

Minority Influence and Fashion. The Model of Style Transformation

Sommer, Carlo Michael ¹

¹ Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences, Germany

TO CITE

Sommer, C. M. (2016). Minority Influence and Fashion. The Model of Style Transformation. In *Proceedings of the Paris Institute for Advanced Study* (Vol. 4). https://paris.pias.science/article/MOSCO_2016-05_minority-influence-and-fashion

PUBLICATION DATE

17/11/2016

ABSTRACT

Tribute to Serge Moscovici. Paris IAS, 17-18 November 2016 - Session 1

This contribution focuses on the role of minority influence in fashion change. It links findings from experimental social psychology to sociological processes of aesthetical and societal change.

According to the concept of style transformation new dress fashions and other life style trends are created by active minorities, as a rule but not necessarily, youth subcultures. Through their experimental creations they express their emerging identities in a challenging context of a fast changing society. Although their values anticipate values to become relevant to the majority, too (e.g., the hedonism of the Hippies as anticipation of a hedonistic consumer society), the majority cannot identify with their provocative opposition and rejects the emerging styles.

This gap is filled by avant-garde designers and their customers. As flexible minorities they play the role of cultural intermediaries. By formalization and re-contextualization, they separate the new style elements from their subversive meaning and transfer them from the domain of objectivity norm into the area of the norms of originality and preference, from ugly provocation to expensive art and fashion. The new styles are associated with prestige. In a process of further dilution, they can be adopted by a greater part of the majority.

It is concluded that the psychology of minority influence provides a substantial contribution to the explanation of aesthetical change.



[Minority Influence and Fashion. The Model of Style Transformation](#)

Sommer, C. M. (2016). Minority Influence and Fashion. The Model of Style Transformation. In *Proceedings of the Paris Institute for Advanced Study* (Vol. 4). https://paris.pias.science/article/MOSCO_2016-05_minority-influence-and-fashion
2016/18 - hommage-serge-moscovici - Article No.23. Freely available at https://paris.pias.science/article/MOSCO_2016-05_minority-influence-and-fashion - ISSN 2826-2832/© 2024 Sommer C.
This is an open access article published under the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International Public License \(CC BY-NC 4.0\)](#)

Bibliography

Aebischer, V., Hewstone, M., & Henderson, M. (1984). Minority influence and musical preference. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 14, 23–33.

Barber, B. (1957). *Social stratification*. Harcourt, Brace & Co.

Barthes, R. (1967). *Système de la mode*. Éditions du Seuil.

Baudrillard, J. (1991). *Der symbolische Tausch und der Tod*. Matthes und Seitz.

Blumer, H. (1969). Fashion: From class differentiation to collective selection. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 10, 275–291.

Bourdieu, P. (1979). *La distinction. Critique sociale du jugement*. Les éditions du minuit.

Brewer, M. B., & Hewstone, M. (Eds.). (2004). *Self and social identity*. Blackwell.

Clarke, J., & Roberts, B. (2006). Subcultures, cultures and class. In S. Hall & T. Jefferson (Eds.), *Resistance through rituals: Youth subcultures in post-war Britain* (pp. 3–59). Routledge.

Curtius, M., & Hund, W. D. (1971). *Mode und Gesellschaft. Zur Strategie der Konsumindustrie*. Europ. Verl.-Ans.

Enninger, W. (1983). Kodewandel in der Kleidung. Sechszwanzig Hypothesenpaare. *Zeitschrift für Semiotik*, 5, 23–48.

Giffhorn, H. (1974). *Moderverhalten. Ästhetische Normen und politische Erziehung*. Dumont.

Haug, W. F. (1971). *Kritik der Warenästhetik*. Suhrkamp.

Kalka, J., & Allgayer, F. (Eds.). (2006). *Zielgruppen. Wie sie leben, was sie kaufen, woran sie glauben*. mi-Fachverlag.

