

IDENTITY TALKS:

EXPLORING ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY OF SLOW FASHION BRANDS



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Abstract

Nowadays organizations find themselves in increasingly complex environments where it continuously becomes harder to maintain a clear organizational identity. Complexity issues arise in particular for organizations that include sustainability in their organizational identity. Few studies, especially in the cultural creative industries, have focused on exploring sustainability-focused organizational identity and its complexity. Hence, the purpose of this Master thesis is to provide a deeper understanding of organizational identity, especially in relation to sustainability. The research is hereby set in the context of the cultural creative industries (CCI). It concentrates on investigating the organizational identity of slow fashion brands, as an example of companies that integrate sustainability in their identity. The research particularly focuses on how founders of slow fashion companies perceive and navigate their organizational identity. The data pool of the qualitative research consists of information obtained from seven slow fashion companies based in the Scandinavian region. The research design is comprised of seven semi-structured interviews and two follow-up interviews. The research findings reveal that the founders of slow fashion brands perceive their organizational identity as a quite complex and multidimensional construct, where different identity components are dynamically related to each other. Based on these interactions, identity tensions can manifest and consequently need to be managed and navigated by the founders. These tensions can appear in the external as well as internal environment of the organization. The Master thesis concludes that organizational identity generally, as well as in relation to sustainability, should be approached from a holistic and universal view. In order to investigate and understand sustainability-focused organizational identity to its full extend, a combination of different research concepts as well as managerial approaches is hereby proposed.

Keywords: organizational identity, cultural creative industries, fashion industry, slow fashion, founders, hybrid identities, multiple identities, identity dynamics, paradox theory, tensions

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1. Introduction

1.1. Context and background

Current situation

Nowadays organizations find themselves in increasingly complex and dynamic business environments, where they simultaneously have to meet various demands (Lampel et al., 2000). These demands do not only come from the inner organization, but also emerge from the external environment around the organization. In a world of growing transparency through social media and constant technological progress the borders between the external and internal business areas seem to gradually vanish and companies become more and more exposed to the external world around them (Hatch and Schultz, 2002). Consequently, organizations are facing various challenges that they need to address simultaneously, such as, technological progress, market disruption, innovation as well as increasing global competition, fast changing lifestyles and customer demands (Bradach, 1997; Lansiti, 1995; D'Aveni and Mac-Millan, 1990, as cited in Smith and Lewis, 2011). In that context, another factor has raised complexity. In the last ten to fifteen years, a growing awareness towards more responsible business practices as well as the protection of social and environmental resources has become more and more relevant for companies (Krüger et al., 2012). This awareness is not only mirrored in the customer asking where her or his product comes from and under which conditions it has been produced, but is also seen on a business level, where founders, for instance, decide to use organic and recyclable materials or to produce their product under good working conditions (Ertekin and Atik, 2014).

A tendency towards business responsibility is for instance quite present in the food industry, for example through organic farming. Nonetheless, this shift has also been noticed in other industries, such as the fashion industry, which will be the subject of this study (Fletcher, 2007). In the last years, the Berlin Fashion Week has for example established an Ethical Fashion Show (<http://www.ethicalfashionshowberlin.com>) to display responsible fashion brands. Moreover, big brands, like *Stella McCartney*, *Everlane* or *Patagonia* are commonly associated with choosing a different approach towards doing fashion. Generally, it seems that, ever since the production

scandal of a collapsing factory of *H&M* in Bangladesh in 2013 and the documentary “The True Cost” (2015) by Andrew Morgan, fashion companies and their practices are more and more under scrutiny.

Fashion Industry

Especially companies in the fashion industry find themselves in an environment of plurality and competing demands. Being part of the cultural creative industries (CCI) already entails a certain amount of complexity for these types of companies. The cultural creative industries commonly include a number of subsectors, such as architecture, cultural heritage, design, fashion, film and music, just to name a few examples, and have caused the attention and fascination of many (Lampel, Lant, & Shamsie, 2000). However, researchers in these industries generally have been noticing a certain complexity, which is related to a *balancing act* (Lampel, Lant, & Shamsie, 2000) between several imperatives that the companies in the industry have to face. Such tensions are among others an artistic quest vs. mass entertainment, novelty vs. familiarity and innovation and market transformation (ibid.). Additionally, companies in the CCI must operate in such a way, that their creative systems allow for individual inspiration and creativity (Knight and Harvey, 2015). The presented imperatives do not only have an impact on the organization’s external presentation, but also directly affect the internal view on themselves and specifically their identity (Smith and Lewis, 2011; Hatch and Schultz, 2002). Consequently, companies operating in the field often need to find a balance both externally and internally, and need to reconcile such competing demands (Hirsch, 1972). Researchers in the organizational field argue that a good understanding of an organization’s identity is crucial to learning how to deal and manage an organization in the CCI (Troilo, 2015).

With regard to how fashion companies that aim to apply sustainable business practices are generally classified, another imperative can be noticed. Very often, a clear distinction between the *fast fashion industry* vs. the *slow fashion industry* is made. In that context particularly what is referred to as “fast fashion” has been met with a lot of criticism. Now more than ever the fashion industry is under scrutiny as one of the main contributors for environmental harm and destruction. More specifically, fast fashion is seen as an industry practice that uses inhumane working conditions, fast productions and exhausts resources in order to maximize profit (Fletcher, 2007; Ertekin and Atik,

2014). As Kate Fletcher, Professor of Sustainability, Design, Fashion at the Center of Sustainable Fashion at the University of the Arts, London, states “fast fashion isn’t really all about speed, but greed; selling more, making more money” (2007). Time in this context is just one aspect of production. Labor, capital and natural resources are abused in the pursuit of maximum profits and short lead times. Cheap clothes are only made possible by the exploitation of such resources (Fletcher, 2007). Last but not least, fast fashion is further accused of ignoring the standards of living and aiding consumerism and environmental damage (Fletcher, 2007).

As a critical response to fast fashion, slow fashion is seen as a counter approach. In the course of a few years, more and more labels that identify themselves with slow fashion or sustainable fashion have been born (Fletcher, 2007). Slow fashion develops a holistic understanding of what constitutes sustainable fashion despite the fact that fashion consumption and sustainability are often seen as opposing concepts (Ertekin and Atik, 2014). Brands that fall into that category, aim to practice a more ethical way of designing, producing, consuming and living. Slow fashion is not time-based, but quality-based. In this case, slow is not the opposite of fast, instead, it refers to choices, information, cultural diversity and identity and maintaining balance. In addition, slow fashion represents quality and longevity; buying fewer products, but higher in value (Fletcher, 2007). It can be argued that this type of fashion is a sneak peak of a different, a more sustainable future for the textile and clothing sector and an opportunity for business to be conducted in a way that respects workers, environment and consumers alike; setting new standards for the way people consume, the way they see aesthetics and beauty and of course the way they perceive the fashion industry (ibid.).

With the fashion industry continuing to increase its engagement in sustainability initiatives, but also companies collaborating to solve various operational and other issues, implications on how companies approach sustainability start appearing. It also becomes obvious how sustainability relates to each company's values in general. In most cases, a high level of sustainability engagement is evidence of it being incorporated and integrated in the business model and the values of the organization and its employees (Googins et al., 2007; Hamilton and Gioia, 2009). When sustainability ceases to be an add-on and is instead integrated in all aspects of the organization, the core of the organization and what the organization represents come into question. This implies that organizational identity in a sustainability context becomes notably relevant, since the importance of

sustainability increases for a company. The need to instill sustainability in organizational values and therefore in the organizational identity becomes extremely central (Balmer et al, 2007).

Due to the totality of different elements that the companies need to take into account, answering and explaining questions about their true identity can get harder and more complex. Thus many organizations operating within this context find it difficult to find their essence and maintain a clear identity (Albert and Whetten, 1985; Christensen, Morsing and Cheney, 2008; Hamilton and Gioia, 2009). Organizational identity has been explored through numerous perspectives and by many researchers. Research on the field has dealt with *identity change*, *construction of identity*, *identity adaptation*, *hybrid identities* and *identity dynamics* to name a few (Albert and Whetten, 1985; Whetten, 2006; Gioia et al., 2013; Pratt, 2016; Hatch and Schultz, 2002), but the topic of organizational identity where sustainability is a core referent is relatively new and has not been explored to the same extent. Hamilton and Gioia (2009) refer to this topic as sustainability-focused identity and argue that the body of literature investigating the processes that take place in embedding sustainability as a core identity referent is very limited.

1.2. Research setting

Problem formulation and research purpose

Set in a context that entails different layers of complexity, a general business complexity as well as a complexity emerging from being part of the CCI and incorporating a sustainable approach, slow fashion companies naturally need to address different demands at the same time (Berglund and Schwartz, 2013). The tensions that slow fashion companies can experience are, not just the general industry tensions such as, being mainstream and at the same time unique (commerce vs. arts), but also acting socially responsible and doing business at the same time (social vs. economic) (Lampel et al, 2000; Berglund and Schwartz, 2013). When it comes to the composition and management of the organizational identity of such organizations, those challenges come into light and need to be addressed, in order to manage an organization internally, as well as present the essence of the organization to their external environment (Hatch and Schultz, 2002). Here it is especially important for the founder of an organization to know what his or her organization stands for.

Nonetheless, this is not an easy task for the founders of slow fashion brands. Their situation of complexity and identity construction, combined with their quest to disrupt and oppose the fast fashion industry, has especially raised our interest as researchers. In particular, our research is interested in how the founders of slow fashion brands perceive and navigate their organizational identity. A special focus is hereby set on investigating the socially and environmentally responsible aspect in the context of their organizational identity.

Research gap

The research focus is supported by two current research gaps. While the field of organizational identity has experienced a lot of research over the past twenty years, studying organizational identity in relation to a sustainability context has been quite neglected, even though sustainability and also corporate social responsibility (CSR) have become more and more relevant for businesses (Porter, 2006; Googins et al., 2007; Werbach, 2009). Additionally, few studies have set their focus on the arising challenges that can appear in the sustainability context (for an exception see Morsing and Roepstorff, 2015). However, sustainability can also raise tensions and difficulties, especially in the construction and management of organizational identity. Even though according to a market report from McKinsey Global Fashion Index in 2016, the fashion industry is now worth an estimated \$2.4 trillion and constitutes the seventh largest world economy (mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/the-state-of-fashion), it has not attracted much attention from academic researchers, particularly not in the context of organizational identity (Hamilton and Gioia, 2009) or sustainability (Pedersen and Gwozdz, 2014). For us as researchers this forms a particularly interesting research area that we would like to tap into and contribute to.

Secondly, in the context of organizational identity, it should also be mentioned that organizational identity in a complex context has been mainly approached from a pluralistic perspective, which usually accounts for research on hybrid identity (Albert and Whetten, 1985) and multiple identities literature (Pratt and Foreman, 2000; Pratt, 2016). In these fields opposing imperatives that exist in organizational identity, were primarily investigated in order to understand and categorize different types of identities and to solve conflicts resulting from those imperatives (ibid.). This seemed particularly important with regard to management issues. Considering organizational identity and its complexity from a more holistic approach has hereby fallen short. We argue that especially in the

context of sustainability-focused identities, the current hybrid and multiple identity approach does not cover the need to understand organizational identities to their full extend (Albert and Whetten, 1985; Pratt and Foreman, 2000; Pratt, 2016).

Consequently, the following research aims at creating an empirical contribution to organizational identity and providing a better understanding in the context of sustainability and general complexity. The purpose of the research is hereby to contribute to the existing literature on organizational identity and present a starting point in the context of sustainability and its complexity. We intend to offer deeper insights in the general reality that the founders are facing with regard to their organizational identity as well as presenting insights into how organizations deal with possible tensions or challenges in their identity. By combining different research fields, the research aims to draw a context that can offer room for further exploration. A hope is also to inspire other researchers to investigate the topic further. In order to address the problem formulation, the following research will take a qualitative approach, supported by seven in-depth interviews of founders of slow fashion brands. In the following, the research question will be explained in more detail.

Research question

In order to contribute to the problem formulation and the presented gap the following research has been created around the research question: How do founders of slow fashion companies perceive and navigate their organizational identity? Hence, organizational identity is investigated from the viewpoint of the founders and relies on the insights they shared. The research question then is divided into two areas of interest. One area revolves around the word “perception”. The “perception” part is concerned with how the founders understand and make sense of their organizational identity and includes sub-questions like: How is the company's' organizational identity constructed and what are different components of their identity perception? Additionally: How does the “sustainability factor” relate to the company’s organizational identity? A focus in the research question on an area of “perception” should serve as a first contextual presentation and pave the way for a deeper analysis.

The second area evolves around the expression “navigate”. Here the research aims to explore how different parts of the companies’ identity are interrelated and managed. A special focus is set on potential tensions within the organizational identity. Consequently, another sub-question is how the founders try to deal with potential tensions in their everyday life as an organization. The “navigation” part should carry the analysis to a deeper level and investigate organizational identity from an interrelated and dynamic perspective. Nevertheless, it should be noted that both areas “perception” and “navigation” are strongly connected. Combining both research streams, we hope to give a deeper insight into the founders’ understanding of their organizational identity, the sustainability attribute in their organizational identity as well as how organizational identity is experienced and managed. This should be able to draw a bigger picture of organizational identity in the context of slow fashion companies.

1.3. Delimitation and disposition of the thesis

Delimitation

Taking the research question into account it can be stated, that the research study is limited to the perception of the founders who form the research subjects and provide the data pool of the research. In our point of view the founders are the persons who started their company and are responsible for the main decisions regarding the formation of the organizational identity. All investigated companies are micro, small or medium-sized fashion companies¹ and more specifically slow fashion companies from the Nordic market. Hence, it is not possible to generalize to other types of fashion companies or a different market. With regard to the investigation of identity, it should be noted that the focus of the study lays on organizational identity and does not take other forms of identity, such as the personal identity of the founders, corporate identity or brand identity into account. The research furthermore focuses on the status quo of the organizational identity rather than a development process over time.

¹ Defined according to: http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/sme-definition_de

Generally, it should be taken into account that the research is designed quite openly and intuitively. It should therefore be regarded as a dynamic process of constant development, similar to a step-by-step journey (Figure 1). The research design and process will be explained further in the context of the research methodology, while the following part will focus on presenting the main theoretical concepts and their importance for the research (ibid.) Additionally we point out that the terms “socially responsible brands”, “sustainable brands”, and “slow fashion brands” were used interchangeably throughout the research. It would have been useful to define these terms before conducting the interviews in order to avoid potential confusion. Since especially the concept of sustainability has many different faces, the research paper will follow with a short elaboration of the context around it, after presenting the general disposition of this thesis in order to give the reader an overview of its structure (Figure 1).

Disposition of this thesis

In Figure 1, a brief overview of this thesis is visually represented.

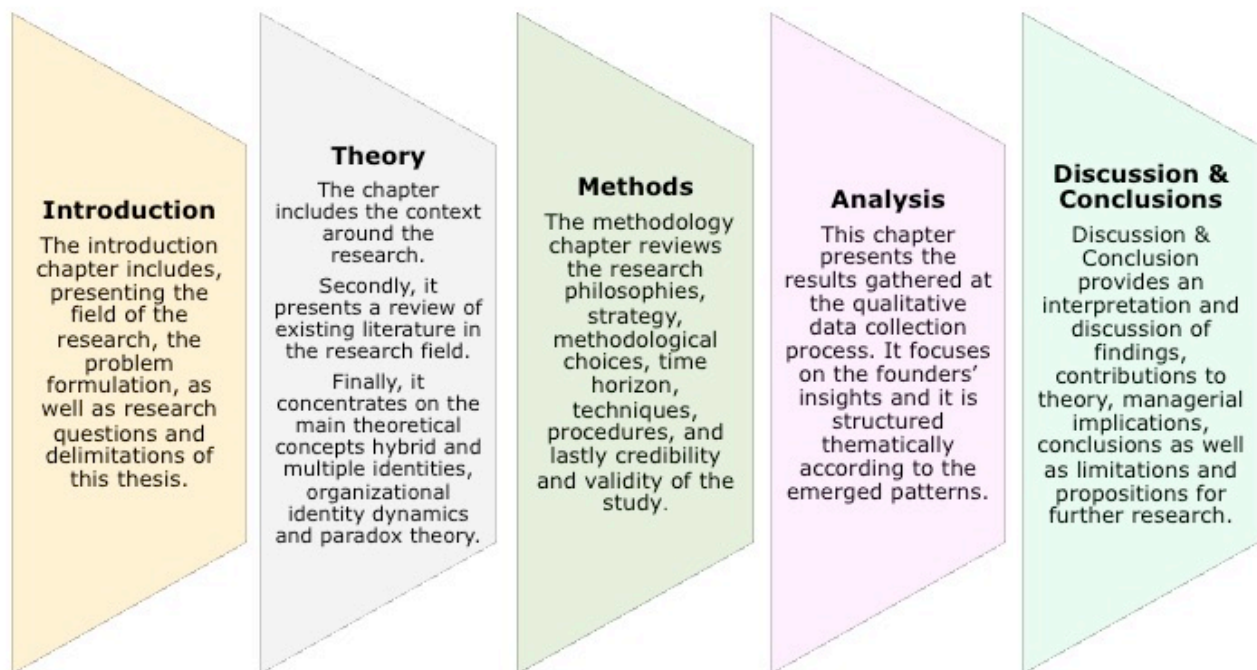


Figure 1. Disposition of the thesis.

2. Theory

2.1. Important concepts

Sustainability and social entrepreneurship constitute the two most important concepts that shape the context of the present research. By discussing their most important aspects, we aim to support organizational identity; the fundamental concept comprising the theoretical framework of this Master Thesis.

