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**The Intersection of “Good” Clothes and Slow Fashion from the
Perspective of Students of the Faculty of Humanities of Charles
University**

MASTER THESIS

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Abstract

The object of my study is to explore the concept of “good” clothes according to the consumer. My research aims to find if there is a relationship between slow fashion - an approach to clothing production and consumption, emphasizing quality, durability, and ethical practices to reduce environmental impact - and what consumers think to be “good” clothes. I define “good” clothes as clothes that the consumer chooses. I will base my theoretical argumentation on sustainable consumption theory and lifestyle politics. I will conduct qualitative sociological research with in-depth interviews of university students of the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University Prague between 18 and 26 years old. They usually have the financial freedom to buy clothes for themselves and represent an age group whose consumption will have a large impact in the future. I chose students of the Faculty of Humanities because they seem to exhibit a more extensive engagement about social, economic, and environmental problems. The interviews are based on the analysis of consumer preference - factors such as price, sustainability, durability, style, ethical production, and emotional value of the clothes are being explored. The interviews are conducted in the Czech Republic. My expected contribution is to provide insights for policymakers and brands to better align their strategies with consumer preferences, thereby fostering more environmentally friendly practices and products.

Keywords: slow fashion, clothing, consumer preference, sustainable consumption, lifestyle politics

Declaration

I declare that I have created the thesis by myself. All sources and literature used have been duly cited. The work was not used to obtain another or the same title. This declaration and consent will be signed by handwritten signature.

In Prague, Date : 23/04/2024

Signature : 

Acknowledgments

I thank my mother for her unfailing support and love.

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Introduction

When I was a child, my mother taught me to take off my jeans and woolen sweater I wore in the city to change to “home clothes”, some leggings, and a T-shirt. It is a habit she also learned in childhood. She told me that it would protect the city clothes from wrinkling and decaying so that I could wear them longer and keep them intact. She would also repair holes in clothing and sometimes even make the clothes herself. For instance, knit a scarf and a sweater for me. When we would go shopping, she would pay attention to buy “good” clothes. In my teenage years, I would buy fast fashion but I quickly grew out of it. I was wondering if other young people have the same values, education, and trajectory as I do. It seems that the widely marketed and omnipresent fast fashion industry is unbeatable through its cheap prices and convenience, but I wondered if it truly fulfills all the expectations we have for clothes. I wonder what are the factors that make clothes “good”? Is what people believe to be “good” clothes linked rather with slow fashion principles rather than fast fashion? Can we observe a shift in the young generation from fast fashion to slow fashion?

We live in the age of industrialized mass consumption and consumer society. The fashion industry is part of it. Industrialization can be traced back to World War II when all kinds of products started to be mass-produced. The affluence that economic growth brought about after World War II led to a time of prosperity and the emergence of a middle class who could afford to consume more in Western Countries. There was no longer the need to buy second-hand clothing or make one's clothes because industrialized production technologies and economic circumstances were opportune for buying new clothes (Godley,1997).

In the 1990s came a breakthrough in the industry: the creation of fast fashion. The word “fast fashion” was first used by the New York Times to describe the ability to create garments that will be sold in stores in just two weeks after the design stage, which was introduced by the now multinational company that is Zara. The advent of fast fashion was revolutionary because it democratized designer fashion, selling designer goods at affordable prices (Crofton & Dopico, 2007).

The democratization of fashion was and still is supported by mass media, notably by international magazines such as Vogue, Elle, and Cosmopolitan, which are also present in the Czech Republic. The following magazines are filled with advertisements and lookbooks which serve the purpose of inspiring readers to decide which new clothes to buy. The drive for consumption is often propelled by cultural pressure, for example, people want to wear

what celebrities - people who are admired and are at the top of the social status ladder - are wearing (Linden, 2016). People get inspired by each other to signal which group they identify with to create a sense of belonging (Akdemir, 2018).

In the Czech Republic, the annual expenditure on clothing is about 2.1 billion dollars, which amounts to 2% of the consumption of Czech households, footwear amounts to 1%, and the rest 97% is spent on food, beverages, housing, transport, and other goods and services (*Fashion Statistics Czech Republic*, n.d.).

The textile industry significantly pollutes the environment. The clothing industry yearly accounts for 10 % of international CO₂ emissions, which represents more than all transnational air and sea transport. In 2020 EU, the carbon footprint of the clothing amounted to 270 kg. An estimation in 2011 reveals that 17 to 20 % of wastewater in the world comes from the fabric dyeing and treatment process (Kant, 2012). Each year, a half-million tons of plastic microfibers, that mostly coming from accessories and clothes, end up in the ocean. The quantity of microfibers that end up in the ocean amounts to about 50 billion bottles made out of plastic. Since one cannot extract microfibers from water, they will enter the food chain (World Bank, 2019). From 2000 to 2020, global clothing production has almost doubled. It rose from 58 million tons in 2000 to 109 million tons in 2020. Current consumption patterns and the short lifespan of textile items suggest this number could soar to 148 million tons by 2030 (European Parliament News, 2021). Municipal textile waste, excluding that generated during production, significantly adds to Europe's textile waste load. The European Environment Agency approximates that each European disposes of about 11 kg of municipal textile waste yearly, totaling around 5.8 million tons collectively (European Environment Agency, 2019). According to Eurostat and the CSO, the Czech Republic ranks seventh in textile waste production within the EU, averaging 12.36 kg per person in 2018 (Eurostat, n.d. & Czech Statistical Office, 2018). While more clothes are being produced than consumed, since the 1980s, unwanted clothing from richer countries are often shipped to poorer countries. This displaces local manufacturers who are outcompeted by Western second-hand clothes (Brooks, 2019).

The production of clothes in the Western world has since the 1990s been characterized by outsourcing. The production of clothes is transferred to poorer countries. This strategy causes many clothes to be consequently relatively cheap because the ones who fabricate most clothes sold in Europe are paid under the minimum wage, in so-called sweatshops. The

workers who make our clothes perform difficult and sometimes dangerous work. The working conditions are described as scorching hot inside a poorly ventilated factory that is dimly lit (Gordon, 2009). There might be violations of child labor laws (Fair Labor Association, 2017).

The environmental impact of clothes is not taken into account by the majority of Czech consumers. According to research by STEM for the Club of Free Women (2022), concerning clothes, consideration of the environment is not decisive. For half of Czech citizens, the lower price of clothing is more important than the conditions of production (especially for households in a worse material situation). Buying clothes is mainly based on price, material, and appearance, less on the ethical side of production. It is not that Czech people are unconscious of the environmental and social problems of the clothing industry, but the fundamental reassessment of the approach to consumption, which the Czechs support as a necessary solution to climate change, is rather on the declarative level. However, young people are more pronounced than the older generations on the need for change, and emphasis on environmental considerations (Stem, 2022).

Notwithstanding, people do adopt environmentally friendly behavior with clothes for other reasons than environmental awareness. According to their statements, half of Czech citizens buy second-hand clothes and the most common motivation is their cheaper price. Other motivations are less important: the opportunity to get clothes not available in the regular offer, a better feeling about the purchase, or respect for the environment. However, among young people, the belief that such a purchase is more environmentally friendly is quite significant (Stem, 2022).

This phenomenon - having consumption patterns that are environmentally friendly even without having environmental friendliness as its only aim, is the crux of the subject of this thesis. The aim is to explore if slow fashion can be adopted not only because of environmental and social reasons (a more altruistic motivation), but because people want to buy “good” clothes (a more self-oriented type of motivation). My question is - What are the factors that make “good” clothes good? Are “good” clothes in opposition to fast fashion? How have young people evolved towards their current perception of “good” clothes? What roles did the older generation - their parents - play in defining and caring for “good” clothes and what roles does the culture play? Do they apply slow fashion principles to clothing?

Slow fashion is a movement that was born in opposition to fast fashion. The slow fashion ideology has its roots in the ‘slow movement’, which was birthed in the mid-1980s, in a restaurant in Italy by Carlo Pertini. The ‘slow movement’ was created in opposition to the fast-food industry. The main aim was to support local cuisine and reintroduce traditional dishes that support local production and heritage. It also includes slowing down the eating experience to cultivate pleasure and health. After the beginnings in the food industry, the slow ideology entered many other industries, including fashion (Wellesley-Smith, 2015). While fast fashion consists of garments made at “cheap quality, low price, mass-produced, machine-made”, and quickly discarded, slow fashion, is defined to be “handmade, time-consuming, uses the talent of artists, better quality and highly-priced.” (Aishwariya, 2019:1). Slow fashion includes traditional methods of making fabric and clothing. It is not produced in bulk (there is no mass production). Craftsmanship is valued. The products are made for customers and are sourced locally. It takes into account the environmental and social impact of its creation. Because of the high quality of slow fashion, the product is usually more expensive than fast fashion (Aishwariya, 2019).

The motivations of slow fashion consumers have already been studied (Zarley & al., 2013). In my research I decided to have the opposite starting point: finding out what young people consider to be “good” clothes. I want to find out if they associate “good” clothes with a desire for durability and care for the clothing items. In this way, I would like to fill the gap in knowledge related to the relationship between consumer perceptions of “good” clothes and slow fashion principles.

“Good” clothes in this thesis are defined as clothes one chooses. In my interviews with students of the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University, I ask what “good” clothes are to the students and thereby find the attributes of “good” clothes. The aim is to find if dealing with “good” clothes respects the principles of slow fashion or not.

I chose to narrow down my focus group to students of the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University in Prague because the students of the faculty seem to have strong values and opinions, leading some of them to even oppose events hosted by the rector of the faculty that they consider as greenwashing. Greenwashing can be defined as an “activity by a company or an organization that is intended to make people think that it is concerned about the environment, even if its real business actually harms the environment” (Oxford dictionary, n.d.). For instance, at the Conference Vogue Live 2023 that took place on

25.5.2023 with the keywords “future world: longevity - sustainable, iconic, innovative and well-lived” (*Vogue Live*, n.d.), some students of the Faculty of Humanities protested against this event taking place in their faculty because they argued it was greenwashing. The groups Univerzita za klima even tweeted that they “hope the leadership of Charles University understood that [they] never want to see events like yesterday's VOGUE live conference full of greenwashing and with sponsors like H&M or Nestlé at our faculties! And not at all under the auspices of the rectorate or dean's office” (Univerzity za klima, 2023). With such a strong stance, I thought it would be interesting to see how students of the Faculty of Humanities apply these values to their clothing consumption, what contradictions there are (if there are any), and what compromises they make. I interviewed students of the Master’s program Social and Cultural Ecology, who I presuppose have values of environmental protection and human rights. I also interviewed students from other programs of the Faculty of Humanities, notably the Bachelor in Humanities and Master students of Anthropology and Historical Anthropology. With these points of view, the aim was to see similarities and differences.

My main research questions are:

- *What do “good” clothes mean for young Czech university students of the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University in Prague?*
- *How are “good” clothes related to slow fashion principles for them?*

It is important to research that topic because insights from this study can guide policymakers in developing strategies that resonate with consumer preferences, and that can promote more sustainable and environmentally friendly practices.

My aim in this research is to show that young people are not as docile, compliant, and easily influenced by fast fashion as one could suppose. One can be fascinated and attracted by the convenience and prices of fast fashion, but one can also critically think about what “good” clothes are for us, and realize that fast fashion is less advantageous than slow fashion in many aspects. For most of my informants, I found that good and functional materials, of greater quality than fast fashion, durability, and price, comfort, functionality, style, fit, sentimental value, and ethical production are factors that influence clothing choice. These factors should not be ignored, if we want to cater to the needs of young consumers, and deal with social and environmental crises.

My main findings are that my informants care about the durability of clothes and most of them are shifting towards slow fashion consumption and lifestyle, not only out of environmental concern, but mainly out of personal needs. Having clothes that last longer than fast fashion saves money. Second-hand, outdoor, and swapped clothes among other are a popular, affordable alternative.

In chapter I.1, I introduce and define concepts that explain clothing in the context of consumption. In chapter I.2, I review the literature on sustainable consumption of clothes and the consumer as well as lifestyle politics. I also introduce research that establishes a typology of fashion consumers. In chapter I.3, I define slow fashion and explain its role as a part of the sustainable consumption of clothes. I look at consumer attitude, facilitators, and infrastructure, which I defined in the chapter previously in the chapter of sustainable consumption. In chapter I.4, I review the literature about different possibilities of what “good” clothes can be. The chapter II.1 and II.2 clarify the subject of the research and the methodological side of the work. The chapters III.1 and III.2 deal with data analysis and interpretation – that is, what “good” clothes mean for young Czech university students of the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University in Prague and how “good” clothes are related to slow fashion principles for them. These chapters are followed by the discussion and conclusion.

I. THEORETICAL PART

1. Fashion in the context of consumption terminology

In this chapter, I introduce concepts that will be used throughout the work. In the chapters that follow I review literature that is linked with the issue of sustainable consumption and slow fashion.

1.1. Consumption

In English, the verb “to consume” comes from the Latin verb *consumere*, which means “to seize or take over completely”, in other terms, “eat up, devour, waste, destroy, or spend.” (Graeber, 2011:491). When the word appeared in dictionaries in the 14th century, consumption was seen negatively and linked with destruction. In that sense “consumer society” would mean a society of destroyers. According to Boulding’s (1945) economic theory, consumption can be defined as “the destruction of commodities - i.e., of valuable things - in the way in which they were intended to be destroyed.” (Boulding, K. E., 1945:2). Boulding’s “bathtub theorem”, which is a metaphor, argues that production and consumption can be seen as a bathtub where production is the water from the faucet flowing into the bathtub, the water in the bathtub is accumulated goods and services, and consumption is the water flowing out of the bathtub (Boulding, K. E., 1945).

The contemporary meaning of consumption comes from economic theorists like Adam Smith (1723-1790) who defined consumption as the opposite of production. This dichotomy reflected the lifeworld of society at the time, where men went out to work (production), and where men lived (household - consumption). According to Graeber (2011), this became the defining aspect of capitalism. On the one hand, one has to produce new goods. On the other hand, these goods must be destroyed or outdated, the consequence being that society has to run with perpetual economic growth. However, Adam Smith never said that the prime desire for humans was to consume. To him, we desire foremost other’s “sympathetic attention” (Graeber, 2011:493). It is with the growth of economic theory that consumption became the apparent center of human desires (Graeber, 2011).

From a sociological point of view, consumption has often been seen in a negative light. Theorists like Adorno and Horkheimer argued that the twentieth-century surge in mass production resulted in the commodification of culture through the emergence of culture

industries. They asserted that consumption primarily benefited manufacturers aiming for increased profits, transforming citizens into passive recipients of advertising influences. They argued that the standardization processes were coupled with the establishment of a materialistic culture, causing commodities to lose authenticity and only fulfill "false" needs. These needs, they claimed, were manufactured by marketing and advertising tactics, potentially amplifying the ability for ideological control or domination (Zukin et al., 2004). However, more recent research in sociology and anthropology perceive consumption as a thing that people simply do, without it being inherently bad (Paterson, 2006).

Consumption is tied to cultural capital because it has been shown that people consume according to their position in society and in that way reinforce their social status. In Bourdieu's work "Cultural Reproduction and Social Production" (2018), he shows that French people who read philosophical, economic, or science books, and who generally read more books of many kinds, are the ones who have a greater economic status, a greater wealth (Bourdieu, 2018:64). Consumption is also linked to wealth as a form of display. In Veblen's (2009) book "The Theory of the Leisure Class", the economist and sociologist coins the term "conspicuous consumption", which stands for buying objects to display one's wealth. He analyzed this aspect in the group of the "nouveaux riches" (the new rich) during the Second Industrial Revolution (1860–1914). Conspicuous consumption is about showing the consumption of expensive objects in order to prove to society one's higher status (Veblen, 2009).

According to Sidney Mintz (1986), there would not be a change in production without a change in consumption. In the book "Sweetness and Power" she makes an analysis of the production of sugar in the 14th and 15th Centuries. The rise of sugar in the English diet - for example in cakes at tea time or dessert - went hand in hand with the enslavement of workers in Puerto Rico to cultivate sugar. Sugar, which was at first a spice like nutmeg or paprika, gradually became more important and was introduced in opposition to salt, and thereby was more utilized. There was both a change in production and consumption with the rise of sugar (Mintz, 1986). Another way in which production and consumption are interrelated is Parr's (1999) analysis of change of refrigerators models every year from the 1930s to the 1950s. The producers planned the physical obsolescence (when the refrigerator will break) and the emotional obsolescence (when it gets out of fashion) in consumer's eyes. In that example, production dictates the conditions of consumption - fridges are produced to

become obsolete after a while, whereas with Mintz it is consumption that drives production – a higher demand for sugar leads to a higher supply (Parr, 1999 in Zukin et al, 2004:179).

The concept of consumption is often used without being defined; the anthropologist Graeber (2011) argues that it means that consumption is an ideology. What he means by that is that many forms of partaking in cultural life, for instance listening to music, wearing certain clothes or skateboarding, all these activities are reduced and “seen as analogous to eating food” (Graeber, 2011: 489). Even when there is a form of participation, for example making music with the piano, or throwing a garden party with soups made out of vegetables from the garden, these activities are still perceived as consumption even though there is a form of participation in it. Graeber argues that one should distance oneself from the concept of consumption, since it is only a metaphor, and it prevents us from distinguishing alienated and unalienated forms of experiences - alienated, in the sense that these experiences are part of the capitalist system.

1.2. Consumer choice

Consumer choice theory dates back to the 19th century and is dominant in the 20th century. The main argument is that consumers are free to choose rationally among alternatives of goods and services.

Some scholars argue that consumer sovereignty in neoclassical economics is not real. The metaphor of consumer sovereignty goes as follows, “individuals can command the organizations composing an exchange market to do what they want, as a monarch might command their troops in the field of battle” (Fellner & Spash, 2014:1). Individual freedom is considered the highest ideal and can only be fulfilled in a market economy with limited government intervention. But in reality, the fact that consumers do not have full, transparent information about the products they are buying prevents them from being sovereign. When it comes to environmental or social impact the consumer can not judge for themselves what is best. In neoliberal thinking choosing to buy whilst protecting the environment is analogous to “choosing a flavor of ice cream”. Instead of changing the industry through regulation the consumer votes with their dollar for what they consider better. There is dominance of the economic sphere over the political sphere (Fellner & Spash, 2014:21).

1.3. Consumption of clothes

What is the purpose of clothing and clothing consumption?

According to the philosopher Williams Matthew Williams (1890), dressing is a human activity contingent upon maintaining a body temperature above the earth's temperate zones. Clothing serves as insulation against heat loss due to its low conductivity, as well as offering protection from weather elements like rain, sunshine, and wind. Footwear, in particular, shields feet from wet or uneven terrain.

Something is lacking in this definition of consumption of clothes, since contemporary consumer behavior reveals a trend of excessive clothing purchases beyond practical necessity. While Williams' analysis emphasizes the functional aspects of clothing, it overlooks its role as a tool for self-expression and social signaling. Clothing choices communicate personality, status, and other social attributes, influencing how individuals are perceived by others (Dunlap, 1928). In societies characterized by social mobility, like the US and Europe, fashion serves as a means of asserting identity and status within the middle class. The democratization of fashion throughout the 20th century expanded individuals' freedom to express themselves through diverse styles, fostering a culture of conscious consumption and self-presentation (Mair, 2018).

Contrary to notions of unrestricted self-expression, fashion is shaped by both the desire to emulate higher social echelons and the need to conform to societal norms. Georg Simmel's theory highlights the dual forces of differentiation and conformity driving fashion trends, underscoring the social pressures influencing individual choices (Simmel, 1957). Thus, clothing consumption is not merely a matter of personal preference but is deeply intertwined with social dynamics and the pursuit of social distinction within middle-class communities (António, 2014). Since the construction of identity is paramount among consumers, factors to be fashionable can outweigh factors to be ethical or sustainable (Mc Neill & Moore, 2015).

1.4. Fashion

The Cambridge dictionary defines fashion as “a style that is popular at a particular time, especially in clothes, hair, make-up, etc.” (Cambridge dictionary, 2024). The Britannica dictionary highlights the polysemy of the word “fashion” which can mean “the

business of creating and selling clothes in new styles” or “a specified way of acting or behaving — usually used after in”. Fashion is also a verb that means: “to form (something) into something else” (Britannica, 2024). I use the definition of “business that creates and sells clothes” in my thesis.

The current fashion industry is part of, and a result of industrialized mass consumption and consumer society. Both first emerged in the Western world, and are now global. The roots of mass production can be traced back to World War II when all kinds of products started to be mass-produced. The post-WWII period is characterized as a period of affluence where a middle class emerged that could afford to consume more. Economic circumstances were opportune for people to buy new, industrially produced clothes, rather than making and mending them (Godley, 1997).

1.5. Fast fashion

Fast fashion appeared in the 1990s. The word “fast fashion” was first used in the New York Times newspaper to describe the ability to produce and deliver clothing very fast, as seen in the 2-week lead time of the multinational company Zara. Lead-time is “the time it takes for a product to go through the whole chain including being purchased” (Linden, 2016:17). Fast fashion democratized access to designer goods (Crofton & Dopico, 2007). As seen in the graph below, fast fashion disrupted the mold of the fashion pyramid:

The Fashion Pyramid

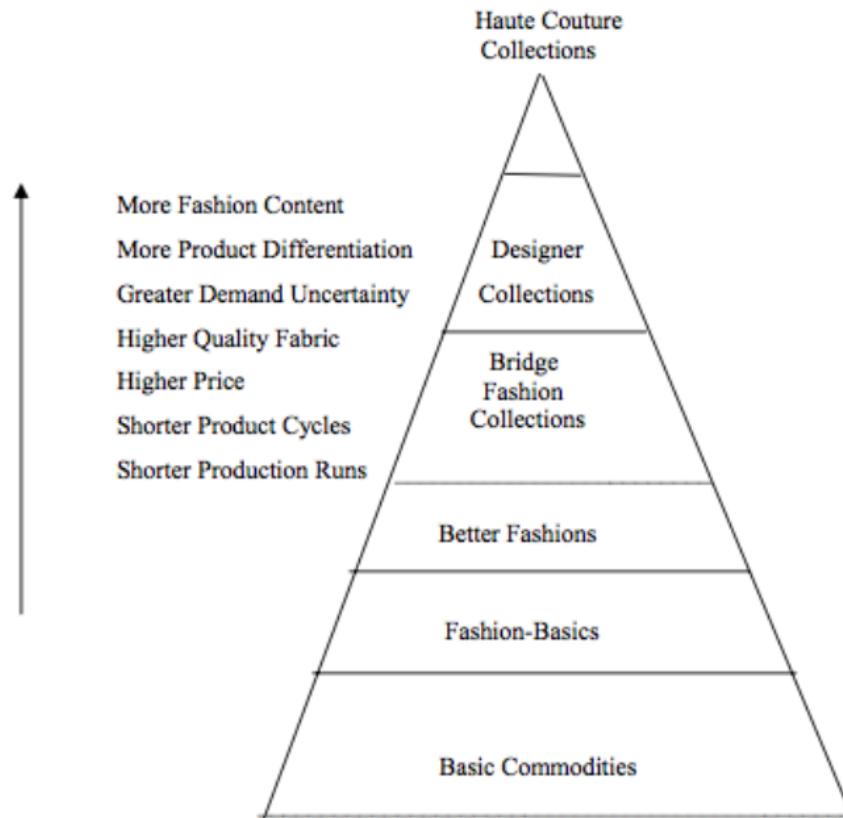


Fig 1. Fashion Pyramid (Doeringer & Crean, 2005 in Linden, 2016:15).

