

# Chapter One

## What We Saw and Why We Started this Project

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### Introduction

The global fashion industry is undergoing a significant change in form. Over the past 10 years a gap has opened between the increasing spectacle and decreasing practicality of haute couture and the ubiquity of designer diffusion lines. It is being filled by what New Zealand designer Karen Walker calls 'high casual' clothing. This clothing typically originates in small privately owned firms that produce high quality original garments in themed seasonal collections. Designers of this scale are now operating successfully in New Zealand, Australia (Maynard, 1999, 2000, 2001; Weller, 2006, 2008), Hong Kong (Skov, 2002, 2004), Brazil (Leitão, 2008), Canada (Palmer, 2004; Rantisi and Leslie, 2010), Sweden (Hauge, Malmberg and Power, 2009) and a range of other countries not traditionally associated with fashion. Indeed, a 2011 special issue of *Fashion Theory* called 'Dreams of Small Nations in a Polycentric Fashion World', focused on small European countries, suggests this phenomenon is now becoming widespread. The opening of this gap arises from many things: the relative ease, indeed necessity, of doing business internationally; changes in the organisation of work for the middle classes; the emergence of new occupations, including those of mediation and representation; the turn to culture and creativity as privileged modes of being in the developed world; the consequent emergence

of new kinds of global subjects. All of these are underpinned by massive changes in middle-class women's lives and careers during the past 30 years.

This book arises from our research on the New Zealand designer fashion industry. An unexpected economic and cultural success story, this high profile export-oriented industry is overwhelmingly dominated by women as designers, studio employees, wholesale and public relations agents, industry and government officials, fashion writers and editors, as well as the more traditionally gendered roles of garment and retail workers, tastemakers and consumers. We were drawn to the research because, in New Zealand at least, this was the first female dominated industry to be identified as a vehicle for the country's new globalising ambitions, after receiving extraordinary attention from government officials, tastemakers and the media. We were also intrigued by the apparent sway that this emergent industry had over the middle-class women around us; our friends, colleagues, sisters and students were becoming amateur fashion aficionados in ways that were both unexpected and unprecedented in a hitherto largely unfashionable New Zealand. As a women's studies scholar long steeped in cultural studies, and a political economic geographer interested in globalisation and neoliberalism, we found ourselves embarking on a research project that would draw on our respective interests and skills in order to explain the unexpected rise and broader implications of this globalising 'new economy' creative industry.

In our efforts to find analytical material which would help us account for the growth and profile of this gendered industry, we became dismayed by the tenor of existing scholarship in relevant academic fields. More specifically, our work has exposed a number of disconnections between our observations of women's positions in, and experiences of, the New Zealand designer fashion industry and the academic literatures on globalisation, fashion studies and the cultural economy. While it is now well recognised that globalising processes are both embodied and gendered, analyses of male dominated areas such as technology, the high skill service sector and finance continue to be privileged over the quieter and more massified changes in women's lives. Nor are we content with existing attempts to gender these accounts which position women only as either low skilled vulnerable workers or, at best, embodied agents of resistance. We argue that the globalising processes of the past two decades have both forced and enabled changes in women's lives. In particular, we claim that processes understood to be central to economic globalisation are underpinned by first world women's entry into the workforce in large numbers at a time when middle-class work is changing profoundly, changes which have come to be glossed as the 'new economy' or the rise of the 'cultural and creative industries'. It is these changes that contribute to the unexpected success of the New Zealand designer fashion industry.

This book is an attempt to rethink the relationship between changes in the global cultural economy over the past 20 years and changes in middle-class

women's working lives through the exemplary case of the New Zealand designer fashion industry. Drawing on 10 years of empirical research, including analysis of media, policy and industry texts, 50 interviews with designers, buyers, public relations agents, intellectual property lawyers, industry specialists, government officials and other associated occupations, and observations at four New Zealand Fashion Weeks, the book shows how the designer fashion industry's innovative designs, explosive growth and global focus have been harnessed to rebrand New Zealand as creative, cutting edge and sophisticated. In successive chapters we examine the rise to prominence of a group of young, largely self-employed, women fashion designers in the late 1980s. We reveal how their activities were harnessed by policy projects aimed at creating a new globalised economy for New Zealand based on export orientation and niche markets, how these transformed New Zealand's urban geographies, created a new industry based on networks of small businesses, generated new forms of cultural capital based on fashionability, and cohered into a distinctive form of gendered economy we term 'workstyle'.

