Master's Degree in
Management

Final Thesis

The Future of Responsible Fashion
A Twofold Business-Customer
Co-Designed Project

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Introduction

The present thesis is dedicated to the presentation of actual Fashion businesses' unsustainable conduct and the risks unfolded under current Fashion trends, which represent a no turning back point for both the natural and social capital preservation, mining future generations' potential economic models' viability. The objective of the study is to raise awareness over the industry's malpractice by providing a glimpse over the uncertain future viability of the sector without the prompt implementation of ad-hoc corrective actions. In the last years the Fashion Industry has become a pioneer in proposing toxic operational models fostering the habit of continuous consumption and non-stop purchase. The most famous business model is represented by the Fast Fashion paradigm, which stresses a "more at less" and "wear and waste" trend of clothing acquisition. Fast Fashion key assets include weekly renewed in store and online lines at highly affordable prices inducing customers to accumulate products at always faster paces causing reduced clothes' maintenance rates. The prices competitiveness is offset by the poor quality of materials reducing users' clothes maintenance period. The shortened clothes retainment period causes, therefore, enormous amounts of wasted products, which are not eligible for recycling purposes due to the high percentage of toxic raw materials usage and are destined to clogged landfills. This model of production has long proved to be toxic for the environment not just because of the continuous production pace needed to maintain always freshly made lines to be available in stores, but also because of the highly polluting raw materials and colorants used to manufacture clothes. On the other hand, there is also the social issue. Fast Fashion operating companies are striving towards implementing cost reduction activities by dislocating their manufacturing plants in low/medium income countries characterized by low labor expenditures. Several cases have been issued against Fashion brands for workers' exploitation, unsafe working conditions and carelessness towards fair employment contracts definition. One of the most worldwide known cases of Fashion Industry's social malpractices has occurred in 2013 with the Rana Plaza's collapse. The event has caused thousands of employees' deaths during working hours, who were appointed by western brands for garments' manufacturing. The most shocking fact apart from the actual possibility to avoid the occurrence of such a tragic event by securing the building infrastructure, has been the

difficulty in issuing all the involved brands as ascribed for the tragedy. In fact, actual global Fashion companies' supply chains are so dispersed and capillary articulated that it is difficult to trace the direct relation between the local manufacturer and the original commissioner. The poor investments over transparency and traceability efforts along the entire businesses' operations, partners and supply chain represents one of the other greatest defaults of the current business of Fashion strategic direction. An economic model which harnesses natural preservation and does not invest in social capital cannot be feasible over the long term as it will be soon constrained by raw materials scarceness and human capital illness. After having clarified the magnitude of current Fashion malpractices, the second chapter introduces the thesis' research plan. The chapter starts from the definition of the research areas of interest, passing to the presentation of the on-field research activity's selected strategy and ending with a literature review inquiry session dedicated to the introduction of the design thinking lead instruments and characterizing practices, as co-designing, which is later explained in the third chapter. The areas of interest, which are of course defined in relation to the presented businesses' unsustainable issue, are also selected for their technological feasibility, economic viability and ultimate users' desirability. It is proper to work on opportunity areas which are realistically implementable through plausible technologies which are affordable for companies and do produce a construct, either a product or a service, which stands in the likings of the end clients' group. Moving onwards in the second chapter, a session is dedicated to the co-design research practice, being the selected one for the present study. Co-designing fosters the chance for diverse entities to engage in mutual collaborations and projects leveraging on joint efforts, usually hosted in a defined channel with the goal to produce unique experiences and products' propositions. Co-design practices aid researches in detecting resolutive path jointly defined and thus available to the parties involved in a process of mutual collaboration. The selection of the methodology has been driven by the ultimate aim of providing a solution to a multifaceted topic as responsible Fashion is, leveraging over parties' diverse background and interests. Diversities included in a joint approach opens the path to equally valuable opportunity areas, which represent valid working fields fostering the attainment of a responsible strategic conduct. The parties involved in the present study are business' players and users' groups, whose roles and contributions will be mediated and aggregately analyzed by the author, occupying the position of a research designer. A stakeholders' map is depicted to

enumerate the multiple potentially involved parties in the sustainable Fashion discourse, but for the present thesis we will limit to the selection of the two critical ones: the business and the users' group. The selected entities are represented by the average business of Fashion player and a users' group, which are considered as the critical entities to grant the Fashion model functioning, still maintaining a widened holistic approach for further entities, being the remaining parties enlisted in the stakeholders' map, for future research enlargements. The users' group will be analyzed through an interviewing process which grants to collect precious insights and observations over actual habits and beliefs, disclosing hidden paradoxes and inconsistencies. The chapter ends with the introduction of a literature review session dedicated to the study of current research activities regarding design thinking lead practices in the domain of sustainable Fashion to both provide a solid working basis for the current study as to certify the robustness of the selected approaches and instruments adopted throughout the work of analysis. The adoption of a literature review also provides a starting point for the present research with the aim to move further and beyond what has been discussed till today. The third chapter is constructed around the topic of dual business-users' centric co-design activities in a process of mutual commitments and responsiveness to achieve sustainable goals. This section discusses the role of social media as vehicles of sustainable Fashion related information delivered to the general online/digital public. It is important to clarify the potential of social media and other digitally available channels as they will constitute a major construct for hosting the previously mentioned co-design activities. All brands are now using social media marketing campaigns as a strategic asset to boost marketing KPIs as sales' increase, users' enhanced engagement, augmented conversion rates and other more. Nevertheless, these campaigns are usually centered at reaching the mass market by the means of greenwashing practices rather than raising awareness by disclosing responsible Fashion related knowledge. The research suggests adopting online networking platforms as chances to host co-design momentum rather than for mass communication purposes. Furthermore, when discussing the co-design topic, it is correct to mention the thesis's attempt to overcome the traditional distinction in between sole business centric and users' centric focus. The chapter enumerates the limitations unfolded by one sided business centric as customer centric approaches, which are theoretically elaborated to be mutually excluding one with the other rather than integrating both under a unique paradigm.

The co-designed approach instead works, for the present thesis as a medium and "gluing" factor in between the sole business centric and customer centric paradigms, fostering the enhanced potential of shared collaborative schemes. As the design thinking model presents, the presence of a designer stands in engaging firms and users for mutually supportive programs organized around a product delivery or service provision either being tangible as intangible in its ultimate nature. After having defined the attempt to work on merging the business' sided with users' oriented working schemes, the thesis is dedicated to presenting how the current business of Fashion is and how it has changed during the Covid19 case. The fourth chapter is initially dedicated to the analysis of the current economics and related data regarding the impact of a pandemic diffusion for the aggregate industry's turnover and economic robustness. Data will prove the pandemic spread to have exacerbated a yet flat/not growing Fashion Industry, requiring for prompt changes in businesses' strategic visions and missions to survive the unpredicted phenomenon. Countries such as Italy, which is worldwide known as the motherland of the Fashion Industry have been severely hit by the pandemic diffusion and have resented the most from profits contraction. Anyway, Italy has proved being one out of the most responsive countries by taking prompt corrective actions as engaging in businesses' diversification solutions to overcome the severe financial limitations. Further on, the section indulges in the consideration of the major effects and responsive actions undertaken by Fashion companies during the sanitary emergency momentum. The two greatest impacts are constituted by enhanced consciousness and attention over customers', workers' and employees' social supports along the entire supply chain. One of the biggest lessons learnt after the pandemic spread do include the fact that without social wellbeing and healthiness preservation no further economic model could be feasible. The second great Covid19 related consequence is constituted by the sensible business models' diversification in the production of PPE as masks, hand sanitizers, gloves and medical suits. Furthermore, companies have proved capable of implementing fundraising activities and to invest profits' shares for the academic research in the attempt to formulate effective vaccines and in the procurement of medical equipment needed to aid ill individuals. After having dedicated space to a business centric analysis, the fifth chapter closes the circle by fostering a customers' centered perspective. Chapter 5 regards the disclosure of users' interviewing practice research's insights and observations, which include the detection of the so named "extreme users" which are

critical informative parties in a design thinking lead study as they part from average users and provide unpredicted but highly potential resolutive perspectives. The selected insights and observations are then organized to construct the challenge definition areas, which have been defined in accordance to the underling threefold dimensions' distinction characterizing the sustainable development definition. As an outcome three different but highly correlated challenges are defined in accordance to the environmental, social and economic setting and will be afterwards merged in the definition of a unique overall opportunity area. The opportunity area is the outcome of comparing the hints obtained from the business centric analysis with the challenge defined in the users' group centric focus. These areas are "zones of tension" marked with a lightning sign, which emerge when merging the two entities' focus. These areas of tension, on the contrary of what might appear at first glance, do represent major windows of opportunity and working areas for further implementations towards Fashion responsibility conversion. The apparent incompatibility in between businesses' operations after Covid19 and users' group obtained challenges turns being the highest potential zone fostering mutual entities' collaborations to fill experience gaps. Finally the selected resolutive path's dimensions emerged from the research study will populate a renewed version of the Fashion business's model canvas, which contains the significant shifts required and meant by both users and firms to sustain the change towards future Fashion engaged responsibility over environmental and social matters, under a long-term feasible circular likewise economic model. The present research provides a business ecosystem strategic direction to implement sustainable practices considering the contributing role of the selected key stakeholders being both companies and users. Obviously, the thesis is written with consciousness regarding other key partners inclusion in the Fashion ecosystem scenario. The present thesis is meant for being the first step for a much wider future research activity aimed at enlarging its scope to the remaining several stakeholders affected and affecting the Industry's operations. The presented resolutive path is holistic and flexible in nature to grant the chance for future research elaborations to use the present outcomes as a starting point for future analysis, open to ad-hoc changes and improvements.

Chapter 1. Why Sustainability is a Matter for Fashion

The word "Sustainability" has become a recurrent term, increasingly present in every domain of our daily life, from the food we acquire, to how we travel, even creating an entire lifestyle developed in accordance to pro-sustainable actions and way of living. Sustainability is not just changing how people act alone or as an entire society, but is also affecting business operations offering new perspectives, and business opportunities fostering long term survival and strategic visions for companies who wish to implement it as part of their corporate core values and strengths. The McKinsey & Company Organization has been a pioneer in recognizing the opportunities offered by the so-called "Business of Sustainability". The organization conducted a survey in 2011 regarding the fact companies were starting to report their sustainability efforts as part of their financial publishing. Firms were also working to reduce energy usage and waste production as an outcome of their operations, ahead of a mere usage of sustainability for sole reputation management [1].

Today the discourse over sustainability has slightly changed, and it has become more complex as its very nature has become multifaceted, comprehending contexts as environmental, social, institutional and economic development all together. The challenges companies must face when implementing sustainability as a core element of their CSR program, are quite complex as they specifically regard each of the four subsystems previously mentioned, assuring they are co-evolving simultaneously [2].

Sustainability is today realistically attainable only by few companies, who possess adequate capital investments resources and who can foster and educate their workers over the topic, to ultimately generate the appropriate managerial know-how. The exclusivity of its corporate adoption controls even more the chances to succeed in a competitive market. When the concept of sustainable business model was first conceived, its main purpose was to put companies into the service of a transformation towards a more sustainable economic system; to provide leverage for integrating sustainability considerations into organization; and to help companies to achieve their

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[1] Bonini S., Gorner S., *The Business of Sustainability*, McKinsey & Company Sustainability, US, 2011.
[2] Spangenberg J.H., *Sustainability and the Challenge of Complex Systems*, Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, Abingdon, 2014.

sustainability ambitions[3]. Today, instead, the notion of sustainable business models is increasingly seen as a source of competitive advantage.

Fashion companies have started committing to sustainability, from big established firms to new emergent ones, working on the creation of sustainable business models being the next generations' most promising and strategically favorable constructs to boosting competitive advantage.

The relevance of sustainability for Fashion is straightforward, not just because Fashion is a detector of latest capturing trends, but also because currently the Fashion Industry is one of the most polluting industries in the world, accounting for about 10% of all humanity's carbon emissions, being the second-largest consumer of the world's water supply, and polluting the oceans with microplastics [4]. These polluting trends have been intensified by the business models adopted by the Fashion Industry, as the winning Fast Fashion Model, offering continuous new collections and designs in stores, doubling clothing production from 2000 to 2014 [5]. The Global Fashion Agenda has reported in 2017, that if the overall business conduct of Fashion firms does not change, its overall impact on climate change will rise to 49% by 2030. Still the environmental aspect is just a part of the entire concern, as also Fashion has been accused lately for unsafe working conditions, low unsustainable wages and even child employment.

Future estimates point out the Fashion Industry's CO2 emissions are projected to increase to nearly 2.8 billion tons per year by 2030, and apparel consumption is expected to rise by 63% from 62 million tons today to 102 million tons in 2030 [6].

The present paper is meant to search for and provide a solution to the present lack of sustainability in current Fashion business models, by questioning the adoption of joint measures entailing both businesses' commitment and consumers' behaviors changes towards the responsible cause, in a process of mutual co-education and collaboration. The research will be conducted following a literature review over the main topics being discussed followed by the actual contribution of the paper throughout the application of the design thinking model as resolutive for the Fashion sustainable issue previously mentioned. Following a collaborative research project, the involved parties being

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[3] Geissdoerfer M., Vladimirova D., Evans S., *Sustainable Business Model Innovation: A Review*, Journal of Cleaner Production, ScienceDirect, 2018.

[4] McFall-Johnsen M., *How Fast Fashion Hurts the Planet Through Pollution*, Global Updates, Business Insider, 2019.

[5] Remy N., Speelman E., Swartz S., *Style's that's Sustainable: A New Fast-Fashion Formula*, Sustainability, McKinsey & Company, 2016.

[6] Global Fashion Agenda, *Pulse of The Fashion Industry*, Boston Consulting Group, 2017.

businesses on one side and customers on the other, are selected from the stakeholders' entire category and afterwards analyzed in a mutual co-creative process, towards the provision of an unique resolution to the Fashion sustainable current matter.

1.1. A Not Responsible Model: The Upcoming Decline of Fast Fashion

Fast Fashion is a term used to describe the readily available, inexpensively made Fashion of today, where the word "fast" defines the rapidness retailers have attained in moving designs from the catwalk to stores, keeping pace with constant demand for more and different styles [7]. Fast Fashion companies thrive on fast cycles: rapid prototyping, small batches combined with large variety, more efficient transportation and delivery, and merchandise that is presented "floor ready" on hangers with price tags already attached [8].

Companies operating within a Fast Fashion business model are striving for the generation of savings and cost reduction dedicated activities along their entire supply chain. Fast Fashion brands are intensively moving their production and manufacturing plants in developing countries characterized by lower labor costs and poor governmental protection towards workers with lessened controls exertion over manufacturing operations. The supply chains dislocation, which appear to be intensively fragmented and dispersed, raises the difficulty in detecting the suppliers-commissioners relation, causing poor legal protection and ethical transparency. Insufficient controls are exerted over exploitation or unsafe working conditions, as over transports from factory to retail outlets, as ultimately over garments' aftercare and disposal [9]. An even lessened control is exerted over raw materials' sourcing, being used for the production processes for garments. Raw materials are selected in accordance to their cost reduction nature, preferring materials such as cotton and polyester, which are ultimately the most polluting materials existing for fabrics production and maintenance. On this purpose, the European Parliament released in 2019 a document regarding the environmental impact of the textile and clothing

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[7] Bick R., Halsey E., Ekenga C.C., *The Global Environmental Injustice of Fast Fashion*, Environmental Health, BCM, 2018.

[8] Joy A., Sherry Jr J.F., Venkatesh A., Wang J., Chan R., *Fast Fashion, Sustainability, and the Ethical Appeal of Luxury Brands*, Journal of Fashion Theory, Taylor & Francis Online, 2015.

[9] *Ibid.*

industry, reporting the improper heavy usage of polluting raw materials as cotton, which accounts for more than 43% of all fibers used for clothes on the EU market. Cotton is environmentally detrimental for its intense requirement of land disposal for cultivation as for water, fertilizers and pesticides usage for its maintenance [10]. A similar concern regards polyester-made fabrics, a non-biodegradable material obtained from fossil-fuels sources. Polyester-made materials as nylon are harmful for human health, because they release microplastic toxins in their transformation phase, which if inhaled by human beings not properly protected can ultimately cause the emergence of breathing diseases. Furthermore, when clothes are washed those very same toxins are released in the environment and can pollute our oceans and the water we use plausibly even ending up in human food chains [11].

The rising fragmentation of today's Fashion supply chains raises the complexity in the evaluation of its transparency and traceability by hiding businesses' malpractices including workers' human rights and wellbeing preservation as natural capital maintenance. The disregard of the social and natural dimension does cause events as the one witnessed at Rana Plaza in 2013 to occur.

A Long Way Towards Workers' Safety: The Rana Plaza Disaster

Figure 1, Rana Plaza's Collapse (Mansutti, E-Paper, 2015, at: e-paper.it.)

The collapse of an eight-story garment factory building in April 2013 outside the city of Dhaka in Bangladesh, was one of the worst industrial incidents documented in the history of Fashion, killing around a thousand of workers. Due to the previously discussed nature of the Fast

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[10] Sajn N., *Environmental Impact of the Textile and Clothing Industry: What Consumers Need to Know*, European Parliamentary Research Service, European Parliament, 2019.
[11] *Ibid.*

Fashion business model, it was quite difficult to discover the brands involved in the tragedy by commissioning work at the Rana Plaza garments' production. Several companies were incriminated as equally guilty for the disastrous event occurrence, but even after seven years it is still difficult to mention their names entirely. This is due mainly to the poor reliability of local governmental authorities, who were and still are sensibly corrupted and unreliable for the control of human rights and workers' safety assurance guarantees. Western Companies as the Italian brand Benetton, the Spanish brand Mango and the Irish brand Primark were mentioned as feasible and responsible for what has happened at Rana Plaza, leaving many other firms tacitly involved. The event occurred in April 2013 is just the third of a series of similar incidents, still of minor impact, happened in Bangladesh, including factory fires in cities of Tazreen and Dhaka once again. What rendered this ultimate event even more unacceptable was its avoidable nature. The days before the collapse, workers claimed cracks were present on walls and ceilings to the local authorities, who consequently warned to avoid entering in the building until safety measures were not taken. Still the building owner admitted those cracks were nothing to be considered seriously and ordered employees to return working under a normal routine. Furthermore, the building itself turned out to have an illegal structure, as the government originally allowed only for a five-story extension of the block. The additional three floors were added later but have never been denounced. The illegal building represents once again both the negligence of local institutions, who were not able to recognize the structure as not compliant with construction safety rules, as also their incapacity to block the corrupted shortcuts adopted for the last floors addition.

Today there are institutions as the NGO Clean Clothes Campaign, who are working intensively to avoid those incidents to happen again, raising responsibility of both local governments and of brands who dislocate their production activities in LMEs. The institution has raised around one million signatures, to require a fair financial compensation by the brands being unequivocally involved in the incident, as it was required to Benetton of refunding victims' families at least. Other global governmental entities as the Institute for Human Rights and Business together with other NGOs as the Belgian Solidarite Mondiale, are issuing sensibilization campaigns for brands whose supply chains are developed in development countries as Bangladesh, and are working at the support of local institutions to get rid from corruption by implementing control directives on human rights preservation and safety working standards.

References:
(1) Clean Clothes Campaign, *Campaign: Rana Plaza*, at: https://cleanclothes.org/campaigns/past/rana-plaza
(2) Gomes W., *Reason and Responsibility: The Rana Plaza Collapse, Open Democracy*, 2013.
(3) Safi M., Rushe D., Rana Plaza, *Five Years On: Safety of Workers Hangs in Balance in Bangladesh*, Global Development, The Guardian, 2018.

Fast Fashion, on the other hand, has completely changed our ultimate consumption behavior. The presence of a continuous flow of new clothes designs being proposed in stores, provides a high rewarding effect over our purchases, as we can acquire up-to-date clothes bearing little prices. The rewarding nature of Fast Fashion has long nurtured our insane habits, and has created a vicious cycle, for a continuous desire of acquiring something new, even if it something we do not actually need. A non-stop purchase and consumption have led to a coherently weighted non-stop waste generation. Consumers now purchase not with a bought-to-keep concern, but with a bought-use-throw attitude, proved by data over latest years increases in clothes' turnover rates. As study regarding textile and clothes' usage conducted by the researcher Rick Leblanc in a 2019 documented consumers constitute the main culprits in Fashion waste generation, just considering an average consumer buys 60% more clothes every year and keeps them for about half as long as fifteen years ago, generating a huge amount of waste [12].

Data are exhaustive enough to understand why Fast Fashion business model is not sustainable over the long term and appears as seriously harming for the very combination of consumers' generated impacts together with the long-term unattainable companies' working footprint. The current business model is responsible for way too numerous emerging negative externalities, which cannot be tackled by few or partial sustainable adjustments. Even in the case companies were taking incremental steps to become environmentally and socially sustainable, they still will have to move for a long term-future oriented vision to ultimately attain a majorly renewed business model fully embracing sustainability. The paper will later discuss the differential accessibility to incremental and radical innovation towards sustainability, which is tightly linked to the nature of the company, whether it is a yet established one or an emergent business. A feasible economic model embracing responsibility in regard of both social and natural capital preservation is not an easy task to be attained and performed. Companies must deal with a so complex and differentiated businesses' ecosystem, it becomes impossible to embrace each

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[12] Leblanc R., *Textile and Garment Recycling Facts and Figures, Sustainable Businesses: Resources*, Small Business, 2019.

stakeholders' perspective and need under a unique business model. Therefore, the very nature of the proposed business model, rather than being just comprehensive must be flexible and holistic enough, to plausibly adapt to each of the stakeholders who are part of the business ecosystem. The following sections are dedicated to an initial aggregate analysis of the challenges the Fashion Industry will have to face soon, adopting actual business ecosystems and current business model canvas presentation. Those models are used to provide a robust research background to the present study with the aim of ending with the proposition of a holistic setting suiting every possibly selected stakeholder affecting the shift towards a responsible working direction.

1.1.1. The Challenges Sustainability Has to Face for Future Survival

An analysis of the businesses' ecosystem will be conducted in first place to define the challenges the Fashion Industry has to face for its future survival. The analysis sketches the interdependencies between Fashion companies and their surrounding environment, to detect ultimate drivers and contributors for business sustainable performance. The business model ecosystem we would rely on in the present paper is the one presented in the work of Marikka Heikkila published in 2012, which is an updated version of the initial framework proposed by Robert Edward Freeman in 2010. This version of the framework appears to best fit the sub-ecosystems' visualization needs of the present paper, for a future definition of the focal users' and stakeholders' groups we will focus on for a Fashion sustainable goal achievement.
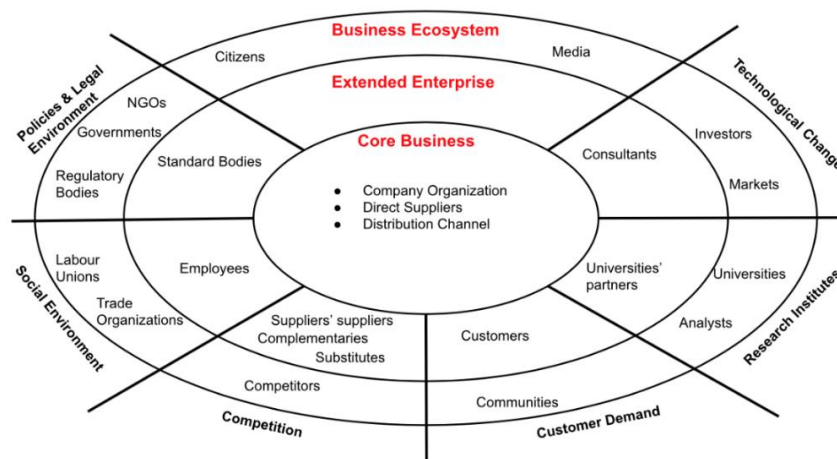

Figure 2. Fashion Business Ecosystem (Heikkila M., Kuivaniemi L., Research Gate, 2012)

The upstanding scheme defines two different sub-categories involved in the complete business working ecosystem specifically differentiated in core business and extended enterprise elements. In order to grant an easiness of visualization of the different stakeholders groups included, the overall scheme is sectioned in seven different areas of interest being: political and legal environment; social environment; competition; customer demand; research institutions; technological change; and other stakeholders groups. All these areas contain an umbrella of entities, which are obviously connected to other domains, as they do not represent independent contexts. The aggregate view thereby offered, integrates numerous entities who are part of the business operating ecosystem and all of them have obviously different weights impacting the ultimate business performance outcomes.

The creation of this framework is needed for the visualization of the entire set of stakeholders contributing and affected by the business conduct, in accordance with stakeholders' theory approach. The stakeholder theory is a theory of organizational management dealing with stakeholders' generated pressures on the company economic, social and environmental performance similarly to the shareholders' pressures over business financial performances [13]. This multiple party's analysis is useful to distinguish and address the specific pressures and requirements every stakeholders' group is exerting over the Fashion Industry, helping in minimizing plausible emerging conflicts from their divergence. The recognition of the existence of stakeholders' exerted pressures plus the detection of their ultimate nature helps companies arrange targeted risk reduction activities, granting their enhanced management control power. Obviously for a business operating in a similar ecosystem it would be impossible to fully embrace each stakeholders' group exerted pressures. The model even if offering a complete understanding of its affecting and affected partners has to be meant as strategically focusing only on those members who are vitally influential for the business operations and appear as critical for the livelihood of the Industry. In the present scenario the selected parties are the companies and the customers' group, as priorly announced. These two parties are pivotal in the consideration of a feasible Fashion Industry setting and without their presence no business model would be even thinkable. This research further adopts the stakeholder

[13] Ogbodo O., *A Stakeholder Approach to Triple Bottom Line Accounting: Nigerian Experience*, International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, Research Gate, 2015.

theory approach unitedly with the previous framework sub-ecosystems definitions, being a point of reference for the generation of an actual business model prototype for the Fashion Industry. A business model is a detailed description of how a company provides value to the customers receiving value in exchange [14]. The business model presented is designed for the Fast Fashion Industry in particular, and it will be of fundamental importance for the present study in the defining the roles of the main members who are values' generating drivers in the Industry as in the detection of possible existing gaps towards sustainability oriented commitments. These gaps or points of tension analyzed from the model, will work as a guide for our research as they will constitute the opportunity areas implementable by the Fashion Industry. The initial business model will be then matched with the results obtained from the design thinking application, which as will be lately explained, drives the current research practice.

Business Model Canvas

Designed for: Fashion Industry As Is
Designed by:
Date: March 2020

Key Partners
- Raw Materials Suppliers
- Manufacturers
- Retailers
- Consumers
- Designers
- Technology Providers
- University/Research Centres
- Commercial Partners, Joint Ventures, Acquisitions
- Artisans
- Investors
- Other Stakeholders

Key Activities
- Products' Design Activities
- R&D over Materials and Fabrics
- Supply Chain Management
- Distribution Channels Management
- Marketing and Selling
- WIP: Implementation of environmental sustainable practices

Key Resources
- IT Tools
- Supply Chain Members
- Distributors/Retailers
- Consumers
- Employees
- Brand Name
- Partners
- Strategic Know-How

Value Propositions
- Appealing and Wearable Styles
- Affordability
- New Lines every week
- Recognition and Personal Identity Reinforcement
- Accessibility
- Easiness of Acquisition
- Tune with latest Fashion Trends
- Status Symbol
- Mutual Brands-Users exchanges

Customer Relationships
- Online Reach
- Products' Customisation
- Customers' Responsiveness and Engagement
- Empowering Loyalty
- Informations Sharing
- Customers-Firms mutual support
- Branded experiences

Channels
- Social Media
- Web Based Communication
- Stores
- Distributors/Retailers
- Magazines
- E-WOM/WOM
- Partners
- Events

Customer Segments
- Mass Market
- Designers
- Brand Communities
- Online Shoppers
- One-time Shoppers
- Diverse Income-Leveled Customers

Cost Structure
- Raw Materials Acquisition Costs
- Manufacturing and Production Costs
- Transportation and Distribution Costs
- Waste and Ineffiencies Costs
- Marketing Costs
- Employees Management and Mainteinance Costs
- Globally Operating Companies Costs
- Infrastructure Expenditures
- Regulatory and Legal Compliancy Costs (ex. Taxes)

Revenue Structure
- Sales Both In-Store as E-Shops/E-Commerce
- Sponsorships
- Digitally Driven Traffic and Engagement
- Leasing/Renting/Selling Contracts

Figure 3, Business Model Canvas of Fashion Industry As Is.

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[14] Najmaei A., *Business Model Value Creation, Value Capture, and Information Technologies*, Encyclopedia of Information Science and Technology, Third Edition, Information Resources Management Association USA, Research Gate, 2015.

The Business Model canvas hereby presented offers a valuable perspective in recognizing how the need to engage in sustainability compliance presently appears being in contrast with some of the core value propositions of the business, as price affordability, multiple collections offers always in line with latest trends, and speediness of acquisition. Even more affected by sustainability implementations are the actual business key resources, key partners and the outcoming overall costing structure, which have to be consistently re-weighted in accordance with responsible concerns the Fashion business wishes to attain. Ultimately the main customer segment, which is practically the entire mass market, needs to adapt and be educated towards responsible changes, otherwise the overall revenue stream would be affected, and companies would risk collapse becoming unprofitable. The challenges offered are several and range from the assessment of a sustainable supply chain, the investments on R&D for alternative raw materials and fabrics disposition, customers' education programs as the re-evaluation and selection of key partners oriented towards sustainable collaborations. It is important to notice deep changes are taken when a business model must change for sustainable aims, overturning the over settled and yet anachronistic nature of Fast Fashion paradigms. Practically all drivers of "fastness" in Fashion as we know it are no longer attainable and have to move towards drivers of "responsibility" as we will introduce in the next chapter.

1.2 The Meaning of Sustainability and the Shift Towards a Responsible Fashion

The term "sustainability" should be viewed as humanity's target goal of human system equilibrium (homeostasis), attained by the means of a "sustainable development" which stands as a holistic, and temporal organizing principle [15,16].

The definition provided by the OECD Institute regarding sustainable development stands as "the capability to pursue adequate and improving performance of social welfare, economic development and environmental protection using resources at a rate of consumption equal or inferior to their rate of regeneration or production" [17]. The definition stresses the presence of a so-called "triple-bottom-line" focus, in accordance

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[15] Brown J., *The Oxymoron of Sustainable Development*, BioScience, Research Gate, 2015.

[16] Ross Shaker R., *The Spatial Distribution of Development in Europe and its Underlying Sustainability Correlations*, Applied Geography, ScienceDirect, 2015.

[17] OECD, *Sustainable Development Goals: Delivering on Universal Goals and Targets*, Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development, Oecd.org, 2020.

to which today's sustainability cannot separate mutually influencing aspects as natural capital preservation, social welfare and economic development, coherently with the observation of an aggregate approach. Businesses can look for enhanced competitiveness only when implementing all the three previously introduced facets of sustainability as long-term business survival is not possible to be undertaken by the means of an environmental or social non-supporting strategy.

Continuous business innovation strives for attaining new opportunities boosting social capital creation, moving towards a working ecosystem capable to support the creation and distribution of knowledge to the entire set of involved stakeholders. A similar reasoning is dedicated to the consideration of natural capital preservation, for which business innovation accounts for the reduction of non-reusable resources utilization and works towards finding alternative sources for operational and productive needs.

These specific challenges have been settled for the Fashion Industry, for which responsibility in the business conduct stands as a groundbreaking element for future companies' survival. As observed in the Routledge Handbook of Sustainability and Fashion, the clothing industry employs about 25 million people globally, contributing to many livelihoods and the prosperity of communities, including women independence and the establishment of significant infrastructures in poorer countries; but it is also a significant contributor to the degradation of natural systems, with the associated environmental footprint of clothing production being very high in comparison with other industries' footprints [18].

The concept of engaged responsibility is still not new to the fashion realm, which has attempted across years to turn from the traditional "take-make-use-dispose" or linear model, by assessing a new circular business model tackling different sustainability-related scenarios. From the late years of the previous century, companies have undertaken shifts from their unsustainable business models, towards more responsible solutions being inspired, for example, by biomimicry-like-business models approaching innovation as encouraged by nature progressively abandoning the most known "Cradle-to-Grave" model with focal support of the researcher Stahel, whose contribution firstly suggested repair and remanufacture concepts as emerging

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[18] Fletcher K., Tham M., *Routledge Handbook of Sustainability and Fashion*, Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, New York, 2015.

solutions to extend products' lives [19]. The results of circular economy attempt still appear being not as completely resolutive and satisfying as thought ending with leaving the responsible issue as a current matter. Circular economic models have not proved to reduce polluting emissions and are not representative of a quest for new materials adoption in line with Fashion responsibility requirements and neither have they clarified the nature of a company's supply chain, leaving questioned points about their fairness and ascertained legality. Prompt actions appear even more necessary when considering yet existing sustainable practices in clothing to have not created a significant impact and to be instead largely marginalized within the Fashion Industry, which continues to work in an inefficient manner creating massive waste, exploiting workers, making it increasingly difficult to make a substantial profit and excluding consumers from an understanding over the logistical or practical considerations of clothing design [20]. Joint actions are then required, as businesses alone cannot act towards a responsible business model implementation without the collaboration and support of the customers' community enabling its ultimate education which stands as essential to mitigate the prevailing throwaway culture and lack of awareness over ethical issues the Fashion industry has to deal with [21]. It is also useful to provide clearance at this point, of what we mean when referring to the term "Sustainable Fashion". Lots of confusion exists over the topic, as different and numerous kinds of sustainable Fashion are nowadays present ranging from green to ethical or even fair and environmentally friendly Fashion. As suggested in Lanzini et Al. book of "Consumer Behavior", the present study will follow the same line of definition by adopting the term "responsible Fashion" throughout the course of the thesis, to part from the traditional dualistic distinction between green and ethical fashion.

The term "responsible Fashion" comprises altogether the environmental and social efforts Fashion businesses are today required to implement in their corporate strategy with an in-depth understanding of consumers' responsible behavior over the working domain posing a light also over non-consumption drivers influencing customers towards responsible goals including social norms or emotions. The future of a

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[19] Andrews D., *The Circular Economy, Design Thinking and Education for Sustainability* in Local Economy, Volume 30(3) 305-315, London South Bank University, 2015.

[20] Palomo-Lovinski N., Hahn K., *Fashion Design Industry Impressions of Current Sustainable Practices*, The Journal of Design, Creative Process & the Fashion Industry, 2015.

[21] Shen B., Wang Y., Lo C.K.Y., Shum M., *The Impact of Ethical Fashion on Consumer Purchase Behaviour*, Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management, Emerald Insight, 2012.

responsible Fashion is thus not possible without a business-customer collaborative process, stressing the responsibility both parties represent to reach those aims. The present thesis suggests fostering a plausible cooperation via digital networks, which represent the most used channel adopted and suitable to all users for communication purposes. They constitute flexible hubs hosting values' co-design activities either in a one-to-one focus between business-customers or in the interaction among many-to-many customers [22], granted by the open-sourced connective nature of the network.

It is still worth to notice that a responsible Fashion attainment is a quite complex domain of study specifically due to the multifaceted nature of the issue and of the entities being involved who play a crucial role in the ability to achieve the goal. This very concept has been outlined in the previous section dedicated to business ecosystems' presentation. The present study recognizes the complexity of the discourse requiring the needed selection of a research focus fostering the role of businesses and consumers under a co-creative paradigm as they both represent the main players and initiators of a responsible future for any business conduct. The aim of the analysis is still wider in nature as it unfolds a first step attempt to construct a holistic model which can then be in turn enlarged to the other remaining parties in the working ecosystems. These are initially neglected as they are not meant as prior contributors to the responsible purpose but can be later integrated with all the needed model adaptations.

1.3. How Today's Fashion is Approaching Sustainability

In the Fashion literature, scholars largely consider sustainable Fashion from a practical point of view. The term "sustainable Fashion" is used as an umbrella category for many practices and as pointed out in the work of Aakko and Sivonen "Designing Sustainable Fashion", it unfolds different possibilities [23]. The mentioned study offers multiple working scenarios, suitable for the application of sustainable development principles within Fashion depending on whether the innovation focus is settled upon supply chain optimization, materials sourcing, production methods and treatments, distribution and end-life renovation solutions, socio-cultural embedded values and information sharing

[22] Rupik K., *Customer Engagement Behaviour in the Fashion Industry*, International Conference on Marketing and Business Development, 2015.

[23] Gurova O., Morozova D., *A Critical Approach to Sustainable Fashion: Practices of Clothing Designers in the Kallio Neighbourhood of Helsinki*, Journal of Consumer Culture, Research Gate, 2016.

scenarios [24]. Several contributions have been accounted for each of the categories previously mentioned, fostering inspirations to lead both incremental and radical innovation opportunities for business conduct.

In the domain of supply chain optimization, we can account mainly for the "Cradle-to-Cradle" production process, which is substituting the old-fashioned "Cradle-to-Grave" framework. The model is consistent with an economic circular approach, and it regards the assessment of environmental and social sustainable aims throughout five critical sustainability-related categories, being: material health, material reuse, renewable energy and carbon management, water stewardship, and social fairness [25]. The cradle-to-cradle model stresses a design for sustainability ranging from the source evaluation of materials both in terms of natural capital preservation and social fairness guarantees by keeping an eye over the impacts the model is accounted for in terms of energy consumption.

Another important area for sustainable improvement is related to material sourcing. As pointed out in McKinsey Apparel CPO Survey in 2019 apparel executives must work for a sustainable sourcing at scale including various strategic actions to be implemented both inside as outside the business domain, as in the creation of strategic sustainable projects with their suppliers who are in turn appointed to become more a "partner" figure. The challenge companies are required to deal with under the matter of materials sourcing sustainability regards the adoption of radical innovations in the types of materials used and the way they are processed. This challenge is not just about finding new options for materials recycling or reuse practices but stands in the need to settle proper investments for new technologies leading to a renewed set of raw materials and fabrics the Fashion firm is working with in accordance with a long-term sustainability-oriented approach. Another fundamental aspect for materials sourcing stands in the entire blockchain transparency disclosed through traceability reports documenting the different phases included from fiber acquisition to store arrival. Fashion companies are today striving with the opportunity to integrate sustainable material sourcing as a strategic part of the overall business core practices but it is still quite a complex and expensive challenge to be controlled. The difficulty

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[24] Aakko M., Koskennurmi- Sivonen R., *Designing Sustainable Fashion: Possibilities and Challenges*, Research Gate, 2013.

[25] Cradle to Cradle Certified, What is Cradle to Cradle Certified?, at: c2ccertified.org.

over the implementation of the latter stands in the involvement of an overwhelming number of parties composing today's average Fashion supply chains, especially when considering a global company structure. In these cases, supply chains usually account for a fragmented and dispersed structure which render difficult their issuance and control along their entirety. To overcome these shortcuts, companies are today focusing in building strategic partnerships with their suppliers and plausibly reduce their size number to be in control over the entire chain and to effectively invest financial resources for its ultimate optimization avoiding any financial dispersion coming from a too widened structure.

Furthermore, when considering the distribution and end of life renovation solutions, a widely adopted business model is the one of green retailing or green distribution. Green retailing refers to the management approach that pursues environmental protection to improve the retail value chain through eliminating waste, increasing efficiency and reducing costs [26]. Retailers work as a touchpoint in between producers and consumers, and represent a medium guaranteeing the supply of responsible Fashion products consistently with an upcoming demand for those types of offers. Adopting a green retailing strategy is effective for exerting control over products' traceability and ultimate quality definition, constituting ultimate added service values delivered to end customers. Customers in turn, when receiving sustainable garments are jointly experiencing a responsibility-related message. The phenomenon generates a deeper consumption awareness over the products and services acquired raising customers' overall education over responsible purchasing habits. Green retailing is a solution for companies to actively approach social and environmental sustainability in compliance with legal requirements exerting a major control over the emissions and waste generation activities. Companies can optimize their retailing and distribution activities also by reducing the costs that would be normally bearable under a linear production model. The overall brand value is enhanced because of firms' public recognition for their social and environmental commitment raising reputation and building customers' trust. Green retailing practices must follow a coherent green distribution activity along the supply chain and retail network. Green distribution stands for the integration of environmental concerns into the inter-organizational practices of

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[26] Sinha R., Chaudhuri R., Dhume S., *Green Retailing: Environmental Strategies of Organized Retailers and Competitive Advantage*, Research Gate, 2014.

supply chain management, including activities ranging from changing the way distribution centers and vehicles are powered, to the implementation of a greater transparency regarding the environment and distribution practices [27]. Supply chain optimization includes multiple working areas stressing different domains suitable for responsible shifts as the sustainable opportunities offered by retailing and distribution methods, by materials sourcing and by radical innovations changing present production and transformation procedures. Even if all these domains theoretically belong to the same organizational area, which is actually the supply chain, it is correct to realize different approaches must be taken depending on the strategic focus concern, keeping an eye over their mutual coexistence with other undertaken strategies destined to the area. Another fundamental opportunity is the one unfolded by social responsibilities areas of commitments companies must deal with. Firms do operate as a part of an ecosystem and their performance is determined by the ultimate value generated and distributed to the society at large, and not just to its customers. Fashion has in the years become a pioneer in achieving freedom of expression by actively contributing to social related matters going well beyond the very limited trend-setting orientation. Companies have strived to debate and work towards social responsibility in the attempt to sensitize communities through their creative works as being done for years by the English stylist Vivienne Westwood who have long worked to spread conscious education through her collections rather than just motivating consumption.

Invest in Culture, Not in Consumption: Vivienne Westwood, a pioneer in responsible clothing

Figure 4, Vivienne Westwood Sustainable Claims (climaterevolution.co.uk.)

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[27] Mwaura A.W., Letting N., Ithinji G., Orwa B.H., *Green Distribution Practices and Competitiveness of Food Manufacturing Firms in Kenya*, International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management, 2016.

Vivienne Westwood has been a pioneer in the Fashion Industry from the early '70s, bringing a unique style proposition through her collections, merging the socio-cultural symbols of punk rebellion with trendy and appealing clothes lines. Vivienne Westwood brand since its foundation, has represented an activist in "giving voice" to the surrounding cultural meanings of the social context it has been born in, maintaining the same commitment also in present times. From the freedom of self-expression and rebellion towards a status-quo system, now the brand is increasingly committed to the sustainable cause, both in terms of environmental as social responsibility. Today's company's styles are clearly more asexual and androgyne, placing greater research over the nature of materials and their versatility.

The unique styles are consistent with an overall fashion research towards members' inclusivity and gender fluidity, to provide collections which are not specifically meant for a standardized user target. Along with an overall commitment towards the removal of fashion stereotypes, Vivienne Westwood has become herself a militant for the "environmentally sustainable" cause, and in particular has also launched a limited t-shirt collection under the name of "Save the Arctic Campaign". The campaign was meant to raise funds for the Greenpeace organization, through an exhibition representing sixty famous artists portraits wearing unbleached t-shirts made with organic cotton. The exhibition raised awareness and effort over the protection of the Arctic land, being recently damaged by environmental climate changes and overall raises in global temperatures. One of her latest campaigns in 2019, was dedicated to her "sustainability revolution" campaign, where the overall fashion show was not centered anymore on trendy and good looking styles proposals, but instead was dedicated to the claim for a more sustainable and responsible economic organization. The collection accounted for clothes with written quotes, about raising consumers' awareness, as the "buy less" label, and shifting towards an environmentally responsible worldwide implemented business model through the three Rs priorities approach "Reduce, Reuse and Recycle".

The Westwood brand is a crucial example of how a company can evolve towards a sustainable business model. The firm is significantly investing in R&D activities for the utilization of fully recycled and organic fabrics, introducing raw materials as organic linen, wood sourced fibers, bamboo made fabrics, together with production processes optimization for a constantly lessened production of emissions, waste generation and energy consumption.

Westwood is an example of complete engagement in a responsible fashion shift, inspiring other companies and designers to follow her guide, and working as an educator for the entire society in the selection of quality over quantity in fashion purchases habits.

References:
(1) Numero Magazine, *Ethical Fashion Series: The Legendary Vivienne Westwood*, at: https://www.numero.com/en/fashion/ethical-fashion-vivienne-westwood-climate-change-eco-friendly-fabrics-sustainable#

(2) Vivienne Westwood, Westwood World, at: https://www.viviennewestwood.com/it/westwood-world/save-the-artic-campaign/

(3) Dezeen, *Vivienne Westwood Call for New Economy*, at: https://www.dezeen.com/2019/10/10/vivienne-westwood-climate-change-crisis/

Fashion brands have a performance responsibility towards the society they live in increasingly feeling responsible for the messages ultimately provided to the end public which must be obviously tuned with the socio-cultural environment of the time they belong to [28]. Fashion companies have become activists and have realized the power of a participative design which fosters the role of users and redistribute power in a different way by actively including voices and skills of the users more than the presently dominant way of mass manufacturing [29]. The participatory design approach is a result of a previous design thinking study which fosters not just a co-creative phenomenon but a mutual understanding and education over the very same matters, upon which brands are sensible to and over which customers must improve knowledge. The design thinking methodology offers multiple hints for the Fashion Industry and its very nature appears being complementary and supportive specifically with the responsible aims the Industry has previously settled.

The following chapter will be dedicated to the explanation of what design thinking actually is and why it is selected for the present research conduct.

1.3.1. The Relevance of the Design Thinking Model

Herbert Simon was the first economist and management theorist to adopt the term "design" in his 1969 work "The Sciences of the Artificial", defining the terms as a creative-solution-based thinking applicable to all human activities, and in particular as a means of approaching managerial problems. During the '90s design practices were initially adopted in the engineering setting, to challenge students with real organizational case studies including actual managerial issues. These methods were used to provide academic students with a know-how over the analytical and practical issues they would face in a real business setting, preparing them to receive a systemic

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[28] Aakko M., Koskennurmi- Sivonen R., *Designing Sustainable Fashion: Possibilities and Challenges*, Research Gate, 2013.

[29] *Ibid.*

education over problems management [30]. The relevance of design was particularly important for businesses offering a product for which its unique design was a fundamental driver for competitive advantage gains. Today the term "design" includes a more vast and systemic definition, referring to its underlying nature destined to resolutive needs mainly applicable both inside as outside businesses and leading to the adoption of a more complete expression defining the overall process surrounding the "design" application, known as "design thinking".

The definition of design thinking has evolved over the years and currently defines an analytic and creative process, offering engagement opportunities open to the general public, to experiment multifaceted problem resolutions by creating and prototyping models by gathering feedbacks and by redesigning ultimate products, operations, and even entire business models [31].

