



INFLUENCE PERCEPTIONS: TRENDS OF FASHION AND TRENDS OF DESIGN

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Abstract: Despite sharing similarities due the knowledge systemization processes and due theories and abilities, the areas of fashion and design may diverge. An example is the divergences regarding the concept and study of trends. As the forecasting of future scenarios, the study of trends interests and shape an action field for both areas. This study achieved the recognition of different approaches by proposing the conceptualization and the parameters for the delimitation, categorization and evaluation of trend analysis studies.

Keywords: trends, design management, fashion.

1. Propection and the creation of the future

In the book “*Previsões*” – Portuguese for previsions – Weiner reports about the vagueness and uncertainty of predictions to posthumous times made by various authors. In the introduction to this publication, it is considered that to guess the direction of our civilization's vector would be like guessing the direction of a bottle in the ocean or the future of thousands of species that grow on the tree of life. To justify the uncertainty and insecurity, Weiner (2001, p.10) quotes the following sentence from Charles Darwin (1809-1882): "trying to follow the mutual action and reaction of any case would be as impossible as throwing up a handful of feathers in a windy day and trying to predict where each particle would fall".

The interest for the future seems constant in our society. However the centuries of experimentation and science have enabled scholars to distinguish what can and cannot be predicted. The skeptics yet believe that the best way to try to understand the future is not to think about the unexpected by using the magic of esoteric knowledge and soothsayers, like Magi using crystal balls and other artifacts preview of the future. The logical method of propection is based on the knowledge slowly acquired through scientific investigations regarding the future in accordance with present signals and recurrences of the past.

Currently, the society has reviewed the concept of "fate" – considering it from a perspective of scenario building and planning. From a traditional perspective, it is needed to program the future so that one can act positively in regard to what is about to come. The schedule and preparation to act in future realities have strong influence of evolutionistic theories that reinforce the ideas of continued existence and progress.

The phrases “the best way to predict the future is to invent it” or “the best way to predict the future is to create it” are respectively attributed to Alan Kay and Peter Drucker. Thousands of recurrences of the quotes are easily found after a half a minute on the internet. These phrases summarize the modern – yet still contemporary – idea of future forecast, aiming to remove the randomness or contingency from the future by trying to set it based on the present circumstances. The overall idea also sustains the concept of "innovation" with the purpose future-base creation in a sustainable and productive way to enterprises.

The current society is – however – complex and autonomous, being a product of uncountable actions of the planet's population. That precludes the immediate and efficient control of such actions regarding the future and would require education procedures that go from the individual sphere to the broadcasting of ideas via mass communication systems. It also requests prospective studies in order to comprehend which

trend may configure future behavior and attitudes of population, productive and consumer sectors as well as the world wide population.

Therefore, there are trend researches and studies that aim to predict the transformations that arise from the advances of today's behavior and attitudes. Firstly, these studies address mapping, discovering and knowing the collective processes. Thereafter, innovation and action plans for the future construction are proposed, according to the best possibilities and expectations of the present time.

Organizations such as institutions and companies, as well as other private bodies, have expressed a special interest for their own future. Companies whose businesses are market oriented require knowledge and prospection of the market culture's forthcoming, which depends particularly upon the consumers' behavior. To a wide range of the industrial and commercial sectors, fashion determinates the behavior of industrial and commercial goods' consumers. Therefore, trends and innovation in the files of fashion are considered interesting by a great mass of producers, traders and consumers who are involved in cultural production and consumption of fashion goods.

Amid this market culture the area of fashion design is configured. Currently, the activity of this area is largely devoted to the development of projects of fashion trends' adaptation and the creation of industrial products in the fashion production chain. So for fashion design, the studies of trends are strategic for the development of their activities. Trends can also be characterized as part of the interest object of design management when applied to the field of fashion design.

1.1 Rationale

To investigate the perception trends studies in the field of fashion design is justified because in the general context of design, the term "trend" was traditionally considered derogatory and is currently perceived more favorably.

Design is an area which's tradition was developed on a scientific basis and the word "trend" was often associated with mythical or speculative forecasts. However, trend studies have being developed in a serious way, also being based on the principles of scientific research and currently being credited and respected in both academic and organizational sectors. Consequently, this fostered a more friendly and cooperative relationship between the forecasting of trends and the field of design.