Before, one could only get access to designer collections at a higher price (the top of the pyramid). Now, fast fashion companies enable the consumer to get more fashion content and more production differentiation at a lower price. However, the quality of fast fashion remains quite low. With regards to price, Veblen theorized that “we desire more the higher their prices go because we hope this will show other people our wealth and status” (Cline 2012: 77 in Linden, 2016:16). However, in the case of fast fashion, it is different. People buy cheaper goods because they can. Thereby, they satisfy immediate desires and the need to be unique, as seen in the quote below:

I want to see new things and styles that help me create and recreate my wardrobe and who I am. But I don't want to look like someone else—so the limited edition satisfies this need to be unique. When I see it on the catwalks or in magazines, I want it immediately. (Joy et al. 2012; 282)

Fast fashion works when consumers seek hedonistic pleasure through quick access to clothes and businesses seek to maximize profits by mass-producing clothes while paying extremely low wages to those who made the clothes (precarization of work). Production and consumption accelerate each other, for example, through marketing and advertisement, the suppliers create demand for the clothes they produce. The consumer accelerates production because through seeking instant gratification by buying clothes that are accessible and cheap, they support the businesses that produce fast fashion, as seen in the diagram below:

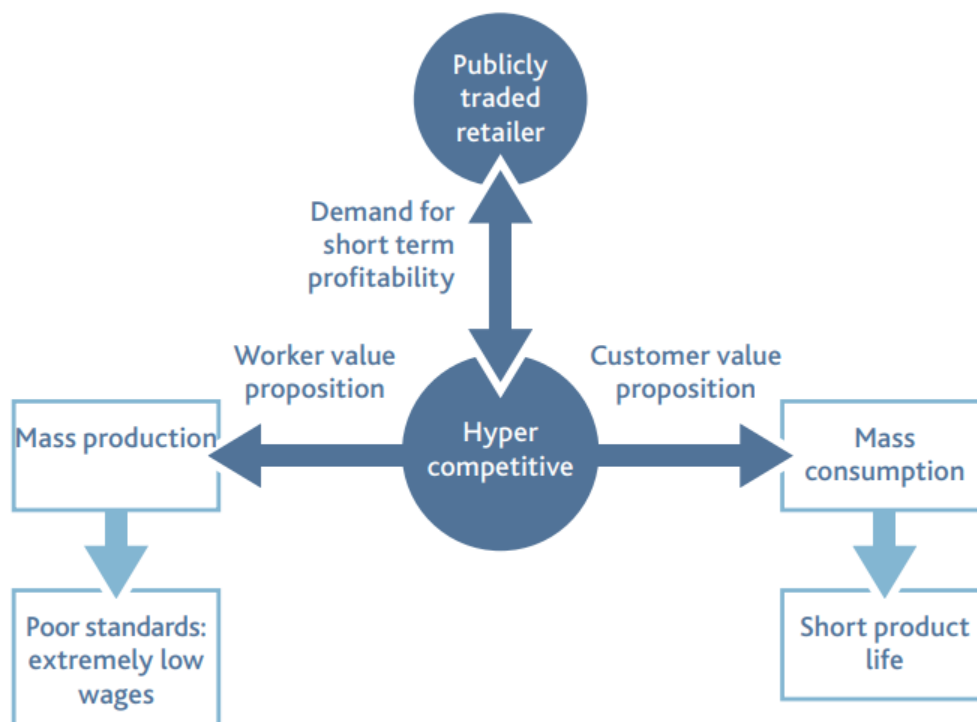


Fig 2. The Fast Fashion business model (Reinecke et al, 2019:20).

As a strategy to diminish costs of the workforce and maximize profits, since the 90s the production of clothes has largely been outsourced to poorer countries. For example, in the case of Zara, the design process takes place at the headquarters in Spain, while the production phase takes place overseas, notably in Spain, Portugal, Morocco, Turkey, India, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Pakistan, Vietnam, Argentina and Brazil (Gestal, 2019). The design and the production take place in different areas in the world, the production not only taking place in own manufacturing facilities, but also in partner factories (Ghemawat & Nueno, 2006).

What is striking about Zara is that when the company sells one hoodie, they allegedly make more profits than all the worker's wages combined (Hachfeld, n.d.). The typical wage of a seamstress in Bangladesh (where most fast fashion is produced) is the equivalent of CH80 per month - around 2065 Czech crowns. While workers are demanding higher wages, employers are obstructing it, to maintain the purchase price low by the international brand companies (Regenass, 2023). The clothing makers often do difficult and sometimes dangerous work. Working in a fast fashion clothing factory is often described as working in a scorching hot, dimly lit, and poorly ventilated factory (Gordon, 2009). It is also often the case that child labor laws may be violated (Fair Labor Association, 2017).

Air transport, which enables the delivery of clothes in a matter of weeks, increases the time pressure in the factories, which puts pressure on the workforce. For factories and the workforce, larger orders with longer lead times are usually better because they allow working hours to be distributed evenly. When the deadlines are shorter, orders are more likely to be outsourced to subcontractors, and more overtime is scheduled. This relates to the treadmill of production theory (chapter 2.1.2 of part I), which argues that the treadmill of production keeps accelerating as the shareholders seek to maximize profits as quickly as possible, which makes the work more precarious. (Regenass, n.d.).

Furthermore, fast fashion causes environmental pollution and overexploitation of resources. 10 % of international CO₂ emissions are a result of the clothing industry every year. The fabric dyeing and treatment process produces 17 to 20 % of wastewater in the world, according to a 2011 estimation (Kant, 2012). Each year, a half-million tons of plastic microfibers, mostly coming from clothes end up in the ocean, which represents 50 billion bottles made out of plastic. Since one cannot extract microfibers from water these microfibers will inevitably enter the food chain (World Bank, 2019). Most of the clothing Americans consume, about 85 percent, which represents 3.8 billion pounds annually, ends up in landfills as solid waste, which amounts to nearly 80 pounds per person per year (Bick, Halsey, & Ekenga, 2018). Since the 1980s, more clothes have been produced than consumed, and unwanted clothing from richer countries is often shipped to poorer countries. Western clothes shipped to poorer countries displace local manufacturers who are outcompeted by Western second-hand clothes (Brooks, 2019).

One of the issues with fast fashion is that to deliver new products as quickly as possible, the companies use air travel. From East Asia to Europe air travel lasts 5 days while

with the boat 5 to 6 weeks and with the train 3 weeks. In 2021, the share of greenhouse gases of Zara is about 10,6 %. As we can see in the diagram below the CO₂ emissions of air travel is 39 times the CO₂ emissions of sea travel.

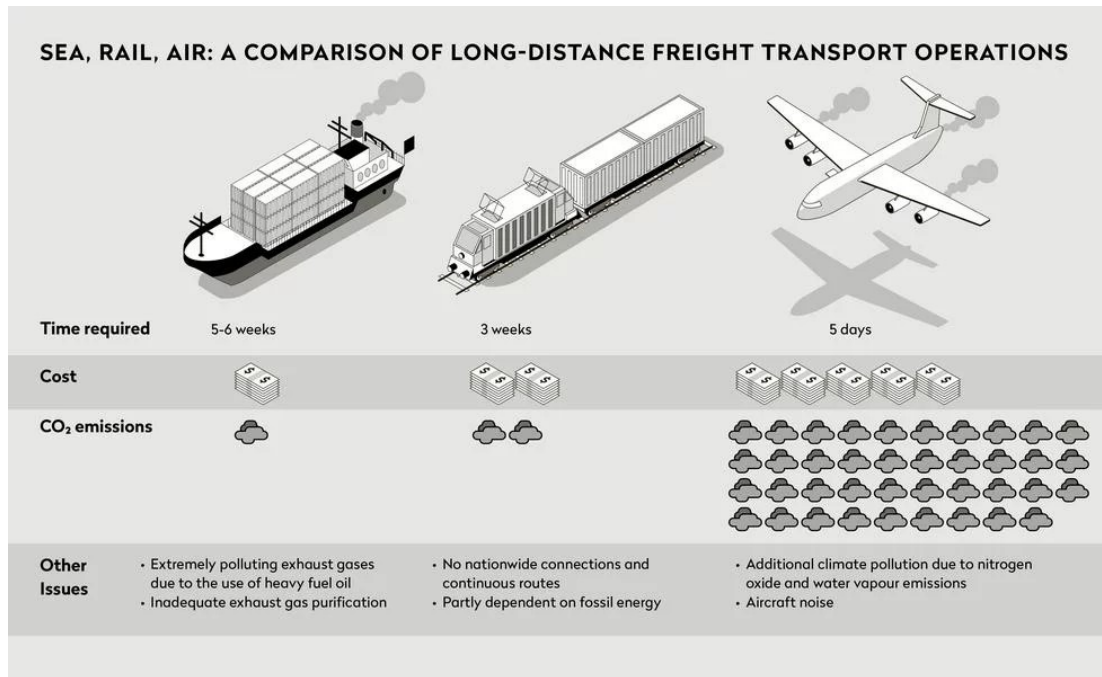


Fig 3. Diagram showing container transport operations from East Asia to Europe (Regenass, 2023).

According to Regenass (2023), “In 2022, the EU alone imported 387,009 tons of clothing, textiles, and footwear and exported 346,778 tons by air, according to its trade statistics” and “even within the EU, where air freight offers only a small time-saving, fashionwear is transported by plane.” The main shipper in this case is probably Inditex, the mother company of Zara (Regenass, 2023).

The mere overproduction of clothes needs to be addressed. According to the Ellen McArthur Foundation (n.d.), clothing production doubled between 2000 and 2015, while clothing use has shrunk by 36%. This rise in production and consumption has a significant social and environmental cost.

Growth of clothing sales and decline in clothing utilisation since 2000

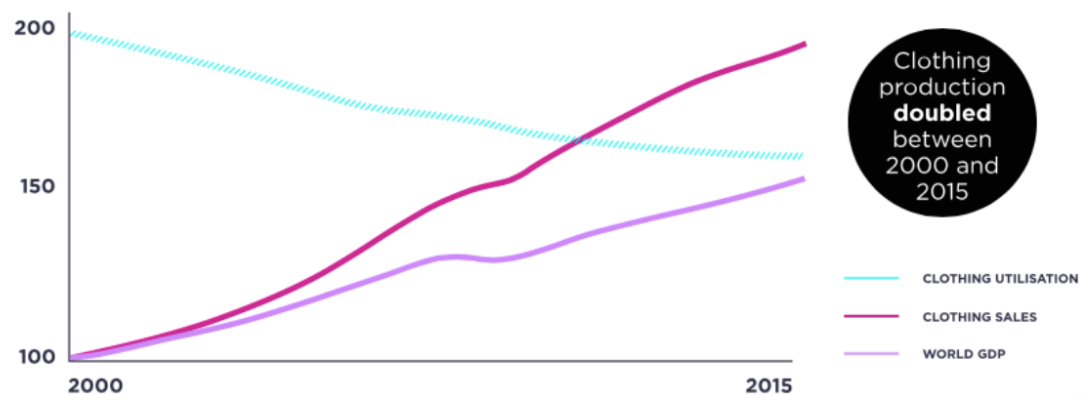


Fig 4. Growth of clothing sales and decline in clothing utilization since 2000 (Ellen Mc Arthur Foundation, n.d.).

1.6. Slow Fashion

It was Carlo Pertini, an Italian restaurateur, who founded the ‘slow movement’ in the mid-1980s, which has become the basis of the slow fashion ideology. The ‘slow movement’ is in opposition to fast food. Slow food’s aim is to promote local cuisine and reintroduce traditional dishes that support local production and heritage. Thereby, one cultivates pleasure and health by slowing the eating experience down. Slow ideology has spread beyond the food industry into many other industries, including fashion (Wellesley-Smith, 2015). Fast fashion consists of garments made at low cost, “low quality, mass-produced, machine-made”, and quickly discarded, whereas slow fashion consists of garments made by hand, time-consuming, using the talented hands of artists, and of higher quality (Aishwariya, 2019:1). Textile and clothing are made using traditional methods in slow fashion. There is no mass production (no bulk production) and craftsmanship is valued. The products are locally sourced and it takes into account the environmental and social impact of its creation. Since slow fashion items are of higher quality than fast fashion, the product is usually more expensive than fast fashion (Aishwariya, 2019).

2. Sustainable consumption of clothes and the consumer

In this chapter I focus on the description of sustainable consumption and lifestyle politics - I first define the two concepts, then I explain the structural aspects of sustainable consumption, how to attain structural consumption from a structural standpoint and explain a gender difference in sustainable consumption. After that, I define lifestyle politics. Then, I explain the difference between predatory hedonism and alternative hedonism which is a paramount shift for sustainable consumption, and different types of consumers concerning sustainable clothing to show the variety of sustainable consumption behavior. I finish the chapter with the concept of anti-consumption, which is part of sustainable consumption.

2.1. Sustainable consumption and lifestyle politics

According to Marta Kolářova (2021), one can define sustainable consumption as a narrower concept than lifestyle politics, it is a part of it. Sustainable consumption is about choosing to buy and consume items that are environmentally friendly and boycotting those, which are not. Lifestyle politics is broader, it encompasses our living situation, mode of transport, waste disposal, and energy consumption patterns. Not only does it include buying items, but also behaviors towards these items such as self-limitation, self-sufficiency, and DIY practices. These practices can also be collective. It also includes how one makes use of our time: our work, what we do in our free time, and how we relate to our family and friends. Both sustainable consumption and lifestyle politics contribute to identity creation and are the result of conscious choices based on values such as protecting the environment. They are an integral part of everyday life (Kolářova, 2021).

2.1.1. Sustainable consumption

The concept of sustainable consumption was founded in 1992 during the UN conference in Rio de Janeiro. One of the 27 principles in the summit's declaration is about the "Reduction of Unsustainable Patterns of Production and Consumption" (Banbury et al, 2012:1). A working definition of sustainable consumption and production was published in 1994 during the Oslo Symposium (Kolářova, 2021). The Oslo Symposium defines sustainable consumption and production (SCP) as "the use of services and related products, which respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life while minimizing the use of natural resources and toxic materials as well as the emissions of waste and pollutants over

the life cycle of the service or product so as not to jeopardize the needs of further generations” (Sustainable Development Goals knowledge platform, 2022).

Current patterns of consumption of natural resources and energy in the developed world are unsustainable in the long run. Developing countries are industrializing and thereby joining the trends and patterns of consumption of the developed world. Sustainable consumption is about transitioning from a consumption society to a society of sustainable lifestyle. However structurally, the growth-based economic systems prevent such a development (Lorek, Vergragt, 2015 in Kolářová, 2021).

Furthermore, for a transition to a sustainable society, there needs to be a better understanding of the practical meaning of sustainable consumption. As Banbury et al. (2012) argue, sustainable consumption is ill-defined in politics, economics, and academia. Sustainable consumption is defined by some as voluntary simplicity or anti-consumption, while others define it as “green”, energy-efficient consumption (Cherrier, 2009, Young et al, 2010). There is also for some the inclusion of equity, where fair-trade products are being supported (Varul, 2009).

The question is, while we need to reduce resource utilization, especially in developed countries, it is unclear what power the consumer has to have an impact. The problem with the consumer sovereignty theory is that from the supply side, production growth rates are pre-planned and advertisements also contribute to higher rates of consumption. Furthermore, consumers hardly connect their consumption patterns and the consequences they have on the environment. There is an attitude-behavior gap (ElHaffar & al, 2020). For example, a study in the UK has shown that consumers with the strongest environmentally friendly attitudes were likelier to fly by plane, thereby having a large carbon footprint (BMRB, 2007 in Banbury et al, 2012).

In the introspective research of Banbury et al (2012), the writers argue that from their own experience, buying oneself out of a system that destroys the environment is delusional, since they three “live in a country with less than 5% of the world population that is consuming 25% of the planet's resources” (Banbury et al 2012: 503). They argue that sustainable consumption is “a construct borne out of that privilege” where one falsely believes that one can save the planet by changing how we consume. Sustainable consumption is a concept coming from classical economic theory, which is the same theory that describes

and justifies the current economic system that is destroying the planet. According to the authors, “You cannot solve a problem with the mindset that created it” as Einstein said (Hawkins et al, 1999 in Banbury et al, 2012). What they offer is a new worldview where one does not focus solely on the individual as a consumer but also on the economy of the commons, since most natural resources are in the form of commons (Banbury et al, 2012).

2.1.2. Structural aspects of sustainable consumption

As argued above, often there is an attitude-behavior gap when it comes to environmental protection. It appears that sustainable consumption has its limitations, and individuals may have little control over reducing their environmental impact. Allan Schnaiberg's theory of the treadmill, as described in “The Environment: From Surplus to Scarcity,” suggests that structural factors play a significant role in causing environmental issues. The theory was conceived in the 80s with the rise of Ronald Reagan in the USA, and Thatcher in England. It tends to be associated with the rise of neoliberal politics, the shift of society to the right, the privatization of public services, the dismantling of the welfare state, which represented social peace, great economic growth, modernization, post-war construction - succinctly, a general turn to the right.

The concept of the treadmill of production presents an alternative viewpoint to the idea that individual actions, environmental education, and personal consumption drive environmentally friendly practices and can change demand and supply. According to this theory, the key driving force is not the individual but rather the overall system. The capitalist society works like a treadmill: society prioritizes economic growth, the treadmill accelerates, it is driven by people, and the motivation for the operation of the belt is therefore growth, profit, and its maximization. On the one hand, there are stakeholders - the workers - whose position on the treadmill worsens (precarious work), but they stay because they need the money. On the other hand, there are shareholders - investors, managers, businessmen - who are also under the imperative of the treadmill to create profits. The treadmill of production is illustrated below (Bell, 2009:56).

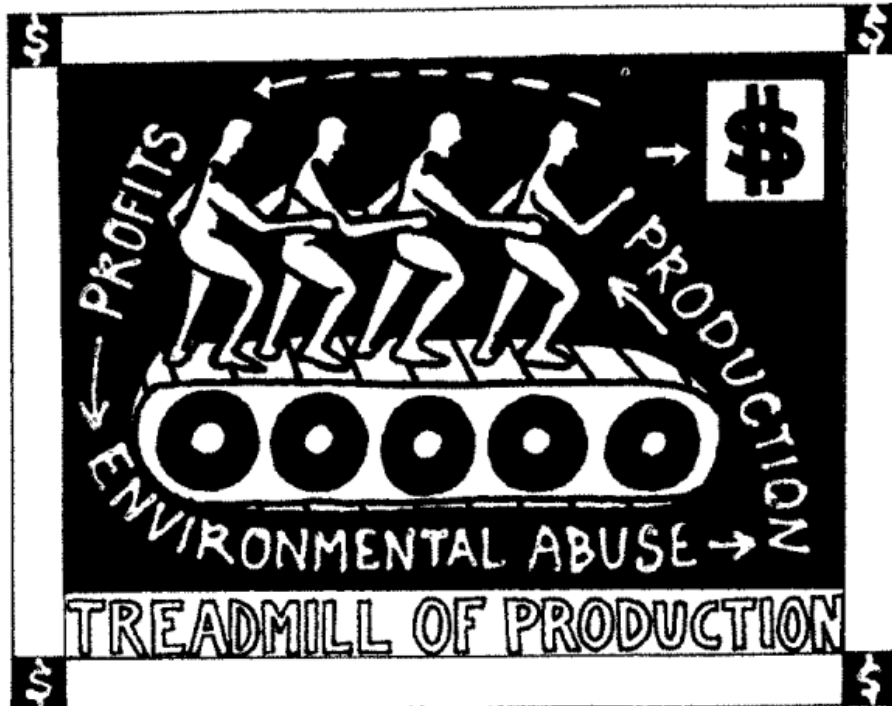


Fig 5. The treadmill of production (Bell, 2009:56).

There are two treadmills, one for production and one for consumption. They accelerate each other.

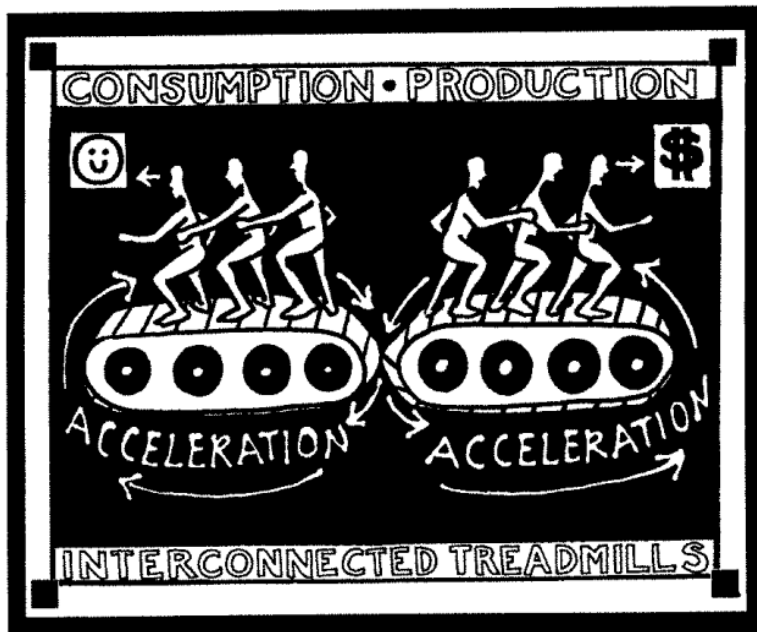


Fig 6. The treadmill of consumption and the treadmill of production are interconnected (Bell, 2009:63).

The treadmill of production is moved by work and machines. As said, the economy in the West is based on the maximization of economic profit, and by reducing costs - mainly for labor - western factories outsource to China, replacing expensive human labor with modern technologies. These are usually more environmentally demanding (for chemicals, raw materials, etc.), and therefore have a larger negative environmental impact.

The treadmill theory emphasizes the role of workers and citizens, not specific consumers. Schnaiberg argues for the necessity to introduce democracy into production, it is best to solve problems where they arise - to control the sphere of production rather than consumption. The consumer attitude never asks the question of the rate of consumption. It is not enough to just substitute products with “greener” products. There is, according to Schnaiberg, a need for social movements, education, and resolving the tension between work and the environment. In addition, prices should indicate the true cost of products (Bell, 2009).