König, R. (1985). *Menschheit auf dem Laufsteg*. Hanser.

Kroeber, A. (1919). On the principles of order in civilization as exemplified by fashion. *American Anthropologist*, 21, 235–263.

Letscher, M. G. (1994). How to tell fads from trends. *American Demographics*, 16(12), 38–42.

Moscovici, S. (1976). *Social influence and social change*. Academic Press.

Moscovici, S. (n.d.). Toward a theory of conversion behavior. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* (Vol. 8, pp. 209–233).

Mugny, G., Rilliet, D., & Papastamou, S. (1981). Influence minoritaire et identification sociale dans des contextes d'originalité et de deviance. *Revue Suisse de Psychologie Pure et Appliquée*, 40, 314–322.

Mugny, G. (1982). *The power of minorities*. Academic Press.

Mugny, G., & Pérez, J. A. (1991). *The social psychology of minority influence*. Cambridge University Press.

Paicheler, G. (1976). Norms and attitude change I: Polarization and styles of behavior. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 6, 404–427.

Paicheler, G. (1977). Norms and attitude change II: The phenomenon of bipolarization. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 7, 5–14.

Perrot, P. (1981). *Les dessus et les dessous de la bourgeoisie: une histoire du vêtement au XIXe siècle*. Fayard.

Richardson, J., & Kroeber, A. L. (1940). Three centuries of women's dress fashions. A quantitative Analysis. *Anthropological Records*, 5(2).

Schnierer, T. (1995). *Modewandel und Gesellschaft. Die Dynamik von „in“ und „out“*. Leske & Budrich.

Schulze, G. (1992). *Die Erlebnisgesellschaft. Kultursoziologie der Gegenwart*. Campus.

Sennett, R. (1998). *The corrosion of character*. W. W. Norton.

Simmel, G. (1911). Die Mode. In S. Bovenschen (Ed.), *Die Listen der Mode* (pp. 179–207). Suhrkamp.

Sommer, C. M. (2012). Dress and identity – A Social Psychologist’s perspective. In H. Wiegand & A. Wieczorek (Eds.), *Mannheimer Geschichtsblätter. Sonderveröffentlichung 4: Kleidung und Identität in religiösen Kontexten der römischen Kaiserzeit* (pp. 257–263). Mannheimer Altertumsverein.

Sommer, C. M. (2016). Die Macht der Kleidersprache. In Bonprix (Ed.), *Bonprix Modestudie 2016* (pp. 14–15). Bonprix.

Sommer, C. M. (2005). Mode. In D. Frey & C. G. Hoyos (Eds.), *Psychologie in Gesellschaft, Kultur und Umwelt. Handbuch* (pp. 245–252).

Sommer, C. M. (1989). *Soziopsychologie der Kleidermode*. Roderer.

Sommer, C. M. (1997). Trend ist im Trend. In H. Krauch, T. Sommerlatte, & A. D. L. International (Eds.), *Bedürfnisse entdecken. Gestaltung zukünftiger Märkte und Produkte*. Campus.

SPIEGEL-Verlag, H. (2016). *OUTFIT 5*. GESIS Data Archive. <https://doi.org/10.4232/1.12493>

Squicciarino, N. (1986). *Il vestito parla. Considerazioni psychosociologiche sull' abbigliamento*. Armando.

Turner, C., Hogg, A., Oakes, P. J., Reicher, S. D., & Wetherell, M. S. (Eds.). (1987). *Rediscovering the social group. A self-categorization theory*. Blackwell.

Veblen, T. (1899). *Theorie der feinen Leute. Eine ökonomische Untersuchung der Institutionen*. Kiepenheuer & Witsch.

Wiswede, G. (1971). Theorien der Mode aus soziologischer Sicht. *Jahrbuch der Absatz- und Verbrauchsforschung*, 17, 79–92.

Zandl, I. (2000). How to separate trends from fads. *Brandweek*, 41(41), 30–32.