

MEEMAS 1 Master Thesis

Master in Energy, Environment and Society

Spring 2022



Universitetet
i Stavanger

Getting to know the conscious consumer: The fast fashion vs. second-hand consumers

Written by: Thea Wigsnes Melsom

Candidate number: 212327

Supervisor: Hande Eslen-Ziya

Department of Media and Social Sciences

Summary

The fashion industry is expected to emit 2791 million tons of CO₂, consume 118 billion cubic meters of water and contribute to 148 million tons of textile waste by the year 2030 (Rausch & Kopplin, 2021). It is estimated that an average European consume 26 kg of textiles per year (European Environment Agency, 2019). In the European society it is becoming more known that the fashion industry is a great contributor to climate change and ethical concerns (Goworek et al., 2020; Niinimäki, 2010). Some consumers continue to buy fast fashion clothing, while others are more conscious and choose mainly second-hand. The goal of this thesis is to explore what differentiates the shopping practices between these two types of consumers: fast fashion and second-hand. The purpose is to discover whether the reasons provided by the second-hand consumers could be used to incentivize the fast fashion consumers to be more conscious.

The thesis is theoretically grounded on the Multi-Level Perspective (MLP) within transition theory (Geels, 2010, 2011, 2019; J. Köhler et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2010). In addition to responsible consumption theory (Agrawal & Gupta, 2018; Lim, 2017; J. A. Roberts, 1995) and the Not In My Back Yard (NIMBY) perspective as a conceptual tool when discussing the results (Dear, 1992; Feldman & Turner, 2010; Hermansson, 2007). A qualitative research method is applied, and both employees and consumers of fast fashion and second-hand clothing is interviewed. The results show that there are major differences in the two consumer groups, but also variances within each group. All of the participants were aware of over-consumption and to some degree that there are social and ethical issues with the industry. The main difference was whether this impacted their purchase intention or not. A uniformly suggested solution to the sustainable transition of the fast fashion industry were increased prices and more visible information.

Acknowledgements

I would like to show my highest gratitude to my supervisor Hande Eslen-Ziya. She has been very supportive and highly encouraging throughout the whole process. Some much needed gentle pushes have been provided when necessary. I am immensely grateful and would like to thank her so much for all the time, work and support she has given me. Her constructive feedback, fruitful discussions and great supervision. Without her I would not have made it.

I would also like to thank all of the participants who have agreed to be part of my thesis. I am so grateful that they have provided their time and reflections to help me build the foundation of the thesis. It would not have been the same without you.

Finally, I am grateful for the unconditional support and encouragement I have received from my family and close friends throughout this process. I look forward to spending much missed quality time with you.

Table of Contents

Summary	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents	iv
List of figures and tables	v
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Background	2
2 Theoretical framework	8
2.1 Transition theory	8
2.1.1 The Multi-Level Perspective	12
2.2 Responsible consumption theory	15
2.3 NIMBY as a conceptual tool	18
3 Literature review	21
3.1 Conscious consumption	21
3.2 Consumers role in transitions	25
4 Method	28
4.1 Research questions	28
4.2 Qualitative research method	28
4.3 The participants	29
4.4 Interviews	30
4.4.1 Coding and transcribing the interviews	31
5 Analysis	33
5.1 Definitions of different consumers	33
5.1.2 Conscious consumers	33
5.1.3 Fast fashion consumers	37

5.2 Information as an incentive.....	39
5.3 Similarities in solutions and the consumers role.....	42
5.4 Emotions and identity towards fashion.....	47
5.5 Greenwashing	50
5.6 Differences	52
6 Discussion	56
6.1 Responsible consumption theory	56
6.2 Sustainable transition theory and the Multi-Level Perspective (MLP)	57
6.3 Not In My Back Yard (NIMBY) perspective	58
7 Conclusion	61
References.....	64
Appendix I Information and consent form.....	69
Appendix II Interview guide employees.....	72
Appendix III Interview guide consumers	73

List of figures and tables

Figure 1 The Multi-Level Perspective on transitions.....	14
Table 1 Coding of consumer participants	31
Table 2 Coding of employee participants	31
Table 3 Diagram of garments bought per 6 months, and where from.	53

1 Introduction

On March 30th, 2022, The European Commission released their newest communication on textiles, the European Union (EU) Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles. This is their vision:

By 2030 textile products placed on the EU market are long-lived and recyclable, to a great extent made of recycled fibres, free of hazardous substances and produced in respect of social rights and the environment. Consumers benefit longer from high quality affordable textiles, fast fashion is out of fashion, and economically profitable re-use and repair services are widely available. In a competitive, resilient and innovative textiles sector, producers take responsibility for their products along the value chain, including when they become waste. The circular textiles ecosystem is thriving, driven by sufficient capacities for innovative fibre-to-fibre recycling, while the incineration and landfilling of textiles is reduced to the minimum. (European Commission, 2022, p. 2-3)

Following this vision, the fashion industry as we know it today will have to dramatically change its ways. Moreover, the consumers will have a much easier pathway to more sustainable fashion and knowing how our clothing is produced, as well as by whom. The EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles emphasizes the importance of supporting investments, innovation and research from the EU itself, as well as individual states and regions to help accelerate the transition of the fashion industry (European Commission, 2022).

Camilleri (2020) explored different environmental policies from the EU, including those for textiles. Emphasizing the importance of cooperation between the governments, consumers, and industries involved. To ensure that the policies, including the EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles, will be imbedded in the individual countries legislation, for them to have such an effect as intended (Camilleri, 2020; European Commission, 2022). Malik et al. (2021) investigated the social and environmental spillover effect that the EUs consumption of textiles impose. A spillover effect is referred to as a positive or negative outcome on others i.e. another country, to the purpose of satisfying the consumption of clothing in the country of question. They highlight the importance of countries to implement such policies, like the EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in their national targets. This to ensure that they are fulfilled, and especially considering

the social and environmental impacts the fashion industry has on a global level (Malik et al., 2021).

This new EU strategy suggests that the industry would have to follow these goals to maintain a customer base in the European market. They mention updating the requirements on different labels used on clothing sold in Europe, digitalizing labels, ensuring that environmental claims are factual, and promoting raised awareness through their motto #ReFashionNow (European Commission, 2022). Marsh et al. (2022) found that both the EU's policies and consumers are increasingly aware and worried about the climate crisis and therefore changing their views of the fashion industry. Having this in mind, an interest to look into the consumers' perspective on their clothing purchases and their attitudes towards fast fashion and sustainable fashion has emerged.

In the European society it is becoming more known that the fashion industry is a great contributor to climate change and ethical concerns (Goworek et al., 2020; Niinimäki, 2010). Some consumers continue to buy fast fashion clothing, while others are more conscious about what they are buying and choose to buy mainly second-hand. The goal of this research is then to explore what differentiates the shopping practices between these two different types of consumers: fast fashion and second-hand. The purpose here is to discover whether the reasons provided by the second-hand consumers could be used to incentivize the fast fashion consumers. Below I will provide some background information about the fashion industry and showcase why this subject is chosen.

1.1 Background

In 2020 Europe imported 8.7 million tons of textile products, where 45 % were clothing. The value of the total import was 125 billion EUR, and 56 % of this was clothing. Though, due to the COVID-19 pandemic these numbers are slightly smaller than previous years (Duhoux et al., 2022), it is nevertheless estimated that an average European consumes 26 kg of textiles per year, and the number on how much we get rid of, either as waste or donations is 11 kg (European Environment Agency, 2019). The textile sector is a very labor-intensive industry and almost 13 million full-time jobs were demanded throughout the entire chain to produce the amount of clothing, footwear and textiles consumed by Europe in 2020. Only a quarter of these jobs exists

in Europe, which showcase that the textile industry is a highly global industry (Duhoux et al., 2022). The fashion industry is expected to emit 2791 million tons of CO₂, consume 118 billion cubic meters of water and contribute to 148 million tons of textile waste by the year 2030 (Rausch & Kopplin, 2021). It is estimated that clothing worth 400 billion American dollars is wasted on a global level annually (Shirvanimoghaddam et al., 2020). In 2020 the production of the amount of textile products consumed by Europeans omitted 270 kg CO₂ per person, and as the industry is global, around 75 % of this was omitted in the major textile producing countries in Asia (Duhoux et al., 2022).

Around 4-6 % of the EU's environmental footprint across a range of impact categories is caused by the consumption of textiles. 85 % of the primary raw materials used, 92 % of the water used, 93 % of the land used and 76 % of the greenhouse gas emissions caused by the production of textiles for European consumption occur elsewhere in the world. The environmental impacts are a direct result of the global mass production and rapid consumption of textile products. (A. Köhler et al., 2021, p. 5)

Peters et al. (2021) explains that the rise of the fast fashion business model, led by companies like Zara, that in the late 1990s outsourced their production to cheap countries in Asia to keep the prices low, have shifted the Western world's view of clothing and fashion. To keep the consumer prices of fast fashion low, there would have to be made cuts somewhere in the supply chain, often this can be at the expense of the garment workers at the first stages. The consequences can be low wages and unsafe working environments (Okur & Saricam, 2019). Workers are exposed to toxic chemicals, particle-contaminated air, and doing repetitive tasks. They suffer from lung diseases including cancer, accidental- and over-use injuries, severe reproductive and fetal outcomes and death (Bick et al., 2018; Shirvanimoghaddam et al., 2020).

In Dhaka, Bangladesh the 2013 Rana Plaza clothing factory collapse, where 1132 garment workers lost their lives and several thousand was injured, is a tragic example of the terrible consequences of the poor working conditions often sustained in the fast fashion industry. The day before the catastrophic incident the workers had noticed cracks in the walls and were evacuated. Due to the high demand and pressure for rapid production they were ordered back the following day, if not they would get fired. This is one of the worst examples of the horrifying outcomes the unsafe working conditions in the clothing factories can have in low-income

countries with few of them meeting the building requirements for a safe and tox-free working environment (International Labour Organization, 2017; Isaksen, 2014; Malik et al., 2021).

The fast fashion business model has also deteriorated the quality of each garment, as the production is solely focused on the least amount of cost (Peters et al., 2021). There is no longer a need to repair garments as they would become unfashionable before they break, if one should try, the fabric is often of such poor quality that this is nearly impossible. Additionally, it is so cheap that to just buy something new seems easier. To keep up with the ever-new lines of updated fashion, consumers continue to throw away barely worn clothing, creating an immense amount of clothing waste. Moreover, the annual consumption of fibers has increased substantially. In 1995 7,6 kg fibers was produced per person, while in 2018 it was 13,8 kg (Peters et al., 2021). The production of textiles has doubled compared to only two decades ago (Shirvanimoghaddam et al., 2020). By sustaining and evolving this business model most production happens in low-wage countries in Asia, this makes both consumers and companies decoupled from the reality as the geographical distances keep us from seeing it. Furthermore, the environmental impact of our clothing is much higher prior to consumption. “About 80 % of the total climate change impact of textiles occurs in the production phase, 17 % in the use phase, and 3 % during end of life” (Duhoux et al., 2022, p. 19). The cultivation of fibers, turning fiber to fabric, dyeing and production, and not least the poor working conditions in these stages have a substantial impact (Peters et al., 2021).

Fast fashion has dire consequences for the environment surrounding its factories as well. Due to untreated wastewater with toxic dyes being emitted in local water supplies and the immense amount of water needed to grow cotton. Additionally, when the clothing is purchased by consumers in high-income countries, and disposed of, they are often repurchased by low- and middle-income countries, where the final faith of the poor-quality clothing often can be at landfills (Bick et al., 2018). The amount of textiles that goes to landfills as waste globally are two thirds of the total (Shirvanimoghaddam et al., 2020). Although, second-hand clothing exports are sent to a variety of countries abroad, many end up at clothing markets in low-income countries, and the quality of what is left is rarely high, and a lot ends up not being sold, and thereby ends up as waste. Due to the lack of sufficient waste management in the low- and middle-income countries, the clothing waste can clog local rivers, and release micro plastics into

the local environment. It destroys local fauna and flora, and pollutes the local environment for all inhabitants. Furthermore, the workers in the industry suffer from health issues working in a toxic environment with little protection, poor wages and lacking security (Bick et al., 2018; Karlsson & Ramasar, 2020; Liu et al., 2021; Madhav et al., 2018).

Clothing means more than just having textiles wrapped around us for the sake of keeping warm or covered, it is about our identity, how we are represented and how they make us feel (Lundblad & Davies, 2016). Ethical concerns, regarding animal welfare, garment workers conditions and the environmental impact of clothing can impact some consumers shopping habits. Personal values, in addition to these above-mentioned ethical concerns might influence the purchase behavior and intention of fast fashion consumers (Stringer et al., 2020).

Sustainable clothing could serve as an alternative to fast fashion. However, they are often made from eco materials like hemp, and have a specifically “sustainable” look, nothing like what fast fashion and mainstream clothing looks like. Additionally, for most consumers the choices of sustainably made clothing is not many, if any, and the price is often a lot higher. Due to the fact that sustainably made clothing is still a niche market compared to fast fashion. It could be challenging for an individual to make a choice between looking fashionable in a social society or following personal values of ethical and sustainable clothing (Lundblad & Davies, 2016; Mukendi et al., 2020; Niinimäki, 2010; Rausch & Kopplin, 2021).

Instead of focusing solely on the niche market of sustainable clothing, there is much clothing already produced, therefore buying second-hand, trading clothes with friends or in public events, repairing what one already own, seems to be better solutions. This year, Naturvernforbundet (Friends of the Earth Norway), the oldest Norwegian environmental and nature protection organization (Naturvernforbundet, 2022a) have focused on clothing repairs on their annual national event of exchanging clothing among consumers. The reason for this is that they argue that by prolonging, and wearing our clothes for the double amount of time, will half their climate impact and therefore serves as a great environmental effort (Naturvernforbundet, 2022b).

Goworek et al. (2020) highlights that the most environmentally friendly solution regarding clothing, is to prolong their useful lifetime. The challenge, as it is with most sustainable solutions, is that by changing the business model of low-cost and rapid-buying, to a

more slow model with higher quality and prices, with longer durability and fewer purchases, could negatively affect the companies income. Although, they emphasize that previous research has shown that most consumers are willing to pay more for a longer-lasting garment, this could point to it being profitable after all. Additionally, consumers of different age-groups would prefer clothing with higher quality and longevity for preference reasons not necessarily grounded in environmental concerns (Goworek et al., 2020).

Another compelling note from Goworek et al. (2020) is that the clothing industry lacks governance and legislation towards a life-cycle perspective. They point out that electronics have such schemes, and that governments could help the shift towards a more circular business model if the clothing industry would be held accountable for their products from cradle to grave. These sorts of schemes and regulations will probably come in place soon, when looking at the EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles mentioned previously (European Commission, 2022). Camilleri (2020) shows that such policies regarding batteries and electronic waste has been in place from the EU, creating this take-back policy. What is interesting and that possibly could help accelerate the transition of the fast fashion industry, is looking into consumers perspectives and how they can influence each other to act more sustainably and be conscious about their consumption patterns. Raised awareness and consumer demand for more sustainable clothing is shown to be rising (Goworek et al., 2020; Marsh et al., 2022).

In this thesis by looking at the consumer behaviors of both fast fashion and second-hand consumers, the reasons behind their choices will be investigated, and suggestions they may have to create a more sustainable and ethical fashion industry. For this the thesis will use transition theory, specifically the framework of the Multi-Level Perspective (MLP) to discuss the participants consumer behaviors and to study the conscious consumers reasons for being aware of their actions and how these motives possibly could help transition the fast fashion industry. The thesis is structured in six remaining sections, it starts first with the theory section explaining the theoretical framework the thesis is structured on and later followed by the literature review of previous research on sustainable clothing and consumption. In the methodology section the thesis will focus on the recruitment of the participants as well as the methods of analysis and coding. In the results section the analysis of the data will be presented in light of the existing research. Followed by a discussion of the results together with the theory. The thesis will be

concluded by arguing that the fast fashion consumers although aware of the environmental consequences of their behavior they nevertheless did not change their habits. This finding was explained in light of the Not In My Back Yard (NIMBY) perspective, where the consumers saw the logical approach to end over-consumption but chose not to participate.

2 Theoretical framework

This thesis is theoretically grounded on the Multi-Level Perspective (MLP) within the transition theory, more specifically sustainable transition theory (Geels, 2010, 2011, 2019; J. Köhler et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2010). In addition to responsible consumption theory (Agrawal & Gupta, 2018; Lim, 2017; J. A. Roberts, 1995). These theories will all provide the analytical tool to make sense of the in-depth interviews conducted. While the transition theory helped in preparing the research questions and discussing the different aspects of the clothing industry, the responsible consumption theory was useful in analyzing the data. In this section first the transition theory will be explained, then sustainability and the fashion industry in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be described (United Nations Development Programme, 2022). Before further elaborating on the Multi-Level Perspective framework and thereafter introducing responsible consumption theory. This section will conclude with the introduction of the Not In My Back Yard (NIMBY) perspective (also referred to as the NIMBY syndrome) (Dear, 1992; Feldman & Turner, 2010; Hermansson, 2007). Later in the thesis NIMBY will also be used as a conceptual tool when discussing the results.