2.1.3. How to attain structural consumption from a structural standpoint

As argued above with the treadmill theory of consumption, sustainable consumption should also include structural aspects, not only green consumerism. According to Gill Seyfang (2006), the economic system has to be changed to attain effective sustainable consumption. She proposes a new economic paradigm based on local economies and community. The main aspects are defined below:

Aspect of new economy	Definition
Localization	Strengthening local economies caused by an increase of transactions at the local level, as a result of locally produced goods rather than import
Reducing ecological footprints	Recycling, sharing, changing consumption patterns to cut demand, reduces overall consumption reduces cutting material consumption
Community building	Promoting solid, resilient, and diverse communities that overcome social exclusion. Supporting social capital and developing active citizenship
Collective action	Acting as a collection to influence decisions and deliver services. Address institutional consumption.
Building new social institutions	Create new social and economic institutions that are founded on different paradigm of what wealth, progress, value, are. These institutions support ecological citizenship.

Fig 7. Sustainable consumption (Seyfang, 2006:798).

2.1.4. Sustainable consumption of clothes: gender difference

Based on a study conducted at the Universidad de Las Américas in Chile, involving 240 students from the Faculty of Engineering and Business, comprising 105 men, 133 women, and two respondents who did not disclose their gender, significant insights into consumer behaviors emerged. The average age of the participants was 29.41 years, with a standard deviation of 9.45 years. The study applies to individuals born since 1996.

The study unveiled gender-specific influences on consumer behaviors. Notably, among women, a positive correlation exists between the avoidance of clothing originating from countries with poor working conditions and various sustainable behaviors, such as purchasing second-hand items, borrowing clothes for special occasions, and repurposing garments, including airing clothes before washing them. In contrast, for men, the preference for clothing made from organic materials positively impacts purchasing second-hand clothes, repairing garments, and airing clothes before washing. Conversely, a negative correlation is observed between men's emphasis on clothing quality and their engagement in sustainable purchasing and post-purchase behaviors, including buying second-hand items, repairing clothes, borrowing attire for special occasions, and finding alternative uses for unwanted garments (Barrera-Verdugo et al, 2022).

The observation that women are more invested in sustainability does not only apply to Chile but seems to be the case in many more countries. According to Kolářová (2021), women are more interested in a sustainable lifestyle and have a smaller ecological footprint than men. In her research, Kolářová discovered that most of the sustainable consumers are women aged between 30 and 44 who are educated and have higher incomes.

However, young women can be in some cases more invested in fast fashion than men. According to Statista (2024), in the UK more women buy clothes from sustainable brands when they are aged 18 to 24 and over 55 years of age, whereas between the age of 25 to 54 years old, men consume more sustainably than women in terms of clothing (Statista, 2021).

2.1.5. Sustainable lifestyle politics

Sustainable lifestyle as defined by Lewis Akenji and Huizen Chen in “A framework for sustainable lifestyle” as part of the UNEP is that a “sustainable lifestyle is a cluster of

habits and patterns of behavior embedded in a society and facilitated by institutions, norms, and infrastructures that frame individual choice, in order to minimize the use of natural resources and generation of wastes, while supporting fairness and prosperity for all” (Akenji, Chen, 2016:3).

According to Lorenzen (2012), a sustainable or “green” lifestyle is in reaction to a set of environmental problems: air and water pollution, climate change, the increasing size of landfills, and peak oil.

As pictured below in a diagram made by the UNEP, the pre-conditions for sustainable lifestyles are not only about attitudes, where the consumer has knowledge and value orientation but also about infrastructure and facilitators.



Fig 8. Key elements to support sustainable lifestyles (Akenji, Chen, 2016:30).

Facilitators are a set of “mechanisms, such as regulation, legal platforms, administrative process, market facilities, or institutional arrangements that provide incentives or constraints for sustainable options” (Akenji, Chen, 2016:32). For example, removing oil subsidies and introducing a carbon tax is a regulation that can nudge the

consumer towards more environmentally friendly practices. Having not only an eco-label for ecological products but also a non-eco label could also shift consumer consumption.

Concerning infrastructure, the aim is to have sustainable product options available that are qualitative, healthy, accessible, and reasonably priced. Thereby, Akenji and Chen (2016) argue that sustainable lifestyle politics is not only about individual choices, but is actually to be solved systemically.

The table below shows an example of infrastructure and facilitators relevant to clothing consumption.

<p>Reducing materialism</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade by barter • Choice editing: set minimum sustainability standards for products • tighten credit card and abusive consumer loans schemes • long product warranties and ensure reparability • "non-eco" labels (red stickers!) • feedback mechanisms (e.g. smart meters) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repair and used-goods centres • Training centres for life skills (e.g. sewing, gardening, home repairs)
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Fig 9. Reducing materialism: facilitator in the middle column and infrastructure in the right column to reduce materialism (Akenji, Chen, 2016:34).

In this table in the middle column, one can identify facilitators. With regards to clothes for example the items can be produced with long product warranties and have ensured that one care repair them. In the right column there is infrastructure (provisions and systems). An example of infrastructure to promote a sustainable lifestyle in clothing is to learn how to sew (training for life skills).

2.1.6. Ecological citizenship

Lorenzen (2012) did semi-structured interviews with voluntary simplifiers, religious environmentalists, and green homeowners, to explore what a sustainable lifestyle is about. It is argued that those adopting a sustainable lifestyle believe that they can change society “even individuals have a part to play” (Lorenzen, 2012: 96).

The fact that everyone has a part to play connects with the concept of ecological citizenship by Dobson (2007). Dobson argues that there are two types of ways to look at a

change of behavior toward sustainability: structuralists and voluntarists. On the one hand, structuralists believe that the economic system determines our behavior. Hence, we must change the economic system first, to change people's behavior. He gives the example of cooperation amidst a system that favors competition: the system will undermine cooperation. On the other hand, voluntarists argue that while "of course, we live our lives in a context, this context is determined in part by how we live our lives" (Dobson, 2007:277). For voluntarists attitude and behavior have a non-negligible role to play.

Environmental citizenship derives from the voluntarist viewpoint. It is about being committed to the common good, knowing that self-interested behavior will not always lead to environmentally friendly outcomes. The basis of environmental citizenship is to recycle, reuse, and conserve. Another aspect of environmental citizenship is the awareness that rights and responsibilities transcend national boundaries. Indeed, for example, CO2 emissions have no boundaries so people have to think about their global impact. Those who emit more emissions, and use more resources have a responsibility towards those who have a smaller environmental footprint, they have to reduce their environmental impact. Furthermore, environmental citizens take up space in the public sphere by protesting, debating, acting, and demanding - but they also act in the private sphere: what they eat, how they heat their house, which transportation system they use, and the like. Dobson (2007) argues that a change of behavior is more lasting than economic incentives. For example, a waste tax has been created in Britain with the idea that people, who would not like to pay for the waste they produce, would reduce their waste production. However, the perverse effect was that people did not reduce their waste but threw their trash in nature, on the side of highways for example. All in all, environmental citizenship does not view the individual only as a consumer, but also as a citizen with rights and responsibilities (Dobson, 2007).

Lorenzen (2012) argues that sustainable citizenship practices can be recycling, buying eco-products, producing our food, being a vegetarian, changing mode of transportation to public transport, on foot or by bicycle, and having energy from renewable resources (Lorenzen, 2012).

2.2. Hedonism: predatory vs alternative hedonism

One of the beliefs one can have about sustainable consumption is that it is an ascetic lifestyle. Ascetic can be defined as "practicing strict self-denial as a measure of personal and

especially spiritual discipline” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2023). This denies the self-interest of the individual. Anti-consumption ethics should not only be about altruism and worries for the environment but also egocentric satisfaction. Trying to impose the definition of what is considered as real needs in contrast to superficial needs could be considered as undemocratic and paternalistic (Soper, 2008).

For a more ethical and modest lifestyle, Roubal and Wawrosz (2020) argue for the inclusion of long-term well-being. They introduce the concept of predatory hedonism and alternative hedonism to explain the change of consuming patterns.

In economic theory, short-term benefit maximalization is prevalent. This cult of immediate satisfaction (one rule: *now or never*), is a consequence of marketing. Marketing campaigns promote the immediate satisfaction approach because firms aim to maximize their profits as quickly as possible. While firms advertise immediate and easily accessible satisfaction, it implies that the consumer will return to get another high. In other terms, saved time will be used for another purchase. Fast fashion is a prime example of this, where people can easily buy cheap clothes that are not durable (fall apart after a few washes) to then buy more clothes quickly afterwards. This is how fashion firms maximize profits.

Predatory hedonism is the product of the economic system described above. The consumer seeks pleasure that is easily and quickly attainable. The thirst for more products and experiences is insatiable. Predatory hedonism never truly gives happiness to the consumer. On the contrary, it creates a state of constant dissatisfaction, causing the consumer to obsessively pursue new products and services - because what matters is not having something, but wanting and acquiring something new. There is also a negative cycle with work. People work hard and compensate for their lack of free time with the acquisition of goods and services. Since they need money to buy these new goods and services, they work even harder, and the cycle repeats itself. An example is travelling companies who offer to get back some of the time spent working. Often, predatory hedonism is in clear conflict with environmental protection.

An alternative to predatory hedonism is named “alternative hedonism” by Roubal and Wawrosz (2020). Alternative hedonism is about deferring pleasure, which enables one to slow down and look forward and cherish more what one buys. Caring for our body, for example, to go to a spa or do sports, investing in our body’s well-being, supporting our well-

being throughout life, is an example of alternative hedonism. Other examples can be slow movements, such as slow food, slow books, slow living, slow travel, slow fashion, etc. These movements avoid hurried living, replacing instant forms of gratification with a more meaningful life. The slower pace also allows one to make more social connections (Roubal and Wawrosz, 2020).

2.3. Different types of fashion consumers

In the realm of sustainable fashion, understanding consumer behavior is paramount because within this landscape, various consumer segments emerge, each with distinct characteristics and implications for sustainability efforts.

In a study by Burns (2011), 3 types of consumers have been identified:

- The novelty-fashion-conscious demographic: they seek constant innovation and trend-setting styles, often driving rapid consumption cycles and contributing to environmental strain.
- Recreational and hedonistic consumers: they prioritize pleasure and enjoyment in their clothing choices, sometimes overlooking the environmental impact of their purchases.
- Impulsive and careless consumers: they make spur-of-the-moment decisions without considering the long-term consequences, adding to the disposable fashion culture.

Furthermore, there are also those bewildered by over choice who may struggle to make sustainable decisions amidst a sea of options. There are also habitual brand-loyal consumers who may adhere to familiar brands without considering their sustainability credentials (Burns, 2011).

In a study by Cavender & Lee (2018), four other types of consumers were identified. These four types of consumers are then evaluated in relationship to particular criteria. For instance, one of the criteria is store preference (fast fashion, high-end and designer, high-end

second-hand market place, mass merchandize second-hand) and sustainability orientation (social equity, authenticity, localism and knowledge seeking).

The four types of consumers identified by Cavender & Lee (2018) are:

- apparel hoarders: they buy large amounts of clothes with their friends, have too many clothes, and negatively impacts the environment.
- mindful consumers: they are mindful about the durability and quantity of clothes that they purchase.
- swappers: they swap clothing with family and friends, have attended at least one swapping event and buy/sell second-hand.
- style consumers: they are most attracted by the design of clothes.

The study found that mindful shoppers have the lowest level of purchase intention toward fast fashion, luxury apparel, and second-hand. These consumers are also the lowest ranked group on trend consciousness and fashion leadership. They are not highly involved in fashion. Instead of following trends they follow their personal style. This shows that they have an emotional link to the clothes they wear. Since they are not trend-driven, they keep clothes for a longer period of time. They are also not carelessly disposing of their apparel. Mindful shoppers, out of all categories, are most interested in sustainability-related messaging. Yet, since they are less interested in clothes all together, they have limited exposure to that type of information.

The apparel hoarder group has the highest on trend orientation and price consciousness. The apparel hoarders do not throw away used clothes but do not donate them either because of the low quality of the items. The group of apparel hoarders has the largest knowledge out of the four other categories about sustainable brands. They have the second highest preference for second-hand places.

The style consumers have second lowest ranking on the overconsumption factor as well as the mindful consumption pattern. They are most attracted to high-end brands. They do not express care for the durability of clothes, probably because they believe that durability is a latent attribute of high-end clothing. Even though style consumers follow slow fashion principles, they are not as interested in sustainability as the other groups.

Swappers exchange clothing monetarily (from second-hand sources) and non-monetarily (from family and friends). Swappers are highly involved in fashion as well as in sustainable consumption. They consume clothes from various sources. One of their challenges is to follow trends while swapping clothes.

2.4. Sustainable consumption and anti-consumption of clothes

In a literature review, Vesterinen & Syrjälä (2022) defined sustainable clothing consumption, anti-consumption, and sustainable anti-consumption of clothing, as summarized in the figure below.

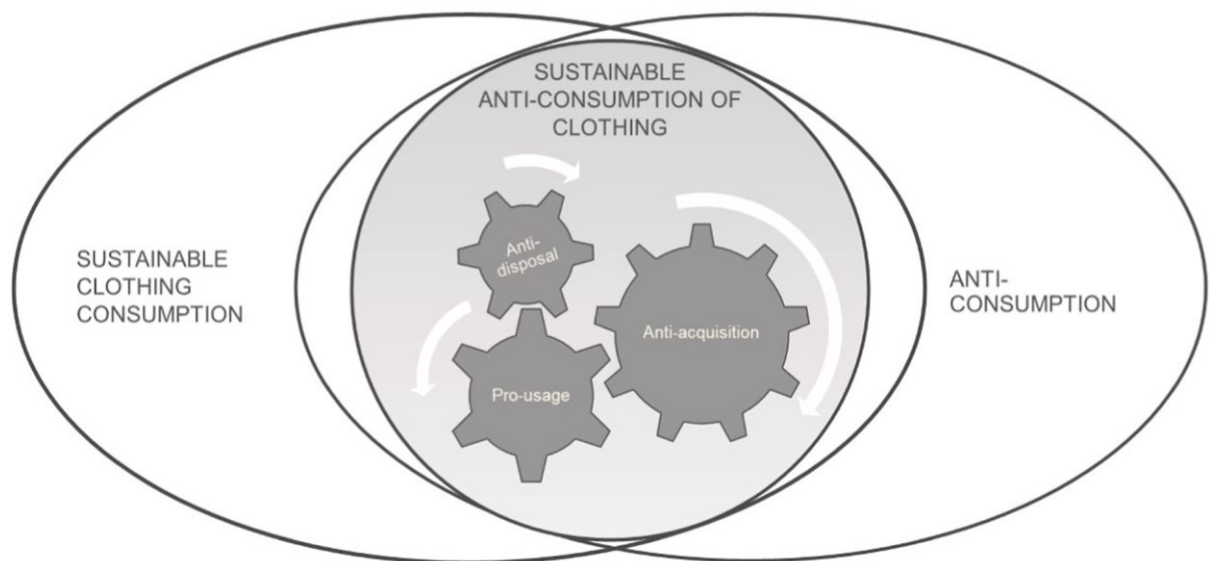


Fig 10. Sustainable anti-consumption as the common ground between sustainable consumption and anti-consumption (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022:9).

Sustainable clothing consumption is defined as reducing “the harmful effects of clothing consumption, such as buying higher-quality products, buying ethically and/or ecologically produced clothing, buying second-hand as well as mending and simply buying less” (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022:4). Sustainable anti-consumption of clothing is defined as “ideologies and strategies aiming at reducing the personal consumption of clothing” (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022:4). Therefore, we can see that a part of the strategy for sustainable clothing consumption is to consume less and be wiser with the choice of clothing.

3. Slow fashion as a part of sustainable consumption of clothes

In this chapter, I link slow fashion and sustainable consumption. I use the theoretical framework by Akenji & Chen (2016) to structure my chapter - I explain a change towards slow fashion at 3 levels: the first being consumer attitude, the second institutional facilitators such as the EU and national governments, and the third infrastructure of clothing care through slow fashion behavior such as repair, care, and repurposing.

3.1. Consumer attitude toward sustainable consumption

A change in attitude means that for example people should boycott fast fashion brands and choose more sustainable options, clothes of higher quality that are locally produced and that are more durable. This also means that there has to be a shift from predatory hedonism, as in Roubal and Wawrosz (2020), to alternative hedonism - meaning that one will not satisfy our desire for clothes as quickly as possible, but alternatively have time to wait and look forward to clothes, and see it as an investment.

In research by Mc Neill & Moore (2015), three types of consumer attitudes were identified, which had different outlooks on sustainable consumption of clothes. The first is the “self” consumer. As the name indicates, that consumer is primarily interested by the egoistic self, they express minimal interest for social or environmental concerns. For them, improving their self-image through fashion is the most important reason for buying clothes. These people particularly enjoy shopping, and sometimes even prioritize wants over needs, when it comes to clothing.

The second group is about “social” consumers. They express concern for the environment and worker rights. The issue that “social” consumers face is an attitude-behavior gap because perceived barriers prevent them from consuming sustainably. An example of identified barrier is peer pressure. In the study, one individual gave up on second-hand clothes because his girlfriend was in disfavor of it. Furthermore, another interviewee argued that the priority was to fit in. Another barrier to ethical consumption is that even though “social” consumers might express concern for the inhumane working conditions in sweatshops, they reply that they are aware of it, but that it does not have enough weight to make them change their decision. They believe that they are “too small” to make a difference. Other identified barriers are greenwashing, and a lack of information and transparency.

Consumers also consider fast fashion as more convenient and cheaper. Sustainable fashion is considered as more expensive but some respondents argued that if they really like the item, they would invest in it regardless of price. When investing in such pricy items, they expect them to be durable to be their money's worth. Some interviewees would freely choose to shop second-hand, not necessarily for the sake of the environment, but for their own pleasure.

The third group is the “sacrifice” consumer, who entirely rejects fast fashion, and choose sustainable alternatives. They believe that the current fashion industry is the product of capitalism and profit-seeking. Therefore, they prioritize buying second-hand, seldom buy new clothes and avoid fast-fashion. When choosing clothes, they look for long-lasting sustainable fabrics. They prefer giving the clothes to charity if possible after choosing to dispose of them. However, their dilemma is reconciling their desire for fashion with their goal of reducing consumption overall. While one could think that this segment of the population is a good candidate for the sustainable fashion market, a possible obstacle can be their skepticism towards industry motives. In their case, transparency is paramount to maintaining trust in a fashion brand (Mc Neill & Moore, 2015).

3.2. EU as an example of facilitators of sustainable fashion

A facilitator is an institutional support for slow fashion. An example of the institutional support of slow fashion is the EU strategy for sustainable and circular textiles, which implements the European Green Deal, The Circular Economy Action Plan, and the European industrial strategy. The objectives, actions and implementation are summarized in the tables below:

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● “All textile products placed on the EU market are durable, repairable and recyclable, to a great extent made of recycled fibers, free of hazardous substances, produced in respect of social rights and the environment”● “fast fashion is out of fashion - consumers benefit longer from high quality affordable textiles”● “profitable re-use and repair services are widely available”● “the textiles sector is competitive, resilient and innovative with producers taking responsibility for their products along the value chain with sufficient capacities for recycling and minimal incineration and landfilling”
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<p>Actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “Set design requirements for textiles to make them last longer, easier to repair and recycle, as well as requirements on minimum recycled content” ● “Introduce clearer information and a Digital Product Passport“ ● “Reverse overproduction and overconsumption, and discourage the destruction of unsold or returned textiles” ● “Address the unintentional release of microplastics from synthetic textiles” ● “Tackle greenwashing to empower consumers and raise awareness about sustainable fashion” ● “Introduce mandatory and harmonized Extender Producer Responsibility rules for textiles in all Member States and incentivize producers to design products that are more sustainable” ● “Restrict the export of textile waste and promote sustainable textiles globally” ● “Incentivize circular business models, including reuse and repair sectors” ● “Encourage companies and Member States to support the objectives of the Strategy”
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<p>Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “The Eco-design for Sustainable Products Regulation, proposed in 2022, creates a framework to set eco-design requirements for products, including textiles” ● “The Empowering Consumers in the Green Transition Directive and Green Claims Directive, proposed in 2022 and 2023, aim to tackle greenwashing” ● “The “Reset the Trend” campaign (#ReFashionNow) was launched in 2023 to raise awareness about sustainable fashion” ● “The Waste Shipment Regulation, proposed in 2021, will help restrict the export of textile waste” ● “transition Pathway for the Textiles Ecosystem, published in 2023, and the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform (since 2018) promote and foster cooperation between industry, public authorities, social partners and other stakeholders.” ● “Calls have been launched under Horizon Europe to further develop technologies and processes increasing the circularity and sustainability of the textiles sector.” ● “In 2023 the Commission proposed a revision to the Waste Framework Directive to introduce mandatory and harmonized Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes for textiles in all EU Member States.” ● “In 2023 the Commission launched a plan to update and revise the Textile Labelling Regulation.”
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Fig 11. Quoting from EU strategy for sustainable and circular textiles for 2030 (European Commission, 2023).

Thereby the European Commission is an institutional facilitator that works on the structural aspects of sustainable consumption. The rapporteur Delara Burkhardt of the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament declares:

"Consumers alone cannot reform the global textile sector through their purchasing habits. If we allow the market to self-regulate, we leave the doors open for a fast fashion model that exploits people and the planet's resources. The EU must legally oblige manufacturers and large fashion companies to operate more sustainably. People and the planet are more important than the textile industry's profits. The disasters that have occurred in the past, such as the collapse of the Rana Plaza factory in Bangladesh, growing landfills in Ghana and Nepal, polluted water, and microplastics in our oceans, show what happens when this principle is not pursued. We have waited long enough - it is time to make a change!" (European Parliament, n.d.).

This falls in line with the idea that sustainable consumption is not to be pursued by consumer behavior alone, but has to change structurally. However, it is argued that one of the issues with this policy is that it reduces the EU's competitiveness in the world market. According to Euratex (an organization representing the European textile and clothing industry), "putting the bar even higher will simply mean that the European textile industry will be pushed out of the market, resulting in a bigger environmental footprint and increased dependency on foreign supplies. Quite the opposite of what the EU wants to achieve with its open strategic autonomy plans" (Safaya, 2023).

While businesses argue that the policy of the EU goes too far, some environmental activists argue that the policy of the EU does not go far enough. In Schnaiberg's treadmill theory, what leads to environmental degradation is seeking the maximization of short-term profits and economic growth. However, the European Union 2019 Green New Deal is based on growth, whilst it emphasizes socio-economic development as part of its strategy (Kallis et al, 2023). According to a study by Kallis et al (2023), for center/left and left politicians in the European Parliament, growth is not an ultimate goal and they, and agree on public investment, environmental justice, and working hours reduction, while the right-wing politicians favor green growth. It is yet to be seen if the degrowth approach will find expression in concrete politics.