In any case, one must consider that the word "trend" is still used frivolously what somehow justifies the doubts concerning its scientific merits – since the word has served to justify projects that were poorly designed in the absence of better arguments to defend the design proposal.

There are professionals in the field of design who warn about the danger of ideas and solutions homogenization as a result of the models proposed as "trend". Due the consideration, in the field of branding and brand management, Melnick (2011) believes "that the symbiotic relationship between culture and design has always existed and will always exist. And the key to a successful brand has always been and always will be the differentiation". Melnick's warning is not unfounded because a mistaken understanding of trend studies may incur in the standardizing images and behaviors. But one must consider that the of the existence of – a perhaps hypothetical – *zeitgeist* (German for "spirit of times") should not legitimize the lack of innovation and creativity.

In the area of fashion, Eckert e Stacey (2001) evince that the designers' attention to fashion trends put the consuming public in the background – which should be the focus of attention of the creators. The authos believe that fashion enterprises consider more what other companies are creating than the wishes and needs of their own consuming public. There is, therefore a forced coherency or cohesion in the western fashion market, since the brands follow similar processes of planning and creation based on equal trend researches. To Melnick, "many designers are seeing the same sources of inspiration and, inevitably, they develop similar styles, either deliberately or unconsciously" (Melnick. Op.cit. p.1). Van Amstel (2007, p.1) states that "design follows trends and does not escape from the *clichés*". Thus, he questions the innovative capability of design, considering that "the society fears and rejects movements that propose radical

changes" [but] worships the proposed changes by design" (VAN AMSTEL, 2007, p.1) because the last ones reinforce the *status quo*.

It is a fact that, traditionally, design attends to the need of a project's adaptation to the industrial project and also aims to attend social needs. Therefore, design practice does not share the uncommitted freedom, creativity and liberty of the avant gard artistic sphere that, as a rule, challenges the prevailing socio-cultural order. Therefore, the relationship between design and trends is acceptable and even recommended. Since trend studies take base on the same scientific principles that constantly supported the development of design processes and, in addition, that designers can develop their creativity parting from trend studies.

There is a moral obstacle in the relationship of trend and consuming market that generally disturbs the field of design – more specifically addressing the specialty of fashion design. However, despite the ideals that have stimulated the development of design as a social activity, long ago a significant portion of this activity was co-opted to serve the market. On the other hand, the progress of trend studies can also cater to social interests even if it has been encouraged and subsidized by the market, the same way as another significant portion of the design activity is devoted to social and community interests.

Before having commercial interests, fashion is an anthropological and sociological phenomenon, whose origin predates the consolidation of the market. Sant'Anna (2007, p.93) refers to the following quote of Lang: "the refusal of fashion, in a broad sense, is both the refusal of social life and the self-exclusion from the community of men, as if the clothes distinguishes man from animal, fashion defines as a citizen". Moreover, as an economic activity, fashion proposes social development with the creation of numerous and diverse employments, generating and distributing income. To illustrate this fact, in an interview during Fashion Rio for the Brazilian news portal Terra, the event director Paulo Borges stated that the *Winter 2011* event created over 3,000 jobs, both directly and indirectly.

There is a kind of approach that comprises the fashion trend only from economical explanations, as a restricted conspiracy between fashion creators and entrepreneurs. The aim of this conspiratorial plot is to manipulate the consumers' desires and attitudes with discontinuous changes of colors, shapes and textures, among other perceptible qualities that stand out as innovation or renewal but are truly an aesthetic-symbolic obsolescence of products in order to make them be perceived as lagged when compared to the latest trend.

Many trend forecasting agencies directed to the market sell their products and services as a solution to jumpstart the businesses of their subscribing customers. For example, through a digital site of fashion trends, which is published online, the British company *Mud Pie* promises inspiration and creative intelligence on consumer as necessary items to the designers, buyers and fashion executives' success (Mudpie, 2011). For they sell subscriptions to access the website as a way for those professionals, entrepreneurs and stakeholders to be promptly informed about the changes in fashion and consumer trends.