2.1.1. Sustainability

Towards sustainability

Before going into further detail, it should be noted that sustainability is understood through the complementary definitions of *corporate social responsibility* (CSR) by Carroll (1979), *sustainable development* as described in the *Brundtland report* (1987), as well as the *Triple Bottom Line* (TBL) concept (Elkington, 1997). These definitions serve to describe the context within which organizational identity is explored. Therefore, we will refer to this context as “sustainability” throughout this thesis. Before discussing sustainability, the notions of *CSR*, *sustainable development* and *Triple Bottom Line* will be defined. Then the focus shifts to sustainability in general and the tensions that often surround it.

Definition of CSR

According to Archie Carroll (1979; 1991) “Corporate social responsibility encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary (philanthropic) expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time” (p. 500).

Definition of sustainable development

Sustainable development is defined as the “development that meets the needs and aspirations of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Brundtland Report 1987, p. 13). Moreover, the *Brundtland Report* (1987), states “sustainable development is not a fixed state of harmony, but rather a process of change in which the

exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development, and institutional change are made consistent with future as well as present needs” (p. 15). In general, sustainable development and consumption aim to increase the quality of life by considering costs and benefits with a long-term perspective and by decreasing the environmental impact (Ertekin and Atik, 2014). It is important to mention that sustainable development serves as the starting point of the sustainability literature with *Brundtland* (1987) using the particular term as opposed to sustainability.

Definition of Triple Bottom Line (TBL)

When talking about the term *Triple Bottom Line* (TBL) it is mainly referred to John Elkington, who introduced the term in 1994. The researcher connected the idea that a company accounts into three “bottom lines”. With the addition of social and environmental aspects to a business’s economic information, he expanded the accounting framework and included a broader perspective on factors that generate a cost in business. The TBL confirms the theory that a company’s responsibility lays both in its stakeholders and its shareholders (economist.com, 2009).

The emergence of sustainability

The increasing level of consumer attention towards environmental, societal and economic consequences of manufacturing methods has led an increasing number of firms to pay attention as well. The negative public opinion against carelessness in these areas has urged many companies into adopting more responsible methods of manufacture (Krüger et al, 2012). The firms, which adapt to those “expectations” and adopt environmentally and socially responsible production methods could enjoy a competitive advantage (ibid.).

The *Brundtland report* (1987) has triggered the development of the concepts of sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR), a term in ordinary use for concepts linked with practices of sustainability (ibid.). Thus, organizations that engage in sustainability (including CSR) can benefit society and give market solutions that have the potential to drive the future growth of the company (Marquis, Glynn and Davis, 2007).

Balancing social, economic and environmental goals

The term sustainability has gained popularity lately and is favored over CSR (Strand, 2013, 2014). When trying to describe and define it, it is important to note that the term implies connecting different aspects of sustainable manufacturing practice. Sustainability is, from a company's point of view, about creating a balance between the social, economic, environmental goals and about connecting these goals to actual consequences and, above all, about integrating these into a business strategy (Krüger et al., 2012). Moreover, "sustainability is a multifaceted concept that presumes a dynamic balance among economic, environmental, and social goals ... an enduring shift toward sustainable organizational practice requires that sustainability become a fundamental, indispensable part of an organization's identity" (Hamilton and Gioia, 2009, p. 436). Simply put, sustainability is "the right thing to do from our standpoint and the right thing to do from the consumer's standpoint" (Bansal and Roth, 2000, p. 728).

Sustainability and tensions

Corporate sustainability, with its interdependence between social, economic and environmental dimensions, is obviously a complex concept that entails a multitude of tensions (Bansal 2002; Gladwin et al. 1995; Hahn et al. 2014). First of all, this becomes evident by the fact that there is not a single definition accepted by all scholars. Moreover, tensions in sustainability may exist between present and future temporal contexts or between competing elements of economy, society, and environment (Slawinski and Bansal, 2012). A business context where sustainability is put into action is for instance the context of social entrepreneurship, which will be explained in the following.

2.1.2. Social entrepreneurship

Definition

Social entrepreneurship is a popular term that has definitely struck a responsive chord (Berglund and Schwartz, 2013). As stated by Dees (2001), "It combines the passion of a social mission with an image of business-like discipline, innovation, and determination (...) the time is certainly ripe for entrepreneurial approaches to social problems".

The concept of social entrepreneurship was deemed appropriate for the purposes of this research, as it is closely linked with sustainability and social responsibility, since organizations operating within this context deal with similar tensions (Berglund and Schwartz, 2013). Here social entrepreneurship presents how sustainability works in practice and its effect on the organization's everyday life. Companies that practice social entrepreneurship often have to face certain tensions and dilemmas. To be more precise, even though combining a social mission with commercial goals is frequently presented as a win-win situation, tensions and conflicts are also likely to arise due to the nature of the conflicting demands and expectations, when non-profit meets for-profit. Such dilemmas seem to be a common part of everyday life, when it comes to social entrepreneurship. This can inevitably be connected with the slow fashion industry as well (Berglund and Schwartz, 2013).

Social entrepreneurship and dilemmas

Nowadays, social entrepreneurship is considered a new positive way of working out solutions. It can take several forms such as non-profit organizations, co-operatives, for-profit or hybrid organizations (Berglund and Schwartz, 2013). It is implied that social entrepreneurs do not distinguish between making money and doing good, but there seems to be a tendency towards favoring the social mission. Even though literature presents social entrepreneurs as heroes, the life of these “heroes” is filled with tension and dilemma due to the effort they make to balance the economic demands of running a business with the social mission they aim to achieve (Berglund and Schwartz, 2013). The different forms of social entrepreneurship suggest that the social goals are interwoven in the commercial enterprises and, at the same time that the commercial goals are interwoven in organizations with a social mission. This creates tension as these two logics are – as described by researchers of the field – non-compatible (ibid.). To be more precise, despite social entrepreneurship’s concern about doing business in a social way, social enterprises are still part of the capitalist society. This is to say that no matter how honest the organizations’ intentions of “doing good” and their intention to find a “win-win” solution between social and economic may be, they are still dealing with incompatibilities and tension (ibid.). Therefore, it is about making profits and remaining a competitive part of the market while simultaneously pursuing the social mission. This duality causes the stakeholders to wonder what it is that the organization stands for. Tensions, dual mission, incompatible identities and logics are used to describe different aspects of social entrepreneurship (Berglund and Schwartz, 2013).

Disharmony

Other theorists on social entrepreneurship suggest that anomalies and disharmonies are integrated to the way social entrepreneurs achieve social change (Spinosa, Flores, and Dreyfus, 2007). Practicing social entrepreneurship seems dilemmatic and these dilemmas stem from the contradiction of combining the concepts of social (voluntary) work and entrepreneurship (business). This dilemmatic reality is called disharmony.

To sum up, this section has intended to draw the context of the given research. The focus has been set around the context of sustainability, presented here as a diverse and complex construct deriving from the concepts of *CSR*, *sustainable development* and *Triple Bottom Line*. Additionally, social entrepreneurship has been discussed to illustrate an example, where sustainability is integrated into the organizational context. What should be noted is that integrating the concept of sustainability into an organization has an impact on the organizational identity as well as the organization's processes in general. As a result this integration can lead to certain dynamics, tensions and interrelations. The following part will introduce the theoretical context of the present research by elaborating on the specific concepts that will be used to answer the research question.

2.2. Literature review

In this section, the existing literature related to identity within a business context is presented. Hereby the chapter will place emphasis on introducing organizational identity from a general perspective as well as an identity-focused one. The dynamic character of identity as well as its implications on the external and internal environment of an organization will further be explained. In the second part of the literature review a brief overview of research on paradox theory and other theories regarding tensions, will be presented in order to provide a better understanding of the lens applied to analyze and discuss the findings of this research.

2.2.1. Organizational identity

IDENTITY ²

Identity (*noun*)

1. *The fact of being who or what a person or thing is.*

1.1 *The characteristics determining who or what a person or thing is.*

1.2 *As modifier (of an object) serving to establish who the holder, owner, or wearer is by bearing their name and often other details such as a signature or photograph.*

2. *A close similarity or affinity.*

Many different sciences such as psychology, sociology and philosophy have dealt with the construct of identity (Sollberger, 2013). Apart from that, identity can also be found within a business context. Depending on the field they represent, theories have given several names on identity, but most commonly they have been occupied with corporate, brand and organizational identity (Urde, 2013; Keller, 2009; Albert and Whetten, 1985; Whetten, 2006). For the purposes of this thesis, organizational identity is explored in further depth.

Organizational identity and identity dynamics

Organizational identity is generally seen as a quite complex construct that can appear in many different manifestations. As Pratt and Foreman (2000) discuss, there seems to be a lot of confusion in identity research. That is because, very often, the theorists of identity tend to use the same terms to refer to different concepts (ibid.). According to Albert and Whetten (1985), organizational identity is a set of statements that organizational members perceive to be central, distinctive, and enduring to their organization. It can consist of different parts and be approached from different research angles. Some researchers hereby focus more on the external aspects of organizational identity (see Brown et al, 2006; Pratt and Kraatz, 2009), while others emphasize internal aspects (see Schulz and Hatch, 1997), or combine both in a dynamic interaction (see Gioia et al, 2000; Hatch and Schulz, 2002). Organizational identity is overall considered a dynamic construct where the main challenge is to discover, specify and measure the dimension of interest.

² Retrieved from: en.oxforddictionaries.com

Following Albert and Whetten (1985) and Pratt, and Foreman (2000) an organization is hereby not limited to only having one dimension of interest in their identity, but can entail several different dimensions at the same time. This is a notion that is also shared by other authors (see Gioia and Hamilton 2016; Foreman and Whetten 2016; Watson 2016; Alvesson and Robertson 2016; Phillips, Tracey, and Kraatz 2016). When talking about organizational plurality Albert and Whetten (1985) refer to the concept of *hybrid organizational identities* – organizational identities that combine two notions that are “not expected to go together” (Albert and Whetten, 1985, p. 270). Pratt and Foreman (2000) hereby open up the concept of two opposing identity streams and introduce the concept of *multiple organizational identities* as identity dimensions that entail two or more identity notions and can stand oppositional, complementary or neutral to each other. The present research will apply both approaches as central concepts to investigate the versatility of organizational identity. By that, it aims to contribute towards a more holistic approach of hybrid identity in particular and organizational identity in general.

When talking about plurality in the context of organizational identity, an interesting notion that should be mentioned as well, is a quest for unity and plurality at the same time. This notion forms a central tension that many organizations additionally deal with. Discussing how to find a balance between two sides, some researchers tend to focus on seeing organizational identity from a unity perspective (see Corley et al., 2006, for a review), without considering an approach where identity could be pluralistic and united at the same time. Nevertheless, some research attempts still have been made to investigate this approach further. In this context, an early paper by Dutton and Dukerich (1991) should be mentioned. Both investigated the organizational identity of Port Authority and argue that even though an organizational identity can have several different characteristics and it can still be conceptualized in one united identity. A later study of Battilana and Dorado (2010) came to similar conclusions. Recent work by Ashorth and Reiningen (2014), as well as Hsu and Elsback (2013), has additionally touched upon this notion. In the context of multiple identities also Pratt has further researched *organizational unity and pluralism* (Pratt and Kraatz, 2009). According to Pratt and Kraatz (2009), who drew upon Mead’s (1934) distinction between organizational identity and self, organizations can have different identities, but still have some sort of holistic understanding of who they are.

When looking at the realm in which organizational identity is investigated, Albert and Whetten (1985) argue that organizational identity can be examined both internally and externally. A consideration of external and internal aspects of organizational identity is also in line with Scott and Lane (2000). More specifically, they support that managers play an important role in the development of organizational identity since they hold the responsibility of controlling the identification processes and have access to all the resources to shape, alter and question the identity. They also argue, that the construction of identity is also influenced both by managers as well as external stakeholders. This is also something that Pratt and Kraatz (2009) support. Referring to Mead's (1934) distinction between identity and self they argue that organizations internalize the expectations of their external environment and create their *organizational self* based on that (Pratt and Kraatz, 2009).

Schultz and Hatch on the other hand offer their own definition of organizational identity, describing it as, "what members perceive, feel and think about their organizations" (1997, p. 357). In other words, the term refers to a shared understanding of the values and the specific attributes, which make the organization what it is, by the public. Here especially the aspect of *organizational culture* becomes relevant. The authors argue that in order to fully understand an organization we need to think of its culture as the context within which the entire organization exists and functions, and where its image and identity are formulated. These parts are interrelated to each other and influence the way the organization sees itself, as well as is perceived by others (Schulz and Hatch, 1997). Thus, Schulz and Hatch (1997) turn what used to be seen as internal or external properties and processes into something more universal. This interrelation of culture, image and identity can be summarized in the following quote by Schultz and Hatch (1997): "Who we are is reflected on what we are doing and how other members interpret who we are and what we are doing" (Schultz and Hatch, 1997, p. 361).

Brown et al. (2006) also take *image* into consideration when discussing organizational identity. According to them, the term *organizational identity* refers to how one or more groups of stakeholders perceive the organization (organizational level). Terms such as *perceived organizational identity* or *organizational identity associations*, then refer to how an individual sees or could potentially see the organization (individual level) (Brown et al, 2006). Moreover they

suggest that image should also be separated into two different concepts: *intended image*, which concerns the management's view on how it wants the organization to be perceived by others; and *constructed image*, which refers to how the organization members believe the organization is perceived, a notion that research has shown is important since it also affects how the members of the organization themselves perceive and react to the organization (Brown et al, 2006). Finally, the authors use the term *reputation*, to address the corporate associations that externally located individuals believe to be central, enduring and distinctive about the organization (ibid.). Hence, *image* refers to what the members of an organization want or believe that others think about the organization, while *reputation* refers to the actual perception of the organization by external stakeholders. What becomes evident here is that for Brown et al. (2006), the constructs of identity, image, and reputation are considered critical for the success of an organization.

Gioia et al (2000) emphasize both the internal aspect of organizational identity and its interrelation with image. More precisely, they support that organizational identity is dynamic and that the “durability” of identity is borderline illusory. They argue that what seems, as lasting identity is essentially the continuous use of the same labels to describe that identity by the organization's members. Therefore, they elaborate that organizational identity is a “precarious and unstable notion” (p. 64), which can be redefined and revised by the organizational members. This is in line with Brown and Starkey (2000) who suggest that there needs to be a constant questioning regarding organizational identity. Gioia et al. (2000) further suggest that this “instability” of identity can serve as an adaptive mechanism to accommodate identity changes in response to external demands. As discussed by the authors, an enduring and stable identity is essential to long-term success. Nevertheless, enterprises should have the ability to adapt quickly to the fast changing unstable environments in order to survive.

Through the introduction of the concept of *adaptive instability*, Gioia et al. (2000) provide a relief for this tension (staying the same and being able to change). The concept sees the interrelationships between organizational identity and image (in its various forms) as the reason for identity to become “dynamic and mutable” (p. 74). This instability in identity, they argue, is beneficial for the organization since it allows it to adapt faster and better to an ever-changing environment. Gioia et al. (2000) also argue that projected images, that are received and interpreted by constituents, often

get modified and then are fed back to the organization, which consequently has an impact of the insiders idea of their own identity. Thus organizational identity is not determined only internally. It involves interactions and intertwining between outsiders and insiders and may be “especially insiders’ perceptions of outsiders’ impressions”. (Gioia et al. 2000, p. 70). Thus, *constructed external image* is key to trigger changes in identity.

Schultz and Hatch (2002) tried to explain the dynamics of organizational identity. Firstly, in a research paper in 2002 they presented a model called “Identity Dynamics” where they elaborate on the interrelation between identity, image and culture stating, “organizations should strive to nurture and support the processes relating organizational culture, identity and images. An understanding of both culture and image is needed in order to encourage a balanced identity” (p. 1014). In 2009 the same authors proposed another model, building on culture and image and created to serve as a means for companies to better manage their identities; the VCI model. They add vision to image and culture as the aspects that comprise a company’s organizational identity. According to their VCI model, only the alignment of these three elements can enable an organization to obtain a strong identity and therefore be successful (Hatch and Schultz, 2009).

Sustainability-focused identity, a new perspective

Research in the particular field is rather limited. *Sustainability-focused identity* constitutes a brand’s new perspective of organizational identity theory where sustainability itself is central to organizational identity. Hamilton and Gioia (2009) use of the term sustainability because it refers to the balance between a business’ social, economic and environmental goals. The authors argue that in order for a company to acquire a sustainability focused-identity both internal and external changes are required. More specifically, organizations, when constructing their organizational identity, need to take specific and dynamic actions related to becoming sustainable (ibid.). This process of acquiring a sustainability-focused identity is a long-term one. Moreover, the authors argue, that a sustainability-focused organizational identity, must also be acknowledged by an external audience. A similar concept is *CSR-identity* by Morsing and Roepstorff (2014). What is essential here is that in both concepts; *sustainability-focused identity* and *CSR-identity*, sustainability is not only an important part of an organization but also “a core identity referent” (Hamilton and Gioia, 2009, p.457).

To conclude, from the above presented literature review it becomes evident that there are several different perspectives regarding organizational identity and that there is not a single definition that is widely accepted. Within the context of organizational identity even different identity notions can exist simultaneously and act intertwined (Albert and Whetten 1985; Pratt and Foreman, 2000). Several scholars try to structure identity into notions, such as image, and an external and internal perspective of organizational identity (Scott and Lane, 2000; Brown et al, 2006; Albert and Whetten, 1985). Moreover, culture also seems to be an important ingredient for constructing, understanding and managing identity (Hatch and Schultz, 1997). Last but not least, a sustainability-focused perspective related to organizational identity has emerged which requires a company to not simply state that they are sustainable but also to take several relevant actions (Hamilton and Gioia, 2009).