In writing this book we hope to make a number of contributions to the academic study of gender and globalisation. While it might be assumed that such a small industry in a tiny country at the bottom of the South Pacific must be inconsequential to our understandings of global processes, it is precisely the improbability of this industry which has forced us to question gendered accounts of globalisation and exposed blind spots in existing literatures on globalisation, fashion studies and the cultural economy. By tracking the ways the New Zealand designer fashion industry is globalising, this book transforms our understanding of the processes of globalisation, the significance of middle-class women's entry into the labour force and the nature of the designer fashion industry itself. First, we make a conceptual contribution to the literatures on globalisation and new economies by explicating the ways in which middle-class women's entry into the labour force over the past 30 years has underpinned new forms of aestheticised production and consumption. Second, we make a contribution to the burgeoning literature on culture and creative industries which virtually ignores the fact that women dominate in many of the industries that this literature focuses on. Finally, by focusing on a new designer fashion industry emerging in a country not traditionally associated with fashion we can contribute to an understanding of how globalising economies develop outside the paradigmatic cases of global cities and powerful nation-states.

## **The New Zealand Designer Fashion Industry**

The growth and success of the New Zealand designer fashion industry took the country, and indeed the international fashion community, by surprise.

New Zealand fashion design seemed to burst from nowhere onto the international scene in the late 1990s. Before that the profile of designer fashion even within New Zealand was so low as to be almost nonexistent. There had been a very small number of long established haute couture designers selling within New Zealand to a tiny elite market. Elite labels such as Christian Dior were sold under licence and other international brands such as Mary Quant and Pierre Cardin were manufactured in New Zealand and sold in major department stores. Shopping districts carried mass-produced clothing manufactured by a small number of heavily protected local companies with very limited variation in design or choice. But few New Zealand women bought clothes; almost all women had been taught to sew as girls and prided themselves on their ability to be self-sufficient in creating wardrobes for both everyday wear and special occasions. One of the very few exceptions to this pattern of elite haute couture, conformist ready-made apparel, and DIY fashion was found in street markets such as the Wakefield market in Wellington and the well-known Cook Street market in New Zealand's largest city Auckland.

Today, all New Zealand inner-city shopping districts have a high proportion of independent local designer-retailers selling original clothing to a growing discerning local market. The High Street-Chancery area in downtown Auckland markets itself to tourists as a distinctive fashion quarter and New Zealand Fashion Week, now in its eleventh year, draws ever more attention from the national and international press. Established designers are focused on expanding their export markets, while young designers are being formally mentored into 'export-readiness'. Garments by high profile New Zealand designers such as Karen Walker and World have been acquired by art galleries and museums internationally. Popular, often expensive, books on New Zealand fashion aimed at the mass market are being produced (DePont, 2012; Gregg, 2003; Hammonds, Lloyd-Jenkins and Regnault, 2010; Lassig, 2010). The most recent of these books (DePont, 2012) was produced in conjunction with the initial exhibition of the New Zealand Fashion Museum in conjunction with the 2011 Rugby World Cup. In sum, New Zealand designer fashion is an example of remarkable growth and change and appears to exemplify the characteristics and attributes of the cultural and creative industries more generally.

The increasing profile of the New Zealand designer fashion industry is in part attributable to government interest. Between 1999 and 2009, successive governments seized on the new high-profile designer fashion industry as both a driver of economic prosperity and a way of marketing a contemporary image of New Zealand to the world. As Gilbert (2000, 20) notes '[a]cross the world, governments are paying particular attention to middle-class consumer demand for distinctive, high-quality cultural commodities in efforts to regenerate or promote particular cities'. In the New Zealand case, the new emphasis on the cultural and creative industries has been deliberately

harnessed to governmental aspirations to 'go global' for the whole country. Designer fashion has been the poster girl for this reorientation, sharing the field with *Lord of the Rings* film director Peter Jackson and his hobbits. The government privileging of this cultural economy is seen as explicitly producing a double benefit. It is both a means to create a new basis for economic development in the context of a globalising economy, and it involves an explicit reworking of national identity and national branding.