According with data collect online, the value of the annual subscription that allows access to the Mud Pie's reports varied from three t six thousand dollars – depending on the number of users who will access the information – in the year of 2011. The amount charged and the success of such enterprises show the validity of that type of information and indicate the seriousness sought in collecting and processing the information researched and offered to their clients. Therefore, prior to the commercial success of trend studies, it is possible to consider the value of the methods and knowledge acquired by these studies, which may also be useful in solving other kinds of problems involving the exploration and configuration of future scenarios.

2. Trends in the philosophical context of fashion

The Italian philosopher Massimo Baldini (1942-2008), agreeing with Polhemus (1995), believes that humans are the only living creatures that intentionally alter their appearance. Also, the philosopher certifies that

the fashion system – as a social phenomenon – plays a central role in these intentional changes (BALDINI, 2005).

In its superficiality, fashion expresses deep human desire for progress, change and improvement. Thus, through aesthetic and symbolic resources, firstly, prejudices are transgressed proposing the socio-cultural development. So, like any phenomenon, fashion betrays deeper aspects that, in this case, refer to the social as a collective composed of interacting individuals. As a precursor in the fashion studies, Marie Villermont notes that "fashion does not make people, but, in a sense, people make the fashions". Therefore, whoever dedicates her/himself to the study of fashion finds "that the fashions are so closely linked to the human spirit that they are like the human's reflection" (VILLERMONT apud BALDINI, *Op cit.* p.54).

The main idea considered by Baldini about the fashion phenomenon nowadays refers to fads as the profusion of styles and "trends". In allusion to Polhemus, Baldini notes that fashion was overthrown by styles and consumers are now moving within a real trends' supermarket. In that sense, the designers are no longer future historians of fashion, but only their tellers (BALDINI, *Op cit.* p.56).

Traditionally, as well as *avant-garde* art, fashion is against the already established cultural tradition, being the manifestation of a break featuring a style that prevails for a period of time. The stylistic predominance sets a "process of social contagion" (Hill, 2003. Gladwell, 2009. Raymond, 2010) that the audience will assume the style by imitation (Mandeville, 1997. Tarde, 1976). Currently, the culture of fashion is configured as a patchwork of different and even contradictory styles and trends, therefore, it is polycentric, plural, polymorphous, cacophonous.

There are mental epidemics, such as fads, that settle alone or characterize variations in the context of a macrotrend or a fashion. "One may distinguish small flows that often last only for a few weeks, designated by the British as fads" (Ibid). Fads refer to a specific social group and are characterized for being very superficial, without changing human behavior as a whole.

The causalities of fashion are sustained by psychological, religious, sociologic, psychoanalytic, metaphysic, ethnic and ideological aspects. To Baldini (2005), fashion expresses the *zeitgeist* or "spirit of the age". The thesis was firstly defended by other theorists such as Flügel (1976), Laver (1989) and Squicciarino (1986). The "spirit of the time" is expressed in the typical manifestations of fashion and also in architecture and other areas of cultural expression.

Other authors consider the concept vague and lacking empirical content, characterizing it as metaphysical. However, this "spirit" *zeitgeist* is marked on the similarity of structural and formal aspects, for example, featured at the artistic and cultural movements of a time, present at events from different cultural sectors. "It is impossible not to perceive the elongated lines of the Gothic an equivalent of the slender medieval clothing shapes, or not to recognize that the elaboration of the Rococo style in architecture corresponds to the elaborate costumes of the same time" (FLÜGEL, *Op cit.*).

Against who accuses the artificial conspiracy in the trends' "invention" – considering that trends are only justified by commercial interests – the *zeitgeist* theory proposes deeper reasons for the emergence of trends. For even if certain fads are commercially produced, there are historical evidences that the cultural manifestations of an epoch express in convergence, from the stylistic point of view, the ideas and values of the time.

There is another scholar who is a benchmark in contemporary fashion theory, Lars Svendsen. He integrates fashion studies to popular media, culture and the ideas of thinkers such as Kant, Adorno, Barthes and Giddens. As Baldini, Svendsen deals with issues related to the theme "fashion trend", arguing that " fashion is only set when change is sought for itself, and occurs in a relatively frequently way" (SVENDSEN, 2010, p.20).

