

Affective design and sustainability: Social stimulation at the feet of humanity



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ABSTRACT

A product can meet the fundamental and essential categories and requirements of the costumers without arousing or enjoying the relationship between product and consumer. This project

searches for solutions of affective design and some impacts of projects that are related to footwear. UNICEF's program "Guardians of Childhood" in Croatia raises awareness among consumers about the eradication of extreme poverty in Africa. Another example is the campaign called "Put yourself in her place" where a group of lawyers reported violations of the rights of domestic workers in Kuwait. The third example of a campaign is "Sustainable Footprint" of Adidas, which had great impacts in Sao Paulo and other cities where exists another store of the brand. It is important to highlight a sustainable contribution, in this case, an affective sustainability for the ethical concepts of consumption and creation of a pleasant bonding between the product and the user.

Keywords: Affective design, Sustainability, Footwear.

1 INTRODUCTION

Society takes pleasure in the effervescence of consumerism, immersed in hedonistic and individualistic culture, surrounded by products, that are loved and hated, as Norman (2008) elucidated. This theme is becoming more relevant, as inconsequential consumption increases environmental problems.

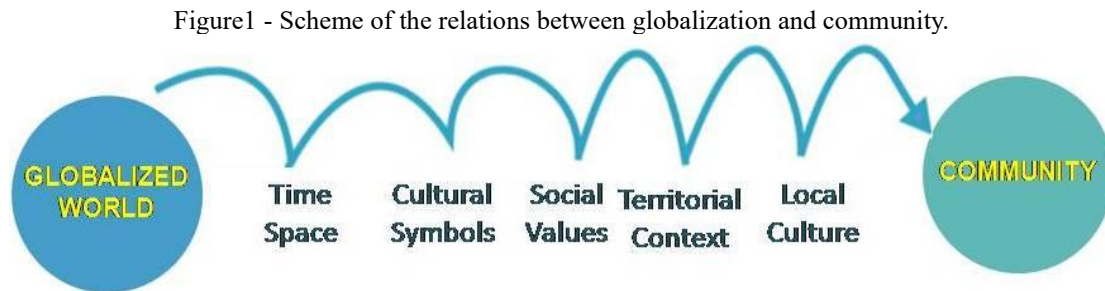
It is observed that globalization involves an interaction of economic and cultural factors, causing changes in the patterns of production and consumption, which, in turn, produce their own globalized characteristics. Socio-environmental responsibility and territorial values are associated with the sustainable concepts of differentiated groups.

Hall (2006) says that the impact of globalization on identity is linked with the time and space that coordinate systems of representation. In this perspective, design has the role of establishing the relations between the context of this globalized world in its territories, traditions, cultural and identities, constructing messages through communications that can be symbolic or functional.

The relationships between the globalized world and the social factors run along paths with design, in order to properly serve the community. In other words, the context of time and space, cultural



symbols, social values, territorial context, and local culture, affects the community, according to figure 1.



Source: Prepared by research, 2021.

However, a product can address social factors and, of course, fundamental and essential consumer requirements without arousing pleasure in that relation. Thus, the elements that lead the relations of the product to affective issues stand out. These can be conditioned to the attainment of pleasure in the man/system interaction. However, it is necessary to promote the formation of a culture of designers that are aware of social problems and impacts on the environment, in search of a better relation between product/environment/society (MANZINI, 2008).

A while ago, the concept of "good design", was used to define the qualities of a product only by usability and functionality. However, as Mont'Alvão (2008) affirms, these are fundamental requirements that, once achieved, seek to satisfy the psychological needs of the user.

Several factors can be analyzed for the appearance of the affective relationship with the product. As described by Russo and Hekkert (2008) it is a relationship of love, that is, a great affection and attachment. But all these principles are linked to a decisive factor: the experience that the product can provide.

According to Teboul (1991) it is necessary that there is something more in the product, that will make us choose that one instead of another. When a footwear denotes status or when an everyday footwear, begins to save the user's stories, it receives a different value of affection. That is, the relationship of a user with his footwear expands in panorama beyond its basic function.

This paper presents studies on affective design relationships and some impacts of social projects related to footwear and the example of scientific research "Social Technology" carried out by the author. It is considered that the designers can act with socio-environmental responsibility from the studies in affective design, since any areas of production leads the consumption to discard.

2 AFFECTIVE DESIGN

The term Affective Design has come to be evidenced in the last decades. This design approach focuses on the role of human emotions and their influence on the way humans understand and relate



to the artifacts. Therefore, it is important to investigate how to design such affective experiences or at least how to facilitate them (MENEZES, 2007).