There are, however, distinctive industrial, socio-cultural and aesthetic characteristics to the New Zealand fashion industry. In contrast to North America and Europe there are no corporate design houses on the model of Ralph Lauren or Donna Karan operating out of New Zealand. Global luxury goods companies, such as LVMH, have only a minor presence as retailers or event sponsors. Rather the New Zealand designer fashion industry is made up of independent, design-led labels produced by small to medium sized companies where uniqueness (of materials, design, production and merchandising) is crucial. New Zealand designer fashion firms are usually intensely local in set-up, sometimes working out of a single site that doubles as both workroom and salesroom. With a few exceptions the garment construction is done by New Zealand manufacturers or individual outworkers. Employees can take on a wide range of roles from finishing the actual product, to administration and/or sales. Even those 'stars' that inhabit the top echelon of New Zealand designer fashion, some of which are now multi-million dollar firms, continue to run their businesses as family concerns and/or husband-and-wife teams and champion a 'hands-on' style of doing business in which their business, creative and personal identities are inextricably linked. Nor do they aspire to leave New Zealand and join major international fashion houses. In numerous public statements the top designers have all expressed their ambitions to remain New Zealand-based niche players at the cutting edge of global fashion trends.

These designers also draw on an unexpected aesthetic for a country notable for its rural 'green' connotations. Fashion journalists and critics have consistently commented on the development of a distinctive New Zealand style, noted for garments that are described insistently as 'dark', 'edgy', 'ironic' and 'intellectual'. These terms are often used to characterise fashion designs that challenge conventional approaches by taking risks with sharp, unexpected and confrontational cuts and looks. A preponderance of black, sharp tailoring, and gothic referencing are amongst the more visible aspects of this distinctive aesthetic. In strong contrast to the traditional tropes of indigeneity, sport and landscape which underpin New Zealand's longstanding strengths based on agriculture and tourism, the new aesthetic has been mobilised to position New Zealand as an urban, urbane and creative place. While celebrating this avant-garde direction, high profile fashion reportage of the New Zealand incursion into the international fashion arena also hints at the paradox at the heart of our analysis, namely,

how a tiny unfashionable country at the bottom of the South Pacific, more noted for its spectacular scenery and numerous sheep, could produce 'from nowhere' a cutting edge fashion industry. It is precisely this question that motivates our analysis.

## The Rise of the Designer Fashion Industry

Until recently, the very idea that the designer fashion industry might play a central role in New Zealand's global bid for export-led prosperity would have seemed laughable. While a small domestic clothing and apparel industry had grown up behind protectionist policies during the post-war period, 15 years ago this industry was moribund – a casualty of the deregulation and tariff cutting that characterised the 1980s more generally. Economic liberalisation had facilitated a trend for mass and middle market apparel to be sourced offshore. As a result, clothing imports to New Zealand more than doubled between the mid-1980s and the mid-1990s (Blomfield, 2002; Perera and Bell, 2000; Walton and Duncan, 2002). The implications for the small domestic industry dominated by a small number of major firms, were dramatic, with mass redundancies ensuing as manufacturing was relocated to lower wage sites, initially Fiji (Harrington, 1998), but more recently China following the signing of an international trade agreement in 2008. More generally, imports from China to New Zealand increased from 8 to 11% in the two decades from 1989 to 2009 (Shand, 2010, xxi). According to a union submission cited by Kelsey (1999) the number of full-time equivalent workers in the footwear, apparel and textile sectors dropped from 30,939 in 1985 to 16,710 in 1997, and was then employing less than 10,000 people. Other figures, which include textiles, clothing, footwear and leather manufacturing, show that numbers in the sector fell from 27,241 in 1996 to 17,097 in 2006 (Business Economic Research Ltd., 2006). While the exact figures may be in dispute, the trajectory is not.