For Svendsen, since the emergence of a fashion system and – more specifically – its expression in clothing, the changes in clothes became a source of pleasure in itself without interference in the improvement of

products. Even if intentional changes were inaccessible to many people for a long period of time, this concomitant desire to "be hip" has increasingly spread.

The novelty is the structural pillar of the system we live in, vindicating the changing fashion trends. "The tradition of modernity has freed us, but made us slaves of a new imperative, we must be completely modern" (*Ibid.* p.26).

At the base of this process are the words of Kant: "the novelty makes fashion seductive", emphasizing the quality of the new as a constituent and intrinsic characteristic of fashion (*Ibid.* p.27). Thus, the traditional logic of fashion was the replacement logic. However, in the last two decades a new logic seems to have gained relevance: the supplementation logic. All trends are recyclable and, without taking the place of the old trend, the new trend is content to supplement the old proposals.

This decreases the importance of trends and implies the coexistence of many fashion trends – context in which they all partially lose their identity. Traditionally, fashion is a phenomenon that expressed the style of its time. Therefore, the coexistence of all possible styles in the same social-historic boundaries causes a time-space compression, as illustrated by the following quotation:

"Objective time and space have, of course, the same quantitative properties as before, but the experimented time and space shrank. This leads to a change in the fashion temporality. While before it could appear to have a more linear temporality, now acquired, in an increasing extent, a cyclical temporality (Ibid. p.33)".

Despite this wide range of options provide the ideas of freedom or anti-authority, Svendsen asserts that – perhaps – fashion is "the most totalitarian of all modern world's phenomena, since it has imposed its own logic to almost every area and through that encompassing everything" (*Ibid.* p.37). Therefore, fashion is proposed as a total social fact because its structural pillars appear as constraints and boundaries of all modern and contemporary social manners and games.

Similar to the concept of *zeitgeist*, Svendsen refers to the "spirit of the age," pointing be notoriously difficult to define such "spirit" in a time when trends change so rapidly, lasting less than a season. Searching to a peacemaker understanding, the philosopher considers the possibility of the *zeitgeist* to be characterized by "an unrestricted pluralism with extremely rapid changes" (*Ibid.* p.67) that is reflected in the fashion flows. Still, Svendsen remains skeptical about the possibility of the *zeitgeist* impact on the fashion to be noticeable.

Convinced that the changes' logic is given by the need to satisfy the boredom, incompleteness and dissatisfaction of the human being, Svendsen considers that consumption is a kind of entertainment, in which consumers project an idealized joy on products increasingly new since the old ones lost the capability to enchant. The author, however, does not propose an explanation of how products differ from each other – allowing the choice of the *best* new – without also explain the reason that justifies the fact that people want to consume coincident products (the convergence logic) trying to satisfy boredom established.

The philosopher perceived as the most popular, controversial and important among the fashion theoreticals is Gilles Lipovetsky. His studies consider topics such as luxury, advertising, humor, beauty and hypermodernity. To exempt himself from a frivolous conception, he considers the fashion phenomenon as in charge of our society, providing the basis for Svendsen's idea of totality. Furthermore, he believes that "the seduction and the ephemeral became, in less than half a century, the organizing principles of modern life" (Lipovetsky, 1989 p.13). In that sense, fashion is primarily a "social device characterized by a particularly short temporality, by more or less fanciful twists and, therefore, with the ability to greatly affect various spheres of collective life" (*Ibid.* p.24). In order to the "fashion system" as the realm of systematic frailty exist; it is necessary that the taste for the new is a constant and regular principle. If this occurs, the emergence of a fashion system makes the present flourish as a new legitimate temporal axis and, as outcome, a new social relationship.

Lipovesty attests that the concept of "spirit of the times" alone does not explain the motivation for the new, which is remarkable in the fashion system. Well, fashion is not sustained without the theatricality logic, the pure fantasy, the appearance games and the promotion of mundane individualism because "fashion set off to express in the luxury and the ambiguity – this particular invention of the West: the free, loose, creator individual and, its correlate, the frivolous triumph of the Self" (*Ibid.* p.49). But it does not weakens the intelligible and complex understanding of the phenomenon that involves other aspects of aesthetic, social, cultural and individual life; which act synergistically, despite each one of those aspects act in a particular way and with their own effectiveness in the fashion processes.

