%	10.0%
Follower	10.0%	55.0%	37.0%	3.5%	0.0%
Early adopter	0.0%	20.0%	68.0%	12.0%	0.0%
Innovator	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%

Wearing a trendy colour or a fashion garment that many other people wear makes you feel...

	Very Confident ←————→ Annoying				
	1	2	3	4	5
laggard	0.0%	13.3%	66.6%	20.0%	0.0%
Follower	0.0%	23.5%	41.1%	28.2%	7.0%
Early adopter	1.6%	18.3%	31.6%	38.3%	10.0%
Innovator	0.0%	10.0%	10.0%	50.0%	30.0%

Wearing a trendy colour or a fashion garment that many other people wear makes you feel...

	Very Confident ←————→ Annoying				
	1	2	3	4	5
laggard	19.0%	33.0%	38.0%	10.0%	0.0%
Follower	12.0%	14.0%	45.0%	28.0%	2.3%
Early adopter	0.0%	20.0%	36.0%	48.0%	4.0%
Innovator	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%

Wearing a fashion garment that is very cutting edge fashion and very different in style from the present makes you feel...

	Not Confident ←————→ Very Confident				
	1	2	3	4	5
laggard	40.0%	46.7%	13.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Follower	8.2%	29.4%	45.9%	15.3%	1.2%
Early adopter	6.7%	5.0%	13.3%	58.3%	16.7%
Innovator	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%

Wearing a fashion garment that is very cutting edge fashion and very different in style from the present makes you feel...

	Not Confident ←————→ Very Confident				
	1	2	3	4	5
laggard	29.0%	38.0%	19.0%	0.0%	10.0%
Follower	20.0%	27.0%	37.0%	13.0%	6.0%
Early adopter	12.0%	4.0%	32.0%	36.0%	12.0%
Innovator	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%

If all your friends agree to wear the Sixties style for one of the millennium party, when you just bought a new glittering millennium style outfit, what would you do?

	Not want to go....	Change to the 60s style	Persuade a friend to dress in millennium style like you	Not care....
laggard	6.6%	26.6%		26.6%
Follower	0.0%	21.1%		21.1%
Early adopter	1.6%	16.6%		13.3%
Innovator	0.0%	0.0%		0.0%

If all your friends agree to wear the Sixties style for one of the millennium party, when you just bought a new glittering millennium style outfit, what would you do?

	Not want to go....	Change to the 60s style	Persuade a friend to dress in millennium style like you	Not care....
laggard	5.0%	38.0%		24.0%
Follower	3.5%	35.0%		29.0%
Early adopter	0.0%	36.0%		12.0%
Innovator	0.0%	0.0%		0.0%

How much would you be concerned if you disagreed about style and colour with others in your social circle?

	Never ←————→ Very Much				
	1	2	3	4	5
laggard	13.3%	26.6%	20.0%	33.3%	6.6%
Follower	20.0%	47.0%	23.5%	8.2%	1.1%
Early adopter	33.3%	45.0%	18.3%	1.6%	1.6%
Innovator	40.0%	50.0%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%

How much would you be concerned if you disagreed about style and colour with others in your social circle?

	Never ←————→ Very Much				
	1	2	3	4	5
laggard	14.0%	19.0%	48.0%	14.0%	5.0%
Follower	14.0%	28.0%	33.0%	28.0%	3.5%
Early adopter	12.0%	28.0%	40.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Innovator	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Appendix V

Historical Chronology of Ratanakosin Period, Thailand

(After: Hoskin, 1986)