Those who survived were forced to reconsider their approach. Across the sector those clothing manufacturers began to invest in new technologies, encourage more innovative design and explore the potential for international niche marketing. While the emphasis remained on sustaining a domestic market, for many clothing manufacturers exporting became an integral part of local operations during this period. High-profile examples include *Sony Elegant Knitwear*, founded after the Second World War by Croatian refugees Zarko and Sonia Milich. Like other New Zealand garment manufacturers this firm was badly affected by the broader political-economic shifts of the 1980s which saw both increased costs for essential imported materials and the loss of its customer base to cheaper clothes made elsewhere. The international share market crash of 1987, which saw New Zealand's market hit especially hard and following which 'you couldn't just do the things that you did previously any longer', provided the final impetus to reinvent the



**Figure 1.1** Cook Street Market by Dick Frizzell. Image courtesy of Dick Frizzell and Momentum Gallery.

company (Lassig, 2010, 215). Today this company – rebranded as Sabatini White – makes very high quality, directional, women’s knitwear that sells well internationally, including into Italy.

During the same period the early entrepreneurs of the New Zealand fashion industry – World, Karen Walker, Zambesi, Kate Sylvester, NOM\*D, Trelise Cooper – became visible. Some began by selling clothes in markets such as the inner city Cook St (see Figure 1.1) and Wakefield markets in Auckland and Wellington respectively, and then as supplementary lines for retail stores.

These embryonic firms were part of a wider shift in New Zealand culture, as a formerly rural and conservative society began to be challenged by a new generation of more urban and urbane young people. In the late 1980s, following the share market crash, inner city retail property became widely

available at relatively affordable prices, while import goods became prohibitively expensive due to the massive devaluation of the New Zealand dollar. During this period key designers opened their own inner city retail premises. These were small firms, often with co-located workrooms and retail premises, and in which almost everything was done by the designer herself, or with the support of partners and/or sisters. Over the next decade they were to gradually increase in profile amongst those young New Zealanders 'in-the-know'.

In the late 1990s these small avant garde designers came to both government and public attention. In 1997 four designers – Wallace Rose, Zambesi, World and Moontide (a swimwear company) were sponsored to attend the first Australian Fashion Week. The following year the New Zealand contingent attending Australian Fashion Week was expanded to include Karen Walker, Blanchet, Kate Sylvester and Workshop. These events mark the first signs of a recognisable New Zealand fashion industry, and international and national attention began to focus on the emergence of the distinctive 'edgy' design aesthetic so often associated with New Zealand fashion. Later the same year Karen Walker was selected to participate in a young designers show attached to the first Hong Kong Fashion Week. There she launched 'Daddy's Gone Strange', her first full collection. When pop star Madonna wore a pair of so-called 'killer pants' from the collection to perform at that year's televised MTV awards, Walker's name went firmly international. In New Zealand she became a celebrity overnight.

London Fashion Week in 1999 is now widely regarded as the watershed event for the New Zealand fashion industry, with industry commentators suggesting that there is a pre- and post-1999 character to New Zealand designer fashion (Shand, 2010). Government sponsorship of four designers (Zambesi, World, Karen Walker, NOM\*D) in a combined showing labelled 'The New Zealand Four' was a wild success, resulting in an invitation to return to London for the autumn showing. International observers commented on the emergence of a new distinctive New Zealand style and hailed New Zealand as the new Belgium – 'fashion-speak for a small country with hot ideas' (Floyd, 1999). The usually staid New Zealand media began to give local designers long overdue coverage and an independent assessment estimated that New Zealand as a whole benefited from over NZ\$1 million in subsidiary publicity from the attention the New Zealand designers received in London.