2.2.2. Paradox

PARADOX³

Paradox (noun)

1. *A tenet contrary to received opinion.*
2. *A statement that is seemingly contradictory or opposed to common sense and yet is perhaps true.*
3. *A self-contradictory statement that at first seems true; an argument that apparently derives self-contradictory conclusions by valid deduction from acceptable premises.*
4. *One (such as a person, situation, or action) having seemingly contradictory qualities or phases*

Throughout the years tensions – such as the need to maintain a balance between social, economic and environmental goals, often present in organizations operating in a sustainability context (Elkington, 1997) – have been investigated by a number of perspectives. The following literature review will shortly present a review of those approaches. The literature related to how tensions caused by sustainability are managed includes five approaches: *a win-win*, *trade-off*, *integrative approach*, *institutional complexity* and *paradox theory* (Van der Byl and Slawinski, 2015; Greenwood et al., 2011, Lewis, 2000). However, the chosen approach of this study is that of

³ Retrieved from: merriam-webster.com

paradox theory. We argue that applying a paradox lens will help us explain and understand possible tensions in the context of organizational identity, especially in relation to sustainability.

To begin with, Bonacchi and Rinaldi (2007) suggest that companies using a win-win lens attempt to align social, environmental and economic goals. This means that, if one aspect of sustainability improves, the other two areas should also be improved or at least their performance should not be affected negatively. In relation to this, Porter and Kramer (2006) examine how a company's financial performance can be aligned with societal benefits.

Trade-offs, on the other hand, are defined as “an exchange of one thing in return for another: especially relinquishment of one benefit or advantage for another regarded as more desirable” as stated by Angus-Leppan, Benn and Young (2010, p. 231). In other words, in a trade-off the result is for example a gain for sustainability and has a negative impact on financial performance; a win-lose situation. According to Orsato (2006), trade-offs are about making a choice between options. When a goal is chosen over another, inevitably tensions caused by contradictory goals are eliminated, according to Smith and Lewis (2011). However, Slawinski and Bansal (2015) support that, when forced to choose, it is only natural that a firm will choose to achieve their financial goals instead of their societal ones.

On the other hand, the integrative approach is considered by Hahn, Pinkse, Preuss and Figge (2015) as a reaction to the *instrumental view*. According to Gioia and Bansal (2013), the *instrumental view* supports that the financial dimension of a business is related to the other two dimensions through a causal relationship. Van der Byl and Slawinski (2015) argue that, on the contrary, the integrative approach views the three aspects of sustainability from a holistic perspective and attempts to reconcile them. As a result, the three dimensions are brought together and none of them is favored over the other. In this case, the tensions are managed by toning down the already heavy focus on the economic goals and by placing more (than the usual) importance on the environmental and social goals.

Last but not least, Smith and Lewis (2011) define paradoxes as tensions that are simultaneously contradictory and interconnected and that last over time. A paradox lens considers organizations as

systems characterized by various tensions. The logic behind the paradox lens, according to the authors, is that organizations can benefit from the acknowledgement of the co-existence of tensions that contradict each other (ibid.). They further recommend the exploration of such tensions, since this way the interrelationship between competing demands can be uncovered. This, in turn, can lead to solutions to complex and problematic situations (Smith and Lewis, 2011).

Next to paradox theory we can place institutional complexity, as they both focus on the way organizations manage tensions and address demands. Greenwood et al. (2011) depict institutional complexity as the situations that emerge when organizations “confront incompatible prescriptions from multiple logics” (p. 317). However, they differ significantly in terms of assumptions and the way they describe relationships between competing demands. Smith and Tracey (2016) argue that one of the interesting differences between the two perspectives is that paradox theory, unlike institutional theory, does not assume that all tensions are somehow institutionally derived. The paradox lens avoids the insistence of institutional theory that everything has to be grounded in wider field or societal processes. As discussed before, both perspectives often focus on the nature of the tensions, but do not offer much insight regarding how organizational members “differentially” experience them (p. 461).

To sum up, in this part we have discussed how companies can manage potential tensions caused by sustainability through five approaches; a win-win, trade-off, integrative, institutional complexity or paradox lens (Van der Byl and Slawinski, 2015; Greenwood et al, 2011; Hahn et al, 2015; Lewis, 2000). Paradoxes are especially important implying that organizations can gain an advantage by acknowledging the coexistence of contradictory tensions. Institutional complexity can be seen as parallel to paradox theory as they are both occupied with managing tensions and addressing demands.

A combination of theories will finally help us to address the research gap to which this thesis aims to contribute to (see introduction). We chose an approach by Hatch and Schulz (2002) that sees organizational identity as something interactive, dynamic and complex. Especially when organizational identity appears as pluralistic and entails more than one identity dimension, complexity arises; especially in a sustainability context, which for us adds an additional layer of

complexity. We will apply a paradox theory perspective because we think that through this lens, sustainability-focused identity will be explored more openly and in-depth.

2.3. Theoretical framework

Organizational identity and its complexity constitute a fundamental concept of this Master thesis. More specifically organizational identity is also explored within a sustainability context. As a first step of understanding identities with more than one identity dimension, the theoretical framework will address hybrid and multiple identities. It will be discussed how both concepts are connected and complement each other in order to provide a deeper understanding of complex identities. Choosing this approach will particularly help the research with answering the first part of the research question: How is the organizational identity of the companies constructed and how do the founders perceive this identity? Secondly, the theoretical framework will discuss identity dynamics in order to understand how different parts of organizational identity are connected to each other. The extent to which organizational identity is a stable or constantly changing construct, the circumstances under which it is viewed as a dynamic process and how image relates to it are discussed as well.

A paradox theory lens is additionally applied to explain certain dynamics and tensions within the identity context of an organization. This is particularly helpful to understand tensions within the sustainability context of organizational identity, since a paradox approach to sustainability and identity examines and embraces tensions between the contradictory characteristics, despite the discomfort associated with juxtaposing different dimensions. This is very important, as it will help us answer the other aspect of their respective research question: How can the founders of those organizations navigate through those tensions?

2.3.1. Hybrid and multiple organizational identities

Identity Plurality

Identity is a quite complex and versatile concept. Most scholars who have theorized identity have used social identity theory (psychology) and the identity theory (sociology) as a foundation that views individuals as having several identities (Pratt, 2016). Therefore, when developing theories regarding organizational identity they considered organizations as having multiple identities as well. The existing organizational research approaches the identity plurality mainly through two different lenses, *hybrid* (Albert and Whetten; 1985) or *multiple identities* (Pratt and Foreman; 2000). Although sometimes the two terms are used synonymously, there are some underlying differences between them, such as the number of identities and the distance of the relationships between or among the identities that vary depending on the approach (reviewed in Pratt, 2016). Both approaches will be discussed in the following.

Hybrid organizational identities

Albert and Whetten (1985) offer their own definition of what is considered a hybrid identity organization. They state that it is the type of organization that holds two types of identities, which are not “expected to go together” (p. 270). One of the most central dimensions that defines hybrids is the normative-utilitarian-dimension: Hereby the *normative dimension* refers to non-economic, cultural, aesthetic, non-monetary focused identity parts, in contrast *utilitarian dimension* refers to a for-profit and economic-centered identity (Selznick, 1957; Etzioni, 1975).

Nevertheless research has not been investigating the specific content of different organizational identities and their dimensions to its full extend. In their original conceptualization Albert and Whetten (1985) even suggest that these identities can vary according to several dimensions and note that, “there is no comprehensive theory to predict how many identities an organization has, or how the dimensions of each are to be defined” (pp. 280 – 281). This indicates that there might be other identity dimensions beyond the normative-utilitarian dimension. Categorizing hybrid identities only into those two schemes, might not explain organizational identity to its full extend. This implies, that a more holistic viewpoint on pluralistic identities might be necessary (Pratt, 2016).

The theorists Albert and Whetten (1985), have defined two types of structures for hybrid identity organizations; ideographic and holographic. *Ideographic identities* are structured in a very clear way, where the groups of the organization holding one identity are separated from the groups holding another, opposing identity. *Holographic*, on the other hand, is a hybrid organization where the identities that are at odds with each other are grouped together (ibid.). Even though it is suggested that most of these organizational hybrids are emerging in response to external demands, the research in this field so far has not been focusing on the external aspect how these hybrid identities influence the relationships with stakeholders, but on the internal aspect instead, how the members of the organization deal with these polarizations (Pratt, 2016).

Multiple organizational identities

While Albert and Whetten (1985) only hint at the idea that an organization can have more than one identity, Pratt and Foreman (2000) articulate this notion to a wider extend presenting the concept of *multiple organizational identities*. Both researchers recognize the existence of more than two organizational identities and thus add to the formerly presented hybrid-focus that an organization is limited to two organizational identities.

In comparison to the concept of hybrid identity, it should also be noted that the view of multiple organizational identities does not apply different identity structures such as “holographic” or “ideographic”. To what extent this is beneficial or unfavorable when understanding organizational identities, is under further discussion. However, the concept of multiple organizational identities can help to broaden the horizon around complex identities and help to understand them to a wider extend (Pratt, 2016).

Multiple identities can be oppositional, complementary or even neutral to each other, in the sense that they are just different with no apparent “conflict” (Corley et al., 2006). Consequently, the most common issues arising when managing multiple identities is due to the number of identities and the relationship between those identities (Pratt and Foreman, 2000). Discussing how multiple identities can be managed best, the researchers argue, that the better synergies between two or more identity dimension are created, the more complementary those dimensions are (Pratt and Foreman, 2000).

The relationship between multiple and hybrid organizational identities

The conceptualization of the hybrid organizational identity and the multiple organizational identities could be seen as complementary (Pratt, 2016). The hybrid theory as presented by Albert and Whetten (1985) concentrates more on the birth and evolution of the hybrid identities, while in the multiple identities theory (Pratt and Foreman, 2000) the focus is set on managing them. Thus the hybrid identity could provide insights in the formation of multiple identities and the theory around multiple identities could advise the management of hybrid identities.

According to Pratt (2016) organizations could also be understood in terms of “multiple hybrid identities” (p. 10). This would follow Albert and Whetten’s (1985) argumentation that an organization can be hybrid along multiple dimensions and is also supported by Pratt and Rafaeli (1997), who discussed the existence of several hybrid identities in one unified identity. In that context it should additionally be considered, that an organization can entail not only one hybrid identity dimension, which includes two oppositional streams, but also several other “multiple identity dimensions” that are, for example, complementary or neutral towards each other. Consequently the described organizational identity would be a mix between multiple and hybrid identities.

Hybrid and multiple identities and tensions

The need to give a single answer to the “Who am I?”-question, contradicts the existence of identity plurality and creates a tension (Pratt, 2016). This tension of single or plural identity is as central as the tension between being similar yet distinct to others and also the tension between internal and external determinants. According to Mead (1934) an organization can have many identities as well as a holistic idea of who they are. A multiple organizational identity approach, which considers organizational identities as complementary, oppositional or just different, also raises general issues about how organizational identities relate to each other. Research usually treats the opposition between identities as something fixed (Pratt, 2016).

Individuals tend to internalize the expectations of society (role identities) and then create a unique sense of who they are across those identities (self). In a similar manner, organizations could also internalize the expectations of stakeholders in the form of organizational identities to intimately

create an organizational self (Pratt and Kraatz, 2009). The process through which an organizational self is developed remains, however, underresearched. There is still enough room for theorists to try and find out how organizations manage these tensions between a unified self and the divided identities that comprise it (Pratt, 2016). When investigating complex identities and different identity dimensions, another point that comes into question is, what kind of dynamics arise in an organizational identity context.

2.3.2. The dynamics of organizational identity

The aftermath of access and exposure

Nowadays, access and exposure can pose significant threats to organizations' identities. The media and their increased interest in the private lives of organizations in hope of exposing any gaps between what the organization claims and how it acts cause exposure (Hatch and Schultz, 2002). The presence of the organization on the Internet, the movement of members and stakeholders and the knowledge transfer in and out of the organization are increasing and influence the identity of an organization (ibid.). In addition to exposure, access is granted by organizations as an attempt to involve veteran stakeholders in a closer relationship and allows the expansion of the organizational boundaries altering therefore the organizational self-definitions (ibid.).

Defining image (me) and culture (I)

In their 2002-work Hatch and Schultz built a model they call "the Organizational Identity Dynamics Model" (p. 991). They argue that image and culture should be viewed as two distinct concepts that both must be considered when defining organizational identity. In other words, they constitute integral components of the organizational dynamics theory. Drawing from Mead's (1934) theory of "I" and "me", organizational image is defined as "as the set of views on the organization held by those who act as the organization's 'others'. By analogy, the organizational 'me' results when organizational members assume the images that the organization's 'others' (its external stakeholders) form of the organization" (Hatch and Schultz, 2002, p. 995).

Thus, image is influenced by the assessment of external factors such as media, business analysts etc. This implies that organizations cannot entirely control their image or the impact this has on their identity (Hatch and Schultz, 2002). On the other hand, organizational culture is defined as “tacit organizational understandings (assumptions, beliefs and values) that contextualize efforts to make meaning, including internal self-definition (ibid.). Just as organizational image forms the referent for defining the organizational ‘me’, it is with reference to organizational culture that the organizational ‘I’ is defined” (Hatch and Schultz, 2002, p. 996). Organizational culture can lead to impressions beyond the managed or intended ones created to express a specific sense of organizational identity (ibid.).

The organizational identity dynamics processes

By connecting and elaborating on the processes that link the concepts of identity, image and culture Hatch and Schultz’s model (2002, figure 2), explains what it means to state that identity is a social process. Taking into consideration both culture and image, those organizational dynamics should help organizations to avoid dysfunction and be more effective (ibid.). Culture and image must both be understood in order to reinforce a balanced identity with the ability to grow and develop in an environment that is under constant change (ibid.). The model consists of four processes that link identity, culture and image (see figure 2).

Mirroring: the process through which identity is mirrored in the image of others. This mirroring process has profound implications. External images are not entirely filtered through the organizational members’ own perception, thus traces of the stakeholders’ own images sneak into the organizational identity, especially in the context of the increased access mentioned earlier. In relation to the mirroring process identity is not just about reflection but also self-examination, a notion that Gioia et al (2000, p. 67, as cited in Hatch and Schultz, 2002) agrees upon by stating “Image often acts as a destabilizing force on identity, frequently requiring members to revisit and reconstruct their organizational sense of self”.

Reflecting: the process through which identity is embedded in cultural understandings. To be more precise, organizational members develop their identity in relation to what others say about them, but also in relation to who they perceive they are. *Reflexivity* in organizational identity dynamics is

viewed as the process by which organizational members perceive and talk about themselves as an organization. Moreover, when organizational members reflect on their identity, it is in relation to their organization's culture and this embeds their reflections in tacit cultural understandings. Cultural understandings are transferred along with reflections on identity into the process of expressing identity (Hatch and Schultz, 2002).

Expressing: the process through which culture makes itself known through identity claims. The expression of organizational culture can aid into impressing others that exist beyond the managed or intended impressions created to express a specific sense of organizational identity (Hatch and Schultz, 2002).

Impressing: the process through which expressions of identity leave impressions on others. Image is also influenced by the assessment external factors such as media, business analysts etc., make of the organization. This implies that organizations cannot entirely control their image and therefore the impact this has on their identity (Hatch and Schultz, 2002).

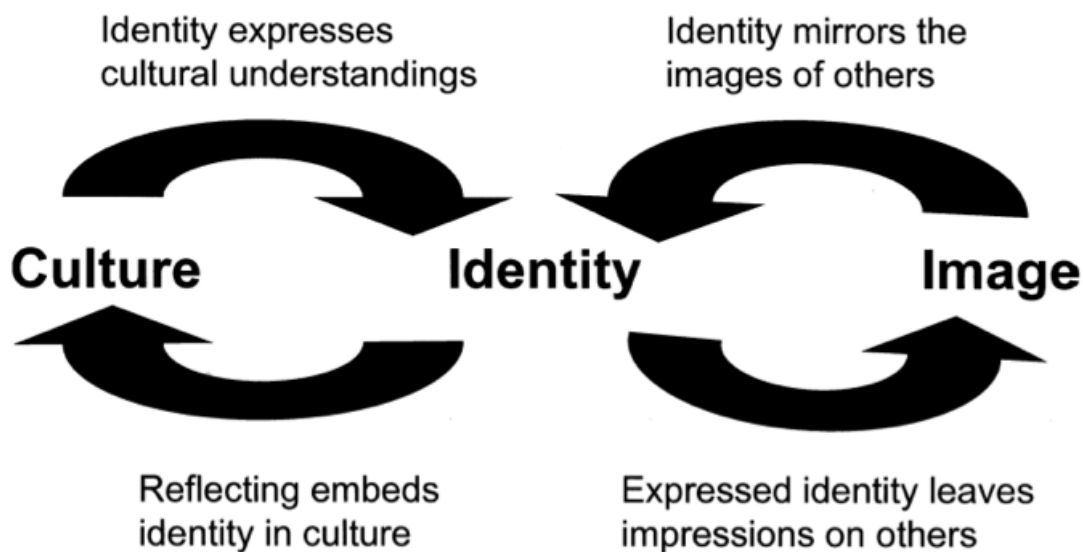


Figure 2. Identity dynamics model, as presented in Hatch and Shultz (2002).