Still the term "design" as explained by the Warwick Business School and Design School in 2014 is meant as the creation and development of meanings and as a way of thinking and doing. The term has been also combined with the "innovation" one as they appear to be mutually sustaining. On the one hand innovation is the driver of change and knowledge creation [32], which is attainable throughout a design-lead procedure aggregately contributing to the strategic setting of a business. Innovation can take place at different levels from products, to processes, or even organizational innovations, thanks to its flexible and multiple settings adaptable nature. The innovation we are likely to approach in the present paper stresses all the three levels of plausible implementation to guarantee their coexistence under a unified model dealing with responsible Fashion. It is even more important to distinguish the two natures innovation can bring along: an incremental and a radical one. Our study, which attempts to construct a holistic approach will grant both two natures as equally viable considering their selection considering the nature of the entity we are approaching either being a yet established business or an emergent one. This distinction will become later on specified as groundbreaking innovations are realistically more attainable by new businesses, constructing from scratch their entire strategic business

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[30] Braha D., Maimon O., *The Design Process: Properties, Paradigms, and Structure*, IEEE Transactions on Systems, Man, and Cybernetics - Part A: Systems and Humans, IEEE Xplore Digital Library, 1997.

[31] Razzouk R., Shute V. J., *What Is Design Thinking and Why Is It Important?*, Review of Educational Research, ResearchGate, 2012.

[32] O'Riordan N., *Knowledge Creation: Hidden Driver of Innovation in the Digital Era*, International Conference of Information Systems, ResearchGate, 2013.

model. The design thinking approach is particularly fitting for Fashion responsibility issues as its overall organization starts from the detection of a gap or an issue in current users' experience. From the initial gap perception the problem is then defined and systemic steps are organized for the exploration of viable alternatives as possible resolutions to the problem under analysis.

The strength of this approach, as explained in 2017 by Monica Calcagno in "Interpreting Innovation", stands on the nature and the role of the designer along the resolutive process, which is ultimately the pivotal entity for a design thinking inquiry. On the other hand, the product or service ultimately delivered is the outcome of a collaboration process in between the company and the customers' group mediated by the fundamental presence of a designer capable to reflect a socio-cultural context and a technological defined setting in which the process takes place. This object either physical or abstract is not valued anymore based on its usability and disposability, but in the socio-cultural meanings and technological impacts it infuses to the ecosystem it is part of. The designer is a medium of translation from the firm to the customer with a vocabulary tuned with the setting it is fitting in, and so it is easily comprehensible to an enlarged working environment. Design thinking offers a unique "language" thanks to which problems can be solved in a context of mutual participation and collaboration between firms and consumers, who are equally invoked in meaning generation potentially destined to a product or a service co-creation. Design is then a cultural and social activity as it is part of an environment and consistently works for it.

In the case of responsible Fashion co-creation paradigms are the most promising to achieve responsible goals. The method offers a perfectly fitting opportunity for both companies and customers to mutually collaborate in the domain of sustainable development with the aid of designers. In fact, on one hand companies can benefit from divergent thinking to enlarge the opportunities and perspectives unfolded under their business models and to determine ultimate solution-prototypes definition. On the other hand, customers receive goods they have actively co-created parting from a mere materialistic need by embracing a shift towards a more conscious and plenty of meanings construct ultimately offered by the partnered business. Furthermore, what is of even greater relevance, is the mutual education and information processing taking place along the co-creation stages which are not just enriching both parties alone but they are also enriching the social and cultural context they are operating in and from which they are affected by as their collaboration is expanding even more the meanings

and the values shaping the business ecosystem. At the very end of a design thinking process the entire society should benefit from its results with the creation of pure and unique values tuned with responsible Fashion requirements. These new meanings are at large destined to educate and change purchase and consumption habits of consumers, rendering them more responsible, and providing companies with economically and technologically feasible solutions, in line with the market demand.

Chapter 2. Research Structure

The present thesis, as being introduced in the previous chapter is organized following a design thinking lead approach inquiry model. Specifically the model is adopted for the ultimate research aim to grant a dualistic perspective given by either following a business centric or a customer centric direction under the responsible Fashion setting unleashed in a digitally networked environment.

The research structure definition serves the underlying inquiry and ultimate learning goals in accordance with the selected working context which strictly includes the problem area being addressed and the users' group being involved. This information appears being crucial in the settlement of a research strategy meant as effective and fitting the thesis' aims. The strategy organizes our challenge's topics implementation by detecting insights gathered from observations and real-world conversations in a co-design co-creative approach with the parties being inquired.

The design thinking model guides our research in its structure definition including two main areas of analysis being: (1) understanding the problem and exploring involved parties, and (2) materialization of results consisting in the problem resolution definition. In breath the structure of our study will move in accordance with the hereby attached framework including the main steps followed in the process.
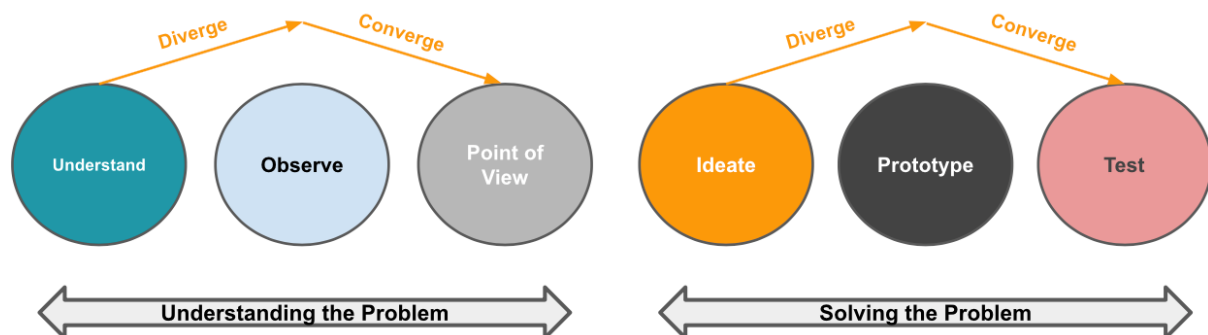
Figure 1, Design Thinking Led Research Plan (Lebmeister K., Trebing Himstedt, 2013)

The very first part of our Fashion innovation study will be dedicated to the process of understanding the issues attached to the present lack of businesses' commitment towards a more responsible Industry leveraging on a dual set of points of view

divergences among involved members fostering heterogeneous contributions and insights to the plausible problem definition. The very nature of design thinking and its main creative character is fostered by divergent thinking thanks to which points of difference in between insights and observations work as renewed and enlarged opportunity areas for solutions settlements. Moreover, the second phase of the analysis will set a core change from an exploratory momentum towards a reconciliation of the different contributions attained during the inquiry stage. This "in-between" phase will be of fundamental importance for moving towards a unique defined problem convergence which will work as a reference for the last part of solution materialization which is practically meant to find solutions to the initially settled problem. In the second area, we will return to a process of divergent ideation of multiple resolutive options, lately formalized and converged through the means of a solution prototyping momentum. This flow of continuous opening and closing towards different resolutive perspectives grants not just the opportunity to construct an iterative model all along the different phases included in the DT approach but also fosters flexibility and differentiation in the multiple potential solutions unleashed by the approach itself. As we have introduced in the previous chapter the issue of a responsible Fashion invokes a consistent number of stakeholders involved so it is quite straightforward to conclude different solutions might be triggered depending on whom the research is most concerned and focused to.

The present chapter is centered to the discussion of the first area being the "problem understanding" section unfolding different examination points including: the thesis areas of interest or working areas, the co-design selected strategy, the users groups and stakeholders' map, the inquiry methodology and tools and lastly the empathy map generation. Additionally to what is being disclosed by the present study it might be issued the inquiry is based on a limited pool of members being involved. As will be later explained the research has been defined in accordance with DT characterizing research methodologies specifically mentioning the directives provided by an IDEO a leader and an instructor over the DT model application. Anyways to provide completeness to the thesis core topic apart from the conducted-on field research an integrative literature review over yet acknowledged innovations in the responsible Fashion discourse will be also tackled and presented, both from a business centric contribution as from customer centric one.

2.1. Research Areas of Interest

The areas of interest constituting the present analysis are settled in accordance with the explorative context which is composed by both the problem area addressed and the users' groups being involved. The areas of interest are crucial elements sustaining the definition of the desired research objectives which are meant to finding fitting solutions to the previously presented Fashion issue in relation to the selected stakeholders groups involved in the research, as it will be discussed in detail later on along the study. The detection of an area of interest gives us guidance throughout the in depth understanding of the plausible shifts towards a more responsible Fashion and aids the study in the detection of creative inspirations boosting the following research phases towards a problem resolutive evolution.

The concept of an economically, environmentally and socially sustainable Fashion is recurrent in our study and is presented as the main area of interest being particularly challenging for its natural complexity in including relevant trade-offs when attempting to provide benefits to diverse stakeholders moved by different underlying motives. What makes the topic even more interesting is the limited capability both firms and customers have proved across the years to properly and transparently commit to the sustainable discourse. The present research works also to shed light on a largely debated but in general blurry defined topic, as sustainable Fashion is. The previously hinted nature of sustainability currently corresponding more to a buzzword than to a commonly shared and scientifically supported knowledge has appeared to be even more trivial when presented via digitally networked communities. Even if several companies as mentioned in the previous chapters are fostering the role of a responsible Fashion as a pivotal element to construct a digital trustworthy relation with its users it is also correct to mention that behind many of those campaigns lies a mere marketing shortcut disposing of a catchy trend as sustainability is just to engage in a short-term aim as to enhance digital traffic or to increase sales.

H&M Being Accused of Greenwashing Conscious Marketing Collection

In August 2019 the worldwide famous apparel company H&M was accused by the Norwegian Consumer Authority (NCA) for a misleading "greenwashing" practice for its ultimate conscious collection launch occurred in April 2019. The misleading elements stood in the low traceability

and transparency in the actual information given by the company to sustain the actual environmental friendliness of the collection campaign, causing the company to be considered as engaging in an effortless marketing campaign only.

Information provided by the company with regard to the materials being used were not sufficiently precise, as they were only centered in the description of recycled cotton and sustainable sourced materials, but they were not clear enough about the percentage of each component present in the aggregate combinations of materials used.

Even more paradoxical was the presence of in-store recycle bins were consumers could leave their old garments in, receiving in exchange a discount over the next in-store purchases, not just because no clear information over the re-usage of such materials was given but mainly because even if products were to be reintroduced following an economic circularity model they would not be for sure sufficient to offset the continuous new products propositions with weekly renewed proposed designs.

H&M was ultimately judged to have attempted to provide an ethical and environmentally committed image which in turn has been proven being a sole marketing campaign not supported by a verified truth.

The Norwegian Consumer Authority has declared as illegal those marketing practices inducing consumers to engage in purchasing activities by the means of pledged information pushing them in an "economic decision they would not have otherwise made".

References:
(1) Hypebeast.com, *H&M accused of "Greenwashing" Conscious Collection Marketing,* at: https://hypebeast.com/2019/8/h-m-conscious-collection-greenwashing-sustainability-norwegian-consumer-authority
(2) BrandingMag.com, *H&M's Greenwashing: Short-Sighted and Unethical*, at: https://www.brandingmag.com/2019/12/12/hms-greenwashing-short-sighted-and-unethical/

The areas of study of the present research appear being even more promising when enlarged to the social media and digitally networked channels, which are obviously offering a promising future for both companies financial, branding and communication performance results. The role of sustainability in the Fashion industry is evolving at a fast pace originally meant for environmentally focused aims to current socially supportive ones. Today the matter of social responsiveness of Fashion via digital channels has appeared being even more necessary with the advent of the pandemic phenomenon of Covid19. Fashion companies were required to prove being committed and being active at the support of people wellbeing for both their in-house and in-hospital health by the means of customized home-delivered campaigns and general donations as charity funds raising activities. With the advent of Coronavirus, Fashion

brands were once again challenged in the creation of innovative solutions at the support of social welfare reinforcing the importance of the sustainability role for current and future business practices mainly via online networks which once again have proved being the most solid channel for companies' operating activities maintenance. The Covid19 spread has opened new and reinforced yet existing Fashion working opportunity areas being part of the enlarged business ecosystem fostering a triple-bottom-lined sustainability paradigm under a digitally networked setting. Furthermore, the wellbeing of Fashion customers has been posed to the very center of current brands' efforts as being presented in the latest BOF's publishing "The State of Fashion 2020 Coronavirus Update". The report exposes the entire Industry to an unprecedented economic contraction negatively affecting the entire business performance around 27%-30% of the average full year turnover, requiring companies to consistently work for reinforcing tight relations with their customers investing in digital escalation programs and working innovations, including employees' provided technological solutions to easily work out of office or online runways, digital 3D design tools and livestream commerce [1]. This once again confirms the very first working hub a responsible Fashion has to tackle merging the customer centric perspective with the business centric one in an attempt to build mutual collaborations and both-sided support specifically in the present challenging moment of isolation where the opportunity of mutual co-creation appears to be even more relevant.

What we expect from this study to carry out, as in accordance with a human centered design approach being offered by the DT methodology itself, is shortly resumed in the following attached scheme, being originally presented by IDEO founder Tom Kelley's Venn's diagram fostering the role of three crucial dimensions for attaining design innovation [2]. The human centered design model also known as HCD integrates a broad set of practices around a common understanding of users' needs, which can improve strategic decision making as well as increase the effectiveness of individual programs [3].

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[1] BOF & McKinsey & Company, *The State of Fashion 2020 Coronavirus Update*, The Business of Fashion, 2020.

[2] K. Connor P., *Design Thinking: Driving Transformation*, agencyQ, Washington DC, 2020.

[3] Braga J., *Is Human-Centered Design Broken?*, UX Collective: UX Design, 2019.
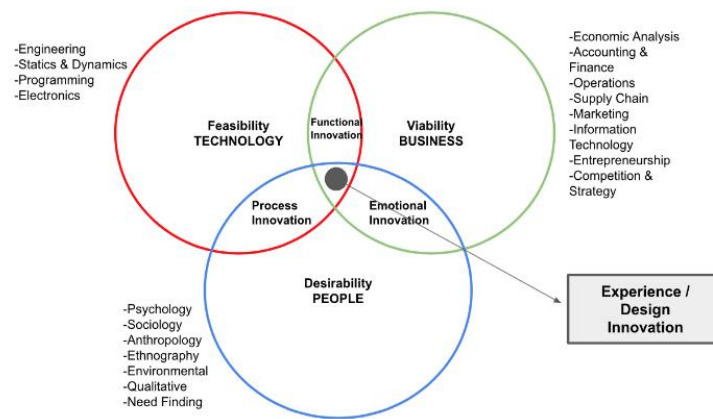
Figure 2. Experience/Design Innovation Diagram (AgencyQ, agencyq.com, 2020)

The research seeks ultimate experience innovation renewals by the means of the support and at the support of people in a social welfare sustaining aim and with the presence of technologically feasible solutions exploitable by all parties involved in the process to ultimately experience the design-led solution. It is also fundamental to recognize the business viability of the solution for the company in terms of needed financial resources and technical know-how necessary to implement the unleashed experience resolution, considering ongoing internal operating costs and external business dynamics. Practically this framework provides a guidance in implementing innovation by merging once again the twofold focus sliding from the general public/people or end-users perspective to the company or the business's one, incorporating an easily shareable and commonly viable technological mean granting the adoption of a selected human centered design approach.

2.1.1. The Selected Co-Design Strategy

The thesis hereby presented has been till this point mostly dedicated and focused in the definition of its main working areas, the users' groups involved and the overriding research questions moving towards a future Fashion responsibility. The formalization of a broader design thinking strategy is now necessary to merge all the presented contributing elements with the aim of providing a resolutive proposal fitting the requirement of a change of an Industry as we know it. As suggested by IDEO founder David Kelly, design thinking does not unfold a linear path and development as it

represents an iterative process of "looping back" to different areas of analysis [4]. The approach can appear chaotic if not under control of a previously defined strategy aiding the research to be always tuned with its overriding objectives by limiting the risk of losing its planned direction in a complex scenario as sustainable development is. The requirement of a strategy of analysis appears even more critical when considering the working area approached: the "understanding the problem" phase. This section is dedicated to a process of getting inspiration from others by framing questions or sharing stories, stressing the human ability to be intuitive in recognizing patterns and ultimately construct ideas which are emotionally meaningful and functional [5]. When getting diverse and multiple insights or when collecting observations, it might become tricky to move back and forth throughout the analysis maintaining a vision all along their evaluation possibly causing the focus of the study to become vague as a consequence.

The strategy definition has been organized in accordance with the research structure as presented in Figure 3, specifically fitting the initial area of analysis being the "understanding the problem" phase, which as explained, might be a risky one to be approached without a defined strategy.

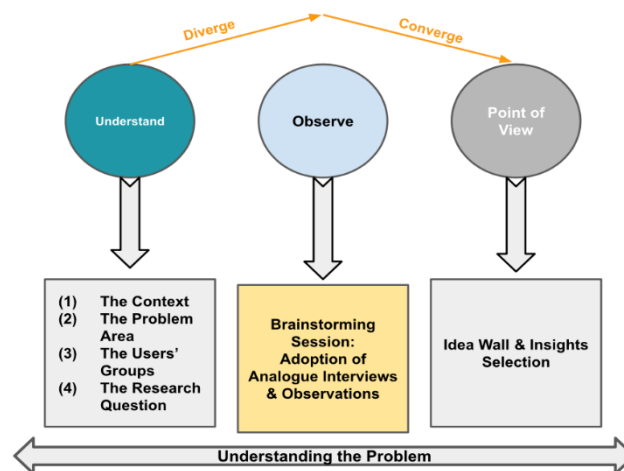*Figure 3, Understanding the Problem Research Plan Phase* (Lebmeister K., Trebing Himstedt, 2013)

The "understand" phase has been at the core of discussion of the previous chapters fostering the socio-cultural context detection, the problem area depiction, the users' groups definition and ultimately the research questions proposition.

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[4] IDEO U, *Resources*, at: ideou.com, CA, 2020.
[5] *Ibid.*

The following part of our strategy will be then dedicated to the "observation" phase with a brainstorming session to gather both information and insights from the users' groups being involved throughout the research study. The brainstorming session serves to generate ideas quickly and in huge amounts taking advantage of divergent thinking momentum to stress the creative innovation process. Multiple insights and ideas might disclose different creative alternatives for achieving innovation or for generally dealing with a preset challenge. The strength of a brainstorming session stands in the opportunity to drive creative ideas on others' generated insights with the ability to merge them all together in the fitting socio-cultural domain of analysis, ultimately being the primary duty of the designer. The global design school and firm IDEO represents a guiding light for companies and scholars wishing to implement human centered and design-based approaches to boost innovation both inside and outside common business operations proposing a design application to be meant for everybody and everywhere. IDEO suggests when planning for brainstorming sessions to select among different but equally valuable instruments and ideation methods including mash ups, e-storming, surveying, idea wall, "others' people shoes" technique and many more [6]. The present research will adopt both analogous interviews, consisting in speaking to differently engaged users who might have a different perspective on the present challenge, as well as observations by watching how people engage with a product or service to obtain new issue-approaching perspectives and to uncover hidden challenges and opportunities [7]. The purpose of insights is to gather information from the selected users' groups benefitting from their inspiring stories and points of view revealing behaviors or unprecedented phenomena, which can be in turn crucial to build new solutions [8]. Insights offer the opportunity to work together with research members on underlying matters or challenges jointly taking the advantage from the open sourced nature of the collaboration and the incremental benefit granted by mutual divergent ideas proposed by the working group. Only after having exhaustively stressed a divergent thinking approach, it might come the chance to start converging all the valuable results into the most promising alternative included in a portfolio of plausible solutions taking the research to the ultimate step of the problem understanding phase, coming about with the "point of view" momentum. The adoption

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[6] IDEO U, *Brainstorming*, at: ideou/brainstorming.com, CA, 2020.
[7] IDEO U, *Resources*, at: ideou.com, CA, 2020.
[8] Stafford C. L., Suri Fulton J., *Why Generating Insights is an Important Skill*, at: ideou.com, CA, 2020.

of the previously mentioned tools of analogous interviews and observations appear being the best option for the present research in gathering inspiration and generating insights in a co-design structured approach. In fact, the very same structure of the interviews will be equally posed to the involved users' groups moving from their divergent ideas streams towards a unique area of convergence, in accordance with a creative multiple parties' supportive collaboration. For an ease of insights visualization and brainstorming results depiction the research will then adopt an "idea wall" to realize ideas and aggregately observe their plausible points of convergence, also exploiting points of difference coming from divergent thinking results consisting in open points working areas. The very ultimate part of building an idea wall and including all interviews and observations' results will constitute the crucial section of the co-design technique, as the analysis will actively combine the multiple information and insights collected to select a common challenge resolutive direction.

2.2. Users' Groups and Stakeholders' Map

Before starting a brainstorming session, the research must dedicate its effort to the collection of analogous interviews and observations. As previously introduced they will constitute the tools for our study to be constructed on. It is also important, before moving to the practical session of interviewing and keeping up with relevant observations, to have a clear structure of the users' groups and the overall stakeholders' map tracing the working area of the present research. In the first chapter, the thesis has posed great attention over the distinction of different but equally contributing stakeholders' groups ranging from the core business area members to the business ecosystem setting. As elucidated in that session, when acting in accordance to the stakeholders' theory, it becomes much difficult quasi impossible to manage the entire umbrella of members being involved and exerting pressures over the Fashion Industry as we know it. It is thus necessary for research's effectiveness to select and focus on just a few numbers among them in the attempt to provide just an initial step of a future enlargeable research aim, moving to the remaining parties thereby engaged. The current paper stresses a twofold analysis and follows a dual focus on the pivotal parties involved in the matter for a responsible Fashion which are once again the businesses' and the customers' groups. In the upcoming chapter the thesis discussion will be consistently dedicated to the evaluation of both a business centric

and a customer centric perspective in the attempt to merge between the paradigms exploring potential common touchpoint with the guide of design thinking model application. Even if apparently the role of these two members have been stressed and long-time discussed in the responsible Fashion Industry setting the aim of the present research is to move from a mere users' analysis for concept validation purposes, towards a research design boosting a wider flexibility and enlightening the contribution of those sets of users known as "extreme users". Extreme users represent the set of individuals being completely apart from the discussed matter, enlarging the scope of the exploration area and unfolding new innovation chances never being imagined before [9]. As an example, in the debate for a responsible Fashion, extreme users might be represented by individuals who do not care or even tempt to avoid Fashion, or on the other hand, by those users who are completely absorbed by the care of sustainability in their daily actions becoming quasi obsessed with the matter. Anyway, the crucial concern for spotting extreme users stands in the capability of the researcher to empathize with interviewees and to develop members' understanding over core and unprecedented needs.

Specifically, the present research has set out the upcoming stakeholders' map from the previously mentioned and selected users' groups, in the attempt to grant the highest possible heterogeneity among members being selected avoiding a too clustered and undiversified set of interviewees. To provide an even greater validity over the research methodology and its orientation the members' set has been pointed out from an interest-influence stakeholders' matrix. This matrix specifically helps to map out stakeholders and their relation to the issue at stake in the MSP and to generate insights on the importance and influence of each stakeholder [10].

As presented in Figure 4, the interest-influence matrix appears being self-explanatory in its outcome representing the greatest majority of the overall sets of different stakeholders being involved in the Fashion responsibility discourse displaced in the right part of the diagram, reinforcing the fact that the matter under analysis is a multiple-parties involving concern. In particular, the upper right hand of the scheme

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[9] Strachan J., *Why Use Extreme Users*, UX Planet, 2017.

[10] Brouwer H., Kormelinck A.G., Van Vugt S., *Tools for Analysing Power in Multi-Stakeholder Processes- A Menu*, Wageningen UR & Centre for Development Innovation, 2012.

appears to be highly populated, hosting different but highly interested and committed parties.

Figure 4, Stakeholders' Interest/Influence and Power Matrix for Fashion Responsibility Matter.

The focus of our analysis will be dedicated, as previously said, to the consideration of the Fashion operating companies and the customers' group mainly, which are both called out from the matrix representation in the upper right hand-side.

Specifically, the participants belonging to the two groups who will be the object of in-depth interviews are listed and presented in the Stakeholders' Map resumed in Figure 5.
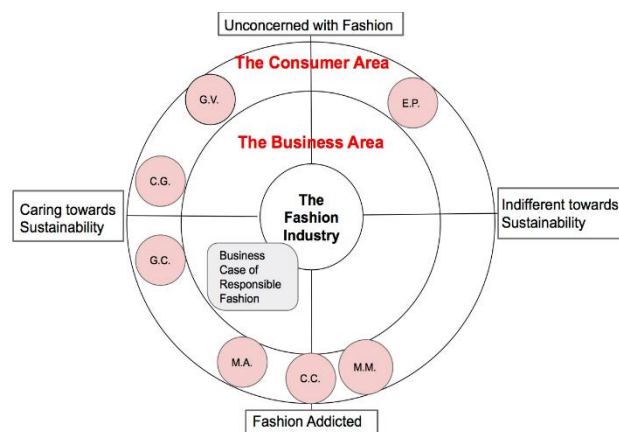
Figure 5, Interviews Mapping over Sustainability and Fashion Valuability Dimensions.

The present map represents the reference schema for our analysis and will be fundamental for the validity and reliability of the present research in the clarification of the parties involved as participants for further brainstorming aims. The research users map is constructed around the core industry under analysis, being the Fashion one. From the industry focus the map is built in two different zones, the business area and the consumer area, coherently with the stakeholders being selected for the

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organization and collection of analogous interviews. The map is also organized in four areas: unconcerned with fashion area - fashion addicted area - caring towards sustainability area - indifferent towards sustainability area. This organization serves the thesis aims to be at ease with the disposition of the conducted interviews to help even more the detection of extreme users which are of fundamental relevance for the collection of high-quality hints for Fashion responsibility goals. A research users' mapping is also valid to provide a structuring to the set of inquired entities, granting robustness to the study and clarifying the referred scenario for the entire thesis. The next section will be mentioning the selection processing and the sample of interviews being selected for the research.

2.2.1. Interviews' Structure and Empathy Map Generation

As previously introduced, the current research will quest for insights and information regarding customers' and Fashion companies' points of views in relation to the business sustainability concern by the means of in-depth interviews. The nature of these interviews stands in an open dialogue with the interviewee in which scheduled questions work as a general background useful for giving structure and control over the entire course of the interview, still leaving enough space for the responder to indulge in storytelling and to part from the previously set questions. The flexibility of analogous interviews is the ultimate strength of these tools being adopted as instruments to conduct a design thinking-based research. The most powerful insights and observations are in fact the unprecedented ones, emerging as interviewees are left free to talk and express their perceptions and thoughts over the discussed matter opening paths and letting working patterns to emerge. As suggested in Stacey Messier's article regarding empathy interviews, the research enumerates a set of seven in depth interviews with a heterogeneous group of customers, while on the other hand an in depth business players' scenario analysis is dedicated to the understanding over engaged Industry's responsibility after Covid19. The selection of seven interviewees for the customers' section has been meant to construct a valid data set, granting patterns emergence and insights generation [11]. Unfortunately, the collection of these interviews has been available only via remote communication as the research

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[11] Messier S., *Design Thinking: What is an Empathy Interview?*, Medium, 2017.

was developed during the Coronavirus disease spread, and no physical meeting was allowed. Still all the interviews have been organized in a video-call setting, granting the opportunity to collect also observations over respondents, as it is theoretically ascribed in the structure of a commonly developed one-to-one in-depth discussion. The duration of interviews has been on average around 40 minutes, as the touch points were several and equally relevant in their contribution to the Fashion responsibility matter. Furthermore, the enlarged duration of the dialogues was a natural outcome of the interview itself, as much space has been left to respondents to freely approach the discussed points specifically including their personal experiences via storytelling practices. For the users' group under analysis, the general structure of questions being posed are similar in nature and in their framing to grant the highest possible convergence among insights for further brainstorming steps, aiding an initial quest for divergent thinking paths.

Specifically, the interviews' structure has been organized in five macro areas, representing different topics of discussion, which are in order presented as: (1) Overview, (2) Environment, (3) Social, (4) Gender and (5) Digital. The overview part is meant to be a brief description of the matter under analysis being the role of sustainability in Fashion, reassuring respondents no right or wrong answer criteria is present, so they should feel free to express their opinions without fear of being judged. The first section, which is the overview part, serves to receive all the valuable information required to build a general persona of the single respondent being addressed at the time, including questions inspecting their general attitudes and intentions over the Fashion discourse and over the sustainability topic, which are at first treated as separate topics and become afterwards combined. The remaining part of the interviews' structure partially follows the triple-bottom line organization of the sustainable concern, specifically tackling matters as environmental and social ones in the Fashion domain. The last two sections are dedicated to the gender fluid and digital channels' usage and perceptions related topics. Gender is specifically meant as an enlargement of the social sustainability matter, being highly influential and influenced by Fashion fads. As we will mention further on in the present thesis, the matter over gender neutrality and inclusivity is today one of the core points of modern Fashion, controlling new styles outbreaks and their public perceptions towards a more socially committed Industry. Lastly the digital section is clearly of fundamental relevance, in particular considering its pivotal role during the diffusion of a pandemic disease,

according to which all operating companies ranging from the public to the private sectors were made functional and still operative only via digital devices. The digital scenario is meant as a core element for the economic maintenance and sustainability of the Fashion Industry, as without its support strong concerns over businesses' chances of survival would emerge in critical historical periods as we are currently part of. We cannot imagine the future of the Fashion Industry without a proper investment over viable digitally operating platforms. Digital channels viability plays a crucial role for companies' engaged competitiveness and visibility for their economic supportive role to traditional businesses' operating activities.

The other supportive element contributing to the interviews upcoming insights stands in the observations collection and during-the-dialogue interviews perceptions over the attitude of respondents under analysis. For easiness in visualization sake this information have been posed in the so called Empathy Map.

The Empathy Map is one of the most used instruments in the design thinking discipline to understand users and gathering insights which are ultimately working towards knowledge externalization to create a shared understanding of users' experience gaps and to provide an aid in decision making [12]. The crucial point being tackled by the present map, which is actually divided in four different sections stands in capturing insights apart from the ones which are actually communicated and disclosed by the means of the interview, in fact its sections do include: says-side, thinks-side, does-side, and feels-side.
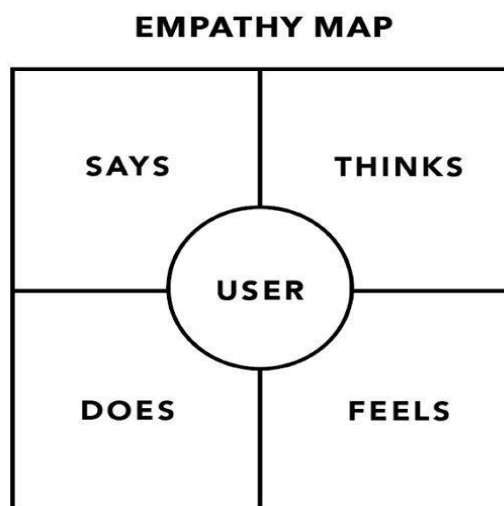

Figure 6, Empathy Map Structure. Source: NN/g Nielsen Norman Group, 2018.

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[12] Gibbons S., *Empathy Mapping: The First Step in Design Thinking*, Nielsen Norman Group NN/g, 2018.

Design thinking models rely on the power of uncommunicated sights recognizing the common inconsistency appearing in between what people say and what they do or feel. Researchers must construct an empathy map as groundbreaking information can be obtained from just observing users rather than engaging with them in intricate dialogues. Actions and feelings can be self-explanatory and appear way more straightforward as they are not likely to be as biased as human thoughts could appear. A commonly made example reinforcing the validity and reliability of these tools has been proven in the past during inquiries regarding families or individuals' eating habits. Even if most people admitted to pursuing a healthy lifestyle when looking at their kitchen shelves surprisingly most of the same interviewees did have high-fat and processed packaged foods in their storages. When limiting a research to only interview-based structures we risk not being in the control of those same information as they could be erroneous or even completely biased. We should not consider the contribution of in depth interviews as insignificant otherwise our entire research will be unreliable, while we should find other non-verbally spoken information supporting our quest or even contradicting it for pointing out valuable working areas coming from users' experience gaps. In depth interviews and empathy maps are thus considered as complementary and equally supporting instruments for our present research reinforcing their sake to uncover users' behavioral drivers. Specifically the "say" section is the most consistent one with the interview common traits as it is dedicated to list what a user is saying in regard of a matter under analysis; while the "think" section is opened to a more empathy stressing perspective in recognizing underlying thoughts the respondent is indulging in all along the process. The "do" part is the one dedicated to observations and physical motions during the in depth-interview, and ultimately the "feel" part includes emotions the interviewee has during the process as by studying her body language or facial expressions to gauge emerging feelings [13].

The ultimate goal, after having recruited all the needed information populating the empathy map, stands in the definition of users personas aiding both the research in recognizing the presence and contribution of the previously mentioned "extreme users" as well as in tackling users' non-explicit knowledge, recognizing true behavioral

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[13] Hendricks B., *Empathy Mapping in Design Thinking: Definition & Example*, Introduction to Design Thinking: Business Courses, at: study.com.

intentions commonly hidden under disclosed information [14]. In-depth interviews and empathy maps allow a human-centered design approach by actively integrating users' perspectives in whether the problem tackled is real and if its discussion could generate positive feelings towards its next resolutive attempts by assuring people do agree with the overall potential the matter unfolds for generating new and unprecedented users' experiences [15].

2.3. An Integrative Literature Review Inquiry

As being previously discussed throughout Chapter 2 the direction undertaken by the present research stresses the convergence in between a business centric approach and a customer centric one by adopting a design thinking research model to uncover a resolutive path towards a more responsible Fashion. Furthermore, the current study recognizes the relevance of a resolutive convergence in an integrated background where sustainability aims are supported and complementary with a digitally networked community. Specifically after the outbreak of the pandemic disease of Coronavirus researchers have realized the inseparable connection in between the sustainability discourse and the digital ecosystem to guarantee a continuum in the overriding businesses' organizational activities which would have been not attainable without a properly implemented digital support. It is still correct to notice the Fashion Industry must deal with the economic crisis being undertaken with Covid-19 diffusion. From closed retailers, to blocked supply chains and entire production plants, Fashion companies were asked to realize the fundamental support of their online stores and e-commerce platforms as the uniquely available solution to cope with the economic crisis [16]. Fashion companies have thus recently started to take seriously the concern of their online stores as an unique internal strength being determinant for the economic wellbeing of a business which should be managed internally rather than externalized with management delegation to third parties moving towards an omnichannel strategy [17]. Digital channels are completely overturning the business of Fashion as we know it,

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[14] Lavazza M C., *Le Empathy Map: Human ed Experience Design, Strumenti e Pratica del Design*, at: mclavazza.it, 2016.
[15] *Ibid.*
[16] Illiano M., *La Via D'Uscita da Codiv-19 per la Moda è l'E-Commerce*, Econopoly, Sole24Ore, 2020.
[17] *Ibid.*

revolutionizing its way of working, selling and even promoting clothing lines and offerings to the general public. As an example, the entire Industry has now decided to livestream for the first time in history the upcoming Fashion shows in Milan and London hosting Fashion webinars, photoshoots, interviews, backstage, and other entertaining sets all transmitted online and worldwide, giving birth to the so called Digital Fashion Weeks [18]. These resolutions will offer the chance for all brands to propose and expose their Spring/Summer 2021 collections fostering continuity for the Fashion economic sector. The digital resolutions will not grant just economic sustainability inside the business but also transversely with their partners as retailers and supply chain entities, which will experience a renewed organization via re-engineered IT systems, mutually supporting the working flow of partnered members included all along the Fashion production line from scrap to the final product or service delivery. Considering the final consumer point of view the delivery of a product will be not enough without a supportive service granting and organizing their availability. Accordingly with an article published by BBC regarding the existential crisis of the pandemic spread consumers are not likely to purchase any clothing while staying at home during a pandemic outbreak, whilst people are more interested in acquiring first necessity products rather than indulging in more frivolous items [19]. The Covid19 is completely overturning consumers' mindsets too and it is opening windows of opportunity in rethinking their purchases and consumptions' habits. As retailers have slowed down and shops have been closed for months consumers have become much more comfortable in living with less by buying less, so their ongoing buying behaviors will be likely set under the "buying less, but better" motto [20]. An even more groundbreaking fact stands with the desire of consumers after a long-time period of self-isolation to re-approach nature and to reconstruct a widely missed contact with their surrounding environment sustaining once again the cause of Fashion towards responsibility, which is currently becoming even more pivotally driving the entire Fashion buying concern [21]. Quarantine has even left people to the adoption of social media and digital networks to

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[18] Giudici G., *La Moda al Tempo del Covid, Milano Vara la Prima Digital Fashion Week*, Lifestyle: Moda, Ansa, 2020.

[19] McIntosh S., *Coronavirus: Why the Fashion Industry Faces an 'Existential Crisis'*, Entertainment & Arts, BBC News, 2020.

[20] Graham A., Marci K., 5 Ways Coronavirus is Drawing Attention to Sustainable Fashion, Resources: Covid-19 Dashboard, at: edited.com, 2020.

[21] *Ibid.*

communicate with other users as brands mainly who have reached unprecedented results in traffic and interactions performances [22]. Consumers have not abandoned their interests over Fashion while instead they have changed it turning it into an opportunity to escape from reality in a creative and socially entertaining way, as by proposing DIYs or by exposing oneself in their quarantine outfits [23].

Paradoxically, the advent of the pandemic disease is now offering unpredictable and previously unattainable working scenarios completely revolutionizing traditional Fashion as we know it and opening the way to long-time awaited responsible offerings. The commitment exposed by consumers and the effort invested in the amelioration of the entire digital networking platforms of a brand have now to be exploited in a jointly consumers' co-creative approach to significantly change Fashion in a more environmentally and socially sustainable way, granting the economic viability and performance of an entire sector who will be otherwise in severe collapse. The chance of working via digital solutions with mutual support of one's network members and users is the core working element for the previously addressed co-creative design thinking model under which the digital ecosystem works at the support of both a business centric as a consumer centric perspective under a converging paradigm.

Furthermore, given the relevant impact of the advent of Covid19 and its business operational greater effects, it is important for the present research to stress in an integrative literature review inquiry the yet adopted innovations towards responsible Fashion under both a business centric and a customer centric domain of research. It is important to realize which kind of innovations and the nature of updated business models Fashion might approach to construct how companies and consumers were and are moving towards sustainable solutions to even more realize their validity after this groundbreaking period for traditional businesses' operations. The aim of the present paper is to offer a resolutive path for sustainable Fashion keeping an eye and being informed over previously attained results coming from similar implementations towards responsible shifts aiming to naturally converge them with the ultimate working ecosystem which has practically introduced different bottlenecks in relation to economic viability and sanitary guarantee.

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[22] Mollard M., Consumer Attitudes: Covid-19 x Fashion, Articles, at: heuritech.com, 2020.
[23] *Ibid.*

The concern of the upcoming chapters will be specifically designed to host and discuss the current point and results of innovation implementation in businesses from an operational organization point of view as from the consumers' overriding approaches to existing Fashion offerings giving of course a core preference to digital settings' proposals.

Chapter 3. The Role of Design Thinking Approach in the Domain of Sustainable Fashion

As introduced in the previous section the role of sustainability in current business operations tackles traditional management practices and opens the opportunity for ground-breaking innovations when engaged through a systematic and controlled strategy, as the one offered by the design thinking/DT methodology.

Every industry is challenged to figure out how to properly implement the sustainability discourse to their current businesses as consumers are becoming more prone and sensitive to the so-called "sustainable megatrend". The Fashion Industry is particularly eligible for the sustainable topic as in the last few years it has become the leader innovator in the economic circularity model proposing sustainable solutions including upcycling, recycling, re-use and second-hand activities. Brands as Vivienne Westwood and Stella McCartney have been pioneers in the sustainable discourse enlarging their commitments from runways to the creation of an entirely new responsible lifestyle.

The application of sustainable practices is still not an easy task, as it requires specific managerial know-how and recognition of its possible side effects. This is the very case of "green washing" procedures in relation to which companies just limit themselves to adopt green-coherent-labels in order to appear being environmentally responsible to the general public but limiting customers' possibilities to realize the veracity of such sustainable implementations [1].

As an outcome most sustainability-concerned initiatives implemented by average companies are prone to fail as they appear being confined to a marketing tactic only and not to a true corporate conduct renovation. These failures create a domino effect, causing the loss of potential of engaging actual customers jointly with a damage of the company image and an even more immediate loss of the allocated financial investments. This very fact has been documented in the 2017 by the Bain & Company Organization, who published a report named "Achieving Breakthrough Results in Sustainability", which attested that in a worldwide survey of 300 large companies

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[1] Berger-Grabner D., *Sustainability in Fashion: An Oxymoron*?, CSR, Sustainability, Ethics & Governance, Springerlink, 2018.

investing in sustainability efforts about 98% of such were ending up with a failed project.

The most common cause for this sort of failure to occur stands in the limited knowledge companies have over the sustainable topic and the poor managerial capabilities adopted for implementing it. Most firms' sustainable efforts end up in marketing campaigns mainly destined to the digital and social media communication domain where this information circulate rapidly and at low costs, so returns over investments can seemingly appear effortless and immediate.

Companies do not recognize the opportunities those platforms might disclose as they are powerful hubs for sustainable values and meanings' disclosure and circulation, opening the opportunity for "experience-creating networks" enabling connections in between networked organizations and customers communities [2].

The present chapter is dedicated to the introduction and discussion regarding the role of businesses-customers' co-design and co-creation processes under a responsible Fashion context. These constitute instruments derived from the design thinking discipline, as approaches for managing sustainable projects involving multiple working parties jointly. The discussion will keep an eye on the current focal presence and role of digital media and platforms which might be valuable hubs hosting these collaborations.

3.1. Sustainable Co-Design in the Era of Social Platforms

The co-design practice has been for a long time rooted in the design thinking methodological discourse contributing to the revolution of firm-designer-customer relation, relying on the opportunity to boost a creative flow of cooperation and participation in an open design process [3].

Co-design is rooted back to the 1960s in the United States during the emergence of human and social rights movements organizing the involvement of mutually different parties; and in the same years it has been approached in Britain too, constituting part of a widespread community action against large redevelopments and rehousing programs that were considered as threats to local communities. Nowadays the

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[2] Romero D., Molina A., *Collaborative Networked Organizations and Customer Communities: Value Co-Creation and Co-Innovation in the Networking Era*, Production Planning and Control: The Management of Operations, Volume 22, Issue 5-6, Taylor & Francis Online, 2011.

[3] Chisholm J., What is Co-Design?, Design for Europe, 2011 at: http://designforeurope.eu/what-co-design.

adoption of co-design ranges in different contexts of application, thanks to its high flexibility and adaptable features making it a suitable option for every problem-related and creative approach setting.

The strategy unfolded under the co-design method stands in finding alternative solutions to an overriding problem benefitting from aggregate contributions coming from diverse and heterogeneous sources mutually involved in the creative process itself jointly acting towards a common "sense making" purpose.

The application of this method can be used for various business's purposes as for products or processes innovations, from distribution management to supply chain organization leveraging working opportunities in any business area.

There are different alternatives available when considering co-design practices which might differ depending on the goal orientation and the level of cooperation being required. There are four different definable co-design working scenarios depending on whether the project focus is settled upon: (1) working together (collaborative and cooperative projects); (2) a preference to work independently (collective and connective projects); (3) a strong commitment towards finding and working for common goals and values achievement (collective and collaborative projects); and ultimately (4) a strong emphasis on individual (or multiple) goals and values (connective and cooperative projects) [4].

We must infer these various alternatives of firm-consumer co-creation processes to have developed even more significantly after the outbreak of new devices and channels for mass communication, today represented by as digital networks.

Strategic networks such as collaborative networked organizations (CNOs) and virtual customer communities (VCCs) show a high potential as drivers of value co-creation and co-innovation practices [5].

As depicted in the work of David Romero and Arturo Molina there is a substantial difference in between the two previously presented constructs. Collaborative Networked Organizations also known as CNOs are organized collaborations supported by the information and communications technology systems for the development of further business opportunities which are characterized by high

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[4] Zamenopoulos T., Alexiou C., *Co Design as Collaborative Research*, Connected Communities: Foundation Series, University of Bristol, 2018.

[5] Romero D., Molina A., *Collaborative Networked Organisations and Customer Communities: Value Co-Creation and Co-Innovation in the Networking Era*, Production Planning and Control: The Management of Operations, Volume 22, Issue 5-6, Taylor & Francis Online, 2011.

flexibility and responsiveness to a changing ecosystem, thanks to the mutual support given by the parties who are involved in the network. On the other hand Virtual Customer Communities or VCCs are a plausible supportive element for yet existing or emerging businesses who are offering their users to customize products or services under a co-designing process for an unique consumption experience, allowing on the other hand the business to continuously gain insights over users and properly adjust their offers and communication campaigns to better target their offerings.

The two constructs can be aimed to work at the support one of the other with mutual contributions for the creation of an innovative business model with the support of an outstanding network to share risk, competencies and skills in.

Digital networks offer a twofold opportunity, the first stands in the creative cooperation towards innovative businesses proposals and in second place they are used to discover new consumption opportunities to build renewed consumers' experiences and shape values in their accordance, giving new meanings to the offerings marketed along with the continuous support of a consumers' community.

However when it comes to Fashion, the matter gets more complex as networks' users who are found to be committed in social media communities while gaining inspiration and information regarding Fashion businesses, however proved their final purchase intentions not being as highly influenced by the digitally created content as it was theoretically expected [6]. The very cause of this outcome stands in the multifaceted aspects contributing in shaping ultimate purchasing intentions and actual behaviors, therefore ranging from internal motivating factors as habits, preferences and emotional attachments to external incentives as monetary or reputational rewards.

It is clear enough that co-design and co-creating networks formalizing in CNOs cannot work without a previous clarification over the consumers' overriding intentions and purchasing behaviors' related fields specifically under the domain of sustainable Fashion, where high knowledge and sensitivity over the context still does not generate consistent preference shifts in "slow Fashion" offers as opposed to "Fast Fashion" ones.

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[6] Nash J., *Exploring How Social Media Platforms Influence Fashion Consumer Decisions in the UK Retail Sector*, Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management, 2019.

Sustainable Fashion firms have to invest in shifting from a mere consumer engagement via digital networks which is in its nature fluctuating and unpredictable [7], towards the construction of well-established and rooted networked organization with their stakeholders enabling a continuous flow of innovation towards the establishment of co-settled values and meanings rather than just limiting to the renovated service of product offerings.

It comes straightforward to observe the benefits attained by yet existing and emerging businesses in the adoption of a design thinking approaches and specifically in the adoption of co-designed solutions. The method itself, when conducted with a support of an expertise group, offers the chance of maintaining flexibility in a fast-pacing market as Fashion business is where competitive advantage usually is attained in an "anything for everything" attitude, enabling companies to seek for new multifaceted problem resolutions in the complex discourse of Fashion responsibility. Furthermore when the co-design methodology becomes part of the core business capabilities and know-how there is the opportunity to work on a long term horizon with a network of diverse entities all creatively collaborating for the provision of insights and to foster ultimate settlement of new habits and values creating flows over the usage of slow Fashion sustainable proposals. Obviously we also need to think the other way round, trying to capture which could be the benefits received by customers at first stage and by the overall society next, through the application of a design thinking strategy in a digitally-networked ecosystem considering to whom contents are destined to and whether there is the opportunity some outcasts would be let aside in the creative process.