In 2001 Pieter Stewart, a former model and TV presenter, launched the first, highly successful, New Zealand Fashion Week in Auckland. This event is now the showpiece for New Zealand designer fashion and, more generally, for Auckland's attempts to position itself as a creative city. Fashion Week, still owned and run by Stewart and her daughters, has become a fixture on the annual cultural events programme. New Zealand Fashion Week and other fashion weeks are also central to the strategies of fashion designers

and figure significantly on their yearly calendars. In 2010 Fashion Week was complemented by the introduction of a further event; an autumn Fashion Festival explicitly targeted at the public rather than industry insiders, and with the same high profile mix of fashion and cognate activities. Beyond the actual activities and the associated sales, New Zealand Fashion Week generates significant economic impacts as an event and in terms of international media coverage. It has also come to figure prominently in the social and cultural landscape of the city, with massive media coverage, live streaming of shows, the development of a post-show fashion weekend featuring condensed catwalk shows, designer garage sales, music, and other events. But perhaps even more importantly for us, it is now a site in which the New Zealand designer fashion industry as a whole becomes visible. This event underlines the extraordinary transformation that occurred in a decade; from a few women making clothes for their friends and to sell in informal markets, to a fully fledged, export oriented, creative industry charged with both economic and cultural meaning.

## **The New Zealand Designer Fashion Industry Today**

Conventional measures of the contemporary New Zealand designer fashion industry are difficult to generate. New Zealand designers are notoriously reluctant to discuss their finances, in part because of the reputational repercussions (government official, 2003; designer, 2008). Indeed, we have gathered 10 in-depth media interviews with high profile designer Karen Walker herself, plus our own, and none has been able to put a precise figure on her exports or turnover. More generally, as we have already seen, routine statistical measures of industry and employment do not distinguish designer fashion from other garment and textile manufacturing, and employment measures are confused by the prevalence of subcontracting and temporary employment. Neither of the relevant government departments (New Zealand Trade and Enterprise (NZTE), Ministry of Economic Development (MED)), nor the national industry association (Fashion Industry New Zealand (FINZ)) has been able to generate meaningful and reliable statistics because of the difficulty of excising designer fashion from broader activity in the clothing and apparel sector (government official, 2007; industry official, 2007). Nonetheless, there are various material indications to support the tale of increasing visibility and success presented above. Because of New Zealand's limited domestic market, designers' aspirations and growth prospects are tied to exports from day one, so one widely accepted metric of success is export earnings. Estimates suggest that exports of designer fashion clothing more than doubled between 2001 and 2004 (Moore, 2004). More recent figures show apparel exports account for NZ\$326m per annum (New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, 2010). Although

**Table 1.1** New Zealand Fashion Week Participation 2001–2011

| Number of Appearances at Fashion Weeks | 1 or 2 | 3 or 4 | 5 to 10 |
|----------------------------------------|--------|--------|---------|
| Number of Labels                       | 139    | 30     | 18      |
| Still Trading in 2011                  | 24     | 18     | 18      |

*Source:* compiled by authors from New Zealand Fashion Week Press releases and programmes.

this figure includes children's wear and outdoor clothing, which are also successful stories of economic reinvention, it is widely accepted that designer fashion makes up roughly 50% of these apparel exports.

There have been other attempts at assessing the size of the New Zealand designer fashion sector. An industry scoping report carried out in 2001 identified 119 companies, accounting for 1,500 employees, which then met the generously interpreted criteria of 'design focus', exhibition and production of diffusion lines. Of these companies, 72% had a turnover of less than NZ\$2 million per annum, and 69% employed fewer than 10 full time staff (Blomfield, 2002). This report also confirmed the relative youth of the designer fashion industry, with two-thirds of these firms established in the 1990s and 13% set up since 2000. Employment patterns in the broader apparel industry underline the point that most designer fashion firms are very small. According to government agency Market New Zealand, in 2002 there were 962 firms in the garment and apparel industries. Of these, 760 (79%) employed 'just over two people', suggesting that these are in fact, for the most part, partnerships with some casual labour brought in during peak periods. Only 2% of firms in the New Zealand apparel business have over 70 employees, a vast change from the regulated post-war period in which three or four large firms dominated New Zealand garment manufacturing and employed thousands of people around the country.