2.1 Transition theory

The earliest research using transition theory mainly focused on the system transitions of electricity and transport, but in the recent years transition theory has been applied to several different aspects of society, like waste management, cities, food and water (Grubler, 2012; Kern & Rogge, 2016; J. Köhler et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2010). Transition theory is about system change and is focused on the relationship between change and stability from an established system, in this case the fashion industry (J. Köhler et al., 2019). The fast fashion industry is a part of our society, and consumers now expect the low cost of clothing, as our lifestyle becomes adjusted to the current systems (Geels, 2011). However, due to climate change, there is a booming emphasis on creating sustainable solutions. As with transition theory in general, sustainable transitions is about a system change. A socio-technical system, such as agro-food, electricity, or as in this case, the fashion industry. Sustainable transition research is motivated by unsustainable production and consumption patterns, and grounded in environmental concerns such as climate change or loss of biodiversity. Transition theory emphasizes a need for radical

changes, a shift in the current socio-technical system, and not merely a small tweak of the existing one (Kern & Rogge, 2016; J. Köhler et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2010).

The importance of coalitions in sustainable transitions is highlighted due to the conflict of some gaining from the transition and others losing. Additionally, the fact that no one actor can transition an established system on their own. Some actors can be interested in the transition for other reasons than to mitigate climate change. It can be for improved health benefits and security, in this case that could be for the workers in the production stages of the fashion industry. It is emphasized that policies for accelerating the sustainable transition is not always sufficient, and therefore coalitions between different actors could be an important addition to create the shift (C. Roberts et al., 2018). The Paris Agreement is mentioned as one such policy, and the previously mentioned EU strategy for sustainable and circular textiles and the Sustainable Development Goals would also need coalitions between consumers, the fashion industry, research, technology and governments to ensure that its targets are met (European Commission, 2022; C. Roberts et al., 2018; United Nations Development Programme, 2022).

Fouquet (2016) argues that historical transitions often have happened simultaneously with the public worrying about the environmental impact of the current energy source. In comparison, with the public increasing knowledge and concern about both the environmental and ethical concerns of the fast fashion industry, it is interesting to see what implications this will have, and have had, for the fashion industry. The pace of historical transitions has often been slow, taking several decades to fully change, but it is argued by some researchers that future sustainability transitions can be more rapid. Due to governing, a much more globalized and connected world, and global targets such as the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Kern & Rogge, 2016; Sovacool, 2016) The meaning and impact of culture is furthermore expressed as an important factor and possible challenge. As it is easier to change a law or regulation, than it is to change an established culture and way of life (C. Roberts et al., 2018). This could point to it being a more complex challenge to change consumer behavior and the fashion industry's 'business as usual', than the regulations that apply to the system.

Additionally, the importance of politics to achieve a societal change of a current system is highlighted. Politics is intertwined with all aspects of sustainability transitions (Geels, 2014; Meadowcroft, 2011). In order to create a societal change, like transitioning the fashion industry

in a more sustainable direction, one needs politics. To achieve the goals in EUs vision, mentioned in the introduction, politics is definitely involved (European Commission, 2022). It is where laws are made, regulations appear and initiatives with funds for further research is born. For new implementations to have an effect, such as suggested in the EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles, policy changes will need to be made, globally, nationally and locally (European Commission, 2022). Now sustainability and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be elaborated on before further explaining the Multi-Level Perspective (MLP) and responsible consumption theory.

For this thesis the focus is mainly on consumers, but solutions for the transition of the fashion industry communicated by the participants will be both consumer- and industry based. When looking at the new EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles (2022), mentioned in the introduction, a radical shift from the existing business model of the fashion industry is needed, and expected. They mention changes like the use of recycled materials, high quality garments that are durable, better and safer working conditions, production that regards the environment, and availability for repairs. The fast fashion industry is referred to as the current system and a linear business model that needs a radical change to become sustainable and in line with the UN Sustainable Development goals (SDGs) (European Commission, 2022).

All the way back in 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development, published a report named Our common future. Popularly it has been called the Brundtland report as the chairman was Gro Harlem Brundtland at the time. In this report sustainable development was defined (ARE, 2022): “[...] to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p. 15). Researchers have since used different criteria defining the term sustainable or sustainability, some have highlighted the ethical and social concerns regarding the production of clothing, including low wages, child labor and sweat shops. Others have focused more on the environmental aspect of sustainability, using fewer resources, limiting the use of pesticides and fertilizers, and recycling of materials (Lundblad & Davies, 2016; Mukendi et al., 2020; Saricam & Okur, 2019).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also mentioned in the EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles, are common and global goals that countries all over the world

have universally committed to. Additionally, agreed to prioritize development and helping to progress those countries that are furthest behind (United Nations Development Programme, 2022). The SDGs are all connected and the outcome of one goal will affect another. They are created in an integrated way to ensure that all development takes social, economic and environmental sustainability into consideration. The SDGs are anchored in all parts of our society and should be goals to follow for all industrial development, with the fashion industry being no exception (United Nations Development Programme, 2022). When reading through the 17 goals, goal number 12, *Responsible consumption, and production*, is perhaps the most obvious goal connected to the fast fashion industry. The vast overproduction of fashion is not sustainable, and our overconsumption is equally bad. The low- and middle-income countries are taken advantage of to produce enormous amounts of cheap clothing, that the high-income countries consume at an exaggerated proportion.

Yet, all the other sustainable development goals could also be connected to changing the ways of today's fast fashion industry. Number 1 *No poverty*, and number 2 *Zero hunger*, would argue that the low wages for the garment workers should be substantially increased. Number 3 *Good health and well-being*, number 4 *Quality education*, and number 5 *Gender equality*, would more closely be met if the garment workers were paid a liveable wage. This would assist them in affording to send their kids to school, all genders, and be able to take care of themselves in their free time. In addition, providing a safe and healthy working environment to ensure that the targets are met. Goal number 8 *Decent work and economic growth*, and number 9 *Industry, innovation and infrastructure*, would also maintain that the workers have a safe work environment, liveable wages, safe and affordable travel means, in addition to the possibility to have increased pay with time due to changes in society and with seniority.

Goal number 13 *Climate action*, number 14 *Life below water*, number 15 *Life on land*, and number 6 *Clean water and sanitation*, are all in line with taking care of the wastewater from the factories, both from dyeing and air pollution from dust. With measures made regarding rinsing both air and water, it would assist these goals to be met, for all living creatures. Additionally, taking care of the clothing after production and consumption. Goal number 10 *Reduced inequalities*, number 11 *Sustainable cities and communities*, number 16 *Peace, justice and strong institutions*, and number 17 *Partnerships for the goals*, would argue that the industry

would see through that their workers in the entire life-cycle, became equal, just and sustainable, working together with all to meet their needs and give all what they deserve in a fair and good way (United Nations Development Programme, 2022). Hence, the SDGs are all in favor of a new business model for the fashion industry. To ensure that both the environment and the people involved have a safe and healthy life and future.

Having thoroughly looked at the EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles and the UN Sustainable Development Goals it is clear that a radical shift from the existing system is needed, called for, and in a hurry (European Commission, 2022). Although the fashion industry is not an energy transition per se, it is an industry with a huge environmental impact, social consequences, and great emissions. Though the focus in this thesis is consumer based, the reason an individual becomes conscious is highly likely, and often grounded in, the negative outcomes of the industry. Consequently, to apply sustainable transition theory to the issue of fast fashion would be logical. In this research, by applying this theory, the existing terminology can be applied and the fast fashion industry is regarded as a socio-technical system. By doing that, it can be showed how difficult such societal transitions are, in addition to look at possible solutions to accelerate this transition by looking at previous research in the transition field.

Now one of the common theoretical frameworks often applied in transition theory, and one that will be used in this thesis will be explained.

2.1.1 The Multi-Level Perspective

The Multi-Level Perspective (MLP) is a theoretical framework often used in sustainable transition theory (Geels, 2010, 2019; J. Köhler et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2010). The MLP consists of three main levels, the micro-, meso- and macro-level. The meso-level is the incumbents, the current government and stable systems already established in the society. This level is often referred to as the regime level, or the socio-technical regime. Due to the fact that it is both the technologies and social society that stabilizes the current systems. This is where the fashion industry would be, as an existing and stable system, managed and kept stable by constant global supply and demand systems. Where the micro-level is a sheltered space, it contains niche-developments and is often referred to as the niche level. It is here that new innovations are given room and shelter to develop. This is where research for new sustainable systems would occur,

and minor companies trying to mature environmentally friendly and ethical business models. At the time, the conscious consumers would also still be at the micro-level as sustainable fashion is still a niche market. The macro-level, often referred to as the landscape level, refers to the stable outside. The landscape needs to become unstable in order to open up ‘a window of opportunity’ for the niches at the micro-level to rise up and change the regime system at the meso-level. Only something vast, such as war, a stock market crash or climate change can disrupt the landscape level (Geels, 2002, 2011, 2014; Schot et al., 2016). The three levels and their interactions within the framework of the MLP is shown figuratively in the figure below (Geels, 2011, p. 28):

Increasing structuration
of activities in local practices

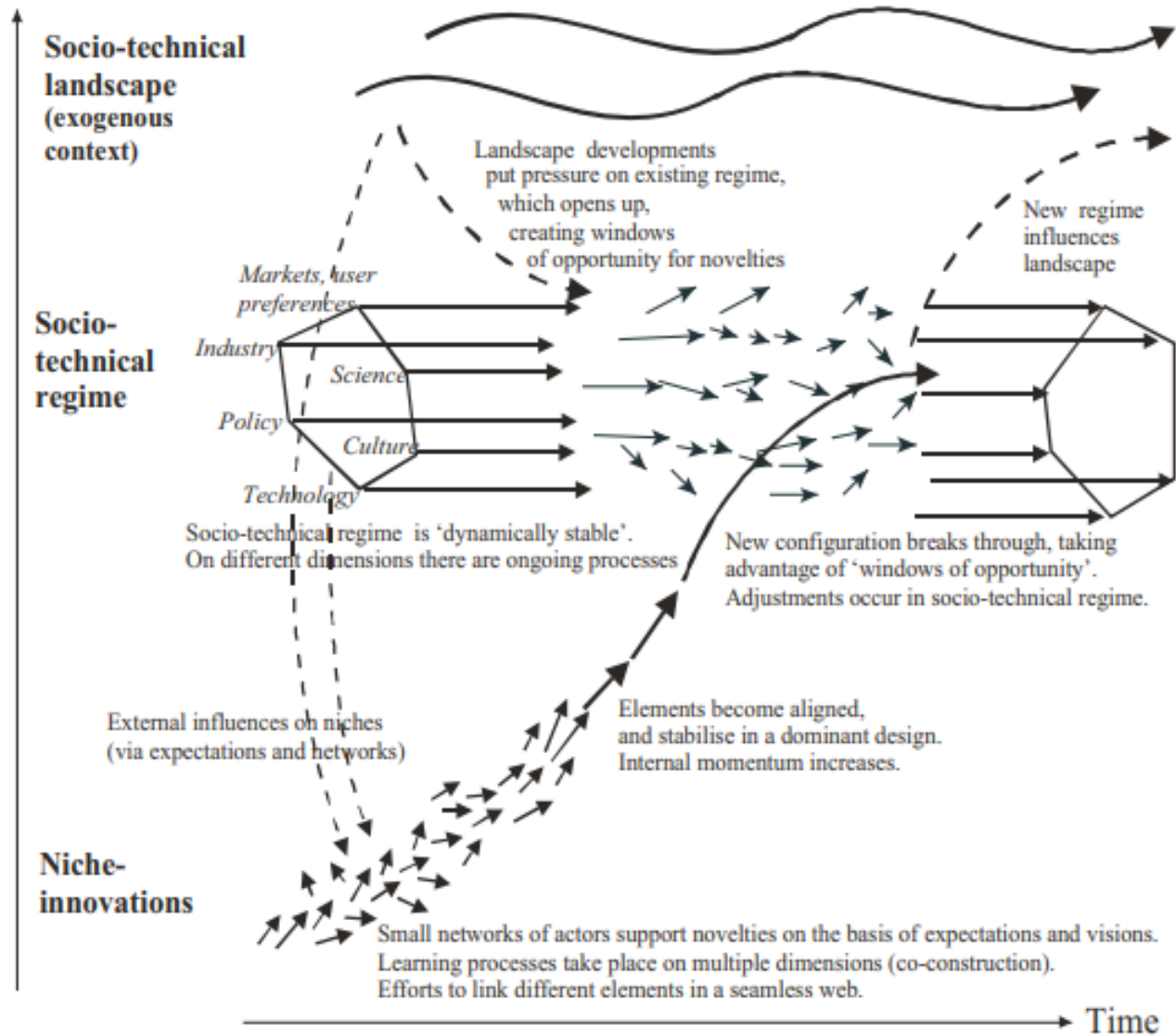


Figure 1 The Multi-Level Perspective on transitions.

In the figure you can see how the levels are connected with each other and how industry, markets, user preferences, culture and policies are all connected and keeping the current systems stable. The exogenous landscape when destabilized opens up for the niches to expand and eventually replacing the regime, creating the transition into a new and more sustainable system

(Geels, 2011). The MLP is a framework often applied when researching future sustainable transitions, and it highlights the need for a radical shift of the systems in place at the meso-level. The socio-technical aspect specifically refers to it not being only the technologies that needs to change, but the social characteristics of consumer practices, business models, imbedded cultural meanings and markets. It understands socio-technical transitions as something evolving due to several different groups including the media, companies, consumers, research, and policymakers, all within the current rules and belief systems (Geels, 2010, 2019). It evolves around niche developments gaining momentum and finally achieving enough motion to replace the current system. Many niches will disappear along the way, but some, often by achieving support from powerful players, will become strong enough to substitute the existing unsustainable structure (Smith et al., 2010). “Growing environmental awareness is a socio-cultural development that can be considered a landscape process, and which is questioning the performance of multiple regimes, whilst generating opportunities for niches” (Smith et al., 2010, p. 441).

By applying the MLP to the fashion industry in the context of this thesis, the micro-level consists of the niche innovations trying to manufacture sustainable and ethical clothing and the conscious consumers as they resist the current system of our fast fashion industry. The issue of climate change, in addition to the social and ethical challenges of the fashion industry that creates a raised awareness, could serve as ‘a window of opportunity’ to shift the stable system of today's practice. Although the historical transitions have been shown to be slow, with the new policy from the EU, the SDGs, raised consumer awareness and the alarming issue of climate change, could be argued to be factors that would create a more rapid transition. The MLP will be deployed when developing the questions and in the discussion of the participant replies. Below, responsible consumption will be explained.

2.2 Responsible consumption theory

Responsible consumption is a theoretical perspective on consumer behavior within sustainable consumption research (Lim, 2017). It is defined as someone who sees their consumption as a responsibility to act with environmental, social and ethical concerns through their consumption decisions. These consumers are aware of the negative consequences consumption can have on sustainability, and therefore they choose to consume responsibly (Agrawal & Gupta, 2018; Lim,

2017; J. A. Roberts, 1995). This theoretical perspective will be applied to define whether or to what degree, the consumers interviewed are conscious consumers. Antil (1984) pointed out that it is not something a consumer is or not, but they can exhibit a high or low degree of conscious consumer behavior.

The term responsible consumption was first used in 1973 by Fisk (Agrawal & Gupta, 2018; Lim, 2017), he defined it as something that “[...] refers to rational and efficient use of resources with respect to the global human population” (Fisk, 1973, p. 24). He emphasized that consumption needed to be in a global perspective, as the resources used to produce goods consumed in one part of the world easily could be extracted from another. He quoted Aldous Huxley from 1968: “Do we propose to live on this planet in symbiotic harmony with our environment? Or shall we choose to live like murderous parasites that kill their host and so destroy themselves?” (Fisk, 1973, p. 28). Responsible consumption behavior has been highlighted as being important for quite some time. It is emphasized that humans, especially in wealthier countries, should hinder the depletion of natural resources and consume responsibly. In this particular article it says that the human population was presently 3,5 billion people, and that the environment was already struggling with high pollution (Fisk, 1973).

J. A. Roberts (1995) stressed the significant difference between socially responsible-, and ecological- conscious consumer behavior as they are often mixed and given the same meaning. Whereas the ecological would only apply for those that are worried about the climate impact, the socially responsible would in addition care about the social and ethical effect of consumption (J. A. Roberts, 1995). He defined a socially responsible consumer as: “[...] one who purchases products and services which he or she perceives to have a positive (or less negative) impact on the environment or uses his/her purchasing power to express current social concerns” (J. A. Roberts, 1995, p. 98). For the fast fashion industry this could then apply that some consumers care more or less about either the ethical and social aspects or the environmental impact of their purchases, or equally about both.