On the 14th of March 2024, the French government adopted measures to curb fast fashion. The aim is to make fast fashion less attractive, for example through the ban of fast fashion advertisements. The reason for the adoption of this law is stated as environmental, saying that 10% of greenhouse gas emissions are caused by the fashion industry (AFP, 2024).

3.3. The infrastructure of sustainable fashion: care and repair

When it comes to infrastructure, for clothing it is paramount for the consumer to know how to repair clothes. Over the past two to three generations, the tradition of repairing and customizing clothing has largely dwindled, coinciding with the fashion industry's proliferation of affordable, mass-produced ready-to-wear garments.

While some communities, especially those in online and offline crafting circles, are rediscovering the creative possibilities of repairing or modifying clothing, mainstream culture often opts to dispose of damaged garments in landfills rather than restoring them. An online survey encompassing responses from 512 Canadian and U.S. consumers revealed insightful patterns regarding clothing repair practices. The study identified self-repair as the most prevalent form of clothing maintenance, with a notable gender disparity showing that women are more actively involved, a trend that amplifies with age. Conversely, paid repair services exhibited the lowest engagement overall, with negligible gender differentials. Men, however, tend to rely more on unpaid repair methods. Notably, within the youngest age bracket (18–24), both genders exhibit similar tendencies towards utilizing free repair services (McQueen et al, 2022).

4. “Good” clothes

In this chapter, I rely on existing research to explore what are the factors that make clothes “good”.

In the academic literature, the term “good” clothes are not a theoretical concept per se. I defined “good” clothes as clothes people choose. Articles have been written about consumer preferences in terms of clothes. Therefore, I review the literature about consumer preferences with regards to clothes, to explore the different possibilities of what “good” clothes can be. Exploring “good” clothes reveal a multifaceted terrain shaped by individual, cultural, and societal perspectives.

People may perceive “good” clothes through a lens of practicality, prioritizing comfort, durability, and versatility amongst other factors. According to a study (Chowdhury & Akter, 2018) about young consumers (between 18 and 32 years old) in Bangladesh, the factors influencing clothing choice are the following:

- In terms of quality and durability, young Bangladeshis prefer unique styles, well-made and soft fabrics, good after wash, and durable fabric. It is important that the fabric is non-irritating and easy to wear. The color should be suiting and the shape age-appropriate.
- Designer dresses and clothes worn by celebrities create greater appeal.
- the price of clothes is important, buying on discount or buy-one-get-one is favored, as well as replicas from high-end brands at a lower price.
- The shopping environment is also paramount. For instance, the store atmosphere is valued.

Clothing preference is also influenced by body shape. According to a study by Sattar, et al. (2019) people are concerned if the clothing fits. When it comes to online shopping people see how clothes look like on models, but often the way the clothing looks on them is different. For people who are bigger they are less likely to wear shorts or blazers and would rather prefer loose clothing.

For some, “good” clothes may symbolize adherence to current fashion trends, reflecting a desire for self-expression and belonging within their social milieu. For instance, clothing can express an adherence to a certain type of music. According to Na & Agnhage (2013) people who listen to the same type of music relate to each other more and thereby develop similar visual tastes and emotions.



Fig 12. Clothing style based on music genre (Na & Agnhage, 2013).

According to a study by Noh, Mijeong, et al. (2015), midwestern US male college students express that they choose comfortable clothes, clothes that make them feel confident, and that meet expectations of their surroundings. They would avoid clothing that would deviate from the norm, for example, clothing that would be perceived as “alternative, gangster, or gay” (Noh et al, 2015:1). They would not buy clothing that is non-conformist, non-professional, or unusual. Thereby, we can see that clothing choice also reflect what people believe about certain groups - homophobia or racism for example. To fit in and feel confident, young American college students would choose clothes to adhere to the dominant style.

Emotions and mood are a significant factor in clothing choice. According to a study by Moody et al (2010), a particular outfit can generate a mood and have an impact on individual emotions. Clothing is used as a way to reflect or manage positive or negative emotions. The personality trait, emotion or mood the wearer wishes to present will affect what they wear.

Clothing preference is deeply intertwined with notions of status, prestige, and aspiration, with luxury brands often serving as markers of perceived quality and refinement. A study by Millan and Mittal (2017) studying fashion consumers in the Czech Republic argues that clothing is often used for its symbolic function - an indicator of status. Drivers for luxury clothing consumption are a status concern, public self-consciousness, and self-esteem. The tendency to seek status indicating clothes is part of a particular historical-economical context. Conspicuous consumption is encouraged by increased income inequality and status mobility. Comparison - person-to-person or online - drives competitive buying. Economic, political, and socio-cultural changes may cause lower confidence and lead to a desire to re-establish self-esteem.

Clothing may be chosen as a way to represent one's profession. A study (Ericksen & Sirgy, 1992) about faculty and staff members of three American Universities, found that employed females would rather wear outfits matching their self-image. The more upward their career anchorage, the more the women tend to wear business clothing.

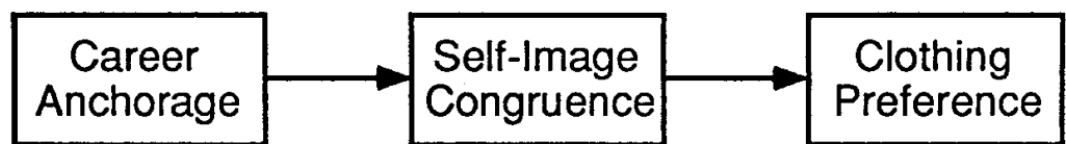


Fig 13. The relationship between profession, self-image a clothing preference (Ericksen & Sirgy, 1992).

Self-image congruence “refers to the extent to which a product image matches a consumer’s actual self-image, and ideal congruity refers to the extent to which the product image matches the ideal self-image” (Ericksen & Sirgy, 1992:409). Consumers who believe that an item of clothing is congruent with the image they want to represent of themselves are likely to choose that item of clothing for themselves.

Clothing is also linked to sexuality. A study by Edmond & Cahoon (1984) of college students at the University of Augusta in Georgia found out that women are aware of which clothes would attract male sexual attraction and would - if they wanted - choose clothes that would enhance their sexual attractiveness.

“Good” clothes can also be associated with good working conditions for the workers of the clothing industry. The term “good clothes, fair pay” was the slogan of a grassroots campaign by the NGO Fashion Revolution that took place in 2023, calling for living wage legislation across the fashion industry. The aim was to produce EU legislation that requires companies to provide living wages in supply chains at the global level (*Good Clothes, Fair Pay: Fashion Revolution*, n.d.).

Amidst these diverse interpretations, the concept of “good” is shaped by individual tastes, experiences, and contexts. Thus, unraveling the intricacies of what constitutes “good” necessitates an exploration of the dynamic interplay between personal preferences, cultural influences, and societal expectations.

II. EMPIRICAL PART

1. Subject of research and research questions

The upcoming chapters are not on the purely theoretical level anymore since they focus on the research, the methodological side of the work, and the empirical part. I establish the theoretical concepts in the specific statements of my informants, and with both inductive and deductive interpretation I formulate my findings and theory.

The subjects of the research are informants who are students of the Faculty of Humanities at Charles University. I focus on ways in which those informants define “good” clothes and what are their reasons, and how and why they act the way they do when they choose clothes.

Based on the research problem, I established the following research questions which I divided thematically into two areas:

1. What do “good” clothes mean for young Czech university students of the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University in Prague?

- What are the factors that make clothes “good”?
- Are students aware of the negative environmental and social impact of the fashion industry?
- Do they transpose sustainability principles into their own life and how?
- Has their fashion consumption changed throughout their life?
- How are they influenced by parents, peers, their cultural context?
- What is their opinion on the price of slow fashion?

2. How are “good” clothes related to slow fashion principles for them?

- Is durability of clothes a priority?
- Are style, price and durability compatible?
- How does their lifestyle support slow fashion?
- Is there a gender difference in the way they care for clothes?
- How do they repurpose clothes when they want to discard them?

2. Methodology

2.1. Research strategy

For my project, I am using a qualitative research approach. According to Novotná et al (2019), qualitative research is about understanding actors and social structures of a particular phenomenon. We study what the actors do, how they talk about it, how they understand it, how they experience it and we try to explain why it is so. We study how humans act on the environment, and how the environment influences humans. My aim is to understand how young students in the Czech Republic interact with clothing, both influenced by others, and as part of a wider economic system.

Qualitative research is based on an idiographic and inductive approach. Idiographic means looking for the specificity and uniqueness of a phenomenon. The aim is to identify details, nuances and variations of a particular phenomenon, look at the differences and commonalities, and come to a particular conclusion from that analysis. In qualitative research we look at the context without taking anything for granted. For my research I not only ask the students about the clothes they consume, but also about how they perceive fashion, why and in what context, how they buy and take care of clothes, what they understand of the way clothes are produced, and so on. Inductive approach is about using data we collect as the source of knowledge, while also using a theoretical framework. My research questions are :

- *What do “good” clothes mean for young Czech university students of the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University in Prague?*
- *How are “good” clothes related to slow fashion principles for them?*

The focus is on an emic perspective. The terms emic and etic come from the linguist Kenneth Pike. Emic comes from phonemic (a phoneme is a sound that has in a particular language a differentiation function) and means the perspective “from within”, from the people being observed. The term was created in opposition to etic coming from phonetic (a science, which studies sounds), which is “from outside”, from the observer. That is why I am interviewing students, to get their point of view.

I am using theory as a starting point, guide and interpretational framework. It gives concepts and keywords that help understand a particular phenomenon, useful for drawing conclusions. In contrast with quantitative study, where one would have as an aim to confirm or refute a theory, in qualitative research, the aim is to use theory and find out which concepts are suitable, and we discuss them (Novotná et al, 2019).

2.2. Choice of sample

I am using as a sample of 20 students from the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University. The sample is chosen according to the *generic purposeful sample* method, which means that the sample stems from the research question (Bryman, 2012). It is being used in research with a clear social phenomenon (in my case clothing consumption), in a group of actors and locations (students of the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University in Prague).

The criterion of purposeful sampling that I am using is that the given phenomenon - consumption of clothes amongst the Czech youth - is being found with students of the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University. The socio-demographic group I am targeting is the age 18 to 26, students of the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University, male and female. I chose students of the Faculty of Humanities because they pursue education about current social, economic and environmental issues, and I assume they are conscious about environmental protection and human rights. I am choosing people between the ages of 18 and 26 because I want to study a generation, which represents people that will be impacted by current environmental degradation and climate change, and who have a role in the evolution of the fashion industry that has a significant impact on the environment. I am starting at the age of 18 since these students are considered adults and are fully responsible for their choices, including consumption and political choices. I am stopping at the age of 26, because I think the majority of Charles university students are aged under 26, and 26 is also a year until the parents are responsible for children when they study at university. I choose male and female students because I would like gender balance. Choosing one gender would omit the perspectives of the other gender. As argued in the theoretical framework, men and women are different in terms of eco-responsibility and have a different relationship to clothes and shopping. I am choosing Charles University since it is the biggest university in the Czech Republic, whose students are educated and living in the capital, Prague. Since the students live in Prague or nearby (they have to commute to the faculty multiple days of the study), they live in an urban environment where they are fully exposed to fast fashion

stores, but also second-hand stores and alternative, and green fashion stores. I chose the Czech Republic since it is a European country part of the “global North”, and also because I live in the Czech Republic and can familiarize myself better with this context.

2.3. Data

My source of data is informants, which are students between 18 and 26 years of age from Charles University. I have used as my method of data collection semi-structured interviews. According to the social-constructivist view of interviews, qualitative interviews are not to be considered neutral, objective references to the phenomenon. They are not a reflection of reality as it is, but rather an indicator of how the one who is being interviewed talks about a particular phenomenon, their relationship to reality, what they emphasize, and also reflects on the one who asks questions. Qualitative interviews are therefore a contextual event, which is in interaction and collaboration of the interviewer and the interviewee, that construct meaning and understanding (Novotná et al, 2019).

Semi-structured interviews are interviews with a partly prepared structure. It means that the researcher prepares the questions in advance. However, during the interview, there is room for flexibility and reaction to the informant's answers. The aim is still to ask all questions prepared beforehand. The advantages of semi-structured interviews are that they leave room for interviewees' formulation and expression. The interviewer can improvise and react. Thereby one can go deeper and bring the interview to a place that was not expected during the preparation of the interview. Being face-to-face with the interviewee ensures that questions are well understood. The disadvantages of semi-structured interviews are not only that they take a long time to prepare and implement, but also that the quality of the interview is dependent on the capacity of the researcher to ask, listen, earn trust, and be reflective enough so that there would not be any manipulation in the interview. There also needs to be taken into account my positionality (Novotná et al, 2019). I am in the same socio-demographic category as my informants (I am a 23-year-old student at Charles University). However, I am not of Czech nationality, in contrast with most of my informants.

My aim with the interviews is to be able to compare the informant's responses. Ambivalences in interviews are welcomed rather than pushed away. When throughout the interview there are inconsistencies, tensions, contradictory or unclear information, or a change of opinion of the informant within the interview, I did not refute them but rather

welcomed them, since they can add nuances to the meaning of the interview. It can be the product of misunderstandings, where I need to reflect on myself, or the informant may have new insights in the interview that lead them to a change in opinion. Qualitative interviews have their limits. It is the reflection of the subjective worlds of actors. It is not completely spontaneous, since we do not know what thoughts go on in the heads of respondents when we interview them. People only tell us what they want to tell us (Novotná et al, 2019). For example, in my interviews, it is apparent that people say they feel the pressure to show they are morally responsible and reject practices that are destroying the environment and leading to undignified living conditions, but on the other hand, there might be an attitude-behavior gap, meaning that the people would believe in sustainable clothing, but still buy fast fashion.

2.4. Interview guide

The purpose of my study is to respond to the following research questions:

- *What do “good” clothes mean for young Czech university students of the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University in Prague?*
- *How are “good” clothes related to slow fashion principles for them?*

The insights of my informants, who are students from the faculty of humanities at Charles University, are crucial to responding to these questions. I ensured their anonymity after the interview and gathered and recorded their informed consent at the beginning of each interview.

The informant’s names, genders, ages and backgrounds are summed up in appendix 1.

I formulated the semi-structured interview questions prior to the interviews and asked all interviewees the same questions. The interview questions are divided in the following categories: “understanding “good” clothes”, “attitude-behavior gap”, “predatory hedonism vs. alternative hedonism”, “consumer behavior”, “slow fashion”, “challenges to show fashion”, “ethical production”, “community and local impact” and “balancing style and sustainability”. I chose to create these categories as a help to formulate the empirical part of my research, but I did not tell any of my informants my categories when I interviewed them. Below are the interview questions:

Understanding “good” clothes:

- How do you define “good” clothes and what does it mean to you personally?
- In your opinion, what are the key aspects of “good” clothes, and how do they differ from other clothes?

Attitude-behavior gap:

- What brands are the clothes that you are wearing? Did you buy them new or second-hand? Did you get them as a gift?

Predatory hedonism vs. alternate hedonism

- What are the different reasons you buy new clothes?
- Who or what inspires you to buy new clothes?
- How often do you buy clothes?
- How much money do you spend?

Consumer Behavior:

- Has your fashion consumption behavior changed throughout your life?
- What were you used to paying attention to in the past and what do you pay attention now when choosing clothes?
- How did your parents influence your choice of clothing?

Slow fashion:

- Is the durability of the clothes important to you?
- Can you share examples of brands or items that you have where you prioritize the longevity and durability of the products?
- Do you want all your clothes to be durable or are there clothes where you care more about durability than others?
- How do you maintain the clothes for them to be durable?

- Do you repair or let repair clothes?

Challenges to Slow Fashion:

- What challenges do you perceive to make the clothes durable?

Ethical Production:

- How important is transparency in the production process for you?
- Is fair treatment of workers in the fashion industry a deciding factor for you when buying clothes?

Community and Local Impact:

- Is it important for you to buy locally produced clothes?

Balancing Style and Sustainability:

- Do you believe there is a trade-off between style and sustainability in your experience?
- Do you think there is a trade-off between sustainability and price?

For most interviews, I did the interview in Czech for bigger convenience of the informants, I translated the interview questions. The Czech interview questions are attached in appendix 2, with a comparison of English interview questions. An example of interview Passportization is in appendix 3 and a transcription of an interview is in appendix 4.

2.5. Analysis

In selecting the methodological approach for this qualitative thesis, I recorded interviews with informants deliberately and purposefully. Recording interviews offers several advantages that align with the aims of this study. Firstly, it ensures accuracy and fidelity in capturing the nuances of participants' responses, preventing the loss of valuable data that might occur through reliance solely on note-taking. This fidelity to participants' voices is essential for maintaining the integrity of the qualitative data collected. Additionally, recording interviews allows for in-depth analysis beyond initial impressions, facilitating

repeated review and enabling me to delve into subtleties of language, tone, and context. Moreover, recording interviews provides a transparent record of the research process, enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of findings (Novotná et al, 2019).

In this qualitative thesis, the utilization of coding techniques to analyze interview data serves as a fundamental methodological approach for uncovering patterns, themes, and meanings embedded within participants' narratives. Coding allows for the systematic organization and interpretation of large volumes of qualitative data, that enabled me to identify recurring ideas, concepts, and relationships across interviews. Through an iterative process of coding, themes and categories emerge, I have gotten insights into the experiences, perspectives, and phenomena under investigation. Coding not only structures the analysis but also facilitates the generation of theory grounded in the data, fostering a deeper understanding of the research topic. Additionally, employing coding techniques enhances the reliability and validity of findings by providing a transparent and replicable method for data analysis. The use of coding in this study adheres to established qualitative research principles, promoting rigor, coherence, and richness in the interpretation of interview data (Punch, 2013).

2.6. Description, reflection and evaluation of the research

I started the empirical part by sending a text to some of my classmates, to see if they would be interested in doing the interview. I told them that it would last around 20 minutes and that they would be anonymized. When some of the students accepted being interviewed, I met them individually at the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University. With each of them I recorded their informed consent to partake in the interview. I also told them that they could contact me any time after the interview if there would be a problem, comment or question. I did the first interview with one of my classmates, the timing was respected, and some answers were shorter than others so afterward I reformulated some questions to ask more “how” or “why” or “how important” something is. The second interview was the same day with a friend doing another master's program than mine, who has Chinese roots but who grew up the Czech Republic. I was delighted to find different answers and found both similarities and differences and cultural differences.

The third interview was with a classmate. When I asked her the first question, she told me that since she knew approximately on what topic I was writing my thesis, her answers

might be influenced by that. I thought about it, but decided that I would not hide my thesis topic from my informants. Without going into detail, I would explain to them what the topic of my thesis is, because the informants who did not already know the topic of my thesis always asked me before the interview. I think it is more ethical to let them know that way. The interview lasted double the expected time (about 40 minutes), but it was not a problem for either of us. I just thought about saying to the next informants that the interview might last from 20 to 40 minutes so that they are prepared.

I was a bit worried about more personal questions, like “how much money do you spend on clothes?” and “where are the clothing items that you are wearing from?” but nobody refused to answer these questions during the interview.

The fourth student I interviewed is an anthropology master's student. At the outset, he was worried about being too “reflective” about himself. I think what he meant is that he was worried he would analyze himself according to theories he learned in anthropology, for example, theories about capitalism, the class system, and do the analysis “for me”. Indeed, he did add theoretical concepts like “habitus” in his answers. In the end, I did not mind that since I think it reflects a particular point of view amongst humanities students, which is also valid and shows a subjective perception of clothing consumption. He emphasized the class he came from; he identifies as coming from the working class, saying that it was a significant factor in shaping who he is and what he wears.

This made me think about my position as an interviewer. I am a master's student in Social and Cultural Ecology at the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University. I am in the same Faculty as my informants, sometimes in the same class. However, I come from France. I moved to the Czech Republic at 17 years of age, studied humanities at the Faculty of Humanities in English and learned Czech intensively for a year, and then started studying the master's program in Czech. It might be that my cultural background, the accent with which I speak, and the errors I make while speaking Czech may draw a border I do not see between me and the informants. I also have a different clothing taste than them, which is culturally and economically determined. For example, I sometimes wear a silk scarf, which belongs to the French aesthetic. In my opinion, I see no one else wearing such things often. My style can sometimes be more casual, I even wear outdoor brands like “Patagonia” to university. I have a few second-hand items in my closet at the moment, but most second-hand I own are clothes from my mother or my aunt. Almost none of my clothes were bought

in the Czech Republic because I do not find many clothes that fit my taste, and I also feel that I have just the right amount of clothes and do not need anything new. To me buying clothes is also a family quality time activity. My perspective is both insider - I am a student of the faculty of Humanities of Charles University - and outsider - I grew up in France. I believe it both gives me distance to see what others do in a new light, and also closeness, that in a way, I can relate to them.

I had a few technical problems, for example during the fourth interview, at three-quarters of the interview, it stopped recording. I realized this only after the interview was done. I decided to leave it as it is, as I had enough insights to extract from it and be careful for the next interviews. Another technical problem was working with Atlas.ti for coding. I tried it on university computers and it did not work well for me. Thankfully, my supervisor recommended coding with the software QDA Miner Lite, which worked great for me.

Since the recorder on my phone did not work during the fifth interview either, I started asking the respondents to record on their phones and to send me the recording through a messaging app. I also realized that the question “What challenges do you perceive to make the clothes durable?” was not clear to many participants, so I added: “If there is a hole in your clothes, what do you do with it?”

On the 12th of March, I presented my work to the class and there were some remarks that it would be better to interview more students who are outside of SKE to get a richer diversity of answers while staying in the framework of the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University. I thought about how to approach students from other study programs that I didn't know. I thought about using the snowball technique, meaning, asking people that I already interviewed if they know people from other programs in FHS. A problem would be that if they are friends, they would have the same values and behaviors. Therefore, I decided to use another technique, to have a greater diversity of answers. I went out of my comfort zone and randomly approached strangers in the buffet, who were Ruby, Petr, and Alexandr, all from the Czech bachelor program in Humanities. I also fixed my recording technical problem by downloading a recording app on my smartphone.

When I reached 14 interviews, I realized that I needed a new technique to make sure that I extracted information from the interviews as efficiently as possible. On new interview documents, I highlighted each quote that I added to my analysis to make sure that I have not

forgotten anything. I increased my number of interviews to reach 20 and found that I was reaching theoretical saturation. I reached out to individuals who I found on the campus and found a few in the buffet - Anna and Marek. I also found students outside and got four interviews from them - Rose, Jan, Kevin, and Julian.