A third way of assessing the size and shape of the designer fashion sector is that between 40 and 60 designers have exhibited at each of the 10 New Zealand Fashion Weeks, of whom about half have been developed enough to present solo shows, while the balance have presented smaller collections in group or 'New Generation' shows. As Table 1.1 shows, participation amongst the top designers has been remarkably consistent over the last 10 years. Of the 48 firms which have appeared at Fashion Weeks three or more times, 36 are trading at the time of writing (September 2011). Of those which appeared once or twice (139), 24 are still trading, of which eight are designer fashion firms, while another 16 are either retailers or high street manufacturers. The remaining 115 do not appear to be active. In sum, therefore, there are 60 firms, the majority of which are design-intensive, actively trading in New Zealand.

While these firms vary considerably in size, it is a condition of participation in New Zealand Fashion Week that even the so-called 'new generation



**Figure 1.2** Style Council. From left to right: Karen Walker, Adrian Hailwood, Elizabeth Findlay (Zambesi), Patrick Steele, Helen Cherry, Murray Crane, Kate Sylvester, Liz Mitchell, Trelise Cooper. Photograph by and courtesy of Monty Adams.

designers' must already be supplying 10 retailers and be export ready suggesting there is now significant capacity in designer fashion. Of those participating in New Zealand Fashion Weeks, six designers – Karen Walker, Trelise Cooper, Zambesi, World, Kate Sylvester, NOM\*D – have been consistently profiled and are commonly identified as the 'top designers' in terms of public profile and export earnings (see Figure 1.2).

These designers have all grown dramatically in the last 10 years. Trelise Cooper has the largest business and now claims to have a staff of 75, a turnover of more than \$NZ15 million, exports of more than NZ\$7.5 million, and to be responsible for the employment of 500 further workers. Karen Walker and Zambesi are the next most significant players. Walker's exports are estimated to be somewhere between NZ\$3.5 and \$5 million, and to make up 80% of her business. Her clothes are sold in more than 130 stores in 15 countries, including nearly 50 cities outside of New Zealand. Forty per cent of her export revenue is generated in Japan. Zambesi is smaller but also claims to employ over 50 staff across its manufacturing operations and its six stores (four in New Zealand and one each in Sydney and Melbourne). Zambesi has a further 22 stockists in Australia, three in Japan, two in Los Angeles and one each in Singapore, London, Stockholm,

New York and Paris. World and NOM\*D, the other two of the New Zealand Four from London Fashion Week in 1999, remain leading players but are significantly smaller.

More generally, the women who dominate the leading firms in the New Zealand designer fashion industry have become prominent figureheads for women in business; Trelise Cooper, Kate Sylvester, Denise L'Estrange Corbett and Karen Walker have all won national export awards, and are regular speakers at export promotion and leadership conferences associated with the 'new economy'. They are frequently portrayed in the business news as exemplary entrepreneurs. They have also become involved in new fields. For example, Karen Walker, perhaps the highest profile of these designers, now lends her brand name to paint, eyewear, jewellery and a diffusion clothing line. These women have also become local celebrities, with all that implies for the management of their own images. Their houses, pregnancies and career trajectories are widely reported, while their clothing appears in regular media features promoting 'new looks'. Finally charity work, particularly around breast cancer, has become a high profile part of the industry. Annah Stretton, who now runs one of the largest businesses in the sector, produces a magazine devoted to breast cancer issues; Karen Walker and Trelise Cooper are both associated with the Breast Cancer Research Trust which holds regular charity events and a highly successful fund-raising T-shirt campaign in association with New Zealand designers and the lower-end clothing chain Glassons.

## Structure of the Book

This book explores the emergence and significance of this new female-dominated industry in New Zealand, focusing in particular on the first decade of this century. It considers how a very small group of women entrepreneurs became implicated and imbricated in the globalising aspirations of New Zealand governments; how fashion became central to the reimagining and reshaping of New Zealand's cities; how an industry was called into being as the division of labour proliferated; how fashionability became a central aspect of urban modalities and subjectivities in New Zealand; and how a new form of gendered economy was established. We argue these New Zealand events and processes manifest more general aspects of the globalising cultural economy that requires us to rethink the gendering of globalisation. New Zealand designer fashion is based on 'workstyle' firms, usually headed and staffed by women who are passionate about fashion. Not surprisingly, perhaps, the industry is also riven with precarious labour practices, self-employment, contracted and portfolio work, volunteer labour, and high levels of, often invisible, failure. Access to this networked, contingent world is premised on performative labour – dressing appropriately, being 'in-the-know', having the right connections, and keeping visible. The designers, along with the wider networks of