Webb et al. (2008) explained that in the mid-2000s consumers showed a substantial increase in the social awareness of companies and were willing to pay more to the right company. They argue that Roberts definition therefore needed to be updated to ensure that the definitions coincided with consumers consciousness at the time. It is also noted that Roberts

agreed with this and stated in his research that it was necessary to update the definition as it evolved with time (J. A. Roberts, 1995; Webb et al., 2008). Another definition of socially responsible consumer behavior is from (Mohr et al., 2001, p. 47): “[...] a person basing his or her acquisition, usage, and disposition of products on a desire to minimize or eliminate any harmful effects and maximize the long-run beneficial impact on society”. They emphasize that the impact of consumer knowledge about a company’s social, ethical and environmental impact is important for the level of awareness. In their conclusion they highlight the need to regulate a company’s claims about themselves to ensure that the consumers receive truthful information and avoid misleading (Mohr et al., 2001).

As shown there are different definitions and/or terms used to describe a conscious consumer, but they would all fit under the umbrella-term sustainable. Sustainability is defined as ensuring the needs of the present, without harming the ability of future generations to meet their needs (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). This definition has also been different, and contained a variety of reasons, depending on who made it, as there currently is not a universal and agreed upon meaning (Lim, 2017). In this thesis a combination of environmental, social, and ethical concerns will be deployed as the definition of sustainability regarding fashion, and a conscious consumer behavior.

Consumption refers to consume something, and thereby it means that it disappears, or that you spend it or use it up. Therefore, it can be said that sustainable and consumption cannot really be put together as they refer to opposites (Lim, 2017; Lundblad & Davies, 2016). However, the term sustainable consumption is a consumption pattern that takes into consideration the environmental and social impact of a purchase, and thus refers to a consumer that considers the sustainability of a product beforehand, and chooses the more sustainable option to consume. Okur and Saricam (2019) emphasizes how important information about the environmental, social, and ethical concerns of the fast fashion industry is, to the level of consciousness of a consumer. Education is seen as an impacting factor, but labeling of clothing, information in magazines, on social media and commercials could be just as important for the average consumer to obtain a higher knowledge, raised awareness, and possibly change their shopping habits into more sustainable patterns.

The phrase political consumerism have also been used in research when describing consumers that are responsible, grounded in their political power as an individual, consumer and citizen. Two main tools are applied, boycotts and buycotts, buycotts are when consumers reject to buy certain products, or from certain suppliers, and only buy products that have certain labels. 'Power to vote with their money' is an expression often associated with political consumers (Austgulen, 2016; Micheletti & Stolle, 2008; J. A. Roberts, 1995).

McNeill and Moore (2015) reflects on the conflict consumers can have, between sustainable consumption and wanting to be fashionable. They highlight that some consumers, with high consciousness around the unsustainability of the fashion industry, can struggle to choose a sustainable consumption pattern as they want to be perceived as somewhat fashionable. Moreover, it is interesting that the solution often is seen as the consumers responsibility. Perhaps it could have something to do with capitalism, and the fact that most industries involved in selling a product, would make profit from selling the most products as possible. It is complicated when the environmental and ethical solution is for a company to change their business model and lower their retail. As shown previously, with the new regulations from the EU, a circular economy is the way forward, and new forms of business models must develop, and the clothing industry will have to shift into a more sustainable direction. One type of business model already mentioned by Fisk (1973) is rental instead of purchase.

To complete this section on responsible consumption theory, although the definitions and phrasing of the terms are different, a conscious consumer will be defined as someone who takes into consideration the social, ethical and environmental consequences of their consumption. Now an explanation of NIMBYism will be provided, this perspective will be applied as a conceptual tool later in this thesis.

2.3 NIMBY as a conceptual tool

The NIMBY syndrome, Not In My Back Yard, usually refers to someone, an individual or community group, refusing having a necessity built nearby, such as jails, wind parks, drug rehabilitation centers, highways and incinerators. It is not the fact that they do not want, or see the feasibility with these building projects, they would just not like them to be in their back yard. Hence, the NIMBY and origination of the phrase (Dear, 1992; Hermansson, 2007). The

connection seen with the possible change of the fast fashion industry and the NIMBY syndromes application is, though it is not about a building nearby, it is a change in peoples lives.

Environmental and ethical concerns within the fashion industry is well known by the European population today, and most of the consumers are to some degree aware that the production of fast fashion often comes with negative consequences for the environment and its workers (Karlsson & Ramasar, 2020; Ki et al., 2021; Niinimäki, 2010).

Dear (1992) describes the development of the NIMBY syndrome as often started by the angry-phase. People are frustrated that the state, industry, or others have chosen their neighborhood as the place to build the facility in question. Some can also show signs of what he calls NIMBY with a caring face, those that oppose it for others and not necessarily themselves (Dear, 1992). Geographical closeness to the planned building project is described as an important factor to resistance or acceptance. Often the inhabitants living closest to the project are the biggest opposers. Another factor that largely affects the opposition is size (Carley et al., 2020; Dear, 1992). A larger facility can often involve a larger resistance from the population.

Hermansson (2007) further emphasizes that NIMBYism is someone who sees the greater good for society with the facility in question, but believes its risks are unfairly distributed as it is planned built in their own vicinity. A proposed solution is communicating the risks and impacts (Schively, 2007). It is argued that by sufficiently explaining the risks, the change could be more susceptible and counteract the NIMBY syndrome. In addition to trust, that the public trusts the ones responsible (Carley et al., 2020). Openness and clarity could therefore be important to the level of trust and acceptance amongst people and counteract NIMBYism. Another factor that is often argued to be a solution for the NIMBY resistance is compensation (Schively, 2007). The compensation would have to be high enough to compensate for the perceived risk or resistance of the given project.

The impact of knowledge about the energy system that is supposed to be built is significant for the support of the public (Carley et al., 2020). By going through research on NIMBYism and public opinion, Carley et al. (2020) found that when the public is aware of the positive environmental impact of a renewable energy system, it greatly impacts the level of support. By increasing the knowledge and awareness in the average population could therefore be an important factor to possibly increase the general support of changing the fast fashion

industry. Some of the participants replies seems to be in line with the NIMBY phenomena as will be showed in detail later in the thesis. Therefore, research on this could be applied as possible solutions for increased support and acceptance among the fast fashion consumers.

Having argued for the NIMBY perspective being useful in this context, previous literature on conscious consumption and sustainable fashion will now be elaborated on, before further describing the methodology, and later analyzing the results with the previous literature and thereafter applying the theories described in this section when discussing the results.

3 Literature review

This section focuses on the existing literature on conscious consumption, what makes a consumer conscious, consumers role in transitions, and the concept of greenwashing will be described. It is in this section that the conceptual framework of the thesis will be introduced.

3.1 Conscious consumption

In research and literature, the definition of what this thesis refers to as a conscious consumer has many labels. Such as sustainable, ethical, socially conscious, responsible, socially responsible, eco-conscious, green etc. What most of them have in common is the focus on a consumer that is thoughtful about the environmental, social and ethical consequences of their consumption, and thereby chooses to consume responsibly, or be a conscious consumer (Agrawal & Gupta, 2018; Ha-Brookshire & Hodges, 2009; Lim, 2017; Saricam & Okur, 2019). As stated in the theory section, the theoretical perspective of responsible consumption will be deployed, but the terms conscious, responsible and sustainable consumers will be used interchangeably.

To be a conscious consumer you follow a set of rules or values to ensure that your consumption is sustainable. This could be to buy clothing second-hand, from sustainable brands, exchange clothing, and generally have a low consumption pattern. It could also entail that one repairs worn clothing to keep them longer, or pays professionals to do so. Some conscious consumers are furthermore concerned about specifics, such as microplastic from polyester clothing, and/or animal welfare regarding wool, leather, and fur clothing. Liu et al. (2021) emphasizes that microfiber pollution has become a global concern for the fashion industry. This is now evident and seen as a contaminant in the marine environment globally. Which is shown in experiments that demonstrate that a regular domestic washing machine will omit 700,000 microfibers per cycle (Liu et al., 2021). Stringer et al. (2020) highlights the importance that the vegan consumers are a growing market, and that these often will avoid clothing from animal derived materials such as wool, silk and leather.

Ha-Brookshire and Hodges (2009) discuss that a consumer can be socially responsible in some, or all stages of clothing consumption. From the very start when acquiring information about where to obtain clothing, to the very end, after disposition. Their research focuses on the

phase after use, and looks at socially responsible consumer behavior regarding donations. They found that most of their participants did not regard their clothing donations as a socially responsible behavior, but was a measure they had to take to open up new space in their closets for further shopping (Ha-Brookshire & Hodges, 2009).

Consumer attitudes towards sustainable fashion was investigated by McNeill and Moore (2015). They found that there is still a leap in knowledge, attitude, and action towards sustainable fashion amongst consumers. Some consumers, lacking information about the unsustainable practices of the fast fashion industry did not see any reasons why it should change, nor wanted it too. While those consumers that were concerned showed a much higher probability in wanting to pursue sustainable brands. It was stressed that these would often seek out information thoroughly and therefore they encouraged sustainable brands to be highly visible and provide sufficient information about their production, and other ethical measures (McNeill & Moore, 2015).

In a different study, Niinimäki (2010) researched consumers in the context of eco-fashion, and also found that there is an attitude-behavior gap. Some consumers, that she called “ethical hardliners”, are thoroughly in line with their personal values and will choose ethical fashion above all else, but this group is still very small in numbers. It was also stated that the availability of cheap fast fashion clothing can make it difficult for all consumers to be in line with their personal and ethical values, when the temptations are plentiful. She highlighted that the manufacturers and designers of eco-fashion should try to broaden their selection as their collections appearances benefits only a small number of conscious consumers (Niinimäki, 2010).

Consumers choosing slow fashion is studied by Jung and Jin (2016). They found that some consumers choose slow fashion brands for environmental and ethical reasons, however some would buy it for quality and long-life reasons. Their research showed that some consumers care more about what benefits themselves. For these, they encouraged brands to focus on authenticity and functionality in their clothing designs, and for some consumers the aspect of exclusivity was most important. This could gain consumers interest in slow fashion for other reasons, before they would hopefully have sufficient information about overconsumption and its negative consequences, and therefore choose it by default (Jung & Jin, 2016a, 2016b).

Research on values and motivations behind sustainable fashion consumption is explored by Lundblad and Davies (2016). They interviewed frequent customers of eco-clothing. Some of

their findings were that consumers were motivated by the perceived higher quality that would entail lower frequency of shopping and therefore be financially beneficial. The consumers felt a responsibility towards protecting the planet and supporting the environment by purchasing clothing made from natural materials, second-hand and/or recycled. This also provided the consumers with a guilt free conscience and in turn prevented them from supporting the exploitation of garment workers (Lundblad & Davies, 2016).

Holroyd (2016) investigated different preservation activities, such as making and mending clothing. Her results indicate that by changing our perception on certain activities from chore to leisure, it could alter our views and make these activities fun and pleasant. Suggestions such as having social gatherings with redesign or mending of clothes could make some of these activities, which prolong the lifetime of our clothing, seen as leisure, and become an enjoyable use of our free time (Holroyd, 2016). Lapolla and Sanders (2015) found that many consumers were hesitant of repairing and repurposing their used clothing due to the lack of practical skills. After having a few short workshops many of the participants became excited and wanted to become more creative with their used clothing to keep them for longer. By having workshops on basic sewing skills and other repair skills at universities, social gatherings or outreach programs, it could help motivate consumers to prolong the longevity of their clothing or repurpose them into something new (Lapolla & Sanders, 2015). Basic sewing skills should also be taught in schools (Mukendi et al., 2020), and projects that are in line with student interests should be prioritized and encouraged.

Agrawal and Gupta (2018) explored different environmentally responsible consumer behaviors in both the developing and developed world. They conducted in-depth interviews with conscious consumers in India, as well as an analysis of a zero-waste blog with most users from the US. Their results indicated that the conscious consumer behavior was quite similar between the two groups, and one of their findings reported repurposing old unusable clothing for other tasks such as a mop. In their discussion, efforts toward raising awareness amongst consumers was mentioned, including social media, television ads and campaigns. The Swedish governments efforts to slash taxes on repairs and add taxes to products challenging to recycle was also mentioned as a positive measure (Agrawal & Gupta, 2018).

Another important aspect is why consumers become bored of their clothing, and what can be preventative factors, which is explored by Kwon et al. (2020). As their respondents reveal several reasons as to why they become bored with their clothing and choose to get rid of them, some interesting information on what makes them feel more attached to some clothing is also provided. Motives such as emotional attachment, time spent and value (price) are important (Kwon et al., 2020). This could imply that due to the low cost of fast fashion, the clothing loses value to the consumer, and that by increasing the price could make them valuable for longer.

Furthermore, looking at culture, and social lifespans of clothing, Haugrønning et al. (2021) have some compelling results. Their research of Norwegian consumers reveals that it is imbedded in our culture and is socially acceptable to donate, give away or sell our clothing when we no longer want them, but that to throw them away as trash is not. They argue that consumers have complete faith in second-hand stores taking good care of their donated products and expect them to be of further use to others. As previously mentioned, most of our donated clothing is exported, and a lot ends up as waste (Fretex, 2022; Niinimäki et al., 2020; Shirvanimoghaddam et al., 2020). Another outcome discussed is that most consumers are satisfied with a lower quality and life span of garments today, and that the business model of fast fashion have made us shift our views and perceive some garments, especially those for special occasions as consumables (Haugrønning et al., 2021). The way they describe that the fashion industry has become part of our culture and way of life, could point to the fact that a transition would be challenging.

The impact of informal exchange of clothing is examined by Laitala and Klepp (2017). They looked at previous surveys conducted in Norway and found that almost twice the amount of consumers had received second-hand clothing from someone than the ones that had bought them at a second-hand store. The informal exchange of clothing was most often occurrent between family and friends. It was found to be very common amongst young children, but also between adults (Laitala & Klepp, 2017). It has also been shown that the clothing we feel a special attachment to, will more often be given to a friend or family member, than donated (Kwon et al., 2020)

Most of the previous research mentioned looked at consumer behavior and attitudes towards sustainable and eco fashion, and this is particularly important for businesses. Looking at

consumers that choose mainly second-hand is interesting, as there is massive amounts of clothing already produced that could benefit the environment by being worn longer. Some of the research looked into consumers that were more responsible in their shopping habits and others focused on consumers in general. Looking at research others have conducted is essential before starting research on your own, and by going through these articles important knowledge has been gained that will assist in the process of interviewing and analyzing the results. Additionally, it is interesting to see possible similarities and differences between their findings and the opinions of the participants in this thesis. This research will now look deeper into the consumers role in transitions, as this is the main objective of the thesis.

3.2 Consumers role in transitions

As stated previously, transition theory will be deployed as a theoretical framework for the transition to a more sustainable clothing industry. The focus is mainly on consumers, and what makes some of them conscious, why, and if their reasons can be used to accelerate the transition. Schot et al. (2016) have written a compelling article about users role in shaping transitions in new energy systems, their view on users, which in this thesis is consumers, is quite interesting. They argue that this is often understudied as an aspect of how a regime change happens. The term user is preferably chosen as they state that consumers would degrade the concept down to someone who buys and uses something, but for users it can mean different aspects as well. As the focus in this thesis is consumers, that terminology will continuously be applied. They further elaborate that their research can be applied in different settings, where consumers play a role (Schot et al., 2016). What is stimulating is how consumers is shown to be a big part of societal change. “Demands for change are often initiated by social movements, and users play a large role as activists” (Schot et al., 2016, p. 9). The curiosity for if the reasons for some consumers to be more conscious can be incentivizing for others is explored here. An example given is how consumers can influence each other by personal advertising, self-help systems and user clubs. In Austria this resulted in consumers building 40,000 solar collectors in the 1990s. Consumer preferences can assist in evolving a transition, not solely accepting what is produced, but re-shape it to fit their needs and wants (Schot et al., 2016).

Looking at some of the work done by Framtiden i våre hender (Future in our hands) regarding the clothing industry, suggests that the consumers role is quite substantial. Future in our hands is one of Norway's largest environmental- and solidarity organizations with more than 40,000 members. They work for ethical and sustainable consumption, and one of their main focus areas is clothing. On their web page they state some facts about what they have accomplished "5000 textile workers and next of kins after Rana Plaza in Bangladesh are now fully compensated. H&M, Gina Tricot and Kappahl with others, are now going public with their list of fabrics after being pressurized by us" (Framtiden i våre hender, 2022, translated to English by me). It is evident that consumers, and consumer organizations can impact change and transitions, and have already started doing so.