Understanding organizational identity

According to Hatch and Schultz (2002), “the interplay of all four processes together, construct organizational identity as an ongoing conversation or dance between organizational culture and organizational images” (Hatch and Schultz; 2002, p. 991). These processes are part of a unified dynamic in which organizational identity is synchronously formed by the cultural understanding created within the organization and the external images fed back by the stakeholders (ibid.). In other words, organizational identity is not a compilation of perceptions of an organization, existing in people's' minds, but rather a dynamic set of processes in which the organizational self is engaging and which is continuously socially constructed from the interchange between internal and external definitions of the organization provided by all organizational stakeholders who join in the game (Hatch and Schultz, 2002). As a result, maintaining an open and continuous dialogue between top management, members and external stakeholders where everyone should be willing and eager to listen and respond, is strongly recommended (ibid.).

While the identity dynamic model (Hatch and Schulz, 2002) offers one way to investigate how organizational identity can be managed in a dynamic and interconnected way, also *Paradox theory* (Smith and Lewis, 2011) can offer insights into identity management. This is especially useful when investigating competing demands and tensions in an organizational scheme. While research on identity management often suggests that identity tensions need to be solved by either adapting or adjusting identity (e.g. Dutton and Dukerich, 1991; Elsbach and Kramer 1996, Gioia and Thomas, 1996), a paradox understanding of organizational dynamics and tensions, commonly accepts the existence of tensions in an organization (Lewis, 2000). In the following the paradox approach will be presented further.

2.3.3. Paradox theory

This theoretical lens offers an approach to tensions that span organizational phenomena, levels of analysis, and theoretical perspectives. According to Lewis (2000), paradox theory has especially been praised by researchers (e.g. Cameron and Quinn, 1988) for moving “beyond oversimplified and polarized notions to recognize the complexity, diversity, and ambiguity of organizational life”

[and offering] “a potentially powerful framework for examining the impacts of plurality and change, aiding understandings of divergent perspectives and disruptive experiences” (p. 760). Consequently, particularly in the context of organizational identity a paradox lens can be applied to understand plurality as well as complexity more thoroughly (ibid.).

Paradox theory presumes that tensions are integral to complex systems. Thus the theory does not only offer a response to organizational tensions, but also encourages active searching and surfacing of those tensions to enhance creativity and performance (Smith and Lewis, 2011). Researchers can ask several primary questions when approaching organizational phenomena: (1) what tensions are embedded within organizations and how and why are these tensions (not) experienced by organizational members?; (2) how are these paradoxical tensions managed? (3); what are the implications of their (in)effective management? Paradox theory hereby provides, a meta-theoretical perspective that can provide guidance on how other theories ask questions and explore insights (Lewis, 2000). For example, organizational identity theorists can adopt a paradoxical perspective to understand the inherent tensions in hybrid identity organizations and identify strategies for the simultaneous management of these tensions. Additionally it can explore tensions of multiple logics (Lewis, 2000).

Today, as globalization, innovation, hyper-competition, and social demands create more dynamic and intricate environments, paradox becomes a critical theoretical lens to understand and lead contemporary organizations (Smith and Tracey, 2016, Smith et al, 2010). The way the leaders of organizations deal with possible tensions in that field can determine their success or failure (Smith and Lewis, 2011). Paradox studies offer an approach to manage those tensions, which suggests that organizations should respond to these competing demands simultaneously, and supports that long-term sustainability, needs continuous effort to meet these demands (Smith et al, 2010). According to Lewis (2000) a paradox lens can additionally help to “explore how disruptions expose tensions within organizations and how ambiguity fosters multiple, often conflicting interpretations of phenomena” (p.765). Building and managing such strategies leads to dynamic, sustainable organizations, it is especially this complexity that drives their success (Peters and Waterman 1982; Collins and Porras, 1997).

Paradox – definition and types of paradox

Smith and Lewis (2011), define paradox as “contradictory yet interrelated elements that exist simultaneously and persist over time” (p.382). This definition underlines two components of paradox: “(1) underlying tensions—that is, elements that seem logical individually but inconsistent and even absurd when juxtaposed—and (2) responses that embrace tensions simultaneously” (ibid.).

Colliding yet interrelated elements have been discovered across a wide range of organizational phenomena and various levels of analysis. However, there is a lack of conceptual clarity in the field dealing with tensions, which is apparent by the use of different terms to refer to paradoxes such as “dilemma”, “dichotomy”, and “dialectic” (Lewis, 2000; Smith and Lewis, 2011). In addition several organizational fields refer to the issue of simultaneously dealing with contradictory demands (tensions), without using the term paradox (Lewis, 2000). Tensions are dealt with from an organizational identity perspective with the exploration of hybrid identity organizations embedded with inconsistent multiple identities (Smith and Lewis, 2011).

The dynamic equilibrium model of organizing

Based on this definition of paradox Smith and Lewis (2011) propose a model they call *the dynamic equilibrium of organizing* (figure 3), which suggests that tensions are inherent and persistent and shows how purposeful and cyclical responses towards paradoxes can lead to long-term success and sustainability (ibid.). The dynamic equilibrium assumes constant motion across forces that are at odds. According to Smith and Lewis (2011), equilibrium is maintained by “adapting to a continuous pull in opposing directions” (p. 386). This model is presented and explained in depth in this section. More specifically, the dynamic equilibrium model has three main features:

1. Paradoxical tensions that are both *latent* and *salient*
2. Responses to tensions that include iterating among management strategies
3. The outcome or impact of management strategies on sustainability

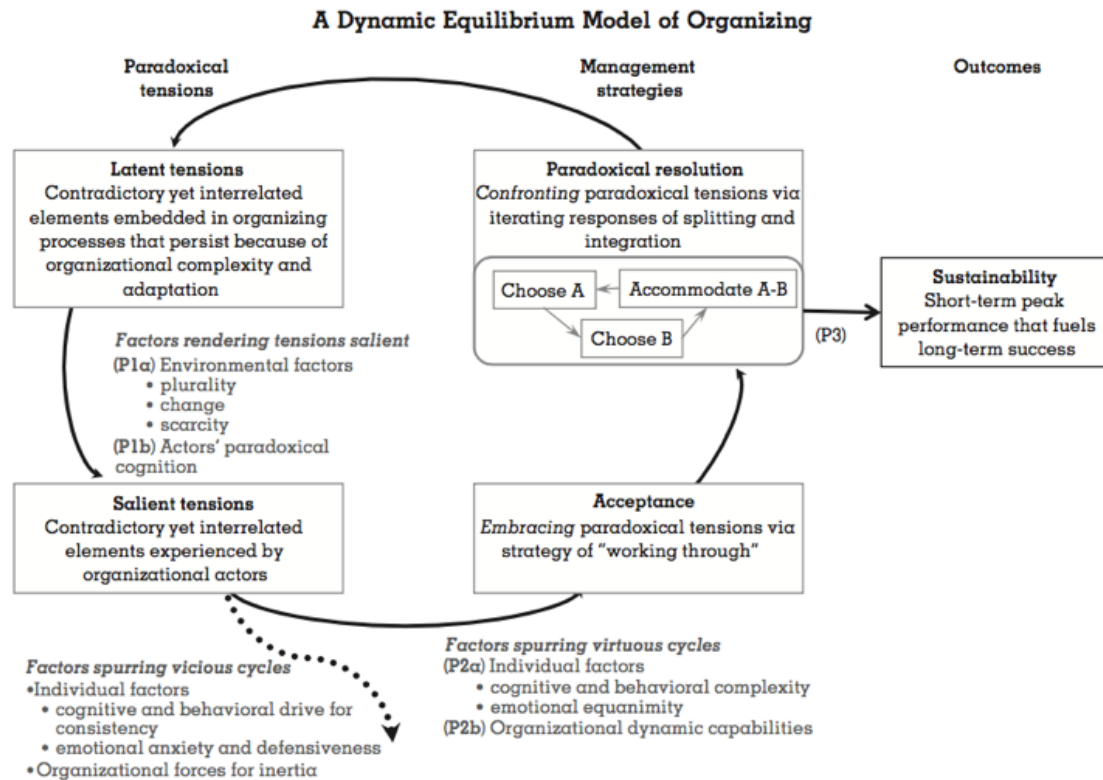


Figure 3. The dynamic equilibrium model of organizing, as presented in Smith and Lewis (2011).

Latent and salient paradoxical tensions

Smith and Lewis (2011) suggest that tensions are both inherent-existing within the system and socially constructed, “that is, opposing yet interrelated dualities are embedded in the process of organizing and are brought into juxtaposition via environmental conditions” (p. 388). With this in mind, the authors focus on the forces that constitute latent tensions, salient to organizational members and stakeholders (ibid.).

When creating organizations, leaders must decide what they will do, how they will do it, who will do it, and when. By defining what they are trying to achieve they also define what they do not want to do, emphasizing goals and strategies such as global vs. local, socially focused vs. economic focused (Smith and Lewis, 2011). Furthermore, by defining how they will operate they decide how

they are not going to operate. In essence by defining A, a broad category of not A is created, which results in a system of interrelated tensions (ibid.).

Such tensions born from acts of organizing persist over time because of the complex and adaptive nature of organizational systems. These complex systems implement varied goals from internal stakeholders and also address various demands posed by external stakeholders (Smith et al, 2010). Success requires attention to be paid to the conflicting needs of stakeholders, customers, employees etc. (Smith and Lewis, 2011). Moreover, these tensions may remain latent-dormant, ignored, unnoticed, until external factors or cognitive efforts highlight their oppositional and relational nature, which then turns them into salient – the conflicting and inconsistent nature of the tensions gets noticed by organizational actors (ibid.).

The authors propose, “latent paradoxical tensions become salient to organizational actors under environmental conditions of plurality, change, and scarcity” (Smith and Lewis, 2011, p. 390). Moreover, they claim “in addition to external environmental forces (...), paradoxical cognition-frames and processes that recognize and juxtapose contradictory demands, make latent tensions more explicit. These cognitive frames may be spurred by cultural and contextual variables” (ibid.). This leads to another proposition that, “latent paradoxical tensions become salient as actors apply paradoxical cognition” (ibid.).

Vicious and virtuous cycles

When the paradoxical tensions are rendered salient they trigger responses, which in turn fuel cycles that can be negative or positive. A negative response (shown in the figure with the dotted downward arrow), spurs from cognitive and behavioral forces for consistency, emotional anxiety and defensiveness (Smith and Lewis, 2011). Often, when facing contradictions, organizations may feel paralyzed in the face of managing those tensions, thus employing defense mechanisms to deal with the inconsistencies. Individuals tend to react by choosing one agenda over the other (Smith et al, 2010) or changing their ideas and beliefs in order to enable consistency, often resulting into a mindless commitment to previous behaviors for the sake of consistency (Smith and Lewis, 2011). This is called a *vicious cycle* (ibid.).

The dynamic equilibrium model proposes a *virtuous cycle* by employing acceptance instead of defensiveness (Smith and Lewis, 2011). Acceptance views tensions as an opportunity to be creative (ibid.). When managers accept tensions as paradoxical, therefore recognizing that they could never choose between the tensions, because either choice would intensify the opposition, they are able to open discussion and foster paradoxical responses to the tensions (Smith et al, 2010). Responding to competing demands at the same time “requires cognitive and behavioral complexity, emotional equanimity, and dynamic organizational capabilities (...) it enables actors to host paradoxical cognitions—the cognitive frames that accept contradictions” (Smith and Lewis, 2011, p. 391).

Smith and Lewis (2011), regard *dynamic capabilities* as “the processes, routines, and skills that enable firm leaders to respond effectively to constantly shifting environments” (Teece et al., 1997, as cited in Smith and Lewis, 2011, p 392). These “dynamic capabilities” provide tools to organizational leaders that enable them to respond to environmental changes and the members to be more open and accepting of the dynamic nature of paradox (Smith and Lewis, 2011). Another proposition by Smith and Lewis (2011, p. 392) states that: “organizations with dynamic capabilities will foster greater acceptance of paradoxical tensions rather than encourage defensiveness”.

A managerial approach to paradox

The dynamic equilibrium model by Smith and Lewis (2011) also suggests a managerial approach to paradox that involves complementary and intertwined strategies of acceptance and resolution. When actors accept that tensions can and should coexist, they have the ability to carefully explore the dynamic relationships between tensions (ibid.). This acceptance creates comfort with tensions that fosters more complex and innovative resolution strategies (Smith and Lewis, 2011). For the authors, resolution is considered as the process with which organizations seek responses to paradoxical tensions, either by dividing and choosing between the tensions or by finding synergies that accolade the odd polarities (ibid.). “Paradoxical resolution denotes purposeful iterations between alternatives in order to ensure simultaneous attention to them over time. Adopting a paradoxical strategy changes the managerial focus from deciding either option A or towards the effort to implement both A and B (Smith et al, 2010). Doing so involves consistent inconsistency as managers frequently and dynamically shift decisions” (Smith and Lewis, 2011, p. 392). Hence managers make choices in the short term while remaining aware about the long-term contradiction (Smith et al, 2010).

Persistent and ongoing tensions are natural according to Smith and Lewis, and managers should remain reflective and manage paradoxes in ways that take advantage of their positive potential (2011). The equilibrium unleashes the potential that paradox has to foster sustainability (ibid). Responding to competing demands at the same time and effectively has been associated with career success (O'Mahony and Bechky as cited in Smith and Lewis, 2011; Peters and Waterman 1982; Collins and Porras, 1997).

The dynamic equilibrium by Smith and Lewis (2011) enables sustainability through three mechanisms:

1. Enabling learning and creativity. Juxtaposing forces can nurture a context within which leaders can engage in creative problem solving, allowing the continuous improvement of the organization.
2. Fostering flexibility and resilience. The management of paradoxical tensions can nurture more dynamic decision-making.
3. Unleashing human potential. Individuals can experience positive emotions as a result of the creativity and learning fueled by dealing with conflicting demands.

Based on the above stems the final proposition by Smith and Lewis: “managing paradoxical tension via dynamic, purposeful, and ongoing strategies of acceptance and resolution (iterating between splitting and integration) fosters sustainability” (2011, p. 394). In agreement to Smith, Binns and Tushman (2010) who argue that this ‘either/or’-approach to strategic tensions is inadequate (p. 449), Smith and Lewis (2011) re-conceptualize organizing and suggest that instead of choosing between dualities, tensions should be perceived as synergistic and persistent; therefore strategies of acceptance and resolution are keys to enable sustainability by engaging in these tensions (ibid.).

Finally, we conclude that the use of the equilibrium model by Smith and Lewis (2011), will enable us to analyze our data in a richer and more holistic way since the context around this thesis is abundant with tensions and competing demands. Using the paradox lens will help us avoid an “either/or”-approach to our collected data and instead adopt a “both/and”-approach that serves the purpose of this research (Smith et al, 2010; Lewis, 2000).

Before the thesis moves on to present its research strategy and methodology, we would like to conclude the Theoretical Framework with a quote of Søren Kierkegaard, who summarized the essence of paradox quite well, saying:

“(…) the paradox is the source of the thinker’s passion, and the thinker without a paradox is like a lover without feeling, a paltry mediocrity”.

—Søren Kierkegaard (1985, p. 29)

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Setting

Research approach

In order to answer the research question and its sub questions, the research took a qualitative approach. The data was collected through seven semi-structured interviews with founders of different slow fashion brands (Kvale, 2007). Additionally, to the seven main interviews, two follow-up interviews were conducted. The goal of the interviews was to gain in-depth, personal information regarding the founders and their organizational identity. Conducting qualitative research, each interview is of informational value, rather than numerical, and should contribute to a deeper insight in certain processes (ibid.). The type of the present research is *informed basic research* (Van de Ven, 2007). Here we, as researchers, took the perspective of outsiders, who were detached from the research subject and aimed to understand and describe organizational identity from the founders' perspective (ibid.). Hence, we were not part of the investigated organizations and did not have any previous connection (e.g. through employment, case study, etc.) to them.

While focusing on qualitative ethnography, *inductive reasoning*, combined with some *deductive* elements was applied. Following an inductive approach, we generally based the use of our theoretical concepts on the insights from the collected data, rather than on theory first (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Applying *inductive reasoning* seemed most suitable in our case, since we did not aim to prove theory, but investigate an organizational phenomenon in the fashion industry and firstly decided on the specific theoretical context at a later point. This made it also possible to keep the research process flexible and facilitated the process of finding the appropriate research angle (Saunders et al., 2016). We, however, argue that some deductive elements, led by theoretical concepts, were included as well (Bryman and Bell, 2007). For example, when building the interview guide we tried to imply specific questions about *brand identity* (Keller, 2013; Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000) and *organizational values* (see also Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000) to test if these concepts are relevant. Focusing on an inductive approach, we nevertheless see the

researcher as an important part of the research process as well as a co-producer of knowledge (Saunders et. al., 2016).

Research philosophy

Besides *inductive reasoning*, it can be noted that the study applied the research lens of interpretivism, combined with social constructionism. According to Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008), both philosophical lenses focus on “how people, as individuals or as a group, interpret and understand social events and settings” (p. 12) and serve as important tools in order to understand and analyze qualitative data. Even though there are various definitions of the interpretive research lens, interpretive researchers commonly agree upon the notion that reality is a complex construct that develops through a process of constant interaction and reflection between human individuals. Humans try to make sense of their reality by attributing different meanings to it (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008). According to Prasad (2005), “human interpretation” (p. 13) is the starting point to develop socially constructed knowledge about the world. The focus of interpretivism is thus the everyday life of the research objects, which the researcher needs to investigate, give meaning and co-construct together with the research object (Prasad, 2005). The realm of our study is hereby similar, looking at the founders of the investigated companies and interpreting the reality of their organizational identity. In the context of interpretivism, also reflection plays an important role. Following what Alvesson and Sköldberg call *reflexive methodology* (2009), we did not aim to constitute an ultimate truth, but rather tried to understand the phenomenon of organizational identity in the slow fashion context. We thus applied a skeptical and reflexive approach towards the entire research process, in order to constitute an authentic as well as critical picture of the reality around our research (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009). Additionally, a very strong branch in interpretive research is social constructionism, which was applied in this research as well and it explained in the following.