2.7. Ethical questions of the research

To maintain ethical standards, informed consent was obtained from all participants that were recorded. I told every informant about the topic of my research, saying it is about clothing consumption and slow fashion. I then told them that they could contact me even after the interview if they had any comments or questions. I then asked them - and it was each time recorded - if they agreed to do the interview. After that, I proceeded with the interview and at the end gave them my contact (Facebook, phone number, or email).

During the interview, I also said that if a question is uncomfortable to answer, for example, how much money they spend on clothes, they can refuse to respond to it. This situation for this particular question only happened once during the research.

Measures were taken to ensure confidentiality and anonymity throughout the research process. I changed all the informant's names both in my interview transcripts and in the thesis and took some measures to make sure that the person would not be recognizable from the interview. For example, one of my informants revealed his political identity and I decided to remove it so that he would not be recognizable.

III. Findings

In this part of the research, I am relating the answers of my informants to the semi-structured interview questions that I presented in the interview guide. I aim to answer the following research questions:

- *What do “good” clothes mean for young Czech university students of the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University in Prague?*
- *How are “good” clothes related to slow fashion principles for them?*

I divided chapters 7 and 8 according to the research questions mentioned above. A qualitative methodology was chosen as it is well-suited to explore the complexities and nuances inherent in social phenomena, allowing for the exploration of multiple perspectives and meanings.

1. What do “good” clothes mean for young Czech university students of the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University?

1.1. The perception of “good” clothes

“Good” clothes are often defined by the informants as a matter of good materials and functional materials, of greater quality and durability than fast fashion. It is also a matter of price, comfort, functionality, style, fit, sentimental value, artistic value and ethical production.

Good materials are the most used qualifier of “good” clothes. Veronika, Wanqiu and Anna both prefer natural fibers over synthetic fibers. The reason for that, according to Veronika, is that she has the feeling that natural fabrics are healthier for the body, and at the same time are degradable, whereas artificial fabrics are not.

Zdeněk also cares about materials, but in a different way. He says:

“I define “good” clothes as clothes that last long, that are comfortable, and help me to walk better, that I feel comfortable in. For example, softer shoes. I differentiate it according to the

quality of the material and on the basis of used technologies during the production of these clothes. For example, clothes that do t-shirts that are hydrophobic shoes that are water resistant, or materials that have a high level of suspension. Quality is according to the material, for example, if the shirt is composed of 100% cotton or when formal shoes are made of real leather. For shirts, it is about the weight of cotton and of course to the touch, that the material is pleasant.”

(Zdeněk, 26)

For Zdeněk, it seems that a choice of good materials both increases the durability of the clothes, as well as the functionality. For example, if a shirt is hydrophobic, it won't show sweating marks. It is also for health reasons. Zdeněk chooses shoes that have a sole that is soft, because one walks better in them. He argues that fast fashion stores have clothing that have bad soles, therefore, he avoids buying shoes from these stores. Marek agrees that functionality of the clothes is an important aspect. In the winter he looks for cotton t-shirts that can feel warmer, for example. We can already see that “good” clothes can be, to my informants, ethically produced - but also of a greater quality, which leads them to avoid fast fashion. In this regard, SKE students and other students agree. Both genders care about the quality and the durability of clothes.

“Good” clothes are often defined in opposition to fast fashion. Robert explains that when he was younger, he would choose clothing from the fast fashion chain Primark. At the time, he could not stand the fabric of the clothes when he was sweating. When he bought what he calls “sustainable” clothes, he found that it was more comfortable. Jennie also agrees that fast fashion is of bad quality. She says when she goes to the fast fashion store H&M she might like a shirt for aesthetic reasons, but soon realizes when she touches the material that it will not warm her up or that it is not functional.

Peter says it succinctly:

““good” clothes are anything that is not fast fashion.”

(Petr, 22)

For most of my informants, durability is very important. Some informants say that to buy clothing, they need it to both like the design and have the clothing last. This is not the

case for everyone. Ruby, for instance, says that if she knows that she likes an item and she can tell it won't last long, she will still buy it. Sophie also has lower expectations for the durability of the clothes she owns, saying that when she has two black shirts and she wears them every day, she does not expect to wear them for ten years. Therefore, she advocates to be realistic with the durability of the clothes. Some informants say they look for clothes that are durable, but are not sure how to tell what is durable or not.

Price is a fundamental factor influencing the choice of clothes. However, avoiding fast fashion can be done on a budget if one buys second-hand. Petr likes second-hand shops where the price is uniform for everything. The price is according to weight only, which can be financially advantageous. If he goes to fast fashion stores, he adds that he does not go there often, then he also looks first at the price. When the clothes are on sale, he says it is an opportunity to save money, there is a bigger choice, there are multiple sections for one type of clothes. He adds that in this way one is environmentally friendly because the clothes are not burned or thrown away.

All informants mentioned that style - the aesthetic aspect of the clothes - is important for "good" clothes. Alice says that she wants to have "cool" clothes that are trendy. Johann says he chooses his clothing according to what makes him attractive. Also, he wants to emulate a certain style of the group he identifies with. He would like to have the look of an anthropologist, saying that they have a specific style.

Some informants emphasize that while style is important, it also has to fit on their body. Petr says that sometimes he likes the clothing item, but it does not fit him, so it will not be a "good" clothing item. He says he has to see it first and then decide if it is good or not. So, finding "good" clothes is a combination of liking the clothing item and having it fit.

Clothing also has a sentimental value. For Alice, "good" clothes are linked also to a special place. She cares not only about what the clothes are, but also where they come from, the atmosphere and story of the store. It seems that there is an emotional link to the store where clothes are bought. To Julian, clothes are an extension of the self and he feels like he has a responsibility towards the clothes. Not only does respecting the clothes mean respecting oneself, but also respecting clothes that are gifts means valuing the bond with the gift giver. The clothing that he has as gifts have a sentimental value to him, he says that it creates a bond between him and the gift-giver. Therefore, the meaning of clothes is not only

about the aspect of the clothes, but also the social context in which they were acquired or received.

Ethical production is a deciding factor for “good” clothes for some of my informants. Sophie says that when she goes for something in particular, for example shoes or jackets, she pays attention to the conditions in which they were made. For other items she usually shops second-hand and therefore does not look at the origin of the clothes. When producers tell a positive story about the conditions of the production of the clothes, the items can be valued even more. Veronika talks about the fact that she likes it when there is a story attached to the clothes -who made it, where, what materials - the story gives clothing a higher value and emotional link. She gives the example of the sweater she was wearing during the interview, saying that it comes from the brand “Babaa”, a sustainable Spanish brand which collects local cotton from local farmers at fair conditions. She adds that it is made in the European Union, in Spain, which she prefers over clothing that was made outside of Europe. For her, “good” clothes also imply that clothes are made ethically and she thinks it is more likely that clothes will be ethically made when they are made in the European Union. A divergent opinion comes from Ruby, who says that feeling good in the clothes is more important than for it to be sustainably produced, saying that if she buys something that is slow fashion and doesn’t like the feeling of it, she won't buy it.

For one of my informants, the artistic value of the clothes makes the clothes “good”. Kevin says that “good” clothes are in accordance with current fashion trends. He is inspired by what is fashionable, what the celebrities he admires wear. He has shirts from top luxury brands, for example Virgil Abloh or Gucci. To him, clothes are a form of art, like paintings. This is why he buys mainly designer clothes. He cares about clothes that have a particular history. His clothes are linked with the subculture, which he belongs to, the music that he listens to. He likes clothes that attract attention and can awaken controversy. He is the only informant wearing luxury items and talking about being influenced by celebrities.

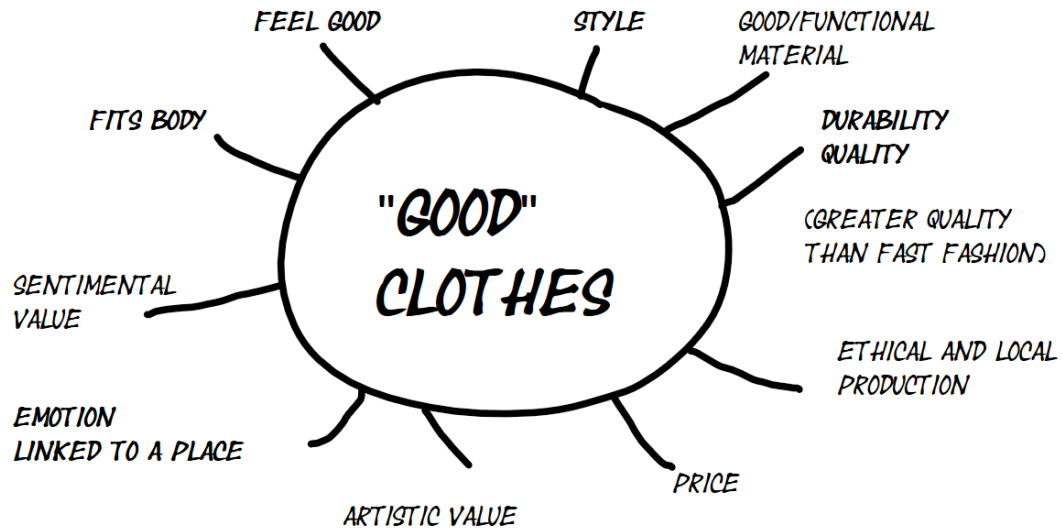


Fig 14. Summary of what “good” clothes are, according to my informants.

1.2. Clothing choice as an expression of identity

Clothing can be considered as an expression of identity. It can also be a reflector of our political identity. It is a rather exceptional case in the sample. Informant Johann makes it clear that his clothing choice is a political statement against corporate capitalism. He wants to avoid wearing suits because they often belong to a group he despises. Clothing also is revealing about the economic situation one is in. Johann talks about having grown up with clothes cheaper than other students, which he perceives as something that makes him different from the rest. He says:

“For me, the political context is important, like subcultures. I have a habitus, I choose clothes that are not extravagant, I don't have branded clothes, for example having “Adidas” on them, I don't like it very much. I wear more things that do not hint at corporate capitalism. I like formal clothes, but I have stereotypes about people in suits. I think these people are “čuraci” (“pissers”), it mustn't always be true, but that is my stereotype. I am active politically, I come from the working class, from a small town. I know that I was clothed worse than my classmates in school because I had cheaper clothes, I think.”

(Johann, 24)

The term *habitus* that Johann uses during the interview comes from Pierre Bourdieu's theory on social class. The main idea is that during primary (childhood, teenage years) and

secondary (adulthood) socialization, the individual acquires social capital. Individuals from the same class will have lifestyles and tastes that are more and more similar, up to creating a “class style” (Bourdieu, 2017). Johann does not have extravagant clothes, which shows he might not want to stand out. For him, not wearing Adidas clothing is a political statement. Wearing logos from transnational corporations would indicate supporting corporate capitalism, and more importantly, signaling it to others. Johann is ambiguous about formal clothes. On the one hand, he likes them, on the other hand, he believes they belong to a social category that he does not agree with, probably the upper class, insulting them as “pissers”. This feeling is reinforced by the fact that he underlines his upbringing as being part of the working class. As a student of anthropology, he also adheres to what he perceives to be the anthropologist subculture fashion style. He argues:

“When you look at anthropologists, you see that they are clothing themselves in a specific way. You can tell the difference between a sociologist and an anthropologist, most of the time, but not always. This is a habitus that is always there, and it is reflected in taste. It is about what kind of impression you make.”

(Johann, 24)

Clothing is thereby, according to Johann, a reflection of class identity, political identity, and professional identity (including being a student in a particular field). No other informant explicitly talked about clothes as being reflectors of a particular political or class identity. However, Petr said that clothing is an expression of his gender identity and personality. He says he buys new clothes if he is ready to show a piece of himself or identity to the world where he is more comfortable dressing in a different way. His identity is also expressed in opposition to his parents. He says that he dresses the opposite way as his parents dressed him growing up:

“When I was younger my mother would buy my clothes. I did not have much choice in it. She was like, “hey these are some clothes, wear them”. There was a set of clothes that I was expected to wear and these were the only ones and my choice was limited. When I grew up and made my own choices I dressed the complete opposite way. When I came here, I started exploring myself and my identity, I would buy clothes to suit that. The more I change, the more I reflect that in my clothes.”

(Petr, 22)

Kevin says his clothes are a reflection of his identity as a part of hip-hop subculture. On the day of the interview, Kevin wore merchandise of the Czech rapper Victor Sheen, one of the most listened to Czech artists he added. His clothing choice is influenced by what celebrities are wearing, so his identity is related to the hip hop subculture. Like Petr, Kevin's clothing style came as a rebellion against his parents. Kevin says that one of his parents did not agree with his clothing choices. With his clothes he tries to respond saying:

“I am from the new generation and that is our style and that is what we present.”

(Kevin, 24)

The relationship between my informant and their parents can also be positive and symbiotic, where the parents support the child's creation of identity and the child trusts their parents. This is the case of Jan who says that his parents listened to his wishes. His mother, in particular, has a feeling for the style he is wearing. In shops she would say: “hey this t-shirt is pretty I like it; it would fit you”. He appreciates the clothing choices his parents made when he was little and looks back on it with fondness. Other informants listen to their parents' opinion later in life after a rebellious phase. Rose says that in her teenage years she tried to find her own style in opposition to what her mother chose for her when she was little - her mother dressed her as a “princess”. However, now she asks her mother for advice because she trusts her to tell the truth about how she looks. Julian learned what is aesthetically satisfying from his father, who is a fashion designer, and it plays a big role in the identity he has today. So, parents have an influence on their children's style and identity. The informants either embrace the parent's taste or rebel against it - it can also be a mix of both.

Many of my informants say that they get inspired by their friends and people they see on the street to build their own style. The inspiration is extended to social media platforms like Instagram or Pinterest.

1.3. Awareness of fast fashion's “crazy” environmental and social impact

The informants realize the harm that fast fashion causes at different moments from various sources. For instance, Alice says that she became aware of this issue thanks to a Slovak social media influencer. She stopped going to fast fashion shops ever since. She says she does not see it as a loss but rather as a gain. When she stopped buying fast fashion, she

formed a better relationship to consumption. In other words, she started only buying an item when she really likes it or needs it. In contrast, in the past shopping was a hobby.

Awareness of the negative aspects of fast fashion led her to change her ways. Wanqiu also learned about the harms of fast fashion through media, in her case “documentaries”, but she separates her reality of shopping these clothes from the reality of how these clothes were produced. She says:

“I don't really think about it actively. When I look at documentaries and stuff, I see and think, “They do that, huh?” But I don't really actively think about it when I am buying clothes.”

(Wanqiu, 24)

According to the sayings of Wanqiu, there can be a disconnect between how we know clothes are made, and how we behave when we want to buy clothes, this form of denial can enable continued use of fast fashion. Ruby has a similar behavior. While she thinks that transparency in the production process of clothes is important, it is not her priority when she buys something. However, she says that for some brands where it is commonly known that the conditions of work are unethical, she will avoid it. She gave the example of the online fast fashion brand Shein.

To other informants, transparency is important. Alexandr says the “crazy” work conditions are unacceptable. To him, the corporations redistribute income to the clothing producers unfairly. He would be ready to invest twice as much for clothing if it would include paying fairly the ones who make the clothes. Robert also uses the word “crazy” to describe the current fashion industry, but from the point of view of the environmental impact. He says he investigated the business model of the fashion industry and came to the conclusion that the globalized transport of clothes is unnecessary and irrational.

Many informants said that they actively try to avoid certain brands that are fast fashion. For example, Zdeněk learned about the negative impacts of fast fashion through a book by Marek Rabij called *Život na míru*. Marek Rabij's *Život na míru* explores the human cost behind the fast fashion industry. In the aftermath of the tragic collapse of the Rana Plaza textile factory in Dhaka in 2013, which claimed the lives of over a thousand people, Rabij went to Bangladesh to investigate the harsh realities of garment production. Through interviews and observations, Rabij exposes the harsh working conditions, child labor, and

exploitation rampant in the garment factories. Since then, Zdeněk says he started avoiding buying clothes from H&M, C&A, and brands from Primark, and Kik.

For some of my informants, there is a compromise to be found between their style and sustainability. Kevin says that he buys shoes from mass production. He admits that to him, style is more important than being sustainable, but it does not prevent him from buying sustainable clothes. For example, in 2016 he wore Adidas shoes that have soles made from recycled plastic. If a brand that fits his style makes durable clothes, he would rather buy from them than from somewhere else. However, style is a priority to Kevin. It has to be something that he likes, that he wants to wear, and that has a cultural and fashion significance.

Alžbeta also learned about the impacts of fast fashion through a book and also points out that the university she is going to might influence her worldview and choices. I do not know exactly what she meant, how the university might influence her worldview and choices. However, students at the Faculty of Humanities might make more ethical choices because of the values that they have (social justice, environmental awareness). Maybe these values existed before entering the school, or maybe these values were acquired when studying.

1.4. Attitude-behavior gap

Most of informants say that buying sustainably and avoiding fast fashion is a priority. However, when I ask them what they are wearing, often fast fashion items are part of the outfit:

“My sweater is the most expensive thing I have on me today, it is a relatively recent find, it is from the brand “Babaa”, a sustainable Spanish brand which collects local cotton from local farmers and I think at fair conditions, it is in the European Union, it is produced in Spain so this sweater is part of a sustainable closet. My overalls, I wear them from 15 years of age, they are from Zara. The T-shirt is from Mango. It is a limited edition, a collaboration with an artist. My jacket is also from Mango, so I also buy clothes in fast fashion stores. I try to limit my consumption more and more but the pieces that I already have I just wear them. The jacket I have is 5 years old. Everything is moving in the timeframe of years. My shoes are from Fila, one can tell that they are not the newest. I will have them for 6 years now.”

(Veronika, 26)

Veronika justifies that she is wearing fast-fashion clothes, saying that she has already been wearing them for a long time. In the past, she would buy fast fashion but now she only buys slow fashion for new items. She argues that while she has fast fashion clothes, she does not discard them and tries to wear them for a long time. So, wearing fast fashion that she bought a long time ago is seen as more sustainable to her.

Alžbeta says that when she feels pressure to buy something - meaning, when she feels she really needs it and quickly - she will rather not think about the ethical aspects of clothing production, such as the working conditions of those who make clothes. Her argument is based on the urgency of time: "I don't have time to deal with those things". However, she is contradictory, because she also says that it is something "[she] thinks about every time [she] shops". She also argues that when she buys clothes she would "at least feel good about [herself]" by buying second-hand. Rose agrees, saying that when she is pressed for time and buys fast fashion, she doesn't punish herself for doing it. However, otherwise, she tries to buy second-hand.

For Alexandr, buying from fast fashion stores when the clothes are not on sale is a way to be environmentally friendly, because the clothes are not burned or thrown away.

The only informants who are not wearing second-hand clothes at all are Jan, Kevin and Julian. Jan was wearing fast fashion items (from Zara, H&M). Kevin is wearing designer brands (Nike, Levis, Carhartt, Swarovski, Hugo Boss, Tiffany & Co). Julian is wearing clothes that he bought in Italy (Clayton, Marina Militare). They all, however, expressed an interest to have a sustainable fashion consumption by buying clothes that they would wear for a long time.

1.5. Ethical fashion: not an easy pick

According to some of my informants, it is difficult to find ethically made sustainable clothes and be sure that they are ethically made and durable. Some informants choose clothing thinking they will be more durable than others and end up disappointed. Alice, for example, argues that sometimes she buys a clothing item that she thinks is supposed to be long-lasting, and it ends up changing shape. She says it confuses her and it makes her feel helpless because she becomes unsure about the ability of her judgment to discern what is durable. This also applies to ethical production. Zdeněk argues that it is difficult to find

sustainable clothes because brands do “greenwashing”. He says that transparency in the production process should be one of the most important types of information when buying clothes, but for many brands it is difficult to know if really, the production is ecological, if the people who made the clothes have an adequate salary. Robert gives a concrete example of greenwashing with the brand Pinguin. He says that the brand claims it is fully Czech, but there is a journalist that investigated the brand and it was revealed that the clothes were produced in Asia. This disappointed him and made him distrust claims of sustainability for all brands.

Johann argues that the main problem is the system, saying that we can't have transparent ethical clothing until the system of capitalism is changed. To him, in our current economy, true transparency is hardly possible. Sophie agrees that transparency in the clothing industry is impossible because if the brands were transparent about how the clothes were made, everybody would stop buying from them. If they say they employ people, even children, for no pay and they intoxicate them so people are sick, people will never buy the clothes, says Sophie.

One could think that buying second-hand would remove concerns about ethical production and sustainability, but some informants think otherwise. Wanqiu argues that cheap non-qualitative clothes “from the Chinese market” can be found in second-hand stores, and therefore it might be the case that fast fashion is sold in the second-hand market:

“When I buy second-hand clothes, in my mind they are a bit more durable already because they are second-hand, so they last. But it is not always actually true, right, because they might sell something that they bought from a Chinese market, and they discard it because no one liked it. Because you have so much choice, right, so you can pick out... What you don't like you can just put in the second-hand.”

(Wanqiu, 24)

So, according to Wanqiu, clothing in second-hand stores may have never been worn before, and can actually be old pieces from the Chinese market, or even fast fashion stores. Thereby, one still supports the fast fashion industry since they get some money from selling the clothes to second-hand stores. However, clothes are given a second life, which can reduce waste and be positive. The question is if these types of clothes should be produced at all.

Sandra argues for drawing “a border” when consuming second-hand, saying one can never be 100% clean. She says that there needs to be a certain border, not only for clothes but for other sectors as well. She thinks we can try as much as possible to be ethical socially and environmentally, but she thinks that it has its limits, we can't be completely clean. That is what she means with the border: she doesn't want to support fast fashion, and that is why she is going to second-hand stores, but she doesn't control where the clothes that are in second-hand are coming from.

Alexandr has an opinion that differs from the rest of my informants. He said that one of the rings he wore was from AliExpress. He justifies buying from this kind of shop by saying that if he buys it in a shop for 290 czk the person that makes it will have the same small amount of money as when he buys it for 20 czk in a fast fashion shop like AliExpress. If he pays 290 czk on the ring, he says that it just gives out more to the corporation and the fast fashion business. The quality is the same, what changes is just the branding. So, according to Alexandr, the pay given to the workers who produce the items we wear will be the same if we buy them cheap or more expensive when it is part of the fast fashion industry.

While local brands are often considered as more ethical, some informants find them inconvenient, thereby making local shopping a difficult pick. Alexandr says that there can be a problem of convenience when it comes to local brands. He says he ordered clothing from a Czech designer online and the delivery was less professional than to order it from a shop on the other side of the world. However, he reflects on his experience and adds that he thinks it is exceptional, people have different experiences.