Bick et al. (2018) highlights that policies and regulations will be the most effective tools to transition the fashion industry, but regardless emphasizes the important role of the high-income country consumers. They argue that these consumers have a responsibility towards the global injustices of fashion. This entails that they should buy longer-lasting high quality clothing from brands with high visibility regarding their production line, buy clothing second-hand and repair what they already have. Additionally, they stress the importance of doing research and avoid purchasing greenwashed clothing (Bick et al., 2018). An explanation of the phenomenon of greenwashing will be provided below.

Rausch and Kopplin (2021) emphasizes that due to the lack of an industry standard, the terms sustainable clothing, green, eco-friendly, organic, eco-conscious and ethical are used interchangeably in literature and research. These terms, including sustainable, are not universally defined or protected, therefore, as a consumer you would have to do further research to ensure whether what is stated is true. Due to this, including the emerging trend of sustainability, there is a challenge regarding truthfully sustainable clothing and greenwashed clothing. Greenwashing refers to a company that profits from products that are not environmentally friendly, while at the same time advertises a product as the opposite (Karlsson & Ramasar, 2020).

Islam and Deegan (2010) researched whether negative media attention towards retail companies, H&M and Nike was the subjects, affected their own publications. Their findings showed that nearly all negative media attention, especially regarding working conditions and child labor, resulted in the company's corporate disclosures containing information arguing the

opposite and trying to redeem their public perception (Islam & Deegan, 2010). Karlsson and Ramasar (2020) talks about fashion companies taking advantage of conscious consumers by advertising their products as sustainable, and encouraging consumers to utilize their ‘money as power’ to buy more, but sustainably. They argue that the fast fashion industry is taking advantage of, especially female consumers, with advertising clothing as green, having diverse ethnicities, sexual orientations and gender equality as some of their selling points, to lure, or greenwash their products to the more conscious consumers (Karlsson & Ramasar, 2020).

The importance of consumers in transitioning the fast fashion industry is seen as a significant factor. This is relevant and interesting as consumers are the focus area in this thesis. In addition, looking at both conscious and fast fashion consumers, and employees of fast fashion and second-hand, the area of greenwashing is essential to acknowledge and further explore. Now the thesis will continue with the methodology section and explain the choices and methods for this research.

4 Method

In this section the chosen research method will be explained, how the participants was approached, and how the process has been carried out. Possible hurdles will be elaborated on, how the interviews have been coded is explained, as well as efforts made to keep the anonymity. To start off the method section the research questions will be stated, as these are the main reasons for choosing the method.

4.1 Research questions

Following the introduction, theory and literature review the research questions will be:

1. What is a conscious consumer: Is a second-hand shopper a conscious consumer? In other words, does the conscious consumer buy less and wear longer, or are they just replacing their habit of shopping fast fashion clothing into second-hand?
2. What differentiates a conscious consumer from the other, unconscious one: Why do some choose to buy second-hand clothing and others fast fashion? Why are some conscious consumers and others not? Is the fast fashion consumer unconscious about what they buy?

The main goal of the thesis is to find the answers to these questions. Additionally, this research takes a deeper look into what the participants see as possible solutions for the fast fashion industry. As well as how important they see the consumers role in the transition from fast fashion to more sustainable clothing. Now an explanation of the method used will be provided.

4.2 Qualitative research method

Blaikie (2010) distinguishes quantitative and qualitative research methods by numbers and words. Quantitative research will result in numbers, averages and give the possibility to estimate and generalize the results. Qualitative research however provides words from the individual informant, providing the opportunity to detailed describe a personal opinion and offers the researcher a chance to more deeply understand each individuals perspective. It might not give the

opportunity to establish that 50 % of the population is this or that, but it can suggest very interesting outlooks, and be a stimulating starting-point for further research.

For this thesis a qualitative research method has been applied and semi-structured interviews with the informants have been conducted. This has given the opportunity to gain more in-depth knowledge and answers for the research questions. This type of interview creates an opportunity to engage and discuss with the participants, as well as getting a deeper understanding of their interests and opinions. The semi-structured interview is most widely used in qualitative research, due to its flexibility and ability to follow the interviewees answers in addition to keep to the main questions or themes (Qu & Dumay, 2011). A qualitative researcher is more open to new concepts and theories coming from their informants, and is less rigid in what to expect and what the informants will share (Blaikie, 2010). After explaining the method of choice I will now elaborate on how I approached the participants and who they are.

4.3 The participants

In order to achieve the information I seek in this thesis I have chosen to approach both employees and consumers of clothing. I have received information from 8 interviewees. One employee of a fast fashion store and one from a second-hand shop. For consumer participants I have interviewed three individuals that mainly shops fast fashion, and two who primarily choose second-hand. Additionally, I have received a written response from one conscious consumer. To make the most out of few interviews I have recruited the consumers through my personal and extended network. This way I could specifically ask someone I, or some of my associates, knew had a preference for fast fashion or second-hand shopping, which made the interview process more efficient.

I have contacted both fast fashion and second-hand retailers directly at the store, to see if it was possible to get an interview with one of their employees. I talked to an employee at a fast fashion store who gave my request, and information- and consent form with my contact info, to another employee. The next day I approached this employee in person, and scheduled an interview at the store. For the second-hand shop I had at an earlier stage tried to contact the store by email. However, I struggled to reach them and after a few weeks I chose to approach them in person at the store. This resulted in a scheduled interview, also at the store.

4.4 Interviews

I have written an information letter and consent form that is approved by NSD – Norwegian center for research data. Both documents are written in Norwegian as my informants mainly have Norwegian as their mother-tongue. A short description of the project, why I want to talk to them, and what I mainly will ask them about is described in the document, and the participants have the option to agree to be interviewed and to it being recorded or not. Additionally, it is highlighted that it is voluntary to participate and that they can withdraw their consent at any time. These are attached together as Appendix I.

The consumer participants was given the option to conduct the interview in their homes or elsewhere, preferably at a café or another public place. To get the most accurate information it is important that the interviews are conducted in a space where the informants feel comfortable, relaxed and safe. All of them preferred to have the interview at home, whilst two of the interviews were conducted online, through zoom (due to long distance). One of the informants chose to conduct the interview with a mutual contact person present for support. Another informant asked if they could respond in writing and I added more questions to my interview guide and sent it to them. For the employees I asked to have the interview at their job, in an office-space or at a café nearby. I have been open to what each informant suggests as a place they would prefer to have the interview. They both wanted me to meet them at their workplace.

By having the theory, previous literature and the research questions in mind I have written two different interview guides, one for consumers and one for employees. This was to ensure that I would ask all of the participants some of the same and most essential questions. During the interviews the participants mentioned different aspects and I would continue exploring and ask them to further elaborate if it seemed relevant to my research. Due to certain themes that emerged during the interviews with the consumers I was able to add some questions to the employee guides as they were conducted last. Some of the themes and questions I have asked the consumers about did not provide the initial responses expected, and others have become more interesting than expected. Some of them, both consumers and employees seemed to have more of a personal interest in the field and mentioned several aspects. The interview guides in English are attached as Appendix II and III. How I coded and transcribed the interviews will now be explained.

4.4.1 Coding and transcribing the interviews

To organize the interviews I have used the code CC for conscious consumers and FF for fast fashion consumers. They have been numbered to separate them from each other. For clarification see the chart below.

Table 1 Coding of consumer participants

Fast fashion consumers		Conscious consumers	
Interview 1	FF1	Interview 1	CC1
Interview 2	FF2	Interview 2	CC2
Interview 3	FF3	Interview 3	CC3

For the employees I have used the code FFEM for fast fashion employee, and SHEM for second-hand employee. See below.

Table 2 Coding of employee participants

Fast fashion employee	Second-hand employee
FFEM	SHEM

Initially in the information letter provided for the participants it said that gender, age-group and name of workplace would be revealed in the thesis. Due to reasons of keeping the anonymity of the participants protected, gender will not be mentioned, *they* will be used instead of *he* or *she*. I will not reveal where the participants live or work either. For the employees I will describe them only as an employee of a fast fashion store or a second-hand store.

The interviews were transcribed in Norwegian as this was the language spoken. When practically possible they were transcribed immediately after they were carried out to ensure that the information was fresh in mind. All of the participants said I could contact them if anything was unclear or if I had any further questions. Information that could possibly reveal personal characteristics was omitted during the transcription process. After transcribing and saving the transcripts on my personal OneDrive account from the University of Stavanger I used the

automatic translate function. The translation to English was fairly good, but I went through them manually and doubled-checked with the original one to ensure that the meaning remained the same. When the interviews were transcribed, the recordings were immediately deleted from the recording device.

After transcribing the interviews, and reading through them several times I coded the interviews for their commonalities as well as differences that came up, and themes of interest that emerged. For instance, my analysis revealed a definition of what a conscious consumer is (as well as is not). My analysis also revealed some main categories such as incentives, common solutions, and emotions and identity which formed the bases of the analysis section of this thesis and will be elaborated in the following section. Furthermore, some differences especially in the amount of clothing purchases between both the fast fashion and conscious consumers. When reading through them several times patterns of similarities revealed themselves and became of interest to further pursue. As Blaikie (2010) writes, the classification of the findings is affected by the researchers purpose and is therefore not a neutral process. What the researcher want to investigate creates boundaries and a direction to the process of analysis. Hence, the themes and patterns of interest to this thesis and its research questions have provided the framework of analysis. The themes and patterns will be elaborated in the analysis section.

5 Analysis

In this section the main findings from the interviews will be presented and elaborated on. The focus will be on commonalities, but also on the differences as well as possible deviations. One of the focus points will be to see if any of the participants suggestions could be imagined as possible incentives for the fast fashion consumers to think more consciously about their shopping habits. The literature previously explained will be applied to further enhance the analysis. There are some different stores, apps and web pages mentioned by the participants, therefore a clarification of the essentials of these will be provided first. The focus will be on second-hand shops (both online and offline) in Norway. Fretex is the most common chain of second-hand stores in Norway, they receive their clothing from consumers and others through widely available containers, usually placed outside grocery stores. It is also possible to donate through mail, at Lindex stores or directly to a Fretex store (Fretex, 2022). In addition, Tise, that is a Norwegian free of charge app, where individual consumers can sell and buy second-hand clothing and others (Tise, 2022). Lastly Finn, a Norwegian online platform where you can buy, give away, or sell, everything from a house to a pair of shoes, or find a new job. These three shops were most commonly mentioned as platforms the participants found their second-hand clothing.

5.1 Definitions of different consumers

The analysis of the interviews with both fast fashion and conscious consumers reflected important differences in how they define their shopping habits and perceive the fashion industry. This section will be devoted to the definitions that they provided about what it means to be a consumer (both conscious and fast fashion).

5.1.2 Conscious consumers

The conscious consumers interviewed put a high importance to where they purchase their clothes. They stated that the clothing they buy were either second-hand or from a brand or store that have high environmental visibility around the way their clothing is produced, on how the working conditions and payment of the garment workers are, and other ethical concerns. They

listed both the environmental and social aspect of the fashion industry as reasons they do not want to support fast fashion.

“I have seen a number of documentaries and read about it, the social and working conditions are just as important (as the environmental concerns) for shopping second-hand” (CC1).

“(The social and environmental impact of the clothing industry) It affects frequency and what clothes I shop. Trying to see what options exist if I need a t-shirt, what is the most sensible choice. Trying to choose what seems like the best option with all parameters taken into account” (CC2).

“(The social and environmental impact of the clothing industry) That's certainly the biggest factor for me behind my decisions when shopping for clothes, and makes me shop less new clothing and less often” (CC3).

They stated that they felt guilty if they bought clothing from the fast fashion industry. As one of the participants mentioned, the amount of water that goes into producing a new pair of jeans “gives them the creeps” (CC1) and that they would never consider buying one that was not second-hand. In addition, for this conscious consumer the looks of a good quality pair of vintage jeans was preferred as personal style. The perspectives that the conscious consumer participants had, resembles what Fisk (1973) defined as responsible consumption. It is also in line with what other research have found to be important factors for a conscious consumer (Agrawal & Gupta, 2018; Bick et al., 2018; Liu et al., 2021; Lundblad & Davies, 2016; Niinimäki, 2010). This is evident when the participants emphasized that they did not want to exploit other people or the local environment in other countries.

Another aspect the participants highlighted was the material their clothing is made of. One of them emphasized that buying clothing made from plastic materials like polyester do not breathe properly and makes them feel uncomfortable, and therefore do not want to buy or wear it:

“I used to be able to bring a blouse, say if I was at Fretex and found a vintage blouse, it's so cheap, 50 NOK, before I didn't think twice about it, but it's probably in polyester it

doesn't breathe. With experience, I know that I'm not going to use it because I hate wearing it because of the fabric” (CC1).

Emotions were found to be an important component in discussing their shopping preferences. For instance for CC3 it was the feeling of guilt when they bought synthetic textiles that was emphasized during the interview:

“If I feel guilty now, it’s because I shop synthetic clothes like sportswear, for example” (CC3).

During the interview with the second-hand employee they confirmed that natural materials is becoming of more importance to their customers:

“The thing about material and fiber content there is becoming more awareness around, and here we have noticed a change (in our customers)” (SHEM).

The fast fashion employee also highlighted how all of their children’s clothing and a lot of their women’s clothing were made of organic cotton, additionally the use of recycled polyester and polyamide were increasing. This was the case they reported, though customers talking or asking about material was a lot less frequent than what it used to be. They said that it could be that the customers either take it for granted or they simply do not care (FFEM). The least conscious consumers they have are the older:

“[...] the slightly older ones who are a bit concerned about whether it's child labor, but this is about the older generation, they're going to buy something, then they can say, it was so cheap it's probably made by some kids, but then they buy it anyway. So don't really know what they want me to say, they probably want me to say, no this is not made by a child, so that they get a good conscience. But those who are older, 70 + they care virtually nothing if it is organic or such, put somewhat extremely” (FFEM).

Hence, one of the major findings was that natural fiber materials were preferred by all of the conscious consumers interviewed. Although the fast fashion employee emphasized that a lot of their clothing was organic cotton or recycled materials, this was not something their customers seemed to care about. Neither did the fast fashion consumers interviewed, they did not mention their preference for any specific material in their clothing purchases from fast fashion stores.

Another feature that the conscious consumers mentioned was how animal derived materials such as wool, silk and leather usually is seen as quality fibers.

“In the past, I deliberately avoided materials from animals, wool, leather, silk, everything we really think of as quality textiles. But then I realized that I replaced all this with plastic, and have concluded that no one is served by this, they can withstand almost nothing even if I try to take care of them to the best of my ability” (CC2).

Though they continued buying wool clothes for instance they bought them from second-hand or organically produced shops. Additionally, they stated that they would take extra good care of these items to ensure that they would last for a long time, and at the very end of their life hopefully would decompose.

“What I'm trying to do now is that if I'm going to have something that's new, or second-hand for that matter, I want it to be natural materials, preferably. Like cotton or linen, I have also begun to use wool to some extent, but then it should preferably be second-hand or organic” (CC2).

The interviews from the conscious consumers reflected that they care deeply about where their clothes come from, the carbon footprint, the social and ethical aspects of production, and what they are made of, both to ensure a long life and comfort. In addition to showing concerns for animal welfare and choosing these materials preferably second-hand. Their explanations of why, what and where they consume their clothing is closely related to the responsible consumption theory described previously. As they consider the environmental, social and ethical aspects of their consumption choices (Agrawal & Gupta, 2018; Fisk, 1973; Lim, 2017). Additionally, in line with the findings of McNeill and Moore (2015) that found consumers that cared about, and felt a responsibility to consume with regards to the environmental and social impact was highly likely to pursue thorough information about sustainable brands and preferably choose these and second-hand options. I will now show the fast fashion consumers responses to this.

5.1.3 Fast fashion consumers

The interviews with the fast fashion oriented consumers reflected two important issues: First the price and second the convenience of the products. They argued that these two things were two major reasons for them to choose fast fashion stores. “It probably has a lot to do with the fact that it is inexpensive and thus you have the ability to have a high consumption and can practice use and throw” (FF1). Their knowledge of the environmental and social consequences of the fashion industry was either very limited or they deliberately chose to avoid it.

“I don't know anything. I was told it was something about, that we had to boycott H&M at some point or something, but I haven't looked into it. Slave labor in China, no I don't know” (FF2).

When asked about what they knew about the effects the clothing industry has on the climate or the environment one of the replies were:

“I suppose it matters, but I have not heard anything concrete” (FF3).

They stated that they have never or rarely considered the environmental issues while buying new things. One of them mentioned that the environmental impact of each item was stated in the online shop, but they did not consider, or look at this while shopping.

“On the H&M app it is also, it says how much the garment has impacted the environment, etc., but it's not something I think about” (FF1).

Though the participants mentioned buying second-hand as a possible solution, they rarely or never performed it.

“Outerwear would be just fine to shop second-hand, but I don't. It's all about the selection in one place and sizes. Shopping one garment at a time seems stressful, it's much easier to buy a lot at once” (FF2).

“Yes I think it can be very nice to go to second-hand stores, but I find it difficult to find anything, it is very unorganized. There's a lot of clothes that just hang there and it takes a long time to go through finding a piece of clothing, and you often feel that you can find new ones at the same price, e.g. at H&M and other less expensive stores” (FF1).