According to Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008), social constructionism aims to understand how “the seemingly ‘objective’ features, such as industries, organizations and technologies, are constituted by subjective meanings of individuals and intersubjective processes such as discourses” (p. 12). The research philosophy believes that the reality that we perceive is “socially constructed by interconnected patterns of communication” (ibid., p. 13), where, according to Alvesson and

Sköldberg (2009), “linguistic, social, political and theoretical elements are woven together” (p. 9). There is consequently no ultimate truth (ibid.). This means that reality is not liable to a defined frame by individuals, but rather the creation of an ongoing process of reflection, construction and interaction with others. Prasad (2005) further points out that, “while we are individually engaged in acts of sense-making, these acts are significantly mediated by the cognitive schema and language that we obtain from our wider societies” (p. 14). With regard to our research process, the social construction of knowledge consequently seemed to take place through a dynamic process between the researcher, the researched object and the surrounding social context of both sides.

3.2. Data collection process

3.2.1. Research design

Idea Generation

With regard to the idea generation process, the relevant focus and knowledge was developed through a process of constant reflection. It can be structured into two phases, that we named - *orientation phase* and *specification phase*, the transition from one phase to another was not specifically planned and was intuitively shaped by the insights of the founders. The first phase of idea generation started out with a general interest in the fashion industry, especially potential change makers within the industry. This phase of the research took many different variables into account, such as for example identity, sustainability, originality or leadership, which made it possible to also gain a good overview of potential areas that call for more research or seemed relevant. The theoretical focus of the first phase was hereby how the founders perceive the brand identity and brand communication of their companies. This is mirrored in the first research question draft that still had a strong focus on branding and brand identity, which was “How do CEOs of sustainable fashion brands build a strong brand identity?”.

However, after the first two interviews we realized that branding does not capture our area of interest and the totality of the gained data. That is why in the second phase of the research process the focus was moved away from branding and directed towards organizational identity and culture.

We realized that considering identity as a social and cultural construct, rather than a strategic tool, would help us analyze and present our data in a more holistic way. This was also relevant, since we set an additional focus on the element of sustainability in their organizational identity. Especially the second interview in the research process brought us new valuable insights and helped us shape our focus. During the interview, we learnt about certain dynamics in their organizational identity that were also related to the company's sustainable focus and needed to be balanced out. In order to provide a better understanding of identity in our given context it made sense to focus on the perception of the organizational identity by the founders, as well as their navigation of this given identity, which finally shaped our research focus. This is finally also visible in our final research question that catches up on the two mentioned areas of interest: *How do founders of slow fashion companies perceive and navigate their organizational identity?* Besides applying literature from the field of organizational identity, we use literature about identity dynamics and paradox theory to further understand the nature of the different dynamics.

Choice of companies

All investigated companies and their founders were chosen on two premises. They had to be companies from the fashion industry and sustainability had to be a core part of their identity. The latter premise meant for us that the brands showed a clear awareness, regarding social and environmental responsibility and included it as a core value of their organization. When testing both premises we mainly oriented ourselves on the information that was found on the companies' website. Since we chose all labels upon the sustainability criteria, it should be mentioned that we trusted the information on the website as well as the information that they provided us with. When it comes to statements about sustainability, ethical production and social impact, we did not have a chance to test to what extent they are backed up and actually realized. This needs to be taken into account, since critical voices may question the statement that they act ethically and responsibly.

When searching for possible companies that we could interview, we firstly kept the search quite open. At the beginning of our research process, especially attending the Fashion Trade Show *Revolver* in Copenhagen from 1st to 3rd March 2017 (revolver.dk) helped us a lot in getting inspired as well as some contacts for potential research companies. Based on a previous contact, it even gave us the possibility to conduct a first pilot interview (Kvale, 2007) with *Changemaker's Apparel*).

While some of the collaborating companies emerge from attending Revolver (such as *Women in Knit, Manifesto*) other collaborations were built through personal contacts (such as *Inside; Changemaker's Apparel, Elise Andersen*), as well as individual research (such as *Respekt; Ethical Essentials*). All of the companies were contacted by email first, in order to explain our project to the founders and ask them for their interest to work with us and contribute to our research (Appendix I) (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008). The draft of the first email varies of course in comparison to the final research outcome.

Anonymity of companies

In accordance with the founders of the investigated brands we decided to keep their names as well as the names of their companies anonymous in order to keep the shared information confidential (Kaiser, 2009; Lahman et al., 2015). The decision to use pseudonyms instead of the founders' real names and brand names was made after the interviews, when we individually asked the companies how they feel about their data and how they want to be referred to. It seemed that some of the founders did not feel comfortable being associated directly with their data. One reason for that might also be that the founders shared personal insights into their organizational identity and some were still in the process of defining their organizational identity. Using pseudonyms firstly seemed difficult, since the real names of the founders and companies also transferred information about their identity and backgrounds. According to Lahman et al. (2015), "practical experience and research has shown people will assign characteristics to other people according to their name" (p. 449). In order to avoid a loss of material and depth of our data we therefore tried to choose names that seem authentic with regard to the background and legacy. This way we were able to protect the privacy of the companies and also interpret our data without compromising the essence of the original information.

Data pool and sampling

In figure 4, a better overview of the companies and their founders is presented. It gets visible that all investigated companies, come from Scandinavian countries. This was not intended and not a requirement of our research. It happened intuitively and most likely due to geographic proximity, also because sustainability is a more common topic in Scandinavia. It should be noted that we did not take national background or type of gender into account. Through figure 4, it gets clear that in

terms of size and age of the investigated companies our data pool is quite varied. This is also something that happened naturally and was not planned, but contributed to the richness and depth of our data. Each of the conducted interviews had its own purpose. While the first ones, and especially the second one with *Inside*, served as an orientation and to shape the research, the following ones (#3 – #7) and the follow-ups had the purpose of further supporting and justifying our research direction (figure 4). In the following, we will briefly present the background of the founders and their companies.

INTERVIEW	COMPANY	FOUNDER	COUNTRY	AGE	PRODUCT	SAMPLING
						
#1	Changemaker's Apparel	Morten Nielsen	Denmark	2015	Apparel	Pilot Interview (Test Interview Guide)
#2	Inside	Camilla Ribeiro	Denmark	2016	Urban Fashion	Shaping / Orientation
#3	Elise Andersen	Elise Andersen	Denmark	30 year in the business	Contemporary Jewellery	Test of new direction
#4	Manifesto	Alexander Eriksson	Sweden	2006	Apparel	Following new direction
#5	Respekt	Ida Tjellesen	Norway	2015	Luxury Fashion	Additional Insights
#6	Ethical Essentials	Thomas Madsen	Denmark	2015	Underwear & Socks	Additional Insights
#7	Women in Knit	Ingrid Gústafsdóttir	Faroe Islands	2002	Luxury Knitwear	Additional Insights

Figure 4. Overview of investigated companies.

Background of investigated companies

Changemaker's Apparel: An Aarhus based apparel brand, founded in 2015 by Morten Nielsen. The company aims to *become a pioneer of change in the fashion industry* and focuses on the use of organic materials, the creation of a recycle system as well as an engagement in charitable projects.

Inside: Founded in 2016, through a *Kickstarter* campaign. *Inside* is a Danish clothing brand that focuses on Danish design, the use of natural material and a social cause. While producing in prisons in Peru *Inside* aims to create valuable labour for the inmates, *turning lost time into fair wages*, hopes and new perspectives. The founder of *Inside* is Camilla Ribeiro.

Elise Andersen: The founder Elise Andersen and her eponymous Danish jewelry company focus on handcrafted, contemporary design jewelry. Additionally, Andersen added the production project *Heartful* to her business portfolio. Based in Thailand the project does not only aim to create new production facilities for her work, but also to create job opportunities and social perspectives for her Thai craftsmen.

Manifesto: The company was founded in 2006 by the Swedish street-wear enthusiast Alexander Eriksson. The founder brought his passion for street-wear as well as an environmental awareness into his company, aiming to combine excellent graphics with cool design and organic materials.

Respekt: The Norwegian Ida Tjellesen founded the Copenhagen-based company in 2015. Resulting from the aftermath of a disastrous earthquake in Nepal, the brand aimed to support and engage social projects in Nepal by doing fashion. Having lived in Nepal before, the founder intended to build her production center there and combine excellent Danish design with sustainable materials and a social focus on Nepal.

Ethical Essentials: Founded 2015, *Ethical Essentials*, is a sustainable apparel company by Thomas Madsen. Based in Aarhus, Denmark, the brand aims to combine high quality materials that are sustainable and organic, with a focus on customer satisfaction and service.

Women in Knit: A Faroese Fashion design company, specializing in sustainable fashion. The company was founded by two Faroese women, Ingrid Gústafsdóttir and Ingrid Meydel, in 2002. Being located in a remote area, the brand focuses on aesthetic luxury knitwear, which is handcrafted by other Faroese women in their homes. By that, *Women in Knit* does not only provide job opportunities, but supports female empowerment as well.

To sum up it should be acknowledged that the companies approach sustainability in different ways. While some focus more on ethical production and the use of organic materials, others emphasize on social projects, such as female empowerment, community development and education.

3.2.2. Interviews

The data collection was undertaken through seven face-to-face interviews with the mentioned founders. Applying a qualitative method of social science research enabled us to gain in-depth, first-hand insights in the founders' perceptions, emotions and experiences. This made it possible to obtain a "nuanced description that depict[s] [...] qualitative diversity [...] rather than on ending up with fixed categorizations" (Kvale, 2007, p. 12). Hereby we saw the interview as an example of a "social interaction" (Warren, 2012, p. 1, in Gubrium et al., 2012) and the respondent as a "vessel of topics" (ibid. p. 12), that is providing specific information and knowledge about certain themes and phenomena. Every conducted interview is regarded as equally important and qualitative informative. The aim is to take each interview to a deeper level, which is influenced a lot by interpretation and reflection upon the collected information.

Technical facts about the interviews

The interview process took in total about five weeks. The research process consisted of one initial informal conversation, a pilot interview, six main interviews, and two short follow-ups on interviews via phone. In agreement with the case companies, all interviews were taken in English and recorded via phone. On average one interview took about 60 to 80 minutes, depending on the availability of the particular interviewee. It can be stated that all interviews took place in Copenhagen. In the case of *Inside* and *Elise Andersen*, we had a chance to meet them at their office spaces in Copenhagen, whereas for *Manifesto*, *Ethical Essentials*, and *Women in Knit* the interviews were taken via Skype. The two follow-up interviews were additionally taken via phone. Besides that, we could interview the founder of *Changemaker's Apparel* during the trade fair Revolver in Copenhagen and interviewed the founder of *Respekt* in a coffee place in the center of Copenhagen. All interviews were conducted individually with the founder, besides the interview with *Elise Andersen*, which was a pair interview between the founder and her business developer. The pair

interview was a spontaneous coincidence and not planned. Nevertheless, it served as a valuable form of collected data and did not distort the data collection process. Interviewing an additional person besides the founder even added additional value and insights to the collected data; especially since it was Elise Andersen's business developer that was present.

Interview style/technique

While conducting semi-structured interviews we used a pre-prepared interview guide that was revised and adjusted accordingly during the research process. The interview-guide covered a draft of themes and topics with suggested questions for each section (Warren, 2012, in Gubrium et al., 2012). Kvale (2007) describes the interviewer as an explorer who finds himself on a journey. Thus a semi-structured interview approach enabled us to go on a flexible research journey, since "the absence of a prescribed set of rules for interviewing [also] creates an open-ended field of opportunity for the interviewer's skills, knowledge and intuition" (p. 34). Furthermore, the semi-structured approach was especially useful when additional questions were necessary to understand the respondent's answer or meaning behind an issue and provided us with a certain factual freedom, being able to rephrase and adjust questions according to the content we received. Stepping away from the interview guide took place under our own judgment as the interviewers, according to the interview process (Warren, 2012, in Gubrium et al., 2012), which thus was quite subjective and could also contain possible errors. The main difficulty that this interview process causes is to ensure that all themes from the interview guide are covered without disrupting the information flow in the interview. Nevertheless, a semi-structured approach provided the interview with an intuitive dynamic and authenticity and made it possible to create a more nuanced insight into the provided information.

With regard to the interview technique, we mainly applied *active interviewing* as well as some element of *creative interviewing* (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995). The authors illustrate an interview as an active exchange of knowledge and emphasizes on the interview as an ongoing, dynamic dialogue between the interviewer and the interviewee (ibid.). In our study *active interviewing* seemed useful to obtain and co-construct knowledge during the interview process, whereas *creative interviewing* provided a valuable support to deeper layers of personal knowledge, such as emotions regarding certain experiences or personal insights in the company (ibid.). Overall, the success of an interview,

especially a creative one, is very much dependent on mutual respect and trust between the interviewer and the interviewee (ibid). That is why we tried to approach each interview with openness and curiosity towards unexpected discoveries, as well as sensitivity and an optimistic attitude to create a comfortable interview atmosphere and to provide the respondent with a positive interview experience (Kvale, 2007).

Interview process and interview guides

Before the main interview process started, we conducted an informal phone conversation with Morten Nielsen, the founder of the brand *Changemaker's Apparel*. The informal conversation had been arranged previously through email and was not recorded. It served as a first orientation regarding the direction of our research. Doing an informal interview was chosen according to the argument of Elliott and Jankel Elliott (2003), who stated, “much of the richest data which ethnography can capture comes from the whole realm of informal talk between researcher and informants” (p. 217). Even though the conversation was arranged on a specific day and time, it was kept very open and flexible, “allowing the informant to control the discussion” (Elliott and Jankel Elliott, 2003; p. 217). The topics of the informal conversation touched upon the founder's background, his motivation behind the company and the organization in general. An interesting side factor of the phone conversation was that the founder informed us about the Trade Fair *Revolver* in Copenhagen and agreed to arrange a first pilot interview with him.

The main interview process started with a pilot interview with Morten Nielsen, the founder of *Changemaker's Apparel* at the Trade Fair *Revolver*. The founder himself was also attending the tradeshow. The pilot interview at *Revolver* formed a good opportunity to get familiar with our research topic in a fashion related environment and to test our interview questions and interview guide (Kvale, 2007). For the interview, we used a pre-prepared interview guide, following the semi-structured approach, and we started with an “outline of topics to be covered with suggested question” (Kvale, 2007 p. 57). This was especially useful since the interviewed person aimed at understanding “the meaning of central themes of the subject's lived world” (ibid., p. 11). Central themes circled upon personal questions, questions about the company's values, its identity in general and corporate culture (Appendix II). Since we were still searching for our final research

focus many topics were broadly touched to gain a broad overview and insight in many areas in order to being able to spot interesting edges that require more research.

Second interview process – definition

For our second interview, with Camilla Ribeiro, the founder of *Inside*, we revised the pilot interview. We aimed to keep the questions more open and less biased. The outline of the interview guide was very similar to the one of the pilot interview (Appendix I). In comparison to the first interview guide, we shortened some questions and made them less biased. For example we left out questions like “Do you nourish your vision?” and only asked the founder to describe the company’s vision. Since the founder of *Inside* felt like her brand can hardly be pressured into academic categories like “brand values” or “brand identity”, we tried to follow Warren’s (2012; in Gubrium et al., 2012) suggestion of asking questions that are “translated into the vernacular” (p. 65), instead of only formulating questions in academic terms. It should be noted that the second interview formed an important point in the research process, since it was the interview that contributed most to our final research focus. During the interview process we noticed that there seemed to be certain challenges characteristic for the investigated brands due to their identity construction. Consequently, this notion shaped our research quite a lot, since we tried to investigate more behind those challenges in the following. The interview guide was then adjusted accordingly.

The third interview was conducted with Elise Andersen, founder of the eponymous jewelry company. For this interview, a new interview guide was prepared, focusing on the new research focus. In comparison to the first two interview guides, the third was shortened down and made more to the point. Continuing with applying a semi-structured approach, could still leave enough room for further elaboration and input. Even though the third interview turned into a spontaneous group interview, the pre-prepared interview guide was still applied (Appendix I) Regarding the third interview guide, the interview started again with basic questions about the founder’s background and company creation, followed by questions about the company's mission and vision. Even though at this point of the process we did not focus on brand identity in the end, questions about brand building and communication were still included (e.g. *Did you use any brand building tools to define the brand? Do you experience difficulties communicating your brand?*). The focus shifted on “active listening” (Kvale 2007, p. 63), which resulted in constant reflection of the content and

adjusting the questions accordingly. The aim was also to ask more follow-up and specifying questions (Kvale, 2007) to encourage the interviewees to elaborate more on specific experiences and give examples. In that sense, also the element of silence served as a useful tool to leave room for the interviewees to reflect upon their input and add additional information (ibid.).