According to Santos and Rióbio (2012) one of the difficulties in the study of affectivity is the definition of what the term really means, which in most cases is confused with the meaning of emotion. Almeida (2001) chose the approach of Henri Wallon, educator and French physician, who lived from 1879 to 1962, to differentiate the terms. For Wallon, the emotion would be related to the biological component of human behavior, referring to a physical reaction that lasts only a certain period of time. On the other hand, the affectivity would have a broader meaning, in which various manifestations are inserted. That is, from basically organic manifestations (expressions of suffering and pleasure) to social related manifestations (feeling, passion, emotion, humor, etc.).

Russo and Hekkert (2008) report that design researchers investigate how such affective bonds occur that people maintain with products and how it is possible to facilitate them. And this occurs because, according to Menezes (2007), the human being has the desire to surround himself with products that help them create a sense of comfort, security and affection.

It is important to point out that the user-product relationship always includes the other in some way either physically or in thought according to Damazio (2006), that is, products do not exist outside of social relations. This reinforces the idea of Le Bretron (2009) that the man is affectively present in the world.

The influence of affect can be found in both individual and social situations. Affective bonds can alter thought processes, changing the way events are perceived and interpreted. It can change the way people interact with each other and can also change how people interact with objects, according to Affectivedesign.org (2006).

To understand Affective Design, it is necessary to understand the affective forms and manifestations that the user can have with a product. One of them, or perhaps the main one, is love. Phrases used by consumers such as "I love my shoes" or "I do not live without my cell phone" can be seen as something ordinary, but they have legitimacy. Russo and Hekkert (2008) argue that love (or worship) expressed in relation to products that are consumed is real and not simply a metaphorical expression.

As Oliveira (2014) affirms, the intense sensory (mainly tactile) contact of the person with his object reaches such an intense level that the object becomes an extension of the human body.

However, unlike interpersonal love, the love of products according to Russo and Hekkert (2008) does not have mutual growth nor reciprocity in interaction. This occurrence occurs since it is a relation with an inanimate object. The author suggests that love for products also differs from interpersonal love considering what is expected from the love relationship with a product that is different from what is expected from the interpersonal love relationship.



RUSSO & HEKKERT (2008, p.152) state that “love between the user and the product is more stable and therefore easier to understand than interpersonal love”.

3 THE SHOES

Footwear has long ceased to be just a product for our feet protection. The shoes have gained symbolic and aesthetic attributes, turning into an item that informs and inserts a person into a context. The shoes of the ancients were divided into categories: those that protected the soles of the feet and were laced with laces and those that completely covered the feet. The idea of footwear as a social investment is not new. It is seen from ancient Greece, in which major characters wore kothorni shoes, with larger heels (MERCATELLI, 2017).

At the time of Luiz XIV, it was decreed that only a high-powered man could wear moccasins with red heels, and no leap could be higher than the one that belonged to the king. Figures 2, the image represents an actor from Ancient Greece, who possibly wears kothorni footwear. In the following, the image highlights the red-bounced moccasins of Luiz XIV. It is observed on how the footwear of that time looked, and how they clearly defined the social position.

Figure 2 – Actor from ancient Greece, wearing a kothorni, and Red jumpsuit slippers from King Louis XIV.



Source: http://49.media.tumblr.com/tumblr_mdsuu4yc7h1qfmw4wo1_500.gif/ <https://ensinarhistoria.com.br/o-retrato-do-absolutismo-monarquico/>

Bergstein (2013) informs that in the time of Napoleon I the fashion from the previous century remained, but men began to wear long boots. Louis Philippe, in his reign, began to wear shoes and boots that were elastic, and the boot of varnish was hidden by the pants. Recently in Brazil embroidered slippers from Bahia have become a characteristic of the people. Today, the most common slippers are made out of rubber (Brazilian brand "Havaianas").



At the time of Louis XIV, it was decreed that only a high-powered man could wear moccasins with red heels, and no leap could be higher than the one that belonged to the king. Figures n° 2, the image represents an actor from Ancient Greece, who possibly wears kothorni footwear. And the image highlights the red-bounced moccasins of Louis XIV. It is observed on how the footwear of that time looked, and how they clearly defined the social position. People have long been buying identities and stories that were materialized into products.

People have to try many things in order to experience other ways to use the products, besides its normal functions. Today, unlike in the past, footwear is more affordable. One can decide whether to pay for expensive, handmade models imported from Italy or to spend less on the less luxurious variations made in China (DUARTE, 2014).

In this way, footwear is a type of product that can add functions, from symbolic and aesthetic to practices, to different degrees, thus becoming a complex product. The shoes can be functional sneakers, high heel party shoes and even the finger flip to stay at home.