Some informants do not have ethical production or sustainability as their first concern when buying clothes. For one of them, what matters most is the artistic value of clothes. Keven says he cares about the environmental and social impact of fast fashion, but what he is most concerned about is stealing clothing designs. To him, fast fashion stores like Zara, H&M, and Shein steal designs from artists. He gives the example of the fast fashion brand Shein, who stole” a shoe design from Balenciaga. In this regard, he says he pays attention to every piece of clothing he is wearing. He also mentions he thinks about animal rights - he is the only informant who mentioned animal rights in the interviews. He also mentions that he is not judgmental towards people who wear fast fashion since “some people don't have 50 000 czk for clothes".

1.6. Second-hand and swapping as a guarantor of sustainability

For many respondents, buying second-hand is a guarantee of sustainability and removes the weight of thinking about how the clothing was made, because it has already been worn by another person. Michael argues that he doesn't pay attention to how clothing was produced because he buys second-hand and doesn't care how it was produced five to ten years ago. It is the same for Sophie. She argues that since she gets clothes from second-hand sources, she doesn't look at where it comes from because since she bought it second-hand, she did not support the brand and how it was made. However, she still looks if it is not from Shein because, according to her, there are some toxic chemicals in the clothes. Petr agrees, saying that if it is new, he will look at where it is coming from but he says he usually doesn't buy new items, so he usually doesn't research that. He adds that even though second-hand clothes are not ethically sourced he gives a second life to it. It is being used as long as possible instead of it being thrown out. Buying second-hand removes the guilt of fashion consumers buying pre-worn fast fashion.

Sandra at some point almost completely stopped buying clothes from fast fashion and started buying clothes second-hand or swapping with her flat mates. She says:

“I am wondering when was the last time I bought clothes in a fast fashion store. It was a couple of years ago. Sometimes I buy fast fashion underwear, but I at least like to try some Czech producers. I am a little bit into ethics, but at the same time to be honest I am not spending so much time on ethics, just doing some super basic research. So, the source of my clothes is the second-hand store, my friends. For example, this hat [that she is wearing during the interview] I found in my flat [she got it from her flat mates] and I am wearing it. This is the standard for me. I don't go to fast fashion stores...”

(Sandra, 24)

During the interview, her hat, pants, shoes, and hoodie came from swapping with friends or partners or second-hand sources. She says that she lives in a flat with flat mates and when they tidy the flat, they put all the clothes in a particular place, and these clothes are free to take. That was the case with the shoes she is wearing. The T-shirt is from a second-hand store in Košice. The hoodie is from her partner. She says her partner got it from his parents.

All my informants are wearing clothes from various sources, often second-hand, or from a family member, flat mate, or partner, from sustainable brands and also fast fashion. Two of my informants did not buy second-hand clothes. It was the case with Ruby. She says her hair band is from her mother. Else, her pants were from Zalando (an online clothing retailer), her jacket from Zara (fast fashion brand), and her T-shirt also. Her sweater was from Monkey (fast fashion brand). She says she is not interested in buying local clothes because financially it is difficult for her - it is more expensive. Concerning fair production conditions, she says she avoids brands like Shein (fast fashion retailer) because of its obvious breach of fair working conditions, but otherwise, it is not her priority when she buys something. Jan also was wearing fast fashion clothes only, Zara and New Yorker amongst others.

1.7. Reasons why one buys new clothes

Many informants argue that they buy new clothes when old ones are worn out. Petr, Zdeněk, and Jan highlight the fact that a change of body can be the reason to buy new clothes so that the clothing fits to the body. Petr, Sophie, and Alexandr say that a change of season can trigger buying new clothes. Jennie says that if she feels cold in her clothes, she will be influenced to buy new warmer clothes. Robert says that faults in old clothes push him to buy new clothes. For example, if there is a hole in his clothes. However, he says he did not buy anything new for a long time. He has clothes that he wears over and over.

Many of my informants say that they buy clothes more out of want than need. Jennie says that she changes up clothes quite a lot. After an exam, she looks at Vinted (an online second-hand shop) to treat herself. Buying clothes is linked with pleasure. Sophie is one of the rare informants who says that she buys new clothes only when she needs them. Yet, it is important to differentiate the word “buying” from the word “acquiring”, because she will still acquire clothes for fun when she can get them for free or swapping. Yet again, acquiring clothes brings pleasure, it is spending money on them that can be a limitation. Kevin says he buys new clothes because he likes to buy new clothes. At the moment his closet is not older than one year. To him, everything should be new apart from the clothing that has sentimental value. Therefore, there is a kind of hedonism linked with buying clothes, that my informants satisfy in various ways.

When it comes to inspiration for clothes, most informants say that they try to fit their style and get inspired by what their friends are wearing or what is worn on social media. Jennie says that if something looks good on the people she sees, it is likely for her to want it too. Anna says she is inspired by what she sees on social media and by her friends. Kevin says that runway shows inspire him, like those of Louis Vuitton or Balenciaga, that are available on the internet. Inspiration for new clothing can also come from an impulse, and emotion. Alexandr also says that his mood is a factor that influences him to buy clothes. It is the emotion that appears when he sees a second-hand store and decides to go there. In his case, it is not anything planned. He says he tends to buy things impulsively.

Some informants like Robert say that no person inspires them to buy new clothes, at least the color of the clothing inspires them to buy it. He is the only person who has this opinion.

1.8. Predatory hedonism and alternative hedonism

In the theoretical part of my research, I talked about predatory hedonism and alternate hedonism. According to Roubal and Wawrosz (2020), hedonism is about wanting an item here and now, for instantaneous gratification, and alternative hedonism is more focused on long-term well-being and delayed gratification. My informants were talking about how when younger, it was a “hobby” for them to go shopping with their mother or by themselves. Alice says that when she was at the end of elementary school and high school buying was a hobby that she never really liked. Interestingly, while it is a hobby that is supposed to bring pleasure, Alice does not like hobby shopping and says she is happier now with buying only when she really wants or needs an item. However, she still changes clothes because she follows fashion trends. She says that she is influenced by trends and she wears what she feels is cool. She wants to buy something that is in fashion but at the same time, functionality is important to her. She buys what she feels she lacks; what she feels she needs to exchange for a new item. Therefore, she may have shifted from predatory hedonism to alternative hedonism.

Wanqiu is different in her shopping behavior. She argues that she goes out to buy a new item when she feels like she has not gone shopping in a while. This means that she does not go buy something only when she needs new clothes, but maybe also because shopping is a hobby to her and she would feel like something is lacking if she has not bought something

for a longer period of time. However, Alice and Wanqiu say that they go shopping at the same frequency and spend the same amount of money on one shopping spree:

“(I buy clothes) once every two weeks. Right now, I am buying overalls online for my new job. (I spend) usually 500 czk, if I really like it up to 1000 czk on something.”

(Wanqiu, 24)

“(I go shopping) twice a month. (I spend) around 500 czk for one purchase.”

(Alice, 26)

It is interesting to note that while Wanqiu and Alice explain their shopping behavior differently, and that it seems like Alice would buy less because she said she has built a more intentional shopping behavior, they end up spending about the same amount of money and time on clothes.

Sandra argues that switching from fast fashion to second-hand fashion leads to a change that I would interpret as from predatory hedonism to alternate hedonism. When shopping fast fashion, one can buy what one wants whenever one wants (given one has the money but is usually cheaper than other types of clothes). With second-hand clothes, one has to sometimes delay gratification and wait for particular items to come, which could be considered as alternative hedonism. Sandra says that if one is used to buying stuff in fast fashion stores, it might be hard in the beginning to find the things that one wants. If one would like a specific type of skirt, one can buy it in the fast fashion store more easily. In a second-hand store, one has to wait for it to appear.

In a similar vein, Veronika argues that she waits to buy clothes and “tries not to hurry”. Concretely, it can be a matter of months where she waits. While she waits, she still buys more often than some of the men that I interview, who would buy clothes once a year:

“I buy something because I like something because I find value in it, but I try to not buy anything frequently or in a hurry, I try to wait, it can be for a month, if I still like it and then I still think about if I buy it, because if I stop liking it or if I truly do not need it... it goes through a net.”

(Veronika, 26)

Veronika uses the “net” metaphor to highlight how she sorts out clothes that she wants from clothes that she does not want. In order to be sure that she will wear the clothes long-term and really value them, she waits and sees if it is not just an impulse. She thereby makes a more tempered decision, and also, probably has the opportunity to look forward to the clothes, increasing anticipation.

Zdeněk argues that sustainable clothing should be outside of trends. He says that it should never get out of fashion. The word “never” is quite extreme, since over the centuries, from antiquity up to the Middle Ages until now, fashion changed and clothes also do not last that long, but the word “never” highlights that sustainable fashion should be on another level than fast fashion. It should have a timeless quality. Veronika agrees, saying:

“I think you can have style; it depends on what your style is, and at the same time be sustainable. The only way it does not go hand in hand is that department stores produce a lot of collections, and many trends, and yes, if I had to respond to the trends, then I would say that I am not stylish. I have my own style and it is not the one that came out one week ago or one month ago, but otherwise, I think people can look good and wear sustainable clothing, for sure.”

(Veronika, 26)

In the interviews one can observe some differences in the frequency of buying clothes and the price one is ready to invest in it (Fig 15).

	gender	name	frequency of buying clothes	price investment on one shopping day
1	male	Kevin	every month	T-shirt until 10 000 czk, for coats or pants 30 to 40 000 czk. For shoes 50 000 czk.
2	female	Veronika	once in two months	up to 5000 czk
3	male	Marek	once in two months	500 czk in second hands but 5000 czk for a jacket
4	female	Sophie	once in two months	60 czk for a shirt and max 5000 czk for a jacket
5	female	Wanqiu	twice a month	500 czk up to 1000 czk
6	female	Sandra	once or twice per month	500 czk up to 1000 czk
7	female	Alice	twice a month	500 czk
8	female	Alžbeta	once a month	1000 czk
9	male	Michael	once or twice a month	around 500 czk
10	female	Rose	1 in 4 months usually.	Max 3000 czk
11	female	Ruby	once a month, 2 to 3 pieces	not more than 700 czk
12	male	Jan	once half year	2 500 to 4 000 czk
13	male	Zdeněk	once a year	3000 to 4000 czk
14	male	Alexandr	4 times a year	300 czk in second-hand, maximum 1000 czk
15	male	Robert	once a year, maximally twice	around 1000 czk
16	male	Julian	every few month 2-3 months	“doesn’t deal with the price” but a “normal” price
17	male	Petr	not often	maximum 1500 czk usually not more than 400 czk
18	male	Johann	once a year	would rather not say
19	female	Jennie	it depends	5 000 czk for designer clothes
20	female	Anna	not very often, not every week	200 or 300 czk maximum.

Fig 15. Frequency of buying clothes and price investment (for one shopping day) from my informants differentiated by gender.

I have data from 15 informants about the money they spend on clothes, I do not have specific enough data from 5 other informants about the frequency of buying clothes and the amount of money spent on clothes. I felt like those students were uncomfortable with giving more precise information, or maybe they did not know how much they spend exactly. Therefore, I did not ask further. While the quantity of the data is insufficient to be representative, we can notice that the highest amount of money spent on clothes is higher

than 100 000 czk, which represents 1 informant: Kevin. For the rest of informants, the maximum investment in clothes should not be more than 30 000 czk.

1.9. Anti-consumption

Sandra, whose clothing is mostly second-hand, swapped, and gifts, also advocates for a reduction in consumption. Even if the sources of her clothes are sustainable, for instance second-hand, she argues that sustainability does not end there. It is also a matter of not overconsuming. She says that after she discovered the second-hand store world, she was excited because it is cheap and she could buy a lot of things, but later she realized that just because it is cheap and more ethical than fast fashion, it doesn't mean that she has to buy everything. She is trying to be more conscious of what she wants to buy. If she would really use the item, or if it would just be in her wardrobe. According to her, it feels wasteful. For example, if she buys a T-shirt from a second-hand store and has it in her wardrobe, it means that there is no one else that can use it. She is trying to lower her consumption. She says she doesn't want to raise consumption for no reason.

Anti-consumption is reflected also in the way we shop. For example, Zdeněk does not look at stores when he is out and about. He does not go window-shopping (in French the expression is *lèche-vitrine*), which means looking at things in shop windows, but not buying anything. He first feels a need for clothing, then chooses a store, and purposefully goes to that particular store. He says that when he has a need, he purposefully goes to a particular store where he can find it.

1.10. Growing up: from fast fashion to sustainable fashion

Multiple informants argued that their clothing buying behavior changed from their teenage years into adulthood. For example, Zdeněk as a teenager was fascinated by the low prices of fast fashion and habitually bought clothes there. He says that before, he surely did not look at the quality, technology and sustainability of production. Earlier it was mainly about what he liked, and what he thought would fit him. He did not even look at brands, he looked primarily at the price. He shifted to second-hand because of the price and the variety of clothes that they have. He says he was looking for a particular look of clothes, for example, flannel or jeans. There was a bigger choice, and mainly a convenient price. A similar case is

Marek, who in the past would buy new fast fashion clothes and now more second-hand or outdoor clothes.

Jennie says that when she was in 6 or 7th grade, she would go with her friends to Vaclavské Naměstí and buy clothes from H&M and Zara. She was regularly buying “really bad quality items”. Now she changed and thinks about if she really needs something, if it is worth it. She thinks about the ratio of quality/price. While Jennie talks about the quality aspect of the clothes, Sophie highlights the moral aspect of buying fast fashion, she says that similarly, when she was young, she would go shopping with friends. She liked it. She says:

“When I was 14-15, I did not know what I was doing.”

(Sophie, 20)

But now that she knows where the clothes come from, she doesn't buy fast fashion at all. She adds that for 12 years her body did not change, she has had the same height, so she accumulated a lot of clothes. She believes she doesn't need more because she doesn't grow out of it. She doesn't buy unless she truly needs it.

Another factor that was important for some informants before was that the clothing is from particular fast fashion brands. Alexandr, up to 15 to 16 years old, was mainly interested in branded clothes. He says his parents influenced him to buy branded clothes. According to them, “good” clothes are only branded clothes, the rest is fine, but not what you would wear in a public setting. It did not make sense to him once he realized the impact of fast fashion and did research about fast fashion and this issue.

Some informants would go out of their way for fast fashion in the past, and change towards sustainable fashion later. Robert says that in the past, he would go to Primark in Dresden with his friends. It did not exist yet in the Czech Republic, so they went on purpose to Dresden for cheap clothes. When he got older and got interested in sustainability he went away from it. He started to get interested in more sustainable fashion. He started going to second-hand stores. In the past, he would pay attention to the price, so that it was not expensive. Now, his focus is also qualitative material.

For all my informants, it is the case that parents, especially mothers, chose the clothing for them as a child and might do it still now, for some part. For instance, Wanqiu

wears the same shoes as her mother, so that they can match together. Wanqiu sometimes takes the opportunity to acquire new clothes, asking her mother to buy them.

Parents can influence the shift from fast fashion to sustainable fashion, especially as my informants were teenagers. Sandra's change towards sustainable fashion came at around the same time as her mother's change towards second-hand clothes. She says:

“When I started to think about fashion and the kind of clothes I wear, in the early teenage years, like 10, 11, we were going shopping with my mother. It was a thing that we were shopping in the fast fashion stores. Also, I remember, at some point I was excited for brands, such as New Yorker or Tally Weil, where things were cheaper, but the quality was not so good. At some point, my mom said she did not want to go into these stores because the clothes were not high quality. You can buy a lot but it won't last. I don't know if it was after I changed my consumption or before, but my mom also started to buy stuff from second-hand stores. Not all of them, but the majority. At some point, when my younger sister was born, 8 years ago, she would buy clothes for her in the second-hand store because even if the clothes would last long the kid grows all the time. I feel like the percentage of clothes my mom buys from fast fashion is a bit higher than it used to be three years ago. But still being conscious about impacts of fast fashion.”

(Sandra, 24)

As we can see, Sandra's mother had an influence in Sandra's fashion consumption behavior. They stopped going to some fast fashion clothing stores together because the clothing wouldn't last. Sandra says she doesn't know who was first of the two to buy in second-hand stores, but they both shifted to second-hand.

Alice had a similar shift from fast fashion to second-hand and slow fashion, but not her mother. She says that her parents are diametrically different. Her father wears a white shirt and jeans every day and her mother love shopping. Her mother has a lot of clothes that she doesn't wear. She buys a lot, but wears the same items. Alice says that she tries not to be like her mother. In contrast, her father has a quite sustainable attitude, he does not care about fashion, only functionality. She says she has something of both of them and tries to balance it.

Parents can encourage sustainable fashion consumption. Sophie says that her parents don't buy many clothes. They buy items that are more expensive but that they will wear for a long time. They also wear items that they acquired 30 years ago. Some of the clothes are passed down to the children, including Sophie. In the case of Veronika, her mother is said to have a "timeless style" that she now wants to adopt. She reflects back on the time when she was a child and argues that her mother dressed her really well, with a lot of taste. At puberty, she would buy whatever she wanted in fast fashion stores and around 20 had a change of heart. She now goes back to the style her mother has:

"When I was a kid, my mom dressed me and my mom had a great taste. Now as an adult, I really value that. It inspires me. When I was a teenager I would make crazy choices, I regret that she did not correct me more. She gave me absolute freedom to buy what I wanted to buy and wear what I wanted. It was necessary to go through this evolution but some pictures are crazy. My mom has a timeless style, she pays attention to quality, neutral colors so that I would fit with the closet, so my style is in the same spirit."

(Veronika, 26)

In opposition with Veronika and Sophie, Zdeněk does not particularly appreciate the clothes his parents choose for him, that he periodically receives as gifts without his permission. He says that a courier rings his bell and tells him that a package comes from Zalando. He says "unfortunately", he cannot influence it. Since the clothing is a gift, Zdeněk feels a moral obligation to appreciate the clothes and not refuse them, even though he does not always like them. Alžbeta has a similar experience, saying that her parents pushed her towards greater consumption. She says that when she was little her parents would buy her everything that she wanted. In certain cases, her mother was annoyed with her if she opposed buying something that she finds fitting. Therefore, Alžbeta says that her parents influenced her to buy a lot of clothes.

Wanqiu also shifted from fast fashion to second-hand as she started dressing herself independently, and was confronted with her parents not understanding why she buys second-hand. She says that most of my life before she would wear whatever her mother bought her. When she started to buy her own clothes, she started to think about sustainability. Her friends started to buy second-hand so she was more open to it. In contrast, her parent's statement asked her:

“Why don't you buy new clothes if you can afford to buy new clothes?” “it's not about that”, I told them...”

(Wanqiu, 24)

It seems that Wanqiu's parents think that second-hand clothes are for people who cannot afford new clothes. Wanqiu does it for sustainability reasons - “the issue” - also because it is trendy and she enjoys shopping second-hand with friends. Julian's parents have a similar opinion. For his parents, second-hand fashion is something that “is not clean, because they pay a lot for the quality”. Julian has never worn second-hand clothes, but it interests him.

It seems like fathers and mothers have a different influence on their children. Fathers are buying clothes less and are caring about them less. However, they can still buy clothes for their children, as in Sandra's case. She says regarding her dad, that they never went shopping together. In other words, go together through the clothes, try them on, and have him comment on how she looks. This is solely an activity she would do with her mother. However, she says her dad likes shopping, because his love language is giving gifts. In her teenage years when she would go to the shopping center with her parents and she would want to buy something, her father would buy for her. In contrast with her mother though, he never started liking second-hand stores. He would rather go to outdoor fashion stores.

An outlier is the case of Julian's father, who is a fashion designer and has a bigger influence on Julian's clothing style than other fathers do for my informants. Julian says that his father has 50 pairs of shoes. As a family they make fun of him, that he, instead of buying beer, buys new shoes. His father sometimes sends him new clothes and has a feeling for what looks good on him and what doesn't. So, in Julian's case, his father's interest in fashion shaped his style more than other fathers.

Some of my informants argue that parents did not really have an influence on their current fashion choices. Robert says since his 15 to 16 years he dresses himself. Kateřina says her parents did not influence her. When she decided she did not want them to buy her clothes, she started to buy clothes for herself. She adds that she always had a word when she was younger.

1.11. Is sustainable fashion necessarily more expensive?

Among my informants there seems to be a consensus that newly made sustainable clothes are more expensive. Zdeněk argues that it is more expensive, because under the concept “sustainable” implies fair salaries for workers and that the products did not travel far. Since we live in a richer part of the world, the one that produces the clothes has a higher salary, and the materials will be more expensive. Sustainable clothes will be more expensive, but, according to Zdeněk, it is a fair price. He adds that if the true cost was in fast fashion, then it would not be fast fashion anymore, because people would not buy that fast. There would be a bigger motivation to change the system. Robert agrees, saying that “there has to be a million things” that have to be fulfilled for an item of clothing to be of quality and sustainable and that it therefore cannot be cheap.

Zdeněk argues that he is ready to pay a higher price for items produced sustainably, but if they do not fully fulfill the sustainability criteria, he would rather not invest in that brand. He says that if a brand is local, and made out of sustainable fabrics, then he is ready to invest more money in it. If the brand pays well the workers but uses unsustainable materials, or on the contrary, it has sustainable materials but is produced in third world countries, then he would not be ready to buy it at a higher price, because with that money he would still support the industry. Julian also says he prefers investing in more quality clothes. Marek agrees, saying that he likes the local Czech brand Tilak, but says he cannot afford a jacket from that brand at the moment.

Petr agrees that when clothing is ethically sourced and ethically made, they are really expensive. He adds that it's more for people who are not students. He explains that usually, sustainable items are more expensive because they are not using the capitalist model of trying to exploit as much labor for the most amount of money possible and if they don't it shows in the price. Unless it's something handmade, like upcycling. To Petr, usually, upcycling is not as expensive as new ethically sourced clothes. Alexandr disagrees. He gives the example of Recycle Store in Prague, where they are misusing the recycling idea. The materials they use are bought in second-hand stores. The people take half a shirt and make a crop top out of it for 2 500 czk. They “transform their innocent idea of sustainability into a business”, according to Alexandr. When it comes to local designers he thinks such a business model is ridiculous.

Ruby thinks that sustainable clothes are more expensive at the moment. However, she believes that the price of these types of clothes will go down. She says that if we all buy sustainable clothes, it will become cheaper.

Financial limitation is one of the reasons why some of my informants buys fast fashion. Jan says that to him, sustainability is one thing, style is another, but then there is the financial aspect, what one can afford and what not. If he really needs clothes then he will buy fast fashion. But if he has the ability to choose something that is more sustainable, then he will choose the more sustainable clothes. At the same time, it has to fit his style. Rose agrees, she says that most of her money is her own and she can't afford new sustainable clothes. However, she does buy second-hand clothes, in contrast with Jan.

