The Emperor's Old Clothes

A Consumer Behaviour-Based Case Study on Second-Hand Clothing as a Sustainable Fashion Consumption Practice in Italy

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Abstract

The current fashion system currently known as Fast Fashion (FF) is responsible for severe environmental and social impacts. Fashion democratisation has increased consumers' appetite for new trends, leading fashion companies to design an increasing number of collections per year. Manufacturing is outsourced to developing countries, where workers' rights and working place regulations are hardly respected. Additionally, garments are designed with material and stylistic planned obsolescence, in order to encourage rapid disposal and replacement. The result is a considerable waste of resources, human labour and accumulation of garbage.

Growing awareness of the negative impacts of FF has led to international movements, like Slow Fashion (SF), promoting a radical change in how we consume fashion and encouraging adoption of more environmentally- and ethically-aware strategies, such as use of ecological or natural material and remanufacturing. One of such alternatives is second-hand clothing (SHC) consumption, as it diverts clothes from landfills or export to developing countries by extending their life-cycle.

The present thesis uses a case study approach to analyse consumers' perceptions of SHC consumption in the Italian context. Here, the peculiar combination of sharp fashion sensitivity and the recent economic crisis has created a fertile ground for consumption of cheap FF clothing. Although clothing collection systems are in place, the majority of what is collected is directly exported to developing countries instead of being reintroduced in the national market. The aim of this thesis is to understand the reasons for this unexpressed potential of the SHC market by investigating if and what types of barriers exist at the consumer level. Semi-structured interviews with SHC shop owners and an online survey targeting Italian consumers were used to understand the motivations for and against SHC consumption and identify potential leverage points to develop it further.

Results show that a sizeable percentage of consumers resort to SHC because of its economic and environmental advantages. However, misinformation concerning this practice and lack of transparency in the supply chain contribute to emphasize a rooted prejudice concerning cleanliness and negative symbolic value held by SHC. Structural issues are also identified, such as aesthetic appearance and availability of SHC channels across the Italian peninsula. Growing awareness of the wastefulness of the fashion industry, eye for quality and decreasing spending capabilities are identified as potential leverage points to popularise SHC consumption. For this to happen, however, advertisement, education and awareness raising of consumers on economic and environmental advantages of this practice are necessary steps to take.

Keywords: second-hand clothes; Slow Fashion; Italy; consumers' behaviour; fashion; sustainable clothing.

Word count (thesis): 13.295

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"I believe that the world today could stop producing […] for 40 years and we'd still have enough things" –

(Bivio, personal communication, March 2017)

Abbreviations

FF – Fast Fashion

GHG – Greenhouse Gas

NPEs – Nonylphenol Ethoxylates

PFCs – Perfluorinated Chemicals

SF – Slow Fashion

SH – Second-Hand

SHC – Second-Hand Clothing

SS – Sustainability Science

1. Introduction

1.1 A new fashion consumption paradigm

Clothes have long lost the sole purpose of offering us warmth and protection from the elements, embodying in fact strong symbolic value. They tell the world a story about who we are (Fletcher, 2000), about our style judgements, our beliefs, our ethical principles and the role we play in society (Ertekin & Atik, 2015; Wolfendale & Kennett, 2011). The media have been stressing this symbolic aspect of clothes, making consumers perceive rapid turnover of trends and outfits as desirable and necessary in order to feel socially accepted (Joy, Sherry, Venkatesh, Wang, & Chan, 2012; Luz, 2007). Since the 1980s, fashion companies have been using this sociological factor to their own benefit, offering ever-increasing number of collections throughout the year (Minney, 2016): H&M, for instance, offers up to 16 collections annually, with weekly stock additions; Zara reaches 24 new clothing lines per year (Remy, Speelman, & Swartz, 2016). The preponderance of these low-priced, low-quality and swiftly out-dated garments has resulted in a clothing consumption 60% bigger than 15 years ago, and in a twice as fast disposal (Cobbing & Vicaire, 2016). A new perception of clothes as 'disposable products' (Ertekin & Atik, 2015; Morgan, 2015) has established a new system, referred to as *throw-away* or Fast Fashion (FF) (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010; Joy et al., 2012).

Driven by rapacious accumulation, this new system has rendered fashion one of the largest polluting industries in the world (Cobbing & Vicaire, 2016; Minney, 2016; Morgan, 2015). Numbers concerning the environmental impact are worrisome in the production, after-care and landfilling phases of the fashion cycle: cotton cultivation is responsible for emission of 98 billion kilograms CO_2 only in 2015 (Cobbing & Vicaire, 2016); 90% of cotton grown is genetically modified (Morgan, 2015), accounting for 24% insecticides and 11% pesticides globally employed (Remy et al., 2016; WWF, 2017); up to 2700 litres of water are needed to produce a single t-shirt (Minney, 2016). Use of synthetic fibres, which has increased by 157% since 2000, reaching 21.3 million tons in 2016 (Cobbing & Vicaire, 2016), has rendered clothes extremely detrimental to the environment in terms of energy consumption, GHG emission (Cobbing & Vicaire, 2016; Minney, 2016), wastewater contamination and impact on ecosystems (Brodde, 2017; Choi et al., 2011; Messinger, 2016), as well as on human health (Greenpeace International, n.a.). Every year the equivalent of $240 million worth of clothes (Minney, 2016), 95% of which could still be re-worn or repurposed (Cobbing & Vicaire, 2016), are landfilled and incinerated (Remy et al., 2016).

Fast Fashion is also responsible for severe impacts on society: outsourced for economic convenience

reasons, textile manufacturing takes place in Global South countries, in what are referred to as 'sweatshops' (Gregson & Ferdous, 2015; Pierlott, 2011). In such places, workers rights are hardly recognised and workplace safety laws loosely enforced (Morgan, 2015; Remy et al., 2016). This, combined with the pressure for delivering new collections quickly, with often unpredictable deadlines, forces textile workers to long working shifts in unbearable working environments (Luz, 2007; Minney, 2016).

1.2 Challenging the Fast Fashion system

Awareness on the hidden impacts of the fashion industry on both people and the environment has grown over the last thirty years (Ertekin & Atik, 2015). This has been facilitated by NGOs' studies, reports and campaigns, namely Greenpeace's *Detox* campaign (Greenpeace International, n.a.), as well as tragic events, like the Rana Plaza accident, where the collapse of a garment factory in Bangladesh lead more than 1000 textile workers to death in 2013 (Minney, 2016).

International movements have arisen worldwide to protest against FF, such as Fashion Revolution (Fashion Revolution, n.a.) and Slow Fashion (SF) (Dickson, Cataldi, & Grover, 2016), and alternative business paradigms have been proposed that aim at closing the loop of the fashion industry (Green Strategy, 2015). SF in particular, which this thesis uses as a conceptual grounding, aims at performing a radical change in consumers' approach to fashion, by 'slowing it down', adopting a more mindful and conscious consumption behaviour (Fletcher, 2007, 2010), and opting for alternative fashion practices. Examples span from purchase of garments produced with ecological or natural material to having clothes tailor-made, remanufacturing or up-cycling garments, sewing and mending clothes (Cataldi, Dickson, & Grover, 2010).

1.3 Second-Hand as a sustainable fashion consumption practice

Among alternative fashion practices, this thesis will focus on the reuse and sale of second-hand clothes (SHC), generally meant as used clothing irrespective of its age (Hansson & Morozov, 2016). This practice has in fact been often highlighted for its considerable benefits in reducing the environmental footprint of FF by extending clothes' lifecycle (Farrant, Olsen, & Wangel, 2010). Furthermore, compared to other eco-fashion strategies, which remain rather expensive and only accessible to a niche of consumers (Ertekin & Atik, 2015), thanks to its economic viability (Pipyrou, 2014) it can be a suitable strategy to encourage sustainable fashion consumption.

The SHC trade registers impressive numbers worldwide: only in Europe up to 2 million tons SHC are

generated annually (Cobbing & Vicaire, 2016). Large part of what is collected worldwide is exported to countries in the Global South (Bigsten & Wicks, 1996; Brooks & Simon, 2012); 10% is resold locally; the rest, around 350.000 tonnes per year, gets landfilled (Cobbing & Vicaire, 2016). Should the lifecycle of these garments be extended by 9 months only, savings in terms of carbon, water and waste footprint would be considerable (7%, 10% and 9% respectively) (WRAP, 2016b).

The issue of excessive textile landfilling has not gone unnoticed in the European context, and the European Union (EU) have recently included the goal of reducing textile waste in their agenda: in 2015 the European Clothing Action Plan (ECAP) was launched, joining efforts from five European organisations (British London Waste and Recycling Board and NGOs WRAP and MADE-BY; Dutch Rijkswaterstaat and the Danish Fashion Institute) (WRAP, n.a.). The target is to reduce carbon emission connected to clothes landfilling and render textile collection processes more efficient and regularised in thirteen selected European countries, Italy being among these (WRAP, 2016a).

This thesis originates from this environmental benefit of SHC and unfolds as follows: guiding aim, research questions and scope will be presented at the end of this chapter, together with framing of the SHC benefits within Sustainability Science. Chapter 2 will provide a brief background concerning the fashion industry in the Italian socio-economic context, and the structural setting of the SHC market. Chapter 3 aims at presenting the concepts and frameworks underpinning the research process, while chapter 4 explains the methodological approach adopted. Results and discussion will follow in chapter 5 before concluding with chapter 6.

1.4 Aim and Research Questions

This thesis aims to contribute to the debate concerning the unsustainability of the current fashion industry by focusing on SHC consumption as one of the practices seeking to reduce its severe environmental impact. By using the Italian context as a case study, it will address the following objectives:

1) understand Italian consumers' perceptions towards SHC consumption;

2) explore the motivations underlying their decision making in fashion purchases;

3) investigate the potential to leverage upon Italian consumers' shopping behaviour to further expand SHC consumption.

The underlying research questions are the following:

RQ1 - What factors guide Italian consumers in their fashion purchases?

1.1 What motivates them to resort to SHC?

RQ2 – What barriers exist to expansion of SHC consumption in the Italian context?

2.1 What are the opportunities and leverage points to motivate Italian consumers to wear SHC?

The correlation between the thesis objectives and RQs can be read in Table 1.

Table 1: summary table of linkages between research questions and objectives.

Research Question addressed	Objective
RQ1	#2; #3
RQ1.1	#1; #3
RQ2	#1; #2: #3
RQ2.1	#1; #2; #3

1.5 Focus on Second-Hand Clothing

1.5.1 Scope

The focus of this thesis will be SHC, meaning clothes and accessories in wearable conditions discarded by the original owner, diverted from the landfill through a recycling and collection system, sorted and reintroduced in the market until the garment's end of lifecycle (Cervellon, Wigley, Carey, & Harms, 2012). For this study, hand-me-downs from relatives or friends will also be included.

Vintage fashion, here broadly meant as fashion produced between the 1920s and 1980s, (Cervellon et al., 2012) will be classified as SHC. However, it is to be maintained that, despite the increasing popularity vintage style is facing in the last years (Cassidy & Bennett, 2012), consumers of such fashion still belong to a very small niche, and are attracted to it by desire to develop an original style and to bring back vogues belonging to the past, rather than because of critical consumption (La Marca & Palamara, 2005).

Remanufactured SHC, i.e. extension of garments' lifespan by disassembling, reworking of its parts and refashioning (Dissanayake & Sinha, 2015), and up-cycled clothing, i.e. employing used or waste material to create a product of higher value and quality (Sung, 2015; Vermeer, 2014), will not be examined in this thesis, although their valuable contribution to sustainable fashion is recognised.

Lastly, this thesis acknowledges the existing debate concerning the social impact of the SHC market in developing countries, where it has been blamed to hinder the development of local textile industries (Haggblade, 1990; Hansen, 2004). Despite the relevancy of this topic in light of sustainable development studies, this study will set a boundary at the circulation of SHC within the Italian market, leaving aside the collateral moral and economic implications of the SHC market on a global level.

The geographical scope of the study is Italy: reason for selecting this particular setting is the will to fill a research and knowledge gap concerning sustainable fashion practices and SHC consumption, existing not only in the Italian academic debate, but also in the development of the market potential of SHC. The author's personal provenience, familiarity with unwritten social norms and full knowledge of different cultural traits existing across the peninsula, as well as of the state of the fashion market, were considered important additional elements to facilitate a more insightful research.

1.5.2 Assumptions

This thesis acknowledges that SHC consumption is a practice closely linked to a consumerist, growth-based economic paradigm, as it is the rapid turnover of fashion and clothes that allows for their resale. It also acknowledges that SHC consumption does not help tackle the issues connected to clothes' aftercare, such as water pollution due to release of microfibers in the washing phase. Its potential is here highlighted as an adaptation-oriented, short-term, end-of-pipe solution, that only approaches one aspect of the bigger FF problem, by redistributing the considerable amount of clothes globally destined to landfills.

It is here recognised that parallel work is paramount on mitigation strategies. It is necessary to change the fashion system holistically by increasing ethical and environmental awareness, and by instilling a gradual preference for quality over quantity in consumers. However, this thesis also assumes that a change in shopping behaviours and progressive adoption of more conscious consumption practices will need a long time to be fully implemented. While FF remains the dominant paradigm, solutions to minimise the damage done and lengthen the life span of circulating clothes need to be sought *within* said paradigm in order to gain larger public consensus. This is where the SHC market comes into help.