Pitch exercise and follow-up interviews – identity crash test

After the second interview, we additionally introduced a short pitch exercise into the data collection process. The aim of this exercise was to test the collected data in an imitated real-life situation in a sort of “playful situation”. The pitch exercise consisted of three parts: a pitch of the company to a potential investor, a potential retailer or customer, as well as pitching to a web agency or brand building company. The founders did not have time to prepare the pitch and were advised to act intuitively. Each pitch had a time limit of two minutes. We are aware of the fact, that in a real life situation the founders would have time to prepare a more professionalized and maybe defined presentation of their company. Since in this particular case we were interested in the founders’ spontaneous reaction when having to present their company and organizational identity to different units, the staged situation fit quite well. The further aim of the exercise was to see how the companies present themselves in the staged situation and which previously presented identity traits they brought into the spotlight of the pitch or left out. Due to the limitations and variations of the pitch the exercise should just be regarded as a tool to gain additional data and not stand as a fact of its own. Since the first two interviews with *Inside* and *Changemaker’s Apparel* missed out on the pitch this was made good for in two additional short telephone interviews. In the case of *Changemaker’s Apparel* some additional questions from the final interview guide, that had not been covered in the first place, were added.

3.2.3. Credibility of research findings & limitations

Axiology of the research

Following Bryman and Bell (2007) we additionally found it important to also take the values that the researcher attributes to the research into account. To proof credibility of our findings, we regarded axiology, which studies the judgment of values, as important (Saunders et al., 2016). We

firstly recognize that the research topic was chosen out of personal interest in the fashion industry and especially brands that aim to make a difference in the system. This might have influenced our research from the beginning and might not have left us completely unbiased when approaching our data. However, it also created a project of passion for us that served as a strong motivation to conduct a relevant and complete research in the fashion industry. We furthermore realized that we also brought this interest, along with our personal values, to the interview situations. Even though we tried to create awareness for our values and their influence on the interviewee in advance (see Saunders et al., 2016), it might still have impacted our final findings. However, since to some extent, especially with regard to sustainability, we very much agreed with the founders' sometimes left-wing, anti-capitalist views, we also had the impression that it created a common ground that made it easier for the founders to share personal information about their businesses. We thus support Saunders' et. al. (2016) notion that being aware of those values can help looking at the gained data as well as the research process in a more authentic and critical way.

Credibility of the collected data

Even though the data process provided us with very rich and valuable data, certain limitations and impacts on the credibility of our data still need to be taken into account. Scholars for example doubt the credibility of the data when a qualitative research process through semi-structured interviews is applied (Miles and Huberman, 1994). It is argued that semi-structured interviews might not be as representative of a data pool, since they would not give the same insights as standardized interviews (Saunders et al., 2016). Being asked in a different situation the questions might also give different insights into the data and therefore might lack reliability (ibid). Due to its size and data collection strategy, the undertaken study can thus not be regarded as representative of the fashion industry as a whole. In the case of our research, we did not aim to collect data that can provide standardization to any kind of situation. The aim was rather to give an overview of a certain phenomenon in the context of organizational identity that can be connected to existing theoretical concepts and thereby provide a deeper understanding as well as opening up the field for further research (Saunders et al., 2016).

In terms of the interview process, additional bias came up as well. This bias can affect the validity of our data. Validity is commonly measured by how much the research can give access to the

interviewees' knowledge and perceptions (Saunders et al., 2016). In order to gain the maximum depth of insights we therefore tried to include follow-up questions as well as ask the founders to give us examples of their experience and elaborate more on certain points. During the research process, we became more and more aware of these aspects and tried to include them, as much as possible, into the interview process (Saunders et al., 2016) so as to gain valid data.

Nevertheless, our data collection process might still have been affected by bias that has an impact on the validity of the data. This bias is mainly a result of interviewing the founders in pairs. We, as researchers, did for example not have a consistent system who of us was asking the questions and who was, recording. Even though there was always a main interviewer, this person varied and some interviews were even taken by only one person. Due to different voice tones, personality traits and asking technique, this might have had an impact on our data (Saunders et al., 2016). In order to avoid this we tried to keep a consistent form and be as reflective as possible on our interview process, by for example giving each other feedback afterwards. Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge, that conducting the present research in pairs still had significant advantages. Doing the interviews together, we could rely on supporting each other during the interview process. We could help each other for example to keep focus and make sure that all topics of the interview guide were covered. Working in pairs, also enabled us to keep a relaxed interview atmosphere, since one person could focus on recording the interview and the other person could focus on asking the interview questions.

In terms of the case companies, it should also be taken into account that the data pool is quite diverse. Besides *Elise Andersen*, a jewelry brand, all other companies are part of the fashion industry in the traditional sense. Some companies like *Manifesto*, *Changemaker's Apparel* and *Ethical Essentials* are apparel brands, while *Inside*, *Respekt* and *Women in Knit* see themselves as luxury brands. Additionally, it should be considered that some of the founders are also the creative directors of the brands and main designer (*Elise Andersen*, *Women in Knit*), which might have affected the data they shared as well. In this context, it could be argued that our data lacks a certain consistency. Since we however chose the companies according to their identity and a focus on sustainability and change making, we see the various data pool rather as a contribution to the richness of our data than a particular limitation.

Further Limitations

Besides that, some limitations could be found. Our research experienced for example some factual limitations. It was only possible to interview two founders in their usual business environment, which would also have been interesting for the other brands. Unfortunately, due to the limited availability and remote location of some of the founders this was not possible. We were, for example, not able to travel to Sweden to interview Alexander Eriksson, the founder of *Manifesto*. In that context, we were further limited to the fact that some interviews had to be taken via Skype. This made it harder to develop a personal common ground and influence the interview atmosphere, since we could only hear each other. This might have resulted in a more technical and less personal conversation regarding the Skype interviews. In some cases the Skype interviews were also shorter than the usual interviews, since the founders were not open to allocate more time. Additionally, all collected data emerged from companies based in Scandinavia. How much validity the insights have with regard to other European companies needs to be tested. In that sense a limitation for the founders could also have been the fact that English was not their mother tongue and some information might have been harder to explain in English. The same, applies for us, as researchers, since English is neither our mother tongue.

With regard to the data collection process it can also be considered as a limitation that we mainly focused on semi-structured face-to-face or Skype interviews and each founder was only interviewed once. Due to a limited availability of the interviewees it was only possible to conduct one interview with each of them. The short follow-up interviews already made an exception in the time schedule of the founders. If they had been available, it would for example have been interesting to interview them additionally in a “focus-group” together with founders of other organizations. Arranging a focus group in form of an “organized discussion” (Kitzinger, 1994 in Erikson and Kovalainen, 2008, p. 173) would have benefited us in many ways. The interactive conversation would have been “increasingly valuable when exploring how viewpoints are constructed and how they are expressed” (Erikson and Kovalainen, 2008, p. 174; based on Kitzinger and Barbour, 1999; Puchta and Potter, 2004). It would have been informative to encourage the participants to share and discuss their experiences with regard to their organizational identity and their reality as founders of slow fashion brands, while as researchers taking a step back from the discussion (ibid.). Organizing a focus group was also not possible due to geographical distance between the founders.

3.3. Data analysis

3.3.1. First cycle of coding

After the interview process was completed, all interviews were transcribed (Appendix II). Moreover, all answer blocks were numbered to be able to refer to certain answers in the analysis. In order to analyze and structure the collected data, we chose the process of coding (Appendix III). Charmaz (2001; in Miles et. al., 2013) refers to coding as a “critical link” (p. 72) that is built between the data and its analysis, whereas for Miles et. al. (2013) a code in qualitative research is “a researcher-generated construct that symbolizes and thus attributes interpreted meaning to each individual datum for later purposes of pattern detection, categorization, theory building and other analytic processes” (p. 72). Hereby Miles et al. (2013) already point to the two major stages in coding that were also applied in the current research process, which Saldana (2013; in Miles et al., 2013) calls “first cycle and second cycle coding” (p. 73).

The first cycle of coding served mainly to gain an overview of the data and structure it by assigning different codes to “data chunks to detect recurring patterns” (ibid., p. 73). From that process a further specification into smaller groups and focus points took place. When starting the coding process we applied *inductive* as well as *deductive reasoning*, according to our research orientation. In order to create a first framework of codes, we created a list of predefined codes (deductive approach), which according to Miles et. al. (2013) came “from the conceptual framework, list of research questions, hypotheses, problem areas, and/or key variables” (p. 81). However, these first list of codes was not set in stone, other codes emerged on the way and were included in the list as well (inductive approach). Since we kept the first cycle of coding very open and flexible, we additionally also applied “sub-coding”, where “a secondary order tag [is] assigned to enrich the entry” (ibid., p. 80) and “simultaneous coding”, when we assigned multiple meanings to one datum (ibid., p. 81).

The predefined list consisted of eleven codes that were attributed to each of the seven data sets in a descriptive way, codes that “summarized [...] the basic topic of a passage” (Miles et. al., 2013, p. 74). We decided upon a preliminary limitation of eleven codes. The codes we used were very broad

and mainly oriented towards the topics the founders talked about. All data was coded manually instead of using specific software. The eleven attributes were the following:

1. ACTIVITIES (Job design; What they do?)
2. PRODUCT
3. COMMUNICATION
4. FASHION INDUSTRY (Process)
5. SUSTAINABLE FASHION INDUSTRY (Process)
6. INSPIRATION (Influences; Competitors)
7. SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (Mission related)
8. MONEY
9. AESTHETICS
10. GOALS (Vision)
11. FOUNDER

In some cases the codes were applied more specifically and in other cases more loosely, for example, giving one sentence several meanings (Appendix III). For the first cycle we tried to approach our data in a holistic way rather than focusing too much on line-by-line coding (Miles et. al., 2013), in order to gain an orientation and inspiration how to structure the data in the best way.

3.3.2. Second cycle of coding

When moving into the second process of coding, where we aimed to group data chunks together and structure them further, we felt that the first cycle of coding did not entirely mirror the focus we aimed to set and it was hard for us to move on to the regular second cycle of coding. That is why we saw a need to step back from analyzing the entire data set, focusing on the most important quotes instead. We therefore chose to apply a second “coding” technique that was more intuitive. Having the codes and insights of the first cycle of coding in mind, we decided to consider each interview again, take out the most important quotes and copy and paste them in one document that we called “The Golden Quotes” (Appendix III). In this process it was helpful that, already in the first cycle of

coding, we had marked in bold some sentences, which we felt contain the essence of our study. Having applied this system, we started the second cycle of coding in order to detect emerging pattern codes within the gained data.

Based on our insights from the first cycle of coding and the “Golden Quotes” – system we could already spot five main areas of interest, so-called “pattern codes” (Miles et. al., 2013, p.87). In our case the pattern codes were:

INDUSTRY

ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY

PRODUCT

PRODUCTION

COMMUNICATION

According to Miles et. al. (2013), “pattern codes [...] identify an emerging theme, configuration or explanation“ (p. 87) and sum up the material from the first cycle of coding into “more meaningful and parsimonious units of analysis– ‘sort of meta-codes’“ (ibid.). Patterning is furthermore a way for the researcher to process data and can happen very intuitively and in a rushed way, which is why the setting of the pattern codes calls for constant reflection and a cross-check (Miles et. al., 2013). In our case we used the emerging pattern codes as color codes. Having used color-coding already in a previous study, we experienced it as a good way to structure our data. In the process of color-coding the “The Golden Quotes”, we re-structured all data according to the color codes and placed the pitch exercise in a separate document.

After having grouped our data under the main pattern codes, we started to structure each pattern’s codes into sub-groups. This happened according to the topics that each of the founders presented in area of the pattern codes. For example inside the theme *INDUSTRY*, “disastrous impact”, “not only bad” and “not part of the industry” formed sub-themes. The description of the sub-groups did not happen after a certain scheme and was rather descriptive and intuitive, based on the topic the founders touched. The pitch exercise on the other hand was analyzed separately, according to the descriptive themes of each the pitch (pitch to investor; pitch to shop owner [potential buyer]; pitch to customer; pitch to web designer or branding agency). It can be argued that our coding process

followed a rather complex scheme. Nevertheless, it was designed quite intuitive and enabled us to use a bottom-up coding approach that emerged step by step and oriented itself around the topic that the founders touched upon. It was therefore not pushed into predefined schemes. Using an inductive approach in the second cycle of coding provided us with a lot of flexibility regarding the coding and made it possible to constantly reflect upon our codes and their sense-making. Following the mentioned approach made it also possible to present our data in the analysis in a quite raw and honest form, while in the discussion we aimed to connect it to its relevant theory.

Learning to reflect upon our coding approach and consequently change our setting if necessary was a very valuable and important experience we made during the coding process. Creating a research map was not an easy process and called for constant reflection and adjustment. We agree with Miles et. al (2013), who pointed out that “the ultimate power of field research lies in the researcher's emerging map of what is happening and why [...] so any method that will force more differentiation and integration of that map while remaining flexible is a good idea” (p. 93). We tried to follow this approach and be flexible to revise our codes. Using different approaches within the coding process helped us to find a way to best analyze and present our data. Nevertheless, it should be taken into account that the coding process might also be impacted by personal bias. Since two people coded the same data, possible bias in terms of different ways of coding needs to be taken into account, as well as a bias emerging from using a quite intuitive approach. Intuition could have also tricked us in some cases. It is important to take these preconceptions into account as well, when looking at the analysis.

3.3.3. Additional remarks for analysis – wording

Before analyzing and presenting the gained data we saw it necessary to give the reader a short introduction to the wording we chose, according to our research question: *How do founders of slow Fashion companies perceive and navigate their organizational identity?* Consequently, the subject of the inquiry is the founder of a slow fashion company. Even though we refer to the position of the interviewees as founders, we acknowledge that the investigated persons are not only the founders of their companies, but mostly also the owners, Chief Executive Officers, leaders and in some cases

also Creative Directors. In spite of this we chose to refer to them as founders, since we regard them as the founding mothers and fathers of their organizational identity.

When looking at the wording “company” it should further be stated that we do not make any difference between the expression, “company”, ”brand”, ”organization”, ”label” or ”business”. In all cases we aim to imply a focus on the organization as one whole entity. Using “brand” or ”label” interchangeably serves only to present linguistic variation and does not imply a contextual differentiation in the case of the given research.

With regard to the term *slow fashion*, we see the companies according to theory definition of slow fashion companies (see Ertekin and Atik, 2014; Fletcher, 2007). By using that term, we further imply that the businesses have a strong socially and environmentally awareness, as well as a general focus on sustainability. When addressing the part of their identity that refers to these practices, we mainly connect their classification as slow fashion brands with terms like “sustainability” or “social and environmental responsibility” and their adjectives. In the study both terms are strongly connected and form part of the study’s context around organizational identity. It is also worth mentioning, that we use the term *sustainability – focused identity* inspired by Hamilton and Goia (2009), which for us hold the same meaning as saying organizational identity in a “sustainability context”. Therefore, both expressions encapsulate the same meaning.

4. Analysis

The following analysis will present the relevant research findings regarding how the founders perceive the identity of their organizations. It revolves around the main topics that the founders mentioned when talking about their organizational and organizational identity. Examples are the fashion industry, views on sustainable practices, the product and production practices, as well as views on the business in general. After presenting the mentioned insights, the paper will move on explaining how the founders intend to be perceived by their external environment. The analysis will hereby also focus on possible tensions in the identity communication and management.

4.1. How do the founders perceive their organizational identity?

4.1.1. Fashion industry and organizational identity

All the investigated brands are part of the fashion industry and seem to hold similar opinions about the industry's current situation. During the interviews with the founders, a common concern regarding the industry was discussed. This concern involves the destructive side effects such as environmental and social harm caused by the industry's business and production practices. The founder of *Respekt*, Ida Tjellesen, referred to the inhumane usage of resources and social capital and stated that, "in terms of facts we know [...] the fashion industry is among the most polluted industries in the world" (Interview 5, *Respekt*, 06.03.2017, #4). A similar statement was made by the founder of *Inside*, Camilla Ribeiro, who also expressed her opposition to the "world of textile production that is extremely harmful to the environment" (Interview 2, *Inside*, 08.02.2017, #12). The founder of *Manifesto*, Alexander Eriksson, went into more detail, illustrating how he travelled to the production centers of the big fashion companies, such as China, India or Pakistan, where he could personally see their "destructive impact" (Interview 4, *Manifesto*, 16.02.2017, #8) on the environment. For him, seeing how "rivers [were] [...] completely polluted [and] extremely full of chemicals" (ibid.), which then results in killing different kinds of wildlife and imbalancing the

entire regional ecosystem (ibid.), was one of “the most disgraceful thing[s] [one] can ever imagine” (ibid., #8). That is also why, according to him, “fast-fashion is the big enemy of the planet” (ibid.).

With regard to the companies’ opinion on the industry, some of the founders also contrasted the creative scope of fashion with its industry practices. The founder of *Inside*, Camilla Ribeiro, stressed that, “here are a lot of things about identity creation and beauty that could do a lot of good things for people” (Interview 2, *Inside*, 08.02.2017, #4). According to her, the way of producing is the main problem of the industry and in her honest words those practices are “*completely fucked up*” (ibid.). This is why she believed that, “the industry needs a big makeover” (ibid.). Additionally, Ida Tjellesen of *Respekt* illustrated during the interview that “fashion in itself is not bad” (Interview 5, *Respekt*, 06.03.2017, #4). She saw the main problem mainly in the way mass production functions. According to her, mass production creates “products that are not long lasting” (Interview 5, *Respekt*, 06.03.2017, #4) and especially in the western parts of the world often end up being thrown away (ibid.). The founder paraphrased this consumption circle as quite “mindless” (ibid.) and pointed out that the big corporations mainly focus on “making [a] profit” (ibid., #4). The consumers on the other hand are driven by personal insecurity and a need to constantly follow-up on (Interview 5, *Respekt*, 06.03.2017, #4). With regard to mass production, Tjellesen shared an opinion directed towards large companies that it is mainly “the world that they create through these perfection standards, which is very disgusting” (ibid., #51), not necessarily the creative part of fashion itself.