One of the solutions to the high price of sustainable clothes are not only second-hand clothes but also hand-made ones. Anna says her grandmother sews, and her mother sews herself almost all the clothes she has. Anna herself has a lot of sewn clothes. She sees it as economical, when one looks at how much the fabric costs and how much the final clothing item costs.

2. How are “good” clothes related to slow fashion principles for them?

In this chapter, I respond to the second research question about the intersection of “good” clothes and slow fashion principles. I explore if durability is a priority, then if durability is more important for some clothes rather than others, then if durability and style are compatible. After that I discuss slow fashion behaviors such as caring for the clothes through wash and repair and gender difference regarding repairing, and how my informants repurpose clothes to give them a second life.

2.1. Durability: a priority?

My informants agree that durability is important. One of the main reasons is to save money. Michael says that he doesn't have the money to spend on new clothes all the time. He tries to buy clothes that last long, because he wants to have them for a long time. He gives the example of buying a down jacket for which he will be ready to invest more money in it. He tries to buy clothes that fit with what he already has. Marek agrees, he says that the common opinion is that fast fashion is cheap and sustainable fashion is expensive. But according to him, fast fashion can be so addictive that one will buy more and more. One will like the clothes less and less and will like to change the clothes often, sell it on Vinted, and the cycle continues. So, the ones who buy fast fashion do not spend less money, on the contrary. Rose says that the more she invests in clothes, the more she expects them to be durable:

“Durability is according to the price to me. The more money I invest in clothes, the more I expect it to last long. If I give out 50 czk for a t-shirt I enjoy wearing it during one summer, and if it doesn't last longer then I will be grateful that I had it and that it brought me joy. When I pay 1 500 czk, I want to have it for a few years in my closet, and I want to like it during those years. The more expensive the clothes are, the more I think about if I am going to buy it. If I buy something for 30 czk and I think it is great. If I bought something for 1 500 and wore it 3 times I would be annoyed. The more it is expensive, the more I think about it.”

(Rose, 23)

Alexandr adds that durability is important for him and he would like his t-shirts to last minimally 2 or 3 years. Jan agrees and wants the clothing to last beyond three years at least.

Durability is linked with the quality of materials, according to Zdeněk. He says that the quality of the materials is very important. Before, in his teenage years he would not consider it as so important. He would buy fast-fashion clothes and saw that the clothing would fall apart. He also got experience from a job he had in a clothing shop. It is there that he learned how to make sure what weight of cotton the t-shirts he has. He also looked into stores where more qualitative cotton is produced, and brands that do it from a better cotton. He remembers that typically Reebok and Puma would make more qualitative cotton shirts than other brands. It might have changed, he says, but at the time they were made out of Egyptian cotton. He also identified that a local brand used Egyptian cotton, namely the brand called Citizen. He says that they produce clothes in the Czech Republic and Slovakia and they have a hydrophobic quality. He appreciates this aspect because one does not have sweat stains. Even though he does not buy shirts from this brand, he states it as an example of what a good t-shirt should be like.

With regards to the quality of the material, some of my informants underline the fact that “natural” fabrics are somehow better than “synthetic” fabrics. Veronika says that she looks at material composition. For example, it is important to her that there are no synthetic fibers and artificial fibers, because she has the feeling that natural fabrics are healthier for the body, and at the same time are degradable, whereas plastic “things” are not. Wanqiu agrees, saying that good materials make clothes durable. She argues that on the one hand, when it is made of natural fabric clothing might last longer. On the other hand, synthetics are quite durable too but are not that comfortable because they are not that breathable.

It seems like Veronika and Wanqiu prefer natural fabrics, not necessarily for the perceived durability of it but rather because it is “healthier for the body” and “comfortable” and “breathable”. Veronika sees it is an advantage that natural fabrics are degradable in contrast to synthetic fibers. Wanqiu says that both natural and synthetic fibers are durable.

Robert says durability is important because thanks to it he doesn't need to change up the clothes. To him, there are two categories of clothes - for the city and for going out in nature. When he goes outdoors it is more important to have quality clothes. He packs one or

two t-shirts for one week so that they can “breathe”. It is important that it lasts and that it is quality material, because one can walk a lot more and feel comfortable at the same time. For him, quality outdoor brands are Patagonia, Zajo, and Maloja. He adds that there is a certainty that these are not cheap off-brands. It does not mean that branded clothes are necessarily of greater quality, but he has certainty that these are.

Second-hand clothes are not necessarily more durable. While second-hand clothing is popular among my informants, Alžbeta argues that unfortunately, second-hand clothes might not last long and that they often come from fast fashion stores. She says that at the moment, she would rather invest in things because it annoys her when she likes an item of clothing and it falls apart. She adds that often she buys something, for example on Vinted, and even if it is often cheap and it is not a qualitative brand, she will still buy it. While it annoys her that the clothing falls apart, she still buys it, which might seem contradictory.

2.2. Are style and durability compatible?

Style and durability are compatible according to Michael, who likes workwear. Workwear is a particular style linked to particular values. It is inspired by people who do physical work outside (construction work, lumberjacks, and the like). Brands that do workwear, according to him, are Carhart and Dickies. The clothing needs to be functional, durable, resistant, and practical. It has become fashionable according to Michael, therefore slow fashion - durable clothing - can be attractive and fashionable. Marek also says he wears outdoor clothes for town. However, to him, outdoor clothes are not that pretty in terms of design, but the functionality is good. To create a pretty outfit, he says it fits to mix outdoor clothes with another style. The very colorful outdoor clothes are not exactly his style.

Petr says he has seen many styles that are sustainable. In his opinion, bad style is when it's not sustainable, when it is fast fashion. Anna agrees, saying that she prefers vintage styles. Veronika is attracted to timeless styles. Alexandr says that sustainability can develop new styles. To him, second-hand stores open people up more to different styles, in comparison with fast fashion where there are, for instance, only blue and red items. One can discover a lot of interesting items that one had no idea one could wear. New styles are developing.

Robert thinks that sustainable brands can become stylish:

“Patagonia works like that. The original idea was to sell clothes for mountaineers and for tourists. But now, when people see a shirt from Patagonia, they like it because it is a famous brand. Maybe, sustainability is secondary. The brand goes first, it looks good. When it is a good sustainable brand, when it looks good on people and others like it, people buy it and at the same time support sustainability.”

(Robert, 24)

It seems like sometimes aesthetics are more important than durability. This is the case for Ruby. She says that when she likes an item and she can tell it won't last long, she will still buy it. She adds that in most cases she cares about the quality of the clothes, but can make exceptions. Keven says he comes from an economic milieu where there was not a lot of money. In the past he paid attention that the clothes would not fall apart, that they would last long. Kevin says that from the moment he made his own money, he paid less attention to durability. He doesn't have a problem when he does sports and the shoes are worn out, when he skates for example. Now, he pays more attention to the artistic side of the clothes. At the same time, he still tries to make sure the clothing is usable for a long time.

2.3. Durability for particular clothes

There are some items where my informants care more about durability than others. For example, Petr says that for some clothes he cares less about durability because he doesn't wear them that often. He gives the example of a lace top that he wears for parties. He says he will take care of it so that it stays usable as long as possible, yet it is out of lace, so it tears easily. He says that he doesn't care about its durability because he doesn't wear it that much. What he cares about, though, is if his shoes or jeans last long. The shirt that he was wearing, he has been wearing for four years. He has a pair of clothes that have been with him for five years, and he still uses them.

Many of my informants believe it is important for shoes to be durable. Alexandr says that when people don't care for it, they break. To him, with shoes, people should invest a little. For some time, he did not do it, he bought from cheaper metal brands. The shoes

would regularly fall apart. He learned from this that it is more sustainable to have shoes for 3 to 5 years instead of having them for one year. It is financially more advantageous.

The second type of clothing, where it is considered important for it to be durable, are suits, Kevin and Jan agree on that. Some of my informants also mentioned coats and pants. They say these items should be durable because one invests more money in them.

Multiple of my informants pay attention to durability when the clothes have sentimental value. Kevin says that he would wear some items for a maximum of 2 years, but he is happy when he has clothes that last 5 years because these are clothes that are going to have a sentimental value. Julian also highlights the importance of sentimental value, saying that clothes are an extension of himself, and therefore he has a responsibility to take care of them so that they last the longest time possible. He says that gifts create a sentimental bond.

2.4. Caring for the clothes to be durable: wash and repair

When it comes to caring for the clothes, it comes down to washing them properly. Veronika says she tries to wash them less. She tries to wash at lower temperatures and doesn't iron, because the heat of the iron destroys the tissues according to her. Wanqiu has the same opinion, saying that most of the damage is coming from the washing process. She tries to not wash the clothes so often, but also keeps them clean so that they are not so smelly from the sweat. If the clothes have spots that she cannot wash away, she says she changes the clothes from the representative category to the home category. It makes the lifespan of the clothes longer. Alice says she doesn't use softener, because it makes the tissues more fragile, otherwise, she does not do anything else. Zdeněk washes the clothes according to what is written on the label, with local and ecological washing liquid that is without packaging. He doesn't put clothes in the dryer. For the shoes he uses particular care products for leather. He pays attention not to walk in the same shoes all the time, alternate. Also, not washing the shoes in the washing machine. Alžbeta also cares for the clothes with particular washing procedures. She says she looks if she has to wash it by hand or in the washing machine. With regards to coats, she brings them once in a certain time to the cleaners. She also says that she has trouble caring for her shoes, she forgets to walk carefully and care about them, they are scratched even though she has it for a little time. It annoys her and she doesn't like to think about it. Petr tries to not wash the clothes that often, not use detergent with it and if it's shoes

he doesn't do anything he just wears it. He doesn't care if there is wear and tear as long as it fits him then it's fine. For jeans, he tries to wash it the least possible. He points out that he has to be careful when he is eating food, so that food does not get all over it. So, he tries to keep it as clean as possible for the longest time. Robert says that when clothes are dirty, he puts them into the washing machine and that is it. He cares about shoes by putting wax on them. Anna talked about using a lint remover for sweaters. She is the only informant who mentioned this object.

2.5. Gender difference: only women sew?

I noticed a gender difference in my interviews. When they have a hole in the clothes, the women would repair it themselves or let it be. Veronika says that when she has a hole in her clothes, she sews it up or puts a patch on it. She likes the movement "mending your clothes" that she describes the following way: one visibly admits the repairs to the clothes, so it doesn't matter if we can see the clothing has been repaired. She gives an example of when she did it. She says she once bought a cashmere sweater in a second-hand store. She noticed that it has a hole in it, so she intentionally sewed it with a contrasting color so that it could be seen that it was repaired. She always tries to repair clothes, she says, to make it cool and wearable. Rose says that she sews back the clothes, she knows how, but if she needs some help with it, she will ask her mother. So, we can see that sewing is transmitted from mother to daughter in the family.

Other women don't mind wearing clothes with holes. Alice says that when there is a hole, it does not matter to her. The only place where it annoys her is between legs, or when it can't be repaired. She wears socks with holes. If there is a hole in her t-shirt and it does not show half of her body, then she doesn't do anything about it. She doesn't repair but it does not prevent her from wearing it. When an item stops being cool, then she stops wearing it.

The men would "have them" be repaired, meaning that they do not do it themselves but by someone else, for example by their grandma (so a female person), or leave it as it is:

"When I have a hole, it depends. For example, the pants that I am wearing right now, when the fabric rips a little, one cannot do much with it, because the material is bad. If it is something qualitative, and I see the material lasts long, then I give it to my grandma or to

someone who knows how to sew and I let it be repaired. If the clothes are from bad material, I prefer to throw it away and buy something that can be repaired.”

(Michael, 23)

Marek also says his grandmother sews back the holes in his clothes.

Kevin is the only informant who mentioned professional clothing repair. Other boys would mention having their clothes being repaired by their mother or grandmother. In contrast, Kevin gets his clothes fixed by a tailor, if he is attached to that clothing, if it is particularly expensive. If it is an item that costs 2000 czk (t-shirt or coat) and less he will not have it repaired.

Zdeněk also has the hole sewn up, or changes the clothes from the representative category to the home category, for example wearing them in the garden. He throws the clothes away when the shirt completely falls apart. Robert is in the same situation. He said that if the clothing has a hole in it that can be closed, he let it be repaired by his mother. What is quite funny to me, is that he added “she has a sewing machine so she can sew it back”. In my experience, holes in clothing are very rarely sown back in the sewing machine, so he probably is quite inexperienced with it. Maybe I am mistaken. We can at least clearly see the gender divide, where only women sew. Robert adds that when the t-shirts have a hole, he stops wearing it in the city and I will wear it at the cottage. Jan says that when he puts clothing away, he brings them to the container for clothes so that more people can use them after him.

Alexandr does not think that holes in clothes are such a problem. When asked about holes in his clothing, he said that he had a hole in his t-shirt and showed it to me. He said he doesn't pay attention to it that much but his mother does not like it. His parents think that it is inappropriate. To him, as long as it isn't anything big, he doesn't see a problem with it.

Even if some clothes are worn out or ripped, sentimental value may be more important than the degradation of the clothes. Julian says he has a friend who gave him an ACDC t-shirt and it ripped a bit, but he says he would never change it for a million dollars because the sentimentality is a lot bigger.

2.6. Giving clothes a second life

Many of my informants mention changing clothes from the “representative” category to the “home” category. They also mentioned upcycling and discarding clothes in special containers for clothes. Alžbeta describes in the interview how she changed a pair of pants into a shirt. Petr does something similar: he says he doesn’t want to waste material. When he wears clothes for a few times and it tears up it is not usable anymore for him. He says that just in case anything tears, or he cannot use it anymore, he gives it to his friends who do textile, they make new things out of it like a tote bag or pants. Kevin also upcycled clothes by using it as rags or making animal toys out of them for his pets.

Results/Summary and Discussion

The main findings of my research are that my informants - who are students at the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University - care about the durability of clothes. In early adulthood most of them transitioned from fast fashion consumption to a more measured, slow type of fashion consumption. Sensibility about the harms of fast fashion both at a global level (environmental and social) and at an individual level for the consumer (quality, durability, comfort and fit of the fabrics), leads them to prefer sustainable clothes over fast fashion.

With the interviews, I found out that “good” clothes can be defined as having good and functional materials. They are of greater quality than fast fashion. Factors such as durability and price play a role in what is considered as “good” clothes. It is also a matter of comfort, functionality, style, fit, and sentimental value, artistic value and ethical production. “Good” clothes combine both aesthetics and comfort. They both fit consumer needs and are ethically and sustainably sourced.

Clothing can be considered as a reflector of identity. One of my informants highlighted how his choice of clothing is made according to the political identity he has. For many informants, identity is constructed as embracing or rebelling against their parent’s clothing choice. They are also influenced by friends and social media. This shows that the identity that is reflected by clothes is constructed socially through interactions with various groups, against or with which informants define each other.

All my informants declared that they became aware of the negative social and environmental impacts of the fast fashion industry through various types of media - documentaries, books, social media influencers, and the like. One of my informants points out that studying at the Faculty of Humanities may have sensitized her more to the issue. Most of my informants say they avoid fast fashion; however, they also often wear some fast fashion items the day of the interview, which could reflect an attitude-behavior gap. However, it is possible to have adopted slow fashion principles and stopped buying fast fashion, while still wearing fast fashion clothes that one has bought in the past. Some informants still choose fast fashion out of convenience, often to save time and/or money. Second-hand is a good alternative to buying fast fashion, to most of my informants. One of my informants said he justifies buying fast fashion items when they are on sale because like

this they are not thrown away or wasted. One of my informants was more concerned about the stealing of designs that fast fashion chains do, which is one of the reasons he does not buy fast fashion. However, he said he also cares about the social and environmental impact of his clothing consumption. All informants expressed an interest in the environmental and social impact they have when they buy clothes. It seems to me that they are all conscious of their choices and justify their consumption choices in their own ways.

While buying ethically is important to most of my informants, it is difficult to achieve. Brands are not truly transparent and “greenwashing” is a problem often mentioned. A solution to buy ethically is to buy second-hand - it is cheaper and the problem of sourcing is solved since it has already been worn by another person. Most of my informants were wearing second-hand clothes during the interview and said that once clothing has already been worn by someone else, they disregard how it was produced because it is second-hand. Buying locally is valued, however, the price is considered to be higher than other options and is, therefore, not always envisaged. Some of my informants argue that they cannot afford buying sustainably produced clothes and that a change of the fashion industry is needed to truly minimize negative effects.

Concerning hedonism, my informants say they both buy clothes because they need them and also because they solely want them. The frequency of buying clothes and the amount of money spent on clothing seems to indicate that most of my informants buy more out of want than out of need. However, some informants mentioned that they want to limit their consumption. This falls in line with the concept of anti-consumption by Vesterinen & Syrjälä (2022), who argue that sustainability is not only about buying or acquiring clothes that are ethically produced but also about buying less.

Many of my informants said they grew up buying clothes from fast fashion stores and gradually shifted from quantity to quality, and often, from fast fashion to other types of clothing such as second-hand or outdoor clothes. Sometimes, their parents are a factor that encourages this shift, but it is also the case that parents do not agree or understand why their child buys second-hand fashion. Some parents argue that the clothing in second-hand clothes is “not clean” and that when one can afford new clothes, it would be degrading to buy second-hand clothes. Thereby, there seems to be a generational gap in the understanding of second-hand clothing and its purpose and meaning in our society. However, there are parents that encourage slow fashion practices like buying second-hand or mending clothes. The role

of sewing back the clothes is attributed mainly to women: the women themselves, mothers, and grandmothers.

Durability is seen as a priority for my informants because it means that one will subsequently buy fewer clothes and save money. When one invests a larger amount of money in clothes, it is expected that the item will last and that one will, in the long term, save money. Durability is linked with the quality of the material. My informants have different visions of what “good” material is, but some argue they prefer natural over artificial fiber. Second-hand clothes are not necessarily more durable.

Style and sustainability are seen as compatible, according to my informants. The men especially mention workwear and outdoor clothing as a particular style they like, that is durable at the same time. Some women say they prefer vintage or timeless styles. Many agree that dressing sustainably is more stylish than wearing fast fashion. While fast fashion responds to quick trends, sustainable fashion is more about finding one's own style. However, sometimes aesthetics may trump durability. In other words, some of my informants prefer buying designer clothes or fast fashion because they prefer the style of it. There are clothes where durability matters more than for others, like shoes, coats, pants, and formal clothes such as suits. The main reason given is that one invests more money in them than for example t-shirts or socks, and therefore expects them to last longer. The clothes that have sentimental value are also mentioned as desirably durable clothes to maintain an emotional bond with the gift-giver.

With regards to repairing clothes, it seems that there is a gender difference. Females would repair clothes themselves and males would have their clothes repaired by their mother or grandmother, an exceptional case being a professional. Both men and women would sometimes not mind wearing clothing with a hole. Once the clothes are not usable anymore in their current form, my informants have creative ways to deal with them. For example, upcycling, making a toy for pets, or changing the clothing into a new item of clothing. Therefore, we can see that my informants care about the whole lifecycle of clothes. They find ways to prolong the life cycle of clothes and once they discard them, they use the special bins for clothes that go to charities.

Many of my findings are in agreement with the chosen literature. With regards to what people perceive to be “good” clothes, Chowdhury & Akter (2018) found that their informants

prioritize quality and durability, unique styles, well-made and soft fabrics, good after-wash, and durable fabric. I have similar results - my informants care about durability, quality, and good materials. In their research, it is important that the fabric is non-irritating and easy to wear. One of my informants said he avoided Gore Tex because he thinks it is toxic, and another informant said she would avoid clothes from Shein because they use toxic chemicals. In their research they found that designer dresses and clothes worn by celebrities create greater appeal. Only one of my informants said he is influenced by celebrities and buys designer clothes. Maybe they are rather influenced by what is worn at the Faculty of Humanities or in higher education in general. They found that the price of clothes is important, buying on discount or buy-one-get-one is favored, as well as replicas from high-end brands at a lower price. In my research, price was mentioned as an important factor, but saving money was mostly achieved through buying second-hand according to my informants. Their research argued that the store atmosphere is valued. One of my informants mentioned that she cares about the store's atmosphere and story, that she deliberately chooses when buying clothes. What they mentioned in their research, and that I did not find, is that the color should be suiting and the shape age-appropriate. None of my informants talked about suiting colors or age-appropriateness, maybe because they took that as a given.

Na & Agnhage (2013) research indicates that clothing can express adherence to a certain type of music. One of my informants says he consciously chooses clothes to reflect his love for hip-hop music. However, he was the only one explicitly mentioning it. Sattar, et al. (2019) argued that people are concerned if the clothing fits. My informants also talked about how clothing should fit their body and suit changes in weight or size. Noh, Mijeong, et al. (2015) argued that their informants - male American college students - would avoid clothes that are “alternative, gangster, or gay” (p.1). In my research, nobody opposed themselves to these kinds of identities. Yet, I did not ask them directly if they were avoiding the alternative, gangster or gay look - so it is possible that they could also have this type of preference.

Millan and Mittal (2017) studying fashion consumers in the Czech Republic argues that clothing is often used for its symbolic function - an indicator of status. One of my informants would define his status as working class and said his clothes would reflect that status. Otherwise, no informants mentioned that they would wear clothes to represent a certain status.

Clothing may be chosen as a way to represent one's profession, according to a study by Ericksen & Sirgy (1992). The same informant argued that he wears clothes that fit the anthropologist aesthetic. So, it seems that there might be an aesthetic for anthropology students, or even more for students of the Faculty of Humanities at large, or even simply for students.

A study by Edmond & Cahoon (1984) of college students at the University of Augusta in Georgia found out that women are aware of which clothes would attract male sexual attraction and would - if they wanted - choose clothes that would enhance their sexual attractiveness. In my research one of my informants mentioned that he wanted to look sexually attractive through his choice of clothing, others would say they want to look good, or stylish, or want the clothing to fit, which might be a latent way to say that they want to look attractive, or just good for any observer.

According to a study by Sattar, et al. (2019) body shape also influences the shopping of clothes. In my interview a few informants mentioned that they would change clothes according to a change of weight, height or general body shape.

As articulated by Mc Queen et al (2022) in the research about clothing repair, there is a gender difference that I also found with my informants. According to Mc Queen et al (2022), there is a notable gender disparity showing that women are more actively involved in repairing clothes, a trend that amplifies with age. The study was conducted in Canada and U.S. My female informants would sew up clothes themselves whereas men would rely on their mother or grandmother. One of them said that he would use paid services to repair clothes.

The limitations of my research are that I studied a sample of people that is not representative of all students in the Czech Republic, and even less of the Czech population does not represent people of other ages and of different backgrounds. My research is qualitative, not quantitative. While my study is not representative in the quantitative research sense, it still shows a particular behavior and understanding of a part of the population which are Czech students of the Faculty of Humanities, who with their education, seem to make more environmentally and socially conscious choices.