1.6 The Sustainability Science analytical lens

Sustainability Science analyses the complex interactions between nature and society holistically (Kates, 2011). By adopting a normative and problem-driven approach (Clark & Dickson, 2003), it aims to identify solutions to environmental problems by combining knowledge from different disciplines and spheres

(Kates, 2011; Lang et al., 2012) and accounting for interactions between different scales, particularly global and local (Jerneck et al., 2010). This lens proves ideal to tackle an issue as complex as Fast Fashion, which extends to different scales and realms of society. Not only does it have a major impact on the environment, FF also affects different realms of society: it deals with macro-economics, as it is inserted in a global growth- and profit-oriented paradigm (Fletcher, 2010); with politics, as it benefits from the lack of internationally recognised policies on work ethic, resource use and emissions (Morgan, 2015). It is also linked to psychology and sociology, as it appeals to people's need to be accepted by peers and be perceived as trendy (Wolfendale & Kennett, 2011); and to ethics and human rights, as the t-shirt a Western consumer buys has been produced under appalling working conditions in Bangladeshi textile factories (Minney, 2016). The current fashion system is therefore a 'wicked problem' (Niinimäki, 2015) that calls for a 'clumsy solution' (Verweij et al., 2006) cutting across different disciplines, geographical and structural scales.

1.6.1 Original contribution

This study originates from the will to fill a perceived gap in the academic debate concerning SHC consumption in Italy and framing it within Sustainability Science. Similar studies have been run on different geographical contexts (Guiot & Roux, 2010; Hansson & Morozov, 2016; Kananukul, Watchravesringkan, & Hodges, 2015), and Italian studies have either broadly analysed the SH market, without specifically addressing clothing (Galvagno & Giaccone, 2015; Marzella, 2014; Spoladore, 2010), or focused on different sustainable fashion practices (La Marca & Palamara, 2005). In fact, studies combining the focus on SHC, the Italian context and the SS approach are missing. Hence, this thesis hopes to partially fill this gap by combining Guiot & Roux's (2010) consumers' motivation framework to SHC and analysing it from a SS point of view.

2. Background

2.1 The economic and cultural role of fashion in Italy

The long tradition of excellence of Italian fashion makes Italy a particularly compelling setting to analyse the impacts of FF in. The country's internationally appraised style, design and tailoring can be traced back to the Renaissance (Frick, 2004), but it was in the post-World War II period that Italian ready-to-wear fashion emerged and gained international popularity (Moss, 2014). In 1951 the first Italian international fashion show took place in Florence, marking it as the first capital of Italian fashion, followed by Milan in 1970s (Moss, 2014). Today, at least 15 among the most worldwide-known fashion houses, Gucci, Prada, Dolce&Gabbana and Armani among many others, have their headquarters in Italy (Mediobanca, 2017; Zorloni, 2017); Milan is recognised as one of the "big four" fashion hubs together with London, Paris and New York, and hosts an internationally acclaimed Fashion Week twice a year (Dillon, 2012). The fashion industry remains one of the most important productive sectors in the country (SpazioEconomia, 2016), with a turnover that in 2015 was estimated at €82 billion (Italy Europe 24, 2016; SpazioEconomia, 2016); this in spite of period of economic recession the country is facing, that since 1992 and particularly after the global financial crisis in 2008, has translated into decrease in productivity, export and overall consumers' spending capacity (Ciocca, 2010; Di Quirico, 2010).

2.1.1 The culture of appearance

Compared to global warming, global poverty and ecosystems degradation, caring about something as ephemeral as fashion might be considered trivial (Wolfendale & Kennett, 2011). Yet, fashion plays a major role in people's lives: it helps construct self-identities, fit into social groups and vehicle personal beliefs and moral principles (Ertekin & Atik, 2015; Minney, 2016; Wolfendale & Kennett, 2011).

In the Italian context particularly, fashion is the privileged vehicle, together with etiquette and kindness, for a distinctive cultural trait, that is the attention to *bella figura* ('beautiful appearance') (Pipyrou, 2014; Severgnini, 2006). In a society where the exterior appearance is perceived as an extremely meaningful representation of one's personality traits (Pipyrou, 2014), there is a considerable pressure on the individual to "stage the self" (Pipyrou, 2014, p. 536). Despite the increasingly lower household budgets, people buy expensive branded items that are conventionally perceived as status symbols in order to attract peers' appreciation, and considering the practice of buying used clothes as detrimental for one's own *bella figura* (Pipyrou, 2014).

2.2 The Second-Hand Clothing market in Italy

Despite this cultural trait, the concept of SHC is not novel in Italy: SHC sale can be traced back to Renaissance Florence (Frick, 2004), and it has been a rather common practice until the immediate post-WWII period (Pipyrou, 2014), when the aforementioned development of Italian ready-to-wear fashion took place (Moss, 2014).

Differently to what happens in countries like the UK or USA, where the SHC market is extensively spread in form of bigger shops (Farrer, 2011), Italian SHC sale has only recently developed in the form of shops (Marzella, 2014). In fact, the SHC sale in Italy happens through a more diversified system, mainly consisting in, private sales, local markets and fairs (Marzella, 2014), or large SHC open-air markets scattered across the Italian peninsula, namely Resìna in Naples, Sinigaglia in Milan and Porta Portese in Rome (Spoladore, 2010).

Compared to elsewhere in the world, Italian NGOs seem to have a very marginal role in the SHC market. While not-for-profit organisations in United Kingdom (Oxfam GB, 2017) or Sweden (Myrorna, 2016), for instance, manage the whole SHC supply chain from the collection to the resale phase, in Italy the charity shops concept is yet to be fully developed (Vesti Solidale, n.a.); local NGOs are only occasionally delegated to manage the supply chain and commercialise SHC for charitable purposes (Ambiente Solidale, n.a.; ARES 2.0 & SINERGIE, 2013; Humana People To People Italia, 2015a). Officially, the supply chain is jointly handled by ANCI ('National Association of Italian Municipalities') and CONAU ('National Consortium Used Clothing and Accessories') and single municipalities, that autonomously decide for the local textile waste collection procedures (Ronchi & Nepi, 2016). This allows for striking differences in textile collection across the peninsula: in 2014, for instance, 61,4 kilotons of textile waste were collected in the North, almost double the amount collected in the Centre and South (respectively 32,7 and 30,4 kilotons) (Ronchi & Nepi, 2016).

Overall, the textile recycling chain in Italy greatly lacks of transparency and regularisation (Humana People To People Italia, 2015b; Liuni, 2015). The fragmentation of the process, the lack of a national legislation on dealing with textile disposal and the large involvement of the organised crime (Humana People To People Italia, 2015b) make it extremely difficult to trace the exact amount of nationally collected and recycled textile waste against what gets incinerated (ARES 2.0 & SINERGIE, 2013; Ronchi & Nepi, 2016). Additionally, the coexistence of different collection channels increases the risk of confusion among citizens, who are not always informed on how best to dispose of their used clothing (Humana People To People Italia, 2015a, 2015b). Available data show that, although Italians consume an average

of 14 kilograms of clothes per capita/year, only an average of 2 kilograms/capita are properly destined for recycling and/or reuse, compared to the average 4 kilograms/capita collected in the rest of Europe (ARES 2.0 & SINERGIE, 2013; Humana People To People Italia, 2015a). Of the clothes collected in Italy, 68% is destined to reuse: large scale collection and sorting of textile waste is mostly performed in Naples and Ercolano, considered the biggest hubs for SHC (Ronchi & Nepi, 2016). From there a large amount (ca. 100-150kt) is destined abroad to North- and Sub-Saharan African countries (Ronchi & Nepi, 2016). In such countries, however, import of cheap SHC is blamed to have jeopardised and boycotted internal textile and clothing industries, so that bans to further SHC import have been imposed (Frazer, 2008; Haggblade, 1990; Hansen, 2004). What remains within national borders is often directed towards recycling for industrial use (29%) or landfilled (3%) (Ronchi & Nepi, 2016).

3. Theory

The aim of the following chapter is twofold: the first section presents the concepts of FF and SF, used as theoretical background to frame the SHC consumption in. The second section introduces the frameworks adopted to analyse the perceptions of the SHC market in the Italian context, and identify hindrances to SHC consumption, respectively Guiot & Roux's (2010) consumers' motivation framework, and Hansson and Morozov's (2016) moderating factors to SHC shopping.

3.1 Theoretical framework

3.1.1 The Fast Fashion system

Starting from the 1980s, the fashion industry in the Western world has undergone a dramatic change (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010) towards a progressive "democratization" of fashion (La Marca & Palamara, 2005). Increasing media coverage of fashion events since the 1990s (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010) meant that designers and apparel companies were no longer granted exclusive access to fashion shows and preview of the forth-coming trends: photos from the catwalks started to be increasingly accessible by being displayed on magazines, blogs and social media (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010). Customers' growing appetite for catwalk trends (Joy et al., 2012) has encouraged companies to change business strategy, using real-time data to understand consumers' preferences (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010) and meeting them with multiple seasonal (and mid-seasonal) collections throughout the year (Cobbing & Vicaire, 2016). Global clothing production, outsourced to developing countries to cut costs down (Minney, 2016), has almost doubled within 15 year, reaching 100 billion in 2014 (Cobbing & Vicaire, 2016). The increasingly low prices of clothing is what has allowed brands like H&M and Zara to register an 'explosive expansion' and become giants of the fashion industry from 2000s onwards (Cobbing & Vicaire, 2016). Economic accessibility of these garments has spiked consumption rates further: compared to 15 years ago, the average Western consumer purchases 60% more clothes. While the current global average is 5 kilograms/person of new clothing purchased per year, with North America leading with 16 kilograms clothes/person/year, the global trend is expected to rise to the American standard of 16 kilograms/person by 2030 (Cobbing & Vicaire, 2016) The underlying motivation is of socio-cultural nature: the 'post-industrial information age' has rendered adapting to shifting trends a necessity for displaying one's social status and being socially accepted (Farennikova & Prinz, 2011). Additionally, the combination of low prices and ever-changing variety of collections makes consumers perceive the shopping experience as an exciting leisure activity (Farrer, 2011).

In order to encourage rapid replacement, companies design clothes with 'planned obsolescence' (Guiltinan, 2009; Hawley, 2008): less and less is invested in material and durability, transforming clothing into 'disposable goods' (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010; Morgan, 2015). The resulting *throw-away* fashion system accustoms consumers to guiltlessly dispose of clothes they no longer use with a rate twice as fast as 15 years ago (Cobbing & Vicaire, 2016). With 30 kilograms of clothes disposed of per person/year in the US only (Luz, 2007), this tendency translates in a reinforcing loop which is both socially and environmentally unsustainable (Minney, 2016) for the reasons highlighted earlier in this thesis.

The heavy burden of the fashion industry on our planet resources has prompted growing media coverage on this theme, ranging from documentaries (Morgan, 2015), to awareness-raising activist movements (Fashion Revolution, n.a.), and has inspired the creation of new fashion paradigms, like the one presented in the next section.

3.1.2 Slow Fashion

Coined in 2007 by Kate Fletcher (2007) and inspired by Carlo Petrini's Slow Food movement, SF is a new fashion paradigm that "promotes variety and multiplicity of fashion production and consumption and that celebrates the pleasure and cultural significance of fashion within biophysical limits" (Fletcher, 2010, p. 262). It aims at performing a radical change within the fashion industry, moving away from a growth- and accumulation-oriented model and advocating a more mindful, conscious and sustainable shopping behaviour (Fletcher, 2010). Ertekin & Atik (2015) identify three main principles underlying SF:

1) *promotion of diversity and de-centralisation*, done by resorting to locally available material, resources and skills;

2) *transparency of the production system*, meaning a reduction in intermediaries and in the distance between designers, producers and consumers;

3) *sustainable design*, meaning producing with long-term durability and usability in mind, rather than 'planned obsolescence'.

The ways to go about this change are multiple: starting from encouraging the reduction in overall fashion consumption (Fletcher, 2010) and the focus on quality rather than quantity (Cataldi et al., 2010; Ertekin & Atik, 2015) to manufacturing with ecological material (e.g. organic cotton, hemp, bamboo, etc.) and dyes; implementing circular or zero-waste production systems (Green Strategy, 2015); remanufacturing; upcycling; acquiring tailor-made clothing; and sewing one's own clothes (Cataldi et al., 2010).

While huge technological improvements have been registered on the production side, considerable

hindrances still exist to the thorough performance of a systemic change in fashion (Cataldi et al., 2010). Both production (Minney, 2016) and consumption (Joy et al., 2012) of ethical and sustainable products have been deemed rather difficult to implement consistently: the higher material and production costs (Minney, 2016) result in fact in garments much more expensive than those offered by FF retail channels (Cataldi et al., 2010; Joy et al., 2012). Moreover, while the awareness is slowly raising, eco-clothing is still perceived as "drab and boring" (Joy et al., 2012, p. 288) by consumers.

As no internationally-recognised policy, nor official SF certification exist that bind companies to adopt sustainable practices (Cataldi et al., 2010), SF practices remain voluntary-based and dependent on the company's personal values, rendering competition extremely unbalanced (Cataldi et al., 2010). Additionally, a plethora of independent ethical and eco-labels exists, that confuses consumers and contributes to further scepticism towards green consumption (Beard, 2008; Bonini & Oppenheim, 2008).