economic, educational and cultural actors that support and draw on the industry to establish their own opportunities, are meshed into what Laura Bovone (2005) has called a 'virtuous circle' where everyone is producing, mediating and consuming highly aestheticised goods and images. In turn, this underpins a broader pedagogy of fashionability in which middle-class New Zealand women and, increasingly, men use designer fashion to create a distinctive form of cultural capital that actively positions them in a globalising world.

Global garment manufacturing has long been the focus of wide social scientific study, and the fashion industry has also previously received attention in economic geography; for example Allen Scott's work on Los Angeles and Paris (Scott, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2006), Norma Rantisi's analysis of New York and Montreal (Rantisi, 2002, 2004; Rantisi and Leslie, 2010), Sally Weller's research on the Australian fashion industry (Weller, 2003, 2008; Weller and Webber, 1999) and analyses of Scandinavian fashion (Aspers, 2006, 2010; Hauge, Malmberg and Power, 2009; Power, 2003; Power and Hauge, 2008). There are also established geographical studies of fashion as retail (Crewe, 1996; Crewe and Beaverstock, 1998; Crewe and Lowe, 1996; Leslie, 2002; Wrigley, Coe and Currah, 2005) and transnational consumption (Dwyer, 2006; Dwyer and Jackson, 2003; Jackson, Thomas and Dwyer, 2007). However, as Reimer (2009) observes, only recently have these geographers of fashion begun to engage with wider debates about the cultural and creative industries. To set the scene for our conceptual arguments, in Chapter 2 we review the diverse social science literatures on globalisation, fashion and the cultural economy. We show that while each of these literatures offers something to our overall analysis, none of these three literatures has fully grasped the new forms of economy, industry, urbanity and subjectivity embodied in these small female-headed fashion firms. This allows us to underline the distinctive conceptual contribution made by our study of New Zealand designer fashion; namely that the changing nature of middle-class women's work has been grossly under-estimated in geographical and sociological literatures on the nature of recent political-economic transformations. Not only does our study make the experiences of these women visible, it also shows how this, in turn, requires us to rethink existent analyses of the gendering of globalisation.

Chapter 3 explores the ways in which the designer fashion industry arose in the context of the neoliberalisation of New Zealand's economy, but was then harnessed to a post-neoliberal agenda which was aimed at re-forming New Zealand as an export-led, globally integrated, knowledge economy. We show how the designer fashion industry was progressively incorporated into four nested governmental projects, of which globalisation was the over-arching goal and integrating principle. As New Zealand governments in the late 1990s realised that the 'more-market' approaches of the 1980s and early 1990s had not created the expected prosperity, they shifted towards new policies in which it was argued that successful developed

economies build economic prosperity through ideas rather than material commodities. As the creative and cultural industries were incorporated into this new 'knowledge economy' framework, New Zealand urban authorities began to attend to creative cities gurus such as Richard Florida and fashion became central to the reshaping of urban spaces and images. Finally, fashion was linked to new forms of social and cultural development through programmes aimed explicitly at Maori and Pacific youth, health issues and community development.

As New Zealand designer fashion industry began to go global, so too did this have implications for the national geography of the industry. All New Zealand cities have mobilised resources and re-ordered urban spaces to take advantage of the economic and cultural potential that fashion appears to offer. However, Auckland has become the pre-eminent city for New Zealand designer fashion, hosting the top New Zealand designers, much of the industry infrastructure, and the high profile New Zealand Fashion Week. Chapter 4 explores this new urban geography, showing that despite explicit political support and sustained industry agglomeration, the city has not been able to harness the symbolic cachet associated with the globalising designer fashion industry. Not only is Auckland continually subsumed by New Zealand in the international branding of the designer fashion industry itself, but also fashion has remarkably little visibility in the ways in which the city represents itself internationally. Instead, the New Zealand designer fashion industry explicitly leverages the symbolic cachet that arises from being associated with the global fashion cities; particularly London, Tokyo and New York. Moreover, whereas the government understands New Zealand fashion to be a key aspect of efforts to rebrand New Zealand and New Zealanders as intellectual and sophisticated, New Zealand's most successful designers produce collections that are evocative of metropolitan themes and tropes. This 'borrowing' of symbolic capital by a globalising designer fashion industry in a 'not-so-global' city underlines the need to consider more carefully how the material, political and symbolic processes associated with globalisation play themselves out in distinctive ways.