Corroborating with other theorists, Lipovetsky points out the historical dynamics that accelerated the process of trends and fashions' renovation that started in the 19th century, and the emerge of the *haute couture* concept and practice that started in the 20th century. That "promoted a normalization of fashion changes, a mandatory renewal operated on a fixed date", systematizing the innovation process that until then was fortuitous (*Ibid.* p.93). After that, other factors such as the choices of specialized magazines and the taste of the public and the celebrities took the forefront of fashion contradicting the set of trends planned and imposed by *haute couture*. Thus, the fashion culture took a "strategic" attitude that promoted the encounter of couturiers' aesthetic bureaucracy and the market demands.

Lipovetsky points out that throughout the 1960s and 1970s the aesthetic consensus was sprayed, mainly due to the rise of sportswear and marginal styles, of the counterculture groups, and of the *prêt-à-porter* creators. Thus, the homogeneity fashion was replaced by the aforementioned patchwork of differing styles. Eclecticism is a staging of contemporary, with shuffled and multiple readings and with references of all times, sides and directions. The contemporary fashion, as well as trends, follows the principle of heterogeneous collages.

To Lipovestky, fashion leaves the luxury of appearances and "completely redesigns the profile of our societies" (*Ibid.* p.255). Therefore, fashion is not a peripheral aspect in our society because the western society is found immersed in fashion under the triple operation of the ephemeral (1), the seduction (2) and the marginal differentiation (3) –since these three structural pillars of the fashion system also structure society.

Lipovetsky leads to the generalization of the concept of trends and cyclical changes beyond the fluctuations (fads) in clothing; because these oscillations in general affect products, services, theories approaches, literary choices, travel destinations and ways of life. At the present, the fashion system bases the laws that govern current culture.

3. Trends in the context of design management

Brigitte Borja Mozota is one of the pioneer authors who set the concept of management in the field of design. She first published it in a book in France in the year of 1990. Mozota notes that there is a shifting direction of the market in search of the design attached to innovation, which is also characterized by application of trends in the development of new technologies. "Companies turn to designers because they capture better than anyone the atmosphere of the time (...). The products express the values and aspirations of emerging consumers" (Mozota, 2011, p.35).

The designers express trends, and they occupy the outset of the innovation adoption curve (Rogers, 1995), playing the role of trendsetters. It is considered that designers capture and express still quite incipient trends into processes and products. Their performance in the market as social innovators intends to lead and communicate the changes soon to be adopted. At first, these changes are implemented socially by *early adopters* and later they tend to be adopted by the general public – which is organized by Rogers (1995) as: (1) early majority, (2) late majority and (3) laggards (Rogers, 1995).

In the condition of innovators, designers consider the world as a reality to be interpreted. The design would, thus, be a *cultural option*. The concept of the "atmosphere of the time" placed by Mozota has a congruence with the term *zeitgeist* aforementioned. Mozota's statement proposes that designers are open and sensitive to the manifestations and effects of the *zeitgeist*. The statement suggests the designers' participation in the materialization of the phenomenon' perceptive effects. "The cultural and imaginative dimensions of design are related to the strategic business' goals generated by the company's vision and to the construction of a corporate identity" (Mozota, 2011. p.18). Therefore, the designer must seek to present innovative solutions mirrored into a reality of the markets' anticipation; also being attentive to the economic, aesthetics, technology and business constraints.

The first stage of a design project – or stage zero – consists in a preliminary stage of investigation. This step could also be named prognosis, since "it is a prospective phase in which an opportunity or potential need is identified and ideas are generated to check if the need can be converted into a design concept" (*Ibid.* p.28). For that reason, this prior research informs about the market and future scenarios that will possibly be set up on short or medium periods of time. Like fashion, design also responds and collaborates with the demand for constant renewed products, stimulating consumption. Although the designers do not promote the fundamental innovations that emerge directly from the social dynamics, they have the ability and "sensitivity" to perceive qualities of market in advance. This is perceived as the prediction of new (or renewed) needs and the proposal of answers to address that need, overcoming technological constraints. "The design is partner and initiator of change in the society. So, she/he is a partner in the management of change in organizations"(*Ibid.* p.52).