The key to attracting consumers to sustainable consumption practices, besides providing adequate information (Bonini & Oppenheim, 2008), lies in combining fulfilment of their aesthetic needs with affordable prices (Joy et al., 2012). Frameworks like the following could provide some helpful guidelines.

3.2 Analytical framework

3.2.1 Patterns of consumers' behaviour

Methods used for this research are informed by the second-hand (SH) shoppers' motivations framework developed by Guiot & Roux (2010). Although their study is limited to SH consumption in general, it will be applied in this thesis to understand consumers' motivations in purchasing SHC.

Guiot and Roux's (2010) framework aims at categorising motivations inspiring consumers, French in their peculiar case, to consume SH goods. By adopting a mixed-methods approach, the final framework consists of a scale of eight main factors most likely to drive consumers to SH, supported by motivations of economic, critical or hedonic/recreational nature (Figure 1) (Guiot & Roux, 2010). The different levels of this scale do not exclude each other, but are strongly interrelated and very likely to appear in combination in consumers' decision-making (Guiot & Roux, 2010).
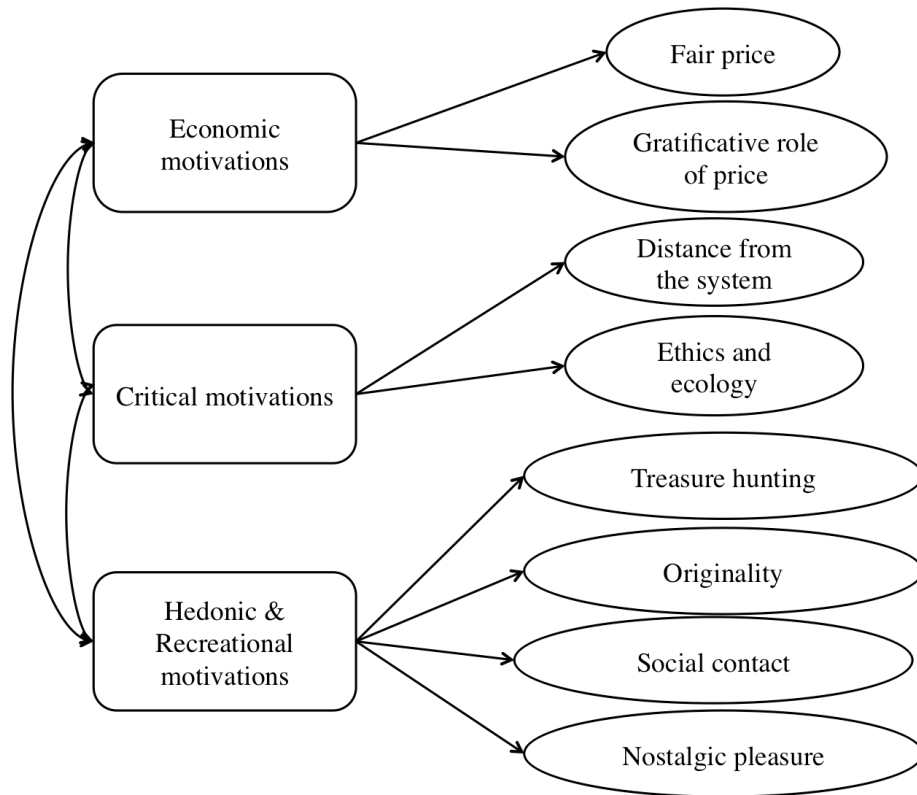
Figure 1: Visual representation of the hierarchical model of consumers' motivations for SH shopping (Guiot & Roux, 2010).

Motivations in to the **economic** sphere are *fair price* and *gratificative role of price*. By *fair price*, Guiot & Roux (2010) mean that the price paid for SH is often perceived by consumers as fairer and more representative of the quality of the item compared to the new. *Gratificative role of price* is that buying potential SHC presents consumers to allocate a smaller share of their budget on accessory expenses.

A consumer's personal **critical** stance against the system in place can also be a strong driver to the decision to wear SHC. Among motivations**,** Guiot & Roux (2010) define *distance from the system* as 'avoidance of conventional channels', that is the will to exit the consumerist system and consume independently from media and fashion dictates. In the case of SH shopping, this also translates in shopping smart and taking "intelligent advantage of products that other people no longer want" (Guiot & Roux, 2010, p. 387). The *ethics and ecology* motivation consists in the desire for an increasing number of consumers have to counteract the *throw-away* consumption culture, due to raising concerns about resource depletion, waste accumulation and waste of good reusable products.

SH consumption has often been referred to as a **hedonic and recreational** activity due to the unconventional sourcing of its stock, garments sold come in unpredictable sizes, styles and colours

(Bardhi & Arnould, 2005; Guiot & Roux, 2010). *Treasure hunting* is one of the distinctive features of SHC shopping: the lack of a predictable and standardised stock transforms browsing items in a SHC shop into 'unearthing a treasure' hidden in the racks (Guiot & Roux, 2010). SH shopping also appeals for the *originality* of the stock, which allows consumers to develop their unique style and dress unconventionally (Guiot & Roux, 2010). Another main reason to drive to SH consumption, according to Guiot & Roux (2010), is the possibility SH shops give to restore *social contact* lost in an era of supermarkets and retail stores, by chatting with shop owners and other customers. Lastly, *nostalgic pleasure*, that is the appreciation of the history, personality and 'soul' an old item embeds (Guiot & Roux, 2010). This value can also be found in garments, and retro-marketing and vintage fashion are growing phenomena of the past years (Brown, Kozinets, & Sherry, 2003; Gregson & Crewe, 2003).

3.2.2 Moderating factors to Second-Hand Clothing shopping

While motivations for SHC consumption will be highlighted using Guiot & Roux's framework, the guideline to identify barriers in SHC development in the Italian context will be Hansson and Morozov (2016) study on consumers' motivations to SHC shopping in Lund, Sweden. By drawing from related literature on consumers' behaviour (Darley & Lim, 1999; Roux, 2006), Hansson and Morozov (2016) list four main factors that can prove obstacles to SHC consumption:

1) **Contamination from previous owner**: in terms of *personality* and of the perception of uncleanliness and lack of hygiene often linked to SHC;

2) **Utilitarian motivations**: that encourage consumers to prefer new clothing to SH in case of low quality/price relationship or size unavailability;

3) **Store characteristics:** that is the appearance, cleanliness and attractiveness of the SHC shops;

4) **Personal values:** meaning that consumers can perceive purchase of SHC as 'personal failure' and inability to buy new clothes; as well as a lack of style and uniqueness.

4. Research design

4.1. Methodological approach

This thesis adopts critical realism as ontological standpoint: it recognises that the social world can only be understood if the underlying structures generating discourses are identified (Bryman, 2012). Social phenomena are products of 'generative mechanisms' which are not directly observable; however, knowledge of the contexts where these mechanisms happen is crucial in order to "shed light on the conditions that promote or impede the operation of the causal mechanism" (Bryman, 2012, p. 29). Hence the decision to adopt a case study approach as research strategy: case studies are considered an ideal approach to examine complex social phenomena (Yin, 1994), in this case Fast Fashion, by looking at the reality around us (Rowley, 2002), in this case through consumers' perceptions. Their use is often recommended to analyse behaviours that cannot be manipulated (Yin, 1994). The case study this thesis will be based on is SHC consumption in Italy, due to the compelling combination, existing in this setting, of sensitiveness to fashion and decreasing spending capability. By using both qualitative and quantitative data, in the form of interviews and a survey respectively, Italian consumer's perceptions of SHC and factors for fashion purchases will be investigated, in order to understand what context-specific factors influence fashion consumption behaviours. Adoption of the above-mentioned theoretical frameworks will help analyse data within the broader debate and facilitate their generalisation (Bryman, 2012).

4.2 Methods

After an initial desktop-based phase, the research included a two-weeks field-work phase in Milan, Monza and Turin, in Northern Italy, and Naples in Southern Italy for a first round of data collection. A second desktop-based phase for the second round of data collection concluded the research.

Data used for this research are both quantitative and qualitative and were collected employing the following methods:

– **Semi-structured interviews** with selected experts and relevant stakeholders in the field of sustainable consumption and SHC retail;

– **Online survey** targeting Italian consumers and aiming at understanding the perception of SHC and criteria used in the decision-making process for fashion shopping.

Additionally, a literature review spanning from articles to books specialised in sustainable fashion was undertaken prior to and throughout the research process to inform data collection and ground it with

evidence. The validity of the findings was ensured through data triangulation (Bryman, 2012).

Data from interviews and online surveys were all collected in Italian and are here presented in an English translation by the author. With Italian being the native language of the author, conducting research in this context in Italian will have allowed for a deeper insight and understanding of the perception of SHC consumption among the Italian public, thanks to language nuances that might have been lost had the research been conducted in any other context.

4.2.1 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews (Bryman, 2012) were chosen to gain a deeper insight into the theme of sustainable consumption practices and, specifically, of SHC purchases. The original plan included involvement of three categories of interviewees: 1) SHC shop owners; 2) alternative fashion consumption entrepreneurs; and 3) academics working in the field of sustainable consumption practices. Despite multiple attempts to get in touch with the latter category, however, no response came from selected academics, thus reducing the stakeholder categories to the former two. Alternative fashion entrepreneurs were included as stakeholders for this study in order to understand the status and the popularity of sustainable fashion practices among Italian consumers.

The stakeholder list has been constantly updated and expanded through snowball sampling (Bryman, 2012). In choosing stakeholders to contact, the following criteria were kept in mind:

- Type of activity: the company/ shop should focus on promotion of sustainable consumption practices, be it production of ecological garments (using organic cotton, recycled material etc.) or resale of SHC.

- Geographical location: companies/ shops should be logistically accessible to the researcher, due to time and economic constraints. Purposive sampling (Bryman, 2012) was used to ensure shops were scattered across the Italian territory in order to get as wide a picture of the SHC market as possible. While virtual contact was established in some exceptional cases, stakeholders situated in convenient locations for the researcher (Naples, Milan, Monza and Turin) were personally visited and interviewed, and used as a proxy for the geographical area of reference.

A total of nine interviews were arranged with SHC shop owners and alternative clothing companies and conducted, either in person or virtually, across the period March 12th to 27th, throughout the fieldwork done in Milan, Monza, Turin and Naples. Purposive sampling was adopted for Milan and Naples, being respectively the Italian fashion capital and the most important hub for SHC collection and export to national and international markets; snowball sampling was employed for Monza and Turin.

All interviews were digitally recorded except for two, respectively recorded manually and conducted via email. All interviewees will be referred to with a number assigned randomly and kept anonymous.

A table containing reference names for interviewees and relative stakeholder category can be found below (Table 2). A more detailed list of interviewees, business description and date of interview can be read in Appendix A. Interviews were subsequently analysed through qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA by identifying common themes, colour-coding them and highlighting them in the interview transcriptions.

Table 2: Interviewed stakeholders listed by business category, with assigned code and business name.

SHC shops		
Interviewee 1	I1	Il Bivio
Interviewee 2	I2	Il Girotondo
Interviewee 3	I3	Vesti Solidale / SHARE Milan
Interviewee 4	I4	Ambiente Solidale / SHARE Napoli
Interviewee 5	I5	Kilo Shop
Interviewee 6	I6	Rinnova
Alternative fashion		
Interviewee 7	I7	CNA Federmoda
Interviewee 8	I8	Dress Me Veg
Interviewee 9	I9	Eco-Geco

4.2.2 Online Survey

The online survey was chosen for the possibility to collect a large sample of motivations for and against SHC consumption among Italian consumers and to inquire about the decision-making process when purchasing new clothes (Bryman, 2012).

Responses were collected through sharing the survey on Facebook from March 24th to April 10th. Facebook was chosen as sharing platform for the possibility of reaching a large and varied sample of respondents. The following typologies of groups, active across the whole Italian territory, were chosen: university-related, gathering students primarily; sell&buy and miscellanea groups, gathering members of different gender, age and occupation and themed by location. A detailed list of groups used for survey sharing can be found in Appendix D.

The surveys collected a total of 321 responses; incomplete responses were deleted, reducing the sample to 314 responses. Analysis of the responses showed a stark majority of female respondents (75,8%) mostly aged 14 to 24 (53,5%), followed by 15,2% of 50 to 59 year old respondents. A complete overview on the demographic information of respondents can be found in Appendix F.

The survey was created online via SurveyMonkey and structured in three sections: a first introductory one, including socio-demographic information (age, gender, provenience across the Italian peninsula and ownership of SHC); a second concerning motivations to buy/wear SHC or not; and a third concerning decision-making process for new clothing purchases. A detailed list of questions used in the survey can be found in Appendix E. Particular attention was devoted to linguistic choices, so that questions and multiple-choice answers would be perceived as neutral, politically correct and non-discriminatory as possible. For questions concerning personal information, provision of a "rather not say" option for gender was chosen in order to make the survey as inclusive as possible.

The guideline in the structure of the surveys was the framework for consumers' motivation to SH consumption, discussed in the previous chapter, developed by Guiot & Roux (2010).

4.3 Ethical considerations

Prior to interviews, an informed consent form asking permission for data treatment and to record the conversation was offered to sign to interviewees as recommended by Bryman (2012). A model of the consent form used can be found in Appendix B. For interviewees who preferred not to be recorded, manual handwritten notes were taken instead and transcribed for data analysis. Anonymity was offered to all interviewees and accepted by many. In the case of online surveys, anonymity was granted to all respondents by disabling the recording of the respondents' IP address.