“I have thought about it a little bit in recent years, but I think it's a bit about accessibility too, that new clothes are much more accessible than second-hand ones” (FF3).

Another aspect they mentioned was that they did not want to buy something that was not treated correctly from the previous owner or had any marks suggesting that they were previously owned.

“There are a lot of things that are also washed out, there are often stains or the color or fabric has faded and then I am not interested” (FF1).

“I am also skeptical about how others have treated the clothes, they are often stained, they may have used a tumble dryer and changed their size, etc.” (FF2).

In addition, some of them argued that, the price was not seen as fair when they could buy new clothing for a cheaper or the same price. Researching consumer attitudes towards sustainable fashion McNeill and Moore (2015) found that consumers lacking knowledge about the unsustainable practice of the fashion industry did not see any reasons for it to change nor wanted it to. This is in line with the findings in this thesis, that the less they knew, the less they cared. Additionally, it is interesting that some of them knew more, but this did not affect their shopping habits the way it did for the conscious consumers. This could possibly be due to the participants differing views on consumers responsibility, and whether it matters if you change your individual behavior.

Preferred material, grounded in environmental or quality concerns was not mentioned by these consumers. They were not purposely choosing clothing that they thought would last them a long time when they bought fast fashion. One of them mentioned that their clothing lasted for the period they wanted, either because they no longer were fashionable or would fit properly (FF2). None of them mentioned either interest or concern of what type of fabric their clothing was made of. Although, one of them stated that they would buy more expensive dresses due to the preference for the fabric feel and fit, and argued that these were of higher quality, and timeless in fashion, and would mean that they could be kept and worn for a long time (FF1). Value (price) was found to be one motivational factors for keeping clothing longer (Kwon et al., 2020). This seems to be in line with the fast fashion participants, due to their clothing being cheap to replace they do not see them as an investment but easily replaceable when they want something new.

The cultural aspect in Norway, that consumers have become used to the business model of fast fashion and perceive some clothing as consumables also seem to be in line with the fast fashion consumers interviewed (Haugrønning et al., 2021).

The fast fashion consumers expressed little to no concern for the environmental or social aspect of their shopping habits, but when asked they did mention that overconsumption was negative, and that they should buy more second-hand. One of them seemed more aware and emotionally affected of the consequences than the others.

“I understand that buying 10 garments a month is not sustainable and is not necessary either. When I have these (biannual closet) cleanups, it's because I feel like, I can maybe find a pair of pants and think wow, I haven't seen that in six months. So I feel guilty about it. In addition to spending far too much money on clothes when I already have clothes I could have worn. It's a feeling that takes over, I need something new to make me feel better, and you often feel guilty afterwards” (FF1).

It seems that one major difference between these two consumer groups is how they choose to act and consciously pursue more information to shift their habits or not. Additionally, the fast fashion consumers cared more about the price and how time-consuming the shopping experience was. Which is also interesting as some of them talked about shopping as a fun activity (FF2). Concluding this section, the fast fashion consumers perspectives seems to be in line with what Haugrønning et al. (2021) found, the business model of fast fashion has become part of our culture and the consumers are satisfied with the poorer quality clothing. Furthermore, what Niinimäki (2010) found, that it is difficult to be in line with personal values when the options of cheap fast fashion clothing are plentiful and tempting. Moreover, the lack of information about the negative consequences could be a contributing factor. The impact of information will be further elaborated below.

5.2 Information as an incentive

The participants were asked if more information could possibly change their shopping habits, as it was surprising that some of them actually had no knowledge about the, especially environmental consequences of the clothing industry.

“Perhaps a little more attitude campaigns, e.g. in relation to factories abroad and that side of it could probably have influenced me. And the environmental impact in terms of transportation, more information about it (FF3).

“I think more information is needed, and more readily available information” (CC2).

“I don't think I think about how much and to what extent all this really affects the environment. Also, it is simpler, there is probably a lot of information out about this, but I choose not to seek it out, because it is easier not to think about it really” (FF1).

“[...] it should have been more informed about and put focus on. Much is kept secret in the fashion and clothing industries. You hear about people who say the workers work under such bad conditions and they just deny it. There should have been more transparency about it and legislation that made it harder” (FF1).

For the fast fashion consumers it seems that the information has to be more visible, it does not seem that it is something they would actively choose to look for, but that different campaigns, and highly visible information could have an impact on their habits. They did mention knowing about social consequences of the fast fashion industry due to social media, influencers and television. CC1 stated: “I also think that it is good to have the documentaries that have been shown over the years with people who go to visit industries and factories where they produce the clothes and that this is shown on television. I think more and more you can't close your eyes to it. Information”. This could be similar to what the fast fashion consumers have seen and made them aware of these consequences. It also speaks for that more of this information could possibly influence them into having a more conscious consumption pattern. More information as a tool to raise awareness and change consumer behavior have also been mentioned by previous research (Agrawal & Gupta, 2018; Jung & Jin, 2016a, 2016b; McNeill & Moore, 2015). The importance of readily available information and knowledge about the fashion industry is shown to have an impact on consumers fashion choices (Agrawal & Gupta, 2018; Okur & Saricam, 2019). This was also supported and suggested by the second-hand employee:

“Information, information and raising awareness, and many are well underway, but it's reaching out to everyone, in all the nooks and crannies. And all those who hold on to the clothes having to be cheap, they become the hardest nut to crack” (SHEM).

Although the fast fashion employee did not directly mention information as an incentive, they did talk about TV programs and books that had greatly affected themselves and their view on the fashion industry (FFEM). Therefore I would argue that the analysis show that increased and available information would impact and incentivize the fast fashion consumers to explore their shopping habits and possibly change them.

The knowledge to action gap, mentioned by both McNeill and Moore (2015) and Niinimäki (2010) is especially interesting when looking at FF1. They had some knowledge on the negative consequences of the fast fashion industry, and stated that this would in some periods be affecting their shopping behavior (FF1). They had different suggestions to how it could be less tempting to buy new fast fashion clothing:

“I feel that with the fashion picture, that there should have been less focus on constantly developing something new, how to look, you see trends coming back that have been in the past. Maybe less advertising around clothes [...] Less focus on clothing being status is important. [...] But perhaps there should have been less availability of clothing, thinking of hi-income countries such as Norway, Europe in general. Less availability for clothes, say when you go to a shopping center there are so many possibilities and options that you often choose the easiest. It gets pressed up in your face everywhere, sales, look here, there should be less focus and less accessibility. Perhaps it should not even have been possible to buy clothes online at all because it makes it very easy. You can sit at home and tap add, buy, it's that simple. [...] But again this with advertising, made it less visible. Sales are of course always nice, but it is because it is clothes that have not been sold and that it is a profit. Making less clothes in general in the world reduces production” (FF1).

They were in a way asking fast fashion to become less available and tempting. In a way acknowledging their own gap in what they knew and how they acted accordingly. In another way FF2 deliberately signed up for all possible emails from the fast fashion brands they were using to ensure that they would be informed of all types of campaigns and sales (FF2). Consumers deliberately avoiding looking at or approaching fast fashion showed an effect on interest and made them see the difference between what they wanted or needed more clearly (Mukendi et al.,

2020). The fast fashion employee when asked if their shopping habits were influenced by having this job replied:

“It is clear that it is easy to, there is a lot of temptations, it is difficult to say how I would have been as a consumer if I had not worked here, because I get to cover very much of my needs here in this store. I'm going to dress myself and my kids that I mostly shop for here, maybe 95% of the clothes they have at home are from here. Because it's available, and I get a staff discount” (FFEM).

To summarize the section of information as an incentive I would argue that the analysis revealed that information is essential to making informed choices. Additionally, when the information is about fast fashion, such as the emails with different offers, or working at a store full of temptations on a daily basis, it can make a consumer buy more. Hence, information is a powerful tool, but it depends on what kind of information one receives. Also, when the information about the negative consequences is insufficient, the availability and temptations of the fast fashion industry is impactful and can create a challenge for pursuing a conscious shopping behavior. Niinimäki (2010) did also find that the plentiful temptations of cheap fast fashion can make it difficult for a consumer to be in line with their own values and information they have. I will now show some commonalities about possible solutions that came up during the interviews.

5.3 Similarities in solutions and the consumers role

A common theme that emerged during the interviews was price increase as an incentive to buy less clothing and contributing to changing the fashion industry in a more sustainable and ethical direction. However, the fast fashion consumers did not want this to happen as for them this would impact their own capability to continue shopping the way they wanted to. Additionally, both consumer groups mentioned that clothing should be available to all, regardless of income.

“I don't want to mention price increases because everyone needs clothes” (FF2).

“It's a bit silly to say it, but to increase the prices to some extent, that you actually pay what it costs. That people get decent wages throughout the process and that things are done in proper ways and no shortcuts are taken. We will have to solve the fact that there

will then be someone who cannot afford to buy clothes in a different way with tax policy. In my eyes, things are so improbably cheap, which is the cause for many of the problems” (CC2).

“In a way, I don't want clothes to be more expensive, because I want to buy them” (FF1).

“In a way, clothes should have become more expensive, not have access to you being able to buy so much that it becomes a consumable, but in another way clothes should also be available to everyone, so that if you only increase prices it will also affect the availability of those with less money” (FF1).

“The best thing would be if the brands put more production locally, that clothes became a little more expensive again and it was not produced as much” (CC3).

The analysis reflected that all consumers saw the low price of fast fashion as a contributing factor to over-consumption. Moreover, that increased prices would affect their own habits and decrease their own consumption of fast fashion clothing.

“There's no industry if nobody buys it” (CC1).

“[...] In general I think it's good to have better solutions for selling and buying second-hand, but the big companies wouldn't give a shit about that because they just want to make money, and they don't profit from it. [...] It's all about supply and demand. As long as people want it, it's possible” (FF3).

“I know that it is over-produced, I understand that reuse is good and that too much is produced” (FF2).

Hence, as the analysis reflected all of the participants seemed to be aware of overconsumption and stated that the consumers role was impactful in a way that if no one bought, the demand would not be that high and the production would decrease. The key difference between them was whether this impacted their shopping habits or not.

“The fact that I shop for both furniture and clothes used is my contribution to living more environmentally friendly, contributing to the planet. Meat is difficult, clothes are simple. It also feels good, it's of great importance and I don't want to be part of that wheel (fast fashion) – I think that's awful. It means a lot” (CC1).

“I think about price the most when I shop for clothes. Not about anything else” (FF2).

“(The social and environmental impact) That's certainly the biggest factor for me behind my decisions when shopping for clothes, and makes me shop less new clothing and less often” (CC3).

Increased prices were also mentioned as a main solution from both employees perspective:

“I believe that putting a higher price on clothing is the best, and most effective measure” (FFEM).

“The ideal thing would have been, what has been, is that the clothing industry, stores and consumers, they demand cheaper and cheaper clothes, there hasn't been a price change in clothes, hardly, since the 80s, it becomes rather cheaper and cheaper and it makes the clothing industry, it becomes cheaper solutions, cheaper materials, cheaper production and more utilization of those who work in the textile industry, with lower wages, cheaper country of production. The ideal would have been, at first, that consumers accepted a higher price, and that better and more natural materials were used” (SHEM).

One of the fast fashion consumers talked about the fast fashion companies in a way that all they cared about was profit, and that it would be difficult to get them in line with selling second-hand or redesigned clothing in their stores. Not specifically mentioning price increase of fast fashion as a solution. Other than them, price increases was a uniformly suggested solution by all participants. To my knowledge very few previous research suggests this as a solution. Although, many emphasize that this is one of the main reasons for the fast fashion industry's rapid rise and preferred choice of consumers (Bick et al., 2018; Okur & Saricam, 2019; Peters et al., 2021). Niinimäki et al. (2020) mentions conclusively that consumers must shift their views of fashion as something entertaining towards a practical product. Furthermore, that the fashion industry by transitioning to a sustainable business model and ending the use of chemicals will be more expensive to produce and thereby clothing would be more costly. The participants in this thesis suggests price increase as an incentive to shop less and lower their own consumption. Therefore, a solution with increased prices to motivate fast fashion consumers to consume less, could be a first step towards a general lower consumption rate. Moreover, it was highlighted by

the participants that this price increase should benefit the farmers and garment workers to ensure a more fair industry.

When the participants was asked about their thoughts on the consumers role in the transition of the fashion industry they all said that the role was substantial. This was the same for both consumer groups, and employees. Yet, almost all highlighted that the industry's role was just as important to initiate a change.

“I believe very much in consumer power, otherwise I would not have lived as I do, but I also do not think we should underestimate the responsibility of politicians to take the measures they can take. So that's yes thanks both” (CC2).

“Yes, we have a big role and we can make a big difference as consumers. However, it is primarily the brands and manufacturers that can make the biggest difference. We as consumers can consume less, exchange clothes and repair” (CC3).

“They're the ones who use it. There's no industry if nobody buys it. I think they have a very big role, but also think those who make the clothes have just as big of a role absolutely” (CC1).

“Yes to some extent, that's the way it is with everything in the world really. We as a civil society have a big role that we often don't take because it feels like everything is at a higher level, we are the ones who buy these things so somehow we have a responsibility to think sustainably and investigate where the clothes come from, but in a different way it should have been more informed about and put focus on. [...] There should have been more transparency about it and legislation that made it harder, but it is we as consumers who create mass production because we buy it, it would not have existed without customers” (FF1).

“A lot lies on us, we should mainly buy second-hand. It's good in every way. Learned us how to sew, patch holes. Sew the hole instead of throwing away the garment” (FF2).

“Yes, I think so, because it's all about supply and demand. As long as people want it, it's possible” (FF3).

Similar to other solutions suggested by the participants, the difference is still whether this impacts their shopping habits or not. It is interesting that they have similar thoughts on the consumers role yet act in such a dissimilar way. Schot et al. (2016) showed that consumers role was important in transitions and that consumer demands often could be the starting point for a societal change. The mention of Future in our hands work in Norway shows that change can happen due to consumers and especially when they work together through an organization (Framtiden i våre hender, 2022). The conscious consumer participants could be some of these consumers, but the challenge would be to get all consumers, particularly those who choose fast fashion, to be part of the change. As Bick et al. (2018) highlighted the important role of consumers from high income countries to take responsibility towards their consumption behavior. Though, they did emphasize that the most important tool to transition the fast fashion industry would be policy change and regulations. The consumer participants also mentioned this as equally important to the consumers role.

The employees had similar responses to the consumer participants. The fast fashion employee emphasized that they had an important responsibility as a retailer.

“Yes, it is clear that consumers are really everything I think, because if no one buys something, it is nothing that lasts. It is them who decide which stores should exist and not. Nevertheless, I believe that responsibility lies with both. I think that we as a chain have a very big responsibility. I believe that all companies have, no matter what industry, we have a great responsibility, a social responsibility. [...] So I think it's twofold” (FFEM).

The second-hand employee highlighted that the conscious consumers are still too few to create an impact and possibly change the industry. They also talked about the knowledge to action gap as an important challenge.

“Not enough yet, but there is more and more awareness of it, as you can also see on Instagram accounts, but the ordinary man and woman hardly think about it. There are an incredible number of people who still haven't set foot in a second-hand store for old prejudices or some reason, so there's a long way to go. (Can consumers contribute to a change?) Yes, if [...] people demand better quality, and then also have to accept that the cost of clothes goes up, because it will follow. How to reach out to everyone with that

message, because you have those who are conscious for environmental reasons and want to change it, but for now these are far too few. It takes so long to get people thinking, and when they start to think, to them actually doing something about it” (SHEM).

The employee participants both emphasized the importance of getting the consumers to agree, the fast fashion employee specifically raised concerns about if one store were to raise their prices it would have to involve the entire industry. It would not have an effect and impact if another store would continue selling cheaper (FFEM). The second-hand employee highlighted that to change the industry without the acceptance of the consumers would be foolish (SHEM). If all clothing became more expensive consumers would be left with no choice than to accept it. In order to be in line with the new EU strategy, the SDGs and creating a more sustainable and fair future this could be an important measure to consider.

The summarized findings from these themes were that the participants agreed that over-consumption was negative. The consumers role is important to initiate a change, but the industry’s responsibility is just as important. A proposed solution to combat over-consumption, lower production and consume less is increased prices for fast fashion clothing.

5.4 Emotions and identity towards fashion

The development of different emotions was another important finding that emerged in the analysis. For instance, one of the fast fashion consumers saw shopping, especially online, as a fun activity and hobby (FF2). One of them would describe their monthly haul as filling an emotional void, and a state of temporarily happiness (FF1). They would all state that feeling comfortable and nice in what you wear had a great impact. Considering identity, the answers were sort of questioning. Identity was originally an aspect of focus, but others became more interesting and important due to the participants replies. First impressions and personal style were mentioned as important regarding their clothing.