To Mozota, companies that execute trend forecasts offer the needed contribution to prospective studies in the field of design. For example, the trend *bureaux*¹ have broadened their knowledge of the public beyond the limiting boundaries of the textile and apparel universe:

"Employing experts in sociology and philosophy and designers who travel the world, the agencies detect emerging trends. Their socio-cultural analysis of new consumer behavior is a useful tool to predict marketing lifestyles. Agencies edit brochures on trends and give consultancy on brands positioning in the international market" (Ibid.).

A country's economic competitiveness is measured by the ability to innovate and conduct research. In this scenario, design is needed because design is, according to Mozota, the ability to consolidate the know-how and generate value to the brand with a global strategy that involves product, packaging and branding. The design of fashion products is integrated to product design and needs to be well grounded in the knowledge of fashion trends and market information. However, in the society of dynamism and fad, beyond technological innovation, the knowledge of cultural trends is necessary to the strategic positioning of all processes and products in the cultural context of global market.

Economist from the beginning of his career, José María Iváñez Gimeno, currently director of the evaluation and economic policy division in the Department of Territorial Policy of Spain, is an associate professor at the Polytechnic University of Madrid. From the strategic and operational focus, both related to the design, Gimeno studies fashion trends especially considering aspects of competitiveness and differentiation. "Differentiation is achieved with a proper fashion management inside the company, which thus acquires the character of a fashion company. For that, companies rely on the uniqueness of their collections"(Gimeno, 2000. p.213).

¹ *Buxaux de style* are laboratories of trend research, fashion institutes and trend observatories; companies dedicated to trend research and product direction.

Like Baldini, Gimeno also makes use of the term fashions to designate the constant aesthetic and behavioral changes in the society. The author attests that fashion is ephemeral by its very nature, defining it as novelty or the adoption of new opposed to what is traditional. "Fashion is the way the new appears in the history" (*Ibid.* p.201).

One can identify that Gimeno's opinion about fashion trends implies the constant newness and ephemerality issue that contrasts to what is unchanging, perennial and classic. Regarding the presence of the term *zeitgeist*, Gimeno does not attest such "presence" or names the phenomenon as the philosopher that study fashion. The researcher, however, employs the validity of studies that analyze the market behavior "as means of satisfying consumer needs" (*Ibid.*). The individuals' way of life could, in this case, indicate which are the value scales, the worldview² and warn about the preferences of individuals as consumers within a certain predicted time spectrum.

Gimeno establishes the need for a sociological basis for the actions of design innovation, primarily in fashion design. This sociological foundation on the consumer market recognition implies that products and services designed and offered to the public adopt cultural meanings that enable individuals and social groups to greatly identify with such products. Based on the prediction indicatives, the innovations proposed by designers may be suitable for matching the needs and desires of a particular group. The garments of a given collection are, therefore, determined both by their technical characteristics as well as by a series of references to cultural models and reasons. This constant cross-mapping of various aspects of contemporary life aims to build scenarios and the prospection of trends.

In the productive organization chart, Gimeno also secures the idea that on top of the fashion production chain there are external sources to a company, such as: the coordinating institutions of fashion, marketing analytics and corporate style investigations. The search for such sources is primarily given in a first stage, the preparation for the project. The coordinating institutions of fashion are responsible for technical research on new products, materials and processes and also for analytical research on trends and market factors in both qualitative and quantitative levels (*Ibid.* p.219).

The economist trusts that trend research takes place outside companies and considers that prognostic information regarding new releases are a dependent variable of professional organizations that define predictable fashion trends and organize meetings and fairs in order to expose these trends.

We conclude that Gimeno considers the existence and dignifies fashion trends, especially in judging them a strategic advantage essential to fashion products' collections. The differentiation of products related to an idea well-grounded in lifestyles and behavior trends. This achievement is based on the time extent of certain fashion concept and the ability of this concept to compete with other fashion concepts.