4.4 Limitations

The author recognizes the presence of some limitations that might have coloured the obtained results in some way or the other. Firstly, the geographical and cultural provenience of the researcher from Southern Italy, together with her position as a young female student, might have an important factor in determining the demographic sample reached by the online survey. Should the survey be conducted from a different network, by a researcher with a different geographical location in Italy, perhaps a more varied sample of respondents might have been collected.

The list of Facebook groups originally selected for the survey sharing had to be reduced for two reasons: lack of timely access to closed groups requiring access request; and to strict posting rules of some groups, which excluded posts not directly related to the purpose of the group. Access to a more varied number of Facebook groups would have facilitated the collection of an equally diversified sample of respondents. The nature itself of some of the groups involved, especially those focusing on sell&buy,

might have coloured the responses here collected, as members of such groups are more likely to be keen on consuming SHC. The decision to use Facebook as the only sharing platform for the online survey, while convenient and more time-efficient, means that potential SHC wearers or non-wearers who do not use Facebook or access it regularly might have been excluded from this study, limiting the sample (Bethlehem & Biffignandi, 2012).

A more heterogeneous sample of stakeholders and a clearer picture of the SHC sale and consumption patterns in different geographical locations would have also been allowed by more time and economic possibilities to travel across Italy. As cultural traits and perceptions can significantly change from one region to the other, and among urban areas of different size, a wider selection of stakeholders would have undoubtedly enabled a deeper insight on the barriers and potentials of the SHC market in Italy.

With concerns to methodology, putting no limit for selectable options for multiple-choice questions in the online survey, while granting respondents more freedom in answering, might have resulted in loss of significance (Foddy, 1993).

Lastly, although the whole field research was run in the author's native language, as the results were then translated to English, linguistic differences need to be accounted for as a potential further limitation. Translational work is very conducive to loss of content, and despite the author's effort to convey the full spectre of shades of meaning, it is likely that the strength of some statements made by interviewees or respondents to the surveys will be weakened in their translated version.

5. Results and Discussion

The following chapter presents data collected through interviews and the online survey, and discusses them in light of the RQs. Four steps will be taken.

Section 5.1 will answer RQ1.1 by analysing the motivations leading the Italian consumers surveyed to wear and consume SHC.

Section 5.2 will present the criteria adopted in purchasing new clothes, addressing RQ1. This will help identify convergence points with motivations to buy SHC, which will then be analysed in section four.

Section 5.3 will address RQ2 by highlighting the barriers identified to SHC consumption by both SHC wearers and non-wearers.

Lastly, section 5.4 will discuss convergent points from the above sections and suggest potential leverage points for mainstreaming SHC consumption in the Italian context, thus answering RQ2.1.

5.1 Motivations for SHC consumption

The sample of SHC wearers amounts to 43% of the total; of these, only 20% affirms to buy them on a regular basis. This section presents their responses, with particular reference to questions 7 (Figure 2) and 8 (Figure 3). Detailed results can be found in Appendix F, Figures F1 and F2.

Data will be presented following Guiot & Roux's (2010) framework (Figure 1) as a guideline.

Q7 How do you obtain second-hand clothes? Rank the options from most frequent (1) to least frequent (5). Select N/A for options you never resort to.

Hanno risposto: 133   Hanno saltato la domanda: 4
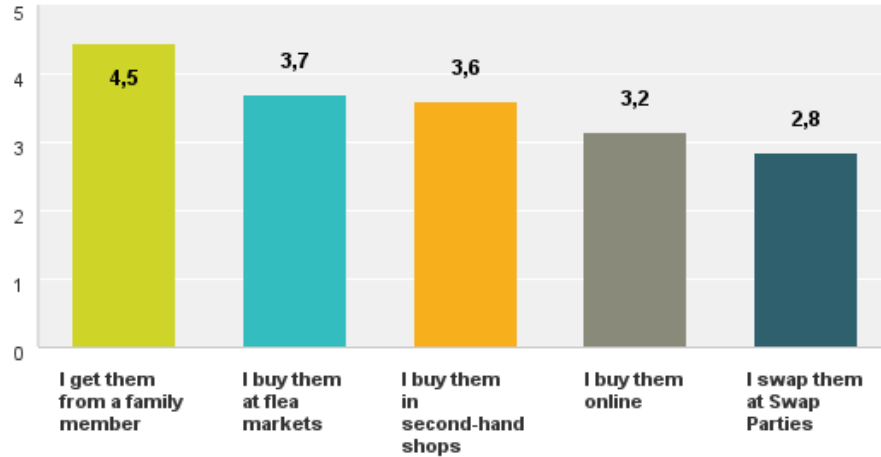
Figure 2: Weighted average of most frequent channels used to obtain SHC.

Q8 How important are the following factors in your decision to wear second hand clothing? Add more motivations if not included in the list.

Hanno risposto: 133   Hanno saltato la domanda: 4
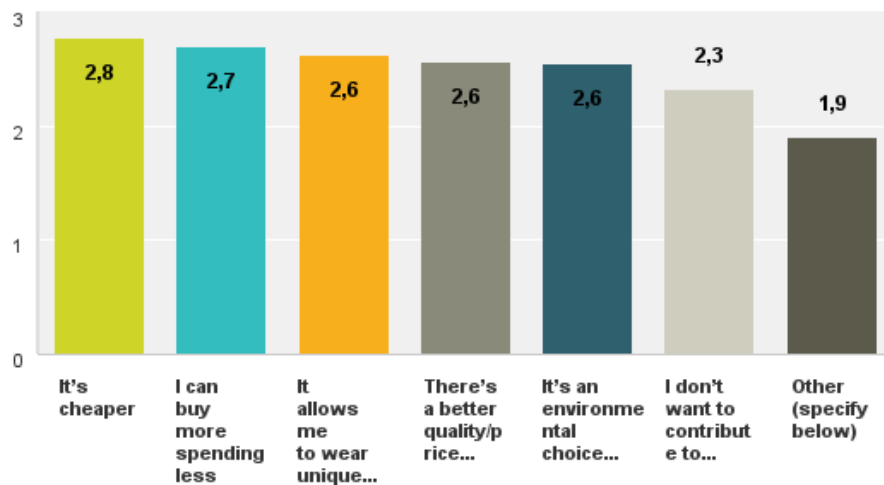
Figure 3: Weighted average of factors in consumers' decision to wear SHC.

5.1.1 Economic motivations

Guiot & Roux (2010) list *fair price* and *gratificative role of price* as motivations of economic nature.

Fair price

The *fair price* factor seems particularly grounded in the Italian context, where an interviewee, currently owner of a SHC shop in Milan, identifies a paradox emerged in the past 30 years and attributable to the dramatic rise of FF:

> *"The FF market has completely butchered the mid-range* [fashion]*, and cheap* (sic) *has also modified the high-end sector, because a pair of classic Gucci moccasin in the 80s would cost more or less 250-300€ […]now they are priced 900, but the product is the same, made in China even. High-end is meaninglessly high, low-end is also meaninglessly low. […]Everything is either too expensive or too cheap, and the mid-range is impossible. […]I think that the alternative to this is exactly second-hand"* (I5)

62% of the survey respondents agree with this last sentence, listing the better price/quality relationship compared to new clothes as an important[1] motivation to buy SHC, ranking it as the 4th most relevant motivator to consume SHC with a weighted average of 2,6 (Figure 3). The price of new clothing is oftentimes perceived as unreasonably expensive compared to the actual quality of the garment itself. I1 herself highlights this feature of new clothing: after working in the fashion industry for the first part of her career, she decided to open her own SHC shop driven by criticism to the excessive mark-up companies apply to their garments:

> *"The markup fashion companies add is unbelievable, it does not reflect anything, it's completely their idea. There is no Givenchy sweater that is worth 600€, it doesn't exist, because the sweater has been made in Portugal for 22€. Instead you apply a fair markup like we do and you sell it for 60€. […]A lightweight, mid-season, nylon jacket from Aspesy* [high-end brand]*, we value it as a lightweight nylon jacket and sell it between 30-75€"*

A vintage shop owner in Naples shares the same view about SHC, saying that:

> *"[…] who has a vintage boutique and finds a* [vintage] *MaxMara blouse […] sells it to you for 50€. I sell it for 5€ [because] it is still used, […] I sell it for what it is."* (I5)

In other words, when a garment re-enters the market as SHC, it loses the arbitrary value associated to its

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[1] Throughout this section, by "important" the author means the aggregate result from "rather important" and

brand, and is valued for its quality alone instead. While still loaded with a markup price, the SHC final price is more representative of the products' quality than the one shown in retail stores, and therefore more appealing to consumers who are increasingly more conscious about their expenses.

Gratificative role of price

In an economically sensitive context like Italy, economic accessibility of SHC constitutes an important factor and it is acknowledged by both interviewees and respondent: I5, for example, claims that *"*[wearing SHC] *is somewhat anti-crisis… […]people are becoming interested in it in order not to spend the money they spent before"*. Respondents themselves claim that the low price of SHC is what encourages them the most to resort to this practice: with 64% of SHC consumers listing it as important and a weighted average of 2,8, this factor appears 1st in the ranking. Immediately following as 2nd most relevant factor, with 63% of respondents classifying it as important and a weighted average of 2,7, is possibility of buying more by spending less (Figure 3).

An interesting North/South difference has been pointed out by I4, communication responsible of a SHC shop in Naples: while in Milan, where other branches of her SHC shop chain are, conventional retailers tend to have higher prices than SHC shops, in Naples and Southern Italy it is quite common to purchase new clothes at a very low price, and therefore the economic convenience is not the main reason why her customers resort to SHC.

Q8 How important are the following factors in your decision to wear second hand clothing? Add more motivations if not included in the list.

Hanno risposto: 87   Hanno saltato la domanda: 108
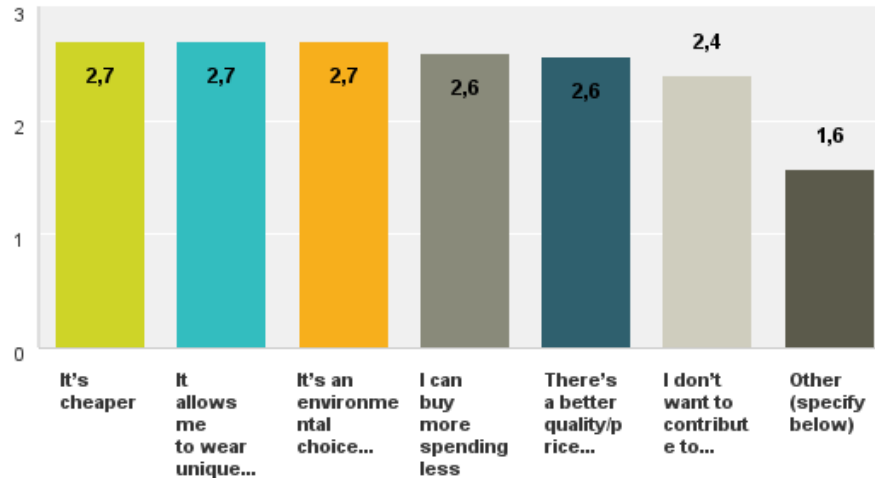
Figure 4: Graph showing weighted average of factors in consumers' decision to wear SHC, filtered to show respondents from Southern Italy only.

The graph in Figure 4 shows that the leading motivation to SHC consumption in the South is characterised by a combination of economic, critical and hedonic factors, all sharing a weighted average of 2,7.

5.1.2 Critical motivations

Under 'critical motivations', Guiot & Roux (2010) list *distance from the system* and *ethics and ecology*. The former factor seems to have limited relevance among SHC consumers, who rank it 6th by importance (Figure 3). In contrast, what survey and interviews showed to be a much more embedded factor among Italian consumers is the disapproval of the wastefulness connected to today's fashion system. This, however, takes on a much greater relevance if analysed within the *ethics and ecology* motivation below.

Ethics and ecology

Environmental concern per se does not stand out as a leading motivation for SHC consumption, with only 56% of consumers choosing to wear SHC for pure environmental reasons and ranking it 5th in order of importance (Figure 3). Additionally, only 55% of respondents stated that wearing SHC helped them

raise their awareness about the environmental impact of fashion. While both sizeable percentages, the data show that there is no direct and necessary correlation between environmental sensitiveness and SHC consumption.

However, an interesting motivation emerges that relates to a mentality typical of the Italian agrarian past, that is concern about wastefulness. As I7 states:

"[the no-waste] mentality was typical of any Italian farmer family from North to South, […]nothing gets thrown away and there is maximum respect for what provides you food. A farmer won't pollute his field or else he is to eat stones afterwards… it was a widely spread culture in a country that was 80% agrarian until the 1930s/40s, a country that had a steady industrialization from 50s to 70s, that has forgotten everything and hasn't taught anything else anymore to following generations."

Some comments from the survey show hints for a possible future comeback of this sensitiveness. Two respondents feel *"sorry to throw away so many still good garments"* (female respondent) considering that *"some recycled clothes are basically new or used very little"* (male respondent). Interviews, in particular, highlight that there actually is a growing sensitiveness to reducing waste, for reasons that combine economic and ecological conscience. In I2's view, *"[…] by now many have understood that waste is not good. The idea has spread a lot […] people mind throwing away stuff"*. Consumers, therefore, might not decide to purchase SHC primarily with environmental sustainability in mind, but this appears to be an important consideration tightly linked to the economic motivations.