In that context, another aspect of the companies’ identity is the fact that they aim to be an inspiration and to provide a solution to their industry and customers. This notion seemed possibly related to their opinions about the fashion industry and its harmful practices. During the interview Camilla Ribeiro, the founder of *Inside*, explained for example her intention to “be part of a solution to a new way of doing fashion [...] and completely disrupt some parts of the systems and the norms” (Interview 2, *Inside*, 08.02.2017, #78). While referring to the destructive forces of the fashion industry, the brand wants to prove “that it can be done in a better way” (ibid., #12). According to the founder of *Respekt* this follows a very natural logic, since in her opinion “the more you learn the more you understand [that] the system is *fucked up* and you are trying to create solutions” (Interview 5, *Respekt*, 06.03.2017, #2). This approach is also something that *Ethical Essentials*

seems to follow. In the interview, the founder Thomas Madsen referred to his brand as a “sustainable alternative” (Interview 6, *Ethical Essentials*, 06.03.2017, #56) in the market.

The rather negative opinion the founders have about the traditional fashion industry seems to have contributed to the creation and development of their organizational identity as fashion brands. This becomes clearer when looking at their way of doing business as well as their general understanding of ethics and values in the different parts of their identity, which will be further analyzed in the following parts.

4.1.2. Slow Fashion values and organizational identity

In the context of the fashion industry and its harmful practices, a strong belief that the founders shared during the interviews was an awareness of sustainability and responsible business practices. Although all companies shared a similar notion, the founders interpreted the realization of this awareness quite differently.

Some of the brands set their focus on fostering environmental sustainability. This is mostly related to their production process. However, very often this focus is connected to other factors as well. When being asked about the vision of his company, the founder of *Manifesto*, Alexander Eriksson, declared that for him, “sustainability is the future” (Interview 5, *Manifesto*, 16.02.2017, #6) and “the only option” (ibid., #8). He connects the production value with a creative quest, and explained during the interview that the core value of his business is to “bring out the best designs possible by using the talents that are available around the world and to produce as responsibly as possible” (Interview 5, *Manifesto*, 16.02.2017, #28). His focus lies on the usage of organic cotton, to ensure the least environmental impact and to support fair working conditions (ibid.). The usage of organic cotton is also something the brand *Ethical Essentials* works with. The founder, Thomas Madsen, agreed with Eriksson, and stated that his company’s vision is “to grow and create a sustainable alternative while causing the least environmental harm” (Interview 6, *Ethical Essentials*, 06.03.2017, #44).

The founder of *Women in Knit*, Ingrid Gústafsdóttir, agreed with Madsen and Eriksson in regard to being responsible, but described that it is very natural for her company to act responsibly and that they do not like to “brag so much about responsibility and ethical production ways” (Interview 7, *Women in Knit*, 13.03.2017, #64). For Ingrid Gústafsdóttir fashion “has to have a deeper meaning” (ibid., #76) and “start[s] with your basic values as a human being” (ibid., #76). The brand tries to combine a responsible production process, the Faroe Islands legacy, an expertise in hand knitting and a strong consciousness about their resources and human capital (Interview 7, *Women in Knit*, 13.03.2017, #60). The founder Morten Nielsen of *Changemaker’s Apparel* tries to embody this foundation as well and connects his environmental sustainable practices with supporting charity. He explained during the interview, “we try to combine both doing good in production, doing good beside making money, and also doing good in giving back to charity” (Interview 2, *Changemaker’s Apparel*, 02.03.2017, #2). Introducing a socially responsible business practice in his company is also a pattern that was reflected by other brands.

Besides having a responsible environmental impact and fostering sustainability, some of the investigated brands additionally support a social cause while doing business. When being asked about the different values that her label represents, the founder of *Respekt*, Ida Tjellesen, underscored that she did not only aim to create and sell clothes, but additionally intended to support social projects in Nepal. Despite the fact that *Respekt’s* production center lies in Nepal, the founder explained that she shares a very personal connection to the country and knows about many social projects that she would like to support (Interview 5, 06.03.2017, *Respekt*, #65). The founder of *Elise Andersen*, Elise Andersen, shared a similar understanding. During the interview, she explained how she connects her jewelry production with supporting a social project in the north of Thailand. Through the project, that she has named *Heartful*, she creates a production facility for her jewellery and also aims to create jobs especially for the Thai women. The founder strives to create a general awareness of the rich craft skills of the Thai people in the many remote areas in Thailand (Interview 3, *Elise Andersen*, 13.02.2017, #13).

In addition to *Elise Andersen*, other companies set a special focus on women’s empowerment, which adds another layer to the picture of their identity. The founder of *Women in Knit*, Ingrid Gústafsdóttir, embodied this focus. Her production is hand-knitted by women in their own homes

in the Faroe Islands, Jordan, and Peru, with the hope to empower the women who are living remotely and are facing very limited job opportunities (Interview 7, *Women in Knit*, 13.03.2017, #84). For the brand *Inside*, the main social purpose of Camilla Ribeiro's business is to "create meaningful jobs for women in prison, who are currently not employed with good salaries" (Interview 2, *Inside*, 08.02.2017, #12). By employing these women, *Inside's* goal is to "hopefully alleviate poverty" (ibid., #12). During the interview, the founder Camilla Ribeiro also added that she aims to realize this social purpose through fashion, "through clothes that inspire, in a world of textile production that is extremely harmful to the environment" (Interview 2, *Inside*, 08.02.2017, #12). Ribeiro strongly aims to prove "that it can be done in a better way, without in any way compromising the coolness and the sexiness of fashion" (Interview 2, *Inside*, 08.02.2017, #12). To sum up the founder hereby seemed to connect the brand's sustainable mission with a general business mission. This appeared to be a very central factor of *Inside's* organizational identity as well.

4.1.3. Production and organizational identity

When talking about their organizational identity, the founders of the companies often also discussed aspects of their production practices. Some of them hereby mentioned the importance of creating fair working conditions and managing with mutual respect. When being asked about the production practices in Nepal, the founder of *Respekt*, Ida Tjellesen, pointed out that it is very important for her company to be able to promise a supply chain that is as sustainable as possible (Interview 4, *Respekt*, 06.03.2017, #25). Tjellesen stressed that the workers in her production facility in Nepal, as well as her business partner "have the same values" (ibid.). Talking about the production process of the brand *Elise Andersen* in Thailand, the business developer, Anna Miller, also underlined their ambition to provide their workers very good working conditions. In addition, she asserted a deeper layer of their collaboration saying, "it's more about creating something that they feel proud to work for and that honours their skills and their crafts" (Interview 3, *Elise Andersen*, 13.02.2017, #70). The founder of *Women in Knit*, Ingrid Gústafsdóttir, articulated a similar opinion on their production process, focusing on dignity and mutual respect. According to her, it is not just about "giving money to some poor people but [...] delivering some very important labor" (Interview 7,

Women in Knit, 13.03.2017, #48). For her this means that she is on equal terms with her workers and even gets to know their personal stories. During the interview, the founder gave the example of a woman telling her about a wall that she built for her house because of the money she received from working for *Women in Knit* (ibid., #48). Referring to the given example, Gústafsdóttir regarded their collaboration as “very warm and special” (ibid., #48).

Some of the companies additionally focused on knowledge exchange and business development. Elise Andersen of *Elise Andersen* provided her employees with training to become a goldsmith and created an entire new value chain for her company. She explained that she aims to use her production site as a training facility for other artists in residence or students from Design Schools (Interview 3, *Elise Andersen*, 13.02.2017, #50). The founder of *Inside*, Camilla Ribeiro, built an entire new supply chain and taught her suppliers in prison how to manage and use the production machines. In her opinion, as a fashion label that operates and follows this kind of ethical approach, one has to accept certain limitations and learn to embrace them (Interview 2, *Inside*, 08.02.2017, #56). According to her, if these limitations are managed in the right way, they can have the possibility of becoming “the strength of the production and the design” (ibid., #14). It can even be considered as a mutual learning process, which is something that also Ida Tjellesen, the founder of *Respekt*, discussed. In her interview, she emphasized that her brand learned a lot about coloring from her suppliers, since according to her, “they are the experts” (Interview 5, *Respekt*, 06.03.2017, #71). For her as a business owner, it is “very important to have this equal relationship and collaboration where you learn from each other” (ibid., #71).

With regard to the other brands such as *Changemaker’s Apparel* and *Manifesto*, the founders did not share a lot of insight into their production process and relationship with their suppliers and employees during the interview. The founder of *Ethical Essentials*, Thomas Madsen, seemed to approach sustainability from a different angle. His company follows a more technical and process oriented approach. During the interview, he explained the company tries to take efforts to gradually improve all their business process and make them more sustainable. Firstly, they start with improving the production phase, “while slowly moving into the usage phase [...] then the next phase is to look at the after consumption phase how can [they] make a closed loop system so [they] can recycle all of [their] underwear products” (Interview 6, *Ethical Essentials*, 06.03.2017, #10).

His approach seemed to intend integrating sustainability in all business processes and creating a kind of 360-degree approach. The founder finished his explanation with stating that for him *Ethical Essentials* is “a project and a company” at the same time (ibid., #10).

4.1.4. Product proposition and organizational identity

Besides talking about the production practices when explaining their organizational identity, the founders also illustrated the importance of their product proposition. Here, a strong identification with aesthetic beauty and design could be detected. For some of the brands, for example *Inside*, it seems to be especially important to underline their quest for aesthetic beauty, “especially to avoid falling into the stereotypes of social fashion [referring to stereotypes of eco-fashion being plain and boring]” (Interview 2, *Inside*, 08.02.2017, #46). According to Camilla Ribeiro, the product needs to “prove that it can be done in a better way without in any way compromising the coolness and the sexiness of fashion” (ibid., #12). Not being considered as an eco-brand is also something that is quite important for Ingrid Gústafsdóttir, the founder of *Women in Knit*. When being asked about her product, she explained in the interview that her brand is “for consumers who yet want to be stylish, so it’s not an eco-brand” (Interview 7, *Women in Knit*, 13.03.2017, #20). It is “the look, the design [and] the aesthetics” (ibid., #20) that she wants to be known for.

Some of the other labels appeared to share a similar aesthetic quest as *Women in Knit* and *Inside*. When he was asked about what is important to him as a brand, the founder of *Changemaker’s Apparel*, Morten Nielsen, explained, “we tried to show that we are not totally boring, we also [...] know what is going on (Interview 1.2, *Changemaker’s Apparel*, 02.03.2017, #16). Additionally, the founder of *Manifesto* declared that his company wants to “make a really cool, fashionable mix” (Interview 4, *Manifesto*, 16.02.2017, #16). In that context the founder of *Ethical Essentials*, Thomas Madsen, emphasized likewise that his company is “a sustainable fashion company and [...] doing it in a cool way” (Interview 6, *Ethical Essentials*, 06.03.2017, #58). The founder of *Women in Knit* Ingrid Gústafsdóttir, who offers the customer stylish products that can be worn with a good conscience (Interview 7, *Women in Knit*, 13.03.2017, #26) also shares this opinion. Nevertheless, the founder of *Manifesto*, Alexander Eriksson, experienced that sometimes when focusing too much

on producing and acting sustainably, the trend and style aspect could get neglected, which he sees as a “big challenge” (ibid., #48).

Some of the organizations demonstrated a strong aesthetic claim and embodied their identity and quest for social change. With regard to *Respekt*, high design standards are also very important in terms of changing consumer habits and re-introducing ideals about beauty and perfection. They want to encourage customers to question and reflect, and potentially step away from mass production and mass marketing in today’s society (Interview 5, *Respekt*, 06.03.2017, #95). When talking about her aesthetical approach, the founder Ida Tjellesen referred to “aesthetic sustainability” (ibid., #95), which in her words, is a combination of good quality, comfort and long lasting design (ibid.). By looking into styles and patterns that will not lose their attractiveness and relevance over time, her main goal is that the customer will keep the fashion piece for many years “without feeling the need to always buy [something] new” (ibid., #95). Thus, her understanding of sustainability in the fashion context seems to go beyond the textile context.

The mentioned quest for aesthetic beauty is also strongly related to the founders’ need of finding a balance between following trends and the creation of sustainable and long-lasting styles. The founder of *Changemaker’s Apparel*, Morten Nielsen, explained, that as a result of the company’s business concept, they “can’t go 100% with the trend” (Interview 1.2, *Changemaker’s Apparel*, 02.03.2017, #16). In his company there is generally a lot of talk about creating sustainable styles (ibid., #16) and in his words, they “are not outdated, just because [they] are not part of a very trend-driven approach (ibid., #16). The founder of *Inside*, Camilla Ribeiro, claimed that due to their different business approach towards design and trends the brand has no “seasonal hype” (Interview 2, *Inside*, 08.02.2017, #14). As a result, there is a bigger need that the sweater “is designed to last” (ibid.). This is also something that is important for *Women in Knit* who aim to produce high quality products that are stylish and “will last many seasons” (Interview 7, *Women in Knit*, 13.03.2017). An appreciation for longevity is also something that the founder of the eponymous jewelry company, Elise Andersen, seemed to share. Andersen explained in the interview that especially in the field of design jewelry the product often creates a very long lasting relationship with the customer, since for example it is bought for a special occasion or transporting a memory of a special family member

(Interview 3, *Elise Andersen*, 13.02.2017, #36). In addition to values like quality, sustainable design and longevity, customer loyalty becomes central concept for Elise Andersen.

4.1.5. Business environment and organizational identity

‘Doing good’ and ‘Doing business’

In the above, we see a strong connection between their business activities and their social and environmental values. During the interviews, the intention was to find out more about how the founders perceive these two factors. Even though their social and environmental values seem very strong, the founders also emphasized the fact that they foremost have businesses that are dependent on profit.

Firstly, profits become an existential factor for the brands, since it is not only necessary to keep the business going but also needed for the brands to act socially and environmentally responsible and realize their missions. During the interview the founder of *Respekt* explained that at the moment they are not making any profit since they are still in their start-up phase, but “in a year's time the business needs to make money” (Interview 5, *Respekt*, 06.03.2017, #12). The founder of *Inside*, Camilla Ribeiro, also underlined this need by stating “*Inside* is a business, we have a goal of employing women in prison but they are producers, so for us of course there is a social purpose, but at the end of the day it is a business we need to make products and we need to sell” (Interview 2, *Inside*, 08.02.2017, #10). For the founder of *Women in Knit*, Ingrid Gústafsdóttir, making profit is also important, especially to follow their values. Gústafsdóttir illustrated the essential logic using a colour metaphor stating, “you cannot be green, being red [...]. You cannot be green with having red numbers, so you have to make a good business for being able to do it in a green way because it is more costly to do business in a green way and for us to be able to support our knitters in Jordan and Peru” (Interview 7, *Women in Knit*, 13.03.2017, #30). Thus, the business and financial aspect are not only a basic existence factor but also a tool to pursue their mission. The founder of *Inside*, Camilla Ribeiro, summed up this logic by stating, “the key objective here is of course, the more we sell the more good we do” (Interview 2, *Inside*, 08.02.2017, #72).

With regard to the mentioned points above, the founder Elise Andersen illustrated her struggle with finding a balance between having a healthy business and supporting a social cause when managing her fashion brand *Elise Andersen*. In the interview, she pointed out that it was quite hard to let anyone into her company, in term of investors, since here the focus was often only on the financial aspect while leaving the social cause completely aside (Interview 3, *Elise Andersen*, 13.02.2017, #10). She also emphasized her own struggle with being a business owner and supporting a social project. She experienced this as being “between two sides” (ibid., #114) and in the beginning she thought “it was either or” (ibid.), either making money and being a healthy business or being non-profit and not even taking out enough salary for herself (ibid., #114). It was later in the brand’s development process that she learned that “it is the money that will make it possible [...] to make something good” (ibid.) which is why the business needs to be healthy. The goal for the brand *Elise Andersen* is however not “about earning a particular amount or reaching a particular goal in a market (ibid., #165). It is more about finding “a state where [they] can work and achieve what [they] want to achieve (ibid.). The founder of *Women in Knit*, Ingrid Gústafsdóttir, shared a similar opinion in her interview (Interview 7, *Women in Knit*, 13.03.2017, #76).

The perception of the founders on their organizational identity showed that they consider their “business identity” as well as “social identity” as two sides of the same coin. With regard to the foundation of her business and its core values, the founder of *Respekt*, Ida Tjellesen, underlined that in her opinion, “everything is connected” (Interview 5, *Respekt*, 06.03.2017, #6). This is also something that applies to founder Elise Andersen. When talking about the alignment of her business processes with her social project *Heartful*, she explained that in the future there will not be two separate lines and “it will all be together” (Interview 3, *Elise Andersen*, 13.02.2017, #56), since for her it is “holistic in a way, [...] like a whole thing” (ibid., #71). A strong alignment between the business related side and the socially and environmentally responsible side is also something that the founder of *Inside*, Camilla Ribeiro, pointed out. In her opinion, only a business that does not distinguish between a business line and an ethical line and completely aligns the two can be called a social business. She explained this point further stating that this is the case if “by every transaction [of a business] you create more social good, [...] and that means that every time you are trying to improve your business, you work on improving the world” (Interview 2, *Inside*, 08.02.2017, #38).