To properly address this question, we need at first to get a glimpse and a clarification over the digital consumer behavior and habits, as it will be further introduced in the following chapter.

3.1.1. Analysis over Digital Consumers' Behaviors and Habits in the Responsible Fashion Domain

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[7] Geissinger A., Laurell C., *User Engagement in Social Media - An Explorative Study of Swedish Fashion Brands*, Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management, Emerald Insight, 2016.

With the advent of digital communication solutions and network-based-touchpoints, the analysis of traditional consumers' behaviors has been challenged by appearing obsolete and non-fitting the rising complexity related to the presence of new drivers contributing to ultimate consumption behaviors, specifically when considering the domain of sustainability in which new structures of values and beliefs do appear [8]. Consumers' motivations about ethical consumption have been dominant in the last years in the Fashion Industry enforcing the settlement of a responsible Fashion market both concerned with environmental as well as social sustainability.

Digital consumers are obviously appearing more informed and in control over the information they receive and have now the opportunity to be in a one-to-one relationship with the companies they get in touch with, mutually aware of their influential power over businesses' strategic conduct.

Even if the weights of information found online can be today overwhelming and in some cases even controversial to be managed, it is of fundamental importance to settle clear collaborative digital networks for both stakeholders and companies to cope with the complex sustainability attitudes consumers perform in an attempt to ultimately modify and construct them together, escaping from the misleading amount of notions present on the Internet which might rather be misinforming than raising education.

As previously discussed, it is quite difficult to define what "sustainable Fashion" stands for as it encompasses a variety of terms such as organic, green, fair trade, sustainable, slow, eco, ethical, and many more each attempting to highlight or correct a variety of perceived "wrongs" in the Fashion industry including animal cruelty; environmental damage and worker exploitation [9].

The "Activate Movement": Digital-Based Sustainable Project by Virgil Abloh and Evian

The sustainable design digital contest just launched in February 2020 by the famous creative director of Off White and Louis Vuitton, Virgil Abloh in partnership with the water bottle designer company Evian, offers a conspicuous winning prize for the launch of a new limited edition of sustainable glass water bottles. The program "Activate Movement" has been funded

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[8] Lanzini P., *Responsible Citizens and Sustainable Consumer Behaviour: New Interpretative Frameworks*, Routledge Focus, 2017.
[9] Lundblad L., Davies I.A., *The Values and Motivations Behind Sustainable Fashion Consumption*, The Journal of Consumer Behaviour, Wiley Online Library, 2015.

by Evian to motivate young designers aged from 18 to 35 in the proposal of design and innovation-based projects for the launch of a brand new environmentally friendly bottle line. Evian has been collaborating with Abloh from about two years and their projects were always being committed to the sustainability domain, as Louis Vuitton's creative director has also become Evian's advisor for the Sustainable Innovation Design project.

Figure 1, Evian and Virgil Abloh Launch Limited Edition Glass Water Bottles (D.M. Davis, Business Insider, businessinsider.com, 2020).

The collaboration is part of a wider sustainable purpose: the brand Evian has committed to become a 100% circular brand by 2025.

The new contest has been meant to give an opportunity to young designers mainly as Abloh reminds the groundbreaking experience he had during his first working experience as an intern at Fendi, which allowed him to freely express his innovative Fashion design ideas bringing his revolutionary street-style taste, which has now become a Fashion hype. The opportunity offers chances to empower young generations, in an attempt as said by Abloh, to redefine the status-quo by the means of design thinking-based approaches. The contest has no prescription and it is following an open-sourced digital networked structure to let anyone join in.

The participation to the program is fully digitally available as a QR code has been provided as an "entry pass" in each produced water bottle, being previously designed as a result of past collaborations between the two parties.

The main aim of the movement presented at an New York Fashion Week Event stands not just on the reinforcement over young generation's proposals in rethinking environmental consciousness, but also in the enlargement of the co-creation platform being previously formed between Abloh and Evian, by letting young designers to be active in the creation of an environmentally responsible world they wish to be part of.

References:
(1) Vogue.com, *Virgil Abloh and Evian are Here to Make Hydration Cool*, at: https://www.vogue.com/article/virgil-abloh-evian-collaboration-sustainable-grant

(2) Businessinsider.com, *Louis Vuitton designer Virgil Abloh and Evian have teamed up to create limited edition glass water bottles tied to the launch of a $54,000 sustainable design contest*, at: https://www.businessinsider.com/evian-virgil-abloh-limited-edition-water-bottles-activate-movement-sustainability-2020-2?IR=T

(3) Hypebeast.com, *Virgil Abloh x Evian Debut "Activate Movement" Collection and Competition*, at: https://hypebeast.com/2020/2/evian-virgil-abloh-activate-movement-water-bottle

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When dealing with responsible Fashion, as we have defined it in the previous chapter, literature comes about the presence of an attitude-behavior gap as much as studied in other responsible-related fields mainly due to the existence of consumption motivations dominated by the need to fulfill a sense of belonging, self-esteem and community acceptance [10], which are meanings not yet being attached still potentially equally present in the responsible Fashion context as they actually are in the Fast Fashion one. Commonly, consumers approach the sustainable Fashion domain for the same reasons being presented above, which are not about the consequence of an act of coherence with personal intentions and underlying motivations but just a desire to properly fit in a social and environmentally committed community they wish to be part of just for an identity confirmation.

At this very stage, co-design can appear as an interesting touchpoint for every member being part of the stakeholders' ecosystem as it offers the chance to work first over responsible Fashion education and second over active creation of related meanings and values, not just fulfilling the need of community belonging but also exerting a proper commitment to them, as they are a result of their own effort.

A comprehensive example is the one previously presented by Virgil Abloh and Evian. The proposed projects is organized in accordance with a process of digital co-creation and co-education with the support of young designers' proposals bringing their fresh new perspectives over the management of new responsible Fashion businesses developments granting at the very end, sustainable products and services proposals which are at the disposal of a wider group of potential and actual consumers. The business case has been reported as due to the nature of a digital collaboration between a finite group of contributors required to work on new meanings creation

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[10] Lundblad L., Davies I.A., *The Values and Motivations Behind Sustainable Fashion Consumption*, The Journal of Consumer Behaviour, Wiley Online Library, 2015.

related to sustainable resolutions, while standing at the benefits of a much less definite cluster in which those values are spread as community ones.

Studies have statistically enlarged the discussion by documenting the positive correlation existing in between customer digital value sharing and trust building with a brand by the means of participatory activities [11]. As presented in Chae Heeju and Ko Eunju work regarding customer social participation in the social networking services, customer-brand participation builds trust over the brand created network facilitating the creation of a community of belonging and generating an overall level of trust over the information generated by the network, mutually reinforcing the network validity.

The context of responsible Fashion gets much complicated when defining the presence of consumption habits, which work as non-cognitive factors limiting the consideration of alternative courses of actions.

Habits are defined by the frequency of a behavior, the stability of the context in which it is performed and the rewarding consequences it appears to have [12].

Fast Fashion, as we currently know, is a perfect hosting domain for those kinds of habits to be performed mainly triggered by the presence of a high rewarding system, due to low costs but trendy and always on time clothes' designs proposals. The frequency of behaviors is therefore reinforced as the more the rewarding mechanisms function, the more the consumer is willing to perform the behavior once again, engaging in a vicious cycle called habit. Habits substantially attenuate the influence of attitudes and intentions over behaviors, that is, habits may function as a boundary condition for the validity of social cognitive models; behaviors might become habitual and a subconscious automatic response might get triggered, in which past behaviors interact with intentions in predicting behaviors [13].

The most known approach being proposed stands in the "habit discontinuity hypothesis" which states that " behavior change interventions may thus be more effective when delivered in the context of major habit disruptions, such as those related to life course changes", as when individuals have to open up to new courses of actions challenging traditionally known ones they appear being way more prone to consider

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[11] Chae H., Ko E., *Customer Social Participation in the Social Networking Services and its Impact upon the Customer Equity of Global Fashion Brands*, Journal of Business Research, Volume 69, Issue 9, 2010.

[12] Lanzini P., *Responsible Citizens and Sustainable Consumer Behaviour: New Interpretative Frameworks*, Routledge Focus, 2017.

[13] *Ibid.*

new responsible solutions as it might have occurred during the latest Covid19 pandemic phenomenon, which has completely challenged our daily routines.

This hypothesis is coherent with the nature of the co-creation methodology in accordance to which the main aim of creative collaboration stands in finding multiple windows of opportunity as potential resolutions to a discussed problem. Particularly in the case of responsible Fashion which is challenging traditional Fast Fashion consumption rooted habits, the application of the design thinking approaches might appear satisfying for stakeholders at large, as they offer an opportunity to challenge consumers' non-conscious behaviors becoming much more aware and in control of their consumption impulses.

Even considering the case co-design collaboration does not translate into direct and immediate shifts towards a responsible Fashion preference, it is still of valuable importance in helping stakeholders to get insights about what moves their actions to later on correct them towards more desirable and controlled end states.

In conclusion, the concept of responsible Fashion is sometimes hard to be defined and approached by stakeholders due to the crowded context it is unfolding, including a digital setting usually containing plenty of contrasting information unitedly with a rising complexity in human consumption behaviors which are ending in a non-controlled consumption and acquisition domain.

Design thinking approaches offer us an opportunity, as denoted before, not just to collaborate for an unified education over responsible Fashion but also to work for the creation of unique meanings and values, reinforcing our sense of belonging to a community mainly when building trust over a digital network and gaining unseen insights over the motives controlling our consumption behaviors and becoming much more aware of who we are, plausibly helping us abandoning old habits for new responsible ones.

3.2. Moving from a Mass Customization Approach to a Responsible Co-Creation

The previous sections have been destined to the presentation of the core topics that will be addressed throughout the thesis fostering the role of design thinking techniques application as a focal element for the attainment of a responsible Fashion system being sought in the current paper.

We have ranged from the consideration of the valuable effects that co-design and co-creative solutions can bring to both businesses and consumers, specifically when the creative collaboration takes place in a digitally networked community.

To conclude this section, there is a need to clarify design thinking methods are not new to the Fashion Industry, which has been keen in its adoption for mass-customization purposes relying on co-design group members' multifaceted points of view to converge products and services proposals towards an unique offering, then massively supplied to the destined market. This part of the thesis is dedicated to the discussion regarding the need to redirect the co-creation workflow towards a responsible discourse especially when it triggers the Fashion Industry, parting from the traditional mass customization end.

At the beginning of the new millennium, Fashion businesses have started approaching the co-design techniques to satisfy the growing requirements of customers for differentiated, unique products and services, granting them a memorable experience, which has in turn proved to foster an increased stimulation level in customers' commitment in further co-participative processes [14]. Businesses' efforts were targeted to a specifically defined market segment, recognizing customers' increased expertise and requirements over the offerings being marketed, seeking also a fine tune with marketing efforts companies have engaged in. The scenario has been considered revolutionary at that time, as the world was experiencing an embryonal digital stage, a moment at which information were floating at higher speed and consumers started having a wider control over the marketed offerings, evolving towards a one-to-one relationship with the companies they have been client of. Initially the co-design methodology for mass customization was applied for marketing purposes mainly, slowly developing in a core business development tool granting adaptability, speed and reliability in a growingly fast-moving economic scenario.

In 2006 noticeable businesses' results have been attained with the application of the principles of mass customization. New business models were initiated involving a focused market strategy, including: the development of a module-based product range; a fitted sales and order processing based on the use of product configuration systems; a manufacturing system with customer-initiated assembly of customer-

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[14] Fiore A.M., Lee S.E., Kunz G., *Individual Differences, Motivations, and Willingness to Use a Mass Customization Option for Fashion Products*, European Journal of Marketing, 2004.

specific products based on standard modules and distribution; and the installation and after-sales service based on the use of standard modules in the product range [15].

The unique values offered as co-created by the means of these new business models have been particularly significant for the Fashion Industry, for which participatory Fashion design models have the potential to foster stronger emotional bonds between consumers and garments, increasing the meaning attached to the product itself, resulting in a made-to-keep good, affecting a sustainable behavioral change [16].

A "responsible" Fashion can be built through the support of a collaborative creative framework moving from the traditional mass production pace towards a more crafted co-design system, driven by social engagement and knowledge sharing, leading to products and services infused with cultural meanings [17].

It might be argued that this kind of structure is reminiscent of an unrealistic "going back to the past" production system, even prior to the industrial revolution attainments but still this is not the case. What the world of Fashion is currently required is to prove its commitment and observable actions towards a responsible business conduct, for which the co-creative solution can prove to be even more effective when taking inspiration from the traditional craft-made underlying cultural values and meanings that were originally attached to clothes.

The craft-made perspective offers an interesting point of view if adapted to modern responsible Fashion goals, as it suggests working beyond the mere product creation, towards the settlement of proper meanings and values engaging in a re-education process with our stakeholders.

Practically, a responsible Fashion as we intend it in the present paper, is the one capable of co-creating not just for a marketed offer proposal but also for a deeper service of knowledge sharing and sense making [18].

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[15] Moser K., Piller F.T., *Mass Customisation Case Studies: Cases from the International Mass Customisation Case Collection*, International Journal of Mass Customisation, Inderscience Enterprise Ltd, 2006.

[16] Cramer J., *Made to Keep: Product Longevity through Participatory Design in Fashion*, Design Principles and Practices, Common Ground Publishing, 2011.

[17] Kozlowski A., Searcy C., Bardecki M., *Innovation for a Sustainable Fashion Industry: A Design Focused Approach Toward the Development of New Business Models, Green Fashion*, Springer Link, 2016.

[18] Hur E.S., Beverley K.J., *The Role of Craft in a Co-Design System for Sustainable Fashion*, Symplectic Publications, The University of Leeds, 2014.

Up To You Anthology as an Open-Sourced Value Creating Platform

Up to You Anthology is a perfectly fitting business example combining craft-related specificities with a digital open source platform, infusing its products with both custom-made attributes and economic facilities. The platform was launched at the end of 2019 by Nicolò Gavazzi, a young entrepreneur who had previously studied at the Columbia Business School and worked in the investment banking sector.

Up to You Anthology has been recently proposed as an innovative design-bag e-commerce enabling users to engage in a co-design process of a customized bag creation, which is then made sellable to a wider public on-site. Users have also the opportunity to collaborate with famous designers for the creation of one-of-a-kind bags.

Figure 1, Product from the Line Minima from Leonardo Talarico. (The Walkman, thewalkman.it, 2019)

The platform offers economic incentives to those who decide to be part of the creative process by equally splitting the revenues obtained from the sale of the products granting higher affordability over the online marketed proposals.

The platform offers the chance for everyone to propose a customized bag concept, which is then managed in all its phases from the design ideation to the production and ultimate distribution by the expertise available at Up To You Anthology.

All the product phases are controlled and settled in accordance with a "Made in Italy" craft/handmade philosophy.

Collaborations do include famous designers from different sectors, as from Fashion to University expertise, granting an heterogeneous set of different products offerings over the platform, as the ones recently released with Naoto Fukasawa, Elisa Ossino and students from Japanese, Italian and American Universities. The aim of the project stands on revolutionizing traditional bags design and production processes following a faster distribution pace,

coherently with the opportunity to work in collaboration with one's favorite designers, and the acquisition of a luxury handmade bag at a reduced price.

The idea can work as an interesting suggestion for further digitally based platforms fostering users' co-creation with the intent to create unique values and meanings for long-lasting made offerings, re-evaluating traditionally high-end niches' destined products and services for a wider public disposal.

References:
(1) designdiffusion.com, *Up To You Anthology, Borse su Disegno*, at: https://www.designdiffusion.com/2019/12/12/dinamicita-e-creativita-per-la-nuova-e-commerce-up-to-you-anthology/
(2) fashionnetwork.com, *Up To You Anthology: Nasce in Italia una Piattaforma E-commerce Inclusiva*, at: https://it.fashionnetwork.com/news/Up-to-you-anthology-nasce-in-italia-una-piattaforma-e-commerce-inclusiva,1165458.html
(3) uptoyouanthology.com, at: https://uptoyouanthology.com

3.2.1. The Customer Centric Digitally Responsible Approach (CCDR)

The concept of "Customer Centric Digitally Responsible" approach has been detected from an evolution of the yet known term Customer Centric Sustainability or CCS, which past attempts have regarded the predisposition of a focal concern over customers' perspectives when dealing with sustainability related programs.

Based on the norm of business-consumer reciprocity, researchers have argued that sustainability outcomes must result from consumer-directed business actions if companies plan to make sustainability an integral part of their business strategies and operations, in which only the mutual efforts of both consumers and companies are needed to achieve those fixed ends [19].

The focus towards a customer centric analysis has been explained in the scientific research work of "Mindful Consumption" [20], in which the attention is posed over the fact that most sustainability initiatives initiated by businesses are too vaguely stakeholders directed, not properly fitting and engaging with customers' related sustainability issues. As previously explained, when defining the group of stakeholders being part of the ecosystem of an operating company, there is a risk to approach a group of entities way too vast to be properly tackled by the means of few sustainable

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[19] Park H., Kim Y.K., *An Empirical Test of the Triple Bottom Line of Customer-Centric Sustainability: the Case of Fast Fashion*, Article Number 25 in Fashion and Textiles 3, Springer Link, 2016.

[20] Sheth J.N., Sethia N.K., Srinivas S., *Mindful Consumption: A Customer-Centric Approach to Sustainability*, Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, Springer Link, 2010.

programs. This is due to the excess variety of motivations, intentions and interests performed by the different parties, requiring a complex system of program orientations which are monetary and practically unrealistic to be implemented all together.

As a consequence, for an easiness of methodological application, Nirmal Sethia's et Al. work suggests to maintain a focus on the customers' group, which is not just the first party being interested and sensitive towards sustainable practices planned by companies, but also because when dealing with the targeted group of customers, a company can realize the multifaceted orientations that generally different entities could bring into as a part of their consumption orientation still addressed to a way smaller sample size. Finally, for the sustainability agenda, the customer is a vital partner-stakeholder especially in connection with certain sustainability goals, as those contingent on mindful consumption cannot be accomplished without customer involvement [21].

Furthermore, when applying a design approach to work on mutual creative problem solutions findings in attempt to co-creating meanings for the underlying socio-cultural domain, companies should also consider the aesthetic nature of design remaining a dependent and context-specific variable [21]. In fact, the process through which we move from the problems to their solutions' shaping takes place in a specific context, which is part of the process of sensemaking [22]. Following this reasoning, we have to consider the socio-cultural context in which we are operating in, as the tentative of departing from the context of reference could cause our co-creation efforts to be nonsense or unrealistically applicable.

This is why the customer centric approach is delivered in a digital networked context not just because online platforms grant an ease in collaboration and foster the possibility to work with an open sourced setting, but also because today social platforms and digital networks represent the very first ideation hubs for giving and creating sense of the world as we know it, questioning and challenging institutionalized consumption preferences. Particularly the adoption of social media networks has offered the chance to boost businesses' economic performance based on a five drivers structure, including: the structural dimension offering an open-sourced collaboration platform; the relational behavior of the multiple perspectives offered by different users

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[21] Sheth J.N., Sethia N.K., Srinivas S., *Mindful Consumption: A Customer-Centric Approach to Sustainability*, Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, Springer Link, 2010.

[22] Calcagno M., *Interpreting Innovation: Design, Creativity, Art*, Editoriale Scientifica, 2017.

interactions; the cognitive dimension thanks to which users' skills and knowledge can be integrated to foster insights over the matter being discussed; the knowledge transfer dimensions, which grants mutual learning and enrichment from other nodes of the network; and finally the legitimization of new ideas platform, as they are an outcome of the aggregate members' joint commitments, mutually reinforced by the previously listed drivers [23]. Another term adopted in our analysis comprises the word "responsible" both for coherence with the previous definition we gave of responsible Fashion, but also because it represents a plausible unification of the three bottom line distinctions sustainability unfolds, being: environmental, social and economic.

The application of a customer centric digitally managed approach offers the opportunity to work simultaneously on all three aspects contained in the term sustainability, fulfilling our thesis requirements of making the approach "responsible", as a distinguishing feature. The work of Hyejune Park and Youn-Kyung Kim on the study of a triple bottom line approach towards customer-centric sustainability stands as an help to support the plausible benefits the CCS can bring about along all the above mentioned dimensions.

Considering an economic dimension, CCS supports both businesses who are capable to finely tune their responsible programs and ultimate products and services proposition with the support of a customer co-participative approach, and also consumers can receive quality products about which they have plenty of information about, enabling them to properly allocate their financial resources towards the improvement of well-being enabling acquisitions. Education over the entire production and trade fairness is also enhanced and a sense of belonging is ultimately boosted as consumers perceive as being an active part of a cooperative community. Finally consumers and businesses can be proactive in the pursuit of environmental friendly solutions, which on one side can help businesses to enlarge the possessed know-how and competitive advantage thanks to unique business models propositions, and on the other side consumers can experience being part of a responsible movement, mutually reinforcing the social community ties previously mentioned.

Social community ties can be reinforced when a brand-customer digital community is created by the means of a co-design framework where the platform itself is not just

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[23] Scuotto V., Del Giudice M., Della Peruta M.R., Tarba S., *The Performance Implications of Leveraging Internal Innovation through Social Media Networks: An Empirical Verification of the Smart Fashion Industry*, Technological Forecasting and Social Change, Volume 120, 2017.

needed to give a workspace to a process of co-creation but also it has the potential to transform in a legitimate hub of public creativity arranged over unique community features shared by the company and the co-designers [24]. The role of such digital communities is even more surprising when realizing digital networks do currently represent the predominant communication channel for sustainability initiatives, as for example social media are the most commonly used channels to reach a wider audience and enable companies to contact consumers who have expressed a prior interest in sustainability issues [25]. For Fashion operating companies, the adoption of online platforms can offer unprecedented competitive advantage opportunities, as in the meantime a co-creative community is created, a certain set of plausible customers is also consolidated, constituting a quasi-tribal grouped structure fully committed with the branded community.

Online communities belong then to a larger digital marketing and communication program, as the collaborative experience empowers the overall brand value not just for the set of co-designers involved but for the entire digital community in which the hub is hosted, enabling additional users to encounter the creative space finally influencing the underlying purchase intentions [26].

Structural Equation Modeling Analysis: How Digital Marketing Co-Creation Experiences Influence Customers' Values and Purchase Intentions
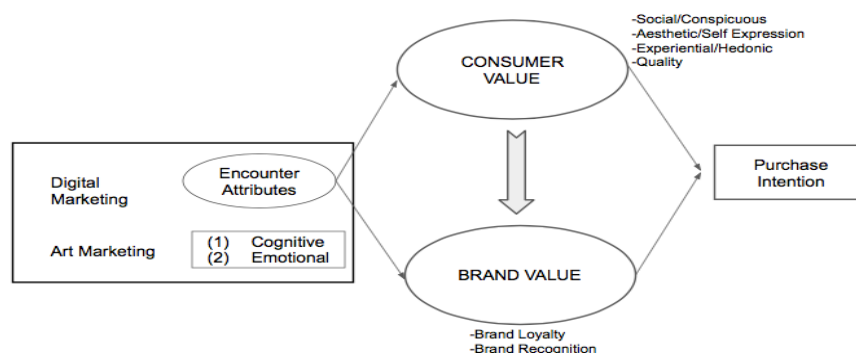
Figure 3, Structural Equation Modelling for Users-Firms Digital Marketing Co-Creative Experiences (Choi E., Ko E., Kim A.J., Science Direct, 2016)

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[24] Wu J., *Co-design Communities Online: Turning Public Creativity into Wearable and Sellable Fashions*, The Journal of Design, Creative Process & The Fashion Industry, Taylor & Francis Online, 2010.

[25] Han S.L.C., Henninger C.E., Apeagyei P., Tyler D., *Determining Effective Sustainable Fashion Communication Strategies*, Sustainability in Fashion, SpringerLink, 2017.

[26] Choi E., Ko E., Kim A.J., *Explaining and Predicting Purchase Intentions Following Luxury-Fashion Brand Value Co-Creation Encounters*, Journal of Business Research, Volume 69, Issue 12, Science Direct, 2016.

The framework hereby presented is part of the work of Eunha Choi, Eunju Ko and Angella J. Kim, who provided a model depicting how digital marketing co-creation experiences are connected to brand evaluation and purchase intentions.

The presence of a co-creating online platform works as previously discussed as a strategic instrument for the marketing program of a company, not just for the yet accounted users but also for the acquisition of prospective customers. As depicted in the scheme, the digital platform offers the opportunity to consolidate encounter attributes, which ultimately define the value specificity of the network, enabling the experience of unique cognitive and emotional states. The value of the platform is therefore increased, members become more and more attached to it, and the value is transferred to the general public accessible online. There is a need to distinguish the two types of values being proposed, either from the consumer perspective as from the brand point of view. The consumer perceives being more committed to the co-creating setting, as she perceives being part of the community which offers unique opportunities for self-expression and meanings' sharing with the other members. As a consequence, the quality perception over the platform and over the brand collaboration hub increases shaping the preliminary intentions and motivations of a likely future purchase.

On the other hand, the brand value is also enhanced as social members become loyal to the brand they are part of the community with, assuring the creation of a digital tribe structure. The overall brand image is strengthened, so the company can finely tune its desired image to the actual one being proposed by the means of a digital context and consumers can easily recognize it, as they were co-enablers of its ultimate definition.

The scheme is presented to give structural clarification over processes and impacts a co-creation experience can offer, which can go well beyond the focus of responsible business model innovation being set by the current thesis and gives a widened view of the underlying opportunities the design thinking approach can entail.

CCDR approach is itself a touchpoint between companies and customers, working as a strategic marketing program driver not only as a creative cooperation space but as a proper platform for a wider public to get knowledge and information about the company marketed proposals. A company can ultimately reinforce its brand image, as contemporary branding trends emphasize the importance of customers' involvement in business activities in order to improve their lives and to let them gain experiences with brands offering what users actually need and want, thus creating long-lasting

value [27]. Benefits are shared by prospective network participants in a process of branded identity externalization by the means of a constructed online relationship.

The CCDR approach offers a holistic method, as it ranges from responsible production of co-created solutions, integrating either a supply chain optimization focus or an entire innovative business model ideation to the responsible consumptions and impact reduction of those products or services resulting from the previous production phases [28]. CCDR works as an educational instrument too, triggering consumers rooted motivations and behaviors, helping them to realize the benefits they can personally attain from a responsible way of living, potentially influencing a spillover positive effect of responsible consumption and non-consumption attitudes, moving beyond the Fashion context.

3.2.2. Limitations of The Model: Why Customers Might be in Control of the CCDR

The customer centric approach comes as a practice embedded in a wider organizational program of Customer Relationship Management or CRM. The CRM is a combination of people, processes and technologies seeking to understand a company's customers by both building relationships with their users and retaining them through loyalty programs [29].

When adopting a customer centric approach, companies reconfigure customers' roles which are not confined only to the role of being a buyer, but of a value co-creator [30], who have the power to provide a differential contribution in the attainment of competitive enhancing innovations. The above-mentioned CRM approach has appeared as groundbreaking with the advent of the Web 2.0 revolution in which information was circulating at higher speed and in huge amounts, connecting in a sole network companies and their end users. The network structure has offered unprecedented scenarios linking multiple parties, who engaged in mutual communications. This phenomenon has revolutionized the approaches companies

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[27] Choi E., Ko E., Kim A.J., *Explaining and Predicting Purchase Intentions Following Luxury-Fashion Brand Value Co-Creation Encounters*, Journal of Business Research, Volume 69, Issue 12, Science Direct, 2016.

[28] Kozlowski A., Searcy C., Bardecki M., *Innovation for a Sustainable Fashion Industry: A Design Focused Approach Toward the Development of New Business Models, Green Fashion*, Springer Link, 2016.

[29] Chen J.I., Popovich K., *Understanding Customer Relationship Management (CRM): People, Process and Technology*, Business Process Management Journal, Emerald Insight, 2013.

[30] Michel S., Gallan A.S., Brown W.S., *Customer Centric Approach to Discontinuous Innovation: Theoretical Foundations and Practical Applications*, Marketing Theory and Applications, American Marketing Association Winter Educators' Conference, 2007.

were using to be in touch with their customers, realizing the flow of information was evolving towards a one-to-one structure enabling communication. Consumers were not passive actors in the business ecosystem anymore but have instead became an active part of it, in a sort of mutual collaboration with the companies they have been in touch with. Nowadays the presence of consumers is even more groundbreaking for companies. The advent of social media networks, the creation of user generated content have become a substantial test field for companies, who are sometimes even overwhelmed by the amount of feedbacks and information they receive from the internet, till the point they are not able to be in control anymore of their ultimate integration in the business. The design thinking methodology has then offered a systemic approach to proactively work in a partnership-like-structure with customers, in a so-called co-creative or co-design process, which is the very foundation of the DT method itself. Companies, along the years, have strived and worked for the implementation of a customer centric approach in their integrated business core strategic practices, but often they have ended up in failure. Researchers have proven many reasons to be related to upcoming failures, as insufficient or inadequate communication contents of channels usage, which were concentrating way more on a mere marketing practice of product centricity rather than a real customer centric focus [31]. Nowadays the risk of failure in the adoption of a CCDR approach is even more alarming, if we consider the entire business reputation and performance to be affected by social and general digital networking mechanisms. The main risk stands in the potential loss of inherent business cultural values and norms, which should to some extent be held as independent by every working company. Firms might become so focused in co-creating and raising values over and with their customers as they believe these practices to be enhancing their competitive advantage, till the point they cause a missed internal vision and mission, leaving them at a complete dependence from the co-creative flow. But what is even more harmful for the entire business is the incorrect implementation of the model often due to the lack of expertise and knowledge over design related procedures, generating consistent losses in financial investments. Companies might miss the very crucial point of the matter by limiting to a superficial analysis of customers' needs and engaged communications. Businesses might strive

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[31] Shah D., Rust R.T., Parsu Parasuraman A.. Staelin R., *The Path to Customer Centricity*, Journal of Service Research, ResearchGate, 2006.

for internal R&D implementations acted towards a dual need of establishing deep relationships with their customers together with a constant monitoring of potential shifts in their needs, causing upcoming threats over their current value propositions [32]. Still they might not even realize, probably for the poor expertise dedicated to the project implementation, that a co-creative model unfolds many numerous opportunities still they are not limited to the sole customers' relationship building or surveillance process. The CCDR is a much more complex procedure, requiring the very integration of customers, actually as being part of the business and collaborating in creating meanings, sharing knowledge, infusing ultimate groundbreaking solutions, which only at the very end of the process are transformed in something we commonly recognize as a product or a service. Only a possible co-ideation phase with a company's end users can bring unprecedented perspectives for unique solutions propositions, assuring a leading competitive advantage acquisition. Still it is a long-time process, reorganizing the traditional practices suggested by the most known customer relationship management practices, deepening the aims and reweighting the challenges. It is important for businesses to realize the CCDR to be an additional competitive tool for a business and not the unique one, requiring control and specific expertise, broadening the strategic scopes and challenges, opening the way to new organizational disciplines to be integrated in the company's know-how. Strategic approaches must be differential and still holistic in their mutual support and complementarity. Relying on the sole CCDR for strategic aims poses brands at failure risks, and mine to the solidness of the entire company capabilities and competence, leaving them at the mercy of customers' needs only.

3.3. A Twofold Focus: A Business Centric and Customer Centric Approach

The Business Centric Methodology or BCM is an enterprise architecture approach, connecting business analysis with the underlying technical infrastructure supporting business operations [33]. The aim of the approach stands in an overall optimization of the business operations through the implementation of new information technologies

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[32] Selden L., MacMillan I.C., *Manage Customer-Centric Innovation-Systematically*, Harvard Business Review, ResearchGate, 2006.

[33] Oasis, *Business Centric Methodology (BCM): Creating Practical Tools for Business Integration*, Business Centric Methodology Technical Committee.

systems granting a continuous flow of analyzable data both inside and outside the business [34]. The continuous flow of information works at the benefit of the entire network, so not just for the business of interest but also for its partners, as suppliers and customers. A re-engineered IT system grants the coordination and a lean management of the network, through the presence of commonly shared data. The BCM approach is built on a number of different core concepts, as the detection of a so called Community of Interest, which is practically obtained through the recognition (validated by formal network theory) of mutually interacting entities, whether they be people, organizations or technical systems, prone towards coalition in groups with common characteristics, such as purpose, vocabulary and behavior [35]. The Community of Interest for a business involves crucial partners responsible for the ongoing vitality of business operations, as employees, suppliers, distributors, and users, just to mention a few of them. The Community of Interest is specifically consistent with the schema previously presented of a reflecting business working ecosystem. It is obvious that not all the interested parties could be included for a unique networked system, still sub-networks can be present, fostering the relationships in between a limited number of entities joining the platform.

There are several benefits granted by the current model, as business benefits, including an optimized and cost reduced management of business operations, higher processes flexibility, and enhanced business responsiveness. An even greater groundbreaking impact is given by the technical benefits granted by the method, as the creation of a networked shared data repository, granting a flow of knowledge and information coming from different services, people and business units [36]. Furthermore, the opportunity to share data with external parties appears of interest, for our present study, in relation to actual and potential users. Not only because this information might be useful for customers to receive enhanced knowledge and a general education over the services they are benefitting from, but even more because thanks to their contribution they can become operative in the ultimate services optimizations. Companies engage in a sort of networked co-creative process with their external users, organized over the creation of analyzable data as a result of a digital

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[34] Chestnut D., *What Does Business-Centric Mean?*, at:bizfluent.com.

[35] Oasis, *Business Centric Methodology (BCM): Creating Practical Tools for Business Integration*, Business Centric Methodology Technical Committee.

[36] *Ibid.*

communication flow. This is the very touchpoint between a business centric approach and a customer centric one, and it is equally significant for both parties as they are fairly contributing to an information creation and sharing scenario. It is important, as a main contribution element of the present paper, to realign both the two approaches on an equilibrium structure, where both the methods are considered in a joint and holistic system. The possibility to restore a similar contribution balance between the two entities, being the business and the customer, has been a focal attempt of the design thinking methodology itself. In fact the DT approach is based on a dual participative process, equally engaging firms and users who are both part of a similar socio-cultural context, in the joint goal to design solutions creating and giving a common meaning to the ultimate services or product propositions, as a result of the collaboration flow, thanks to the mediating focal role of the designer.

This structure is coherent with both a business centric approach, which originally relies on a networked amelioration of existing relationships detected under the so named community of interest, obviously comprising end users; and also, it is consistent with a customer centric strategy. In this very last case, customers are asked to be actively involved with the companies they acquire from, not just for the ultimate creation of a loyal relationship with the latter, but specifically for sharing knowledge and differentiating education.

In the present paper, both the two approaches will be considered as equally weighting, in an aggregate analysis offered on a systematic basis following a design thinking approach.
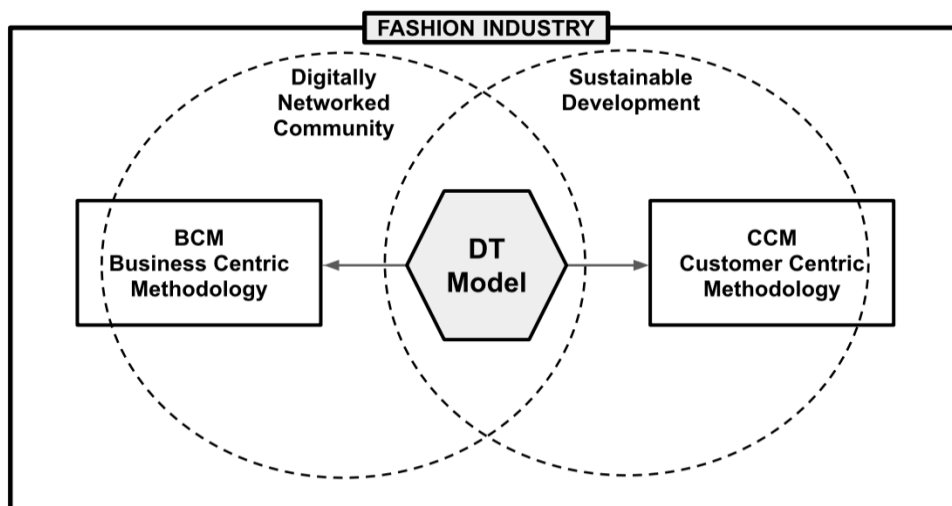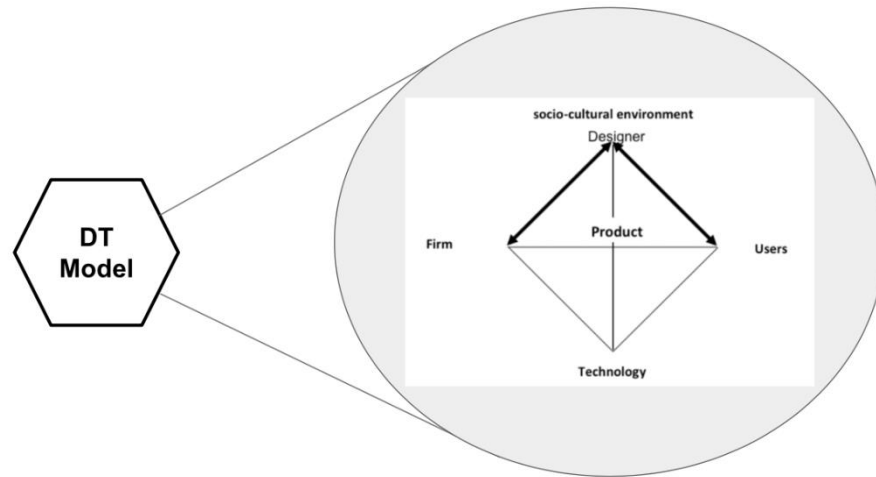
Figure 4, Research Design Thinking Lead Strategy (Calcagno M., Cavriani E., SSRN Electronic Journal, 2014)

In the following sections, the research will follow the hereby presented framework, focusing on a dual but always complementary study of the two entities being focally involved in the system. The DT model the present paper will refer to is the one being presented by Monica Calcagno and Erika Cavriani, in a system of dual contribution between firm and users creating a joint meaning through the mediation of a designer, in an aggregate socio-cultural and technologically developed environment. An on-field research over sustainable business model innovation will be also conducted in the domain of Fashion, maintaining the very same focus, to ultimately merge results following a design thinking approach. The study recognizes the relative importance both parties have for the detection of innovative solutions towards enhanced responsibility, but it is also aware of the fundamental role of a joint action to attain the desired Fashion responsible outcomes.

Chapter 4. A Business Centric Focus: Fashion Players' Scenario Analysis in the Time of COVID19

The traditional business model Fashion companies have been reliant on is now posed in doubt by sustainability pressures exerted both in the external operating ecosystem as by internal pressures towards enhanced competitiveness. In the previous chapters we have largely discussed the predominant active role consumers are now playing and their requirements for an entire business setting renovation. These pressures have posed in crisis existing structured brands opening the way to innovative emerging Fashion companies capable to embrace the full potential of sustainable practices via radical processes and products innovations. The wellbeing of the entire Industry, which has been so uncertain in the latest years in relation to market instability and ethical concerns, has been currently exacerbated by the advent of the Covid19 pandemic disease. The pandemic spread has brought along an unprecedented critical economic momentum mainly for the Fashion Industry, who had to cope with physical retail shops closure, delays and shutdowns in the ongoing production operations along the entire supply chain, postponed Fashion shows and significant shifts in consumers' consumption preferences towards first necessity products [1]. The business has been set out from the category of first-necessity goods producers therefore stopping its non-stop production operations on an international market level. The fast-paced Fashion operating cycle has been completely stopped causing excess unsold clothes storage in companies' warehouses and consistent orders cancellations from suppliers mainly settled in low/medium income countries, potentially sparking a humanitarian crisis [2]. Even greater impacts have to be considered when recognizing how the disease spread is also changing the political settings, where new commercial agreements are settled in favor of a more protectionist policies opening the way to new disruptive innovative technologies, including Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the Internet Of Things (IoT) development towards even more digitized internal and external business operations [3]. If Fashion has been long time called to face sustainable aims, the advent of the Covid-19 has accelerated even more the move towards a significant responsible

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[1] Tognini M., *Sopravvivere al Covid-19: per l'Industria della Moda Salvezza Fa Rima con Digitalizzazione e Collaborazione*, Business Insider Italia, 2020.

[2] Elle, *How the Covid-19 Pandemic is Affecting the Fashion Industry*, 2020, at: elle.com.

[3] PMI, *Fashion & Luxury: Trend Digital nel Post Covid*, 2020, at: pmi.it.

change. The actual working scenario threats as a wake-up call for both businesses as consumers to start a slowdown momentum, moving from traditional mass production mechanisms towards the implementation of responsibility related corrective actions, before any stronger issue comes at hand [4]. The challenges the entire Industry is now facing are even more strict and imminent and will require the active contribution among members both inside and outside the business operations to achieve common strength to manage the uncertain momentum [5]. A similar attention is necessary in actual brands relationships with customers, which are going to be completely renewed and once again should strive for mutual support and collaboration in the attempt to provide goods consumers are actually looking for, reinforcing ultimate brand quality and transparency to improve the reputation over the sector and bring about a "ramp-up" phase for the Industry performance. Companies will be required to rely over touchpoints connecting with their end-customers, mainly via digital networking solutions. Specific dedication is required to the comprehension of emerging shifts over consumers' mindset during the quarantine period, transforming them into more prudent purchasers, mostly influenced by digital-first approaches to brands during the lockdown momentum [6]. The latest McKinsey collaboration with the Business of Fashion regarding the Impact of Coronavirus outbreak over brands has offered interesting insights in a moment of such great financial depression for the sector, fostering the priority of working over the Industry's value chain proposition and its renovation in accordance with digital escalation and innovation imperatives [7].

4.1. The Differential Impact of Covid19 over the Fashion Industry: Facts and Figures

The advent of a pandemic disease has posed serious limitations to the ongoing business operations in worldwide market settings, mining the survival of companies particularly affecting those sectors which were not included in health-related and first necessity goods producers' clusters, as the Fashion Industry actually is. Apart from substantial turnover contractions for the first quarter of the year 2020, the entire

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[4] Sowerbutts C., *How Will The Covid-19 Lockdown Affect Our Fashion Trends?*, 2020, at: luxiders.com.

[5] Tognini M., *Sopravvivere al Covid-19: per l'Industria della Moda Salvezza Fa Rima con Digitalizzazione e Collaborazione*, Business Insider Italia, 2020.

[6] Fashion United, Evolving Business Mindsets During Coronavirus, 2020, at: fashionunited.com.

[7] McKinsey & Co., The Business of Fashion, *The State of Fashion 2020: Coronavirus Update*, 2020.

Fashion operations are issued opening the way to an entire structural regeneration of the sector from its deepest roots. A series of concatenated effects involving multiple parties are meant when facing the impact of Covid19 over the wellbeing of the Industry ranging from physical shops maintenance, online shops investments, new relations with end customers and overturned business relations with companies' suppliers. The luxury market has been facing, during the Covid19 spread, one of the most concerning economic contractions, experiencing about 27-30% reduction of global revenues with huge reductions in quasi all the accounts being present in the published financial accounting statements [8]. Severely critical effects are hitting those brands operating in the Asian market mainly, as in China, which were the very first countries experiencing the disease spread and having to face the economic crisis brought about. Similarly, other European and American countries are currently experiencing the very same impacts which have been anticipated in the Asian market, bringing substantial financial distress for also those markets which is probably going to realize in the second quarter of the year 2020 [9]. As presented in Table 1, the entire apparel and Fashion Industry has been facing challenges during the last decade because of a combination of recession aftershocks, increased promotional intensity, and channel shifts causing a slowed market growth in the last three years mainly [10].
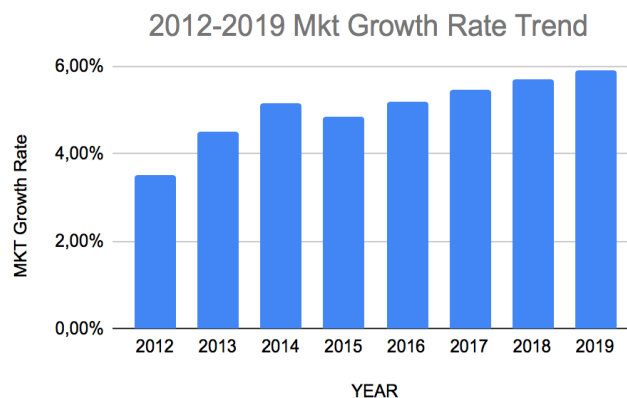
Table 1, Fashion Industry Market Growth Rate Trend from Years 2012 to 2019 (statista.com, 2020)

What appears to be even more relevant from the reported market trend across years is the reverse tendency of substantial market growth especially from year 2012 to 2013

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[8] McKinsey & Co., The Business of Fashion, *The State of Fashion 2020: Coronavirus Update*, 2020.

[9] Naef I., *Gli Effetti del Covid19 sulle Multinazionali: Crollo per la Moda*, Fashion United, 2020.

[10] Baum C., Brown P., Gerstell E., Peng A., *Perspectives for North America's Fashion Industry in a Time of Crisis*, McKinsey & Co, 2020.

which reported around 29% growth in the entire ecosystem. Instead when observing the very last years included in the graph, mainly when focusing on the last three years from 2017 to 2019 the rate of growth has remained positive still it has sensibly decreased its enhancement pace, coming up to about the 4% of market growth in between 2018 and 2019. These data do confirm the pre-Covid19 market contractions the Industry has been facing especially in the last years, which give additional evidence of the yet critical economic setting the Industry had been yet coping with. With the advent of the pandemic spread, the market recession has been even more significant and has stressed the adoption of even more prompt actions towards sensible structural and operational shifts in the current business conduct. The Fashion Industry has been one of the most affected industries from the advent of Coronavirus, specifically for the globally dispersed nature of its manufacturing operations causing major supply chain disruptions. The manufacturing sector has experienced joint critical hits by the advent of a pandemic diffusion, especially when considering East Asia which apart being the global manufacturing heartland, is the area being most striked by the spread of the disease [11]. First, the lockdown of Fashion manufacturers and suppliers has caused an unprecedented economic damage to those Western brands who have moved their production plants in East Asian countries, experiencing a premature shutdown of their ongoing operations due to suppliers' sanitary emergency restrictions [12]. Second, Western brands have fallen into a shortage condition, struggling with the opportunity to collect the needed production inputs to keep ongoing businesses' activities [13]. Third, as the spread of Covid19 has tackled Western countries too, companies have started cancelling or postponing orders to their suppliers who on the other hand had just started a production ramp-up phase, causing unmanageability of planning orders activities and even cuts in employment positions, inducing even greater struggles for low income countries, relying on Fashion manufacturing as the major contributor for national GDP rates, exacerbating poverty conditions. Looking at Table 2, which gives a snapshot of the economic condition at the very beginning of its spread during February 2020 in East Asia, we are able to realize the magnitude of the effect Covid19 has had not just on the economic

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[11] Baldwin R., Weder Di Mauro B., *Economics in the Time of Covid-19*, Vox Debate, Voxeu Cepr, 2020.
[12] *Ibid.*
[13] *Ibid.*

performance of the former, but also on Western countries, which appear being completely dependent over Asian manufacturing export activities.