As Bergstein (2013) states, it is up to the user to decide who he wants to be at any given moment, and what information his shoes should convey. Footwear in the contemporary world has evolved and changed to the point of assuming a unique personality and communication with the non-verbal world.

4 IMPACTS OF SOCIO-ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS

The principle of Sharing Moral Values composes the school of emotional values described by Russo and Hekkert (2008). This principle is related to a connection between the moral and ethical values of people and products. Consuming consciously leads to the experience of social pleasures - an abstract form of pleasure that is experienced when a product embodies certain values and transfers a sense of environmental responsibility to the user.

Some examples of projects and campaigns related to footwear that influence society in relation to social and environmental issues are going to be presented.

4.1 PET SANDALS CAMPAIGN

In some countries of Africa, where poverty is extreme, the inhabitants make their own footwear - PET (Poly Ethylene Terephthalate) sandals with manual resources and techniques. PET bottles are gas packaged products that can reach the driest, poorest regions at low prices. The use of PET in dry regions could be an advantage, but the effect on nature of this uncorrected material is questionable.

In the Brazilian northeast countryside, the price of two-liter refrigerant drinks in PET bottles is accessible to the local population. However, in cities like Santa Filomena, in Pernambuco (in Brazil), for example, the price of a 200 ml bottle of mineral water is too high. This fact occurs in other regions



with desert characteristics. Drinking water transported to the cities of the northeast by the Brazilian Army for safety, since safe water is something very precious. The aggravating factor is that there are no adequate destinations for PET packaging. In these poor regions, there are no recycling industries and waste is usually destined for the dumps, according to Mourão (2019).

As a result of the eradication of extreme poverty in African countries, such as Madagascar, UNICEF (2013) launched the awareness campaign “Put yourself on their shoes”, which aimed to bring this reality to consumers in developed countries by selling PET sandals in famous stores, through the emotional appeal of design. This action was proposed by Bruketa & Zinic OM for UNICEF Croatia. UNICEF's "Children's Guardians" program in Croatia seeks to raise awareness among consumers so that they can be regular, long-term donor individuals for the eradication of extreme poverty in Africa (UNICEF.ORG.). The program sought to raise financial resources to help poor African children through a campaign aimed at the community (figure 3).

Figure 3 – Campanha "Guardiões da infância" UNICEF Croácia.



Source: https://www.adsoftheworld.com/media/ambient/unicef_put_yourself_in_their_shoes.

The proposal gave shoe consumers the feeling that poor people feel when they wore African PET sandals for a few moments. The objective was to sensitize the consumer to literally understand the day-to-day lives of those living in extreme poverty. And it's also worth mentioning, that the campaign has drawn attention to consumers regarding the use of recyclable materials.

4.2 KUWAIT AND THE SHOE CAMPAIGN

An advocacy group reporting violations of domestic workers' rights in Kuwait developed an intensive publicity and outreach campaign to promote respect for the rights of these workers, in 2010.

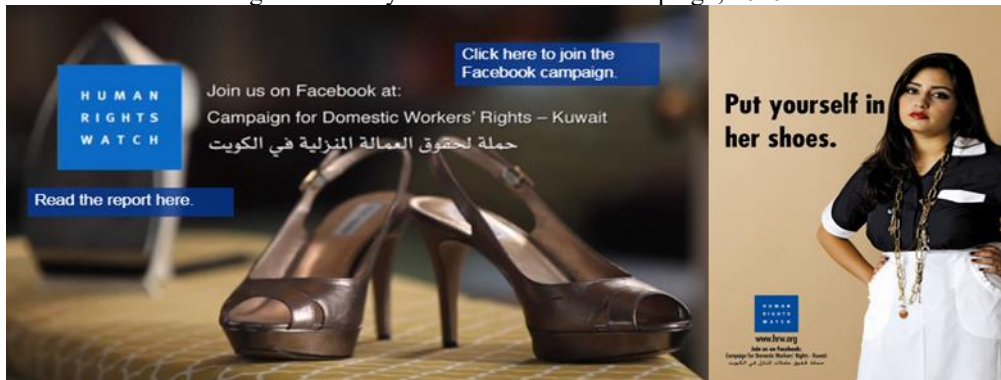
The campaign was an effort to illuminate the abuse that is often remained hidden in private homes and beyond the reach of the law. The proposal forced employers in Kuwait to grant the rights



of domestic workers in accordance with their labor laws and to grant them the same rights as other workers now have, including limited working hours, wage-time pay, and a Slack week.