- 1782: Chakri was proclaimed King Rama I and established the current dynasty. The new capital moved from Thonburi to Bangkok.
- 1809: Phra Phutthaloetla, son of Rama I, ascends the throne as Rama II.
- 1822: Dr John Crawford, envoy of the British East India Company, visited Bangkok in an unsuccessful bid to secure trade relations with Thailand.
- 1824: Phra Nangklao, son of Rama II, ascended the throne as Rama III.
- 1844: Bangkok's first printed matter, the Bangkok Recorder, a fortnightly newspaper in Thai, came off the press.
- 1851: Mongkut, half-brother of Rama III, ascended the throne as Rama IV at the age of 47 after spending 27 years in monastic life. From that point on Bangkok's development increasingly followed the Western lines. King Rama IV also expanded the city limits with the construction of a new enclosing canal. He preferred his bureaucrat orderly mode of dressing with a shirt when having an official meeting (previously high ranking court dress was naked from the waist up). King Rama IV appeared in Western dress in some photographs (particularly in portrait and pictures of official meeting).
- 1855: King Rama IV and Sir John Bowring, envoy of Queen Victoria, concluded a treaty opening up trade between Thailand and Britain. Treaties with other European powers and with the U. S. followed in quick succession.
- 1857: King Rama IV orders the construction of the city's first roads capable of taking wheeled traffic.
- 1862: Anna Leonowens arrived in Bangkok. She became for a while governess of King Rama IV's children, and later grossly misrepresented life at the Thai Court in her published reminiscences, *The English Governess at the Siamese Court* and *The Romance of the Harem*. This misleading works inspire Margaret Landon's book,

Anna and the King of Siam, which later spawned the stage and film musical, *The King and I*. She further fostered King Rama IV incarnation towards adoption of Western dress and English etiquette by educating the royal children to Victorian values and codes and commissioning clothing in contemporary Western style for an official banquet. Most effected by these style changes were the women who later adopted Thai Jongkaben and Western tops. In the beginning period of Ratanakosin (the current dynasty), Thai men and women wore Jongkaben. They wrapped the bottom of the body with a piece of cloth from waist down to floor, tightened the waist with a belt, rolled both ends of the cloth vertically, passed the end from front through legs to put that end at the back of waist and tightened the waist. Women had a long piece of cloth [i.e., plain or pleated cloth called Sabai] to wrap their chest. Men wore top in Winter but wore nothing on top in Summer. Whenever cloth was worn over the shoulder it usually represented individual status and/or referenced a specific occasion.

- 1868: Chulalongkorn, son of King Rama IV, ascended the throne as Rama V. His reign introduced far-reaching reforms and the increased Westernisation of Bangkok, both in its internal workings and its outward appearance. In his reign, men's hair style changed from partly-shaved to short-cut as in Western style.
- 1872: Rama V created a uniform shirt called, 'Rajcha-Pattern' for civilian use. Some of the institutions of state began to have their own uniforms, wearing trousers, helmet, socks and shoes. Women's hairstyle was changed from the 'wing style' (parted in the middle at front and hairless at the back) to a long or short Western style. Later, women wore Western shirt underneath Sabai and the shirt developed to a Western style blouse with 'mutton leg' sleeves.
- 1884: The Grand Palace was equipped with electric lights and over the next 13 years the electrical supply was extended to cover the entire city.
- 1893: Bangkok became the first city of the East to have electric trams. By the turn of the century the network covered 20 kilometres and the tram company operated 2800 car/miles per day.
- 1897: King Rama V visited Europe, the first Thai monarch to do so. He made a second tour 10 years later three years before his death.
- 1908: Bangkok had about 300 motor cars.
- 1910: King Rama V died. His long reign and many enlightened reforms made Bangkok a truly modern city and an effective capital of the nation. His son, Vajiravudh, ascended the throne as Rama VI, the first Thai monarch to have been educated

overseas (in England). European lace and fabric became a widespread fashion among the elite, while the Jongkaben was replaced by a short skirt-like garment, called Pa-Sin.