One of the conscious consumers said that clothing and fashion had never been as fun as when they fully committed to second-hand and vintage clothing. They felt more secure about personal style and very rarely felt bad about shopping as every item was thoroughly thought through. They further explained that by mainly buying second-hand online, on platforms such as

Tise and Finn, these considerations meant more as you buy from an individual and get the clothing sent by mail (CC1). They were also the participant that regarded fashion as the most impactful on their identity:

“I feel that because when you buy second-hand, you don't shop in the same sense, at least not me, one is more conscious of shopping what I like and what I fancy. Personally I feel when people are dressed only in what is fashionable now, everything is, I can't see who you are, because you're connected with this mainstream thing, so it's difficult to know exactly who you are, because everyone wears the same thing. Whereas if you have chosen clothes based on what you like, and have taken some references from fashion of course, it says more about you as a person (CC1).

When asked how clothing affected their identity one of the conscious consumers replied:

“It's a bit like the chicken or the egg. Is it my identity that affects my clothes or is it my clothes that affect my identity?” (CC2).

The fast fashion employee expressed feelings of disgust when discussing the cheapest brands of fast fashion. They would put their trust in what their own brand claimed, in terms of social and ethical aspects of production, but question the stores that were beyond cheap (FFEM). When asked why they did not want to buy from these brands, this was the reply:

“Because it smells, that's when I get thoughts again, okay what are the ones who made the clothes left with, what is it that the farmer who has grown the cotton, what are they left with, and what, they have sprayed it with some cheap and toxic chemicals, I think it's completely distasteful” (FFEM).

Another aspect mentioned by one of the conscious consumer participants was that sometimes they would think others were lucky to not have the kind of worrying about the negative consequences as them. This was the response when asked if they talked to friends or others about fashion and its consequences:

“May think that they are lucky not having to think about it so much and I do not want to indulge others with the bad conscience/how heavy it can be to think so much about it” (CC2).

This is interesting as it suggests that it is quite a burden to feel responsible for your own consumption. They also mentioned dilemmas between wearing their clothing for the longest possible time and still be representable in a social society. The example given was pants with holes in the crotch, they did not perceive their own abilities in repairing this nicely enough to be shown in public:

“There is a trade-off between the social gaze and the conscience” (CC2).

Enhancing consumers general repairing and mending skills is suggested to be easily achieved through community workshops (Lapolla & Sanders, 2015). Having these skills as mandatory subjects through school is another suggestion (Mukendi et al., 2020). Skills for repairing our clothing was also mentioned by the fast fashion consumers.

“Learned us how to sew, patch holes. Sew the hole instead of throwing away the garment” (FF2).

One of the conscious consumers also mentioned the use of tailors to mend your second-hand clothing into personal and individual garments perfectly suited to your own body-shape (CC1). The fast fashion employee had an interesting perspective on sewing skills nowadays and how their customers had lacking interest and skills in mending clothing.

“Thinking like my grandmothers generation, they sewed their clothes themselves, and the clothes sat perfectly and matched their bodies, because they could sew, either completely from scratch, or that they bought a garment and made small adjustments so that the length of the dress was good, they could sew a little out or a little in, so that the garment was perfect for them. Whereas today, we are a bit like that, in the past the garments sat nicely, because they were sewn to the individual, it is clear that it was also expensive then, while today we will have more garments, but we do not bother to make an effort for it, and there are very few who can sew as well. [...] People today want to have their cake and eat it too, they want to look nice, but they kind of don't bother to make an effort, tailoring is a completely unknown term, to hand in to them, where do I find it, we don't even know where that would be. So it surprises me a little, more personally then I mean, people settle for, yes, I'll take it, I guess it's trendy with frills, yes I don't like it, but I'll take it anyway. Feel people go around being a bit partially dissatisfied really, but they take it

because it's easy, it hangs there, it only cost 200 NOK so I just take it, very like that” (FFEM).

Arguing that if the skillset of repair and mending our own clothing was taught through schools, workshops for those no longer in school, could help consumers and possibly make them more interested in pursuing these skills in practice. The rise of fast fashion have made the skills of repairing redundant (Peters et al., 2021). For the transition of the fast fashion industry these skillsets would be handy for consumers in the pursuit of a more sustainable wardrobe. Moreover, previous research have also found that by perceiving these activities as leisure could make them an enjoyable use of our free-time (Holroyd, 2016).

To summarize this section, the importance of clothing as an identity marker was not as important as first expected. Although, it was uniformly stated that wearing clothing that made the participants feel comfortable and nice, was of great importance. For some, a special attachment to some clothing could be due to the price (value) or value in terms of them being a favorite garment or a planned investment. The way the participants described the importance of being comfortable and feeling nice in their clothing is in line with what Lundblad and Davies (2016) found. Moreover, the reaction the fast fashion employee had about the cheapest fast fashion stores is more in line with what the conscious consumers had for all fast fashion, and in line with Antil (1984) and Ha-Brookshire and Hodges (2009) that there are degrees to how conscious a consumer is. Hence, their clothing did mean something to them, but not as such a high status for their identity as first perceived. The culture of fast fashion has also shifted the society’s view and need to repair clothing. Additionally, due to the vast range of cheap clothing that exists it is less desirable to mend them in order to create a perfect fit. Perhaps if clothing became more expensive and less immensely accessible, the need and interest of mending and repairing would rise and make the average consumer more appreciative of the clothing they already have.

5.5 Greenwashing

The analysis revealed a variance in the mention of greenwashing. Some of the conscious consumers talked about it as something to avoid, while some of the fast fashion consumers seemed to be victims of it. When asked about what they were thinking of when I mentioned sustainability and clothing these were two of the conscious consumers responses:

“That word I hear a lot from the big clothing chains now, it's in the wind, this is sustainably made, this and that, there's a lot of focus on it at the moment. But then maybe it's not. (greenwashing) If I think about it further, I think what is sustainable is that the clothes are made in a good way. Both from the people who make them, and how big the climate footprint is, and to the consumer, wear your clothes several times, shop used, purchases of good quality that last a long time” (CC1).

“Reduced consumption. It all comes with an environmental and climate cost, what is sustainable is reuse and using until it can no longer be used. Also thinking that there is a lot of greenwashing, and abuse of the term. It's easy to get blinded” (CC2).

Greenwashing was mentioned another time by the same conscious consumer when talking about the importance of information to raise awareness and educate consumers:

“Does this cost a lot of money because it is good quality or because it is a brand. Have people been paid what they should or is it the management that takes out a lot of money. Bring out this information in one way or another so that the consumer can make a conscious choice and become nudged in the right direction without it being greenwashing or such. I think that would have had a lot to say” (CC2).

One of the fast fashion consumers saw H&Ms take-back clothing scheme as a solution (FF2). Though this is a positive measure for sustainability in theory, only a small amount of clothing gets recycled and it more closely resembles greenwashing. It is less than 1 % of clothing that gets recycled into new clothing globally (Niinimäki et al., 2020). Through the use of advertising around such sustainable solutions in a fast fashion company, it can confuse consumers into believing that the entire company is sustainable. Hence, greenwash their image and mislead their consumers (Karlsson & Ramasar, 2020). The fast fashion employee mentioned that they also had a take-back scheme and provides their customers with a coupon when they donate clothing. Though they notice that their customers do not do this because they are conscious but to receive the coupon.

“We see that people don't do it for the environment, that they want to do something good for the environment, they do it to get that discount coupon. It's kind of a good thought, but I would think that in the long run such benefits will fall away, because it should be

something we do automatically, which we also do when we hand in batteries, for example. If you go to the convenience store to deliver batteries, you don't get a discount coupon, but it's to get people started" (FFEM).

Their thought that this is a way to get customers to start donating their clothing and to hinder clothing going to trash is interesting. It could be that this is a starting point and eventually will become the norm. Although, the possibility to donate your clothing to charity containers have been around for a long time and the only reason one would take unwanted clothing to a fast fashion store instead would be the coupon. Another way these take-back schemes could potentially be important for the stores is if they would start selling second-hand clothing alongside the new ones. As consumers throw away barely worn clothing this could be a potential new business model (Peters et al., 2021).

To summarize this section, the importance of acknowledging greenwashing is critical. The conscious consumer participants were those that mainly was aware of the phenomenon, they avoided fast fashion and were skeptical when they claimed that something was sustainable. The fast fashion consumers seemed to be misled by fast fashions attempts at greenwashing. Rausch and Kopplin (2021) emphasizes that due to the lack of an industry standard of terms such as sustainable it is difficult to ensure that claims are true. Increased knowledge, more visible information and a way to certify whether sustainability claims are correct could be important to combat greenwashing. As Mohr et al. (2001) also highlights that there is a need to evolve a guarantee that would verify such claims.

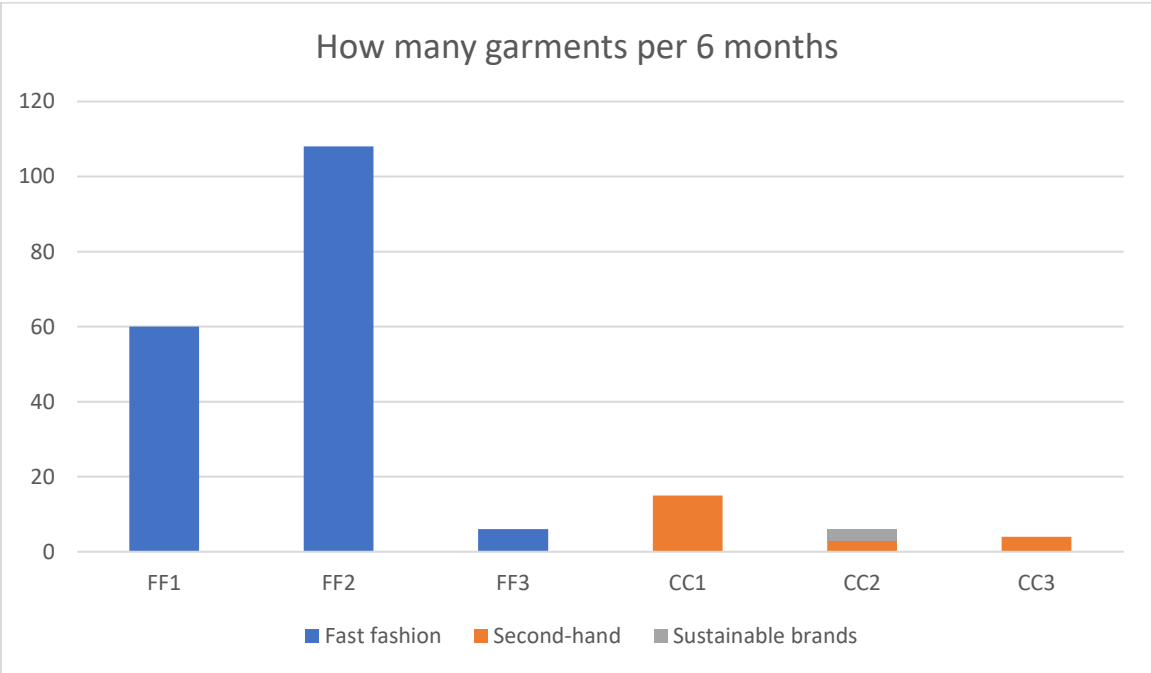
5.6 Differences

The analysis also revealed some important differences between the participants. The difference in number of garments purchased by CC1 and FF3 is interesting. FF3 shops primarily fast fashion clothing but has a more conscious shopping pattern. They explained that their last purchase was a new specific item of clothing, as the one they had worn for the previous years now were outworn. CC1 who shops exclusively second-hand was the one that expressed the highest interest in fashion and personal style and had a higher consumption rate than FF3. Although, due to the conscious choice of shopping only second-hand the available choices of clothing would naturally decrease. This could be the reason why the amount of garments was

much lower than FF1 and FF2. For specific numbers of garments purchased, see the diagram below. This finding shows that a fast fashion consumer can have a substantially lower number of purchases than others. It also reveals that not all fast fashion consumers shop a lot, and not all second-hand consumers shop very little.

An important finding that have emerged during the analysis is that there are different levels of how conscious a consumer is. In other words, some consumers know in great detail the consequences of the clothing industry and avoid it at all costs, and others do not. Moreover, a substantial variance in how much clothing and how often the consumers shop, both the fast fashion and conscious consumers. I will show in a diagram below to provide a clearer view of the different shopping practices of the participants.

Table 3 Diagram of garments bought per 6 months, and where from.



As this diagram shows there is a huge variety in the participants consumption patterns. Although the conscious consumers have generally lower consumption, FF3 is on the same level. When looking back to the average consumption in Europe, 26 kg of textiles per person annually (European Environment Agency, 2019). A laundry blog provides some information about the weight of different garments to see how much would go in the washing machine. Looking at

these numbers the approximate average of one garment would be around 0,4 kg (Bethan, 2022). If this number is multiplied with the amount of clothing FF2 buys per 6 months, who is the fast fashion consumer with the highest shopping rate, this is equivalent to 43,2 kg, coming in largely above the European average. When applying this to CC1, who is the conscious consumer interviewed with the highest amount of clothing purchases, the number will be 6 kg, and well beneath half of the European average. Further research on how this number is spread out between individual consumers could be interesting to reveal if it is the majority of people that have very high consumption, or if it is evenly spread out and over-consumption in general.

Another difference, or similarity is how well thought through the purchase of a garment was. For FF1 and FF2 it seemed more as an activity and hobby, and none of them mentioned that the fast fashion clothing they bought were especially important, other than that they mainly wanted new clothing or saw a sale. FF3 on the other hand stated being very thoughtful before buying new clothing even though they were from fast fashion brands:

“I think very much about something before I order it, so I try not only, I never order like, that I order one of each color to see which one is the best and return again. I always order with regards to keeping what I order. Alternatively, if they don't have it in my local store, I can try something similar. So I try not to think of it as a fitting room. (Why) It's because I find it unnecessary to drive back and forth for” (FF3).

This response is more in line with the conscious consumers and it is interesting to see that there are different levels of how conscious a consumer behavior is. As Ha-Brookshire and Hodges (2009) also stated that a consumer can be responsible in some or all stages of consumption.

“I do not remember in detail how the conditions are, etc., but know that it is not good and therefore I do not want to participate in it” (CC1).

This conscious consumer acknowledged that their awareness of the consequences of fast fashion was not particularly detailed as it had been a while since they had read or seen anything in particular. Yet, they still did not want to participate in purchasing fast fashion. This is interesting in comparison to FF1 who also had knowledge about the same consequences, yet did not choose to avoid fast fashion. Their reasons was mostly due to the accessibility and cheap cost

of fast fashion and that it was a lot more available. Still, it is compelling that two individual consumers with the same amount of knowledge could have such different consumer behaviors. Though the analysis revealed that there were differences between the consumer participants, both in the same group and between the groups, the major difference was that some of them consciously pursued second-hand clothing and others did not.

To conclude the section of analysis, the consumers had different definitions of themselves as consumers. The conscious consumer participants saw their consumption as a responsibility to act and behave in a sustainable way to ensure a minimum environmental footprint as well as not supporting the negative ethical and social aspects of the fast fashion industry. The fast fashion consumers though they mentioned over-consumption as negative and increased prices and second-hand shopping as possible solution they did not choose to participate. All participants, including the employees agreed that information was an important incentive to transition consumers perspective and the practice of the industry into a more sustainable direction. Higher prices was another uniformly suggested solution, though the fast fashion consumers did not want this. Feeling comfortable and nice in what you wear was important to all participants, yet the impact of clothing towards identity was less substantial than assumed. The phenomenon of greenwashing was something that the conscious consumers seemed to be aware of, but not the fast fashion consumers. Differences between the two consumer groups was apparent, yet some differences within the two groups was also revealed. Though the participants agreed on many levels, they had dissimilar behavior and consumption patterns. Which was the biggest difference between them. Having discussed the analysis and findings with previous literature, the next section will connect them with the theory presented in the thesis.

6 Discussion

This section is dedicated to discussing the findings from the interviews and connect them with the theoretical framework introduced in this thesis. The different aspects that were highlighted in the analysis is further elaborated in this section, in addition to showcasing some links that could be motivating for future research. Firstly, the responsible consumption theory will be discussed, secondly sustainable transition theory and the Multi-Level Perspective. Thirdly, Not In My Back Yard will be applied to the perspectives of the fast fashion consumers. The last section with concluding remarks will follow this section.

6.1 Responsible consumption theory

The conscious consumers perspective on clothing consumption was in line with the responsible consumption theory previously explained. As they saw their consumption of clothing as a responsibility to minimize harm to the environment and not support the poor working conditions and low wages of the garment workers in the fast fashion industry (Agrawal & Gupta, 2018; Fisk, 1973; Lim, 2017; J. A. Roberts, 1995). They consciously chose to consume preferably second-hand or from sustainable and ethical brands. Additionally, they showed concerns for what type of fabric their clothing was made of and mainly bought what they needed rather than wanted.