Countries	GDP	Manufacturing	Exports	Manufactured Exports	Covid-19 Cases
US	24%	16%	8%	8%	159
China	16%	29%	13%	18%	80410
Japan	6%	8%	4%	5%	331
Germany	5%	6%	8%	10%	262
UK	3%	2%	2%	3%	85
France	3%	2%	3%	4%	285
India	3%	3%	2%	2%	28
Italy	2%	2%	3%	3%	3089
Brazil	2%	1%	1%	1%	4
Canada	2%	0%	2%	2%	34

Table 2, Large Economies and Covid19 Cases. (Economies in the Time of Covid19; DataBank World Bank, FT Covid19 Dashboard, 2020)

China is the most critical country hereby listed in terms of Covid19 documented cases, immediately followed by Italy, which still at February 2020 accounted for about the 4% of total amount of cases being issued in China. China is also the focal country among the most developed economies worldwide in terms of manufacturing activity and related exports. It is clear enough to realize how impacting the shutdown of manufacturing activities in China has been detrimental for Western countries specifically as UK, Italy, France and Canada who appear not being self-sustaining with internal manufacturing operations and who are for sure dependent over the core East-Asian export centers. As the disease kept on spreading worldwide, Fashion brands have started experiencing a jointly negative effect added to the previously mentioned suppliers' factories closure, being the immediate demand shock as consumers have been physically prevented from going shopping in stores [14]. A study conducted by McKinsey & Company has reported the impact of debt levels on brands survival varying on the physical stores closures durations. In accordance with the so mentioned study the extended duration of physical stores closure due to sanitary restrictions might be detrimental for around 75% of the entire set of companies working in the garments and clothing industry, leaving the same in an irreparable condition of inability to cope with the amount of debt which could never be offset by daily cash-incoming operations from clients' purchases. As reported in the mentioned study, the persistence over months of physical shops' lockdown causes the general amount of

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[14] Baldwin R., Weder Di Mauro B., *Economics in the Time of Covid-19*, Vox Debate, Voxeu Cepr, 2020.

debt over EBITDA results to be incrementally impacting and negatively weighting for the entire businesses' survival. These results are the outcome of a joint effect of differential tendencies. On the side complete inactivity of physical shops coping with huge warehouses' goods density was experienced, while on the other the inability of current e-commerce stores to have enough capacity to fulfill aggregate purchase requisitions occurred by taking up also those requests which were previously dedicated to physical shops alone. The insufficient responsiveness brands are performing, showing off multiple service gaps mainly concerned with the effectiveness of their online stores, is a result of the evident lack of preparation and organizational flexibility in coping with such an extreme event. On the other hand, also consumers who were as unprepared as businesses were to the pandemic diffusion, have also changed their purchase preferences as their consumption habits have been completely disrupted, abandoning the quest for typical Fast Fashion trendy offerings and moving towards more qualitative comfy and sporty clothes, giving priority to first necessity items only destined to the wellbeing of the individual first and foremost. As being depicted in Table 3, in between the months of February and March 2020, online buying preferences documented by the online distributors' leader Amazon have completely overturned, arriving to the point of negligence and missed interest over largely required apparel and footwear products, contrasted by an increased interest over beauty products.
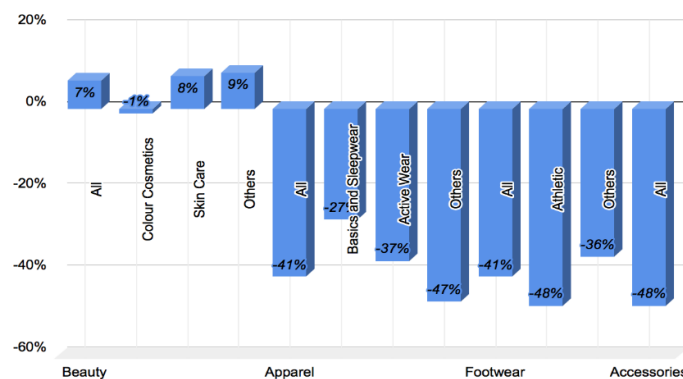

Table 3, Feb'20-Mar'20 Percentage Point Change in Amazon's Purchases Preferences (McKinsey & Company, Stackline, 2020)

These data are relevant not just for realizing the alternative innovative solutions companies should undertake to substitute their traditional operations destined to their businesses' activities, as the adoption of an adequate e-commerce or e-shop store to

sustain physical flagship stores, but are also fundamental to realize customers' needs have changed during the lockdown as well as consumptions' orientations. Consumers have proven to be more prone towards responsible purchases, abandoning the tendency of impulsive shopping and have become way more intolerant towards those same brands who do not prove being working at the support of a responsible ecosystem, favoring environmental and social sustainability [15]. Apart from consumers being physically limited by lockdown restrictions to go shopping, it has been documented how a psychological effect has also occurred. Average users seemed practicing a "wait-and-see" attitude, which is actually typical during an economic crisis condition, indulging in a tendency to stop purchases and financial investments practices [16]. The "wait-and-see" momentum has for sure generated a shock in the demand tendency [17] additionally to the affection of supply sided activities with the before mentioned stagnation and brutal stop of production activities, entering in a period of detrimental economic inactivity, threatening the collapse of the entire current economic and financial systems.

4.1.1. The Impact of Covid19 Over Fashion Responsibility Mission

The advent of a pandemic diffusion has been groundbreaking for worldwide extended businesses' ecosystems, as it has been impacting global financial performances, economic and political stabilities, acquisition and consumption habits. In the former section, our thesis discussion was concerned with the presentation and explanation of the economic impacts being generated by the previously listed effects brought into with the spread of a global virus, in particular for the Fashion Industry, which is strictly embedded in the economic circle generated through the manufacturing industry. Fashion as all other businesses being similarly dependent over the manufacturing sector, has been significantly challenged during this critical period, not just in terms of economic survival and ongoing operations maintenance, but also in terms of social sustainability towards its direct and indirect employees as towards their customers. The period we are just living has posed several questions and doubts over current Fashion business practices negatively weighing over long time rooted firms'

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[15] Baum C., Brown P., Gerstell E., Peng A., *Perspectives for North America's Fashion Industry in a Time of Crisis*, McKinsey & Co, 2020.

[16] Baldwin R., Weder Di Mauro B., *Economics in the Time of Covid-19*, Vox Debate, Voxeu Cepr, 2020.

[17] *Ibid.*

performances and posing the attention once again over acknowledged topics as environmental long-term unsustainability of Fashion production activities targeted towards a "buy-wear-discard" attitude and lack of transparency and fairness traceability all along the entire industries' supply chains.

The spread of a virus and the subsequent shutdown of production activities has not just given Fashion firms the opportunity to rethink their business operations but has also stressed a prompt shift towards a more responsible corporate conduct dealing with a social and economic sustainable support to foster the livelihood of the Industry. The present thesis has, from the very beginning, stressed the meaning of moving towards a more responsible business ecosystem, including sustainability along all the three dimensions the concept has been originally declined into: environmental, social and economic. Before the diffusion of Covid19, the environmental concern has been the focal element among the three and it was perceived as crucial mainly for Fashion companies wishing to enhance their competitive strength through honest commitment for the natural capital preservation cause, including it as a building part of their corporate missions. During the lockdown momentum, a number of environmental improvements were identified including significant reductions in pollution levels and greenhouse gas emissions following the closure of many power generation plants and factories, the dramatic fall in the volume of air travel and the restrictions on the movement of people to work or shopping trips within towns and cities especially during a focal period for Fashion shows located in Milan and Paris during February and March 2020 [18]. Still these environmental benefits have obviously appeared being temporary and limited to the period of shutdown, as with the recovery of the traditional manufacturing and production pace the pre-Covid19 levels of emissions and waste generations are reached back again. Positive effects experienced during quarantine of production have been significant for environmental wellbeing, still are not sufficient when thinking they lied on the back of economic collapse and human distress [19]. On the other hand, the remaining dimensions composing the triple-bottom-line definition of sustainability have appeared as groundbreaking for this period, consisting with the social and economic guarantees fostering the wellbeing of an entire economy. Social sustainability has become an overwhelming element shaping renewed after Covid19

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[18] Jones P., Comfort D., *A Commentary on the Covid19 Crisis, Sustainability and the Service Industry*, Journal of Public Affairs, Wiley Online Library, 2020.

[19] Tesher D.C., *Covid-19 Impact: Key Takeaways From Our Articles*, S&P Global Ratings, 2020.

business strategies, including employees safety guarantees from infection risk and alternative income sources insurances during on-hold working conditions, as well as consumers' alternative entertainment activities at the support of psychological wellbeing during social distancing. In terms of economic sustainability, Fashion companies have challenged their traditional production activities enhancing their processes and product flexibility by turning part of their manufacturing lines to the healthcare service.

The upcoming sections will be dedicated to the in-depth discussion of the various commitments being undertaken by Fashion firms towards a more socially conscious and economically sustainable business conduct, including ad hoc mentioned businesses' cases of Fashion brands being dedicated to the cause.

4.2. After Covid19 Social Sustainability

After having analyzed data regarding the impact of pandemic spread over the Fashion sector, facts and figures document businesses were on average unprepared to cope with a similar extreme event and proved not being flexible enough to adapt to change, posing at risk the entire survival of an Industry. Not just companies are coping with huge losses in liquidity and do present a vulnerable financial stability but are also asked to take accountability over the sustainability of their value chain by protecting their human capital. The advent of a pandemic has posed focal attention and relevance over the wellbeing of individuals and has brought greater awareness over its preservation in order to keep working in an economically sustainable and human sustaining business ecosystem. This renewed consciousness is particularly weighting for the Fashion sector, which has been long time criticized for its doubtful practices and lack of transparency along supply chains' structuring. On the other hand, with the resulting quarantine of consumption, also the demand side has been suffering from generous cuts in purchasing and consumption activities, posing a greatest stop over the non-stop-paced Fast Fashion ritual. Selling products or services has appeared not being enough for companies to continue their normal operation activities and brands have been challenged to find new solutions to maintain and build connections with their customers completely parting from a materialistic aspect. The resulting uncertainty being displayed both in the supply chain scenario as in the demand sided

one has forced companies to reconsider their corporate directions finding new innovative solutions to both keep pace with a changing ecosystem as well as to maintain competitiveness by preserving their reference markets' segments. For Fashion companies the activity of rethinking the business conduct through innovation has been particularly complicated as it consisted in finding new opportunities to connect with crucial business partners, being committed to their sanitary wellbeing even priorly to their financial one. For the first time, Fashion firms have started reorganizing their business activities taking care of the livelihood of its partners, parting from a mere product-process focus, and moving towards a humanitarian and socially sustainable direction. New collaborative solutions have been found thanks to digitally innovative programs which have been fundamental to overcome operative and connective boundaries being set by social distancing biddings. We will discuss later in the chapter how digital innovations have been largely adopted by Fashion firms in the pursuit of socially sustaining practices for their supply and demand sided parties and how these solutions have brought in something different from the unique consumerism spotlight, giving space to new working scenarios and unprecedented collaborations.

4.2.1. Supply Chain Sustainability

The very first lesson Covid19 has given to the Fashion Industry regards its limited capability in being adaptive towards unprecedented events, as the spread of a pandemic represents plus the critical impact this unreadiness to cope with changes might be in terms of businesses' livelihood. What has for sure emerged is the vulnerability of global Fashion brands, who contrary to what might seem as a point of strength considering the widened market they are operating in and for, have proven to be instead limited by the capillarity and complexity of their supply chains mainly, which are strictly dependent over Chinese manufacturing operations. Among the world's biggest garment manufacturing countries China and Bangladesh are on top of the list, where around 70% of fabrics used in production plants in Bangladesh's garments industries do come from Chinese producers [20]. The fact the entire Fashion business has been so reliant upon China, not just in terms of retailers and suppliers' ties but between Fashion suppliers themselves has been enormously detrimental for the

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[20] University Arts London, *Fashion in the Time of Covid-19 - A Series of Specialised Reports*, UAL, UK, 2020.

economic sustainability of the entire sector. The negative consequences of such an economic contraction have been first experienced by vulnerability characterizing Fashion supply chains, namely the factory workers whose income is already extremely low and who often have no financial security or alternative sources of income [21]. The economic crisis experienced consistently with the worldwide spread of the virus has hit twice the already harassed factories settled in low and medium income countries with the arrival of the disease in Western areas too, which determined orders restrictions and delayed payments requests for garments which have been already produced, pushing even further the yet weak financial condition of Fashion suppliers [22]. Looking at Table 4 we can better assess the effect Coronavirus spread has had over day-to-day activities of companies operating within the sector.
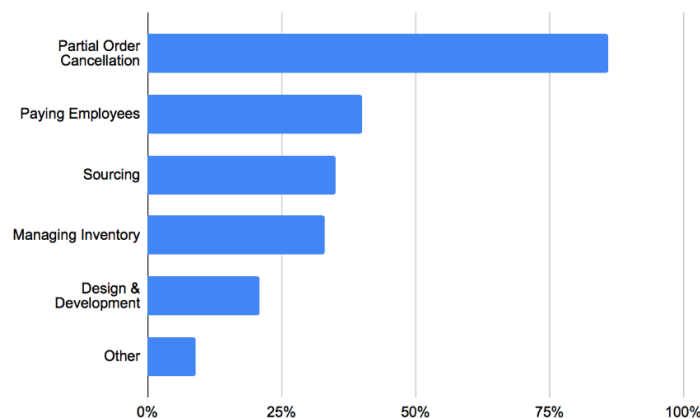
Table 4, Percentage Impact of Covid-19 over Fashion Industry Operations (Boston Consulting Group, Sustainable Apparel Coalition and Higg Co, 2020)

The top three most affected aspects of the economic crisis stand in order cancellations for around 86%, followed by a 40% on paying employees, closed by a 35% impact over sourcing activities. These results are even more devastating when considering the socio-economic context in which they will take place, which is actually represented by worldwide poorest nations being longtime struggling with human rights recognition and fair payments attainment and which have also posed their entire economic and political stability over Fashion supplying activities [23].

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[21] University Arts London, *Fashion in the Time of Covid-19 - A Series of Specialised Reports*, UAL, UK, 2020.
[22] *Ibid.*
[23] Brown S., *Rebuilding a More Sustainable Fashion After Covid-19*, The Council of Fashion Designers of America, CFDA, 2020.

A research conducted by IndustriALL, the global trade union which gives " a voice" to workers around the world, stated millions of garment makers have already lost their jobs as a result of the virus and have no access to social or financial safety nets to help them weather this storm [24]. The risk workers of garment factories in development countries as China and Bangladesh are facing is to die either by the spread of the virus or by extreme poverty conditions. The production planning activities in manufacturing companies are organized in accordance with the amount of clients' orders being received and require a proper procurement of the needed raw materials and production resources inputs to grant the fulfillment of those very same orders. As Fashion brands and retailers start postponing orders, cancelling them or even delaying payments, they limit the chance for suppliers to cover the investments undertaken to assume the resources for the planned production. Factories are left with little choice but to destroy or keep hold of unwanted goods already made and lay off their workers in droves [25]. Even if many Fashion brands are destinating consistent financial compensation programs to their retailers and office workers to cope with the economic crisis taken by the outbreak of the disease, still these are not equally supportive towards the members composing supply chains in their entirety [26] and have appeared not as prompt to recognize the priority those parties had among all others, being in a yet exploited condition.

Slow Factory Foundation: A Fashionable Social Mission

Slow Factory Foundation is a non-profit organization founded in 2013, which organizes education and community literacy initiatives programs in coordination with worldwide Fashion brands to properly address the widespread social issues the Industry has to cope with and has been made responsible for across the decades. At Slow Factory, sustainability literacy involves understanding the organizational principles of ecological and social ecosystems, for humanity to work with these systems instead of working against them. The Foundation adopts a holistic human centered based approach in combination with Fashion cultures around the world, technology and ethics to strive for a balanced working ecosystem supporting the social cause by reducing human disparities.

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[24] Fashion Revolution, *The Impact of Covid-19 on the People Who Make Our Clothes*, Fashion Revolution Org, UK, 2020.
[25] *Ibid.*
[26] IndustriALL, *Why Transparency Is Key to Transforming the Fashion Industry*, IndustriALL Global Union, 2019.

Figure 1, Slow Factory Foundation for Black Lives Matter
Movement (https://www.instagram.com/theslowfactory/?hl=it, 2020)

The organization's motto stands as "Everything you make turns to earth as food, or poison", which stresses the circular approach the entity is following along all its projects, stressing a self-sustaining working environment where no waste is produced and no human being is left aside. Annual free global education summits are organized as opened conference online series, which are both destined to give voice to the traditionally unfairly marginalized community cultures as the Black Browns and as Indigenous people, to give them back the recognition and equality they deserve to, and helping existing communities to change their old mindsets which have caused such improper social unsustainable behaviors to occur. The Slow Factory's most famous summit is the Study Hall, which gathers every year open conferences led by Fashion experts and influencers over the responsibility matters. Topics discussed in the last edition have been various but equally significant in the sustainable discourse including supply chain debates, cultural influencers, industrial textile recycling matters, indigenous waters and land activists, underground streetwear icons, just to mention a few of the total parties involved. These events are fostering partnerships and global collaborations all aimed towards non-profit activities fostering cross-cultural and interdisciplinary tangible eco-solutions to bring to the market. Slow Factory Foundation is a tangible example of climate positivity purposes and hope towards human cultures, fostering their priority role for a balanced business ecosystem before the quest for profits generation. Sustainable literacy summits are food for thought towards a more responsible Fashion, opening the way to human rights preservation by the means of largely respected working ethics, including the gender disparity topic, and by realizing climate change stands as a focal human right, calling for an immediate action of responsibility by all involved Fashion entities.

References:
(1) Slow Factory Foundation, 2020, at: slowfactory.foundation.
(2) Study Hall Educational Foundation, SHEF, 2020, at: studyhallfoundation.org.
(3) Pitcher L., 10 Crucial Things We Learned About the State of Sustainable Fashion, Highsnobiety, 2020, at: highsnobiety.com.

Still such a challenging phenomenon has increased awareness over the entire sector by determining the importance of human wellbeing and health protection for the resulting sustainability of worldwide economic ecosystem. Early signals suggest that a global health crisis will increase overall consumer demand for products closely associated with trust, well-being, and the collective good – particularly in categories such as food and nutrition, but also in beauty and Fashion, which are considered 'close to the body' [27]. As consumers spend less money but more consciously, the expectation for sustainability, fair working conditions, and ethical action within supply chains will become absolute table stakes [28]. Fashion brands are starting to transform their corporate visions by consistently integrating social sustainable programs not just for their direct employees but also for the ones being part of their enlarged value chains. First and foremost, Western companies have committed to not cancel orders from their suppliers to not exacerbate the yet struggling economic condition Chinese and Bangladeshi factories are working in. Companies such as H&M, Nike, Target, VF Corp, Inditex, and PVH have all been committed towards the payments of entire set of commissioned orders, shifting expectations towards responsible communication and respect for partners across the value chain, in the belief that stronger and supportive relationships among parties involved could be a determinant capability to rebuild and restart after the state of emergency has passed [29]. Apart from the unique economic sustainability focus, which appears being the most straightforward element for the maintenance of an entire working sector, the diffusion of Coronavirus has opened up previously not considered windows of opportunities, reinforcing the prior commitment towards socially sustainable businesses' activities as focal for the upcoming liquidity and cash preservations' aims. The wellbeing of people has then overturned the working direction of the Industry and now determines a core competitive dimension companies should all implement as part of their essential corporate ethics values and beliefs to keep pace with a to-the-roots changed business ecosystem.

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[27] Brown S., *Rebuilding a More Sustainable Fashion After Covid-19*, The Council of Fashion Designers of America, CFDA, 2020.
[28] *Ibid.*
[29] *Ibid.*

4.2.2. Employees' Sustainability

The challenge the virus expansion has posed over the survival of businesses composing the Fashion Industry is practically tackling every operational dimension companies are organized with, raising serious concerns and doubts whether all those should remain unvaried after the sanitary and economic crisis has passed. Sustainability experts jointly with the active commitment of Fashion firms are struggling to empower certain critical assets, which are determinant for the wellbeing of the business, as by safeguarding value chains, employees and customers first and foremost [30]. It has become of particular relevance the preservation through health restrictions and sanitary measures of direct workers being employed in the Fashion Industry, not just in terms of reduction of plausible expositions to the infection but also in terms of financial support and psychological aid throughout the "work from home" procedure. The so-called smart working option has been largely adopted by quasi every Industry and not exclusively in the Fashion one to grant the continuity of daily operations undertaken by employees also when physically away from the office location. The challenge posed by the not-new substitutive approach to traditional office work was to practically function with a consistent amount of employees being connected simultaneously to the network, avoiding the system crush and granting the connectivity among teams to collaborate as done in physical presence [31]. As previous data regarding the trend of the pandemic spread had shown, Italy has been one of the first and most hit countries worldwide and it has been immediately pushed to take actions to preserve the economic stability of the country by introducing flexible working options, allowing business operations to be maintained and to be sustainable for workers also at home. In Italy, the virus has been significantly diffusing during late February 2020 mainly in Lombardia and Veneto regions, during the same week the city of Milan had been hosting its famous fall/winter collections Fashion week. Soon all events had been blocked and cancelled; events' hosts in Milan were required to fly back home and workers were asked to postpone any business trip to contain the pandemic diffusion and to safeguard their wellbeing. From the initial rush towards the

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[30] Brown S., *Rebuilding a More Sustainable Fashion After Covid-19*, The Council of Fashion Designers of America, CFDA, 2020.

[31] FashionMagazine.it, *Smart Working e Collaborazione per Far Fronte alle Nuove Sfide Introdotte dal Covid-19*, 2020, at: fashionmagazine.it.

implementation of virus protective measures, in April 2020 around 85% of Fashion professionals have been accounted to be working from home bringing a widened brand-new working culture which will presumably endure long after the pandemic ending [32]. Business operations' have been completely overturned with the requirement to work at high distances still remaining highly connected even more than workers were used to when physically closed at the office, stressing the support of a properly fitting new company mindset and conduct capable of empowering employees' communicative skills and functional effectiveness [33]. As Coronavirus has exponentially boomed worldwide finding countries not as prepared to cope with its diffusion as they should have been, firms have been required to implement working alternative resolutions, as the work from home one, without little or any prior workers' education or longtime support instructing them how to properly adopt the instrument, enhancing as an outcome the challenge companies were facing for their financial survival and human capital preservation. The challenge was even greater for small brands who do not possess an effective external storage system, enabling workers to be operative at home as they are at office; also because the tool has not reached enough capacity to become sustainable for small businesses too [34]. As disclosed by the latest McKinsey & Co report regarding the groundbreaking effect of Coronavirus spread for the Fashion Industry, companies operating in the sector must strive for a so called "digital escalation". Social distancing has highlighted the importance of digital channels more than ever and lockdowns have elevated digital as an urgent priority across the entire value chain but, unless companies scale up and strengthen their digital capabilities in the recovery phase of the crisis, they will sue in the longer term [35]. The point stressed through the digital escalation concept refers to the amelioration of collaborative channels not just in between the brands and their stakeholders, but also and most importantly in between the members working for and inside the brand. After Covid19, companies have realized that the "work from home" practice is not an option but has become way more significant turning into a necessity. Even if widened adoption of smart working solutions has become a lifesaver practically for every business during

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[32] Mellery-Pratt R., Soar S., *Fashion Is Working From Home. How to Make It Work.*, The Business of Fashion, 2020.

[33] *Ibid.*

[34] Papa E., *Ai Tempi del Covid-19 lo Smart Working Non è più un' Opzione ma una Necessità*, Corriere Innovazione, Corriere Della Sera, 2020.

[35] McKinsey & Co., The Business of Fashion, *The State of Fashion 2020: Coronavirus Update*, 2020.

the sanitary emergency, there are also conflicting opinions over the validity of the medium. The analysis being conducted by ValoreD, one of the greatest Italian companies' partnerships working for gender equality and different cultures integration and support in Italian businesses, has posed several questions over the sustainability of smart working option. The research had been conducted over a pool of 1300 workers and freelancers who were experiencing the instrument during the lockdown. The 60% of women had reported the difficulty to be working at home considering the lack of space and time flexibility due to the exerted pressures of having kids at home [36]. It has been documented 1 woman out of 3 had been in great difficulty to find out a work-life balance, while instead 1 man out of 5 had experienced the same. These results once again do prove how women are called out for maintaining the wellbeing of the family much consistently than how men are appearing to recall once again a gender disparity in the manageability of the work-life balance in between genders [37]. What comes as a result is the great potential being disclosed by the instrument offering new future working directions, which can be much more flexible from the old-fashioned "work at the office" habit, still it must be integrated coherently with a series of supportive tools granting the sustainability of the medium for workers over a long-term orientation. The risk of over-working or as previously mentioned the incapacity to merge the time for work with private life moments could turn into being very harming and unmanageable for an employee, causing enhanced distress and anxiety. Businesses should take care for introducing fitted programs working at the support of their employees and their families to grant the effectiveness of working performances as they were at the office plus the opportunity to maintain the needed flexibility to take pace with their families and the preservation of their private times, mainly through training and educative platforms combining work with leisure.

4.2.3. Customers' Sustainability

The third leveled social sustainability Fashion brands have been working for during lockdown was the customer oriented one. As discussed in the employees' sustainability section, the sanitary prescription of social distancing and at-home

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[36] Vogue IT, Lo Smart Working delle Donne ai Tempi del Coronavirus, Vogue News Italia, 2020, at: vogue.it.
[37] *Ibid.*

quarantine has deeply affected Fashion customers, who were completely ascribed from visiting physical shops and instead had much more time to navigate online. Internet time has gone up 70% and there has been 61% more engagement on social media platforms since the start of confinement according to data revealed by Facebook recently; brands have experienced up to 70% more time spent across their apps, with Instagram and Facebook Live views doubling in just a week [38]. Brands have been challenged in the proposition of brand-new digital communication and marketing strategies to keep their customers committed during forced isolation [39], by assessing brand new digital brand experiences. Fashion firms have been providing virtual entertainment as community games, cooking classes and fitness tutorials [40] to keep their customers engaged and strengthen up the feeling of being part of a community, thus building deeper connections and working for long term loyalty [41]. Traditional digital marketing and communication campaigns which were mainly targeted to boosting sales' goals have appeared to be inappropriate for the significant shift in consumers' behavior, which has deeply changed from the consumption focus to the entertainment quest during the isolation period. First and foremost, business leaders have re-planned their marketing tactics adapting them to the uncertain period and have budgeted for long term-oriented programs as deepening brands-customer connections and boosting loyal relationships, which would in turn become functional after the lockdown [42]. So rather than investing on sales enhancing advertising campaigns, brands have been striving for entrusting empathy with their customers to provide solidarity and support during the period of confinement. Different approaches have been adopted by Fashion brands to construct a deepened sense of community fostering social sustain and engagement, including diversified content creation creating a sense of joint commitment towards infections' control, showing off care for both the physical and psychological wellbeing of the general user. One of the most adopted digital communication strategies has been dedicated in the creation of entertaining content as the proposition of virtual trips even while staying at home, organizing creative

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[38] Mollard M., *How Fashion Brands can Market and Communicate During Covid-19*, Heuritech, 2020.

[39] Chitrakorn K., *How Brands are Connecting with Customers in Lockdown*, Vogue Business: Companies, 2020, at: voguebusiness.com.

[40] *Ibid.*

[41] Mollard M., *How Fashion Brands can Market and Communicate During Covid-19*, Heuritech, 2020.

[42] Chitrakorn K., *How Brands are Connecting with Customers in Lockdown*, Vogue Business: Companies, 2020, at: voguebusiness.com.

directors' online talks and storytelling, and engaging customers with ad-hoc created apps to boost creativity through augmented reality to relief and mind off customers from the unease of social distancing [43]. Brands such as Louis Vuitton, Bvlgari, Emilio Pucci and Rimowa, one of the most worldwide famous luxury luggage producers' brands, have been proposing diversified digital contents bringing their customers around the world still stressing the importance to remain safe at home. The Louis Vuitton Foundation, which combines the work of great artists all around the world with a sympathy over exhibitions and representations merging every kind of artistic performance has launched the hashtags #FLVfromhome and #Museumfromhome on its social media accounts with a dedicated program of worldwide online live videos, interviews, concert replays and exhibitions tours all accessible via social networks. On the other hand, Bvlgari and Emilio Pucci brands have dedicated their digital contents to the celebration of Italy being their country of origin, paying tribute to the beauty of the land which has been largely hit by the virus spread.

Finally brands as Rimowa have played with digital content messages and featuring products with an artistic orientation, creating collaborations with worldwide dispersed artists combining their feelings during self-isolation with branded products.
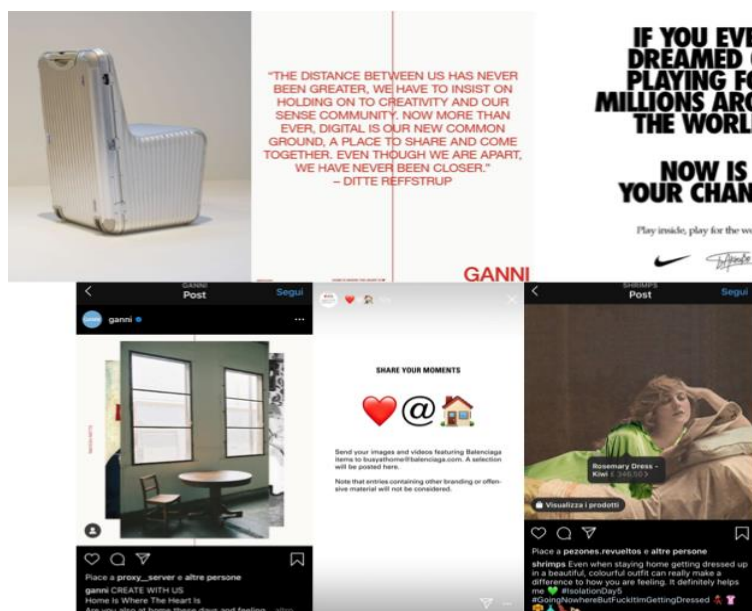
Figure 2, Selection of Fashion Digital Campaigns During Coronavirus (From the upper left: rimowa.com; ganni.com; nike.com. Bottom left: @ganni; @balenciaga; @shrimps, 2020)

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[43] Tan-Gillies H., *Communicating in Crisis: Fashion Brands Deepen Digital Engagement amid Covid-19 Era*, The Moodie Davitt Report, 2020.

Brands have proven being particularly creative in the uniqueness of contents' propositions, which follow not just the perception of being part of a community as belonging to the same team as the Nike brand has been stressing throughout its digital platforms' campaigns, but also the chance to find new ways to entertain as through apps, viral challenges and trends as the "Pillow Challenge" and collaborative projects with users even from home, as proposed by brands as Gucci, Shrimps, Burberry, Ganni and many more. Gucci and Burberry have engaged in the creation of apps working through augmented reality, offering the chance to simulate clothes, accessories wearing and beauty products try-ons, fostering the inspiration phase usually preceding the purchasing momentum with a combination of digital innovation and new brands' experiences. The Gucci's app has been particularly groundbreaking in its design following along the vision given by its creative director Alessandro Michele in the quest to create exclusive contents as building branded wallpapers, stickers, emojis to be used with augmented reality solutions, interiors' decoration, branded gaming in Gucci Arcade session and even Gucci products' customization in the DIY area. On the other hand brands as Shrimps and Ganni have launched online competitions as sketching their at-home dream outfits offering the chance to win a bag in return and creating images and artworks being inspired to the motto " Home Is Where The Heart Is", gifting shopping cards to the chosen winners and featuring a branded pop-up exhibition in Copenhagen.

Finally, Fashion creative directors have been oriented towards digital campaigns to the creation of a community connecting users and supporting people not feeling alone even during the social distancing momentum. Fashion companies as Bottega Veneta "Virtual Residency", Balenciaga, Alexander McQueen, Dior and many others have launched dedicated hashtags, reposting at-home users pics and organizing online livestream events ranging from cooking sessions to fitness classes. Brands have offered the chance to their users to be connected not just with the brand but with a set of other users dispersed around the globe, who are all experiencing the same difficulties while living in quarantine but making it less weighting by being shared within a community. Customers felt supported by brands they could be in touch through social networks and users have received creative motivations and inspirations from companies, ultimately reducing levels of anxiety and stress coming from quarantine period. Brands on the other hand have boosted relationships with their customers by entrusting even more the ones being existing even previously from the Covid19

diffusion and enlarging the network to new users building up new connections. A scary event, as a pandemic spread could be, have in turn resulted in quite positive effects as companies have been able to finally reorganize their online campaigns not limiting to sales' enhancing goal and customers have been enriched with new experiences apart from the sole consumption one, receiving greater awareness and mindfulness over the brands they are surrounded by, creating new unique relations.

4.3. After Covid19 Economic Sustainability

Many sectors have been struggling to cope and be in control of the financial and structural impacts the Coronavirus had at large, still out of the large group of sectors being affected by such aftermaths, the Fashion Industry is probably one of the most challenged as the structural changes are so significant that the entire business ecosystem has been questioned and the traditional competitive strengths have been posed in doubt. The economic distress is probably the first sign Fashion companies have experienced along with the worldwide diffusion of the disease, as deep changes have forced and shifted our traditional consumption and demand habits, as well as the supply planning schema have been overturned. As demonstrated in the CGTN online journal article regarding the impact of Covid19 over the Fashion Industry, the disease has shifted purchasing habits forcing customers to buy online still to buy less and better raising products' awareness and traceability research in customers' selections, ultimately changing the way they dress. Consequently, companies have boosted their e-commerce websites and their digital platforms to engage with customers even aside from the physical shop experience but have also questioned their businesses' directions realizing a shift towards more conscious and sustainable practices to be necessary. With the slowdown of sales and turnover contractions, companies have had the chance to realize Fashion has to be responsible for a reduced pace of production and an higher quality of offerings' portfolio, considering Fast model has longtime proven not to be sustainable over the long term and to be just a soon-to-end phase of Fashion. Obviously, brands have to figure out new competitive strategies necessary to recover from the great momentum of economic depression, but also to enable a sustainable economic direction, granting continuity in the long term and being flexible enough to adapt to extreme periods as pandemic spreads. Lessons learnt from

late practice are not accessible to anyone, either because several companies or their direct suppliers have not been able to survive from the financial contraction of the momentum, considering the Industry has been yet facing economic difficulties so the explosion of the disease has had exacerbated the preexisting financial struggle, and also because not all brands were as prompt to invest financial resources in boosting alternative strategic solutions. Practically big established brands have had the chance of investing enough liquidity in realizing alternative financial sources of profits, whilst not yet consolidated emerging brands have not been able to keep pace with such radical structural shifts and have thus lagged behind in competitive market dynamics. The current section is dedicated to the analysis of the three most adopted strategies by Fashion brands to cope with the economic contraction and to find new sources of sustainable income, practically restructuring their production lines and becoming much more sensitive to cultural shifts, that is to say: omnichannel championship; production diversification; cultural responsiveness campaigns.

4.3.1. Omnichannel Championship

The greatest effect Covid19 has had on a global scale immediately after the sanitary emergency has been the economic one. Every sector, every business either for the better as for the worst has been hit by the spread of the disease and practically every firm has been forced to introduce structural changes or review strategic directions to adapt and deal with the one of the greatest economic crises ever experienced. For many sectors, ranging from the agri-food to the interior design sector, online shopping has offered the chance to at least survive from the stopped sales traditionally occurring in physical shops, finding new sources for profits. Analytics over online shopping trends documented the increased levels of visitors, conversion rates and the average value of online orders during the Covid19 highest peak of diffusion momentum and shows off the fast-paced transformation of traditional customers towards digitized customers [44]. Considering Fashion Industry specifically the online websites' traffic growth has ranged from 2,2 billion people in January 2020, so prior to Covid19 outbreak, to 2,6 billion people in March 2020, the most critical phase of the pandemic

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[44] Dara V., *Coronavirus e Acquisti Online*, Inside Marketing, 2020, at: insidemarketing.it.

worldwide diffusion, visiting brands and retailers websites as Nike, Macy's, Wildberries and H&M the most [45]. Equivalently, companies have empowered their innovation technologies, as relying more and more on the adoption of big data to study the unprecedented online shopping boom phenomenon, or as investing in IoT and AI strategies, enabling the sustain of an even more digitized set of customers deeply changing the values and meanings around the physical shop [46]. For brands the requirement to move towards increased digitized organizational processes was not something new, but the advent of Coronavirus has accelerated the move of businesses towards digital solutions, not just proving being a sustainable medium to get in touch with customers but also to collaborate and keep continuity with the entire value chain, as with suppliers, sub-contractors, partners, and investors, creating an hub governed through networked co-creation. It is in particular for the case of Fashion that a strong requirement for a solid and properly constructed e-commerce platform to be emerging as a need for the very same Industry to cope with yet underperforming sectorial results and to find alternative solutions apart from the first big source of profits, being physical shops. Brands as Kering and Diesel, have empowered their online channels, including their e-shops by internalizing them in accordance with an omnichannel strategic direction rather than maintaining the management of their online stores to external agencies for a matter of expertise while keeping the sole direct management over physical shops [47]. The omnichannel strategy is based on a cross-organization and alignment of diversified communication strategies and users' experiences all along the different channels shared between brands and customers, in order to generate adaptive contents to the channel being selected while simultaneously supporting and reinforcing contents delivered on all the remaining channels boosting brand integrity [48]. The point in this strategy especially after Covid19, stands in the increased capability to introduce innovative technological solutions at the support of an e-commerce platform, jointly with a reassessed meaning over traditional physical store, which should not be eliminated of course but should be rethought and reorganized. It is correct for companies to internalize the managerial procedures of

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[45] Pacitti V., *E-Commerce e Tendenze dei Consumatori durante il Coronavirus*, Semrush, 2020, at: it.semrush.com.

[46] PMI, *Fashion & Luxury: Trend Digital nel Post Covid*, 2020, at: pmi.it.

[47] Illiano M., *La Via d'Uscita da Covid-19 per la Moda è l'E-Commerce*, Econopoly, Il Sole 24 Ore, 2020.

[48] Politecnico di Milano, *Omnichannel e Customer Experience*, Digital Innovation, 2020, at: osservatori.net.

diversified channels, not just after the recognition of digital platforms as key assets for strategic competition, but also in the light of the amelioration of the entire value chain organization and control over the supply traceability, enabling a boost in personnel competences and professional know-how. What appears to be even more promising is the overall potential of such a strategy, which ultimately gives brands the chance to be completely in control with the relation they have with their suppliers too and not just with their customers under a digital shopping perspective. The present thesis is particularly sensitive to adopting innovations working in double-sided directions, being customer-centric and business-centric all together. When organizing an omnichannel strategy, the business benefits from both the consistency of its communication efforts and mutual support of its dispersed touch points, as from the leaner internal and external processes organization. One of the first opportunities corresponds to the suppliers' relationships management, which should be processed through customized software capable, thanks to an IoT structuring, to fasten supplying requirements as orders creation and receipts, materials tracking, terms of payments, lead times and production capacity organization, thus reducing waste of both money and time while increasing procedures' performances along with cost reduction activities. The report conducted by McKinsey & Co reinforces the validity and the growth opportunities for an entire Industry by adopting digital innovative solutions which are practically transforming every domain of the entire value chain [49]. The omnichannel strategic strength resides in the chance to converge unique customer experience focus by the means of personalized promotions and activations or either through AI powered sales associates; as well as optimizing supply chains and distribution mechanisms as through demand forecasting and replenishment, warehouse picking and slotting and IoT orders procurement organization [50]. Finally, the chance to largely leverage on IoT based organizational procedures gives opportunity for storing data and retrieving information to digitize product development and support functions too, by collecting historical information and being able to set the competitive challenge always further [51]. The digitization of products is of particular relevance in the present research, as it aligns with its prior intentions of building a network strong enough to foster a continuum

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[49] Gonzalo A., Harreis H., Sanchez Altable C., Villepelet C., *The Fashion Industry's Digital Transformation: Now or Never*, McKinsey & Co: Retail, 2020.
[50] *Ibid.*
[51] *Ibid.*

in between the business and its customers, in the attempt to build a digital co-creative scenario taking chance from incremental values provided by either parties. This collaboration is probably even more performing when resulting from omnichannel commitments, as it gives enough collaboration space for both the included entities while ensuring enough control for the business to properly support the ultimate creation of digitized products which are the object of the collaboration, thanks to the networked setting within the supply chain, which gives once again chances to enlarge the collaborative scheme while delivering innovative digitally-born products. The omnichannel solution is thereof a flexible enough option for brands wishing to maintain a continuum along their value chains, fostering an economic stability also in times of unprecedented crisis as the Covid19 could have been by building competitive advantage and reinforce businesses' crucial collaboration touchpoints, either being with customers as with suppliers.

4.3.2. Product Diversification

When Covid19 has started spreading worldwide, initiating with China, landing in Italy and ultimately hitting the U.S., the global economy was proven weak to cope with the threats taken with the advent of a such unexpected but highly critical phenomenon causing practically every political and financial setting to be left distress in the attempt to limit the negative consequences over international sanitary and economic stability. The current thesis has so far proven the Fashion Industry among all others included in the current businesses' enlarged ecosystem to be one of the most impacted by the outbreak of a virus, either because Fashion related offerings were not substantially considered as first necessity goods and also because companies themselves has proven not being adaptive enough whilst being too sensitive to external threats. The necessity of finding new sources of income to at least repair organizational costs by avoiding firing employees and maintaining a continuity in production, has taken brands to adapt their production lines coherently with the sanitary critical momentum, giving on the other hand a fierce contribution in limiting the shortage of medical equipment as of face masks, medical protective suits and gloves, and hand sanitizers. In March 2020 the CNN documented in the US, where the Covid19 was first striking, health officials have been warning stockpiles of medical equipment to be insufficient even

with manufacturers' ramped up productions, thus forcing medical workers to reuse masks between patients or even make their own [52].

Figure 3, Examples of Fashion Product Diversifications During Covid19: Hand Sanitizers Gels (From the left: ft.com; bvlgari.com, 2020)

The shortage of protective face masks was experienced even in countries such as Italy or China, which have been the first on the list to be brought down by the emergency status, stimulating a wakeup call for companies as the ones belonging to the Fashion sector, who have been yet used to retrieve and transform fabrics and textiles in their normal manufacturing processes, pushing them to work at the support of the healthcare Industry by switching off their final offerings into PPE production to sustain the fights against Covid19 diffusion. Europe was the first and most active continent to put in place healthcare campaigns at the support of medical supplies, including the commitments of Fashion groups as Inditex and Kering [53]. The French luxury group Kering has proven being particularly dedicated to sustain the sanitary cause both by supplying the French health service with 3 million of surgical masks acquired and imported from China and also by turning two of its major brands being Yves Saint Laurent and Balenciaga into masks manufacturing, also keeping an eye over health protection measures for their staff members under the supervision of local authorities [54]. Another worldwide known French Luxury group LVMH, counting an umbrella of top brands as Dior and Louis Vuitton, has adapted several production facilities of the brands included in the parental group for the supply of around 40 million

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[52] Holland O., Pellerin A., *Fashion Industry Answers the Call for Masks and Personal Protective Equipment to Fight Covid-19*, CNN Style: Fashion, 2020.

[53] *Ibid.*

[54] Kering Group, *Kering Contributes to the Fight against COVID-19*, 2020, at: kering.com.

medical grade face masks distributed to healthcare personnel throughout France [55]. Another interesting case brought by LVMH to work at the support of healthcare industry and of companies' stakeholders in assuring safety standards, has stood in the conversion of perfumes production plants as the one dedicated for Givenchy, Guerlain and Dior to production of hand sanitizers which will be ultimately distributed for free all over French hospitals and sanitary institutes [56]. Still, the most significant commitment performed in favor of Covid19's defy has been the one executed in Italy, the country of reference for the international Fashion Industry still unfortunately one of the first and most hit by virus's contagiousness. Fashion brands in Italy have been called out to properly adapt their production processes at the service of medical supplies most for the country's northern regions' hospitals and health institutes, as Lombardy and Veneto, engaging the attention and hard work of brands as Prada, Gucci, Armani, Bvlgari and several others in a long list of equally committed Fashion businesses all aligned for the wellbeing of the country and its citizens. During March 2020, the brand Gucci, included in Kering Fashion Maison's group, has provided around 1 million of surgical masks and 55k of other medical necessities in the following weeks after being called out from Tuscany region for the provision of healthcare necessities [57]. Furthermore, always under the requirement of Tuscany sanitary system, the brand Prada has followed the example and path being initiated by Gucci by producing around 80k medical protective suits and around 110k surgical masks to be donated to the medical equipment of the region [58]. The biggest challenge has still been set by Armani Group, who at the end of March 2020 has turned the entirety of its Italian plants into the production of disposable scrubs for medical equipment [59], exposing the brand founder and leader Giorgio Armani to a moral battle both at the support of Italian sanitary system, as the recognition of long term unsustainable practices included in current Fashion practices fostering a substantial shift in branded directive routes. Last but not least in the long catalogue of high-end brands working for the sanitary cause, the Rome based jewelry brand Bvlgari has also turned its production plants at Lodi in Italy for the production of 75ml recyclable bottles of hand sanitizers gel distributed via

[55] Revness A., *Dior Converts Factory for Masks Production*, CR Fashion Book, 2020, at: crfashionbook.com.

[56] Studio Industry, *Come i Marchi di Moda Stanno Iniziando a Muoversi*, Studio Industry: Coronavirus, 2020, at: rivistastudio.com.

[57] Kering Group, *Kering Contributes to the Fight against COVID-19*, 2020, at: kering.com.

[58] Maddalena R., *I Marchi della Moda che Stanno Contribuendo alla Lotta contro Covid-19*, Forbes, 2020.