The awareness of the environmental impact of FF is instead rather engrained amongst SHC shop owners. Some interviewees have even made their own personal concern the decisive reason to start a SHC business, (I1; I2; I5; I6). I1 sees SHC as the ideal option to reduce the environmental impact of fashion and states:

"With my job choice […]I feel I'm earning money and a living for me, for my employees, and I'm not putting anything into the circle that wasn't there already, I'm just redistributing[…], I'm not damaging anything, I'm not adding any more loads on an already overburdened system, and this is fundamental to me." (I1).

Second-hand clothing is perceived, in this quote, as the possibility of closing the loop in fashion by redistributing the global overproduction of clothes. Such a consideration resounds with the principles the Circular Fashion concept is built upon, that aim at promoting a new fashion paradigm through more

purposeful design and clothes reuse and recycling (Green Strategy, 2015).

While the environmental motive might not have a fast grip on Italian consumers, the economic advantage of not wasting clothes in still good conditions proves a compelling leverage point for its mainstreaming, as discussed further in this chapter.

5.1.3 Hedonic and Recreational motivations

In the 'hedonic and recreational motivations' category, Guiot & Roux (2010) insert *treasure hunting*, *originality*, *social contact* and *nostalgic pleasure.* The following section presents the pertinence of such motivations in the Italian context.

Treasure hunting and originality

While not specifically referred to by survey respondents, the relevance of the *treasure hunting* and *originality* features of SHC is recognised by some interviewees. Interviewee 5 confirms this by telling how one of his customers chanced upon (and bought) an original Chanel bag wrongly displayed among 5€ bags. I4 highlights an additional aspect when, referring to the likelihood of chancing upon a 30€ Valentino bag, she defines SHC shopping as the possibility of *"accessing that Olympus of products you wouldn't be able to access with your budget […]saying 'even I can wear it'"*.

A motivation linked to treasure hunting is the search for *originality*: differently from conventional fashion retailers, in SHC shops no garment is identical to the other, neither within the shop nor to collections displayed in other SHC or conventional shops. Buying and wearing clothes that no-one else has, and developing their own style with what is found, is a motivation deemed important by 59% of SHC consumers, who rank it 3rd most relevant. Even the downsides to this feature, e.g. size unavailability, is considered part of the game and cherished by consumers: *"I like not having the choice I have in conventional shops. If my size it's not there, it doesn't suit me"* (female respondent).

Social contact

Absent as a leading factor among survey respondents, social contact seems to be a really important feature for many interviewed SHC shop owners, who do identify some form of interaction and social bonding happening *within* or *because of* their shops. I2, for instance, cares about establishing a good relationship with her customers and reveals that many consider shopping at her shop a way to talk about their problems and release them. Her shop, originally established as a children SHC shop, even includes a

playground area for customers' children.

I7's shop floor appears as a space extremely conducive to social contact: one reason is that he allocates a room in his shop to local young designers, giving them the possibility to remanufacture SHC from his shop and create haute-couture pieces, some of which were even displayed in fashion shows. I7 also holds regular monthly social events in his shop, creating informal setting where he himself can interact with and allow interactions among customers. Combining the business motive with the social aspect is also I4's main goal. In her shop's case, the reasoning behind selling SHC goes beyond the recycling for environmental reasons. Managed by a social NGO working for social integration, the business mandate of her SHC shop is to launch a new type of economy, grounded on social integration and enhancement of what is wrongly considered 'waste'. In her words, their objective is to *"put back into the circle and give value to what we manage to find, be them human resource or clothes, it doesn't matter"* (I4). They do so by employing disadvantaged or marginalised people, by devolving part of their profits to local charity initiatives, by offering gift cards of their shop to poor people. Her NGO, and consequently her SHC shop, try to bring this message of solidarity and social inclusion on the shop floor: by engaging in conversation with the customers, explaining them the logic behind the SHC resale, where the clothes come from, who handles them etc., the goal is to spark a change process in consumers (I4).

Nostalgic pleasure

Nostalgic pleasure seems to have a particular relevance as motivation for SHC consumption in the Italian context. Two tendencies suggest this: the revival of vintage fashion on the one hand, and the consumption of hand-me-downs from family members on the other.

Vintage, despite remaining a niche fashion practice, has recently been gaining popularity in the Italian context (Spoladore, 2010), especially among young people from 16 to 25 years old (I6), to the extent that all SHC shops interviewed included a corner to vintage garments.

However, the appeal to vintage fashion does not appear as relevant as reusing clothes gifted by family members, either in their original style or remanufactured to follow present trends (I7). 68% of SHC consumers in fact have ranked this as the first most likely SHC acquisition channel, even more frequent than resorting to shops or flea markets (Figure 2). Reasons to do so go beyond the uniqueness and the sentimental value attached to the garment, although this aspect is often mentioned in separate comments. There seem to be three equally relevant main explanations: the first being of economic nature, as use of hand-me-downs replaces fashion purchases (*"I don't buy them. It's an exchange among*

close friends and family"). The second is the much higher quality of clothing produced before advent of FF (I1; I5; I7), that many consumer still seek and no longer find at an affordable price in conventional shops (*"I often readapt vintage* [clothes] *within my family – mom and aunts – because quality is not so high now!"*). Lastly, a third identified reason lies in the displeasure with disposal of good-quality clothes in still wearable conditions.

5.2 Motivations for new clothes consumption

After presenting the reasons Italian consumers decide to buy SHC for, the following section will highlight the emerged criteria they keep in mind when purchasing new clothes. Emerged criteria will be presented according to the macro motivations ('economic', 'critical' and 'hedonic&recreational') suggested by Guiot & Roux's (2010) framework examined in section 3.4.
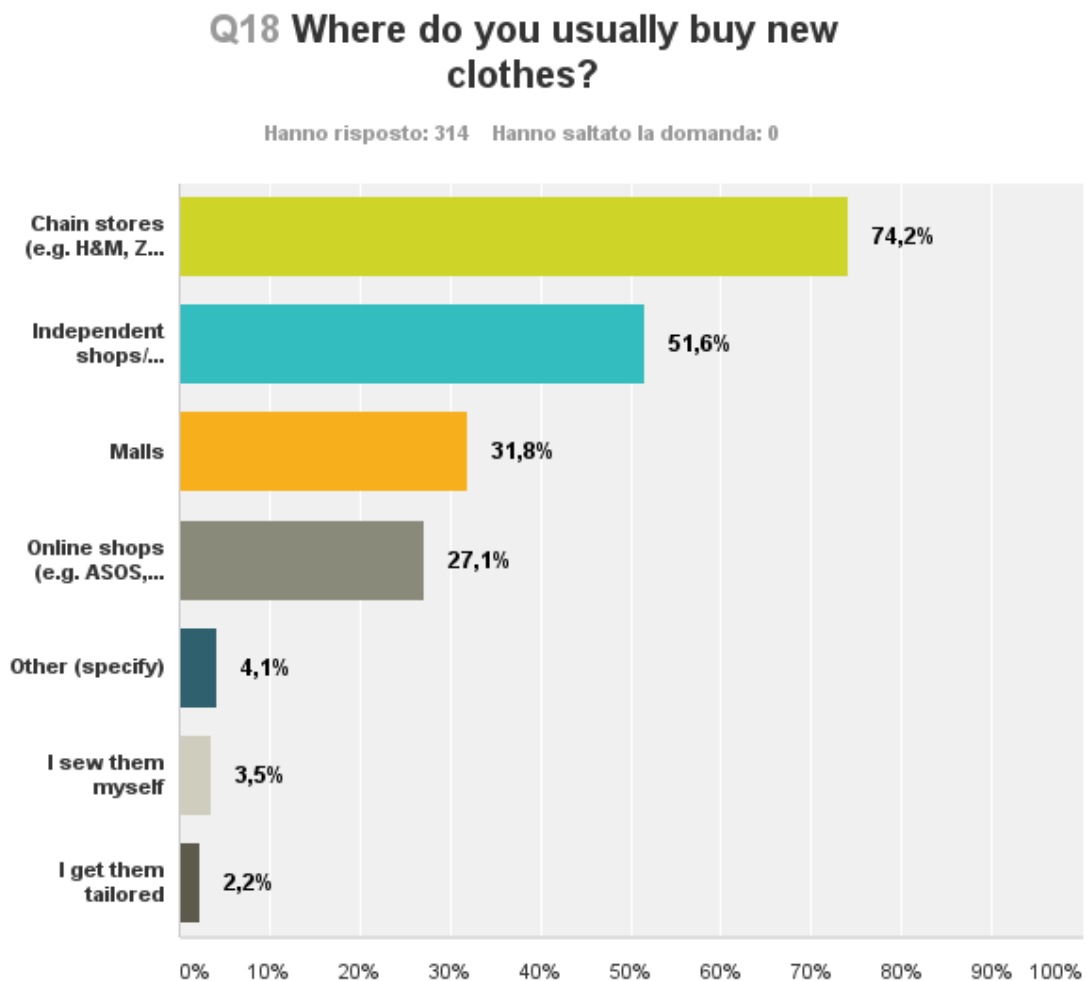
Figure 5: Graph showing popularity of acquisition channels of new clothes.

30

Q19 When buying new clothes, what priority do you give to the following factors?

Hanno risposto: 314   Hanno saltato la domanda: 0

Factor	Value
Good product durability a...	2,4
Consideration on their...	2,4
Low price	2,2
Artisanal, Made in Ital...	2,0
Use of ecological,...	2,0
Environmental responsibili...	1,9
Social responsibili...	1,9
Trends	1,8
Other (specify below)	1,8
Brand	1,6
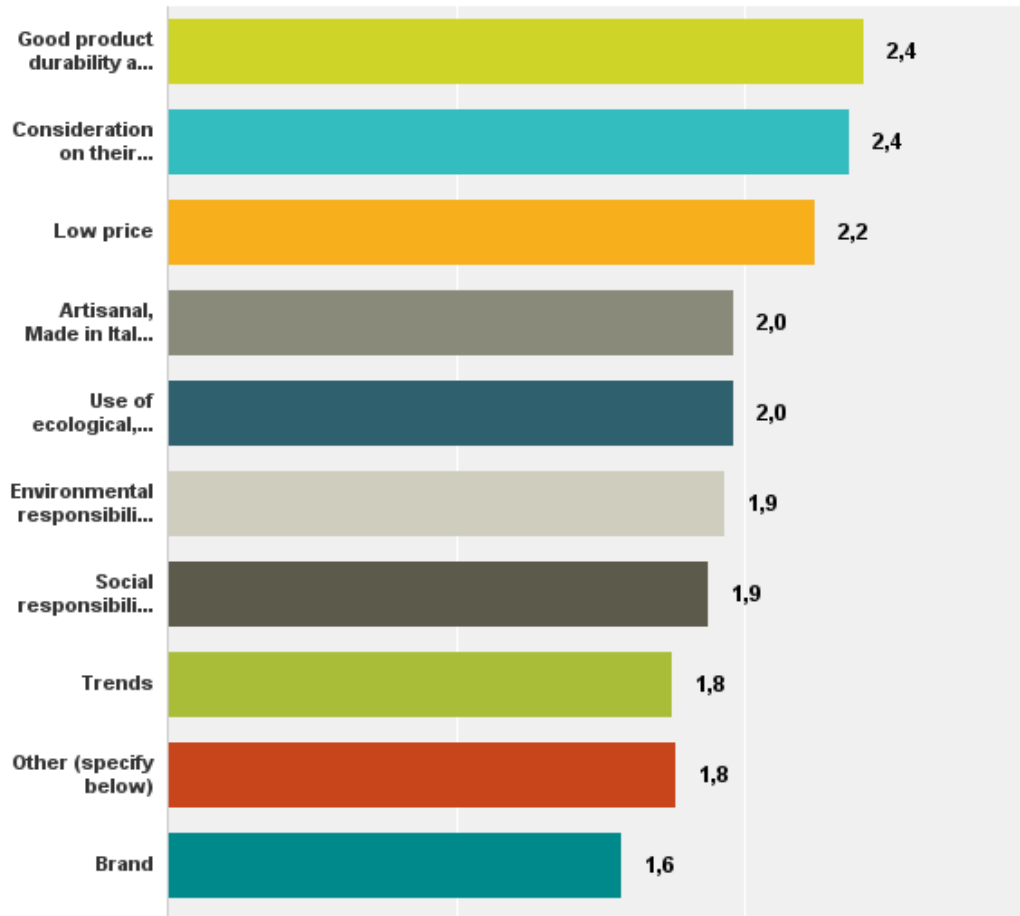
Figure 6: Graph showing weighted average for factors prioritised in new clothing purchases.