Furthermore, the conscious consumers showed a high level of awareness and knowledge about the negative impacts of the fast fashion industry and were thoughtful about their purchases and tried to wear their clothing for as long as possible. Mohr et al. (2001) and Okur and Saricam (2019) emphasized how important information is for a consumer to act responsibly. Political consumption was briefly mentioned in the theory section, consumers practicing buy- or boycotts and emphasize the ‘power to vote with your money’ (Austgulen, 2016; Micheletti & Stolle, 2008; J. A. Roberts, 1995). The conscious consumer participants revealed aspects linked to this behavior when talking about using your consumer power by not shopping fast fashion and do something about your individual actions and impact as a consumer.

McNeill and Moore (2015) showed that some consumers could have a high awareness about the negative consequences of the fast fashion industry but still struggle to be in line with

these values due to them wanting to be perceived as fashionable. This perspective does not seem to be in line with what the fast fashion participants revealed. They did not express high levels of guilt and argued for the accessibility and cheap cost of fast fashion as why they preferred it. For FF1 the knowledge to action gap (McNeill & Moore, 2015; Niinimäki, 2010) was more relevant as they revealed more in-depth knowledge about the negative consequences yet did not change their behavior and consumption pattern. The other fast fashion consumers did also mention that they saw over-consumption as negative and had some knowledge about the social and ethical challenges for fast fashion. Though, they seemed to have less information and still saw fast fashion clothing as a preferred choice.

All of the participants saw the consumers role as substantial, but only the conscious consumers practiced responsible consumption. Moreover, they did also highlight that the industry and politicians responsibility was equally important in the transition of the fast fashion industry.

6.2 Sustainable transition theory and the Multi-Level Perspective (MLP)

Transition theory and the MLP was most useful when choosing the subject of this thesis and for developing the interview guides. Still, some findings are in line with what others have found regarding sustainable transitions. The importance of coalitions in sustainable transitions (C. Roberts et al., 2018) is supported by the participants in this thesis. They all mention that consumers are important but that the industry, legislation, regulations and politics are equally important and should work together to achieve a sustainable change. Politics role in sustainable transitions is emphasized as critical (Geels, 2014; Meadowcroft, 2011).

Both consumer groups and employees agree that the solution to a transition of fast fashion would demand multiple stakeholders to participate and work together in order to create a change. Including the industry itself, media, politicians, governments regulations, consumers and influencers. The major difference is whether the participants want it to change, as some of them are satisfied with their shopping practices to date. Geels (2011) highlights that transitions can be challenging as we all adjust our lifestyles to the current system. However, this would also imply that we would be able to adjust to a new and more sustainable system.

When looking specifically at the framework of the MLP and applying it for the case of this thesis, one could argue that climate change is disturbing the landscape. Information about the social, ethical and environmental impacts of the fast fashion industry becoming more visible to the consumers, creating an additional disturbance. With increasing consumer demands it could create a momentum and destabilize the current fashion system and thereby force them into a radical shift in order to keep up with their customers and the societal change. The niches of today, truthfully sustainable brands, repair shops, second-hand retailers and the conscious consumers, could take over and replace the current system, creating a new and sustainable regime. Policies such as the EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles, the SDGs and our ever increasing global world, media and research, could also contribute to the transition (European Commission, 2022; Geels, 2010, 2011; C. Roberts et al., 2018; United Nations Development Programme, 2022).

6.3 Not In My Back Yard (NIMBY) perspective

In this research NIMBY was also best applied to the findings, particularly the fast fashion consumers. NIMBY is usually applied when researching opposition to a building project and it entails inhabitants that do see the purpose of the building as necessary but do not want it in their own vicinity (Carley et al., 2020; Dear, 1992; Hermansson, 2007). In light of the NIMBY perspective, I argue that the fast fashion consumers show signs of the NIMBY syndrome by stating that the obvious solution would be to buy less, buy second-hand and have clothing be more expensive, yet they do not want to contribute personally. By applying the NIMBY perspective to the context of the fast fashion consumers, possible solutions to combat the NIMBY syndrome could be useful.

As Dear (1992) describes the NIMBY development, it often starts with the angry-phase, which here would be that consumers will not tolerate increased pricing of fashion as it would negatively affect their ability to shop. NIMBY with a caring face could also be argued to be the consumers that not necessarily oppose increased prices for themselves, but for consumers with less funds. Geographical closeness to the project is described as an important factor to resistance or acceptance (Carley et al., 2020; Dear, 1992), in this case it is argued that increased prices of

fashion in general would receive some protests as it effects a habit or hobby that many consumers enjoy, and higher prices would greatly affect this.

It is also emphasized that the NIMBY syndrome is about someone who sees that the project is positive for the greater good of society but do not think that the risks are fairly distributed due to their own connection of closeness (Hermansson, 2007). Therefore it could be argued that for the consumers with lower wages it could be seen as unfair that everyone, despite income-level would have to accept more expensive clothing. This is of course a challenge, with increased differences between social classes not being particularly positive for a society. Yet, the huge differences between a low-wage household in most of Europe compared to the low-wage workers in Asia producing the clothing is significant. Additionally, if second-hand clothing became the default shopping habit, prices would be even lower than fast fashion is today.

A proposed solution to prevent NIMBYism is often argued to be compensation (Schively, 2007). For the transition of the fashion industry this could be based on income, by reimbursing a certain amount of clothing per person with regards to personal income. It could also entail a cultural shift, by decreasing the perceived social value and status of new clothing and instead focus on a few high quality garments and buying second-hand.

Another possible solution suggested is thoroughly communicating the risks and impacts to avoid the NIMBY syndrome evolving (Schively, 2007). Carley et al. (2020) further explains that it is of great importance that the public trusts the ones who are responsible for the project. Moreover, that when the positive environmental impact of the proposed project is properly explained, the level of acceptance increases. Arguing that if the fashion industry, the governments, and media would all share the same message, it could strengthen the level of trust in consumers. Additionally, if clear and transparent information was given to the public about the entire life cycle of fast fashion, it is likely that most consumers would change their views and be more conscious in their shopping behavior. This is also supported by the participants responses to the importance of information to make informed choices.

The opposition to a building project is largely affected by its size and closeness to the inhabitants (Carley et al., 2020; Dear, 1992). Proposing that the fast fashion consumers with the largest amounts of cheap purchases, that enjoy shopping as a leisure activity or feel the need to shop regularly will be the biggest opposers. Possibly activists working against the transition of

the fast fashion industry into a more sustainable direction, with increased prices as a consequence. It could also be those who would boycott the first attempts at change, and keep shopping at the stores that have yet to transition. If the number of these kinds of consumers are particularly high it could implicate the eager for fast fashion brands to make the transition as they would lose customers to those that have yet to do so.

To summarize this section, there are commonalities between the fast fashion consumers perspectives and the NIMBY syndrome as showed. My contribution is therefore that research on NIMBYism and its proposed solutions could be applied in this context and assist in raised awareness and acceptance among fast fashion consumers to become more conscious and support the sustainable transition of the fashion industry.

7 Conclusion

This thesis was an attempt to answer two main research questions: What is a conscious consumer and is a second-hand shopper a conscious consumer? And what differentiates a conscious consumer from a fast fashion consumer and why do they choose differently? Additionally, what do the participants suggest as possible solutions for the fast fashion industry and how important do they see the consumers role in this transition. The conscious consumer participants were all in line with the theory of responsible consumption and saw their consumption as a responsibility to consider the ethical, social and environmental aspects of their choices (Agrawal & Gupta, 2018; Lim, 2017; J. A. Roberts, 1995). They were consciously selecting second-hand or sustainable brands. They preferred natural fiber clothing, and consciously thought thoroughly through their decisions prior to consumption. Additionally, they would wear their clothing for longer and only purchase what they believed they would wear a lot. Although one of them expressed a higher interest in fashion and the impact of their clothing, the amount of purchases was still way below the average. Due to the limited number of participants it can not be said that all second-hand shoppers are conscious consumers, but the conscious consumer participants in this research were conscious consumers.

The fast fashion consumers had more individual differences, but they all preferred fast fashion. One of them had more in-depth knowledge about the negative consequences of the fashion industry, but still did not pursue this awareness in their consumer behavior. This is in line with the attitude to action gap also found by McNeill and Moore (2015) and Niinimäki (2010). Another had a much lower consumption than the others and were more in line with the conscious consumers when explaining their consumer behavior. Their decisions were thoroughly thought through and they rarely purchased clothing because they wanted, most often because they needed. Although, their purchases were from fast fashion brands and their awareness around the negative consequences of the fashion industry was lacking. The main reasons the fast fashion consumers provided for their consumer behavior of clothing was convenience and price. Second-hand clothing can compete with fast fashion on price, but not on convenience and accessibility, at least not yet. One of them also mentioned that to make fast fashion less available could impact our views on clothing as a consumable and quit the practice of a throw away culture. The limited

sample of fast fashion participants in this research showed a variance in their shopping behavior and could point to it being a larger variety of consumer behavior in this consumer group.

Regarding the participants suggestions for solutions there was two clear commonalities between all, both consumers and employees, one of them being increased prices. Although, not all of the participants wanted this to happen, they all suggested that this would impact the amount of purchases from fast fashion. Due to the low prices today, it was easy to consume more than necessary and replace garments instead of repairing. The other solution was increased, available and visible information. The conscious consumers saw this as a possible incentive to shift fast fashion consumers behavior in a more thoughtful and sustainable direction, and the fast fashion consumers saw it necessary to increase their knowledge and awareness to better understand the industry's challenges and affect their own purchase behavior. Applying the MLP to the context of the fashion industry has been helpful as it fits within the description of a socio-technical system and the participants agree that to initiate a radical change it is important that several stakeholders are involved, including consumers.

Further research regarding solutions to NIMBYism could be applied to solve the challenge of getting fast fashion consumers in line with the transition to a more sustainable clothing industry. The new strategy from the European Union is forcing the fashion industry to steer their way in a more sustainable direction, in order to keep their place in the European market. The UN Sustainable Development Goals are also in favor of the transition to a new and sustainable fashion industry, with improved conditions for the workers being just as important. Stricter legislation and the responsibility of politicians and the fashion industry was highlighted by the participants. Though they did state that the consumer role was impactful and important as well. Information, awareness campaigns and higher prices were all solutions suggested by the participants. This is also in line with previous research (Agrawal & Gupta, 2018; McNeill & Moore, 2015).

Although the sample of participants in this research is very few, it is interesting to see the differences between the consumers within the same group, fast fashion and second-hand. Furthermore, the differences between the two groups. Another approach to this theme could be to perform a quantitative research, this way one could get more respondents and be able to conclude more in general and analyze possible differences such as gender, age, education, social class etc.

Because the choice in this thesis was a qualitative approach with few participants it is not possible to draw any societal conclusions, but it has provided some in-depth and interesting aspects that could be useful for further research. What is the most interesting finding in this thesis would have to be the fact that all participants mentioned increased prices on fashion to be an effective solution. Moreover, that most of them highlighted that this would be important to ensure that everyone involved in the production of the clothing, from the farmers to the factory workers would have a livable wage and increased safety. For the fast fashion consumers it would also automatically decrease their amount of shopping and thereby prevent, at least some of their over-consumption. By combining the transition into a more sustainable fashion industry, with more information, increased consumer awareness, and increased prices it could be an important first step.

References

- Agrawal, R., & Gupta, S. (2018). Consuming Responsibly: Exploring Environmentally Responsible Consumption Behaviors. *Journal of Global Marketing*, 31(4), 231–245. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08911762.2017.1415402>
- Antil, J. H. (1984). Socially Responsible Consumers: Profile and Implications for Public Policy. *Journal of Macromarketing*, 4(2), 18–39. <https://doi.org/10.1177/027614678400400203>
- ARE, F. O. for S. D. (2022). 1987: *Brundtland Report*. Sustainable Development. <https://www.are.admin.ch/are/en/home/medien-und-publikationen/publikationen/nachhaltige-entwicklung/brundtland-report.html>
- Austgulen, M. H. (2016). Environmentally Sustainable Textile Consumption—What Characterizes the Political Textile Consumers? *Journal of Consumer Policy*, 39(4), 441–466. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10603-015-9305-5>
- Bethan. (2022). Laundry Weight Calculator (UK Guide in KG). *In The Wash*. <https://inthewash.co.uk/laundry-and-ironing/laundry-weight-calculator/>
- Bick, R., Halsey, E., & Ekenga, C. C. (2018). The global environmental injustice of fast fashion. *Environmental Health*, 17(1), 1–4. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12940-018-0433-7>
- Blaikie, N. (2010). *Designing Social Research: The Logic of Anticipation* (2nd ed.). Polity Press.
- Camilleri, M. A. (2020). European environment policy for the circular economy: Implications for business and industry stakeholders. *Sustainable Development*, 28(6), 1804–1812. <https://doi.org/10.1002/sd.2113>
- Carley, S., Konisky, D. M., Atiq, Z., & Land, N. (2020). Energy infrastructure, NIMBYism, and public opinion: A systematic literature review of three decades of empirical survey literature. *Environmental Research Letters*, 15(9), 093007. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1748-9326/ab875d>
- Dear, M. (1992). Understanding and Overcoming the NIMBY Syndrome. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 58(3), 288–300. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944369208975808>
- Duhoux, T., Le Blévenec, K., Manshoven, S., Grossi, F., Arnold, M., & Mortensen, L. F. (2022). *Textiles and the Environment: The role of design in Europe's circular economy* (ETC/CE 2022/2, p. 86). European Topic Centre Circular Economy and Resource Use.
- European Commission. (2022). *EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles* (COM(2022) 141 Final, p. 14). EU.
- European Environment Agency. (2019). *Textiles in Europe's circular economy*. European Environment Agency. <https://www.eea.europa.eu/downloads/e27564dbf0f7462ea5c52e4c9aaf2775/1615301143/textiles-in-europe-s-circular-economy.pdf>
- Feldman, S., & Turner, D. (2010). Why Not NIMBY? *Ethics, Place & Environment*, 13(3), 251–266. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1366879X.2010.516493>
- Fisk, G. (1973). Criteria for a Theory of Responsible Consumption. *Journal of Marketing*, 37(2), 24–31. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1250047>
- Fouquet, R. (2016). Historical energy transitions: Speed, prices and system transformation. *Energy Research & Social Science*, 22, 7–12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2016.08.014>
- Framtiden i våre hender. (2022). *Om oss*. Framtiden.no. <https://www.framtiden.no/om-oss.html>
- Fretex. (2022). *Fakta om Fretex*. www.fretex.no. <https://www.fretex.no/om-fretex/fakta>

- Geels, F. W. (2002). Technological transitions as evolutionary reconfiguration processes: A multi-level perspective and a case-study. *Research Policy*, 31(8–9), 1257–1274. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0048-7333\(02\)00062-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0048-7333(02)00062-8)
- Geels, F. W. (2010). Ontologies, socio-technical transitions (to sustainability), and the multi-level perspective. *Research Policy*, 39(4), 495–510. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2010.01.022>
- Geels, F. W. (2011). The multi-level perspective on sustainability transitions: Responses to seven criticisms. *Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions*, 1(1), 24–40. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eist.2011.02.002>
- Geels, F. W. (2014). Regime Resistance against Low-Carbon Transitions: Introducing Politics and Power into the Multi-Level Perspective. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 31(5), 21–40. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276414531627>
- Geels, F. W. (2019). Socio-technical transitions to sustainability: A review of criticisms and elaborations of the Multi-Level Perspective. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, 39, 187–201. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cosust.2019.06.009>
- Goworek, H., Oxborrow, L., Claxton, S., McLaren, A., Cooper, T., & Hill, H. (2020). Managing sustainability in the fashion business: Challenges in product development for clothing longevity in the UK. *Journal of Business Research*, 117, 629–641. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.07.021>
- Grubler, A. (2012). Energy transitions research: Insights and cautionary tales. *Energy Policy*, 50, 8–16. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enpol.2012.02.070>
- Ha-Brookshire, J. E., & Hodges, N. N. (2009). Socially Responsible Consumer Behavior? Exploring Used Clothing Donation Behavior. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, 27(3), 179–196. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08873302X08327199>
- Haugrønning, V., Laitala, K., & Klepp, I. G. (2021). Consumer practices for extending the social lifetimes of sofas and clothing. *Product Lifetimes And The Environment*, 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.31880/10344/10176>
- Hermansson, H. (2007). The Ethics of NIMBY Conflicts. *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, 10(1), 23–34. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10677-006-9038-2>
- Holroyd, A. T. (2016). Perceptions and practices of dress-related leisure: Shopping, sorting, making and mending. *Annals of Leisure Research*, 19(3), 275–293. <https://doi.org/10.1080/11745398.2015.1111148>
- International Labour Organization. (2017). *The Rana Plaza Accident and its aftermath* [Organization]. International Labour Organization (ILO). http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/geip/WCMS_614394/lang--en/index.htm
- Isaksen, K. K. (2014). *Rana Plaza-kollapsen var regelrett mord* [News]. NRK. https://www.nrk.no/urix/_-rana-plaza-kollapsen-var-mord-1.11678627
- Islam, M. A., & Deegan, C. (2010). Media pressures and corporate disclosure of social responsibility performance information: A study of two global clothing and sports retail companies. *Accounting and Business Research*, 40(2), 131–148. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00014788.2010.9663388>
- Jung, S., & Jin, B. (2016a). From quantity to quality: Understanding slow fashion consumers for sustainability and consumer education. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 40(4), 410–421. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12276>
- Jung, S., & Jin, B. (2016b). Sustainable Development of Slow Fashion Businesses: Customer Value Approach. *Sustainability*, 8(6), 540. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su8060540>