[59] Armani Corporate, *Il Gruppo Armani in Sostegno all'Emergenza Coronavirus*, 2020, at: armani.com.

the Italian Civil Department planning its production for around hundreds of thousands of bottles during the months of March and April 2020 [60]. On the other hand, also Fast Fashion famous brands such as H&M and Zara have kept pace with PPE production requirements and have strongly offered their economic and productive contributions by reorganizing their supply chains. Similarly to what performed by luxury Fashion Maison's, the Inditex group which includes names as Zara, Bershka and Pull&Bear has adapted its value chains and logistic departments at the disposal of hospitals, including the production of scrubs and gloves for medical staff. H&M has been dedicated to the supply of PPEs after having arranged its organizational processes at the benefits of patients and medical personnel, shifting its resources to help fighting the pandemic [61]. Concluding, even if the advent of Coronavirus has shocked the international economy questioning the stability of longtime rooted businesses' working ecosystems, the Fashion Industry has been for sure one among the first and foremost being called to action for both maintenance of continuity over its facilities as for its highly suitable manufacturing features towards PPE provision under the sanitary emergency momentum. The cause has been equally supported along the Industry setting, involving high-end brands as well as famous low cost international groups, giving chance to be supportive and learn a lesson over product diversification and manufacturing adaptation, reaching enhanced organizational flexibility while fostering an opportunity to rethink the business direction in accordance with a sustainable development principle, at the respect of the good health and wellbeing of individuals.

4.3.3. Cultural Responsiveness Campaigns

Fashion companies have promptly responded to a worldwide call for action aimed at supporting the fight against the pandemic spread with all the instruments at their disposal. In the previous sections we have gone through an in depth analysis of the various but equally valid actions Fashion companies have settled during the period of social distancing and fiercest fight against Covid19, either by creating contents with the collaboration of digital users generating new brands' experiences either by actively transforming their traditional productions processes to support the healthcare systems

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[60] Bvlgari, *Bvlgari Donates Hand Sanitizer Gel to Fight Coronavirus*, 2020, at: bulgari.com.

[61] Sheinberg D., *How Zara is Helping to Prevent Covid-19*, Post Funnel, 2020, at: postfunnel.com.

both locally as globally. Even if the Fashion Industry has been significantly hit by the economic crisis spreading together with the disease diffusion, businesses have remained vigilant and responsive to a sanitary emergency not just devoting part or the entirety of their production lines to medical PPE provision, but also raising funds to invest in the scientific research implementations at the support of medical centers, cities and families struggling with the financial difficulties undertaken with the closure of several commercial and touristic spots. Both established brands as emerging ones are dedicated to the mission of fundraising with diversified strategies, still equally engaged in against-Covid19 campaigns. First and foremost, the British Fashion Council has proven being a pioneer and an example for all brands worldwide establishing the BFC Foundation Fashion Fund for the Covid19 Crisis, at the support of both fashion businesses as individuals to survive in a period of economic uncertainty [62]. The foundation has been created with a series of partners pertaining to the sector, including names such as British Vogue, Burberry, Browns, ARCH & HOOK, British GQ, and many more. The foundation has been able to make around £1 million of emergency funds, which will be distributed to 37 selected parties including Fashion designers and businesses, depending on their urgency and capabilities to come about the crisis and thrive post crisis [63]. Significantly important is the fact that part of funds have also been destined to Fashion students to promote their careers and keep them going in their professional degree parcourse. The example of constructing against-the-pandemic ad-hoc projects have been undertaken by high end brand as Prada Group, financing the "Proteggimi" campaign in collaboration with the Milan based hospital San Raffaele, aimed at supporting medical research regarding the differential impact the disease has on males rather than on females patients [64]. Another Italian luxury brand Gucci, who have proven being the leader in the average companies' turnover in the latest years, have committed through its community in a crowdfunding project "We Are All in This Together" raising around €2 million [65].

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[62] British Fashion Council, *BFC Foundation Fashion Fund for the Covid Crisis*, UK, 2020, at: britishfashioncouncil.co.uk.

[63] *Ibid.*

[64] Prada Group, *PROTEGGIMI: Progetto di Ricerca sul Covid-19*, 2020, at: pradagroup.com.

[65] D-Repubblica, *Gucci, 2 Milioni di Euro e un CrowdFunding contro il Coronavirus: "We Are All in This Together"*, D-Repubblica.it, 2020, at: d.repubblica.it.
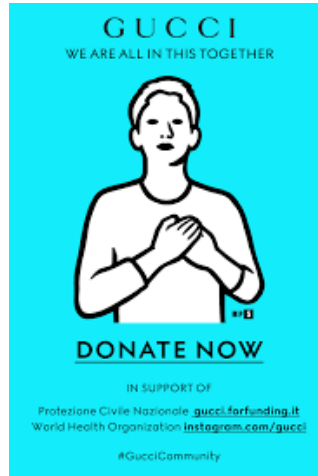
Figure 4, Gucci Community Campaign Against Covid19 (gucci.com, 2020)

Specifically, €1 million has been destined to the Italian Protezione Civile Organization for the implementation of intensive care areas, while the remaining part has been donated to the WHO's Solidarity Response Fund dedicated to supporting patients, health centers and scientific research [66]. The branded project lead by Gucci stresses the effort of an entire digital tribe of members, counting around 70 million users to become changemakers and to be the active part of a global fight targeted at the wellbeing of a global community. Particularly significant is the rate of responsiveness been reached in Italy, which is not just one of the most hit countries from the virus spread but also the worldwide recognized motherland of Fashion, under the motto "Italia We Are Here With You", a project created by the Italian Fashion Council and reuniting numerous brands and their custom campaigns in a commonly shared commitment. The umbrella of brands involved in the project do include names as Diesel with its OTB Foundation, who has worked for the provision of PPE and of innovative technologies improving air quality in medical centers; Dolce & Gabbana, who has made a donation to Humanitas University to support scientific studies over human immunity response to Covid19 disease; Valentino with its "Valentino Empathy" advertising campaign featuring famous artists as models and photographers around the globe, which ultimately turns into a charity fund program to finance the Spallanzani Hospital in Rome. Another strategy, being most pursued by emerging brands who did not have enough financial liquidity and production flexibility due to their strict budgets to sustain direct monetary donations, have still been dedicated to the cause by

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[66] World Health Organization, *Emergencies: Coronavirus Disease Outbreak (Covid-19)*, WHO, 2020, at: who.int.

investing a percentage of their sales revenues to support Covid19 relief. One of the strongest initiatives have been promoted by the American brand Alapel, imagined under the desire of mixing arts with hand painted shoes and accessories, by launching an ad-hoc collection named "Stronger than Ever". The 5% of every purchase made from the collection will be donated to support national Covid19 aid by contributing to provision of medical supplies, delivering food both to senior citizens preventing them to go outside and to families struggling with economic uncertainties and risking critical impoverishment and providing donations to the American Red Cross [67]. Similarly the American independent brand Lingua Franca, famous for its embroided clothes being its signature look, has implemented collections as the "Food Bank for NYC" or "I Heart New York", whose proceeds are partially destined to organizations and entities in New York who work at the support of people being particularly hit by the pandemic diffusion, as homeless people or families struggling with poverty or individuals who are affected by other critical living conditions and do deserve an economic aid more than ever [68]. It is interesting to observe the quasi complementary function luxury and established brands have played with emergent and independent ones, when actively responding to the emergency cause. On average, the former group of brands has dedicated its effort mostly to fundraising and direct donations at the support of globally spread healthcare systems either developing PPE, funding scientific research and investing in intensive therapy treatments. On the other hand, the latter group has on average focused mainly on the wellbeing of citizens yet living in extreme conditions particularly tackling the matter for impoverishment and malnourishment during and after Coronavirus outbreak, by creating ad-hoc collections and devoting part of their profits to the causes. Even if dual efforts of Fashion brands do have seemed to be mutually sustaining in the overall emergency related calls to action, what has appeared as particularly lacking is the attention of big established players for the consideration of the economic stability of individuals during and after the Covid19 momentum and the risk of their impoverishment. The actions of luxury players have been for sure crucial for the good functioning of the global sanitary system and the ultimate control over the virus spread, still it seems little interest was paid over the financial crisis hitting families especially in Italy, where the greatest part of the GDP is granted through tourism. High

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[67] Alapel, *Stories: Our COVID-19 Initiative*, 2020, at: alapel.com.

[68] Lingua Franca, *Collections I Heart New York & Food Bank For NYC*, 2020, at: linguafranca.nyc.

end brands have seemed to forget the relevance of their customers' purchasing power as critical for their ultimate financial performance, maybe because the sanitary cause was treated as a priority excluding all other related emergencies. Still today families are finding themselves in critical conditions, as people have lost their jobs or have not been paid or have not received any layoff national program hitting one of the greatest economic crises ever experienced. The Fashion Industry should keep great attention over the negative sided remaining effects of the Covid19 spread, as a lesson learnt to improve the efficiency of future fundraising activities by keeping an eye over economic wellbeing of their employees, of their customers and finally of the society, as a driver of their own financial performances.

4.4. Unsustainability of Fashion Sustainability Campaigns After Covid19

The present chapter has been dedicated to the discussion over impacts Coronavirus spread has had on worldwide financial stability at large and over the Fashion Industry in particular. An unprecedented event as the virus spread was as impacting as challenging and overturns the "game rules" of businesses' competitiveness, fostering new opportunity areas. Industries have been forced to rethink their strategies to protect or gain a share over their operating market by specifically approaching the matter over social and economic sustainability. Several established and emerging brand names have been mentioned throughout the chapter, as they have provided an example of good practice and high responsiveness to in depth changes in their ecosystems. Fashion brands have proven flexibility and adaptation to the emerging scenario and have been able to work at the support of people both sustaining their psychological wellbeing as their sanitary status. By improving the social sustainability cause as a pivotal element of their business conduct, Fashion companies have diversified their original business operations and have benefitted from alternative sources of income, stabilizing their financial performance. For sure a negative phenomenon has enabled companies to find new chances for growth, and have learned the importance of having an organic structure, which is highly flexible in its nature, still we have to mention some points of doubt are still remaining and appear as evident. The main and most problematic element stands on the fact that the economic sustainability element is not double-sided and is unilaterally centered at the financial stability of the company but

not of the customer. The economic contraction taken with a pandemic diffusion has approached the society at large, not companies only, and it was especially groundbreaking for families been priorly hit by economic difficulties, causing issues in impoverishment rates. It is paradoxical and incongruent to observe that most of the brands, especially luxury ones, have not reduced the price of their offerings, but on the contrary appear to be even more expensive after the Coronavirus outbreak as in the past. The brand Gucci has been mentioned multiple times in the chapter as it is for sure a pioneer in the sustainability cause, and it has largely proven its efforts by investing in the sanitary cause as in the wellbeing of its customers. Coherently the brand has recently launched its first new sustainable collection named "Off the Grid", composed by genderless clothing made from organic, bio-based and sustainably sourced materials [69]. The introduction of responsible collection reinforces the attention the brand has on the sustainability cause on its different composing facets, being the environmental and the social one, but when it comes to the remaining economic element, some controversies come at hand. The collection is outrageously expensive and practically undo all the efforts for sensitizing customers over the Fashion responsibility matters as only a niche of few customers could afford these pieces. Similar brands' directions and strategies are quite confusing, as they remain tied to the old-fashioned reputation of luxury brands to be expensive, and at the very end conclude companies are not as close to their public as they pretend to. Gucci, just to mention one name of a widened group, which do propose themselves as revolutionary brands, rethinking the traditional meaning and values around Fashion, practically are nothing different from what they have been in the past, and exacerbate the feeling of an "exclusive Fashion" accessible to a more and more restricted set of clients, especially after the economic difficulties undertaken with the pandemic event. Similarly, when constructing the chapter, there was a quest for Fashion companies campaigns dedicated to the financial sustain of families ranging in quasi poverty conditions, or of supply chain subsidiaries and manufacturers in low income countries as Bangladesh, but no vivid cases of established luxury or fast Fashion brands being active on similar matters was present apart from H&M group donations to Children's Defense Fund, GLAM4GOOD, Los Angeles LGBT Center, the Nashville Rescue

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[69] Carreon J., *Gucci Launches "Off the Grid", Its First Sustainable Collection*, Elle Fashion, 2020.

Mission and the Meals on Wheels Foundation [70]. On the other hand emerging brands as Lingua Franca, Alapel, Kayu and Monica Sordo, just to mention a few, have proven to being more dedicated to people especially to society outcasts, the ones which were yet impoverished before the virus diffusion, which are the ones who need the greatest cares. Emerging brands who have not the same liquidity as established ones, had not enough strength to invest on the sanitary cause, still have dedicated their donations to food provisions and general care of poor families, sustaining them on their economic stability. Also, Fashion associations as Fashion Revolution have fundraised resources destined to Fashion manufacturers and garments producers in low income countries, under the motto "Who Made My Clothes", by also empowering a network of contributors to force Fashion companies to not cancel orders or fire employees. There are some doubts around the decisions by established brands to support the fight against Covid19, not to question the veracity of the commitment but leaving some question marks around the low diversified missions. Both fast Fashion leaders as luxury ones have intensively focused their investments over the sanitary and the psychological wellbeing of individuals by creating ad-hoc apps or online programs, but no one has invested for the economic stability of their clients, assuring they have not been impoverished by the catastrophic events. In comparison with the former no significant investments were made for children being at home from school, or for homeless people or for families whose parents have lost their jobs during Coronavirus spread. So, which is the meaning brands pose over social and economic sustainability, and is it at the support of good practice marketing campaigns rather than of a truthful support of their general public? And why so much poor diversification has been dedicated to the fundraising programs, focusing on the sanitary cause univocally? Probably the economic support of the sanitary system during an emergency momentum is the most echoing commitment, reinforcing the reputation of a brand and its reliability. Investing in the healthcare setting was indirectly connected to the marketing efforts Fashion companies are investing in and have for sure made the difference in gaining consent in a period of health uncertainty, but it is not effective over the long term. Time for sure will elucidate and remove doubts over the distinction of greenwashing practices and pure commitments, but it is correct for Fashion

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[70] H&M Magazine, *Supporting Communities During COVID-19*, H&M Group, 2020, at: ww2.hm.com.

companies to work on a 360° orientation, when evoking responsibility efforts. It is clear that no brand could be able to foster alone all the different facets the sustainability matter is declined into, but the cooperation of an entire Industry with the aid of its customers could and have to be for sure able to improve the responsibility mission in its entirety leaving no vacuum spots. The Industry should work as part of a group to give heterogeneity to its efforts, mutually communicating with its stakeholders to realize what they need the most, what should be improved and what comes as a priority. This is why the following chapter, after having realized the necessity for an highly connective network between firms and customers first and foremost, is dedicated to the building of such a network adopting design thinking practices. This network reassess the responsibility priorities Fashion companies should focus on by integrating as part of their business strategies the customers' perspectives by collaborating with them. There will be some points which will emerge as groundbreaking and critical for the support of the Fashion responsibility mission after having researched a set of customers. These will represent the pivotal drivers constructing a responsibility-based network fostering the future of an industry, which must come transparent regarding its missions and practices.

Chapter 5. Responsible Co-Creation: Results of a Co-Design Approach

After having analyzed the after-Covid19 Fashion businesses' ecosystem by presenting the different actions undertaken by Industry players who populate the sector, the thesis is now dedicated to the presentation of the results and insights gained from the design thinking research conducted on the selected users' group. The chapter is structured to provide at first instance a synthesis over the themes and insights obtained from the interviews' conduction, which are going to be schematized in a brainstorming wall area. So, following our strategy definition presented in Figure 1, we are at the second step of the "Observe" momentum which as said, is appointed throughout a brainstorming session.
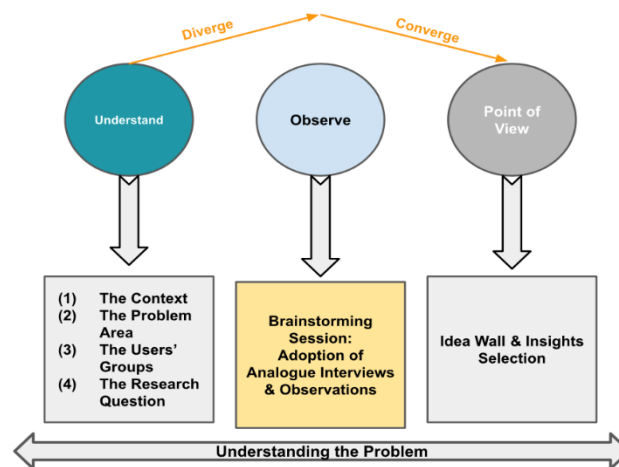
Figure 1, *Innovation Work in Interdisciplinary Teams: Creative Ideas Development* (Lebmeister K.,Trebing Himstedt, 2013)

After having organized the research led insights, the analysis will move to the definition of actual patterns and recurring themes being part of the responsible Fashion topic, which unfolds actual users' experiences gaps or unmet needs. At this point we will complete the third and last phase of "understanding the problem" flow by constructing a "point of view" area definition. After having fully analyzed the reasoning behind why a responsible Fashion seems so hard to be pursued, we will move towards the resolutive phase. As seen in Figure 2 we will be finally entering an "ideation" phase which will be dedicated to the definition of the actual opportunity area. The opportunity area will result from a co-design led activity, merging the users' experiences gaps and the as-is business features of sustainable Fashion sector. The present thesis is going

to be dedicated to the sole "ideation" momentum as it is strictly focused on the resolutive activities for attaining a responsible Fashion business.

Figure 2, Solving the Problem Area (Lebmeister K., Trebing Himstedt, 2013)

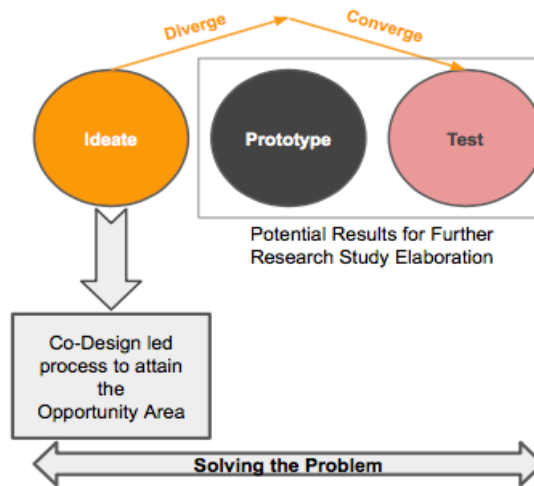The remaining elements of "prototyping and testing" will be left as a starting point for potential future in-depth research activities, experimenting on-field the validity and robustness of the opportunity area hereby proposed. In fact, the present paper is not meant to practically test the resolutive idea, but rather it is centered on the co-creative design thinking based research to understand and address the purpose of a future business responsibility. Furthermore, the proposed opportunity area will be organized as a multifaceted construct composed by diversified drivers equally influential for the environmental, social and economic sustainability model. Finally, the chapter is concluded with an overview over renewed business model canvas integrating responsible drivers fostering Industry's strategic diversification towards servitization means attained by building unconventional collaborative networks, rather than just limiting to products' proposition strategies.

5.1. Brainstorming Wall: Interviews Insights & Observations Depiction and Challenge Definition

After having conducted the seven scheduled interviews for the selected users' group, the research work is dedicated to the organization of the most relevant insights gathered throughout all the interviews. The generation of insights has been granted by the ethnographic nature of the research methodology, granting qualitative results

rather than traditional quantitative outputs as it is common in traditional on-field researches. The nature of insights has enabled both the discovery of meanings related to the role played by sustainable choices in users' mindsets as well as of underlying norms including difficulties in realizing the need to stop toxic habits and becoming conscious over current consumption trends by undertaking sustainable lifestyles. Those same behavioral norms have proved to be actual barriers preventing users from fully embracing the sustainable cause. Barriers consist in users' experience gaps leading the way to windows of opportunity offering collaborative spaces for the proposition of new businesses' directions. Figure 3 represents the resulting brainstorming wall, which has been significantly populated by the numerous interesting insights and observations found throughout interviews' analysis. For a visualization sake the insights are colored in three different nuances to clarify which sustainable dimension each of the quotes is linked to. The legend regarding the different coloring selected criterion is presented in the upper-right part of the insights table presentation. Insights and observations which are left in default black color text, are the ones not strictly pertaining to one of the three categories of sustainable development, still they have been considered as significant for present research outcomes. The decision of using a different coloring has helped the research to be consistent in the analysis of the interviews' outcomes, as all of them were ranked in accordance to their reference

Figure 3, Brainstorming Wall, Insights and Observations Areas.

group and furthermore the initial clustering has aided the activity of finding patterns and even of recurrent themes in the triple bottom lined categories of sustainable development concept definition. The initial screening of insights has helped in realizing that even if different users' persona were intentionally involved in the research activity, still average results have proven an extended issue concerning lack of knowledge and informativeness over the topic of sustainability. Interviews analysis have taken to realize the presence of extreme users as respectively the interviewee #1 and the interviewee #2. Under closer lens, the first interviewee has declared not being as sensible over the matter of sustainability not just in Fashion but practically in every domain of application, sustaining the general public is interested in sustainability only after a specific benefit either economic or aesthetic has been satisfied. This user is quite representative of the overriding trend of Fast Fashion, by supporting the appeal of clothes lines and styles as a focal element driving the ultimate purchase selection not considering any other information as the provenance, the materials used, the overall supply chain fairness and other responsibly connected features.

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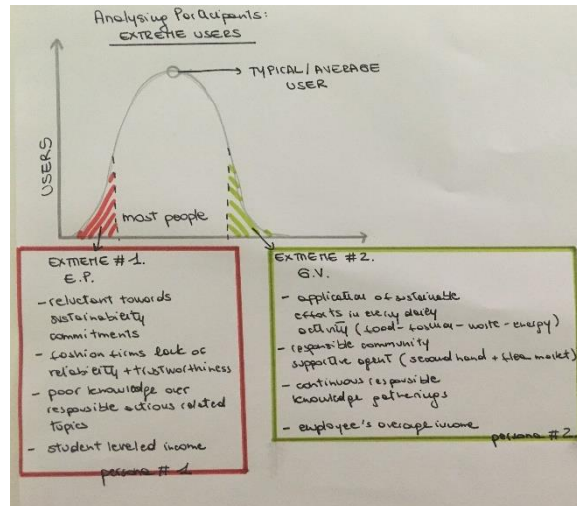
Figure 4, Analyzing Research Participants: Extreme Users Detection.

The purchasing habits and consumption trends still appear to be inconsistent with the overriding consciousness over harms being caused by continuous production and consumption under a "made-use-discard" business model. The user #1 affirms being aware of the issues taken from the unsustainable production and consumption trends but is not capable of parting from its long-time rooted purchasing habits, making it difficult for him to convert its behavior towards a more responsible way of living. Interviewee #1 is also retrieving information over both the sustainable topic and the latest Fashion trends via social media but interacting with influencers only excluding companies' profiles, which in his opinion are creating contents for marketing purposes only and are therefore not reliable. Still he is attracted by influencers' opinion which unfold a type of marketing instrument played by background companies leveraging on members' influential e-word of mouth capabilities to target customers' enhanced purchases. The present thesis analyses also the challenge being set by users' inconsistencies and inability to break habits mainly due the poor educational relationships companies have with their users, which are on average driven by aesthetic appeal and representative styles rarely including knowledge sharing practices or cooperative activities. The second extreme user is the one interviewed in interview #5, whose purchase and consumption habits are uniquely driven by personal ethical thoughts and attachment to the sustainability cause towards both natural and social safeguarding aims. This user, after having largely retrieved information and gained knowledge over the sustainable topic, has completely shifted her buying and

consumption behaviors. The interviewee represents a clear case of how knowledge and consciousness can break long time rooted lifestyles recognizing the sustainable cause needs time and dedication being a practice of daily commitments. The persona under analysis has become a supporter of local producers characterized by reduced and crystal clear background supply chain; of cooperative societies whose members appear to be mutually sustaining both internally as externally their playing scenario in the attempt to collect strengths; and has abandoned the shopping at malls experiences preferring flea markets, second-hand markets or upcycling solutions.

Apart from the two significant cases of extreme users, whose quest represents one of the main targets of a design thinking research, it is worthwhile to mention the average results obtained from the remaining part of the interviewing process. First and foremost, all users have proven to be attached to the sustainable discourse, with a specific attention to social sustainability practices especially after Covid19 experience. Users have realized the need to feel supported and of being part of a community sharing thoughts and feelings especially during and after a period of social distancing, of economic and sanitary emergency. Even if users' desire to be part of social sustainable campaigns and to be mutually supportive for others has been largely disclosed, there is a hidden lack of in-depth knowledge and consciousness over the topic. Users do get informed mostly via internet by using social media channels, which consist in as dense hubs of information ending being too superficial to tackle a complex discourse as sustainable development is. As an example, users have said to be informed about sanitary aids and social campaigns being undertaken by companies during the quarantine, still have poor knowledge over workers' exploitation in wide supply chains structures dispersed in low income countries or in regard of brands' operational fairness practices during sanitary emergencies. As a result users appear being sensitive and aware over the topic by gaining information just by the means of few articles circulating on the internet referring to sustainable practices, usually written to boost disagreements towards political settings rather than to increase knowledge and reduce consumers' misinformation. The absence of knowledge distribution, which represents one of the focal pillars of human development index contributing to social capital generation causes a vicious circle, as consumers appear not being able to get rid of their old-fashioned consumption trends. Furthermore, no significant network hosting shared norms, values and understanding to facilitate cooperation within or

among stakeholders' groups[1] has been already set, compromising future potential to exert control over unsustainable purchases and consumption trends effects. The lack of connective ties with users is also today causing an issue for the Fashion Industry, as the fact branded campaigns are not considered trustworthy when engaging in sustainable practices. If consumers are not integrated in responsible campaigns and are not instructed over the matter, it is straightforward they would be suspicious over the veracity of Fashion firms' efforts, when also no significant change is made on the business model working scheme.

As those different tensions have appeared evident from a first broad analysis of gathered insights, it is correct to define a challenge considering the complexity of the sustainable matter by maintaining the original clustering of environmental, social and economic sustainable dimensions. First, the challenge has been analyzed under the terms of environmental sustainability in Fashion, as depicted in Figure 5.
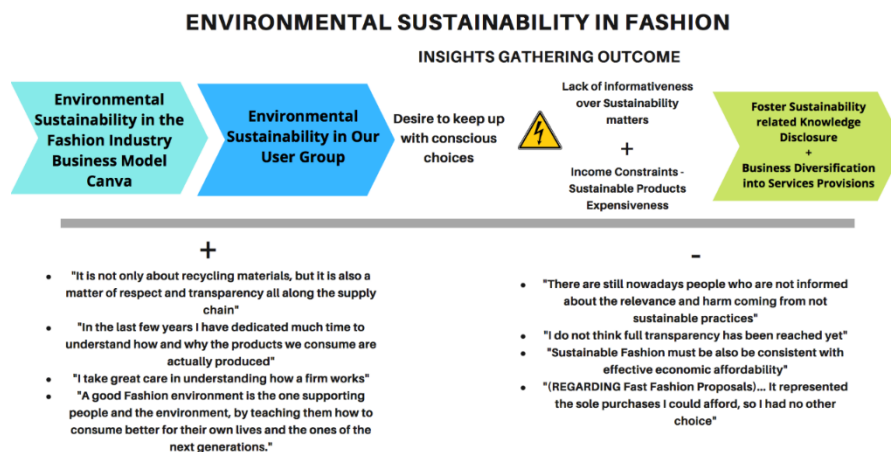
Figure 5, Environmental Sustainability Fashion Challenge Definition.

After a prior business centric consideration over the application of environmental sustainability in the Fashion business model canvas, the analysis has been further focused on its role in our user group domain. The main tensions emerging from insights and observations' analysis attained during interviewing process comprise a paradox between an enlarged desire to perform conscious actions and choices contrasting with a general lack of informativeness over sustainable matters, in addition to sustainable alternatives unaffordability perceptions set by income constraints and

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[1] Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Social Capital and Social Wellbeing*, CommonWealth of Australia, 2002.

offerings' expensiveness beliefs. As previously said, the lack of consumers' knowledge over sustainable topics represents a critical gap Fashion business must take care of by working on transparency and traceability disclosures. The matter of economic constraint is in reality just a bias nurtured by lack of control over actual purchasing trends, as the acquisition of few by high quality products is actually balanced with the purchase of tons of goods at cheap prices and quality. Once again, the process of boosting users' knowledge and awareness could be critical in determining the removal of false beliefs and toxic lifestyles. In addition, another viable solution is represented by business diversification towards the provision of a service rather than just of a single offering. Fashion services could be effective in constructing trustworthy close relationships with customers' group, by entailing product maintenance or upcycling solutions to extend a product's lifetime, and as an extra they can foster community building chances by connecting users together who can acquire second-hand branded goods from other members or who can exchange ideas or beliefs, nurturing a sense of tribe creation.

Secondly the analysis has passed to the consideration of social sustainability dimension under Fashion business domain. The process undertaken to arrive at the insights gathering outcome is the very same being previously mentioned for the environmental phase and it will extend also to the next and last section, which is the economic one. As mentioned previously, users have on average evoked a significant attachment and attention towards the social sustainable cause, especially after the experience made with the pandemic spread, still some inconsistencies have emerged also in this occasion. Specifically, the attention towards social sustainability is not supported by consistent knowledge over the topic, both due to a not adequate process of qualitative information's gathering but also to a spread feeling over Fashion companies' unreliability. Fashion firms have never strived towards businesses' traceability and transparency disclosure efforts and as a consequence, users do not trust them as they perceive those sustainable campaigns commitments to be mere marketing moves or to be hiding some not clear unspoken realities, as children exploitation or as non-compliance with workers' safety standards.

Figure 6, Social Sustainability Fashion Challenge Definition.

Another persistent clue emerged during insights' analysis regards diffused perceptions' over minorities discrimination especially via social media channels, where comments flow without any content control at a non-stop pace. Users' believe topics as disabilities, eating disorders, body shapes' diversities and diverse sexual preferences are treated by Fashion companies just for their catchiness and appeal towards increased traffic and engagement objectives. In a real-world scenario, people who are truly living those outcast conditions feel not being truly supported, both because they believe pro-diversity campaigns to be once again only driven by marketing moves and also because those same campaigns are not perceived as representative enough over the diversity, figuring caricatured appearances, exacerbating even more the feeling of inadequacy. LGBTQ community's harnesses as body shaming comments are still too present on social media channels, which has appeared a disturbing element for the interviewed group. Therefore, the hint given to Fashion businesses is to foster its community building instruments to create a mutually supportive environment fostering acceptance and distributing culture to eradicate hate thoughts and comments both online and offline. On the other hand, Fashion firms must rely on the same networks to disclose sensitive information over traceability and transparency along their entire operations to engage networks' members into trustworthy boosting and joint committing activities. The arrangement of a new Fashion business direction is necessary both in the amelioration of management operations and fairness practices as in the extension of a network fostering community values

and beliefs of mutual social support and natural capital respect. Fashion firms should take advantage of users' beliefs over the fact communities constitute a sense of belonging providing examples of good practice working as a point of reference for its trusted members. Ultimately the research has moved towards the analysis of insights in relation with the economic sustainability topic. What has emerged from an initial screening is the widened belief of economic unsustainability of responsible Fashion proposals, meaning consumers value sustainable Fashion as a luxury good they would not be able to acquire constantly over time. Furthermore, as observed also in the previous two cases of sustainable development dimensions, users are on average quite hostile and resistant towards changing their rooted consumption and purchase habits, even if recognizing, as an outcome from their own statements, not to be sustainable over a long-term basis. Once again users' statements prove an existing paradox in between members' likeliness to keep up with conscious choices with the performed behavior, following a "buy-to-waste" attitude.
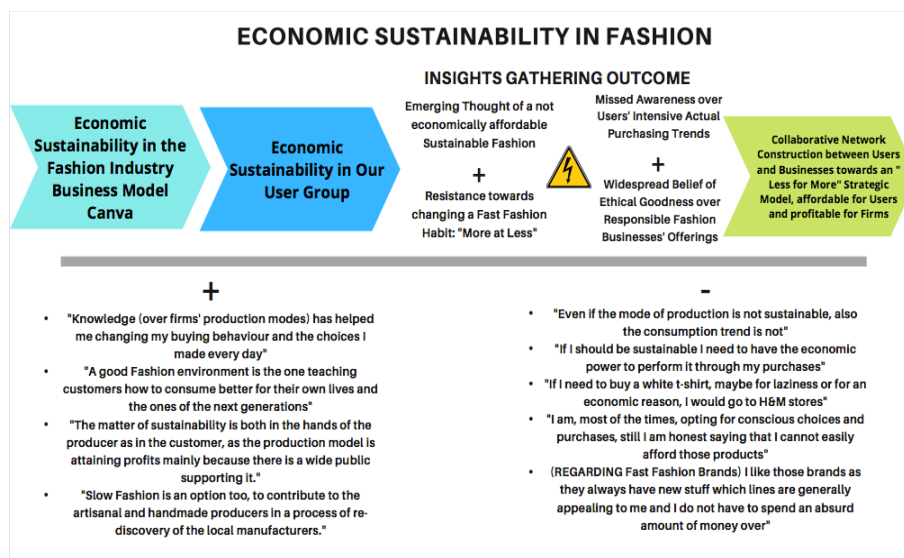
Figure 7, Economic Sustainability Fashion Challenge Definition.

The belief over responsible Fashion's unaffordable prices emerges as a cognitive bias, resulting from poor knowledge over the responsible Fashion domain and its valuable alternatives. As said, if consumers were aware of their actual intense acquisition and consumption trends, they would realize their actual costs are not significantly different from the ones they would bear following a more conscious and qualitative attitude, favoring a "Less for More" habit. A preliminary resolutive proposition refers once again

to possibly favoring the construction of a collaborative network, fostering users' knowledge and building a trustworthy relationship thanks to which the company can be aided in project management and other ad-hoc activities through the support of a solid branded-customers' community. The network is meant to work as a host for co-design challenges as for instructing users towards engaging in responsible selections, towards the improvement of both companies and users' sustainable oriented businesses' directions and choices.

After having analyzed in depth all the three levels undertaken in the concept of sustainable development, the following part of the research plan requires a results' aggregation to define a unique opportunity area suitable to all three dimensions being analyzed. Resuming the threefold analysis, the research's challenge is made out of several tensions' areas emerged from merging users' groups insights and disclosed information with performed consumption attitudes. Even if emerging tensions appear diverse and numerous considering sustainable development dimensions' specificity, some of these have appeared as recurring. The most relevant are: the desire to commit for conscious choices vs the actual resistance towards abandoning actual toxic purchase and consumption habits; the belief over responsible Fashion offerings' expensiveness vs poor informativeness over viable solutions as flea market/ secondhand/ upcycling in addition to unawareness over actual expensive and intense buying trends; attachment to social sustainable matter vs unreliability towards Fashion companies pursuing social campaigns due to poor transparency and traceability disclosures; and mostly important an average desire to become sustainable vs lack of informativeness, knowledge, understandings over the topic combined with poor social media nurtured information disclosing incomplete and not-always correct information. The challenge being set for Fashion stands in realizing a solution both viable to companies as suitable to selected users' groups granting enhanced knowledge and awareness spread. The process of digital community building which works with and for customers requires businesses' full engagement in becoming more transparent and fairer, by constructing a renewed business model fostering the opportunity to transform the Industry into a responsible ecosystem. To realize this solution, the research plan involves the arrangement of an upcoming opportunity area set in accordance with previously mentioned tension areas.

The aim of an opportunity area stands in providing a holistic solution which appears tied to all specific issues being met in the detailed analysis both univocally as jointly,

being also flexible enough to adapt to future changes and variations in businesses' ecosystem. The next chapter will be dedicated to the definition of an opportunity area resulting from a joint analysis of users' groups' insights and observations' tensions areas together with the main responsible Fashion business drivers favoring sustainable development quests.

5.1.1. Opportunity Areas Towards Future Fashion Responsibility

The definition of opportunity areas oriented towards sustainable development achievements has been obtained from the joint analysis of existing gaps emerging between Industry leveled drivers of sustainable development and challenges set as an outcome from interviews' in-depth analysis. In particular the quest for feasible opportunity areas has been attained by merging the twofold perspectives of business-centric focus, considering the dimensions contributing to the attainment of a responsible business model together with customer-centric focus, which has been largely inspected throughout the interviews' gathering process. The outcome has been met by the means of a co-design led approach, fostering mutual contributions and matching properties the two involved entities could bring to reduce eventual gaps or tensions persisting in both users' experiences as in business drivers' applications. The aim of the thesis, as being explained from the very beginning of the research, has always considered the co-design application as a pivotal construct providing reliability and consistency to the overall research practice, with the overriding aim to provide a solution suitable to both parties under consideration. The selection of these two groups has been led by the necessity to tackle the sustainable issue starting from players constituting a discriminant role towards the attainment of a responsible Fashion Industry, still with the promise to conquer an holistic solution being flexible enough to be extended to the different stakeholders presented in the initial resuming map. Explaining Figure 8, on the right-hand side the analysis gives space to the customer centric focus while the left-hand side is dedicated to the analysis of current responsible Fashion scenario players, which have been largely examined back in Chapter 4.

Once again, the schema is organized coherently with the analysis' research plan, keeping a distinction between the two approaches with the aim of a future integration towards an aggregate focus construction. Both the focuses, the business-sided and

the users' group-related, have been arranged in accordance to the threefold elements composing the sustainable development concept of: environmental sustainability, social sustainability and economic sustainability. Starting off from the right-hand side, the schema recalls what previously presented in the challenge definition momentum. Specifically, the environmental sustainability part contains the emerging tension between users' sourced insights to commit for responsible behaviors and an experienced constraint related to lack of informativeness. Poor knowledge consequentially comes after poor companies' disclosure practices leading to business transparency jointly with added users' belief of conscious choices unaffordable offerings, which are once again resulting from a lack over habits' awareness and sustainability related information. Moving towards the left hand part of the graph, when listing the business focal drivers granting the attainment of environmental sustainability aims, we encounter critical dimensions as traceability and transparency along the supply chain, environmental footprint, research for business model coherency with economic circularity, R&D on new technologies for arranging alternative raw materials usage, new recycling solutions and many others. The analysis of environmental sustainability dimensions in accordance with co-design led approach gives space to multiple tension areas to emerge.
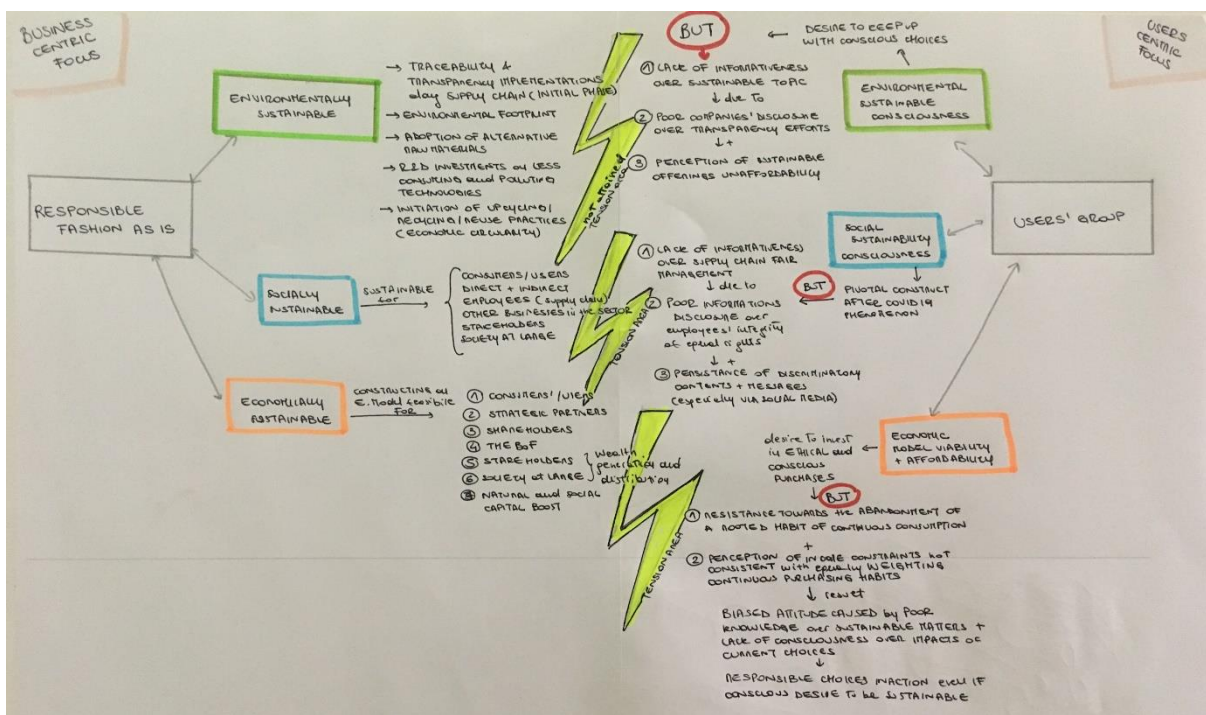
Figure 8, Opportunity Areas Definition following the Triple Bottom Lined Construct of Sustainable Development Principles.

For example, if users' have poor knowledge over developed sustainable alternatives or over the entire economic circular model of consumption, they would never be able to fully sustain companies who implement such practices, leaving them with wasted investments and poor resources. Additionally, one of the greatest issues experienced by actual Fashion Industry stands in a widened lack of transparency, traceability and fairness of supply chain management, manufacturers treatment and production operations, which represent prior elements limiting further knowledge diffusion and proper users' informativeness over sustainable matters. Similar results are observed for social sustainability session. Users have proven to be particularly interested in socially committed campaigns, especially after the Covid19 experience. The actual socially sustainable Fashion system is meant to work for the wellbeing of its consumers, stakeholders and ultimately of the entire society. Still evident inconsistencies do emerge in between the two areas. How can companies expect to be socially sustainable when there is poor clarity over the composition of their supply chains and their partners' management, especially referring to the ones dispersed in extreme poverty zones as Bangladesh and China? And, how can users feel supported in their unique features and sexual orientations by Fashion firms, when still too many stereotypes and minorities discrimination persist on social media channels? Users, as detected through interviews' observations do not trust Fashion companies as they appear not being transparent while performing doubtful actions, as fostering acceptance and non-discriminatory contents in their marketing programs while giving space to stereotyped messages or body shaming comments in dedicated social media accounts. How social sustainability can work if customers do not trust the companies they are approaching? Also considering the last part regarding economic sustainable section, evident tensions have emerged. The main hint obtained from our interviewed group has been a widespread belief of a not affordable responsible Fashion, jointly with a resistance to abandon rooted habits of "buy-use-waste" models. As previously observed, customers' hostilities towards rooted purchase and consumption trends' abandonment are nurtured by poor awareness and understanding over current toxic lifestyles neglecting any form of responsible practice. The consequence takes to a biased users' attitude opposing a desire to become sustainable with the incapacity to truly commit for those purposes, including strong beliefs over economic constraints set by sustainable offerings. The widespread misinformation over the topic could never grant the chance for a circular economic Fashion model to be attainable. Users will

poorly acquire and support alternative responsible Fashion offerings; companies will stop to invest in R&D practices and new technologies applications as they turn being not profitable; and the entire Industry will remain stuck to an old-fashioned fast paced business orientation. Poor economic wealth is going to be generated and distributed after responsible alternatives' introduction, leaving the natural capital to a condition of over exploitation limiting future productive requirements availability. As said, every dimension of the sustainable development area hosts numerous points of tension when approaching responsible Fashion discourse under a joint perspectives' analysis. Still all of those tensions appear recurrent and interconnected even if brought out under specific sustainable development drivers, contributing to the robustness of the entire research. The mutual integrity of diversified tension areas as synergies resulting from all sustainable development levels components have sustained the co-design process in finding a feasible solution holistically viable to every detected opportunity area. The following section will present the so mentioned "glue" working as a connective resolutive path for future responsible Fashion model viability by jointly embracing strategic requirements coming from actual sustainable business as users' group consumption necessities. The Fashion Industry will be receiving a renewed business orientation, whilst consumers would be able to fulfil their experience gaps by improving their knowledge, boosting social support and reliability towards companies they join a community with.

5.2. A Feasible Business Direction: A Co-Designed Responsible Fashion

The definition of a resolutive path including all emerging tensions previously analyzed in both the challenge and opportunity area detection has been projected maintaining the overriding research methodology following a co-designed trajectory. Tensions being addressed in the previous section were outcomes of joint analysis between actual responsible Fashion business drivers and users' groups insights analysis, both declined into the three composing dimensions of sustainable development discourse.

BIASED ATTITUDE CAUSED by ?
KNOWLEDGE over SUSTAINABLE
LACK OF CONSCIOUSNESS over
CURRENT CHOICES
↓
RESPONSIBLE CHOICES INACT
CONSCIOUS DESIRE To be SUST

CONVERGES TOWARDS

rethinking the FASHION BUSINESS
STRATEGIC VISION

① USERS' - FIRMS COMMUNITY
BUILDING
↓ enabling

② KNOWLEDGE DISTRIBUTION OVER
SUSTAINABLE MATTERS + ACTUAL
CONSUMPTION IMPACTS + RAISING
AWARENESS PROJECTS
↓ granted by

③ COMPANIES' DISCLOSED TRANSPARENCY
and TRACEABILITY OPERATIONS regarding:
production methods, supply chain organization
and employees' empowerment and fair
treatment
+

④ collaborative projects users + brands
destined towards sustainable offerings
and services implementations
↓ TAKES To

⑤ an ECONOMIC VIABLE MODEL To both
users as brands.

INVESTING on CULTURE

Figure 9, Business-Consumers' Co-Designed Resolutive Approach Towards Future Fashion Responsibility.

These tensions, which are presented with the lightning sign in the research area depiction, are highly complementary and connected one with the other, all moving towards an unique resolutive path direction. The outcome has taken the research to find a co-designed solution to a co-designed emerging tension area. The necessity to consider three dimensions of environmental, social and economic sustainability has been preserved to give equal space to all three concerns while respecting their specificity. Still, as said, the final output does not maintain the diversified character as the solution suggests a renewed business direction, which reflects all different areas being considered under aggregate vision. In fact, the result is named as a co-designed responsible Fashion product of merging business centric focus with a users' directed one. Figure 9 represents the visual representation of the resolutive construct.