The campaign has invited employers to imagine themselves as the domestic workers, with a series of advertisements based on the theme: "Put yourself in her shoes." Each ad asked viewers to consider how they would feel if they were subjected to some of the common violations these migrant workers face (Figure 4).

Figure 4 – Put yourself in her shoes campaign, 2010.



Source: <https://dailyintake.wordpress.com/tag/put-yourself-in-her-shoes-campaign/>.

More than 660,000 domestic workers come from countries like India, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Indonesia, Nepal and Ethiopia to live and work in Kuwait. Although some employers respect their rights, many others violate contractual working hours and do not pay wages on time, allow workers to keep their own passports or give them a normal day off from home (Dailyintake. Wordpress.com).

4.3 SUSTAINABLE FOOTPRINT – ADIDAS

The voluntary program "Sustainable Footprint", aimed at minimizing the environmental impacts caused by the incorrect disposal of sports shoes. The project consisted in collecting the sneakers of any brands that were in no condition for us to use. The donor should sign a footwear donation term for reuse, and in return, get a free gift from the Adidas store. The German company carried out this campaign in the seven stores and eleven outlets in São Paulo in 2012. Until April of that year, there was a change of shoes for tickets to the Football Museum, located in the Pacaembu stadium in the capital. The toasts, as of March of the same year, varied according to the Brazilian city (Envolverde.cartacapital.com.br).

In 2015, Adidas launched the "Sustainable Footprint 2.0" (Figure 5), a reverse logistics program to promote the proper disposal of sports clothing and footwear, reducing environmental impacts. The initiative, which was available in forty-one of the concept stores of the brand offering discount on purchases per product collected. The project began to accept items that go beyond sports shoes, also



collecting t-shirts, pants, shorts, and blouses of any brand or style. From the disposal, the products are transported by Adidas itself to the Distribution Center, taking advantage of the existing logistics operation of the brand - without generating additional emissions. From there, the products went to I: CO, an entity specializing in footwear and clothing life cycle management and a partner in adidas, responsible for the sorting process. Depending on the state in which it is found, the product was directed to one of the three ways that it was done: recycling, where the raw material is used to make another piece; reuse, which goes through hygiene and return to the used clothing market; or energy generation, a process that would strip the product from its original characteristics, and then it would turn into fuel, serving to feed cement kilns (Bloglogistica.com.br).

Figure 5 - Adidas Sustainable Footprint Campaign in Brazil, 2015.



Source: <https://www.bloglogistica.com.br/mercado/exemplo-de-logistica-pegada-sustentavel-adidas/>

5 RESULTS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Humans cling to things, but they also get tired of them. And it is in this context that the designer can act, seeking to understand these affective relations between user and product. With this, there is a need for the awareness of the designers of the socio-environmental aspects, praising the product the qualities to preserve the environment.

It has been observed that the humans are affective being and that kind of relationship is not only interpersonal, it can happen with products. There are some design requirements for a product to become affective, such as aesthetic longevity. But also, the socio-environmental responsibility that generates symbolic values to the function of footwear.

It was observed that footwear can be a feasible theme for socio-environmental impact analyzes through affective design. The object needs to participate in unique moments in the user's life to gain



meaning. Whether accumulating affective memories or just assigning values, such as status, to the user in certain situations. This longevity benefits not only the user, but also the environment, as the product will have a longer life cycle.

The presented examples of projects and campaigns related to footwear provide new possibilities for society in relation to socio-environmental issues. Thus, the humanitarian aid campaign in Croatia, organized by UNICEF, making it possible for society to feel the lack of adequate footwear. The emotional impact provided a new sensory perception, both in relation to PET bottles and the form of reuse for protection of the feet.

The example of the "Feel Your Shoes" campaign drew attention to social injustices in Kuwait and encouraged the insertion of human rights in that country. The image of domestic work under heels highlights the difference between employers and employees.

The Adidas campaign in exchange for shoes used for rewards and discounts encouraged the correct disposal of waste for recycling. In a recent edition, the campaign has shown itself to be broader, making society more aware of the value of recycling. Dealing with affective design in the socio-environmental sector is a small contribution that companies and institutions can make to make society aware. Customized services and socio-environmental campaigns can improve life quality. Social responsibility can be a lever for environmental impact solutions.

In the examples presented, one can prove the importance of the role of the designer as an opinion maker. It is important to highlight the sustainable contribution, in this case, the affective sustainability. Talking about sustainability is not just talking about materials when we are creating products, services, and spaces that are loaded with an emotional feeling, bringing the user to the production and the design process. By the ethical concepts of the consumer, it is possible to create a pleasant link between the product and the user.



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