- Karlsson, M. T., & Ramasar, V. (2020). Selling women the green dream: The paradox of feminism and sustainability in fashion marketing. *Journal of Political Ecology*, 27(1), 335–359. <https://doi.org/10.2458/v27i1.23584>
- Kern, F., & Rogge, K. S. (2016). The pace of governed energy transitions: Agency, international dynamics and the global Paris agreement accelerating decarbonisation processes? *Energy Research & Social Science*, 22, 13–17. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2016.08.016>
- Ki, C. W., Park, S., & Ha-Brookshire, J. E. (2021). Toward a circular economy: Understanding consumers' moral stance on corporations' and individuals' responsibilities in creating a circular fashion economy. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 30(2), 1121–1135. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.2675>
- Köhler, A., Watson, D., Trezpacz, S., Löw, C., Liu, R., Danneck, J., Konstantas, A., Donatello, S., & Faraca, G. (2021). *Circular economy perspectives in the EU textile sector: Final report*. (EUR 30734 EN; p. 143). Publications Office of the European Union. <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2760/858144>
- Köhler, J., Geels, F. W., Kern, F., Markard, J., Onsongo, E., Wieczorek, A., Alkemade, F., Avelino, F., Bergek, A., Boons, F., Fünfschilling, L., Hess, D., Holtz, G., Hyysalo, S., Jenkins, K., Kivimaa, P., Martiskainen, M., McMeekin, A., Mühlemeier, M. S., ... Wells, P. (2019). An agenda for sustainability transitions research: State of the art and future directions. *Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions*, 31, 1–32. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eist.2019.01.004>
- Kwon, T. A., Choo, H. J., & Kim, Y. (2020). Why do we feel bored with our clothing and where does it end up? *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 44(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12540>
- Laitala, K., & Klepp, I. G. (2017). Clothing reuse: The potential in informal exchange. *Clothing Cultures*, 4(1), 61–77. https://doi.org/10.1386/cc.4.1.61_1
- Lapolla, K., & Sanders, E. B.-N. (2015). Using Cocreation to Engage Everyday Creativity in Reusing and Repairing Apparel. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, 33(3), 183–198. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0887302X15572877>
- Lim, W. M. (2017). Inside the sustainable consumption theoretical toolbox: Critical concepts for sustainability, consumption, and marketing. *Journal of Business Research*, 78, 69–80. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2017.05.001>
- Liu, J., Liang, J., Ding, J., Zhang, G., Zeng, X., Yang, Q., Zhu, B., & Gao, W. (2021). Microfiber pollution: An ongoing major environmental issue related to the sustainable development of textile and clothing industry. *Environment, Development and Sustainability*, 23(8), 11240–11256. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10668-020-01173-3>
- Lundblad, L., & Davies, I. A. (2016). The values and motivations behind sustainable fashion consumption. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 15(2), 149–162. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.1559>
- Madhav, S., Ahamad, A., Singh, P., & Mishra, P. K. (2018). A review of textile industry: Wet processing, environmental impacts, and effluent treatment methods. *Environmental Quality Management*, 27(3), 31–41. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tqem.21538>
- Malik, A., Lafortune, G., Carter, S., Li, M., Lenzen, M., & Kroll, C. (2021). International spillover effects in the EU's textile supply chains: A global SDG assessment. *Journal of Environmental Management*, 295, 113037. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvman.2021.113037>

- Marsh, J., Boszhard, I., Contargyris, A., Cullen, J., Junge, K., Molinari, F., Osella, M., & Raspanti, C. (2022). A value-driven business ecosystem for industrial transformation: The case of the EU's H2020 "Textile and Clothing Business Labs". *Sustainability: Science, Practice and Policy*.
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15487733.2022.2039491>
- McNeill, L., & Moore, R. (2015). Sustainable fashion consumption and the fast fashion conundrum: Fashionable consumers and attitudes to sustainability in clothing choice. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 39(3), 212–222.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12169>
- Meadowcroft, J. (2011). Engaging with the politics of sustainability transitions. *Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions*, 1(1), 70–75.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eist.2011.02.003>
- Micheletti, M., & Stolle, D. (2008). Fashioning Social Justice Through Political Consumerism, Capitalism, and the Internet. *Cultural Studies*, 22(5), 749–769.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09502380802246009>
- Mohr, L. A., Webb, D. J., & Harris, K. E. (2001). Do Consumers Expect Companies to be Socially Responsible? The Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility on Buying Behavior. *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 35(1), 45–72. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-6606.2001.tb00102.x>
- Mukendi, A., Davies, I., Glozer, S., & McDonagh, P. (2020). Sustainable fashion: Current and future research directions. *European Journal of Marketing*, 54(11), 2873–2909.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-02-2019-0132>
- Naturvernforbundet. (2022a). *About Norges Naturvernforbund* [Organization]. Naturvernforbundet.No. <https://naturvernforbundet.no/>
- Naturvernforbundet. (2022b). *Den store klesbyttedagen* [Organization]. [naturvernforbundet.no. https://naturvernforbundet.no/klesbyttedagen/](https://naturvernforbundet.no/klesbyttedagen/)
- Niinimäki, K. (2010). Eco-clothing, consumer identity and ideology. *Sustainable Development*, 18(3), 150–162. <https://doi.org/10.1002/sd.455>
- Niinimäki, K., Peters, G., Dahlbo, H., Perry, P., Rissanen, T., & Gwilt, A. (2020). The environmental price of fast fashion. *Nature Reviews Earth & Environment*, 1(4), 189–200. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s43017-020-0039-9>
- Okur, N., & Saricam, C. (2019). The Impact of Knowledge on Consumer Behaviour Towards Sustainable Apparel Consumption. In S. S. Muthu (Ed.), *Consumer Behavior and Sustainable Fashion Consumption* (pp. 69–96). Springer.
- Peters, G., Li, M., & Lenzen, M. (2021). The need to decelerate fast fashion in a hot climate—A global sustainability perspective on the garment industry. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 295, 126390. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2021.126390>
- Qu, S. Q., & Dumay, J. (2011). The qualitative research interview. *Qualitative Research in Accounting & Management*, 8(3), 238–264. <https://doi.org/10.1108/11766091111162070>
- Rausch, T. M., & Kopplin, C. S. (2021). Bridge the gap: Consumers' purchase intention and behavior regarding sustainable clothing. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 278, 15. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2020.123882>
- Roberts, C., Geels, F. W., Lockwood, M., Newell, P., Schmitz, H., Turnheim, B., & Jordan, A. (2018). The politics of accelerating low-carbon transitions: Towards a new research agenda. *Energy Research & Social Science*, 44, 304–311.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2018.06.001>

- Roberts, J. A. (1995). Profiling Levels of Socially Responsible Consumer Behavior: A Cluster Analytic Approach and Its Implications for Marketing. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 3(4), 97–117.
- Saricam, C., & Okur, N. (2019). Analysing the Consumer Behavior Regarding Sustainable Fashion Using Theory of Planned Behavior. In S. S. Muthu (Ed.), *Consumer Behaviour and Sustainable Fashion Consumption* (pp. 1–37). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-1265-6_1
- Schively, C. (2007). Understanding the NIMBY and LULU Phenomena: Reassessing Our Knowledge Base and Informing Future Research. *Journal of Planning Literature*, 21(3), 255–266. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0885412206295845>
- Schot, J., Kanger, L., & Verbong, G. (2016). The roles of users in shaping transitions to new energy systems. *Nature Energy*, 1(5), 16054. <https://doi.org/10.1038/nenergy.2016.54>
- Shirvanimoghaddam, K., Motamed, B., Ramakrishna, S., & Naebe, M. (2020). Death by waste: Fashion and textile circular economy case. *Science of The Total Environment*, 718, 137317. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2020.137317>
- Smith, A., Voß, J.-P., & Grin, J. (2010). Innovation studies and sustainability transitions: The allure of the multi-level perspective and its challenges. *Research Policy*, 39(4), 435–448. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2010.01.023>
- Sovacool, B. K. (2016). How long will it take? Conceptualizing the temporal dynamics of energy transitions. *Energy Research & Social Science*, 13, 202–215. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2015.12.020>
- Stringer, T., Mortimer, G., & Payne, A. R. (2020). Do ethical concerns and personal values influence the purchase intention of fast-fashion clothing? *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*, 24(1), 99–120. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JFMM-01-2019-0011>
- Tise. (2022). *Slik fungerer det*. Tise. <https://tise.com/>
- United Nations Development Programme. (2022). *Sustainable Development Goals | United Nations Development Programme*. UNDP. <https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals>
- Webb, D. J., Mohr, L. A., & Harris, K. E. (2008). A re-examination of socially responsible consumption and its measurement. *Journal of Business Research*, 61(2), 91–98. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2007.05.007>
- World Commission on Environment and Development. (1987). *Our Common Future* (A/42/427; p. 247). United Nations.

Appendix I Information and consent form

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet

Getting to know the conscious consumer: The fast fashion vs. second-hand consumer

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å bli kjent med ulike forbrukere av klær, mer spesifikt de som handler mest i kleskjeder eller bruktbutikker. I dette skrivet gir jeg deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål

Jeg ønsker å finne mer ut av hvordan klær påvirker identiteten og tilhørigheten til den enkelte. Hvorvidt det er noen bekymringer tilknyttet klimaavtrykket eller det etiske aspektet ved klesindustrien. I tillegg til å spørre forbrukere direkte ønsker jeg å snakke med ansatte i klesbutikker. Jeg er nysgjerrig på om du har noen formening om hva forbrukere kan gjøre for å påvirke klesindustrien i en mer bærekraftig retning, eller om du har andre tanker om dette. Jeg ønsker å intervju et par personer som i hovedregel handler på kleskjeder og et par som handler mest brukt. Intervjuet er estimert å ta rundt en halv times tid. Jeg utfører denne undersøkelsen i forbindelse med masteroppgaven jeg skriver ved Universitet i Stavanger, under studiet Energi, miljø og samfunn.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

Universitet i Stavanger er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Forbruker:

Jeg planlegger å rekruttere innenfor eget nettverk, gjerne også henvendt via eget nettverk. Dersom dette ikke er tilstrekkelig kan det hende jeg møtte deg utenfor en klesbutikk. Jeg ønsker å intervju et par personer som i hovedregel handler på kleskjeder og et par som handler mest brukt. I tillegg til en eller to ansatte, både ved en kleskjede og brukthandel.

Ansatt:

Jeg planlegger å kontakte en eller flere kleskjeder og bruktbutikker per mail for å høre om de har noen ansatte som ønsker å snakke med meg. Det kan også bli aktuelt å høre om jeg har noen i mitt nettverk som kjenner noen som arbeider i en klesbutikk og rekruttere på den måten om første plan ikke gir resultater. Jeg ønsker å intervju et par ansatte ved en kleskjede og et par ansatte ved en bruktbutikk. Det behøver ikke være med den samme.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

Forbruker:

Hvis du velger å delta i prosjektet, innebærer det at du blir intervjuet av meg. Det vil ta deg ca. 30 minutter. Intervjuet inneholder spørsmål om dine vaner rundt kleshandel, hvordan klær påvirker deg, samt spørsmål om klimaavtrykk og mulige fremtidige løsninger. Dine svar vil bli tatt opp på lydopptaker om du velger å samtykke til det. (Dersom du ikke ønsker dette tar jeg notater på papir mens vi snakker sammen). Svarene dine vil bli brukt som datamateriale i

oppgaven min, lydopptak slettes så fort de er transkribert, og både transkripsjonen og notatene vil bli slettet så fort oppgaven er godkjent.

Ansatt:

Hvis du velger å delta i prosjektet, innebærer det at du blir intervjuet av meg. Det vil ta deg ca. 30 minutter. Intervjuet inneholder spørsmål om din kundegruppe, mulige endringer i butikken, samt spørsmål om klimaavtrykk og mulige fremtidige løsninger. Dine svar vil bli tatt opp på lydopptaker om du velger å samtykke til det. (Dersom du ikke ønsker dette tar jeg notater på papir mens vi snakker sammen). Svarene dine vil bli brukt som datamateriale i oppgaven min, lydopptak slettes så fort de er transkribert, og både transkripsjonen og notatene vil bli slettet så fort oppgaven er godkjent.

Det er frivillig å delta

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykket tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle dine personopplysninger vil da bli slettet. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg.

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

Jeg vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene jeg har fortalt om i dette skrivet. Jeg behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Jeg, Thea Wigsnes Melsom, har tilgang til lydopptak og eventuelle notater. Min veileder, Hande Eslen Ziya, ved Universitet i Stavanger vil ha tilgang til ulike utkast av oppgaven min før den er ferdig, men vil ikke høre opptakene eller se notatene.

Det vil bli brukt egnet lydopptaker fra Universitet i Stavanger, navn og kontaktopplysninger skal ikke brukes i arbeidet og vil bli erstattet med forbruker eller ansatt.

I oppgaven vil du bli anonymisert, det nevnes kun kjønn og aldersgruppe for forbruker, eksempelvis kvinne i 20-årene, og navn på butikk for ansatte, eksempelvis H&M, men ingen flere spesifikasjoner som filial, stilling, sted, alder eller kjønn.

Hva skjer med personopplysningene dine når forskningsprosjektet avsluttes?

Prosjektet vil etter planen avsluttes 7. september 2022. Etter prosjektslutt vil datamaterialet med dine anonymiserte personopplysninger slettes.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra Universitet i Stavanger har Personverntjenester vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Dine rettigheter

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke opplysninger vi behandler om deg, og å få utlevert en kopi av opplysningene
- å få rettet opplysninger om deg som er feil eller misvisende
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg

- å sende klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å vite mer om eller benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:

Veileder ved Universitet i Stavanger, Hande Eslen Ziya, hande.eslen-ziya@uis.no.
Student ved Universitet i Stavanger, Thea Wigsnes Melsom, theamwm@gmail.com.

Vårt personvernombud: Marianne Gjerlaugsen, marianne.gjerlaugsen@uis.no, ved det samfunnsvitenskapelige fakultet. Bitten Lunde, bitten.lunde@uis.no, ved divisjon for forskning.

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til Personverntjenester sin vurdering av prosjektet, kan du ta kontakt med:

- Personverntjenester på epost (personverntjenester@sikt.no) eller på telefon: 53 21 15 00.

Med vennlig hilsen

Hande Eslen Ziya

Thea Wigsnes Melsom

Veileder

Student

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet *Getting to know the conscious consumer: The fast fashion vs. second-hand consumer*, og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

- å delta i intervju
- at intervjuet blir tatt opp på lydopptaker

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

Appendix II Interview guide employees

What is your customer base like, and how would you describe your average customer?

In your experience, what would you say are the main reasons your customers shop in your store?
Please explain in-depth.

Can you explain how you sort the clothing in your store, and why you do it this way?

Do you ever have sales, if so why? Do you inform customers about your sales elsewhere than the store itself? Does sales impact the customers in any way – more customers?

In your experience, have you noticed any changes in your customers, or in their behavior, over the past few years? (Ex. Regarding questions, mentioning sustainability, environment, ethics)

Have you made any changes in your store/brand in the past few years regarding sustainability? If so, please explain in-depth.

For you as a consumer, has it impacted your shopping habits in any way to work at this store?

What do you believe could be possible solutions to the social and environmental impact of the clothing industry?

Do you think the consumers play a big role in creating a more sustainable fashion industry? If so, please explain in-depth.

Appendix III Interview guide consumers

How often would you say you buy clothing, and how many garments per time?

How and where do you most often obtain clothing?

What would you say your clothing means to you, and influence how you feel and appear?

How would you describe your relation to trends and fashion, and how this impacts your shopping?

Do you usually shop alone or with someone? Why?

Is clothing or fashion something you ever talk about with friends or others? If so, what, how and how often?

What comes to your mind when I mention sustainability and clothing?

Do you know anything about the social or environmental impact of the clothing industry, if so, what?

Is this something you reflect upon while obtaining clothes, and does it affect your shopping in any way? If so, how?

Do you ever feel guilty buying clothes?

What do you believe could be possible solutions to the social and environmental impact of the clothing industry?

Do you think the consumers play a big role in creating a more sustainable fashion industry? If so, please explain in-depth.