- 1911: An aeroplane landed for the first time in Bangkok, piloted by a Frenchman. The occasion prompted the sending of four Thai army officers to France to be taught how to fly. They formed the basis of what later became the Royal Thai Air Force.
- 1912: A plot to overthrow Rama VI, hatched by a small group of army and navy officers, civil servants and civilians, was discovered and nipped in the blue.
- 1917: Thailand entered World War I on the side of the allies. In the same year Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok's premiere seat of learning, was founded. Also in 1917 Rama VI succeeded in getting his way and closed all gambling houses in Bangkok, effectively depriving the government of a significant income from duties levied on such establishment.
- 1921: Compulsory primary education introduced.
- 1925: Prajadhipok, brother of Rama VI, ascended the throne as Rama VII. He was the country's last absolute monarch. In his reign, women fashion changed from long sleeve to short sleeve blouse wearing with Pa-Sin. Premed hair (American style) became very fashionable.
- 1932: A bloodless coup changed the system of government from an absolute to a constitutional monarchy. This would be the first of some 16 coups, both successful and attempted, to disrupt government up to mid-eighties. Also in 1932 Pra Buddha Yot Fa, or Memorial Bridge, over the Chao Phya river was opened as part of Bangkok's 150th anniversary celebrations.
- 1933: Thammasat University (University of Moral and Political Science) was founded in Bangkok.
- 1935: King Rama VII, while in England for an eye operation, officially abdicated. He stayed in England until his death in 1941. He was succeeded by King Ananda as Rama VIII. The reduced power of the king was taken up by the prime minister.
- 1938: Prime Minister Phibun Songkram (1938-44 and 1948-57) announced his nation-building program and imposed new dress code. Men had to wear a shirt with sleeves, trousers, hat, socks and shoes. Women had to wear a blouse, skirt, hat, and shoes, while gloves and stockings were for formal occasion.
- 1939: The official name of the country was changed from Siam to Thailand, which literally means 'land of the free' although full democracy and civil liberty were yet

to be achieved.

- 1941-45: Thailand was occupied by the Japanese and was ostensibly linked to Japan for the duration of World War II. This, however, was largely an acceptance of a de facto state and there was widespread unofficial support for the allies.
- 1943: Bangkok's School of Fine Arts was raised in status to become Silpakorn University with Italian sculptor Professor Silpa Bhirasri (Corrado Feroci) as its first principal.
- 1946: King Rama VIII was found shot dead in his bedroom. He was succeeded by his brother, the reigning monarch, King Bhumipol Adulyadej, Rama IX.
- 1949: In a move primarily aimed at restricting the influx of Chinese, a foreign immigration quota of 200 per nation was enforced.
- 1960: Bangkok's population exceeded 1.5 million. Queen Sirikit, consort of Rama IX, created a set of national costume for women, consists of 8 styles for different occasions.
- 1963: Generals Thanom Kittikachorn and Praphas Charusathian came to power and established dictatorial rule.
- 1973: Student demonstrations in Bangkok succeeded in toppling the Thanom-Praphas regime. A democratic coalition government was set up.
- 1976: The return of exiled Thanom and Praphas to Thailand trigger off bloody fighting between left- and right-wing students at Thammasat University; 40 students were killed and nearly 200 wounded.
- 1980: A bloodless coup brought in Prime Minister General Prem Tinsulanonda. He created the national costume for Thai men called, 'Prarajchathan', which is a jacket with mandarin collar and cut in the same style as Western suit.
- 1982: The Ratanakosin Bicentennial celebrated Bangkok's 200 years as the nation's capital. Among the many colourful displays of pageantry was the rarely seen Royal Barge Procession down the Chao Phya River. From this period on affluence and conspicuous consumption demonstrated the saturation of Thai clothing and apparel markets with every kind of Western fashion. The garment industry flourished creating cloth to European designs and became the 8th biggest global producer.
- 1997: The South-East Asian economic recession and crisis began in Thailand and spread to other economies in quick succession.

Appendix VI

Costume and Fashion Evolution in Thailand

Era	King Rama IV-V	King Rama VI-VII	Period of Transition Prime Minister Phibun Songkhram		1960's	1970-1974	1975-1979	1980-1984	1985-1989	1990-1994	1995-1999
Influences Theme	Victorian	Edwardian	European	USA				International Modernisation			
	Colonisation and Westernisation		Westernisation								
											

Plate 5: Costume and Fashion Evolution in Thailand