First thing, the resolutive area prescribes the creation of a user-firm community not only centered towards brands' loyalty but also enlarging its mission by turning into an open platform fostering double-sided flow of information, ideas, meanings, providing plenty of occasions to host collaborative momentum. The Fashion business now more than ever needs to be supported by a strong community in which consumers do not recognize brands just for the appealing trends of latest collections, but mostly for the values they exchange and create with. After Covid19 experience, Fashion firms have

started recognizing the need for creating a strong community. In fact, physical in store experience and purchasing momentum have proved being not enough to sustain the sector over the long term also during extreme cases occurrence as a pandemic spread could be. Obviously, an extreme event as the former mentioned, has provided all businesses with the evidence regarding importance and urgency to invest in digital solutions. Brands should empower communities through online networks, either created via websites or social media channels or even via blogs depending on the selected instruments and medium most fitting the company under consideration. Digital setting offer great chances to communicate at a fast pace, quasi worldwide granting open access to every plausible connected member. The more people are connected to a network the more powerful it is, so therefore companies cannot leverage only on brands' passionate but should also embrace new messages to engage new target users as by widening the topics touched during content sharing activities. As a second element the network is empowered and nurtured by opinions and information sharing, so the more knowledge circulate in it, the more companies can entrust users' reliability by becoming more transparent while consumers can enlarge their awareness to account for changes in their purchasing and consumption criteria. As seen, one of the recurrent insights mining the feasibility of a responsible Fashion model is represented by diffused lack of knowledge in regard of sustainable topics, mostly lead by lack of companies' transparency and traceability campaigns, ultimately leaving customers in total misinformation with suspicious attitudes towards those same brands' contents veracities. When the community is backgrounded by a qualitative flow of content, as the one increasing awareness over the sustainable topic, not just the network becomes itself more solid and supported but also consumers can be more prone towards investing in Fashion sustainable cause as they collect plenty of information about. Companies can in turn invest in R&D research and practices moving towards a renewed responsible business model, being confident over consumers' actions and commitments' awareness by continuous updates over sustainable projects nurturing networked hubs. When sharing thoughts and values, users become not just content supportive but also products' acquiring, granting the needed profit for private companies. As a third aspect, the research takes great attention to the requirement of a renewed model improving brands' disclosed transparency and fairness in local production plants as all along supply chain's entirety. It is fundamental that as a concern contained under social sustainable

discourse, all workers' rights are preserved, and no abuse is legitimized in the workplace. Ethical concern constitute highly sensitive topics for consumers especially after Covid19 as companies are required to engage for all employees' empowerment practices, proving their customers to be active over the social topic and to earn trustworthiness for such actions. One of the major issues the current business of Fashion has to deal with is linked to consumers' suspiciousness over branded pro-social and pro-environmental campaigns as they are thought only as marketing driven projects. Giving proof and keeping the attention over ethical programs' reliability gives chance for users to trust those brands investing in users' involvement by the means of fundraising or at distance support projects. The very same discussion could be held for non-inclusive and discriminatory contents disclosed by both users and companies via digital channels. It is straightforward that the community should host only qualitative content and should strive for spreading a "love for the others" culture, by working and educating users, rather than just focusing on marketing driven inclusive campaigns. Finally, the creation of a highly informative network, equally supported by companies as users, gives the chance to work for an economically viable solution. For consumers in fact, the recognized fast paced purchasing trends will aid them in realizing the consistent amounts of money they invest to maintain these insane acquisition practices consequently reweighing costs undertaken by more conscious choices. On the other hand, companies will be able to properly fianance their pro-sustainability implementations, still maintaining a price fairness over the offerings they propose. We must remind that a social sustainable practice is viable in nature for everyone and thus does not create any income disparity. Companies should charge fair prices for their offerings in the respect of their customers, considering the scenario of charging high mark-up prices to limit customers' opportunities to fully sustain responsible Fashion proposals, leaving once again the model to become not profitable and feasible over the long term. The resolutive scheme is itself highly complex and multifaceted, as it satisfies every sustainable development dimension with a holistic adaptation to possibly changing ecosystem features. Resolutive modes remain the same while contents shared can be easily updated in relation to businesses' specificity and overriding working scenario shifts. In the following sections specific definitions and clarifications over each of the four mentioned responsible future Fashion drivers will be presented. Each one of them is thought of as being highly connected and mutually supportive for and by others, under aggregate consideration. In the last part of the

chapter, the research will discuss how the renewed Fashion business direction will impact the actual business model canvas presenting the areas which should be substituted or changed to give space to a responsibly committed drivers composing an enlarged equally oriented business model.

5.2.1. Unconventional Digital Community Building

Building a community network is the priority suggestion resulting from interviews' analysis outcomes. This medium grants opportunity to host mutual exchanges of information and collaborations between Fashion brands and users' groups. As analyzed in Chapter 3, after the pandemic spread, Fashion companies have started investing in their digital channels to get in touch with their customers and provide extra branded experiences, far from the old-fashioned physical shop scenario. Brands as Gucci, Bottega Veneta, H&M, Inditex and many more ranging from high Fashion segment to Fast Fashion ones have all empowered their digital medium to recover financial wealthiness of their companies proposing new strategies for customers to communicate and experience brands' offerings even entertaining people in a period of unease due to social distancing. The lesson learnt from Covid19 has been groundbreaking and there are no turning points. Brands have implemented diversified usages of digital networking solutions, which have been significantly succeeding in terms of engaged traffic and users' interactions. Companies have the duty to continue working on the implementation of community building strategies to support consumers wellbeing. This includes supporting users not just in terms of entertainment but also in the process of knowledge empowerment, interests and Fashion related know-how distribution, including community mutual support and several other activities. The present research structures the adoption of a solid digital community as a response to consumers' aids requirement in becoming familiar with sustainable choices, modes of purchase and consumption communicating with other users and brands in an open sourced platform. The lack of knowledge over sustainable related practices while analyzing the interviews' insights, has proved being critical for the actual shift towards responsible experiences abandoning long time rooted toxic trends of consumption. On the other hand, when Fashion brands have attempted to sensitize their customers over the topic, those commitments were still perceived as not trustworthy as they were

conceived as strictly dependent over marketing aims such as raising sales, traffic, users' engagement and conversion rates. When relying on a strong community, brands have the chance to exchange information as in a one-to-one communication flow, continuously involving users in the updates of their documented sustainable projects both in environmental and social domain. Over more, Fashion brands may use the same network medium to disclose their transparent and traceable actions, including data over ethically organized and managed supply chains which are currently worldwide structured with extreme dispersed capillary spread. The nature of Fashion supply chains has been long time questioned as their dispersion has been always conceived as a feature hiding its structuring and definition, ultimately appearing as a blurred entity. The digital community offers opportunities to widely diffuse information at a fast pace to a plausible large number of members, posing clarity over vendors' relationships' management issues. Also, brands should adopt these mediums as a support for community inclusivity. Fashion is generally perceived as an element fostering the feeling of belonging, uniting individuals with similar styles and tastes preferences aiding a process of recognition between members and among different groups. This sense of belonging can be nurtured in a community network, where differences are all accepted and no discriminatory or hate comments are welcomed. More than working on the phenomenon of "keyboard lions", the community fosters the aid to change members' mindsets by eradicating discriminatory ideas. Fashion brands should provide a good practice example being leaders in activities dealing with social inclusiveness by removing any possible minority's discriminatory campaign or products' lines. Examples of discriminations may regard clothes lines offered to women or men exclusively, or even the ones having stringent sizes and patterns causing plus-size and gender-fluid clients to feel neglected. Other from the information flow, the community is strengthened through mutual creation of common understandings, interests and meanings during collaborative exchanges. Brands can benefit from customers' close relationships when starting off new projects by involving them in co-designed momentum. Projects are in turn finely targeted and are result being more successful rather than when launched without any external users' hint. Customers might also enlarge their branded experiences and can build trustworthy relationships with brands they are in touch with, as they are not considered mutually passive users but instead they become active collaborators. The network, in the present research, works as the pivotal construct, supporting all the other upcoming

future responsible Fashion drivers, granting the knowledge exchange between businesses and users in a one-to-one flow of communication. The same community poses the basis for a renewed business direction, being profitable for both firms and customers and being affordable to both parties. The next driver will define the necessity for companies to become first movers fostering "good practice" examples committing in public disclosure forecasts, invoking transparency, traceability and overall fairness aims. As an effect, consumers will become more prone to follow these good practice hints by being more participative and informed in the process of community participation starting off a review over their actual consumption modes.

5.2.2. Companies' Good Practice: Transparency and Traceability Commitments

The process of engaging in transparency and traceability commitments is the second building block composing the structure of renewed Fashion sector business direction. As previously mentioned, the opportunity to foster such information disclosure is sustained by a defined presence of a digital network community, which in fact provides a medium through which companies can publish on topic related data with direct consultation for connected members. During the process of insights' analysis, users proved a common feeling of unease towards Fashion brands specifically meant by the unclear business management practices surrounding their supply chains organization and their overall strategic structure. Consequently, customers did not trust Fashion firms engaging in sustainable practices or projects, as they appear not transparent enough in regard of outstanding organizations and engagement over such sustainable actions. Companies' responsible dedicated campaigns seemed paradoxical with respect of overall business poor information disclosure strategy. The chance of becoming transparent and clear along the entire business structure is itself an element nurturing external parties' reliability over brands' efforts giving proof over good practice engagements. Not just customers have to cope with limited knowledge over diverse alternatives available for responsible products' offerings, but additionally they are constrained to long-time rooted purchase and consumption habits. The presence of a brands-users network in which users might be provided with tangible proofs over conscious practices is for sure a focal instrument aiding users' ultimate sensibilization over responsible matters. The process of becoming a transparent and traceable

structure grants strong tied connections for companies and users to collaborate and engage in aggregate practices of sustainable friendly actions. The role of networking is fundamentally of spreading knowledge and awareness not just in a passive communication flow, but also by committing mutual strengths throughout cooperative projects. Another issue being disclosed during users' interviewing momentum has regarded brands' suspicious practices with highly dispersed supply chains, mainly in low income lands such as China and Bangladesh. Those areas, as explained throughout the thesis, are highly dense of garment factories, whose workers' sanitary and safety conditions are not warded in any chance. Numerous articles have been published regarding Fashion companies' malpractices, revealing to the general public the deepest secrets of an unsustainable Industry. The transparency and traceability features are required in order to provide evidence over companies' changed and sensibly ameliorated organizational practices, ensuring fairness and equal rights all along their business operations. During Covid19 explosion, many brands have decided to cancel and postpone suppliers' destined orders made leading the ones located in low income countries to risk severe impoverishment conditions, exasperating a yet difficult living state. Companies should strive for supporting suppliers and partners' social and economic sustainability, as they represent a vital part for ultimate business wellbeing, considering a domino effect where the preservation of the former directly contributes to the wealthiness of the latter. When brands prove being practically committed to their workers' equal sustainability rights communicating such actions through community settings they once again spread values of integrity and support towards the "other". Once again, the direct consequence of such good examples can work as a credo for the community members evoking those same values as personal and not just shared. When digital network members are taken to believe in mutual respect and support they would be less prone in writing hate comments in the same platforms, simply because those meanings do not pertain to the community and no such contents can thus fit the setting. Resuming brands must be pioneers in good practice examples both to educate their users in the digital community exchanges both to help them construct an in-depth knowledge over business practices becoming familiar with the sustainable topic. The next driver is in fact a direct consequence of transparency and traceability efforts of Fashion Industry entities in the attempt to instruct customers in a process of becoming more aware of their habits and the potential positive shifts they could engage into.

5.2.3. Users' Habits Awareness and Responsible Practices Education

Receiving an education, especially when it is mutually created by the means of a collaborative community, offers great opportunities for growth and raising awareness over actual behaviors. The chance of being more in control over actual purchase and consumption trends is the major initial step for customers to start behaving more responsibly. It is obvious that for the very nature of the connective platform the process of exchanging information and raising knowledge is double sided and it is valuable as for companies to better target its initiatives as for users' enhanced know-how. There is in fact no chance for customers to engage in sustainable lifestyles without having first clarified their actual not long-term maintainable positions. The awareness over actual consumption behaviors is fundamental to induce users to practice a sensible shift in their daily actions, also realizing previously perceived responsible products' economic unaffordability to be not well founded. Actual average consumers' consumption trends are for sure not environmentally, socially and neither economically sustainable over long-term orientations. From an environmental point of view, users are taught to follow a "buy-use-waste" mode of consumption, which must be immediately disrupted. Secondly, considering the social sustainable cause, even if customers have mentioned during interviews about the importance of a fair and equal rights fostering supply chain and overall business organization, still in the end they just value products' lines for affordable prices appeal fully driving their purchase selections. This has been conceived as one of the greatest inconsistencies in between what people said and what they performed. Last on the economic side of the matter, users are not aware of their nonstop intensive expenditures over products they do not actually need, just because they are victims of a society built over continuous consumption schemes. In turn users think sustainable clothing to be overpriced, not considering the fair charge for underlying firms' R&D investments and new technologies adoption to grant alternative products availability. Users do not realize, because they cannot keep the pace of what they do, that there is no significant difference in acquiring less for more rather than more for less. Therefore, they exclude ex ante any chance to commit and invest in sustainable clothing lines. The community, which include users and brands, have the duty to mutually spread knowledge and

invest in the overall social education over responsible discourses, boosting social capital evaluability as required in sustainable development concept definition. Informed users and responsible brands should engage other less aware community members to become in control of their purchasing behaviors by stopping their exaggerated lifestyles, which are not sustainable for the current economy. If continuing to produce and consume at a not-limited pace, the natural capital would not be able to satisfy our needs anymore and we will accumulate debts with the surrounding ecosystem not capable at fulfilling all our joint production requirements. During year 2020, from the month of August researchers have declared we have been in debt with natural capital resources and if continuing current production trends in few decades we would need two planets to keep the actual consumption available. Before getting to an irreversible state when we will have to cope with an ill environment, we today have the duty towards planet and future generations to take corrective actions for provide them with same possibilities and conditions we have had the chance to rely on. The theme of raising awareness, exerting habits' control and changing lifestyles is more urgent than ever. The presence of a community who is supporting these same ends can substantially aid the work of individual human beings while attempting those goals relying on support and motivation entrusted by other users who are striving for the same results. Once again, the Fashion Industry should exploit the feeling of belonging of its members to create a responsible society sustained and at the sustain of others towards a responsible way of living. Great opportunities are shaped for other sectors too, who may benefit from the so called "spillover effect", which stands on the fact that as users start following a specific conduct in one field of their lives, they would shape the likings to be consistent also for other matters as foods acquisitions, energy consumptions, waste production and many others. Interviewees have appeared being sensible to the topic of food purchase, exerting great attention over products' origins, supply chains, treatments and use of pesticides. The food industry can thus be considered as a highly potential segment fostering spillover effect over Fashion attempts to move towards gained responsibility. When consumers are aware and do start to comprehend the need to change for more conscious alternatives a more sustainable economic model is instituted, both for users as for brands in an underlying co-designed resolutive approach. The economic viability of a responsible Fashion Industry is afterwards presented in the next thesis section.

5.2.4. A Cooperative Effort: Responsible Fashion Economic Viable Solution

The last constituting element of our co-designed responsible resolutive re-direction of actual Fashion Industry converges in the creation of economically feasible solutions viable to both companies and sustaining users. First and foremost, the proposal of creating and adopting a digital networked community has been also given considering the economic resources all companies, either established as emergent, could invest in to foster potential medium availability when used for supporting the responsible cause. On the other hand, also users can easily have access to the platform as just an internet connection is required indulging in significantly affordable costs. The most significant aspect, apart from the clear necessity of proposing a medium which is not economically discriminant for any possible network member, corresponds to the issuance of a resolutive economic model accessible over long-term orientation by providing a protection over natural capital preservation. The research values an economic model allowing both present generations system participation, avoiding any chance for individuals' exclusion, as future generations' guarantees for constructing their own economic setting without having to deal with past issues of not responsible lead structures. Fashion companies are for sure required to place great investments, depending also on the size of the business, over R&D programs and new technologies adoptions. Brands should allocate financial resources upon alternative raw materials usage, upcycling garments and clothing, new recycling processes' propositions, second-hand and renting programs, products' repair initiatives and other ad-hoc projects to shift towards responsible business conduct. Even though the required assets' investments are significant and highly impacting on actual businesses' financial performances considering the latest period of economic contraction, those same investments will be fully replenished by loyal customers supporting sustainable causes and acquiring offered products. The move towards a conscious business is the outcome of collaborative actions fostering the mutual support of involved entities not just in terms of ethics alignment and common shared values and norms, but also in terms of economic sustain. Companies can work responsibly only if consumers do invest in them; while consumers can become responsible only if viable sustainable offerings are provided, jointly leading to a solid economic model boosted by both parties fair attachment to the cause. Economic circularity, which has been a long-time discussed topic for its high potential in resolving unsustainable production and

consumption pace issues, is also a highly complex model mainly due to its multifaceted nature. An economic circular model is feasible only if the entire ecosystem can properly fit it, as even if only just one segment of the ecosystem is not supportive the entire model fails consequently. In the present thesis stakeholders' mapping scheme has been precedingly presented, showing off a highly populated setting posing clarity over the reason why attaining an economic model is so challenging when all those parties' contributions are required. In the present case, as the research plan has always fostered the role of two pivotal entities under co-designed based resolutive schemes, efforts granting the issuance of an economic circular viable paradigm are posed first and foremost towards involved firms in relation to their customers. The plan is afterwards to extend the model to other stakeholders imposing needed variations over the present formula, depending on the nature of each single involved entity. The outcome resulting from a process of co-designing aimed at finding a solid path towards the future of responsible Fashion stands as an economically collaborative involvement, as practically all the other previously seen drivers were required to. Fashion companies and users alone are not strong enough to pursue those aims and only with a process of active and continuous collaborations the complex requirements for the sector's sustainability can be brought along and consequently enlarged to remaining stakeholders under a participative working scenario. The research work fosters the capability to create a networked communication and working flow as discriminant for the likeliness of achieving the preset objectives.

5.3. What Future Responsible Fashion Should Stand For: Business Model Canvas Revision

The last section of the present thesis is dedicated to the consideration of changing patterns contributing to actual Fashion business model canvas, as presented in Chapter 1, to foster future sectorial feasible shift towards a more responsible organizational conduct. The implementation of the following suggested changes is also critical for ultimate adoption of a collaborative digital network medium in the attempt to merge a company centered focus with a consumer centric perspective towards Fashion sustainability. Summing up the renewed business model canvas should create the conditions for networking strategies to be fully implemented in each

of its composing parts. Analyzing elements contributing to the model presented in Figure 10, key partners, key resources and channels do remain unvaried as they represent fixed contributors which must be necessarily included in the Fashion ecosystem to function properly. Key activities parts instead should be updated considering activities of community building via digital networked communication medium. Those activities should include ongoing production and organizational quality controls and guarantees enabling ultimate fairness and transparency values proposition jointly with traceable practices. These responsible acted activities should be implemented for both supply chain management voice as for distribution management field, appearing as transversal programs integrated to the entire listed actions. The "WIP" element regarding environmental compliance should become more solid and should be transformed into an actual activity including social and economic compliance too, towards consumers' affordability and natural capital preservation major value propositions. Still the most important added activity stands in branded-users continuous collaborations projects, which rather than being meant as occasionally programs, should instead be considered as ongoing actual business operations integrated in the daily flow of strategic practices. Value propositions fields would sensibly be transformed after the update of major activities performed under the model. Sensible supplements count users' social sustainability attained through digital based support leveraging over yet available digital channels; plus economic affordable and viable offerings propositions enabling users' economic sustainability attainments. Users' identity is strengthened by adoption of continuous collaborative momentum in addition to users' sustainable education investments made by Fashion brands wishing to empower their customers responsible related consciousness in its entirety. Elements as "status symbol" and "update with latest trends" take a secondary position with respect to major implementations considered as critical for moving towards a renewed business orientation, integrating key values as affordability, environmental friendliness, other users' social support as workers' rights integrity observations. The greatest value of the newest model represents wealth distribution practices resulting from creation of sustainable economic models, shared with diversified entities including firms, stakeholders and key partners, with a specific concern for users' economic wellbeing and supply chain economic safeguard. Moving onwards to the customers' relationship area, major composing elements include collaborative digital networked setting fostered to the creation of an ultimate quasi-tribal community.

Business Model Canvas

Designed for: Future Responsible Fashion Industry

Designed by:

Date: July 2020

Key Partners
- Consumers
- Digital Network Users
- Digital Network Suppliers
- Raw Materials Suppliers
- Manufacturers
- Retailers
- SustainableTechnologies Providers
- University/Research centres
- Commercial partners, joint venture or aquisition
- Artisans
- Investors
- Other authorities

Key Activities
- Community Building
- Responsible Fashion Knowledge Distribution and Informations Disclosure
- Users'-Brands Co-Designed Projects
- Supply Chain Transparency and Traceability
- Sustainable Production Quality Controls
- Quality Products Offerings
- Continuous collections updates
- Branded environmental, social and economic users' support

Key Resources
- Users/Customers
- Digital Fashion Communities
- IT Systems
- Direct et Indirect Employees
- Transparent and Traceable Supply Chain + Distribution and Retail
- Brand
- Responsible Driven Know-how

Value Propositions
- Digital Users' Sustainability Engagement
- Social Support via Digital Networks
- Responsible Culture Fostering
- Community Identity Reinforcement and Recognition
- Networked Collaborations
- Employees Safety and Equal Rights Preservation
- Products' Quality and Durability
- Products' Affordability
- Wealth Distribution Along Key Partners
- Uniqueness
- Multiple options offered
- Accessibility

Customer Relationships
- Collaborative Digital Network
- Responsible Fashion Informations and Knowledge Sharing
- Users-Brands Shared Beliefs and Norms
- Identity Building
- Customisation of spaces
- Users' Social Support

Channels
- Online – Social Media Communities
- Others Web Based Communication
- Stores
- e-WOM/ WOM
- Brands' Partners
- Supply Chain Members
- Distributors/Retailers
- Events

Customer Segments
- Digital Community Members
- Online Shoppers
- Sustainable Committed Consumers
- Network partners
- Commercial Partners' Customers

Cost Structure
- Digital Community Mainteinance and Content Provision
- Firms'-Users' Co-Designed Projects Financing
- Raw Materials Acquisition Costs
- R&D Investments for Alternative Sourcing
- Assets' Investments for Recycling, Re-use, Up-Cycling Programs
- Sustainability Compliance Controls
- Sustainable Manufacturing and Production Costs
- Transportation and Distribution Costs
- Marketing Costs boosting Sustainable Practices
- Fair Employees Management and Salaries Expenditures
- Global organization Management Costs
- Infrastructure Expenditures
- Regulatory and Legal Compliance Costs

Revenue Structure
- Sales boosting under a long term "Buy and Retain" approach
- Digital Community Visibility
- Conversion Rates
- Online Responsible Fashion Traffic and Engagement
- Services Provision as products repair, upcycle and second hand branded programs
- Sponsorships
- Subscription fee for selected collaborative/co-design projects
- Assets sale/leasing/renting

Figure 10, Fashion Business Model Canva Revision: Towards Industry's Responsibility and Responsible Digital Community Building.

These relationships will nurture not only specific projects coordination but also will grant sustainable related knowledge exchanges between firms and users. Relationships will empower customers' sense of belonging, a typical feature characterizing Fashion ecosystem setting, by distributing shared values, beliefs and meanings jointly co-created with firms they are coordinating with.

Customers' relationships will boost brands' trustworthiness and no doubts will be attached anymore over the veracity of sustainable programs, as it still happens under actual businesses' practices. In fact effects undertaken with Covid19 case have shaped users' enhanced chances to experience renewed brands connections, as meant for social support during period of social distancing, offering new opportunities for exchange with other parties even when physically distant. Customer segments will be targeting communities first and foremost rather than focusing on a highly dispersed

mass market, which has raised difficulties for its size unmanageability. Renewed customer segments will be integrated including sustainable friendly and responsible committed parties, who have not to be strictly considered as passionate of Fashion, but who are still integrated in the move towards a responsible business model. Online shoppers will be also elected as one of the first categories brands would refer to in the near future, as they represent the most significant sector who can be turned into a potential community loyal member due to its featuring attachment to available digital medium and for their brands' communities sites' online visibility. One-time shoppers instead are likely to disappear in the list of customers' segments, as those clusters emerge being not consistent anymore with the outstanding prerogative of future responsible Fashion business conduct, relying upon the creation of a solid community based on loyal and committed participants. As a consequence no space would be left for one-time consumers, which are destined either to be left aside from future Fashion propositions or on the other hand are going to engage in a sustainable commitment practice and will be thus converted into responsible customers, significantly taking part in networked settings. At last, also the costing structure and the revenues structure will record significant variations. Referring to the costing structure major changes will include financing over investments and raised costs needed to maintain the overall community functioning, which will not regard only the actual financing of the digital network itself but will also include assets investments enabling sustainable related projects and programs based on finished products co-design and ad-hoc servitisation purposes availability. In fact, other costs will be dedicated to responsible development programs dealing with environmentally, socially and economically sustainable practices. Raw materials acquisition costs will be supplemented with the technological financing for alternative raw materials sourcing too, while employees' management and salaries expenditures will be aligned along the entire organization in accordance with equal fairness standards. The remaining costs as marketing, distribution and transportation, infrastructure and global organization management costs will be maintained but refigured under the terms of sustainable development aims. Practically all costs will initially figure a sensible increase due to sustainable practices' inclusion, still they will repay over the long-term by enhancing business continuity and fostering a business model who would remain available today as for future generations. Marketing costs, as an example will turn being more effectively placed. Thanks to the digital community trust worth boosting mechanism, companies reputation will become

more reliable and marketing efforts will grant an enhanced performance based on users' trustworthiness. Also, infrastructural costs will be supplemented with new assets acquisitions to foster new sustainable technologies adoption granting maximum sustainability over the entire set of organizational activities, ranging from end products offerings and reduced ecological footprint and emissions to safety standards preservation in working areas. Considering the revenue stream sales will benefit from price raising practices, always maintaining ultimate customers' affordability features, substituting the old-fashioned structuring over quantity-dense production schemes. Furthermore, customers will become more familiar and attached to the "less for more" principle, engaging in actual purchase and consumption attitudes favoring the quality over quantity preferences. On the other hand, companies can better allocate their financial resources in sustainable related implementations rather than in continuous new collections design and production practices, giving an end to the non-stop Fast Fashion business operational trend. The revenue structure will be also supported by partnerships programs entailed with other businesses acted towards sustainable development practices. Rather than relying only on products' sales, brands would benefit from extra services provisions such as repair, upcycling solutions, and second-hand branded products. Practically Fashion companies would diversify their business portfolio, dealing with both products as services provisions, enlarging the scope of the revenue flow. Sponsorships will also remain but will be constructed only in accordance with responsible practices paradigms, as it would occur for leasing contracts part. The traffic and engagement via digital networks will be for sure empowered thanks to the highly diversified nature of contents being shared. Responsible related topics will be published coherently with transparency practices and knowledge enhancing value propositions, engaging different types of online accounts. The network practice is highly inclusive and no Fashion-addicted unique criteria will be anymore followed for community memberships. The most powerful aspect of the proposed solution stands in the fact that it is feasible for every business and every user, always considering the needed adaptations to the case specific scenario and still it is deducted from an actual business model transformation. Left aside some specific voices in the canvas which need to be integrated in the business model to pursue long term business sustainable developments, the rest of them are actually remaining the same in the naming still their nature has been updated, by including variations towards improved responsible versions implementations. The aim of the resolutive proposal does stand in the

creation of a paradigm which is not discriminant neither under a business centric perspective nor under a customer centric orientation, granting the chance to every entity to benefit from the collaborative networked setting. Sustainable development practices will be for sure needing precious financial investments to grant a circular business model proposition. Still under a collaborative and mutual supportive structuring, first with customers and later with aids coming from selected stakeholders' group, initial expenditures will repay over long-term business continuation. The direct outcome of a long-lasting business ecosystem stands in the chance to be fully available for future generations, offering them equal opportunities compared to ones our current generation is benefitting from by preserving natural capital resources and by investing in social wealth fairly distributing knowledge and financial resources.

Conclusions

The objective set by the present thesis consisted in defining a resolutive path for the current business of Fashion unsustainable dilemma, constructing a feasible strategic proposal for both firms and users. As discussed in the prior chapters the necessity to rethink the business of Fashion strategic direction and orientation has been recently exacerbated by the pandemic diffusion, causing the entire sector financial contraction. Even priorly to the Covid19 phenomenon, the Industry had been struggling with stagnant sector's growth jointly with the management of extra costs related to the economic compensations for the externalities resulting from the highly polluting businesses' operations. The necessity to think a resolutive path considering the business perspective with the users' points of view is direct outcome of the nature of the sustainable issue itself. Sustainable development can be fully attained only when a mutual collaboration and efforts dedication of firms' proposed products and services with users' actual consumption and purchase habits. On the one hand if businesses' current practices have proved being not sustainable over the long term just mentioning effects as air and water pollution, intensive energy usage and supply chain unfair treatments, also when analyzing customers' behaviors, no reassuring data are taken. Average customers have proven being constrained to long time rooted purchase and consumption habits, being victims of a consumerism-like economy, favoring their investments in Fast Fashion offerings. Users have been long time seduced from the business model of Fast Fashion proposing always trends-tuned lines at cheap prices, inducing the general public to acquire loads of clothes they do not actually need. A featuring characteristic of these highly affordable products consists in the low quality of materials and underpaid manufacturing labor hours, ending in the former condition to reduce users' retainment rates and producing uncontrolled amounts of waste, whilst in the latter case it ends to maintaining and supporting a toxic business model working on the shoulders of workers converging in yet severely impoverished conditions. To pursue sustainable development aims a collaboration is necessary in between the operating companies and the users' groups. The thesis has in fact stressed the concept of engaging in a co-designing project integrating the diverse roles played by the included parties not just to achieve a responsible business ecosystem strategic redirection, but also to start building the basis for an active collaborative network in between the different members involved. The objective being set by the present

research which stands in providing tangible solutions to change current Fashion activities towards responsibly committed operations has been pursued by applying the methodological approach of co-designing, in the attempt to overcome the traditional partition in between a company's centered focus from a users' centered one. The concept of Fashion responsibility which is recurrent in the present study has been selected as representing a compromise equally representing the three layers of sustainable development definition. When in fact using the word "sustainability" there is a significant lack of clearness in defining which kind of sustainable composing dimension the paper is referring about. In our case the evident necessity for Fashion to shift towards sustainability implementations is as significant in the environmental domain, as in the social one and even as in the economic feasibility dimension. The scope of finding a word which was equally representative but flexible enough to adapt to the different environmental, social and economic dimension has taken to the usage of the responsible term definition. In fact, apart from specific occasions in which the term sustainability is used to define just a driver of the three being mentioned, the remaining times the word "Fashion responsibility" is recurrent. When fostering the sole business centric focus to achieve full sector's responsibility, related efforts appear as insignificant. If companies do invest in green technologies or in a more fair and transparent supply chain organization, consumers' would not appear as interested in supporting the businesses not just because they do not know anything about, but also because they would be never prone to invest more money in causes they are quite disinformed about. On the other hand, if users were to be alone in the process of responsible sensibilization, they would not be able to apply it on the long run as they do not find fitting alternatives in the competitive market fitting their conscious purchase and consumption preferences. Under this industry's ecosystem scenario, design thinking co-designing solutions have come at hand as the proper instrument to merge the two focuses in an integrative approach to build responsible solution definition and parties' mutual collaboration projects in networking settings. The chances of finding windows of opportunity for structural changes in the business of Fashion were quasi unrealistic considering the last decades always faster production paces, reaching non-stop strategic business model. The responsible Fashion dilemma has been long time discussed with poor solutions being implemented mainly due to difficulties in finding breaches in past businesses' activities. The advent of a pandemic diffusion in the present year has taken numerous difficulties as shutting down companies' operations,

leverage on smart-working activities, shutting down shops, cancelling suppliers' orders, dealing with changed users' preferences for first necessity products rather than leisure or frivolous ones, ending with significant economic contractions in quasi every industrial sector. As said Fashion Industry has been the one most suffering from the advent of Covid19 which has exacerbated a yet difficult financial condition. Causes are diverse as the fact companies do leverage on the focal presence of physical stores to nurture their continuous new styles proposals which had been remained closed for two months during lockdown, or as the fact most of western brands do have production plants and suppliers located in China, which has been the very first country experiencing the shutdown due sanitary emergency prescriptions. Also as mentioned previously significant changes have been recorded in users' online buying preferences during the pandemic social isolation period. People staying at home were not craving anymore fancy dresses or stylish products, whilst they have invested in first necessity items dedicated to their personal wellbeing, as cosmetic products or sports related items. The difficulties set by the Covid19 explosion were still an opportunity to define a moment of break from Fashion's insane non-stop business model giving the chance to rethink the business direction towards responsible commitments. As for brands, also users experienced a brutal stop to their consumption and purchasing habits, engaging in a two months lasting period to think and take actions towards their past behaviors and preferences. The great chance offered by the pandemic spread was the provision of a significantly lasting window of opportunity meaning a breach from past production and consumption trends, giving the chance to rethink the strategic direction of an entire business and groups of users. Chapter 4 has dedicated plenty of attention in discussing responsible directed ameliorations undertaken by Fashion brands undertaken under the period of pandemic diffusion. Numerous brands have changed their production lines to provide PPEs as medical masks, suits, gloves and hand-sanitizers. Fashion groups have invested in sanitary research programs and in the wellbeing of their employees both for direct ones by empowering smart working activities, as for indirect ones providing financial aids to their suppliers by not cancelling orders or by raising funds. Brands have been also particularly dedicated to the social sustainable cause by creating apps, digital programs and online courses and classes open to their customers to feel part of a community and not be left alone during the period of severe social distancing. The significant role played by community building through digital settings has fostered the creation of a supportive and close-

knit environment which has been pivotal element of thesis' responsible re-directed solutions. The last section of the thesis has been dedicated to the analysis in insights and observations collected during users' group interviewing program to identify the potential experience gaps related to responsible Fashion offerings. Research outcomes have been clustered in accordance to three layers populating the sustainable development concept, and research challenges and opportunity areas have been also maintained the distinction among the three departures. It has been significant to maintain such distinctions to give equal representativeness to all the three elements, in the attempt to come about with a final resolutive scheme being flexible and adaptive to the environmental as to the social and economic scenario. Major insights included the overall lack of users' informativeness and knowledge over the responsible topic and brands' efforts to achieve it. Poor communications and mutual exchanges were present in between parties so that neither brands nor customers were able to disclose and document sustainable related knowledge to support conscious choices. The general users' lack of awareness and culture over the responsible Fashion topic made them to believe such offerings to be not economically affordable constraining conscious brands to a niche kind of market. Users were not able to realize their actual consumption trends took them to spend even more money in low quality products, which are acquired without a conscious need. Lack of informativeness and control over the impacts of customers' consumption trends took them to exclude a priori sustainable Fashion as an expensive and not reliable kind of business. Another important element disclosed during the interviewing process has been the fact that, due to poor communication in between brands and users, all Fashion responsible campaigns and programs were perceived as unfair or unreliable, practically because customers were not integrated in such programs but were only meant as passive receivers of poorly informative clues. The definition of a business of Fashion strategic redirection has started from the very concept of building a network, fostering mutual collaborations, exchanges and responsible related qualitative information. The challenges being detected during the activity of merging users' centered perspectives with businesses' working ecosystem are multiple still interconnected, especially when considering they are a direct outcome of the threefold definition of sustainable development definition. These challenges include users' widespread lack of awareness over the responsible topic which is highly in contrast with current firms' significant investments for shifting towards new sustainable

technologies and modes of production. If users are not engaged in the process of shifting towards sustainable practices, they would not be able to properly support them via purchases and other investments as acquiring companies' shares. Another tension area is represented by users' requirements for socially sustainable projects, leveraging on inclusiveness and psychological well-being, especially after Covid-19 momentum. Companies are still perceived as not credible when proposing messages encouraging socially committed campaigns, as customers consider them as merely driven by raising-sales and engagement aims. The fact that brands are not meant as trustworthy is critical when considering users are requiring them a social support and commitment. The last issue point stands in the perceived unaffordability of sustainable Fashion offerings, which part significantly from old time rooted users' purchase and consumption habits converging to Fast Fashion trends. The move towards economic circular models requires active contribution of users' investments enabling the maintenance of new technologies and machinery's introduction. The significant aspect stands in the necessity for an economic setting to be solid and viable over the long run by joint users' and businesses' commitments in the financial sustain of the same. If either one of the two parties is not engaged in the financial support of a new business direction, the model is itself not viable and would cause initial investments to be misplaced, ending up to exacerbate even more a yet damaged industry's performance. Customers are not prone to be passive receivers of tons of information anymore, specifically from the social media boom phenomenon which disclosed huge amounts of information in short times. Users need to be sensitized by actively integrating their participative role in communities enabling them to do something, as sharing collaborative projects and programs which are supported by responsible meaning most and foremost. Only participation and community building can foster a trustworthy environment where all members, firms and users, are equally dedicated in responsible meanings and values co-creation. The digital community workplace is the best fitting knowledge circulation settings under the collaborative program scheme, creating a reliable environment where both firms and users are supporting the other also in terms of economic financing. Not just users become more informed, aware and active in the responsible Fashion domain but also companies do engage in transparency and traceability ensuring practices during the process of mutual responsible knowledge disclosure. Brands can finally become also more transparent in the eyes of the general public when becoming clear over their supply chain organization and distribution,

granting raw materials' high quality, products' origins certifications and employees' fair treatment practices. Reuniting brands and users under an unique umbrella of collaborative projects all oriented towards responsible offerings created the opportunity to construct a long term feasible economic model. Companies can invest in green technologies, R&D programs fostering operations' reduced environmental and social impacts, and in servitization projects having the granted support of a strong community, whose members are equally committed in responsible improvements as they are coherent with the community shared values, norms and beliefs. On the other hand, customers might become more aware and conscious over their consumption trends, realizing their actual behaviors to be not valid over the long run, thus constructing the basis to shift towards new consumption models being "less for more", meaning acquiring less but better, preferring quality than quantity and becoming more scrupulous over products' origins, manufacturing and supplying procedures. The final aim of the present research stands in constructing a long-term available business model for both businesses as users involving a "less for more" credo, ensuring higher quality fewer pieces at higher still affordable prices. The proposed renewed business of Fashion model has been designed in the attempt to be holistic and adaptive to future research activities enlarging its scope also to the remaining stakeholders being presented in the stakeholders mapping. A responsible Fashion orientation is in fact enlargeable to other businesses' partners to ensure its entire commitment, involving all plausible entities in the responsible project. The tools and instruments being proposed are nothing new, but their role is rethinked as oriented to the responsible discourse exploiting their full potential for further improvements and ad hoc changes. The present thesis has made the very first step towards a major business responsible change by rethinking the strategic business model structuring and orientation, reassessing its missions and visions under a users'-firms' integrative program of common values and meaning definition. The research outcomes are open to future studies and in-depth research activities integrating different entities' role with aims of enlarging the responsible scope to the entire set of involved stakeholders.

Appendix A

Interview #1

Where: Skype Call
Duration of the interview: Around 50 minutes
Who: E.P.
Age: 23
Profession: Student of "Innovation and Marketing" Master's Degree Course
When: 25/03/2020, h. 3.00 p.m.

Interview with Ettore Pettenuzzo, a 23-years-old student in "Innovation and Marketing" at Ca' Foscari University.
Ettore lives in San Martino di Lupari, Padua, and he is currently working as an intern for a startup which works in the digital marketing consulting for other companies. Specifically, he is responsible for managing the social media destined campaigns, and he creates custom posts fitting the different digital platforms they are going to be presented in.
The interview has taken place via Skype, as due to the Covid19 we did not had the opportunity to manage it vis-a-vis.

Today I would like to talk with you about Sustainability in Fashion. I have several questions I would like to discuss with you about, and I am quite interested in knowing your personal experiences and stories you have experienced in relation with the topic.

Interviewer - I
Interviewee - E.P.

I - I would like to assure you this interview is composed by several questions, but they do not mean any right or wrong. I would like just to have a normal conversation to discover your personal thoughts and points of view, about the topics I have previously introduced to you. So, let's begin.
Can you tell me a little about yourself - as your hobbies, what you do for a living?

E.P. - My hobbies are on-hold at the moment as I am very passionate of posting what I do in my daily life via social media, and at the moment, since the quarantine has started, I cannot post anything funny or interesting for my followers as I am always at home. Still, I am passionate of video games, and I spend most of my time playing video games. Also, I am passionate of video making, photo editing and the creation of general content to post online on my personal social media.

I - When you hear about sustainability, where does your last experience with sustainability has taken place?

E.P. - It took place during the work I am doing as an intern. A client of mine, who works in the power and electricity sector, has to participate to the event "M'illumino di meno" which will be held on the 6th of March. For that event, they asked us to create a custom sustainability post,

representing the hours spans during the day in which it was more responsible to turn the light off, as obviously different costs are entailed related to the specific hours you use power-consuming devices at home. What was interesting is that people are not interested in sustainability alone, but they become interested in it only if they receive a personal benefit from it, as in this case, they could reduce the amount of bills paid for receiving an electricity service

I - What does sustainability means to you? And how important is it for your daily life?

E.P. - In my daily life sustainability is connected to a sorting waste activity, I have six different cans for throwing my waste in. I do not have a liking for people who are aggressive about recycling or environmental-related matters, who go mad over the topics. As for example, I have recently read a post regarding Jennifer Lopez, who had been criticized for being using real furs, or being wearing boots made with real animal leather. The thing that surprised me, is that people via social media, wished her death just because she was wearing real animal leather. I think that people's reactions were way exaggerate, as I must be honest in recognizing that a real fur is not even comparable to a fake one, so in part I can understand people who decide to use them.

I - So, you mean you are pro real furs or clothes made with real animal leather?

E.P. - Yes, I am.

I - Can you tell me about a Fashion Brand you have lately acquired a product of? Can you describe it to me?

E.P. - The last time I went shopping was about two months ago, so it is quite difficult to remind it precisely. You mean a brand anyone knows about?

I- Not necessarily, it must be a brand you have lately purchased something from.

E.P. - Ok, now I remember, it was a pair of shoes of Trussardi Jeans. No, wait is called Trussardi Action. Wait a moment, I am going to take them, so I can tell you precisely what they are. (2 min later) Ok they are from Trussardi Action.

I - What is your all-time favorite brand? And Why?

E.P. - Hugo Boss, as I really like the kind of styles they propose, their collections, the colors they use.

I - I do not know much about their collections, which types of styles do they propose? And is it common for you to acquire Hugo Boss products?

E.P. - I like their suits, but I cannot afford to buy always their clothes. I variate a lot in the brands I acquire something from, I am not keen in a brand per se. I pay way more attention to the style of clothes of accessories, the most important thing is that they have to be weird and unique. Look at my shoes from Trussardi (shows them on camera) they have lightnings painted or quotes written.

I - What does Fashion means to you?

E.P. - Fashion means something really bad to me. It is about people wearing all alike, just because they share the same redundant idea of beauty, which is objectively turned in the same clothes or accessories. At the end people wear the same stuff. I do not like it.

I - So you would not describe yourself as a passionate of Fashion.

E.P. - No, I would prefer to call myself as a passionate of unique styles.

I - And what do you think about Fashion and Sustainability?

E.P. - I have once seen a runway fashion show, in which the designer proposed to merge fashion with sustainability. It was quite interesting, and he used local raw materials to create the clothes for the collections. Still the result was not so appealing to me, even if I recognize the ethical value behind the overall work.

I - Previously you were saying you acquire something based on the style of products, so in this specific case, you would not acquire something falling under the "sustainable fashion" domain as they are not appealing to you?

E.P. - I cannot agree with that precisely. Maybe as I like weird things, they can appeal me in some way. What I think is that I perceive sustainable clothes, as something you would wear to express an ethical concern, but they cannot be used to express yourself as a fashion-addicted in the traditional way clothes are meant to.

I - How do you think, as a consumer, you can change or contribute for a sustainable fashion?

E.P. - Many things can be done; the matter is whether one wants to do them. Still, let's suppose a fashion company engages in unlawful activities as exploitation of its workers or of a land. I would never acquire a product from that company.

I - Is there any way you think you can actively and not passively contribute for a more sustainable fashion? As for example, a consumer might want to contribute to the reduction of waste, by purchasing less or by paying attention to the materials used in the garments' creation.

E.P. - Actually, I wear the same stuff I used to wear when I was fourteen. I mean, I throw something only if it is wasted, or I give them to my little cousin.

I - Has your opinion over sustainable fashion changed across years, and do you think it might change once again along years?

E.P. - No, I have always maintained this thought. When I was fourteen, I was always wearing sweatshirts and pants, I did not even know what sustainability was about.

I - Are there any special circumstances in accordance to which your opinion can change? As for example, is there any possibility under which a sustainable fashion can become as appealing as a mainstream one?

E.P. - Yes, it could be. The important thing is that a company operating in sustainable fashion has to be aware of the need to not compromise style with the materials used for example, if they are recycled. People would never wear something that seems like a bag made of plastic. Companies have to focus on appealing styles at most. I think people are not wearing stuff to be supportive to the environment, they are wearing stuff because they think they are cute or fitting their tastes, and if in turn they can be supportive to the environment, that is even better. But it is just a consequence.
Still I am not an expert of fashion. Maybe experts of the topic would appreciate something beautiful in that sustainable proposals, I am just a consumer, and until know I do not think I would ever acquire something I have seen as a sustainable garment.
It is a controversial topic, as sustainability is usually difficult to be ascertained and recognized.

Environment

I - How do you think Fashion and Environment are related?

E.P. - I think Fashion is a way to recognize the environment in which it is hosted. The Italian Fashion is completely different from the French one, and it defines the country of origin.

I- Fashion is for sure a way for communities to be recognized among others, as it is embedded with a social meaning. But my question was a bit different, when I talk about environment, I mean the territory, the land, the preservation of biodiversity or of biocapacity.

E.P. I understand. I do not know precisely data related to the impact of fashion over natural capital. Personally, as I am a social media addicted, when I have the opportunity to share a personal thought about sustainable fashion that can be highly influential on others, that in turn cause a major change in how people are purchasing or consuming, maybe having a positive impact over the environment too. This can be helpful for companies too, as they can recognize strategic opportunities to implement their business, maybe tuning their offerings or services.

I - Have you ever thought about the raw materials used or the production provenance of the garments you wear? Is it a meaningful information for your purchases?

E.P. - Yes of course, many clothes I have acquired report the label "Made in Vietnam". It is obvious that for a cheap product, I can imagine people being exploited on the backside of production.
Still, lots of companies are moving their production and manufacturing activities abroad, first they were moved in Romania or Albania, now they are moved in Asia mainly, where no specific restrictions are present.
It is also a governmental thing. Companies have to pursue their ethical responsibility missions, but still in the European Countries, this becomes unmanageable from a financial point of view. Companies are forced to go abroad.

Social

I - How do you think Fashion can enforce a "good-fashion-society"? For example, it is true manufacturing activities are moved in Asia, specifically in Bangladesh. In 2013, a giant garment manufacturing building hosting thousands of workers, collapsed. People died, and what is most surprising is that workers for months complained cracks were present all over ceilings and walls, still no safety protective measure was taken. Which measures would you require to a Fashion company as a consumer to avoid those events to happen again?

E.P. - Probably I would require for safety measures to be present and guaranteed. Still I think that these actions would require companies to invest loss of their financial resources, so the very fact of moving their manufacturing plants abroad would become nonsense. I think managers do not generally care about their workers safety, as the main reason they are working in there is for cost saving activities.