5.2.1 Economic motivations

The economic driver and the search for the affordability are evident from the survey responses and interviews. Underlying motivation is, again, the recent economic crisis that has reshuffled Italian consumers' economic priorities and reduced their spending capability (Ciocca, 2010). This has resulted in a dramatic increase of purchases through FF channels: 74% shop at chain stores like H&M and Zara; 27% opt for online shops (Figure 5). Comparatively high is the percentage of those resorting to malls, here meaning big scale supermarkets selling low-price clothing (32%); and to other channels like markets and Chinese import shops. The low popularity of options like getting clothes tailor-made, is explained by I7:

"If I need to put food on my table maybe the 10€ t-shirt […]ends up tempting me more than going to have a tailor-made shirt and pay 120€, because although it only lasts three washes, I can buy 12 of those [t-shirts]*"* (I7 speaking of an average Italian consumer)

Low-price is deemed an important[2] motivation when shopping by 82% of respondents, resulting 3rd in the ranking of priorities. What appears to be predominant, however is a certain long-term thinking over the quality and the durability of the product, discussed in the following paragraph.

5.2.2 Critical motivations

Long-term thinking

Listed under critical criteria, but tightly linked to the economic factor, is the long-term thinking many consumers adopt in purchasing fashion. *Good product quality and durability* is voted an important factor by 93% of consumers, followed by 87% of *expected utility*, resulting respectively in the 1st and 2nd most important shopping criteria.

The reason for this preference is again to be read in the economic crisis. While price remains a paramount factor, consumers seem to seek a compromise between what they can afford to buy and an overall good product. Impulsive shopping does not seem to have a hold in the Italian context, precisely because economic difficulties deter money squandering: *"I buy something only if I actually need it"* (female respondent).

These two aspects are identified as two crucial aspects SHC consumption could leverage upon for its mainstreaming, as discussed later in this section.

Environmental sensitiveness

Italian consumers are generally gaining more awareness on environment-related themes, and ecological sustainability is steadily becoming part of the political and economic agenda (Mannheimer, 2016). In the past years, the food industry particularly has reflected change in consumers' demands by increasingly offering organic food, free-range meat and vegan products. Some respondents do show some attention in this respect for fashion too: 47% account for the environmental responsibility of the fashion company when buying, while 44% seek the use of ecological or natural material in the

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[2] This section will again use the aggregation of "quite important" and "very important" responses.

manufacturing[3]. With weighted averages of 2 an 1,9 respectively, however, the environmental sensitiveness appears a minor factor in the fashion consumption. While almost all interviewees confirm that there is growing interest towards alternative and more sustainable forms of fashion consumption, they stress that it most likely involves a very limited share of population, *"where there is a peculiar mix of culture, critical sensitiveness and spending capacity"* (I7). Different reasons drive this. Some read it as an economic problem, since ecological garments are known for being more expensive than synthetic ones, hence less appealing (I7). Others as a structural issue, as the invasive presence of cheap imported garments makes the competition even more challenging (I7; I9). Others ascribe it to the misinformation, that makes it almost impossible to verify the social and environmental responsibility of fashion houses-

5.2.3 Hedonic and recreational motivations

Italian consumers indeed place a great emphasis on clothes they wear in enhancing their appearance, as discussed above in this thesis. This is conventionally recognised as a distinctive aspect of the Italian approach to fashion compared to Northern-Europeans' (I7): *"In Italy […]people often do things to have a* [positive] *image to others, rather than minding about themselves. Abroad, on the contrary, one tends to enhance their personal style with anything works"* (female respondent).

As shown by the survey responses, however, enhancement of the personal image does not necessarily translate into following trends or buying specific brands (respectively 8th and 10th in the ranking of significant shopping criteria) (Figure 6). This is a compelling departure from the above-mentioned cultural trait of *bella figura*, that sees the ownership of expensive branded items as essential to portray a positive personal image (Pipyrou, 2014). More than the brand bought, it is the development of one's own original style that is considered paramount. However, only new clothes seem to serve this aim, as *"[they] arrive 'neutral' in the shop, but end up absorbing the personality of those who wear them"*.

A different comment by a female respondent shows a compelling aspect that could be efficiently used to mainstream SHC consumption, that is *"I never buy 'things everyone have'"*. Search for originality and exclusiveness is hence an important driver in new clothing consumption too, and while this might prove difficult in a market ruled by uniform collections by FF chain companies (I5), SHC would certainly

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[3] It is interesting to note that animalism, which in other field is tightly linked to environmental conscience, when applied to fashion translates in a rather contradictory trend, that is resorting to synthetic, non-biodegradable fibres instead of wool, leather and silk.

facilitate it, as discussed later in this chapter.

5.3 Barriers to SHC consumption

The following section will present the barriers that hinder the development of SHC market in Italy. The barriers will be presented according to their existence at the individual or systemic level. Based on Hansson & Morozov's (2016) moderating factors (section 3.4), this section integrates data collected through interviews and online survey. A graph showing weighted average of barriers can be seen in Figure 5.
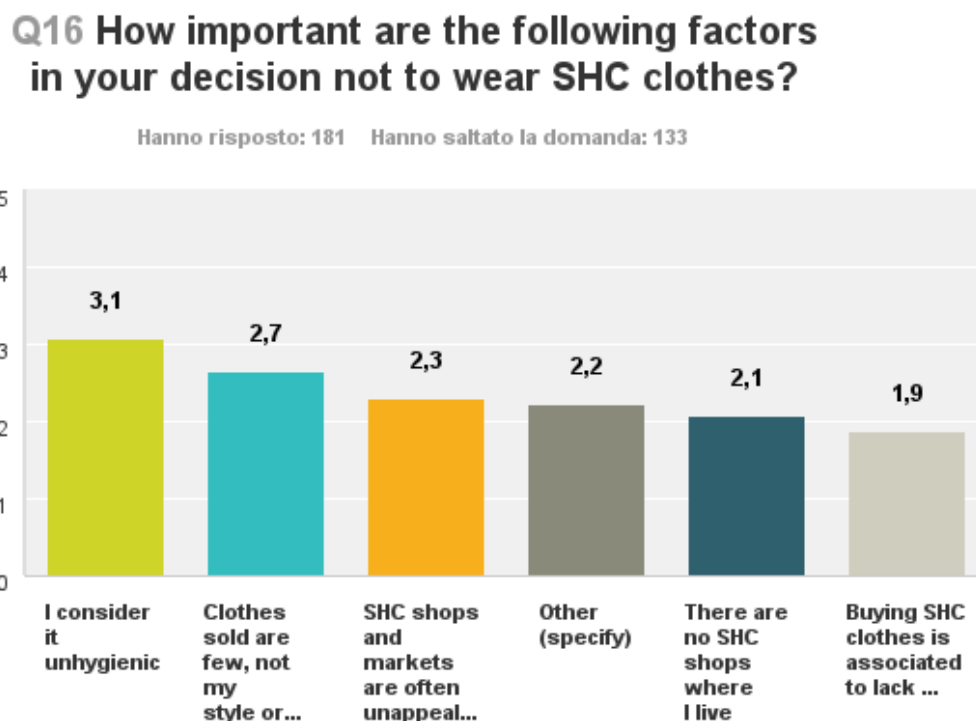
Figure 7: Graph showing weighted average for barriers to SHC consumption identified by non-SHC wearers.

5.3.1 Personal barriers

Contamination factor

Hansson and Morozov's (2016) 'contamination factor' appears as a sizeable hindrance in the Italian context. 75% of non-SHC wearers claim that perception of uncleanliness is what motivates them not to consume SHC, listing it as the most relevant barrier with a weighted average of 3,1 (Figure 7). Some corroborate Hansson and Morozov's (2016) findings stating that the idea of wearing used

clothes is not appealing, both for hygienic motivations and for the 'personality contamination' that impedes them to transfer their own style on clothes; as a respondents says: *"Clothes to me are extremely personal. They are 'neutral' but then absorb the wearer's personality. I would feel uncomfortable wearing someone else's clothes"*.

A feature of the SHC channels in Italy helps fuel this bias, that is the unattractiveness of shops and flea markets. Very few of the shops care about their interior and about providing the customer with a pleasant shopping experience, comparable to conventional clothing stores (I1; I2; I4). They all argue that, in order to compete with FF stores and modify consumers' perception about SHC, the first step consists in making the shop itself a more appealing environment. This aspect is confirmed by Darley & Lim (1999), who stress the importance of the aesthetic appeal of a SHC shop, enhanced by pleasant atmosphere and music, in order to compete with conventional retail stores.

The perception of SHC as unhygienic seems particularly rooted due to a second reason, i.e. the association of SHC as 'waste'. I5 confirms this point sharing:

> *"You have no idea how many things* [I have heard say about me]*, like that I sell garbage"* (I5).

The reason for this is that, when not donated to charitable purposes, as mentioned below, clothes are disposed of as textile waste and landfilled. This confers SHC a 'rubbish value' (Pipyrou, 2014) that lack of information, as discussed later in this chapter, contributes to feed.

The fear of 'ugly appearance'

Closely linked to the contamination factor is the perception of SHC as a practice associated to lack of economic means (in Hansson & Morozov's framework referred to as 'personal value'). Although being listed 5th by relevance among consumers, with a weighted average of 1,9, the fear of being perceived poor is still somehow rooted in consumers. As a female survey respondent writes:

> *"[…] Unless you are somewhat charismatic […] wearing SHC is associated to those who cannot manage their life or don't care about care of themselves. A judgment I often hear is 'Don't they even have money to buy an H&M t-shirt?'"*

Another quote by I5 highlights an additional interesting point:

> *"Some customers tell me 'my friends can't know I come to shop here'… and* [when] *they get applauded and asked 'where did you buy it?'* [they answer] *'I bought it for 1000€ in Milan', […] utter hogwash because you paid 3€"* (I5).

This particular quote corroborates the finding highlighted by Pipyrou (2014): in Italian society, where having a *bella figura* is paramount, the ownership of branded clothing and accessories is considered an important status symbol capable of defining someone's position in society (Pipyrou, 2014). Consuming SHC, which would make for a suitable compromise between economic viability and staging of one's appearance, is conversely perceived as a reason for shame and thus detrimental to the *bella figura* for reasons that recall the aforementioned association with waste. As primarily collected to be exported to developing countries with charitable purposes (Ronchi & Nepi, 2016), SHC assumes the 'sign value' of clothes 'for the poor', and its use portrays the wearer as a 'second-hand citizen' (Pipyrou, 2014).

5.3.2 Systemic barriers

Competition with cheap new clothes retail channel

A minor, but compelling reason for not buying SHC is the difficult competition with cheap, new clothing (Marzella, 2014). When presented with the opportunity to buy cheap clothes, in the desired size, colour and style, for the price of a used garment, consumers are most likely to prioritise 'utilitarian values' (Hansson & Morozov, 2016) and opt for new rather than used. Many respondents state that it is simply *"not worth it"* considering that the price of a used garment equals that of a new one.

An additional factor to consider is the immediate availability. As consumers in the Western world are used to satisfy their shopping needs quickly and on-demand (Ertekin & Atik, 2015), adapting to the unpredictability of SHC can prove challenging and frustrating to some consumers and direct them towards conventional stores.

Unavailability of facilities

Not all respondents who claimed to not wear SHC do so because of opposition to the concept. Some, in fact, argue that they only wear new clothes because of the lack of facilities (SHC shops, flea markets etc.) to buy used ones, assigning to this factor a weighted average of 2.1 (Figure 5). Interviewees identify the reason for the lack of a sufficient network of SHC channels in the inadequate media coverage of the existing successful examples of SHC shops. As demand remains consequently low, SHC shops remain a niche entrepreneurial strategy that if expanded further across the Italian territory would prove to be an extremely profitable activity (I1).

As a result, SHC shops tend to flourish in big urban centres, like Milan, Rome and Naples, but get scarcer in peripheral areas.

Material obsolescence

The last impediment to expansion of SHC consumption is what is driving this market to a crisis, that is the predominance of poor quality FF garments (Cobbing & Vicaire, 2016). The more consumers resort to cheap, FF clothes for their shopping, the less likely they will last to the extent of being entered in the SHC market. As mentioned above, FF clothing is designed to become obsolete, both in style and fit, very rapidly, and the poor quality it is manufactured with means that the wear-and-tear will render the garment unwearable after a few washes.

This is therefore a particularly challenging issue SHC market has to face to survive: the poor product quality will make it not worth it to mend clothes and extend their life-span. Survey responses confirm this, with 50% of total respondents listing excessive wear-and-tear of the garment as the main reason for disposal. Clothes are thus directly landfilled, skipping the reuse step and aggravating their environmental impact.

5.4 Potential for future development of SHC

In section 5.1, **RQ1.1** was addressed. The main motivations for SHC consumption among Italian consumers were investigated and identified in the **economic convenience** and **originality**. Section 5.2 addressed **RQ1** by showing that **economic convenience** is what Italian consumers also prioritise in their new fashion purchase, together with a long-term consideration about **good quality and durability** of the product.

The possibility to allocate a lower budget to fashion expenses is a particularly appreciated aspect of SHC consumption. This, despite the above-mentioned geographical variations, should not come as a surprise in a country where consumers' spending capability has dramatically decreased with the period of economic recession (Rossi, 2010), modifying Italian consumption behaviour and opening a window of opportunity for SH consumption (Marzella, 2014).

Possibility to develop an original style is another driver to SHC consumption: hence the recent revival of vintage fashion (Marzella, 2014). Connected to this hedonic motivations, but tightly linked to the economic convenience too, is the compelling popularity of wearing hand-me-downs from family members. A study set in Southern Italy adds an interesting ethnographic reading to this tendency: because of their symbolic and historical value, use of clothes circulated within the family is often considered much more positively in contexts where SHC consumption is otherwise avoided and contemned, that is Southern Italy (Pipyrou, 2014). As another study focusing on Ecuador highlights, the

reason why hand-me-downs are such a popular SHC acquisition channel: not only they hold an added emotional or relational value, but they avoid wasting valuable resources by landfilling garments in good conditions (Cruz-Cárdenas & del Val Núñez, 2016). The relational value embodied by the gifted garment, therefore, is tightly linked to the critical consciousness of consumers (Cruz-Cárdenas & del Val Núñez, 2016).