Conclusion

Fast fashion is known for having significant negative environmental and social consequences. Not only is fast fashion harmful, but it is also less durable than other types of clothing. In this work I focused here on how the selected informants - students of the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University - understand “good” clothes and if they associate “good” clothes with durability and slow fashion principles.

For almost all of my informants, the durability of clothing plays a role in the decision-making process, though it is not the only characteristic of “good” clothes. However, informants differ among themselves in the ways they try to consume sustainably while fulfilling their needs and desires. Based on individual similarities and differences in the perception of “good” clothes, I divided fashion consumption behavior into 5 categories:

- *the second-hand shopper* - this category describes people who buy second-hand clothes because they are cheap, have attractive styles, and are more ethical and sustainable than fast fashion since one is giving them a second life by wearing them. Second-hand shoppers believe that second-hand fashion can be stylish because they like vintage styles or can create more unique styles with second-hand clothes. They rebel against a belief (which their parents can adhere to), that second-hand clothes are somehow “not clean” or for people who cannot afford new clothes. On the contrary, they have a positive vision of second-hand shopping which they can do with friends for fun. They might shop in second-hand physical stores or online, Vinted being the main cited platform.
- *the new sustainable clothes shopper* - this type of consumer will seek out local, ethical, and sustainable brands to buy from and value the story that is behind the clothes that were created. These clothing items are more expensive than second-hand fashion or fast fashion, but they are also of greater quality and therefore will last longer, which means that it will be cheaper in the long run. These clothes may be casual, but they are often outdoor clothes or workwear, which is particularly popular among male informants. Outdoor clothing is considered to be of greater quality and durability than other types of clothes and it can be considered by some as stylish too.

- *the “good” materials clothing shopper* - this type of consumer cares mainly about good materials. It can be sourced sustainably or not, it can even be fast fashion, the most important is that the material is comfortable to the touch and that it will last a long time. Often, the consumer will prefer natural fibers over synthetic fiber because of the aspect, comfort, and biodegradability of natural fibers. The functionality of the material is also taken into account. For instance, if the t-shirts leave sweat marks or not, or if the shoe soles are soft and healthy for the foot. Greater quality of material also means greater durability, so sustainability is also taken into account for the “good” materials clothing shopper.
- *the artistic shopper* - for this type of consumer, the most important aspect when buying clothes is the artistic value the clothing has. They buy original designs from high fashion or luxury brands and avoid fast fashion because, amongst others, these chains steal designs, which they consider unfair. This was the case for only one of my informants, generally, students could not afford a whole closet of designer clothes.
- *the fast fashion shopper* - this type of consumer may be aware of the negative aspects of fast fashion, yet still buys it out of convenience (in terms of saved time and money). This type of consumer seems to reflect an early stage of fashion consumption.

For the fast fashion shopper and for the second-hand shopper informants, owning clothes for a longer time makes them believe that they are slow fashion consumers. Yet, slow fashion also includes sustainable production.

These categories were not filled by the informants evenly and some informants also could fit in multiple categories. The most common category was second-hand shoppers, the second most common was the good materials shopper, the third most common was the fast fashion shopper, and fourth was the new sustainable clothes shopper. The artistic shopper corresponds only to one of my informants.

I identified 3 stages of fashion consumption I found for most of my informants, where I noticed a transition from sustainable fashion to slow fashion:

- *Stage 1: the fast fashion predatory hedonism* - this stage usually takes place in my informant's adolescence, where they try out different styles, explore their identity, and go shopping for fun, with their parents or friends. During this stage, the teenager is fascinated by the low prices of fast fashion and is unconscious or disregards the environmental impact of their clothing consumption. They favor quantity over quality. Intuitively, they choose what they like without envisaging the consequences of their actions.
- *Stage 2: avoidance of fast fashion and second-hand predatory hedonism* - During this stage, the consumer has become aware of the negative environmental and social impact of fast fashion, and also realizes that fast fashion clothes are most of the time not durable, not as comfortable as higher quality clothes. Even in terms of style, fast fashion clothes are not as interesting. The informants discover an alternative, which is second-hand shopping, where they can buy different types of clothes at low prices without guilt. They enjoy shopping with friends and can decide to shop for a large amount of clothes in one go, which is why I still consider them as hedonists.
- *Stage 3: alternative hedonism and slow fashion* - this stage is about realizing that fashion consumption is wasteful. Overconsumption is to be avoided. The consumers will therefore slow down their fashion consumption, buy or acquire fewer clothes. When wanting to buy a new item, they will wait for some time to see if it is worth it, to then make an informed choice. This type of delayed gratification is part of alternative hedonism.

Most of my informants were at stage 1 during their teenage years. Many are currently at stage two. Two informants are part of stage 3. There is also an exception of a particular informant who cares mainly about the artistic value of clothes and is able and willing to buy large amounts of clothing at a high price. However, he is rather an exception in the sample.

These stages are similar to the categories formulated in research by Mc Neill & Moore (2015). Stage 1 is similar to the “self” consumer concept. As the name indicates, that consumer is primarily interested by the egoistic self, they express minimal interest for social or environmental concerns. For them, improving their self-image through fashion is the most important reason for buying clothes. These people particularly enjoy shopping, and sometimes even prioritize wants over needs, when it comes to clothing. Stage 2 is similar

to “social” consumers. They express concern for the environment and worker rights. The issue that “social” consumers face is an attitude-behavior gap because perceived barriers prevent them from consuming sustainably. Yet, they make more sustainable choices by buying second-hand clothes. They buy second-hand clothes not only out of environmental concern but also out of self-interest. Stage 3 is similar to the “sacrifice” consumer, who entirely rejects fast fashion, and choose sustainable alternatives. They believe that the current fashion industry is the product of capitalism and profit-seeking. Therefore, they prioritize buying second-hand, seldom buy new clothes and avoid fast-fashion. When choosing clothes, they look for long-lasting sustainable fabrics. They prefer giving the clothes to charity if possible after choosing to dispose of them (Mc Neill & Moore, 2015).

My research has a qualitative character and the research results do not claim to generalize to the whole population. I have interviewed 20 people. The low number of informants who I interviewed does not allow for generalization to the population of young people in the Czech Republic but to the issue of “good” clothes and slow fashion for the students of the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University. Time constraints for the thesis limit my research.

Future studies could fruitfully explore this issue further by interviewing students from other faculties of Charles University, or even young people from other backgrounds and age categories. I suppose that young students of the Faculty of Humanities have a sensibility for social and environmental issues and are also educated on the subject of fast fashion’s negative impacts. It is likely that parts of the population are not aware of the negative impacts of fast fashion, or that they do not care about the durability of clothes. Since my informants were all students of the faculty of Humanities of Charles University, they might be consuming clothes in a way that is specific for their particular group. Since clothing is linked to identity and the social group one defines oneself to be in, people from other social groups may have the imperative to wear other kinds of clothes. Clothing may also be linked with status, and people in certain positions might not want to wear second-hand clothes because it would contradict their status. However, in my sample, most informants were wearing second-hand clothes. It seems like at the Faculty of Humanities it is not only accepted but encouraged (the faculty hosted several clothing-swapping events).

I hope my research will be useful for policymakers and stakeholders in the fashion industry, to facilitate the transition towards slow fashion. My research shows that what my informants perceive as “good” clothes involves a good quality of the garments and durability, which are generally in opposition to fast fashion. All my informants were conscious of the social and environmental impact of fast fashion and were negotiating how to include these values to their choices.

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Appendix

Appendix 1. Informants

	Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Study area
1	Alice	female	26	Social and Cultural Ecology Master
2	Wanqiu	female	24	Historical Anthropology Master
3	Sandra	female	24	Social and Cultural Ecology Master
4	Johann	male	24	Anthropology Master
5	Veronika	female	26	Social and Cultural Ecology Master
6	Zdeněk	male	26	Social and Cultural Ecology Master
7	Michael	male	23	Social and Cultural Ecology Master
8	Alžbeta	female	20	Bachelor in Humanities
9	Robert	male	24	Social and Cultural Ecology Master
10	Jennie	female	19	Bachelor in Humanities
11	Sophie	female	20	Bachelor in Humanities
12	Ruby	female	21	Bachelor in Humanities
13	Petr	male	22	Bachelor in Humanities
14	Alexandr	male	21	Bachelor in Humanities
15	Julian	male	22	Bachelor in Humanities
16	Kevin	male	24	Bachelor in Humanities
17	Jan	male	23	Bachelor in Humanities
18	Rose	female	23	Bachelor in Humanities
19	Anna	female	20	Bachelor in Humanities
20	Marek	male	21	Bachelor in Humanities

Appendix 2. Interview guide

Interview guide in English	Interview guide in Czech
<p>Understanding “good” clothes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do you define “good” clothes? - In your opinion, what are the key aspects of “good” clothes, and how do they differ from other clothes? <p>Attitude-behavior gap:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What brands are the clothes that you are wearing? Did you buy them new or second-hand? Did you get them as a gift? <p>Predatory hedonism vs. alternate hedonism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are the different reasons you buy new clothes? - Who or what inspires you to buy new clothes? - How often do you buy clothes? - How much money do you spend? 	<p>Pochopení dobrého oblečení:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jak definuješ „dobré oblečení“ a co pro tebe osobně znamená? - Jaké jsou podle tebe klíčové aspekty dobrého oblečení a jak se liší od jiného oblečení? <p>Rozdíl v postoji a chování:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - jaké značky máš oblečení? Kупoval jsi je nové nebo z druhé ruky? Dostal jsi je jako dárek? <p>Dravý hedonismus vs. alternativní hédonismus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jaké jsou různé důvody, proč si kupuješ nové oblečení? - Kdo nebo co tě inspiruje k nákupu nového oblečení? - Jak často nakupuješ oblečení? - kolik peněz utrácíš?

Interview guide in English	Interview guide in Czech
<p>Consumer Behavior:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has your fashion consumption behavior changed throughout your life? - What were you used to paying attention to in the past and what do you pay attention now when choosing clothes? - How did your parents influence your choice of clothing? <p>Slow fashion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is the durability of the clothes important to you? - Can you share examples of brands or items that you have where you prioritize the longevity and durability of the products? - Do you want all your clothes to be durable or are there clothes where you care more about durability than others? - How do you maintain the clothes for them to be durable? - Do you repair or let repair clothes? 	<p>Spotřebitelské chování:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Změnilo se během tvého života tvůj chování ke konzumaci módy? - Na co jso byl zvyklí dávat pozor v minulosti a na co nyní při výběru oblečení? - Jak rodiče ovlivnily tvůj výběr oblečení? <p>Pomalá móda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Je pro tebe důležitá, abys mohl oblečení dlouho nosit? - Můžeš uvést značky nebo kategorie oblečení, které máš, u nichž upřednostňuješ dlouhou životnost a odolnost produktů? - Chceš, abys mohl oblečení nosit dlouho a u které ti na odolnosti záleží více než u jiných? - Jak udržuješ oblečení, aby bylo odolné? - Když máš díru na oblečení, co děláš?

Interview guide in English	Interview guide in Czech
<p>Challenges to Slow Fashion:</p> <p>What challenges do you perceive to make the clothes durable?</p> <p>Ethical Production:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How important is transparency in the production process for you? - Is fair treatment of workers in the fashion industry a deciding factor for you when buying clothes? <p>Community and Local Impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is it important for you to buy locally produced clothes? <p>Balancing Style and Sustainability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you believe there is a trade-off between style and sustainability in your experience? - Do you think there is a trade-off between sustainability and price? 	<p>Výzvy pro pomalou módu:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jaké výzvy vnímáš, aby bylo oblečení odolné? <p>Etická produkce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jak důležitá je pro tebe transparentnost ve výrobním procesu? - Je pro tebe při nákupu oblečení rozhodující spravedlivé zacházení s pracovníky v módním průmyslu? <p>Komunitní a místní dopad:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Je pro tebe důležité nakupovat místně vyrobené oblečení? <p>Styl vyvážení a udržitelnost:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Myslíš si, že ve tvoji zkušenosti existuje kompromis mezi stylem a udržitelností? - Myslíš si, že existuje kompromis mezi udržitelností a cenou?

Appendix 3. Passportization (Wanqiu)

<p>Interview date, place, and time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - length of interview - recording method 	<p>26/02/2024</p> <p>00:18:53</p> <p>mobile phone recorder</p>
<p>Research participant data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - name (pseudonym in research), gender, age - profession - other data, important from the point of view of research (language of interview, etc.) 	<p>Wanqiu, female, 24 years old</p> <p>Student Master of Historical Anthropology</p> <p>Interview in English</p>
<p>Research participant selection (recommended by whom, etc.)</p>	<p>I have known her from the time of my Bachelor</p>
<p>Method of contacting the research participant, a form of informed consent (written, verbal, non-objection)</p>	<p>Facebook message</p> <p>Informed consent recorded on the mobile phone recorder</p>
<p>The course of the interview:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - present persons - interruptions (phone calls, arrivals of other people, etc.) - the atmosphere, the impression of the interview - the impression of the research participant (significant features of the interview – nervousness, urgency...) 	<p>We were alone.</p> <p>There were no interruptions.</p> <p>The atmosphere was kind and the conversation friendly.</p> <p>The research participant seemed comfortable.</p>

Appendix 4. Interview transcript Wanqiu (interview in English)

Understanding “good” clothes

E: How do you define "good" clothes?

W: "good" clothes are clothes you can wear for a long time, that are durable, and that you personally really like the style of it. Materials are important and is related to durability.

E: In your opinion, what are the key aspects of "good" clothes, and how do they differ from other clothes?

W: I don't like clothes that have synthetic fabrics for example, I prefer natural fabrics. Often cheap clothes are made from less comfortable fabrics.

Attitude-behavior gap

E: What brands are the clothes that you are wearing? Did you buy them new or second-hand? Did you get them as a gift?

W: For this thing (the jacket) we went on a trip to Berlin, went to a second hand, and I thought I did not really like anything, but then I saw this jacket. I picked it up and fell in love. It is 16 euros only. 10 percent wool. I could not wear only wool because it is itchy so it is good that it has lining in it.

The turtleneck is from H&M. I wanted to have the same as last year, I was kind of upset about the fact that they don't do it the same way anymore. It is made of elastan. It is pretty comfortable but gets wrinkly.

The pants, I don't remember where I got them from but they fit me, so I am wearing them.

The shoes are from Ecco. My mom got them so we can match together. She has a blue pair I have a yellow one. The material is suede. The thing about Ecco is that the material is very good, my family has a good experience with the brand, so I use it for a long time. The minus is that sometimes the color rubs off.

My socks are from AliExpress actually, a Chinese online platform that has been very popular lately, it's cheap. They have a typo on them. So, you can see the quality of the product right there (giggles).

Predatory hedonism vs. alternate hedonism

E: What are the different reasons you buy new clothes?

W: When I wear the same style too often, and I want to be seen as something different. Basically, most of the time, when I think it has been a while I haven't bought something. I

wish I had something, or I really liked this turtleneck and I want a new one, so I can buffer between them. |But yeah, they don't make it anymore.

E: Who or what inspires you to buy new clothes?

W: Mostly, when I go shopping with my friends. I'm going to look at what clothes I would like to buy. When I am with my mom, I am like, can I buy something on your dime? Mostly when I think I would like something new, or something I previously liked.

E: How often do you buy clothes?

W: Once in two weeks. Right now, I am buying overalls online for my new job.

E: How much money do you spend?

W: Usually 500 czk, if I really like it up to 1000 czk on something.

Consumer Behavior

E: Has your fashion consumption behavior changed throughout your life?

W: I think because it is mostly a trendy thing to do. Buying second-hand. I think it is a thing that has been more popular since I have been in high school. I feel like I have been more conscious of what I buy and how I might impact the environment. It has been more talked about in recent years than before. Most of my life before it was whatever my mom likes, she buys me. When I started to buy my own clothes, I started thinking about the issue. My friends started to buy second-hand so I was more open to it. My parents were not that into it, they were like: "why don't you buy new clothes if you can afford to buy new clothes?" "it's not about that", I told them... but yeah

E: What were you used to pay attention to in the past and what do you pay attention now when choosing clothes?

W: In the past I would focus more on the fact that I like to clothes now I also look at the quality.

E: How did your parents influence your choice of clothing?

W: mostly, my mom, she likes a specific type of stuff that I in later years think I don't really like. In the past I would dress according to what my mom liked, I did not really know what I liked myself, when I got older, I change my style. I don't know if I am dressing according to what's very popular right now, I'm not sure. I try to think for myself but of course I get influenced by a lot of things.

Slow fashion

E: Is durability of the clothes important for you?

W: Yes, but when I buy second hand clothes, in my mind they are a bit more durable already, because they are second-hand, so they lasted. But it's not always actually true, right, because they might sell something that they brought from a Chinese market, and they discard it because no one liked it. Because you have so much choice, right, so you can pick out... What you don't like you can just put in the second hands.

You also have to think about the price. In my mind durable things are not always 100% what they claim to be, they're most of the time more expensive than fast fashion, which is not to say I don't buy cheap fast fashion. Probably stuff I just like on the picture. I do that a lot actually.

E: *Can you share examples of brands or items that you have where you prioritize the longevity and durability of the products?*

I care for example more about the durability of my jacket and my pants than my socks.

E: *Do you want all your clothes to be durable or are there clothes where you care more about durability than others?*

W: When I am wearing outdoor clothes, and especially shoes, I care. When it's a t-shirt, I just wear it, because I like the logo or something. Outerwear is important to me. Otherwise, I don't care that much about it.

E: *How do you maintain the clothes for them to be durable?*

W: Not really, maybe I should, but honestly, I don't. I separate the whites from the colors that is about it. If it is outerwear, I only wash them once a season because it is washed differently than other clothing. Other than that, I don't think about that.

E: *What challenges do you perceive to make the clothes durable?*

W: Good materials make clothes durable, when it is made of natural fabric it might last longer, even though let's be honest, synthetics are pretty durable but are not that comfortable because they are not that breathable.

If there is a hole, if it is underwear, I toss it. I don't want that. If it's my favorite underwear I keep it. I don't repair it, as long as it is not too big and if it's too big, I have to toss it as well.

When its other things, I repair it sometimes. For example, the jacket I am wearing, the back piece, I sawed it back on three times, and it fell apart every time, so I decided to leave it as it is.

Ethical Production

E: *How important is transparency in the production process for you?*

W: I don't really think about it actively. When I look at documentaries and stuff, I see and think, "they do that, huh?" But I don't really actively think about it when I am buying clothes.

E: *Is fair treatment of workers in the fashion industry a deciding factor for you when buying clothes?*

W: Not really. My friend really thinks about it, but her clothes are really expensive. Her clothes are fairtrade.

Community and Local Impact

E: *Is it important for you to buy locally produced clothes?*

W: Not really. I think about it even less than the other aspects.

Balancing Style and Sustainability

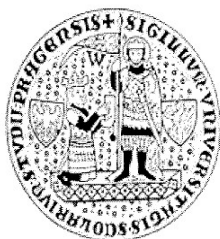
E: *Do you think there is a tradeoff between sustainability and price?*

W: Of course. If it more sustainable the price is going to rise. I try to aim for the middle ground sometimes. But sometimes the price just wins.

E: *Do you believe there is a trade-off between style and sustainability in your experience?*

W: If I don't like the style, I won't buy it at all. If the clothes are made for a specific function, like overalls, or ski clothing, they are meant to fulfill a specific function. But if it doesn't fit my style, I won't think about buying it.

Appendix 5. Masters thesis project



**Fakulta humanitních studií
Univerzita Karlova
obor sociální a kulturní ekologie**

Pátkova 5/2137, 182 00 Praha 8 – Libeň



Magisterský obor
sociální a kulturní
ekologie

Projekt diplomové práce (DP) oboru sociální a kulturní ekologie

1. Jméno studenta: Bc. Eleonore Raynal-Pečený
2. Předběžný název DP (česky): Prolínání "dobrého" oblečení a pomalé módy pohledem studentů Fakulty humanitních studií Univerzity Karlovy
3. Předběžný název DP (anglicky): The Intersection of "Good" Clothes and Slow Fashion from the Perspective of students of the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University
4. Klíčová slova (česky): pomalá móda, oblečení, preference spotřebitelů, udržitelná spotřeba, politika životního stylu
5. Klíčová slova (anglicky): slow fashion, clothing, consumer preference, sustainable consumption, lifestyle politics
6. Anotace (doporučený počet znaků: 500-1000): The object of my study is to explore the concept of "good" clothes according to the consumer. My research aims to find if there is a relationship between slow fashion - an approach to clothing production and consumption, emphasizing quality, durability, and ethical practices to reduce environmental impact - and what consumers think to be "good" clothes - that the consumer chooses. I will base my theoretical argumentation on sustainable consumption theory and lifestyle politics. I will conduct qualitative sociological research with in-depth interviews of university students of the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University Prague between 18 and 26 years old. They usually have the financial freedom to buy clothes for themselves and represent an age group whose consumption will have a large impact in the future. I chose students of the Faculty of Humanities because they seem to exhibit a more extensive engagement about social, economic and environmental problems. The interviews are based on the analysis of consumer preference - factors such as price, sustainability, durability, style, ethical production, and emotional value of the clothes are being explored. The interviews are conducted in the Czech Republic. My expected contribution is to provide insights for policymakers and brands to better align their strategies with consumer preferences, thereby fostering more environmentally friendly practices and products.
7. Výzkumná problematika – co a proč zkoumat (doporučený počet znaků: 1500-2000):
The aim of my research is to explore in how far students of the Faculty of Humanities adopt slow fashion principles. My main research questions are:
 - What do "good" clothes mean for young Czech university students of the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University in Prague?
 - How are "good" clothes related to slow fashion principles for them?

This topic is relevant because a transition to slow fashion contributes to respecting environmental limits and solving problems of social inequalities and exploitation in our current economy.

8. Současný stav bádání (doporučený počet znaků: 1500-2000):

My thesis is primarily based on the concepts of sustainable consumption and lifestyle politics. It is part of the current debate about a transition from fast fashion to slow fashion, and more generally sustainable development.

9. Způsob řešení & posicionalita – jak a kým zkoumat (doporučený počet znaků: 800-1200):

I chose a qualitative research method to understand how and why students of the Faculty of Humanities of Charles University consume clothes the way they do. I am both an insider and outsider of my informant group: I am student at the Faculty of Humanities but in opposition to my informants who were raised in the Czech Republic, I come from France.

10. Praktická uskutečnitelnost výzkumu (doporučený počet znaků: 800-1200):

The project lasted two semesters and language competencies needed were English and Czech. With regards to ethics, anonymization and informed consent were applied.

11. Aplikovatelnost (volitelná položka):

The work can contribute to changes in policy and changes in the fashion industry, that are in line with consumer preferences and values.

12. Použitá literatura:

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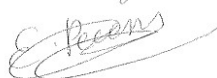
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