I - So you think there is a sort of trade off, as in order to guarantee cost reduction activities, you should forgo ethical values.

E.P. - I do not think it, still I think it is important to consider companies are working for profit, and that is the main goal, unfortunately attained in every possible manner. This is how global consumption works, and we are all part and responsible for it.

I- Is it supply chain transparency something relevant for your ultimate purchases?

E.P. - Obviously it is important. Anyway, when I have to purchase something, at first, I value a product acquisition only if I think it is appealing, second, I consider the brand whether I know it or not. If it is a brand I do not know, it does not mean I am not going to acquire it, just I would look for further information about. Third, I look where the product it is made. Let's suppose the product is made in Bangladesh. If I particularly like the product, honestly, I won't care of it, and purchase it anyways.

Gender

I - What do you think about today's fashion inclusivity? As for example, do you think Achille Lauro' s last performance at Sanremo, was a clear sign of fashion inclusivity and fluidity? He was wearing traditionally women destined clothes, and he was perceived as a clear symbol representing today's fashion fluidity, where no distinction exists anymore in between what a man or a woman should wear.

E.P. - In general I think a feminine shape has been present from long time in masculine suits design. On the other hand, also women have been wearing man made clothes from long time. Meaning the androgynous style is not something new. Still I think Achille Lauro was a genius and a pioneer in the gender fluidity message. The problem is that is not fashion being inclusive, is the person who wears it.

I - In this very case, I would like to tell you several unisex brands are present today and are working for proposing entire collections which go from size 36 to 55, equally wearable by men

and women. So, companies themselves are working actively to promote inclusivity, as a part of their business strategies.

E.P. - I did not know anything about these brands, still I think that ultimate inclusivity depends on the willingness of people to wear those clothes.

I - How do you think inclusivity and its perception has changed across years?

E.P. - My parents' generation was not so inclusive, as probably we could think we are today. Still I think today's gender fluidity hides some latent prejudices. I do not think Fashion can change social values in the short term.
I also think this overall "freedom to express" which is so strongly proposed by Fashion companies, is not 100% real, I think it includes a sort of marketing trend and attention receiving phenomenon, which is obviously profitable for a company. It is not always true commitment to the topic.

Digital

I - How do you get informed about recent fashion trends?

E.P. - I just open my personal Instagram account and see people are dressed all alike. When then I go shopping, I cannot consider those things I have seen multiple times on social media. This is why I always go for something weird or different. It is like fashion trends have an opposite effect on me.

I - Do you use social media to have information regarding sustainability?

E.P. - Yes of course, as via Facebook I have recently seen a video about the melting of glaciers. I think what we do today is extremely important for future generations. Today we are for example experiencing the very first impacts of globalization and a of a consumption-based economy.
We are working today to foster future generations survival.

I - Which are, in your experience, the meanings the fashion brands you are in touch with do develop through their digital platforms? Do you think they are related to sustainability?

E.P. - I work for a company who offers jewels. The values they propose are about women inclusivity, as for example "no matter which your size is, you are always beautiful". People are very responsive to these social inclusive messages and campaigns, and companies most of the time exploit these highly response and attention generating domains, just to increase the number of customers they can engage with, but not for the inclusive value alone. It is not usually a genuine commitment.

I – So do you think today's sustainability is merely a marketing activity?

E.P. - Yes, most of the clients I am working for use sustainability as a marketing boosting element. The only exception is the power and electricity company I was mentioning at the very beginning of the interview. This company has funded the creation of a digital room, open to

everyone, fostering inclusivity, as also people who do not have normally access to the internet, have received the instruments to freely navigate in it. It was interesting because that, in my opinion, was a pure commitment, not meant at all to be related with the products they offered. I have learnt if you are committed on any sort of sustainability-related concern, you can be quite successful on social media. Even just with a pic taken for the support of a minor community, you can engage in huge attention and users' responsiveness. This has happened when I had to prepare a business report for a company, and what emerged is that strategic success is currently centered in the sustainability domain.

I - Why, among many other topics, do you think sustainability is the focal one? I mean there is lots of sensitivity towards the topic, but in the very end our consumption and purchasing habits are not aligned with those sustainable premises? I think it is quite a paradox.

E.P. - Hegel said, "Once personal beliefs are settled in human minds, they become habits, which in turn cannot be eradicated". It was a topic I presented in my high school thesis, and it was about the difference between beliefs and habits, related to the No Vax context. People construct their information via social media, which for the greatest part are fake news, and they become so strong and rooted in our beliefs that no scientific evidence will help in disconfirming or convincing facts are different from what reported on the Internet.
In this specific case, I have maintained purchasing habits in fashion from adolescence, and they have become so rooted I cannot disrupt them so easily.
We must think about different generations. Our society values are a product of the changes occurring in between generations, meaning our generations is way more willing to move from the past values to construct its own. I have seen a report in which old people were asked to answer about sustainability related matters, and I had the perception they do not know nothing about. I do not think it is their fault as during their generation no education or relevance was given to this topic, maybe to others, but not about sustainability, which is way more actual. Our grandparents have educated in accordance our parents, and our parents have in turn educated us something different, and we with our new meanings and social values will further educate our children and so on. Probably our children will be way more educated about sustainability, than how we actually are, it is just a passage. This I think explains also the changes approached along years in the acceptance of homosexuality. Our grandparents were way more reluctant to the topic, while our parents have opened up significantly towards the topic. I think our generation is not already open to fully embrace sustainability, we are in the process to, and we will see plain results in the following.

I - Which is, in your opinion, the impact of digital marketing for fashion sustainability purposes?

E.P. - I do not care at all about Fashion on social media or any other digital platform. The only thing I do look at are the ads passing by on TV, maybe regarding perfumes or jewelry items. I cannot get tricked by digital marketing practices. I think I am more interested to brand ambassadors or loyal customers, which might be people I am yet following on social media, so their opinions weight more on my ultimate fashion purchase selections. I do value a lot how popular a product is, as I tend to completely avoid it. I do not like to wear things all other around me are wearing, as I do not like to look like others at all. Maybe they give a hint to me about what not to wear or to select.

I - Are you part of a Fashion digital community?

E.P. - No actually I am not, even if in the past a fashion brand named Dolly Noir asked me to become a brand ambassador, but I refused as at that time the brand had not many followers, and I did not like their initial styles proposals. Now I regret that decision, as the brand has grown, and their proposals are way more interesting for me.

I - Thanks for your time. Have a nice day.

Interview #2

Where: WhatsApp Call
Duration of the interview: Around 45 minutes
Who: C.G.
Age: 25
Profession: Fund Raising Project Manager at the Hospital in Padua
When: 27/03/2020, h. 4.00 p.m.

Interview with Chiara Giacomin, a 25 years old girl working as an employee for the Hospital settled in Padua. She works at the pediatric ward, as a project manager. She is held accountable for fundraising, which are ultimately invested for projects needed for the implementation of the pediatrics services. Chiara has previously studied at the Artistic High School in Padua, but she had not attended the University.
This interview has occurred via WhatsApp Calls, after Chiara has ended her smart working hours required for her job.

Today I would like to talk with you about Sustainability in Fashion. I have several questions I would like to discuss with you about, and I am quite interested in knowing your personal experiences and stories you have experienced in relation with the topic.

Interviewer - I
Interviewee - C.G.

I - I would like to assure you this interview is composed by several questions, but they do not mean any right or wrong. I would like just to have a normal conversation to discover your personal thoughts and points of view, about the topics I have previously introduced to you. So, let's begin. Can you tell me a little about yourself - as your hobbies, what you do for a living?

C.G. - I work for the Pediatrics Foundation of Padua, I work at the Hospital. I manage the ideation and creation of projects, so I can say I am a project manager, and then I find the needed resources to fund the projects themselves, which are planned to improve the effectiveness and good working of the entire Pediatrics structure here in Padua.
Regarding my hobbies, I would describe myself as a quiet person. I am passionate of books, they have followed me for all my 25 years, or maybe less as I probably have started reading later. Then I like yoga, but I am also very lazy, so I potentially like it a lot, but I am not always used to perform it every day. I am interested in art, but I am not gifted, and my dexterity is really basic, so I might have ideas, but I do not have the talent to realize them myself. I like walking outside, with

fresh air. And oh yes, I love cooking. The only talent I have is performed when cooking, my dexterity is also improved in that very case. I love cooking.

I - When you hear about sustainability, where does your last experience with sustainability has taken place?

C.G. - It depends in which kind of field is connected to. There are different kinds of sustainability, it can be economic, environmental or social. I think every kind of action we perform, even the one we perceive as insignificant, could be fundamental for sustainability. Our actions should never compromise the needs of future generations, in my opinion, so they unfold even daily activities to me. But let me think about my latest experience, mmm, let me think about it.

I - Don't worry, let's continue, then maybe we can return to that question. My next question is: What does sustainability means to you? And how important is it for your daily life?

C.G. - Sustainability is something I care of everyday, as for example when I go grocery shopping, which is actually one of the last few things we are by now allowed to do. Whenever I go shopping for food, I think about the background supply chain, being aware that whatever I decide to acquire will be somehow affecting our present and our future. It is about conscious choices.

I - Can you tell me about a Fashion Brand you have lately acquired a product of?

C.G. - Oh gosh, I think the last time I went shopping was about five months ago. The thing is that I tend to acquire secondhand clothes from my friends or at flea markets. Maybe the last time I went seriously shopping, was at Seventy. Seventy is an Italian brand, I think it has been founded around the '70s or maybe earlier, but I do not know precisely. In general, I acquire the most from secondhand markets, but whenever I want to buy something which is properly sewed, made with specific and refined fabrics, I go at Seventy shops.

I - So you think secondhand products are not comparable in terms of quality or neat fabrics?

C.G. - Second hand products are all coming from previous usage so even in the best case, few signs of wears are for sure present. Also, I acquire secondhand clothes coming from brands as Zara and H&M, which have not the greatest quality and resistance. Therefore, I think there is not the same quality, I could plausibly find in new products acquired from Seventy. In general, I have given myself a rule also for secondhand clothes, which is to acquire less but of higher quality, obviously paying more.

I - What does Fashion means to you?

C.G. - Oh gosh, I do not know. Maybe it is about style, or a sense of belonging. I would define it as a feeling of belonging.

I - So would you not describe yourself as a passionate of Fashion?

C.G. - No, I do not think so at all. I do not know; it is just that is not something for me. It is something I am not interested in. It is not something I am disgusted by. Obviously, I think Fashion

entails a sort of expression, it is a type of art for sure. I like it as it unfolds a creative process, which is something interesting, but it is still not something I am interested in.

I - And what do you think about Fashion and Sustainability?

C.G. - I think it is a combination that functions, and it has to function. The concept of sustainability has to be flexible enough to suit different contexts, our present life is made of. Even in the production of clothes, I think sustainability can be applied to different scenarios: as from the raw materials provenance, to the production and manufacturing methods adopted.

I - How do you think, as a consumer, you can change or contribute for a sustainable fashion?

C.G. - For sure I could avoid any fast fashion brand, and generally avoid filling my closet of stuff I do not really need, just because I am bored. Then, I think it should be correct to be informed about how brands work, how they produce, and to study their value propositions, their moods.

I - Has your opinion over sustainable fashion changed across years, and do you think it might change once again along years?

C.G. - Yes of course, I think age takes consciousness. Maybe it is not even about age, it is about what you encounter in your life. Today teenagers are way more prepared over the topic, mainly because they have lived in an era where media are constantly sending those topics-related information, and young generations are at the very center of the overall information flow. We were more conscious about other topics when we were teenagers, maybe about something that does not even concern them.

Environment

I - How do you think Fashion and Environment are related?

C.G. - As a first thing, the Fashion Industry is the first or maybe the second most polluting industry in the world, and that for sure is the first link between the two elements. This information is something we should learn from and work on. We should be aware that if the Fashion Industry is one of the world's most polluting sectors, then it might be clever to start thinking about it differently, imagine different ways to produce, and work on it to improve it, to reduce emissions, to make it more green.

I - Do you think this issue you have described, is just about production or even about consumption? Let's think for example about raw materials provenance or reduction in emissions from production plants, do you think this would be enough to reconcile the industry with the environment it is hosted in?

C.G. - Consumption is for sure important too. Sustainability is quite a complex topic, mainly because it unfolds so many and different fields of application, it is sometime hard to consider all of them together at once. I think it should unfold a proper style of living, obviously this is not about being perfect in everything, it would be impossible and unattainable, but I think we should pay attention to the most of the things we do on a daily basis, even the smallest actions. It is not just about purchase, it is about an attitude, and a matter of coherence with one's thoughts and beliefs.

I - Have you ever thought about the raw materials used or the production provenance of the garments you wear? Is it a meaningful information for your purchases? Does it affect your ultimate purchases?

C.G. - I would like to say "yes" as an answer to this question, but to be honest it is not. I acquire products as white plain t-shirts at H&M, so it does not affect my purchases. At first, coherently with my ethical principles, I would answer "yes", but the reality is quite different. I know it is important to consider the overall fair-trade concern or the materials provenance, how people work for those companies, how they are treated. But I am not a saint, I must admit it. As an example, if I need to buy a white t-shirt, maybe for laziness or for an economic reason, I would go to H&M stores, maybe I would acquire it from the "Conscious Collection". Anyways I know that even if materials are partially recycled ones, I know they are worked in manufacturing plants in Bangladesh, where workers are mistreated or exploited.

I - The H&M's "Conscious Collection" case is something I have discussed in my thesis, as that very case has been accused being just a "greenwashing" practice, and not a real and accountable commitment towards an improved sustainability.

C.G. - Yes, but I think that with those big brands, it is quite difficult to attain a real and 100% honest sustainability.

I - Do you think we could be more hopeful for small or medium enterprises or emerging businesses working in the Fashion Industry, to attain ultimate proper sustainability?

C.G. - Yes, for sure, I think we should be more hopeful about those kinds of firms. I mean, as a big brand, there is a need to manage huge capitals, and their overall related costs. They have to face a fierce competition with competitors in the Industry, so most of the times they do work on cost reductions programs.

Social

I - How do you think Fashion and Society are related together?

C.G. - Oh gosh, maybe in the way Fashion influences people. Maybe Fashion affects people's personalities and identities, but I do not know if it makes any sense.

I - Yes, of course it does. And which do you think are today's social issues which need to be faced by the Fashion Industry?

C.G. - Oh I do not know, maybe it is an old-fashioned idea. But I think that somehow Fashion must face women's roles and emancipation in our society. Maybe it has to be concerned about the fairness of its supply chain too, as for example it might be struggling to decide whether to produce locally in the brand's country of origin, or whether it is more cost effective to locate plants somewhere else. It might also include some difficulty in the ultimate selection of the country in which to produce ultimately.

Gender

I - Let's talk about the gender-related topic. You know Fashion fluidity is something we have recently heard a lot about. What do you think about today's fashion inclusivity?

C.G. - In my opinion, as Fashion offer the opportunity to express themselves, their personalities, what they believe in, I think it infuses a sense of belonging. Fashion has the power and the duty today, to embrace differences and to legitimize them, by the means of supportive messages. People, on the other hand, have the tendency to be easily influenced, sometimes this could be a negative fact, while in this case, I think it might be mutually empowering. As for example, a person can freely be whatever he or she wants to be, by wearing that specific brand. On the other hand, the brand is strengthened and supported by people wearing its products and believing in its values.

I - What would you think if I say to you that today there are several unisex brands, which are working for proposing entire collections which go from size 36 to 55, equally wearable by men and women? Would you ever think about acquiring or even actually acquire the products offered by those brands?

C.G. - Well, let me think. I think it could be a good idea, obviously then a person can be always free to express whoever he or she wants to be. There would be no need to distinguish what is distinctive of men and what of women, so I think elements can become just personal, and not remind to some stereotypes. I think it could embrace positive effects.

I - Have you recently experienced this phenomenon regarding gender fluidity? Have you noticed it in something in particular?

C.G. - Not really, maybe because it is a world I am not as keen on. I do not have any social media personal account, so also on that side, I am not as informed on these recent trends. I could be an amazing example for you to prove there are some people left on this world who do not use any social media, and are not even interested in.

Digital

I - Even if I know, from what you told me, that you are not interested in Fashion, suppose one day you would like to get informed about recent fashion trends? How would you retrieve information?

C.G. - Well, in that case I think social could really represent the only chance to be informed.

I - And how would you search for information in the very case of Sustainability related content or products?

C.G. - Well, I rely a lot on what people suggest me. Generally, I receive a lot of information and hints from my friends and parents, regarding products they suggest me, and then I expand that information via searching on the Internet. This for example occurs frequently for those products I am not actually as interested to, as for example cosmetics or other beauty related products, for which I am not personally keen to look for information about. I really care and appreciate the word of mouth in those cases, I think I am way more passive on that, and look for others' points of views or suggestions, mainly when it comes to topics, I am not keen on.

I - Which are the meanings you think fashion brands should develop through their digital platforms? Do you think they should relate to sustainability?

C.G. - Do you mean how they should orient themselves? Well, in my opinion there is a lot of stuff going on about sustainability. Still, I think companies should prove how they have changed the way they operate; they should be transparent and reliable on what they produce and serve to the market. When it comes about Fashion, I do not really know which can be the most strategic opportunities or meanings they should specifically pursue. For sure, they should be committed to the environment, to people. When I mention people, it is not just about making a customer satisfied, but it is mainly about education towards social inclusion and enhanced tolerances towards the ones which are unfortunately still considered as "minorities" groups. It is something that should be independent from the specific case of Fashion we are discussing today; I think it is something all companies working in every possibly existing sector should embrace.

I - Which, do you think, is the impact of digital marketing for fashion sustainability purposes?

C.G. - I think marketing is based on consumers' needs, so based on that a company tunes its campaigns accordingly.

I - And would you rely on those campaigns, whatever information they embrace? Would you trust them, for example if they would have to mention sustainability related actions? Would you verify that information?

C.G. - In my opinion, after having seen the campaign I would probably look for further information, or at least document myself a little if I am interested to acquire it. I would look for the materials they disclose to use, how they work, what they do not. But at the very end I trust their source, I believe firms to be transparent and reliable. I believe in a conduct of transparency, so as a company decides to expose with sustainable campaigns or ads, then I suppose it should be true, it would be stupid to expose something it is not, with the great risk it unfolds to be accused as unlawful or even worse of fraud. I do not pose too much in discussion when it comes to that case, I would just trust the source.
Still if I am interested in acquiring a product specifically because it is "environmental-friendly" or in some way sustainable for a specific scenario, in that very case I would look deeper for the veracity of those information.

I – Thank you for your time. Have a nice day!

Interview #3

Where: Skype Call
Duration of the interview: Around 40 minutes
Who: M.M.
Age: 60
Profession: Retired
When: 28/03/2020, h. 2.00 p.m.

Interview with M.M., 60 years-old women who has recently retired from her work as an employee of an insurance company. M. lives in Padua with her family, she has two daughters, and currently she lives with her husband and her second child. M. continues to work about two to three times a week for the same office she was previously employed at, as she is does not want to drop out drastically from work and maintain a little of a routine.

This interview was also managed via Skype, as the Covid19 restrictions required no gatherings or meetings suitable for a one-to-one interview.

Today I would like to talk with you about Sustainability in Fashion. I have several questions I would like to discuss with you about, and I am quite interested in knowing your personal experiences and stories you have experienced in relation with the topic.

Interviewer - I
Interviewee - M.M.

I - I would like to assure you this interview is composed by several questions, but they do not mean any right or wrong. I would like just to have a normal conversation to discover your personal thoughts and points of view, about the topics I have previously introduced to you. So, let's begin. Can you tell me a little about yourself - as your hobbies, what you do for a living?

M.M. - I really like to go walking outside, with fresh air. I love the mountains, I love to spend time in there, relax and breathe, and be in contact with nature. Otherwise, when I am at home, I dedicate to my biggest passion, which is embroidering or sewing dresses. I consider myself as a very creative person, so I create my own styles or drawings I would like to reproduce on fabric.

I - When you hear about sustainability, where does your last experience with sustainability has taken place?

M.M. - My last experience with sustainability is about sorting garbage, is it something I can mention? It is something I am very strict about, something I would not forgo for any reason. I like to think something I cannot use anymore, might instead be useful if recycled to somebody else. It would be such a waste to discard everything without any limit!

I - What does sustainability means to you? And how important is it for your daily life?

M.M. - Sustainability to me means improving our well-being by improving the environment we live in. Specifically considering the times we are in; the healthiness of human beings is the first thing we should take care of.

I - So, when you think about sustainability, you only mention it in relation to the environment? Have you ever thought of it as related to a social domain?

M.M. - Yes, I have always thought about it as connected to nature and to the overall environment. I have never thought of it in terms of society, as minorities or similar concerns. Maybe I am a selfish person.

I - Can you tell me about a Fashion Brand you have lately acquired a product of? Can you describe it to me?

M.M. There is this one brand I love, it is called Malìparmi. I really like their styles and patterns, the colors they use. I love their ethnic reminding styles; they are something different. The quality of the products is also high, I think they can work as a good compromise in between price and quality. I often acquire products of this brand, as I find them as specifically representing my own style and taste. Still I must be honest that not all their products are Made in Italy, which is something disturbing me a little, as I know people might be exploited or underpaid, and it is something I do not agree with. Also, many of their latest products are made of synthetic fibers, so the quality is not present all over the collection.

I - What does Fashion means to you?

M.M. - Fashion means style to me. Fashion is something personal, a way to express one's personal tastes and style. It is a way of expression to me. I always wear what I personally like, not what others think it might be cool. For some people Fashion is about showing off.

I - And what do you think about Fashion and Sustainability?

M.M. - I think it would be a fantastic combination. Anyway, I think it must be also be consistent with effective economic affordability. I mean, if you use recycled or discarded products, the price charged for the renewed object should be more like a medium brand, and not to a luxury one, otherwise no one could ever acquire a sustainable cloth.
Let's suppose at the very end of the distribution process, those clothes are sold as luxury items, they become unsustainable from a consumer's economic point of view. A product should be sustainable as it reduces the pollution related to its production, it does not waste additional natural resources, and it becomes economically sustainable too.

I - Do you think Fashion and Sustainability are just a matter of purchase or does it involve consumption too?

M.M. - Mmm, I do not know really. I think a person should be coherent from the purchase selection to his/her consumption habits. I mean if you keep on washing your clothes with highly pollutant detergents, the very first choice of purchasing a sustainable cloth is useless.

I - How do you think, as a consumer, you can change or contribute for a sustainable fashion?

M.M. - Maybe I could consider purchasing only recycled or secondhand products. Still I fear sustainable companies working in fashion might charge unsustainable prices for those pieces, and I would never be able to habitually acquire them. This is why big low-cost fashion chains as Zara are successful. If I should be sustainable, I need to have the economic power to perform it through my purchases, otherwise it is once again an exclusive Fashion, destined to few people.

I - Has your opinion over sustainable fashion changed across years, and do you think it might change once again along years?

M.M. - Yes of course, when I was young, I never thought about sustainability. During my adolescence we were living the economic growth, and we were all thinking about consumption. Companies were producing all they could at increasingly higher manufacturing speeds, so we

were all motivated to acquire even more. Now things are completely different. Today we are concerned about sustainability, for sure as an outcome of that economic period I was mentioning before, we have to deal with the wasting results on an intense industrial era, in which maybe we have exceeded some boundaries we should have taken care of, as for natural preservation and adoption of scarce resources.

Environment

I - How do you think Fashion and Environment are related?

M.M. - They are connected through the raw materials, offered by the environment and disposed by Fashion operating companies. The thing is about what we give back to nature from this process, which now it includes waste and garbage mainly. We should work for a circular process, in which we receive resources from nature, and we give it something in turn, avoiding any possible disruption.

I - Do you think your actual purchase and consumption habits are affecting the Fashion can attain environmental sustainability?
M.M. - Yes for sure, recently I look for acquiring less products, but of higher quality.

I - How this purchase trend is different from previous ones?

M.M. - Years ago I used to purchase from brands as H&M or Zara, as I was looking for more frivolous things. I used to buy products from those brands more for a personal whim rather than for a necessity. They do not have products I would wear every day, as they propose more trendy and weird product lines.

I - So, in general, would you affirm you acquire a product at Malìparmi for necessity while at Zara for a whim?

M.M. - Not exactly. If I buy something at Malìparmi, it is because I am looking for a quality product, in line with my tastes, that I would normally wear on an everyday basis. On the other hand, when I buy at Zara, I am looking for something trendier, just to change a little bit, without spending too much money. Imagine if I had to acquire all my products at Malìparmi, that would not ever be sustainable for my economic account.

I - Do you think raw material and production provenance to be meaningful for your fashion purchases? How and why is it or is it not a defining element of your buying preferences?

M.M. - Yes, they are important. I am constantly looking at products' labels, and what is surprising is that even when you look for high brands, with expensive proposals, they rely on a manufacturing process settled in places as Romania or Bangladesh, which is actually the very same of those products which are priced about 5€. Still, I must be honest and I admit I tend to acquire those products anyways, especially if I truly like them. Conceptually, if I had to spend my money and invest for an expensive fashion purchase, I would prefer to acquire a "Made in Italy" one.

Social

I - How Fashion and society are related for you?

M.M. - I do not know. I think Fashion and society are more about a bandwagon phenomenon, meaning people buy stuff because they think those are cool as everyone is wearing them. There are people on social media, motivating all their viewers to acquire the same clothes they are wearing. It is more about a homologation process.

I - You perceive the current relation in between Fashion and society as something negative, as a process of loss of diversity?

M.M. - Yes for sure, it comprises a loss of personality.

I - How do you weight supply chain transparency for your ultimate acquisition?

M.M. - It is fundamental for me, to recognize where raw materials are produced, where the production process is located at, the overall quality offered. I think the majority of Fashion operating companies are today working mainly in developing countries, to abate their overall production costs, by exploiting workers. This I think could be quite a dangerous aspect in the reputation of a company.

Gender

I - Today's Fashion proposes the concept of social inclusivity, as an example Gucci is a pioneer in proposing these values and are mutually integrating them in their overall business vision and strategic products' proposals orientation. What do you think about today's fashion inclusivity?

M.M. - I see young people wearing clothes much more freely than how we were used to in my generation. Now boys wear like girls, and I think they have completely overturned our past taboos about what to wear or what not to wear. When I was young, it was a very fierce choice to dress so hazardously, against what society taught us it was more appropriate to wear. People were more prone to judge or to have prejudices, people were considered as outcasts. Today we are way more tolerant towards how people decide to dress up, we are softer on the topic. In the past our parents would never accept similar things.

I - I think also during your generation, young people had a great willingness to express themselves, their ideas through clothes. I mean during the '70s, hippies created their own representative styles, not just for an aesthetic need, but mainly for the recognition of their unique and strong beliefs. Guys were wearing heels; androgynous styles were common too.

M.M. - Yes, but it was way more limited, and not as normal as it is today. Today you are not judged for wearing what you want to, and it can be either a skirt or a ripped jean. Maybe when I was young, there was more consciousness about the topic, people believed in what they wore and what that specific cloth meant, today everything is much more a commonplace, maybe it is more for an aesthetic need than for a pure and original belief.
As in the past, homosexual relationships were not accepted, now they are way more. Anyway, I perceive people are now even showing off excessively their sexual preference or do indulge in more public sexual acts, just because once it was forbidden. I enjoy and support every sexual

preference, but I think that as any heterosexual relationship should also be, there are some things that should be done in private.

I - What would you think if I would tell you several unisex brands are present today, and are working for proposing entire collections which go from size 36 to 55, equally wearable by men and women?

M.M. - I think it could be an interesting product proposal, I do not know if I would be ready to wear them, if they suit my taste, but I would give them a chance for sure. I would only fear an excess in homologation, which is yet a persistent phenomenon in our current society. Anyways I think it could be a chance for people who are in difficulty to express themselves with what they wear, it could be easier for them also to express who they are and what they believe in.

Digital

I - How do you get informed about recent fashion trends?

M.M. - Mainly through magazines, or I look at showcases a lot, to look for what they propose at their shops. I use a lot Pinterest on my smartphone.

I - How do you get informed about sustainability?

M.M. - I do not really inform over the matter, I admit to be quite passive over the topic, I just consider information passing by, maybe through media or the news transmitted via internet, but I am not actively seeking information over the topic. I search for information on labels, as where it is produced, the raw materials used, their origins, how they have been transformed.

I - Which are, in your experience, the meanings the fashion brands you are in touch with do develop through their digital platforms? Do you think they are related to sustainability?

M.M. - When using Pinterest, only pics are presented, but no specific information or meanings are transmitted. After I see a post about a cloth, I can look for further information if I am interested in acquiring it, and if it is an expensive item. For example, some time ago I have seen a report transmitted on TV about goose feathers which were used for the filling of jackets. It was quite shocking to me as those ducks were raised and mistreated by overfeeding them to put on weight to overproduce the number of feathers they have been covered by. From that moment onwards, whenever I had to acquire a jacket made with real animal feathers filling, I have always checked for the products provenance and where those ducks where specifically raised. Many times, I found that information being consistent with the indications disclosed by the report, and the same times I refused to acquire those products, even if they were aesthetically appealing and perfectly fitting my tastes. I am not fine with natural and animal exploitation, up to the point where those animals can be harmed. Most of those brands were actually high end ones, which is something even more quite surprising, as once I expect to invest a consistent amount of money for a product, I require the overall supply chain to be in line with the price charged and to be fair enough to sustain and motivate that same price.

I - Are you part of a Fashion digital community?

M.M. - No, I am not. I do not have any social media account, so it something that I have never considered probably because I have never had the opportunity to be in touch with a brand community via Internet. I am quite opposed to use of social media, I do not care about what other people post, I think there are better ways to be in touch with people I know, or with companies I am interested in.

I - Which is the impact of digital marketing for fashion sustainability purposes?

M.M. - Marketing is everything nowadays to sell something, I think it is the best approach to encourage customers to purchase one's products or services proposals. I think companies should be more transparent about their production processes and overall supply chain and use it as a strategic content in their marketing campaigns. It would be interesting to realize where those materials are from, their origin, also to educate customers and clients about the nature of the products and the business conduct entailed.

Many companies avoid showing off their production processes, mainly because they know they are ethically and also legally questionable in many cases. I remember the very case of an Italian firm producing jeans, which has been discovered, some years ago, to have its entire manufacturing plant settled in Turkey, in which children were exploited and mistreated. Anyways those products were sold as a high-end jean, for which the price charged was coherent with a luxury item.

I think sensibilization and transparency are today fundamental to be disclosed, I feel there is no longer space left for hidden information or partially said truths uncovering inhuman scenarios. People need information, and companies must fairly provide them to their general public.

I think the lesson we are learning today from the Covid19 experience, is that without human global health no economic system can be held. Therefore, I think working for sustainability today is essential to preserve human and natural health, to enable a possibly working economy, it is a necessary condition.

I - Thanks for your time. Have a nice day.

Interview #4

Where: WhatsApp Call
Duration of the interview: Around 50 minutes
Who: M.A.
Age: 24
Profession: Student in "Innovation and Marketing" Master's Degree Course
When: 01/04/2020, h. 11.30 a.m.

Interview with M.A., a 24-years-old student in "Innovation and Marketing" at Ca' Foscari University.
M. lives in Castelfranco Veneto, Treviso, and she is currently working at her master's degree thesis concerning technological innovations encompassed in the automotive industry to reduce sensibly car emissions. She is currently at home with her family due to the lockdown to stop Coronavirus spread. She has recently returned home from a 6-months length Erasmus in Denmark.

The interview has taken place via WhatsApp, as due to the Covid19 we did not had the opportunity to manage it vis-a-vis.

Today I would like to talk with you about Sustainability in Fashion. I have several questions I would like to discuss with you about, and I am quite interested in knowing your personal experiences and stories you have experienced in relation with the topic.

Interviewer - I
Interviewee - M.A.

I - I would like to assure you this interview is composed by several questions, but they do not mean any right or wrong. I would like just to have a normal conversation to discover your personal thoughts and points of view, about the topics I have previously introduced to you. So, let's begin. Can you tell me a little about yourself - as your hobbies, what you do for a living?

M.A. - I am M., I am 24 years-old, I am a student at the end of my master's degree, and I am going to graduate soon. In my free time, I do not have any hobby, at the exception of doing sports. I really like to spend my time for something which helps me to improve my general knowledge, as analyzing data or joining marketing analytics courses.

I - When you hear about sustainability, where does your last experience with sustainability has taken place?

M.A. - Do you mean my latest practical experience or the latest information as articles I read about concerning sustainability?

I - It can be both, just what gets through your mind at first.

M.A. - Ok, my latest experience has been during my thesis, as it regards the analysis of how both European and American car makers are able to propose car lines which are always less polluting, dealing with climate change and approaching global warming reduction campaigns and controlling greenhouse gases emissions.

I - Why are you so interested in the topic?

M.A. - Everything has started with another university project I had last year which regarded the emissions trading schema in Europe, specifically focusing on transport modes as aviation mainly. When I had to select a topic for my thesis, this was the topic I was inspired by as it comprises sustainability concerns and environmental ones. Still I had to change the setting this analysis was based upon, knowing the Professor following me for the thesis is quite concerned with the automotive sector. He helped me with the analysis.

I - What does sustainability means to you? And how important is it for your daily life?

M.A. - Sustainability is to be aware of what is happening around us, and the need to act in favor of sustainability in all fields of application to reduce any upcoming environmental concern. Still, sustainability means being aware, even if I realize it is something that we are quite missing.

I - Do you perceive it more as a trend, and not as a true commitment, requiring deep search for information?

M.A. - Yes, I think there are two main groups of people: the ones who are truly aware and informed and so do act proactively to change things to improve their wellbeing, as imposing standards over emissions; on the other hand there are falsely-aware individuals who do act because something is fashionable or is a trend, but who are not completely able to realize the entity of what is happening in the world. Since I have been more aware about sustainability concerns, I am trying to change things up, even the little ones, as for example not buying plastic bottles, reducing the amount of waste produced, and relying of reuse, specifically when it is concerned for food. I am currently avoiding compulsive purchases, preferring quality rather than quantity. When it comes to food, I try to make the best in my purchases, controlling product sources, and their supply chains.

I - So you are closely paying attention to what you acquire and which kind of food you bring back home.

M.A. - Yes, I like to collect information and to pay attention to those details. I think people are not informed, or there is a lot of confusion over the matter, so people tend to be more misinformed than completely lack any kind of data.

I - Can you tell me about a Fashion Brand you have lately acquired a product of? Can you describe it to me?

M.A. - The last time I went shopping was about two months ago, so it is quite difficult to remind it precisely. It has passed so much time from my latest fashion purchase, mainly due to the pandemic diffusion. I have acquired other products, but not fashion related ones.

I - Why? Which are your feelings about fashion items?

M.A. - Mainly because I do not trust the source of the products. No, wait, I have not explained myself properly. Given the current situation we are in I do not trust acquiring products I would then have to wear, even if I know no specific issues should be brought along. I am quite skeptical. Also, I have not acquired anything because I do not like to buy clothes online, I am quite attached to the physical in store experience. Still the last time I have acquired something in a shop, it was from a little shop here in Castelfranco back in the month of January.

I - So do you not like making your purchases online?

M.A. - I would not describe myself as a fanatic of online shopping. Occasionally I have acquired something from an online store as from Asos, but it is not a habit, as other people might have.

I - What is your all-time favorite brand? And Why?

M.A. - Oh gosh. My all-time favorite brands are in between Zara and Stradivarius. I know you are going to kill me anyway (Laughs). I am, most of the times, opting for conscious choices and purchases, still I am honest saying that I cannot afford those products. If I had to purchase

sustainable clothing pieces I would have only three items in my wardrobe. I think for the fairness of the entire supply chains, the controls and the transparency of the product the overall cost is obviously higher, and I think it is correct to pay more for similar products. At this very moment, I have to rely on those "Fast-Fashion" brands. They are my favorites as they had satisfied along different years all my different styles, from a sporty one to a classy, ending with a more sophisticated one.

I - Have you ever thought about second-hand products or markets?

M.A. - Yes of course, even if I have never been to a second-hand market, nor I have ever searched for related information. Still, I know different people both physically as online who have acquired products from second-hand shops or markets. I think there you can find really cool pieces, with a high quality, that rather being discarded can be reused. Now I do not feel going in there or acquiring something second-hand, I am not ready.

I - What does Fashion means to you?

M.A. - Fashion means… Wait, I am searching the right words to express the concept. I would not say it is about covering up. Fashion means communicating something about oneself to the general public, and even if someone strives to conform to fashion trends as much as possible there will always be an uncontrolled part related to personal taste, which is something not full comprehended under fashion trends. If you study one's personal style you can truly understand that person. Fashion is like a gun. It works to improve the confidence in oneself, helping an individual to come out with an exceptional confidence, which would not be as easy to express in other ways.

I - So would you not describe yourself as a passionate of Fashion?

M.A. - Yes, 100%. I would pass hours to look at different styles, color matches and similar stuff.

I - And what do you think about Fashion and Sustainability?

M.A. - I think it is a working combination, and probably I would define it even necessary for the environmental scenario we are approaching now. Still, I perceive a significant lack of information among consumers. There are several brands who engage with their customers to explain their production methods, which is the research and the work behind materials selection and the overall story behind the product itself, which I think is a fundamental element supporting the cause of sustainable fashion. Anyway, there are cases in which this information are not fully communicated, or at least they are target to a closed niche of consumers, who are yet aware and have plenty of knowledge over sustainable fashion. The remaining mass of customers have a perception over sustainable fashion as being something trendy and new, but not something they would acquire a product of, mainly because they limit to the enhanced cost of the item, but are not able to closely value the benefit of acquiring and wearing a sustainable garment. Sustainability is not able to conquer the mass market mainly for a widened lack of awareness over the topic. In the meantime, these products will always be expensive so I think they would never reach a standard, and they will never become a mass product, as long economic and purchasing disparities will come along.

I - When you were talking about the communication activity entailed by companies to spread the sustainability cause, were you referring to a specific real-world case or was it just a perception of yours?

M.A. - No, no. Even when thinking about luxury brands, they are expensive mainly because there is an high markup related to the brand name itself, but the price is also due to a truly committed research over their offerings. This latter content is somehow tightened to the close niche of consumers acquiring those products.

I - So you mean sustainability messages are received only by active consumers who are strictly looking for those kinds of information. You do not feel brands are pushing those messages to their enlarged public or general reach.

M.A. - Yes, yes exactly.

I - How do you think, as a consumer, you can change or contribute for a sustainable fashion?

M.A. - Well, maybe engaging in a deeper research over brands who are actively working for fashion sustainability purposes, and in general looking for information regarding the topic.

I - Has your opinion over sustainable fashion changed across years, and do you think it might change once again along years?

M.A. - Yes, for sure my ideas have changed. Initially there was a lot of skepticism, as I was not truly convinced that fashion and sustainability could be brought together. Afterwards as knowledge over the two topics have increased and deepened, I realized the two could work and even match together. My perceptions will change once again whenever I will have the chance to purchase products and acquire something produced in a sustainable fashion version.

Environment

I - How do you think Fashion and Environment are related?

M.A. - They are connected because in order to produce fashion items it is necessary to use resources which are given by the environment as natural capital. Even when considering the entire life cycle of fashion products production, from fabrics to colors, clearly there is a certain consumption of natural resources. I think this is the point where the two meets, and practically fashion deserves the environment to keep on working.

I - What makes a good fashion environment to you?

M.A. - For environment you mean what?

I - It is about a properly functioning business ecosystem respecting natural capital.

M.A. - Ah ok. First, a great attention must be paid to the types and the sources of raw materials adopted along the production process, in order to lessen the impact and abuse of the so called "scarce resources", preferring renewable resources. Then we should consider also the matter of

the ecological footprint, which should be included in a business operating model, to minimize the impact ongoing industrial activities are posing on the environment.

Social

I - How Fashion and Society are related for you?

M.A. - I think they are related in the same way I was mentioning previously when answering to the question "what fashion represents to me". I think Fashion, even if it comes being improper under some circumstances, creates and gives labels to individuals depending on the style that person is wearing, enabling the recognition and the clustering of that same individual into a defined and stereotyped group. In some sense I think this phenomenon could be a resource too, as we are all different and we have different styles. Fashion works as a cohesive element but at the same time a differentiating one, as you can distinguish from others who are wearing different stuff, but you can find yourself being part of a tribe and a group of people who have the same taste of yours.

I - Interesting. And which are, in your opinion, the social issues fashion has to face nowadays?

M.A. - First I have to mention the issue of child labor, if I can mention it as a social issue. I think it is still diffused, and I perceive lots of brands are still abusing of children, even more brands than we ever thought or currently have information about. Obviously, we could open a greater debate scenario regarding corporate ethics and CSR business practices. Secondly, I would say… let me think of how to properly explain the concept. Sometimes fashion gives you the freedom to express who you are, as there are plenty of styles one could rely on. Unfortunately, our society is still not clever enough to accept or even comprehend people who wear extremely extravagant clothes parting from the standard. There are lots of people who decide to wear what they are confident in, as they perceive to be free to express themselves 100%, but those same people suffer from prejudices or bullying. I think about homosexual persons, or in general people who have an eccentric style, which are not welcomed or even worse suffer from physical and psychological harms.

I - What you just said is anticipating a topic we are going to discuss next, which is the gender theme. Probably you are aware as you are a passionate for fashion, that many brands are working for inclusivity causes, and are promoting gender fluid campaigns. I wanted to ask you which are your thoughts over the matter.

Gender

M.A. - I think that as long as there will be people judging you or others, we will be never free, even if those judgments are not necessarily negative or of disguise. When referring to the gender fluid cause embraced by fashion companies, I have quite a cynical opinion. I think many brands do engage in these campaigns mainly for marketing purposes rather than for pure commitment and dedication. For example, I have a controversial feeling about one of the latest Nike's campaigns regarding the introduction of plus-size lines. Obviously, I appreciate and agree with the fact of introducing a category of people practicing sports, which has never been traditionally considered as belonging to the sports world, as being obese and overweight people. Still I also think Nike has been quite smart in this campaign, as the mediatic impact of introducing plus-size dummies

and lines would be enormous, as it was proven. I must realize how far this desire for inclusivity and gender fluidity is real or strategic. Anyways, I think it is absolutely a correct cause, as no one is worse than others and no one should be excluded. Everyone should have access to the same plethora of offerings and should have the opportunity to access to the same number of different styles options, mainly to not feel excluded. I think society is yet good enough in excluding people, so fashion brands should work for the better. As for example I am completely disagreeing with brands producing clothes for babies and kids, who are using specific colors as pink for girls and blue for boys to distinguish gender. I think this is just a way to put a way too premature stereotype over babywear.

I - In this very case, I would like to tell you several unisex brands are present today and are working for proposing entire collections which go from size 36 to 55, equally wearable by men and women. Do you think it is something that could work for you, something you would find interesting, or even acquire something from?

M.A. - Yes, I would say so. Anyway, the first thing coming up in my mind is that the only item option and style is a sporty one, as about not too much feminine or masculine, so I would think about a plain t-shirt, or jeans or cargo-themed trousers. I think it as something that could work, still there will be always items for which a certain distinction will always remain, as when thinking about dresses which will be always worn by women or transgenders who identify themselves as women. It is something that could work for its versatility mainly, but I do not think it could substitute existing specifically fitting styles for women and men.

I - Yes, generally I think to more of a streetwear style, which is still in nature equally worn by everyone. Moving on, how do you think inclusivity and its perception has changed across years?

M.A. - Well, the topic regarding inclusivity has changed significantly, both for the better as for the worse. People have become much more confident and aware about their own identity, as for example people are way more free to express themselves, as traditional standards have been completely overturned and people have become much more in control of their identity, even priorly to what it could have been ever predicted. On the other hand, there is also a negative side, as with self-exposure people are now facing much greater risks of incurring into prejudices. I think it is correct for anyone to show off and feel confident in exposing himself or herself, but I also think there are lots of ignorant people out there just ready to judge others. This does not stand only for gender preferences or sexual tendencies, but also for people who have particularly eccentric styles. If we perceive part of a more inclusive environment, we are for sure more prone to expose ourselves. The more we expose, the greater risks of judgements and prejudices we can also encounter along the way. Risks can range from simple judgements to body shaming or insults or acts of bullying.

I - So do you think this sort of inclusivity is quite superficial in nature? Maybe also when realizing that with the advent of digital communication more individuals can confront with others and express their own opinions even anonymously, so they feel even freer to express their negative thoughts and perceptions over other network users.

M.A. - Yes, this is exactly the point. Social media and the advent of digital networks in general have both given the chance to express even more for the better as for the worse.

Digital

I - How do you get informed about latest fashion trends?

M.A. - Mainly looking at Instagram pages, yes definitely via Instagram. What I do the most is to look at fashion brands websites, specifically high end or luxury brands which I will be never able to afford, searching for their collections to realize the most used colors matches or patterns or styles combinations.

I - Ok I see. Apart from fashion trends, which are in your experience the kind of values and meanings fashion brands do express via their digital platforms, which include both social media as websites and ecommerce platforms?

M.A. - I think they are mainly concerned with the sustainability topic. Brands do tend to divide sizes from the average tall - small sized - and normal weighting individuals. I have also observed many brands have stopped using photoshop to correct models' imperfection, so pics are way freer from correction filters.

I - And how do you get informed about sustainability related info?

M.A. - Well, when it comes to sustainability, I usually look at the corporate website of the company I am interested in, and I search for the "sustainability" section. I think it is the most usual approach for an economist (Laughs). Otherwise I search for information via social media and their ads.

I - Are you part of a Fashion digital community? Do you feel you are a passive contact or an active influence for fashion brands you follow?

M.A. - Totally passive. You mean: Am I am an engaged user, right? No, for sure I am a silent user. Maybe the only action I do contribute with is through likes on brands' social media pages.

I - Which is the impact of digital marketing for fashion sustainability purposes?

M.A. - Well I think the impact could be enormous and groundbreaking. Actually, at the moment there is no specific fashion sustainability related campaign that is coming up in my mind.

I - H&M has lately proposed a more "Conscious Collection".

M.A. - Oh yes, you are right. I think sustainable fashion reflects a double sided coin, as on the one hand there is great potential over the cause especially when properly communicated via digital marketing granting an enormous reach; on the other hand there is also a greenwashing risk, meaning brands do promote something just because they are following a trend but not for a pure commitment and dedication. Firms can leverage a lot on greenwashing practices, even braking into misleading practices which ultimately threat unconscious and misinformed consumers. Unaware consumers do easily tend to trust, as in the case of H&M, when the brand is significantly famous, and the sustainability message is so strong, even if at last they are just manipulated and tricked.

I - Thanks for your time. Have a nice day.

Interview #5

Where: WhatsApp Call
Duration of the interview: Around 40 minutes
Who: G.V.
Age: 31
Profession: Industrial Engineer for a Cooperative Society
When: 04/04/2020, h. 5.00 p.m.