It is interesting to note that the environmental awareness does not emerge as major driver to SHC consumption, and data suggest that no necessary correlation exists between the two. However, due to the recent exposure to the hidden façade of the fashion industry, Western consumers seem to be progressively resorting to alternative consumption practices (Ertekin & Atik, 2015). While this attention to sustainable fashion is not yet rooted in Italian consumers, the above-mentioned sensitiveness to wastefulness, combined to a growing sensitiveness towards sustainability (Mannheimer, 2016), leave hope for future improvements.

An opinion shared by many interviewees is that Italy holds a great potential for developing the SHC market. Two factors suggest this: first, the presence of many luxury fashion houses' headquarters and offices, which in places like Milan results in the easy and frequent access of employees to brand discounts or samples (I1). This surplus of high-end garments is sold in almost unworn conditions by fashion employees, who feed the SHC market with branded, generally good quality clothes. The second is that, as shown by data above, quality remains a primary factor in the decision-making process of Italian consumers' for fashion shopping, and when clothes are collected and entered in the SH supply-chain, they are more likely than anywhere else to be of good quality (Marzella, 2014).

There clearly is a number of leverage points within the Italian market that would allow for mainstreaming SHC consumption, provided that some of the identified barriers are adequately dealt with. The following section aims at presenting them and suggesting future steps to take.

5.4.1 Leverage points

The first aspects to leverage upon for SHC mainstreaming are its **economic viability** connected to the **growing sensitiveness**. With the progressive worsening of Italians' economic conditions caused by the economic recession, the above-mentioned sensitiveness towards wastefulness will most likely reawaken and induce consumers to find consumption methods that account for the environment while remaining affordable. This belief is shared by both respondents, who largely mention this factor within the survey, and interviewees (I1; I2).

Another interesting point consists in the **originality** of SHC. Due to its constant stock replenishment, to the unpredictability of styles and sizes found, and to the fact that no two garments are the same, SHC consumption could appeal those non-SHC wearers who aim at exclusivity, originality and research of novelty in their fashion purchases (Palmer, 2005).

Lastly, SHC has been praised by respondents and interviewees for the possibility of purchasing clothes from past decades, which are known for offering better manufacturing and overall quality. In light of the priority given to **quality** and durability in fashion purchases, this particular feature should be able to attract non-SHC wearers to SHC consumption.

5.4.2 Future steps

Bonini and Oppenheim (2008) see five main hindrances to adoption of green consumption practices: lack of awareness; negative perceptions; distrust; high prices; and low availability. Except for high prices, which do not apply to the relatively cheap SHC, results show that these same hindrances can be identified in mainstreaming SHC in the Italian context.

Filling the information gap

Lack of information constitutes the first, significant barrier to overcome. Two are the steps that need to be taken. The first one consists in empowering the consumers, providing them with adequate information about the environmental and social impacts of FF, whilst encouraging them to take action, demand transparency and drive a change in the fashion system through their consumption choices. As I9 stresses:

> *"[…] It's the consumers who make producers change direction, because if they demand healthy products and leave […] on the shelves products made exploiting people around the world, perhaps we'll go back to an economy redistributing wealth more equitably".*

It is paramount that personal involvement of the consumer and provision of information go hand in hand, because the inaccessibility of trustworthy informative material has been perceived as a great hindrance to mobilisation (Ertekin & Atik, 2015). According to Pierlott (2011), feeling of helplessness is what curbs consumers from performing a change in their consumption: this is triggered by the lack of transparency in the system, and by the difficulty in conducting a lifestyle in line with one's own moral imperatives without any guidance. Consumers therefore need to be guided, involved and informed constantly in order to be encouraged to make a change (Pierlott, 2011).

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Misinformation does not only concern the fashion system as a whole, but the practice of SHC itself too. As shown above, one reason consumers in Italy do not resort to SHC consumption is the lack of sufficient advertisement; as it does not receive enough media coverage, consumers are left with the preconceived association of SHC with uncleanliness, poverty and unfashionableness. According to I1, it would take something as simple as a TV report dealing with SHC in an interesting, sexy (sic) manner to change people's perception.

Improving information about SHC is necessary to emphasize its role as sustainable fashion consumption practice: this would not only attract non-SHC wearers who try to lower their environmental footprint, but also to educate SHC wearers themselves, who are often not aware of its environmental benefits.

Some of the interviewed stakeholders show a commitment in that sense: both I4 and I7 in fact admitted to be planning a series of workshops, respectively in schools and parishes in Naples (I4) and schools in Turin and province (I7). In line with Joy et al.'s (2012) view, young consumers are those that primarily need to be educated towards more sustainable choices and encouraged to perform a shift in consumption behaviour.

Creating a competitive, but fair enabling environment

The Italian SHC market has a clearly unexpressed potential, which if further developed and promoted would yield considerable economic and environmental benefits. Should exported SHC be retained within the national clothing market instead, and the SHC market rendered more popular and attractive, interesting business ideas and job opportunities will be likely created in Italy (I1). Establishing a better enabling environment is another key step for spreading SHC consumption. Efforts towards this would clearly have to go beyond the national boundaries and involve Western consumers as a whole. Movements as those mentioned at the beginning of this thesis are examples.

The first action to take is demanding a slowing down of the global fashion production and investment on quality rather than quantity. As shown by surveys, the reason why Italian consumers discard clothes is not only due to passing trends, but primarily because the low-quality and the wear-and-tear impede further use. Producing garments that last longer and can be given a second life is therefore key to SHC expansion.

Secondly, curbing the invasive import of Chinese clothing in Southern Italy particularly is needed. While channels for affordable new fashion need to be open in order to enable replenishment of SHC

stocks, competing with this market is extremely difficult for SHC, and only a strong commitment to environmental and moral principles would divert consumers from cheap fashion.

Cultural exchange

Hopes for development of SHC consumption are identified in the growing intercultural exchange happening especially amongst young people. As a male survey respondent has it:

> *"Thanks to Erasmus and similar international educational projects, many young Italians are getting to know realities – like those of SHC shops – already widespread abroad".*

A possibility for a change in the above-mentioned cultural asset, that prioritises appearance over substance, is offered by the many opportunities young people currently have to travel and face new mindsets and lifestyles. Interviewee 7 confirms this, arguing that the reason why vintage, in his case, is gaining popularity is because*"[..] we're starting to get the mindset of how they dress in Northern Europe"*. The more contacts are kept with foreign contexts, the more likely SHC consumption is to become accepted in the Italian context again.

5.4.3 The importance of the Sustainability Science lens

The FF system, which appeals for economic and sociological reasons despite the negative impacts, can only be counteracted by alternatives equally able to meet consumers' needs. A truly sustainable fashion practice is in fact one that successfully combines the 'three legs' of the sustainability stool, i.e. environmental preservation, economic viability and social imperatives (Miller, 2013). This combination can only be found if the holistic, participatory and transdisciplinary approach of SS is adopted (Lang et al., 2012). Informed by the knowledge that long-term sustainable solutions must be context-specific, this study focused on Italy, analyzing SHC with the SS lenses. The potential of mainstreaming SHC as a sustainable fashion practice in this specific context was investigated by exploring consumers' perceptions. Especially in a context like Italy, where the recession has reshuffled Italian consumers' priorities and rendered economic viability a paramount factor in everyday-life decisions (Marzella, 2014), a compromise for consumption practices need to be found. Their needs and their motivations to SH and new clothing were highlighted, trying to find points to leverage upon in order to encourage sustainable fashion consumption.

6. Conclusions

The current FF system, driven by accumulation of cheap, poor-quality and rapidly obsolete garments, places a considerable burden on the planet. The detrimental impact it has on both the environment and society has rendered the shift to a more sustainable fashion system imperative. By drawing from the pool of sustainable fashion practices encouraged by the SF movement, this thesis focused on SHC consumption as an alternative to FF purchases. Italy was chosen as a case study for a twofold reason: for the important role fashion play in the economy and culture of the country; and for the identified gap in the national academic debate dealing with the potential of SHC as a sustainable fashion practice.

This thesis aimed at partially filling this gap by examining the SHC practice from the SS point of view and investigating the potential of SHC consumption as a sustainable alternative to FF, in the sense that it combines environmental, social and economic benefits (Kates, 2011) while being contexts-specific and holistic (Lang et al., 2012)

The guiding RQs aimed at accomplishing three main objectives: investigating motivations to SHC consumption; motivations to new clothes consumption; and identification of barriers and leverage points for further expansion of the SHC market. In doing so, a mixed-method approach was adopted, consisting of semi-structured interviews to SHC shop owners, of an online survey addressing consumers, and of a literature review for data collection and triangulation. A scale of patterns of SH consumers' behaviour by Guiot & Roux (2010) was utilised as analytical framework for structuring the methods and presenting the results.

Findings show that consumers resort to SHC mainly because of its economic advantages. Economic motivations also lead consumers' choices in new clothing consumption, and together with the growing sensitiveness towards the wastefulness of FF could be used as leverage points to curb development of the SHC market. However, misinformation concerning this practice and lack of transparency in the supply chain contribute to emphasize a rooted prejudice concerning cleanliness and negative symbolic value held by SHC. Structural issues are also identified, such as aesthetic appearance and availability of SHC channels across the Italian peninsula. Growing awareness of the wastefulness of the fashion industry, eye for quality and decreasing spending capabilities are identified as potential leverage points to popularise SHC consumption. For this to happen, however, advertisement, education and awareness raising of consumers are essential future steps to take.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Interviewees list

Below a detailed list of stakeholders involved in the study. Interviews were run across the period March 12th to 27th, throughout the fieldwork done in in Milan, Monza, Turin and Naples. Structure for the interviews can be found in Appendix C. Prior to interview, a consent form as the one attached in Appendix B, guaranteeing the interviewee's right to remain anonymous in the study and to withdraw from it at any time, was given to sign.

Table A1: Summary of stakeholders involved in interviews during field work.

Reference number	Interviewee	Business location	Description	Date	Interview type
SHC shops					
Interviewee 1 (I1)	Anonymous, Il Bivio	Milan	SHC shop.	March 12th	In person on the premises, recorded
Interviewee 2 (I2)	Anonymous, Il Girotondo	Milan	Consignment SHC shop.	March 13th	In person on the premises, recorded
Interviewee 3 (I3)	Anonymous, Vesti Solidale / SHARE	Milan	Chain combining re-integration in the job market, financial support to solidarity projects on local territory and respect for the environment through sale of "textile waste".	March 20th	Email correspondence
Interviewee 4 (I4)	Anonymous, Ambiente Solidale / SHARE	Naples		March 27th	In person on the premises, recorded
Interviewee 5 (I5)	Anonymous, Kilo Shop	Naples	Vintage shop selling per. Additionally, the shop holds regular upcycled fashion exhibitions in collaboration with local designers.	March 27th	In person on the premises, recorded, informal
Interviewee 6 (I6)	Anonymous, Rinnova	Monza	Electronic devices and clothing recycling company	March 14th	In person on the premises, not recorded, informal
Alternative fashion					
Interviewee	Vitaliano Alessio	Turin	Confederation of small and medium	March	In person on the

7 (I7)	Stefanoni, CNA Federmoda		artisanal enterprises	15th	premises, recorded
Interviewee 8 (I8)	Anonymous, Dress Me Veg	Rome	"Vegan" clothing start-up using organic cotton and natural dyes	March 12th	In person at "Fa' la Cosa Giusta" fair of sustainable lifestyle practices, recorded
Interviewee 9 (I9)	Anonymous, Eco-Geco	Verona	Small scale company producing organic cotton jeans.	March 12th	In person at "Fa' la Cosa Giusta" fair of sustainable lifestyle practices, recorded

Appendix B – Consent form

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Sustainability Studies

Modulo di Consenso Informato per partecipazione ad intervista semi-strutturata su pratiche di moda sostenibile in Italia.

Mi chiamo Ilaria Tafuri e sono una studentessa del Master in Studi Ambientali e Scienza della Sostenibilità presso l'Università di Lund, Svezia.

Per la raccolta di dati per la mia tesi, incentrata sulle diverse pratiche di moda sostenibile in Italia, sto conducendo delle interviste semi-strutturate della durata di circa 30 minuti, variabile a seconda della disponibilità dell'intervistato/a. L'intervista verrà registrata per scopi di trascrizione successiva e mantenuta confidenziale. Accesso alle registrazioni verrà garantito unicamente alla sottoscritta e alla mia relatrice Sara Gabrielsson.

A qualsiasi punto dell'intervista, l'intervistato/a ha la facoltà di non rispondere o ritirarsi dall'intervista. Inoltre, ha la facoltà di richiedere che parte delle sue risposte non venga pubblicata.

Firmando questo modulo, l'intervistato/a acconsente a prendere parte all'intervista. Il suo anonimato può essere mantenuto durante l'intero processo di ricerca, se richiesto.

Acconsente ad essere registrato?

☐ Sì   ☐ No

Preferisce mantenere l'anonimato?