Chapter 5 focuses explicitly on the gendering of the designer fashion industry. It shows how the broader networks that make up the industry developed through a proliferating division of labour which saw the growth of educational programmes, public relations, showrooms, events management and other small businesses which service the designers and their firms. The growth of employment opportunities and the associated proliferation of small businesses have allowed middle-class women to identify market niches and develop economic opportunities that fit with their lifestyles. In this chapter we locate the growth of the fashion industry in general changes in women's working lives, both in New Zealand and throughout the developed world. We argue that this industry has all the

hallmarks of the new cultural economy, including a precarious labour force, emphasis on performativity and presentation of self, and a virtuous circle of mutual reference and reciprocal consumption, and underlines how these characteristics of the industry are premised on gendered forms of entrepreneurial subjectivity.

Chapter 6 explores the pedagogy of fashionability. We show that designer fashion is not simply a successful industry with a visible urban presence. We argue that one of the major effects of the fashion industry, an effect in disproportion to its economic impact, is the way in which it has effected a change in New Zealand and New Zealander's orientation to the world. We show that the design aesthetic which propelled the industry to success in the late 1990s grew out of a neoliberal subjectivity which privileged edgy, ironic, 'dark' designs. This new symbolism underpinned a redefined sense of nationhood as well as new conceptions of personhood. It moved New Zealand decisively away from traditional tropes of indigeneity, sport and landscape, and was an attempt to teach New Zealanders to feel, think and act as globalising subjects. We discuss how this symbolism was used to position New Zealand as an urbane and intellectual place, and then through an analysis of print, televisual and net media, show how this gendered aesthetic has changed how New Zealanders think about themselves and how they live their lives.

In Chapter 7 we reflect on the state of the New Zealand designer fashion industry ten years after it first came to prominence and as the global recession has challenged consumption-led models of economic growth and national identity. We begin by observing that the industry appears surprisingly buoyant. The established designers, now entering middle age and many with partners and children, continue to produce successful collections for domestic and international markets. Contrary to expectations, business failures have been surprisingly few and are most often attributable to factors other than recession. The network of auxiliary activities continues to proliferate, creating further economic and cultural opportunities for middle-class New Zealand women. But nor have any of these New Zealand fashion firms become the global brands and major export earners that government and industry pundits hoped for. Consequently they are often dismissed by government officials as 'lifestyle firms' that have failed to fully develop. Our argument is that this dismissal is misplaced, and that many observers of the industry have failed to grasp the distinctive ways in which the women who make up the networks of New Zealand designer fashion practice gendered versions of entrepreneurship, industry and economy in their 'workstyle' firms and what this means for wider analyses of globalisation.

Finally, we conclude by returning to the broader debates about globalisation, fashion and gender. Although this literature has been paid an enormous amount of attention to the experiences of third world and

migrant women in the broader clothing industry, rarely has it focused on the networks through which middle-class women have been drawn into the fashion industry, and the new forms of aesthetised production and consumption that have ensued. Nor has the cultural economy literature recognised the implications of shifts in middle-class women's work for the small networked firms they study. Consequently the rapidly growing number of female fashion entrepreneurs who are designers, educators, public relations specialists and marketers are virtually invisible in the existing academic literature despite their increasing visibility in the popular press. By making visible the experiences of the middle-class women who make up the New Zealand fashion industry, and exploring the new economic opportunities they have created for themselves and others, our analysis thus provides a major corrective to existing analyses of the globalising cultural economy.

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