G.V. is a 31 years-old girl living in the city center of Padua. She is an industrial engineer and she works for a cooperative firm dedicated to the introduction of people with disabilities into the working scenario. In her free time, she also works as a Yoga teacher and she is passionate of travelling around the globe, most of the times alone.

I: Today I would like to talk with you about Sustainability in Fashion. I have several questions I would like to discuss with you about, and I am quite interested in knowing your personal experiences and stories in relation with the topic.

Interviewer - I
Interviewee - G.V.

I: Can you tell me a little about yourself- as your hobbies, what you do for a living…?
I work as an industrial engineer in a cooperative society. I am working in the operation department dedicated to the optimization of the production line activities. I am specifically interested in applying the lean philosophy in the production flow. As a hobby I do like to experiment different sports, like running and hiking, but in general I am an open person, so I like to experiment different stuff. I love to read and to travel both in Italy and Europe. A dream of mine is to visit the Far East area, as India, China and Japan of course.

I: When you hear about sustainability, where does your last experience with sustainability has taken place?

G.V.: Today actually I went hiking in the mountains and I took a bag to collect all plastic junks I found along the way. I have been a vegetarian from two years, as I am not favoring high intensity production processes both for human health as for animal wellbeing. I do not shop anymore at supermarkets or at big chains, I do prefer buying first quality local products from producers or small grocery shops. When it comes to clothes, I acquire products from vintage markets or at second-hand events.

I: What does sustainability means to you? and how important is it for your daily life?

G.V.: It is important because I respect nature and I want to leave a good world to the next generations, and I want it to be better than how it is by now. I think we have a duty with the next generations. I perceive the climatic change being a dramatic fact for our current ecosystem. I think the pandemic spread of Covid19 is highly connected to intensive production processes and to a lessened respect of nature. We are so used to sacrifice the wellbeing of our world for industrial or capitalistic priorities, that we are not realizing we are ruining the world with our own hands. I think it is not sustainable both for the environment as for the

people. People should be less stressed and have more time to dedicate to their hobbies and their passions. It is both a natural issue as a human and social one.

I: Can you tell me about a Fashion Brand you have lately acquired a product from?

G.V.: As I told you before I do not buy anything new. I buy clothes at vintage markets, and most of them do not have any label.

I: What is your all-time favorite brand? Is it typical for you to acquire those branded products? Why it is meaningful for you? (In case the person does not have a favorite Fashion brand, then ask him/her which are the main reasons not to have one?).

G.V.: I do not have a favorite brand. I like brands who produce free-time and sports dedicated clothes, as for example Nike, Vans, O' Neill. Still I do not buy anything from them, I just like the styles, the lines.

I: What is Fashion for you? Would you describe yourself as a "fashionista"?

G.V.: Fashion for me is a woman or a man who is confident with what is wearing. Fashion is about being charming and stylish with whatever clothes you have on, as for example when wearing a jumper. For me it is not related to a pair of heels or a fitting dress, is about being coherent with who you are and being okay with it. It is not about trends; it is a matter about being yourself. I am not a Fashionista in the classic way, as I do not take pace with runways or Fashion shows. When mentioning "Fashion" I think most of the people do think about supermodels in a runway wearing a Gucci dress or a Valentino bag. Fashion does not represent anything of these to me, it is something more personal and independent from trends.

I: What do you think about Fashion and Sustainability? How do you think they can be combined? Is it just a matter of purchase, or does it involve its consumption too?

G.V.: I think Fashion and Sustainability to be an important duo, as the Fashion Industry is followed by lots of people, especially in this historical period, in which we are so focused in aesthetic and beauty related things. The society pushes us to be compliant with those standards, so Fashion has a great duty about being committed, and being honest with their own messages. It is not only about recycling materials, but it is also a matter of respect and transparency all along the supply chain, as granting a fair pay to all Fashion suppliers and employees. If a Fashion brands is not committed in the employment ethical principles, it is not reliable to me.

I: How do you think, as a consumer, you can change or contribute for a sustainable fashion?

G.V.: I think it is something related to what I just told you previously in the kind of choices and conscious behavior I take care to perform daily. I decided to acquire only vintage products and not support any big chain as Fast Fashion brands. Still, I am quite open to changing my mind and become a supporter of those big brands, but only after having proved to be transparent, to be fair, to be traceable all along their supply chain, by reducing its size too. In the Food Industry many companies are dedicated to the slow food which is committed at supporting local producers and shortening the supply chain. Slow Fashion is an option too, to contribute

to the artisanal and handmade producers in a process of re-discovery of the local manufacturers.

I: Has your previous opinion changed over time and why?

G.V.: Yes, for sure. In the past I used to buy lots of clothes from Zara or H&M, mainly related to an economic matter, because those products were particularly convenient. Additionally, I was not as informed as I am now. In the last few years, I have dedicated much time to understanding how and why the products we consume are actually produced, and this knowledge has helped me change my buying behavior and the choices I made every day.

Environment

I: How Fashion and Environment are related to you?

G.V.: First of all they are related in the recycling activities we can perform daily. Additionally, they are connected in the industrial processes because firms must pay attention in their operational activities, as in selecting which kinds of raw materials to use, and in realizing how much a firm is actually producing to limit the risk of overproduction. Companies must pay attention to which kinds of products they use in their production activities, whether they are polluting, and how they can be recycled. Especially for garment producers the matter stands also in using raw materials which are not causing any allergic reaction or are in some way damaging the skin. Environment to me means also the team of employees a firm is supported by, which represent a fundamental element of survival for a company.

I: What makes a good fashion environment for you? Which are its composing elements? And what makes it no good for you?

G.V.: I think it is an environment boosting collaboration and creating a network with artisans and local producers, especially for the product development phase. Another good Fashion environment driver stands in the ability to communicate with users, and in general with people who have a responsible behavior and who are sensitive to the sustainable topic, not just for a cooperative momentum but also as they represent potential key clients, granting high connectivity with other users. They could also be part of different sectors, as for example a company dealing with sustainable food production and a firm joining the beauty related sector. I think differentiation in sectors collaborations brings multiple opportunities and working perspectives, bringing also numerous potential partners connections.

I: Why do you think raw material and production provenance to be meaningful for your fashion purchases? Is it the first thing you look at?

G.V.: Yes, for sure it is one of the first things I look at when acquiring a product, either a cloth, some food or a piece of furniture. Furthermore, I take great care in understanding how a firm works and which kind of attention it pays to its workers. What I look for is the traceability of raw materials, as the provenance and the distance from the production plant and the human resource aspect. I prefer to invest in local producers, still I am quite open to out-of-Italy brands. I retrieve information of foreign brands from their websites, and mostly from their Instagram

pages and profiles which gives much quicker hints, in order to understand how a label is working and if it is consistent with my ethical convictions, as by reading their posts or websites. Otherwise I rely a lot on a word of mouth mechanism, such as asking my friends or my family for some brand suggestions, or I get informed via my actual local shops I am a loyal client of. I want to be sure the choices I make are consistent with traceability aspects and slow chain features.

I: Why do you prefer Instagram as the best channel to get the information you are looking for? Which kinds of content are you looking for?

G.V.: Because Instagram is quick and straightforward. Usually, as I am passionate about reading books and I genuinely love reading, I look out for posts containing information about a brand and what it does, how it works, and which are its values and mission. If I am really interested in a brand, I look for story-telling videos too, but in general I am not the kind of user who is keen in videos. I prefer to read, and not to listen, as for me it is easier and helps me retain the information much more than I would do just by listening. Videos are generally too long for me. In general Instagram is immediate, as through images and information I can quickly understand if a brand suits me or if it is something which does not work for me. I look also at people who are following the page, to check if some friends of mine are interested too and it gives me an extra hint to realize its trustworthiness.

Social

I: How Fashion and Society are related to you?

G.V.: I think it is a matter of good practice with a company's employees first and foremost, ranging from the remuneration fairness to the empowerment of workers. I know the majority of Fashion brands do produce in India or China, which is not something I am opposed to if there is a respect for workers. I think first those companies should serve the local clients first and then spread their offering worldwide, to distribute wealth fairly. Secondly, workers should receive the same treatments as facilities and benefits which are usually granted to western employees, as the opportunity to have a career, to grow professionally. It is not just about the payment rate; it is mainly about giving them the same opportunities we deserve for employees in the rest of the world.

I: So, it is clear you weight significantly the supply chain transparency for your ultimate products' acquisition.

G.V.: Yes.

I: Which are, in your opinion, the social issues fashion must face today?

G.V.: Well, on average I see lots of improper messages delivered to the Fashion audience. Fashion firms have for sure made a long way in the adoption of alternative raw materials as recycled and organic fabrics, still on the other hand I have seen distorted concepts of beauty and perfection, ending in tacit body shaming. Also brands who are committed in fighting the body shaming phenomenon do appear on the contrary being the voice of specific beauty standards, as when selecting models with specific body types. On average, the first big issue

that comes into my mind stands in proposing the anorexic body type as the ideal one, which I think is still today a strong status quo Fashion brands are not able to abandon. I think it is absurd to pursue an ideal body type who is not genuine or not naturally achievable, rather than preferring to empower people in the way they are helping them to accept who they are in their uniqueness.

Gender

I: What do you think about today's fashion inclusivity?

G.V.: I think Fashion brands have been pioneers, in the last few years, in developing the message of gender inclusivity, reducing prejudices. I perceive they are advanced on the topic, as they have been in the past for other matters as political or economic. I think Fashion has always been capable of being the initiator of some good practices and has been also an example for other industries in reducing disparities and integrating minorities.

I: Why do you think reaching full gender fluidity is an important element?

G.V.: From my personal experience I can say it is fundamental to me as there are multiple times and days in which I prefer to wear menswear, and people usually ask me whether I am a lesbian or why I do not use traditional feminine clothes, as a pair of heels. I do not think at all femininity is expressed by wearing heels or curvy dresses every day, it is not a concept which is uniquely linked to a dress.

I: You think the general public is not to be ready to receive those kinds of proposals or messages?

G.V.: Actually, I do not care, I think Fashion brands should be coherent with who they are and the values they believe in, and if people are not ready today, they will be soon. If people are not prepared, if they are still connected to old beauty standards, it is not an enough justification to prevent Fashion companies from delivering the messages of inclusivity. If a company has good values it must pursue them, no matter what.

I: What if I would say to you that there are several existing fashion brands who attempt to create unisex collections?

G.V.: I have seen some Japanese brands who are proposing unisex items, especially because Japanese Fashion relies more on linear and simple fittings, so a same cloth can be quite adaptable to different users. I think it is something I would be a great supporter of, just thinking I am a great fan of my boyfriend's wardrobe and I like to wear many of his clothes.

I: So, you do think there are no specific products which must be destined to a gender only, as skirts for women and ties for men?

G.V.: No, exactly. Still, even from my point of view, when seeing a man with a shirt skirt could be impacting at first glance. I know and I admit being a product of this society, and sometimes eccentric people are perceived as being strange. Still I take my time to think about that and

realize I am quite ok and supportive for people to be free to express in whatever way they prefer to, without prejudice.

Digital

I: How do you get informed about the latest fashion trends? In the case you do not, you can totally say you do not.

G.V.: Ah ah, no I do not, I do not care.

I: How do you get informed about sustainability related info?

G.V.: Mainly via network, and word of mouth process. As I told you previously about two years ago, I started changing my consumption and purchase preferences, preferring vintage markets and avoiding supermarkets. I do buy products from small shops selling local products, most of them are "km 0" kind of products, avoiding plastic products, and selecting small chain traceable goods. When I started knowing people working in the sector, soon I got into an always larger network of people, working in other sectors still pursuing the same overriding ethical choices. The network helped me to find everything I needed and acquire it in an alternative way.

I: I think in this kind of fair and ethical network of producers, people are quite supportive of one with the other. I have always felt like they are apart from the traditional competitive moves, and on the contrary they are collaborative the most.

G.V.: Yes, it is true, they are cooperative. I think those kinds of producers, even if there are always the negative cases and in general lots of people are interested also in making a profit, are more welcoming towards cooperative and mutually sustaining experiences. I think this could be an interesting lesson for Fashion to learn.

I: I do not know if you do pay attention at this point in your daily life, but which are, in your opinion, the meanings fashion brands are developing through their digital platforms? Do you think they are related to sustainability?

G.V.: I have seen growing sensibility over the theme of body shaming and the attention towards the adoption of alternative raw materials options, maybe the recycled or organic ones. Still I do not think the anti-body shaming campaigns to be 100% effective. Lots of brands are working on plus size proposals, and in general they tend to be more and more supportive towards minorities. On the other hand, no coherent information is given regarding fair payment and treatment of employees, I do not think they are transparent enough. They must work a lot on it.

I: Are you part of a fashion digital community? Do you feel a passive contact or a mutual and active influence on those brands?

G.V.: No, I am not a part of an online fashion community. Still I am active and supportive towards local and emerging brands, who handcraft and perform handmade and craftsmanship

activities. I think it is something we should return to; I mean the attachment to small local producers and the art of working with a person's own hands.

I: Which is the impact of digital marketing for fashion sustainability purposes?

G.V.: I think it is fundamental as there are still nowadays people who are not informed about the relevance and harm coming from not sustainable practices. Marketing uncovers a huge chance to help users to become more aware, when it is properly managed and not meant for sales increase only. I think Facebook, Instagram, Webpages, or even the TV medium for older people, do work as great channels to inform people, so I think those social tools have to be tuned to spread powerful information in a coherent way, as focusing on transparency and trustworthiness.

I: Thank you for your time. Have a nice day.

Interview #6

Where: Phone Call
Duration of the interview: Around 45 minutes
Who: C.C.
Age: 23
Profession: Student in Biotechnology Master's Degree Course
When: 10/04/2020, h. 7.00 p.m.

C.C. is a 23 years old student of Biotechnology at the University of Padua. She is currently attending her internship at the University Lab to fulfil her master's degree Thesis. She likes practicing sports and mostly hanging out with her friends. She likes to travel in extreme conditions as travelling by boat around Greece and Croatia. She had been selected for an Erasmus experience in Sweden, but as soon as the Covid19 broke out, she was forced to return home in Padua and finish her academic career in Italy.

I: Today I would like to talk with you about Sustainability in Fashion. I have several questions I would like to discuss with you about, and I am quite interested in knowing your personal experiences and stories you have experienced in relation with the topic.

Interviewer - I
Interviewee - C.C.

I: Can you tell me a little about yourself- as your hobbies, what you do for a living…?

C.C.: My name is C.; I am 23 years old and I am studying for a Biotechnology master's degree Course. I am going to graduate in December 2020 and I am currently working on my thesis which regards the study of genetic diseases and the overall biological process causing those pathologies to emerge as the way they are connected to the amino acids being present in our organisms. I would like to continue working in the research field, mainly in the Academic environment, preferably not in Italy. Do not get me wrong, I love Italy but now I would like to collect experiences abroad and to live in other places and leave Padova for a while.

I: When you hear about sustainability, where does your last experience with sustainability has taken place?

C.C.: Maybe during my last trip, I went to Croatia on a boat trip with my friends. You know the boat life is quite extreme as you do not have unlimited disposal of plain water and you have to significantly modify your normal consumption habits. When travelling by boat you are constantly in the open sea and you cannot rely on the traditional facilities and services you would have travelling on the land. I was quite observant towards not using much water after the bath in the sea, I just took what it needed to remove the salt from my skin, and also I was paying attention to the garbage we were producing, throwing only organic junks in the sea.

I: What does sustainability mean to you? and how important is it for your daily life?

C.C.: Sustainability to me means being respectful towards the nature and the preservation of our world. In my family we are used to not using plastic bags or components as water bottles, we are paying attention to differentiate our garbage and we try to acquire products which are locally made and do not have encountered long travels to become disposable in our own city. Still I would not describe myself as a fanatic over sustainability, I try to improve day by day and make always conscious choices, as I am starting to reduce also the amount of meat I am consuming weekly, still I am not one of those persons who are not tolerant towards people who have different mindsets or lifestyles. I prefer to discuss politely with people about the topic, I always try to realize different points of view rather than staying on my own.

I: Can you tell me about a Fashion Brand you have lately acquired a product of? Can you describe it to me?

C.C.: I do not acquire lots of products from luxury brands as my income is quite limited, so I tend to shop from big chains as Zara and Pull & Bear. Probably my last purchase was a fancy shirt from Zara. I like these brands as they always have new stuff which lines are generally appealing to me and I do not have to spend an absurd amount of money over. Generally, for more high-quality clothes, I tend to ask my mother to lend me one of her stuff as a bag or dress. Lately my mother has attended a sewing course, so she is also creating trousers or dresses for me from old clothes drafts. I really like the end results as I like the materials she selects and uses, and the styles are quite linear and simple.

I: What is your all-time favorite brand? Is it typical for you to acquire those branded products? Why is it meaningful for you? (In case the person does not have a favorite fashion brand, then ask him/her which are the main reasons not to have one?).

C.C.: Actually, let me think about it. Well I would say there is not an all-time favorite brand to me, as I have never been so attached to brands. I am quite interested in the styles or in the patterns, as they must be appealing and trendy for my personal taste, so I like to be quite flexible in what I acquire. Maybe the one I am the most loyal to is Adidas or Nike, as on average I really like what they offer, their lines and their proposals are something quite tuned with the way I want to present myself.

I: What is Fashion for you?

C.C.: Fashion is a form of expression, is an immediate element as people just observing your style can realize which kind of person you are. In my case I would describe myself as a person who wears trendy stuff but is not obsessed with clothes or brands. Fashion helps recognize people who are similar to me, still I am always open to others who are attached to brands or who wear classy stuff, it is just not my thing, but I respect them.

I: What do you think about Fashion and Sustainability? How do you think they can be combined? Is it just a matter of purchase, or does it involve its consumption too?

C.C.: I know Fashion is currently facing struggles to maintain full sustainability over its production activities, mainly connected to the waste intensive production. In my opinion the greater issue stands in the purchasing habits of people, me included, as we generally tend to over consume and buy products, we do not actually have the necessity of, but just because we like the way they look. I have several clothes in my wardrobe I have never worn and are still with the price tag on. Sometimes we tend to go shopping just because we are bored, and we acquire stuff as they are appealing and do not cost as much, so even if me lately regret our purchase we know it did not cost too much, and the price is completely bearable.

I: How do you think, as a consumer, you can change or contribute in a sustainable fashion?

C.C.: Maybe by changing my habits, by purchasing less and being more in the control of what I acquire, meaning whether it is necessary or not. Another important change could be to buy less but better, so invest in quality rather than in the amount of goods I can acquire with the very same budget.

I: Has your previous opinion changed over time?

C.C.: Yes, for sure, when I was a teenager, I did not care at all about what I was acquiring, and why I was buying it. In the past I bought clothes just because I fancied those and wanted to wear something new for a special occasion, but I was not as informed over the kind of choices I was making. Now I am way more conscious and informed, and I am much more in control of my impulsive shopping. I think as I will grow older and become economically independent, I have greater opportunities to buy more quality items, so to invest more on the quality rather than keep on buying from large chains.

Environment

I: How Fashion and Environment are related to you?

C.C.: I think Fashion is quite harming in terms of waste production and pollution generation, causing huge damage over the environment. The Fashion Industry, as other industries, have the duty to invest in new technologies to reduce the polluting impact they perform over nature.

I: What makes a good fashion environment for you? Which are its composing elements? And what makes it no good for you?

C.C.: A good Fashion environment is one which is not limited to the sole sale of products but is also committed in distributing knowledge and information to its customers, in order to help them realize the impact of their own actions. Fashion companies should teach people how to consume, how to acquire products, so not just limit to the appeal generated by the trendy styles being proposed. I think also companies should become clearer about how they work, so generating more in-depth consciousness. I feel like we are so used to being superficial and attached to the appearance that we are not able anymore to be critical and to have our own ideas and questions about what we and others do.

I: Do you feel your consumption behavior to be affecting the way fashion is environmentally sustainable? In which way?

C.C.: Yes, for sure. I know I am not the best example of a consumer as I shop in big chains and I acquire lots of stuff. Still I know I am working on it; I am trying to acquire better and less. As I said previously also when I will have a salary and I will be economically independent from my family, I will be able to invest more on quality.

I: Why do you think raw material and production provenance to be meaningful for your fashion purchases? How and why is it or is it not a defining element of your buying preferences?

C.C.: I think production provenance to be a fundamental element in the ultimate evaluation of the ethical goodness and quality of a cloth. I have to be honest saying it is not something that till now has prevented me from acquiring certain products from brands as Zara or Pull & Bear. Honestly, I have always known it was something I was not totally ok with, but it represented the sole purchases I could afford, so I had no other choice.

Social

I: How Fashion and society related to you?

C.C.: They are related as Fashion and certain kinds of styles create distinctions into a society. Fashion is so influential in the way we approach other people as they are one of the first facts we notice when meeting someone we do not know nothing about. Fashion is a form of expression, as I said, but is also a way to gather into a group of people we perceive being similar to us, so it is 100% influencing our social ties.

I: What makes a good fashion society for you? Which are its composing elements? And what makes it no good for you?

C.C.: A good Fashion society to me is the one which supports every human being, no matter how strange or eccentric it could be. A Fashion society should be welcoming for everyone and should be the space in which no stereotypes and prejudices are present, as it is connected to something fully personal. Also, the Fashion society benefits from diversity, so it should be even more prone to be flexible towards even extreme individuals.

I: Which are, in your opinion, the social issues fashion must face today?

C.C.: The fact that not all customers are ready to be free from prejudices and stereotypes. I feel like, even in young generations, there are still loads of judgments towards minorities, and they are not as open to accept every style with an open heart. The Fashion Industry should work on the spread of messages of acceptance and removal of hate comments via social media, where people tend to be continuously judging others. Fashion firms should help people learn there is no harm in wearing a plus size or being from other nationalities. As it represents a powerful social tool it should help people become more cohesive and supportive.

Gender

I: What do you think about today's fashion inclusivity?

C.C.: I think it is a controversial element. As I said previously, I know lots of brands who are spreading inclusivity messages towards minorities inclusivity means, either regarding nationality or sexual preferences. The fact is that the public seems not fully ready to accept them. I mean these messages are not powerful enough to help people learn and widening their good sense, ultimately preventing them from stop spreading hate contents. I think Fashion brands should better tune their contents, and separate them from a sole appearance connected status, which is usually known for.

I: How do you feel about androgynous styles and trends? And why do you think reaching full gender fluidity to be important?

C.C.: I am totally supportive with reaching full gender fluidity and I am totally ok in obtaining full gender fluidity. Actually, I am quite sensitive to the topic as I have several friends who are homosexual or come from different parts of the world, or who wear singular staff. So, it would be fundamental for me to feel they are supported by the society and they are not suffering anymore from prejudices or stupid old ideas.

I: How do you think fluidity has been related to your past experiences?

C.C.: It is mainly related to my friends, as I know a lot of friends of mine who would be benefitted from reaching full gender fluidity. Still also my family has always taught me to be supportive towards minorities and outcasts, till the point I feel to be committed and protective towards them from any discriminatory comment they might come about with.

Digital

I: How do you get informed about the latest fashion trends?

C.C.: Mostly via social media, specifically via Instagram. I do not follow lots of brands, I am more interested in accounts proposing different styles combinations, you know those accounts in which every post is dedicated to the presentation of an entire outfit idea. This is mostly where I look at, or I also search a lot in the e-commerce section on brands, and I look at the latest releases and collections.

I: How do you get informed about sustainability related info?

C.C.: I read articles, both online and in newspapers and magazines. My family and my grandparents are still used to old fashioned magazines and newspapers, so they are always present at home. I prefer reading magazines as "L'Internazionale" who gives in depth information regarding multiple topics, including sustainability, and I feel it helps me improve my own critical sensibility. I am searching for more official and trustworthy sources for information I perceive as highly scientific.

I: Which are the meanings fashion brands are developing through their digital platforms? Do you think they are related to sustainability?

C.C.: Yes, in some way I think they are committed to sustainability content disclosure. On the other hand, I feel like, maybe it is my own perception, that the first goal of Fashion brands working online is the one of increasing sales and making an always greater profit. I do not think the kind of values which are spread online, to be totally free from practical needs as to sell stuff. I do not think full transparency has been reached yet.

I: Are you part of a fashion digital community? Do you feel a passive contact or a mutual and active influence on those brands?

C.C.: No, I am not part of a Fashion digital community, even if I have modeled for a brand who posted the pics in its Instagram account. I do not think I am genuinely active, maybe I am but in an unconscious way, as by liking posts or leaving tags and comments or by visiting websites, enhancing traffic generation.

I: Which is the impact of digital marketing for fashion sustainability purposes?

C.C.: I think today is one of the sole chances Fashion has to come about a huge public and spread valuable messages with. It unfolds great learning opportunities both for consumers as for brands, as they can engage in mutual communication opportunities, to learn feedback from and to perform always better. Digital channels are a way to listen, to learn and to cooperate, to change things by building a network. I think every company should invest in digital marketing.

I: Thank you for your time and have a nice day!

Interview #7

Where: FaceTime Call
Duration of the interview: Around 1 hour
Who: G.C.
Age: 24
Profession: Student in Classical Philology Master's Degree Course
When: 20/04/2020, h. 1.00 p.m.

G.C. is a 24 years old student of Classic Literature at the University of Padua. She has recently obtained her bachelor's degree and she currently is a student of a Master Degree Course in Classical Philology. She lives in Padua with her family and she has been taking dance classes

in the last few years. During the weekends she likes to go out for dinner with her friends or she also likes to party and join dance competitions. She is also a traveler and she is passionate of beauty and eccentric styles, as she has been mainly influenced by her mother who is a hairdresser.

Interviewer - I
Interviewee - G.C.

I: Today I would like to talk with you about Sustainability in Fashion. I have several questions I would like to discuss with you about, and I am quite interested in knowing your personal experiences and stories you have experienced in relation with the topic.

Overview

I: Can you tell me a little about yourself- as your hobbies, what you do for a living…?

G.C.: My name is G., and I am a student in Classic Philology at the University of Padua. I am currently in the first year of my master's degree Course as I got little late in my previous bachelor's degree attainment. The reason was not due to the fact I did not like the course or I had problems studying and getting good grades at the exams; in fact I have been dedicated and passionate about what I was studying to the point I wanted to take the time I needed to perform at my best. I love reading both prose as poetry, and I really like to suggest to others my personal tastes and opinions regarding the book I come along with. In fact, I dedicate the largest part of my Instagram posts to mention the books I read, as also people who follow me can come along with new reading options. I love to dance, and therefore from the last two years I have decided to take some dance classes. I danced with a partner so now, due to the Covid19 emergence, we had to stop all classes and competitions as we could not maintain the proper distances. I miss dancing a lot and I am looking forward to restarting.

I: When you hear about sustainability, where does your last experience with sustainability has taken place?

G.C.: I think it has taken at home when I had to differentiate garbage. Since I was a child my parents have been particularly stringent on the topic of differentiating waste, I remember we always had different garbage bins at home, so I grew up with a attention to the topic. So yes, my last experience with sustainability is related to sorting garbage.

I: What does sustainability mean to you? and how important is it for your daily life?

G.C.: Sustainability to me means being respectful towards nature as towards all human beings living in the same environment. I must admit it is quite important as a concept, and I try my best not to be a heavy consumer of plastic made products, or to waste the less natural resources as possible, but I am not obsessed with the topic. I am for sure not a heavy user, meaning I am not the average consumer who purchases lots of products just because it is appealing from the shopping experience. I try to acquire things only when they are necessary also because I am improving my capability in optimizing my monetary resources.

I: Can you tell me about a Fashion Brand you have lately acquired a product of? Can you describe it to me?

G.C.: I do not know; I do not acquire products from traditional shops. Usually I have a style idea that fits my tastes and my body curves, and I require the dressmaker I have been loyal to for years to sew the dress I want. The last cloth I have acquired was from my dressmaker for a dance event. I do not like to go shopping at large shops or chains as I do not like the styles and the way they fit. I am quite curvy as a type of body and for example when I go to Zara, I cannot find anything that fits me properly. I realized across years I was more feeling a pin-up/50's style kind of clothes, and I need them to be customized in accordance to my body measures.

I: Do you feel a sense of unease when shopping at large chains?

G.C.: Yes, for sure. I think the largest part of the brands present in the Fashion Industry are still constrained to an ideal type of skinny beauty, which is unrealistic to be attained to everyone, and it creates a sort of conflict and missed acceptance towards people not fitting those sizes. As a result, plus size brands seem to be considered a not-trendy kind of Fashion, as if you are a little overweight you are not allowed to dress in accordance with the latest Fashion modes.

I: What is your all-time favorite brand? Is it typical for you to acquire those branded products? Why is it meaningful for you? (In case the person does not have a favorite fashion brand, then ask him/her which are the main reasons not to have one?).

G.C.: I do not have a favorite Fashion brand as I do not go shopping at famous shops. I think there is nothing for me in there, so I automatically avoid going in there. I prefer to personalize my styles and to have something unique, and not to acquire something mass produced.

I: What is Fashion for you?

G.C.: Fashion is class and elegance and at the same time it represents personality and it is something you can play with; it is not meant to be always considered as serious as some people think it is. Fashion is something connected to who you are and the way you want to show yourself to others. I do not believe in trends, as they are suffocating one's personal tastes, and it is just a way to homogenize people, creating stereotypes and copies. It is absurd to see all those people walking down the street with the same pair of shoes, or the same skirts, it is funny as you can for sure realize the power of trends and media over personal tastes and ideas.

I: Do you call yourself a "fashionista"? What does that word mean to you?

G.C.: Yes, I would, but not a fashionista of current Fashion, mainly of "my idea of Fashion". Obviously, I look at brands' collections and I really like brands such as Gucci who are proposing eccentric styles and accessories, still I like the piece not the outfits and the way pieces are combined. I like to experiment with my own ideas and outfits combinations even if they are anachronistic with latest trends. I actually do not care if I am not trendy enough if the

styles, I wear are comfortable and good looking to me. My personal point of view is all that matters, it is the most relevant element. I have learnt to not care anymore by others' tastes or opinions. Let me live, the same way I do with others!

I: What do you think about Fashion and Sustainability? How do you think they can be combined? Is it just a matter of purchase, or does it involve its consumption too?

G.C.: I am not as informed over the matter, but I know the Fashion Industry has been recently accused of managing the business in a not long-term sustainable way. It is something that has never personally affected me, not because I do not think it is not an important issue, but mainly because I have never played the game of Fast Fashion brands, and I have never sustained them. For sure the matter of sustainability is both in the hands of the producer as in the customer, as the production model is attaining profits mainly because there is a wide public supporting it. I think we are part of a continuous consumption way of living, and as we are getting used to acquiring more and more, we are for sure consuming more to maintain the model alive. As I acquire expensive clothes, which are high quality handmade, I have not the chance, mainly for an economic constraint, to purchase huge amounts of such. My wardrobe is not full of pieces, and the ones I have had have been collected through the years, they are not a product of last months' purchases. I prefer buying less but better.

I: How do you think, as a consumer, you can change or contribute in a sustainable fashion?

G.C.: For sure by acquiring less, but of high quality, and by allocating in a smart way the money I invest in my wardrobe, by purchasing only the things I need and respecting the "life" of usage of a garment. Another way to be sustainable is to select the proper clothes detergents, not the ones which are available at the supermarket. Something I should work for is to acquire detergents which are not excessively polluting the water, or the ones which are produced with natural raw materials. I think there is not a proper disclosure of information over the topic, so I know I should have to retrieve data autonomously and I have to dedicate time to my research. I think it gets time and honest commitment to become sustainable.

I: Has your previous opinion changed over time?

G.C.: Probably growing up I have become much more conscious and attached to the sustainability of products we acquire as a family, mainly in the food domain. When I was younger, I was way more prone to consume processed foods, industrial made products. In the last few years, I have become more scrupulous about the origin of products and the way they are cultivated, and we have lessened our purchases from supermarkets. I think I should gather for further knowledge in respect of sustainable Fashion, still I know I am working in the right direction.

Environment

I: How Fashion and Environment are related to you?

G.C.: I think they are related as the natural environment provides us with the raw materials needed to maintain clothes production, as in general it holds for every working business. I am not as informed over the unsustainable modes of Fashion productions, but I am certain they

are not 100% respectful over the preservation of an ecosystem. Still I think the same reasoning should work for customers who are constantly purchasing goods and consuming huge amounts of water and energy just to keep them all clean. Even if the mode of production is not sustainable, also the consumption and purchase trend is not.

I: What makes a good fashion environment for you? Which are its composing elements? And what makes it no good for you?

G.C.: The one supporting people and the environment, by teaching them how to consume better for their own lives and the ones of the next generations. A good Fashion environment to me is the one which truly empowers women. I am a feminist and I read tons of books in regard of the topic, and I have always felt women were way more required to fit into beauty and Fashion standards than men were. The Fashion sector should eliminate those gender barriers and help women to be themselves by supporting them, no matter their sizes, their disabilities or their beauty defects.

I: Do you feel your consumption behavior to be affecting the way fashion is environmentally sustainable? In which way?

G.C.: Yes, I think my consumption behavior is positively affecting the sustainability results of Fashion. Still it is not worthy, as I am just an outcast and the Fashion Industry is not proposing sustainable modes of productions, it is just trying to come up with some remedies to its unsustainability, with scarce results I think, as I have recently heard heavy discussions over the topic.

I: Why do you think raw material and production provenance to be meaningful for your fashion purchases? How and why is it or is it not a defining element of your buying preferences?

G.C.: It works the same way it stands for food purchases, as the more an item is locally produced the more control, I can have over the way it is produced. If a good travel from the Far East just to become a consumption good here in Italy, I question its freshness and quality, especially when it is sold at cheap prices. I admit the origin of clothes was something that has never affected my purchasing attitude as I have acquired only from Italian brands or I have commissioned clothes to my personal dressmaker. I am not sure over the origin of the fabric, but in general I have trusted my dressmaker, as she knows I have skin sensitivity issues with some fabrics, and if they are not high quality ones, they are causing me irritations. In general, I think the origin of materials are fundamental for the ultimate quality in terms of long-lasting clothes and sensitive skin compatibility.

Social

I: How Fashion and society related to you?

G.C.: I think Fashion owes a duty to society, and vice versa. History has taught us that specific clothes and styles were representative of social facets, political beliefs and fights for equal rights achievement as the use of short skirts for women. I think they must be aligned, as Fashion is representative of modern society and has the greatest impact in organizing the relationships on its inside. To me, there is a lot of work Fashion must do in supporting women

mainly. Beauty ideals have changed, maybe curvy models are now more common than it was in the last century, but I think a lot of stereotypes are still too present, mainly with the advent of Photoshop and posting pics on Social Media. Fashion should be breaking all stereotypes and creating an idea more than a line, empowering every human being to be whoever he/she wants to be, and teaching people to not judge.

I: Which are, in your opinion, the social issues fashion must face today?

G.C.: The biggest social issues stand in the growing ignorance and dependence over the social media proposed models, which are computer made or edited beauties. I know Fashion brands do use a lot the social media channel to be in touch with its customers, still I think rather than just proposing products they should propose also an ideal and a knowledge. The time we are in is so attached to the external beauty and appearance that the Fashion Industry, who works in it, should not exploit the momentum only in terms of potential sales, but also by being committed in transforming the ideals of beauty. When looking at a brand's social media page, I expect to find a concept and not just to find a catalogue of the latest products' releases. Still there are not so many brands working over the topic, maybe during quarantine I have perceived an increased sensitivity over the issue, but I am scared that as soon as consumption trends get back on track, Fashion brands will stop caring in disclosing ethically committed messages.

Gender

I: What do you think about today's fashion inclusivity?

G.C.: I have seen lots of brands proposing styles merging colors or lines which are traditionally meant for women also in menswear dedicated collections. So in terms of gender acceptance and inclusivity I think Fashion has done and it is now doing a great work, still I also think the social issues are continuously evolving, so the social challenges, as I told you, are now different.

I: How do you feel about androgynous styles and trends? And why do you think reaching full gender fluidity to be important?

G.C.: I am quite dependent over feminine styles so in general I do not think an androgynous style could work for me, not because I think it is not proper, but because it does not fit my personal taste. Anyway, I am a supporter in reaching full gender fluidity, and even more I think people should wear as they prefer to, without any prejudice or limitation.

I: How do you think fluidity has been related to your past experiences?

G.C.: Maybe when I was younger, I was more stringent over the feminine lines of the clothes I had been wearing. Then growing up I realized I was not always in the mood to wear feminine pieces, as there were some days in which I just wanted to put on a pair of jersey trousers with a jumper. I have become much more flexible also with the things I personally wore, but I have never been judging one's style and clothes preferences. I have been raised as an open-minded person, and one's style was never a driver shaping my opinion over an individual, especially when I did not know the person at all.

Digital

I: How do you get informed about the latest fashion trends?

G.C.: As said previously I am not obsessed with latest Fashion trends, so I am not looking for them on purpose as by tuning on runway shows or by researching current styles on the Internet. This is since most of the times the lines proposed were not fitting my curves, so I started nurturing my personal taste by detaching it from Fashion proposals. I know what works for me, and what I look good on. Still there are times, mainly on social media as Instagram posts or Pinterest, where I come along with latest releases or collections, so in that case I have a more in-depth idea of the latest trends. Furthermore, I am quite old styled as I get inspired by what I see at shop windows of luxury brands, but I am not as appealed by web advertisements.

I: How do you get informed about sustainability related info?

G.C.: I am not as informed, maybe the few knowledge I have over the topic comes from the books I read, but I am not on purpose looking for those kinds of topics. The moment I need precise information, maybe how to sort a specific type of waste, I retrieve it quickly on the Internet.

I: Which are the meanings fashion brands are developing through their digital platforms? Do you think they are related to sustainability?

G.C.: I think some of them are committed to it as for the brand Gucci, who I have seen lots of posts dedicated to gender inclusivity or as for Armani, who has lastly fighter for a sensible change of Fashion, to reduce its production pace. But for the remaining part I think the main commitment of brands is to generate an appeal by proposing good-looking styles generating the purchase desire. So, I think their aim via digital platforms is to increase sales, rather than truly disclosing an idea supporting sustainability.

I: Are you part of a fashion digital community? Do you feel a passive contact or a mutual and active influence on those brands?

G.C.: No, I am not, I do not think I will ever be. For sure I am quite passive, as I never shop online or look for Fashion brands accounts on social media channels.

I: Which is the impact of digital marketing for fashion sustainability purposes?

G.C.: In my opinion the potential would be enormous and will be deeply impacting the purchase attitude of consumers. Digital marketing should be used not just to induce people to buy goods, but also to induce them the desire to retrieve information, to spread knowledge and become more in control of what they acquire. Probably for the Fashion Industry this would be harming as if people become sustainably conscious the consumption pace would sensibly reduce, and brands' profits would too. Fashion companies should foster their future livelihood and future survival by empowering their communities, by developing consciousness.

I: Thank you for your time. Have a nice day.

Appendix B

Interview #1 — E.P. — USER

SAYS
"People are not interested in sustainability alone, they become interested just after receiving a personal benefit from it"
"Real fur is not comparable to fake one"
"Sustainable clothes are not effective in expressing yourself"

"The first critical element favouring products' acquisition is lines appeal"
"I cannot afford sustainable clothes. They are too expensive"
"I do not believe Fashion companies to be truly committed in sustainable campaigns"

THINKS
-Loves being unique and wearing unique styles
-He is honestly not committed into sustainable practices
-Has never perceived alternative clothing options as valid

-He knows his purchasing criteria are not critical but does not perceive it as a critical fact

DOES
-Extrovert
-Quite talkative
-Wears comfortable clothes
-Multiple times looks at his smartphone

FEELS
-Is stressed by the sustainable cause
-Is stressed by current Fashion trends homologations
-Discomfort with sustainable Fashion campaigns

-At unease when discussing valid alternatives as second-hand markets / recycled clothes

Interview #2 — C.G. — USER

SAYS
"Anytime I go shopping I think about the background supply chain transparency"
"I tend to acquire clothes from secondhand markets"
"I prefer to acquire less at higher quality"
"Fashion is a feeling of belonging"

"Sustainability is an attitude"
"If I need a plain white t-shirt I go to H&M"
"Fashion companies should be transparent and reliable"

THINKS
-Truly believes in the potential of engaging in conscious choices
-She thinks being actually embracing sustainable practices
-Sustainability is attained in both purchase and consumption

-She recognises the potential Fashion companies have in aiding customers to indulge in more conscious practices
-Believes in good practices as gender inclusivity campaigns

DOES
-Goes shopping in Fast Fashion stores
-Usually uncertain over the given answers
-Questions herself whether the answer given is right or not

-Reflects a lot over the answers
-Quite interested over friends' suggestions and WOM phenomena

FEELS
-Unease in giving answers
-Perceives a sort of judgement
-Not as in depth informed over the current impacts of unsustainable Fashion practices
-Discomfort with Fashion actual proposed trends and models

-Unease in the adoption of social media accounts

Interview #3 — M.M. — USER

SAYS
"Sustainability to me means improving the wellbeing of the environment we live in"
"The fact workers can be exploited and underpaid disturbs me"
"Sustainable Fashion must be also economically sustainable"

"We should strive for a circular economic model"
"I am not quite informed over sustainable fashion current mispractices"
"The Covid19 experience teaches us the importance of social wellbeing and sustain"

THINKS
-Thinks sustainable Fashion offerings to be not affordable
-Thinks current Fashion sustainable programs are reserved to a niche of customers who can afford them
-Perceive social sustainability as focal after pandemic spread

-Perceives Fashion brands are not committed to transparency and traceability disclosures
-Thinks being passive and a poorly informed user

DOES
-Talkative and confident
-Goes purchasing at Fast Fashion big chains
-Does not invest in sustainable practices information gathering
-Kitchen full of plastic bottles and bags

FEELS
-Passionate and interested over Fashion trends
-Interested in gaining knowledge over responsible practices but she is limited by laziness
-Too old for social media tools

-Responsible for the wellbeing preservation of others' and of nature

Interview #4 — M.A. — USER

SAYS
"Sustainability means being aware"
"When it comes to food I check for products' sources and supply chains"
"I do not like to buy clothe online"
"I cannot always easily afford sustainable clothing, even if trying to select them the most"

"Sustainable Fashion cannot conquer the mass market mainly due to diffused missed awareness over the topic"
"Fashion is a cohesive element as a diversifying construct"
"I have a cynical opinion over branded campaigns regarding gender inclusivity"

THINKS
-With the advent of social media people are more free to express themselves but are also risking more bullying occasions
-Believes sustainable related knowledge is not owned by the average consumer
-Thinks brands are tending to indulge in greenwashing practices

-She cannot afford sustainable clothing
-The in-store experience to be fundamental to construct brand reliability
-Fashion companies are not working towards transparent practices disclosure

DOES
-Goes shopping at Fast Fashion branded shops
-Tries to express the concepts at her best, stresses the points multiple times
-Correct herself by reformulating her answers
-Confident

-Passionate of grocery shopping
-Pays the highest attention towards food products' provenance

FEELS
-Fashion addicted
-She feels at unease when expressing people are not even conscious of their actual purchasing trends
-She feels being deeply committed in raising awareness information gathering practices

-Attracted by the business model formula of "more at few"

Interview #5 — G.V. — USER

SAYS
"I think the current economic model is not sustainable both for the environment as for social wellbeing"
"I do not buy anything new. I buy clothes at vintage markets"
"Sustainability is a matter of respect and transparency all along the supply chain"

"Big Fashion brands should work with and for local artisans and producers"
"I have dedicated much time to understand how the products we consume are manufactured"
"Fashion has been an initiator of good practice campaigns"

THINKS
-Believes in the importance of firms' transparency and traceability practices
-Sustainable knowledge should be diffused to and with users
-Fashion should rediscover its local handmade manufacturers' origins

-Environmental sustainability should be as implemented as social sustainability is
-Fashion firms should strive for integrating minorities and reducing any discrimination
-Cooperative societies are critical to empower sustainable committments

DOES
-Shops only at local producers
-Manage cooperative projects in between small businesses empowering sustainability campaigns
-Uses only recycled or second-handed clothes
-Invest time in boosting her knowledge over the sustainable matter

-Confident and proud of her ethical mission
-Talkative
-Kind and extrovert

FEELS
-Unease with current Fashion trends
-Believes in collaborative projects managed by small locally settled companies
-Fashion Industry has the power and duty to inform people and work with them to engage in actual responsible shifts

-Not pleased by marketing campaigns even if recognising the power these instrument have on the mass market
-Necessity for tangible proofs of brands' engaged responsible efforts

Interview #6 — C.C. — USER

SAYS
"I like brands like Zara for their appealing lines at affordable prices"
"We generally tend to over-consume and buy products we do not actually have the necessity of"
"A good Fashion environment distributes knowledge to its customers"

"A Fashion society should be welcoming for everyone, leaving NO space to stereotypes and prejudice"
"The F.I. should work to spread messages of acceptance and removal of hate comments via social media"
"I do not think Fashion transparency has been reached yet"

THINKS
-Digital channels are tools for cooperation
-Network creation is perceived as a fundamental construct
-Thinks sustainable Fashion is not affordable
-Thinks companies' online campaigns are only meant to raising profits

-Perceives scarcity of Industry's disclosed infos regarding current operations
-Thinks users have poor awareness over their consumption choices

DOES
-Does not value other affordable alternatives to high Fashion sustainable offerings
-Shy
-Pays attention to alimentary products' sources and treatments
-Favours only local materials
-Plastic free supporter

FEELS
-At unease when discussing regarding general sustainable practices, maybe because of the poor control over the topic
-At unease when realising the negative effect of her purchases selections
-Feels economic constraint as uncrossable

-Perceived difficulty in retrieving significant raising awareness messages via social media

SAYS

"Anytime I go shopping I think about the background supply chain transparency"
"I tend to acquire clothes from secondhand markets"
"I prefer to acquire less at higher quality"
"Fashion is a feeling of belonging"

"Sustainability is an attitude"
"If I need a plain white t-shirt I go to H&M"
"Fashion companies should be transparent and reliable"

THINKS

-Truly believes in the potential of engaging in conscious choices
-She thinks being actually embracing sustainable practices
-Sustainability is attained in both purchase and consumption

-She recognises the potential Fashion companies have in aiding customers to indulge in more conscious practices
-Believes in good practices as gender inclusivity campaigns

Interview #2 C.G.
USER

DOES

-Goes shopping in Fast Fashion stores
-Usually uncertain over the given answers
-Questions herself whether the answer given is right or not

-Reflects a lot over the answers
-Quite interested over friends' suggestions and WOM phenomena

FEELS

-Unease in giving answers
-Perceives a sort of judgement
-Not as in depth informed over the current impacts of unsustainable Fashion practices
-Discomfort with Fashion actual proposed trends and models

-Unease in the adoption of social media accounts

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