At this level, trend research becomes of great importance, since it promotes the anticipation of the market's qualities and alert companies to develop not only products or a type of communication, but an holistic strategic process focusing their consumers. Thus, prospective research aims to identifying needs and desires and to understand the values and esteems of the target consumers in order to serve them proactively.

² The term "worldview" is the literal translation of the expression *Cosmovisión* used by the author in the original Spanish text. The term has its origins in the German *Weltanschauung* and means world perception, point of view, world conception.

4. Trend studies as management strategy

Convergence points are identified among the considered authors, allowing studies that can situate trend prospecting as consistent and strategic activity for the area of design management and more particularly to the management applied in fashion design. It is considered that the consequently performed prospecting of trends is a necessary activity to the integration of design and organizations in the dynamic context of the fashion society. That is suggested by the evidence that the dynamics of fashion structures the social culture and the market relations.

The first aspect to be considered is the idea of "change". Every trend necessarily has a relationship with change or transformation; be it extravagant and evident, be it discreet and rather tenuous. These changes can happen in relation to consumer behavior, the emergence of new style groups and also regarding social hierarchies. According to Lipovetsky, trends involve social, cultural, individual and aesthetic aspects of life.

Another relevant aspect within the current social *ethos*, are the changes considered valid and legitimated as trends due to the logic of: (1) assortment; (2) renewal, and (3) standardization of change. Lipovetsky, Baldini and Svendsen attest that in this society the taste for the new has become a regular and consistent principle. "Fashion is only set when change is sought for itself, and occurs in a relatively frequent way" (SVENDSEN. *Op cit.* p. 24) Thus, an intentioned renovation is searched, in which the change justifies the change.

The concept of "mandatory renewal" is also legitimized by researchers in the field of design management. For example, Mozota justifies design strategies searching for innovation coupled with design. Gimeno presents trends mainly as constant newness contrasting to what is unchanging, perennial and classic. The study of future innovations implies recognition of the market and the consumer public, in order to anticipate future scenarios in which organizations will operate. This incites companies to develop processes, services and products [for communication and consumption] from a broad strategic overview on consumer behavior trends.

That also directs to consider trends as "mirrors of the future". Baldini uses the term "reflection" to stress the indicative and descriptive character that trends assume in relation to our society. Mozota attests to the need for developing innovative solutions mirrored into a reality of innovation in anticipation of the market dynamics. In agreement with Lipovetsky, like other cultural symptoms, fashion is "mirror of society". As a cultural symptom, the expressions of fashion [shapes, colors, textures, and patterns] also reveal profound implications in economic, political and social fields. Fashion involves deeper matters, configuring it as a *total social fact*. This means that its mode of operation has spread to all culture spheres.

Mozota confirms that trends inform about the market, providing estimative analysis of future scenarios. This indicates that changes have are observable and identifiable. She considers that designers are affected and stimulated by the "atmosphere of the time" and confirms the principles that underpin such terms as "spirit of time", and "zeitgeist", which are used by other researchers.

In operational and strategic levels, fashion trends are relevant to the competitiveness, differentiation and uniqueness of an organization, such as institutions and companies of products and services. Businesses seek to trace the dynamics of cultural meanings in order to maximize the public's identification with the objects by them produced, adopting as cultural, social and aesthetic changes as references (GIMENO. *Op cit.*). In the field of design, the recognition of future trends occurs during the project's preparation phase and consists in a preliminary investigation stage (GIMENO, *Op cit.*; MOZOTA, *Op cit.*).

In general, trends are constituted as changes and oscillations in the quest for constant and self-legitimate renewal, but in congruence with the "spirit", *zeitgeist*, of a particular time. Prospective studies seek to identify influences on a given scenario, interpreting their transformations in the direction of understanding

and predicting its consequences. Trend research can be applied in various ways. The most known and disclosed is the adaptation and adequacy of trends into an apparel collection. However, one can go further, given the diversity of information about the market, behavior and emerging lifestyles. Thus, the investigation of trends is applicable in various social levels and industry sectors. The guidelines for the future can guide concepts, styles and products and will also influence the market and – therefore – the companies' management. Trend prospection made with seriousness and scientific consistency can also guide policies, strategies, cultural and social activities, projecting changes in the public interest.

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