☐ Sì   ☐ No

Data   _____

Nome   _____

Firma   _____

La ringrazio per il suo tempo e per la sua disponibilità,

Ilaria Tafuri

Figure B1: Consent form distributed to interviewees prior to interview in original Italian.

Appendix C – Interview guidelines

English translation from original Italian.

SHC shop owners

Introduction	
Questions	Notes

I'd like to start by talking about your experience and on how the idea of opening X came about.
    1. How long has this shop been open for?
    2. What brought you to open a SHC shop?
    3. Are there specific principles you are inspired by and try to vehicle with your activity?
    4. Where do you get your stocks from?
      - Ex. donations
      - customers selling their own clothes
      - external stockists
    5. How does the sorting, selection and selling process happen?
    6. Do you try to adhere to a particular trend along this process?
      a. Or do you sell every item provided it's in sellable conditions?
	Prompts:
	-environmental awareness
	-solidarity
	-critique to the fashion industry system
	-Inspiration from abroad realities and experiences

Market reception	

7. Did you face any difficulties in entering the market?
Yes
    a. What type of difficulty?
      i. Ex. Perception of Italian customers
      ii. Limited and very selected clientele
      iii. Lack of awareness and knowledge
      iv. Competition with the throwaway fashion
    b. How did you overcome them?
No
    a. So you immediately found an interested clientele?
 	
    8. Do you think the second-hand clothing market is widespread in Italy?
      a. Why?
    9. How do you think one should intervene to increase its diffusion?
	Prompt:
	  - *How come?*
	  - *Could you talk to me more about that?*
	
	If Yes, ask if there are any differences between North/South or between different cities – Ask to justify their answers

Clientele	
10. Could you describe me who your average customer is?	*(Age, occupation, provenience etc.)*
11. Have you noticed any difference in those who visit your shop to bring clothes to sell and those who buy them?	*Prompts:*
12. According to you, why do your customers buy use clothes? What do you think are their main reasons?	*-Environmental consciousness?* *-Better quality for lower and more reasonable prices?* *-treasure hunt?* *-Uniqueness?*
Network	
13. What channels do you use to advertise your shop?	*Ex. Wordmouth? Blogs? Social media?*
14. What relationship do you have with other SHC shops in your city? a. Do you enact any associative or collaborative relationship?	*If so, what type of collaboration? Could you please expand further?* *If no: what are the reasons?* *If no, briefly explain*
15. Have you ever heard of the Slow Fashion movement?	
16. Do you think your shop adheres to its principles?	
Conclusion	
We reached the end of this interview. Before concluding, do you have any questions, comments, additions you want to make?	

Alternative fashion consumption entrepreneurs

Question	Notes
1. When and how did you set up your company? 2. What are the values you are inspired to? 3. Are they the same you try to vehicle with your companies? 4. Did you face any difficulties when entering the market? a. What has been the consumers' reception? 5. Do you believe that your items have a fair quality/price ratio? 6. Who is your target? a. How do you plan on expanding it, involving and making your products accessible to a larger share of consumers? 7. What could be the incentive to buy higher quality garments, made with ecological material?	 *(If so, what type?)* *Prompt:* *-with advertisement?*

8. Have you ever heard of the Slow fashion movement? 9. Do you feel you adhere to its principles with your activity?	*If No, briefly explain* *If yes, ask how could it be rendered more popular and widespread in Italy.*

Appendix D – Facebook groups for survey sharing

Table D1: List of Facebook groups used to share the online survey, including type, target and number of members at the time of the survey publication.

Name	Group type as defined by Facebook	Target	Number of members at time of survey publication
Studenti Universitari	*Study Group*	University students of any age, geographical location across Italy and study subject.	58,551
学生のコタツ (Gakusei no kōtatsu)	*Club*	Students and teachers of Japanese studies at University of Naples "L'Orientale", of any age and gender.	486
EasyMonza	*Neighbours*	Members of any gender and age located in Monza.	12,731
Scambio, Compro, Vendo ABITI e ACCESSORI	*Buy and sell*	Members of any age and geographical location across Italy, with prevalence of female members.	817
Italiani pronti per la Svezia	*Travel*	Members of any age, gender and geographical location across Italy	2,892
SECONDA MANO cerco.vendo.scambio (ferrara e provincia.)	*Buy and sell*	Members of any age and gender located in the city of Ferrara and province.	6,303

English translation from original Italian.

The Emperor's old clothes: Survey for Thesis on Perception of Second-Hand Clothing in Italy

Before we start (Page 1)
Hi! Thank you for deciding to take part in this survey! My name is Ilaria and I'm writing a thesis on the perception of second-hand clothing in Italy. To do so, I need your opinion!
The survey consists of three sections: an introductive one, one about your approach to second-hand clothing and the last one about your approach to purchase of new clothing.
I promise I'll take only 5-10 minutes of your time: I ask you, though, to answer as accurately as possible to the questions.
Ready? Let's begin! ☺

Section 1 – A look inside your wardrobe (Page 2)
1) How old are you? [comment field]
2) What gender do you identify yourself with?
• Woman
• Man
• I'd rather not say
3) Where in Italy do you live?
• North
• Centre
• South
• Islands
4) What do you do in life?
• Study
• Work
• Both
• Neither
5) Open your wardrobe: do you own any SHC?
• Yes
• No
6) Do you buy them on a regular basis?
• Yes (*it continues to page 3*)
• No (*it continues to page 4*)

Section 2: Your motivations as second hand clothing buyer (Page 3)

7) How do you obtain second-hand clothes? *Rank the options from most frequent (1) to least frequent (5). Select N/A for options you never resort to.*

- I buy them in second hand clothing shops
- I buy them in flea markets
- I buy them online
- I exchange them during swap parties
- I get them from a relative (parent/brother/sister etc.)

8) How important are the following factors in your decision to wear second hand clothing? *Add more motivations if not included in the list.*

	Not at all important	*Little important*	*Rather important*	*Very Important*
There's a better quality/price relationship compared to new clothes				
It's cheaper				
I can buy more spending less				
It allows me to wear unique clothes, different from those offered in shops				
It's an environmental choice because it reduces new resource consumption				
I don't want to contribute to consumerism				
Other (specify below)				
Other [comment field]				

9) Do you think wearing second-hand clothing is a common practice in Italy?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know/ I don't have an opinion

10) Besides you, do your friends or relatives also wear second-hand clothes?

- Yes, all of them
- Yes, but only a few
- No, I'm the only one
- Not yet, but they're open to the idea
- I don't know, I've never asked them, we don't talk about it

11) Why do you think stops more second-hand clothing in Italy? *Add more factors if not included in the list*

	Not at all important	*Little important*	*Rather important*	*Very Important*
Perception that clothes are not clean				
Association with lack of economic means				
Lack of enough shops, markets or events to exchange clothes				
Perception that SHC shops are not trendy/ chic / inviting				
People don't know that SHC shops exist				
They can't compete financially with bigger chains/ independent shops				
Difficulty in finding desired size/item				
Lack of info about environmental impact of fashion				
Lack of info about the ethical side of labour				
Other (specify below)				
Other [comment field]				

12) Do you think it might become a more common practice in the future?

• Yes	
• No	
• I don't know	
Why? [comment field]	

13) Do you want it to become a more common practice?

- Yes
- No
- It's indifferent

14) How do you think it might be rendered a more common practice? *Rank in order of priority from 1 (high priority) to 5 (low priority)*

- Raising number of SHC shops
- Organising social events to raise awareness and encourage swap/sale of second-hand clothes
- Making shops and flea markets more appealing, supplied and trendy
- Highlighting its economic advantages
- Highlighting its environmental benefits

Section 2: Your motivations as Non- Second-hand clothes buyer (Page 4)

15) How important do you consider these factors in your decision to not wear second-hand clothes? *Add more motivations if not included in the list.*

	Not at all important	*Little important*	*Rather important*	*Very Important*
There are no SHC shops where I live				
Shops and flea market are often unappealing and not fashionable				
Clothes sold are few, not my style or size				
I consider it unhygienic				
Buying SHC is associated to lack of economic means				
Other (specify below)				
Other [comment field]				

16) What could encourage you to wear second-hand clothing? *Rank according to higher (1) or lower (6)*

61

likelihood
• If there were more SHC shops in my city and, therefore, more clothes choice • If SHC shops were trendier and more appealing • If I was assured clothes are adequately selected and hygienically treated prior to sale • If it became a more common and popular choice • If it was more economically advantageous than buying new clothes • If I had more info about the benefits for the environment • Other (specify below)
Other [comment field]

Section 3: Purchase of new clothes (Page 5)
17) Where do you usually buy new clothes? *Select all that apply*
• Chain stores (e.g. H&M, Zara etc.) • Independent shops • Online shops (e.g. ASOS, Yoox, Amazon etc.) • I get them tailor-made • I sew them myself • Other (specify)
Other [comment field]

18) When buying new clothes, how important do you value the following factors in your shopping decisions?

	Not at all important	Little important	Somewhat important	Very important
Low price				
Good product durability and quality				
Brand				
Artisanal, Made in Italy manufacturing				
Consideration on its utility				
Use of ecological, recycled and/or natural materials				
Trends				
Social responsibility of the producing company				
Environmental				

responsibility of the producing company	
Other (specify below)	
Other [comment field]	

19) The reason why you get rid of clothes most often is because... Rank options from the most (1) to the least frequent (5). Select N/A for options you don't resort to.

- …they are torn or ruined
- …they are no longer trendy
- …they don't fit anymore
- …I don't like them
- …I have them in my wardrobe but I never wear them

20) What do you do with clothes you no longer wear? *Rank from most (1) to least (5) frequent. Select N/A for options you don't resort to.*

- I give them away to friends or to charity
- I sell them
- I readapt them /have them readapted by a tailor
- I upcycle them
- I throw them away

The end! (Page 6)

The survey is over. Should you have questions or want to have further info about the outcomes of this survey or about my thesis, please leave your email below and you will be contacted.

Thank you so much for your help! ☺

Your email: [comment field]

Appendix F – Data

Survey demographics

Table F1: Categorisation of respondents by gender (%)

Female	Male	Rather not say
75,8%	22,9%	1,7%

Table F2: Categorisation of respondents by age range (%).

14 – 24	25 – 29	30 – 39	40 – 49	50 – 59	60 - 80
53,5%	9,2%	7%	11,1%	15,2%	3,8%

Question #7: How do you obtain second-hand clothes? Rank the options from most frequent (1) to least frequent (5). Select N/A for options you never resort to.

	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	Totale	Punteggio
I get them from a family member	60,61% 20	15,15% 5	15,15% 5	3,03% 1	0,00% 0	6,06% 2	33	4,42
I buy them in second-hand shops	15,15% 5	12,12% 4	12,12% 4	6,06% 2	0,00% 0	54,55% 18	33	3,80
I buy them online	12,12% 4	3,03% 1	12,12% 4	6,06% 2	3,03% 1	63,64% 21	33	3,42
I swap them at Swap Parties	9,09% 3	12,12% 4	3,03% 1	6,06% 2	6,06% 2	63,64% 21	33	3,33
I buy them at flea markets	3,03% 1	33,33% 11	9,09% 3	3,03% 1	6,06% 2	45,45% 15	33	3,44

Figure F1: Results from survey question #7: "How do you obtain second-hand clothes? Rank the options from most frequent (1) to least frequent (5). Select N/A for options you never resort to."

Question #8: How important are the following factors in your decision to wear second hand clothing?"

	Not at all important	Little important	Rather important	Very Important	Totale	Media ponderata
Other (specify below)	20,00% 1	0,00% 0	40,00% 2	40,00% 2	5	3,00
I can buy more spending less	9,09% 3	21,21% 7	48,48% 16	21,21% 7	33	2,82
It's cheaper	9,09% 3	24,24% 8	45,45% 15	21,21% 7	33	2,79
It allows me to wear unique clothes, different from those offered in shops	24,24% 8	18,18% 6	42,42% 14	15,15% 5	33	2,48
There's a better quality/price relationship compared to new clothes	28,13% 9	12,50% 4	43,75% 14	15,63% 5	32	2,47
It's an environmental choice because it reduces new resource consumption	36,36% 12	27,27% 9	15,15% 5	21,21% 7	33	2,21
I don't want to contribute to consumerism	36,36% 12	24,24% 8	27,27% 9	12,12% 4	33	2,15

Figure F2: Results from survey question #8 "How important are the following factors in your decision to wear second hand clothing?"

Question #16: How important are the following factors in your decision not to wear SHC clothes?

	Not at all important	Little important	Quite important	Very important	Totale	Media ponderata
I consider it unhygienic	5,62% 10	19,10% 34	36,52% 65	38,76% 69	178	3,08
Clothes sold are few, not my style or size	22,03% 39	18,64% 33	31,07% 55	28,25% 50	177	2,66
SHC shops and markets are often unappealing and not fashionable	26,97% 48	28,65% 51	32,58% 58	11,80% 21	178	2,29
Other (specify)	45,45% 20	9,09% 4	22,73% 10	22,73% 10	44	2,23
There are no SHC shops where I live	33,71% 60	33,15% 59	25,28% 45	7,87% 14	178	2,07
Buying SHC clothes is associated to lack of economic means	45,20% 80	28,25% 50	20,34% 36	6,21% 11	177	1,88

Figure F3: Results from survey question #16 "How important are the following factors in your decision not to wear SHC clothes?"