Competition and inspiration

The founders were asked how they see their company in relation to their industry competitors and which other brands they admire or see as competitors. During the interview, the founder of *Changemaker's Apparel*, Morten Nielsen, stated that regarding competitors, his challenge is more to “get into a fashion store, so basically to kick some of the other, kind of ‘normal’ brands out of the store and have a sustainable brand” (Interview 1, *Changemaker's Apparel*, 01.02.2017, #66). To compete with the big, more traditional fashion brands, he could imagine a collaboration with different sustainable labels. For him the competition is more like “the new way of doing fashion vs. the old way of doing fashion” (ibid.). He experienced more support and openness among the more ethical oriented fashion brands. (ibid., #86). The founder Elise Andersen also confirmed this statement, stressing that she feels like there is a common understanding among the more ethical brands (Interview 3, *Elise Andersen*, 13.02.2017, #127).

However, some of the other founders, for example” Camille Ribeiro from *Inside*, stated that they see a competition with other ‘non-ethical fashion brands’. The founder Camilla Ribeiro mentioned *ACNE* as a competitor, who are in the same price range and aim to sell a feeling of coolness and lifestyle (Interview 2, *Inside*, 08.02.2017, #62). In her case, admiration and competition seemed to be very close to each other. This is also the case for *Women in Knit*, whose founder Ingrid Gústafsdóttir mentioned *ACNE* as well, as a source of inspiration, success, and creativity (Interview 7, *Women in Knit*, 13.03.2017, #118). Besides *ACNE*, also *CHANEL* provides admiration for the label. According to the founder, stories like *CHANEL* are especially inspiring since they represent a combination of features like female empowerment, timelessness, craftsmanship, and a strong creative force (ibid., #118).

The founder of *Manifesto* and *Respekt* mentioned the company *Patagonia* but focused on different aspects of the brand. While the founder of *Manifesto*, Alexander Eriksson, referred to *Patagonia* as a brand that shares a similarity with his company (Interview 4, *Manifesto*, 16.02.2017, #56), the founder of *Respekt*, Ida Tjellessen, admired the brand’s “effort especially in the sports industry [of] making products that are more sustainable in terms of the environment and people” (Interview 5, *Respekt*, 06.03.2017, #53). The companies’ comparison with their competitors also served as a good orientation of how they want to be perceived by others.

4.2. How do the founders want their companies to be perceived by others?

In addition to analyzing different reference points of the identity of the investigated companies, the analysis will look at how the brands want to be perceived by external units, such as customers or potential stakeholders. The research will illustrate how the founders experienced presenting their organizational identity and demonstrate how they deal with possible tensions and challenges that appeared. The analysis will conclude with a short “identity in action” exercise, where the founders were asked to pitch their organizational identity to different stakeholders.

4.2.1 Positioning and organizational identity

When being asked about the positioning of their organizational identity, the brands shared different opinions on what image they aim to present to their external environment. It seemed like a balancing act of various factors related to their business traits as well as social and aesthetic identity traits.

When answering the question ‘*how do you want to be perceived by others?*’, the founders particularly referred to the companies’ product characteristics. Overall, the product seemed to display the companies’ identity and constituted a strong part of the intended identity image. Sharing her opinion on the “aimed customer perception”, the founder of *Respekt*, Ida Tjellesen, explained that she wants “people to feel that [the product] is good quality [...] and [...] long lasting design (Interview 5, *Respekt*, 06.03.2017, #95). When being asked, the founder of *Ethical Essentials*, Thomas Madsen, underlined the quality aspect of his product as well as the aspect of “supporting a whole cause” (Interview 6, *Ethical Essentials*, 06.03.2017, #60). According to him, customers should buy the product “because they think it is a valuable purchase” (ibid.). This is also important for Elise Andersen who wants her customers to appreciate that the product they buy “is very value driven” (Interview 3, *Elise Andersen*, 13.02.2017, #70). For the founder of *Women in Knit*, Ingrid Gústafsdóttir, it is however quite relevant “to be [seen as] stylish” (Interview 7, *Women in Knit*, 13.03.2017, #20) and not as an “eco-brand” (ibid., #20). Besides that, she wants her customers to know that her company has “been taking care of the resources” (ibid., #24). In terms of

communication and branding, she sees it as a two-step process where the sustainable aspect of the company is mentioned secondly after the aesthetic appeal (ibid., #74).

Following Ingrid Gústafsdóttir's argument, some of the other brands also underlined that it is not sufficient to only be perceived through a social focus, other aspects, especially branding- and marketing-related, have to fall into place as well. According to the founder of *Inside*, Camilla Ribeiro, "the cause is going to convince people to care, but it does not mean that [they] will want the product" (Interview 2, *Inside*, 08.02.2017, #32). For her, it is very important not "to be perceived as a social label but as a fashion label" (Interview 2, *Inside*, 08.02.2017, #20). She does not believe that the social aspect is "appealing for the customer" (ibid., #24). According to her, people should buy her product "because they heard about *Inside*, it sounds cool [for them] [and] they want to be part of that universe" (ibid., #64). If she could choose, she would not want to be known for producing in prison at all, since she believes that, it is very important that "the shirt and the product [...] speak for itself." (ibid., #30). In her opinion, a common mistake that companies make when going into a social field is to neglect the relevance of marketing and branding (ibid., #40). Ribeiro believes that the success of a brand lies in its appeal to the customer (ibid., #70). Thus, it is crucial that the brand and its product are attractive and transmit a feeling of "aspiration" (ibid. #20) and "desire" (ibid.).

Regarding the importance of branding and marketing some of the other brands shared a similar opinion. As an example, the founder of *Changemaker's Apparel*, Morten Nielsen, illustrated that, "it has to be a mix" (Interview 1, *Changemaker's Apparel*, 01.02.2017, #26), since being organic is not enough for his company. According to him, "the brand has to be nice from the beginning [which is why they] still think about the Ps in marketing like "product – pricing– promotion – packaging" (ibid.). His customer should like the product first and the sustainability aspect should come in the second place (ibid.). The founder of *Ethical Essentials*, Thomas Madsen, also explained that their intention is to create something that is "valuable and unique in a more sustainable way" (Interview 6, *Ethical Essentials*, 06.03.2017, #56). Since *Ethical Essentials* however does not want the customers to buy the product only because of that, the founder added, that his company, firstly "need[s] to compete on price and on quality and on top of that [...] be a sustainable alternative"

(ibid.) An importance of “the look of the product, the fit, the price, the quality” is something that the founder of *Manifesto* regarded as essential as well (Interview 4, *Manifesto*, 16.02.2017, #18).

Not all investigated companies shared the same opinion about the importance of marketing and branding. The founder of *Respekt*, Ida Tjellesen, represented a rather critical approach towards it explaining that marketing “is neither [their] strength nor [their] interest” (Interview 5, *Respekt*, 06.03.2017, #14). With regard to marketing and branding, it is very crucial for her not to sell only for the sake of consumption and profit but rather according to the customers’ actual needs (ibid.). Even though she expressed her dislike towards branding, Tjellesen also had to admit the need for it in her company, in order to attract for instance more people to work and collaborate with (ibid.). She also saw a need to create “aesthetic worlds” (ibid., #119), that her customers are fascinated by and want to be part of. This would also help her to communicate the essence of her brand better and drive sales (ibid.).

4.2.2. External environment and organizational identity

Communicating a sustainability-focused identity

Even though the brands seemed to have a clear picture of their identity, some difficulties and tensions appeared when looking at the communication of their organizational identity. Some founders implied that it is hard to express the totality of their organizational identity and to know where to set the focus on. The founder of *Changemaker’s Apparel*, Morten Nielsen, for example, underlined the difficulty of communicating both being a fashion brand and a sustainable business. In his own words “it is also a balance and it is very hard to find” (Interview 1.2., *Changemaker’s Apparel*, 02.03.2017, #16). The founder of *Inside*, Camilla Ribeiro, experienced similar problems when communicating the brand’s essence as well as their story of producing in prison and supporting women. She stated that, “it is very difficult to try and communicate both those things at once to the same person” (Interview 2, *Inside*, 08.02.2017, #20). According to her, she “would never say that [*Inside’s*] brand value is social responsibility” (#22) even though it is “inherent in the DNA” (ibid.) of the company. Thus, when talking about the perceived image of the organization’s identity, Ribeiro makes a clear distinction between brand DNA and brand value. This distinction

also shows the complexity the company is facing. After all, the social focus of the brand, as well as its aesthetic and business orientation, tend to be equally important to the founder (ibid., #68).

The founder of *Respekt*, Ida Tjellesen, shared a similar dilemma. She referred to the complexity of presenting the core content of *Respekt*'s organizational identity through its website. Tjellesen explained that her company contains a story about production, design and handcraft as well as “a story that is community based, [...] selling shirts, but also supporting communities and families who are a part of this factory or showroom” (Interview 5, *Respekt*, 06.03.2017, #23). She admitted that at the moment, this is not very visible and understandable through their website which might confuse customers. (ibid., #23) She also refers to the brand's necessity to create a clearer image of themselves in order to be understood in a clearer way. The founder of *Changemaker's Apparel*, Morten Nielsen, on the other hand emphasized the difficulty of getting customers to understand the brand's story as well as the difficulty in telling it in the first place. He explained that he finds it difficult to get “into the stores and make people buy the product” (Interview 1.2., *Changemaker's Apparel*, 02.03.2017, #21). This is especially difficult since according to him, “they have to know the story, and it's hard to tell the story” (ibid.).

The founder of *Elise Andersen* also found it hard to find the right way to communicate and set their message straight. During the interview, Elise Andersen explained, that her company needs to decide now “how to [...] separate the commercial side and [...] the kind of job creation in rural villages” (Interview 3, *Elise Andersen*, 13.02.2017, #48). Referring to the decision making process, Andersen's business developer, Anna Miller, explained that it has been “kind of back and forth” (Interview 3, *Elise Andersen*, 13.02.2017, #7) without knowing if they should “leave the Thailand project aside and focus more on the jewelry” (ibid.) since that is what customers get in the end. However, Elise Andersen explained that her company “is kind of holistic” (ibid., #101) and “the whole vision behind the production, the Thailand project and the people is [also] important” (ibid., #98) as well as “honoring traditional handcraft but making it more contemporary, with contemporary design” (ibid., #98). Aligning all of the different aspects in one message is consequently very hard for the company (ibid., #101). That is why they are now aiming to sharpen their core message so that customers, potential investors, and partners can easily understand it

(ibid., #103). In Andersen's opinion, the new message should be "nice and neat and sharp and simple" (ibid.).

"Selling" a sustainability-focused identity

Besides struggling with sense making of their organizational identity, the founders also experienced that external stakeholders, such as customers, retailers, or potential investors are having difficulties in understanding their concept. The founder of *Changemaker's Apparel*, Morten Nielsen, stated that, "sometimes [their] proposition is a bit too complex, when it comes to understand every part of it" (Interview 1, *Changemaker's Apparel*, 01.02.2017, #10). When he for example presented his brand and the concept to a potential buyer, he experienced that "it takes a while to explain" (ibid., #88). Nielsen stressed that it is easier for him when he has the time to explain the company's concept thoroughly and in detail, but in his experience this is not always the case. Some of the stores are even put off since they "are afraid that they won't be able to explain the story to consumers" (Interview 1.2., *Changemaker's Apparel*, 02.03.2017, #19). Another problem Nielsen noticed is that it "is really a hard work and because it is a new philosophy you need to get people on board" (ibid., #40). In his opinion, the reason for that might be that his brand entails a new concept and people need to get familiar with it first. The founder thinks that customers do not even need to understand every detail of the companies identity, "as long as they understand some parts of it" (ibid., #10). Nielsen seemed to accept that as a starting point when approaching new customers.

In contrast to that, the founder of *Respekt*, Ida Tjellesen, did not experience particular difficulties when talking to shop owners. Tjellesen illustrated that she preferred talking directly and personally to retailers. Even though this approach is, according to her rather old fashioned and "quite like a salesperson from the 80s or 70s" (Interview 5, *Respekt*, 06.03.2017, #83) it appeared to be working for the company. In her opinion, the most important thing is "being humble" (ibid.) and honest. Her experience with this approach was quite positive and helped establish new sales connections. In Tjellesen's opinion, the shop owners who like *Respekt* will reach out to their customers later and present their brand. According to her, this will form a stable base for a good relationship and reputation (ibid., #33). In addition, she explained that even the shop owners were quite interested in the story of their brand (ibid., #83). Nonetheless, she pointed out that their communication is still tailored and she would not mention the whole concept and ideas behind *Respekt* since it could

confuse potential retailers. Even though the brand did not seem to have difficulties in presenting themselves, the founder still showed a certain awareness of their complexity and its effect when presenting the brand to others.

Elise Andersen, from the eponymous brand, also experienced certain difficulties when presenting her company. The founder underlined that in the beginning of establishing her brand she did not even mention the Thailand project *Heartful* since “people didn’t get it” (Interview 3, *Elise Andersen*, 13.02.2017, #13). She explained that it was “too much” (ibid., #52) and “too confusing” (ibid.) for people to understand. The reactions which she often got were even people putting her down saying, “oh Lina, please don’t spread yourself too much. [...] You have a lot of good ideas, but please don’t think about it” (ibid., #54). Especially when talking to potential investors, it seemed necessary to “emphasize the more traditional approach, with like a sprinkling of the nice social side” (ibid., #59). When mentioning *Elise Andersen’s* social approach, the founder has also experienced investors being confused and thinking the business was only non-profit and charitable (ibid.). Similar problems also appeared when talking to design companies since those did not get the full message of the company and were predominantly focusing on the financial aspect while ignoring the social ones (ibid., #66). Ingrid Gústafsdóttir, the founder of *Women in Knit*, elaborated on her experiences when talking to potential buyers at fairs and addressed the importance of being able to explain their message “very, very shortly [...] to make it in a word or at the most in a sentence” (Interview 7, *Women in Knit*, 13.03.2017, #82). This is important since they do not have time for more elaboration.

Even though the experiences of communicating their organizational identity varied among the investigated brands, a notion that almost all labels seemed to share was a need to improve their communication process. When asking the founder of *Changemaker’s Apparel*, Morten Nielsen, he admitted that they were not communicating enough due to a lack of time. (Interview 1.2., *Changemaker’s Apparel*, 02.03.2017, #12). The founder of *Manifesto*, Alexander Eriksson, on the other hand, saw the problem rather in “hav[ing] a very small reach” (Interview 4, *Manifesto*, 16.02.2017, #34) and not “a very big platform to communicate from” (ibid.). Moreover, he stressed the notion that they “need to sharpen [their] message” (ibid.). According to him, this could happen in a re-branding process in order to set the brand’s sustainable aspects more to the point, especially

in terms of store and customer communication (ibid.). The brand *Respekt* also shared a need for better communication. The founder, Ida Tjellesen, is seeking for a new partner in the organization who can be responsible for PR and marketing, which she believes “is mainly [their] biggest weakness” (ibid., #99). According to herself, she lacks verbal communication skills and in her words is a “bad communicator” (ibid., #117) who is rather able to “communicate through [her] clothing (ibid.).

4.2.3. Communication tools for organizational identity

According to the research in the prior section, it seems that the founders of the investigated companies are facing some struggles regarding the presentation of their organizational identity. In order to gain some insights into how they deal with these difficulties, the analysis will set a short focus on the communication tools the founders use. It should give the reader a brief insight in a possible solution process.

Importance of visuals

One way of the founders to balance the companies’ communication process is by using visuals. The founder of *Women in Knit*, Ingrid Gústafsdóttirfor, stressed the importance of visuals for her business. Based in the Faroes Islands, the brand is quite isolated, which makes it even harder to create awareness. In the interview, the founder illustrated her strategic decision to spend money on creating strong visuals. She stated, “from day one, the first money that we ever had to spent we did not spend it on salary for me, for example, but on the best photographers, the best models and aimed for the best visuals” (Interview 7, *Women in Knit*, 13.03.2017, #52). For Ida Tjellesen, founder of *Respekt*, strong visuals are “a way to connect to the fashion industry and to create an aspiring brand image” (Interview 5, *Respekt*, 06.03.2017, #119). In her opinion, this is something her company still lacks (ibid.). Strong visuals could also help the brand to communicate their core essence in a shorter way (ibid., #113). Elise Andersen also emphasizes that her company is currently working on creating a new website. It should work as a tool for explaining the company “like a visit card” (Interview 3, *Elise Andersen*, 13.02.2017, #41) and create “the whole universe” (ibid., #41) of the brand.

Authentic storytelling

Regarding their business values, practices, and communication, a central aspect that almost all investigated fashion labels shared is an ambition to display authenticity and transparency. Some of the brands firstly refer to the terms on a more general level using it as an additional tool in their communication strategy. The founder of *Ethical Essentials*, Thomas Madsen, noticed a shift towards more business transparency, which becomes especially important for smaller brands and is appreciated by the customers (Interview 6, *Ethical Essentials*, 06.03.2017, #64). By connecting transparency to the brand's communication strategy, the label *Inside* appears to encourage this tendency. The founder, Camilla Ribeiro, explained that the brand aims to “communicate it [ref. to the product] the way that [they] believe is a fashion communication [way], but still being extremely transparent about [the] messaging” (Interview 2, *Inside*, 08.02.2017, #20). Also for the founder of *Changemaker's Apparel*, Morten Nielsen, authenticity plays an important role in their communication. For him, this means to “always say everything exactly as it is” (Interview 1, *Changemaker's Apparel*, 01.02.2017, #8) and being “honest about what [they] do” (ibid., #8).

When discussing the communication strategy of their organizational identity, some of the founders additionally use storytelling and connect it to transparency and authenticity. The founder of the Faroe Island based company *Women in Knit*, Ingrid Gústafsdóttir, emphasized a strong connection between transparency and the brand's vision. During the interview, she underlined that her company “wanted to be really transparent and really authentic” (Interview 7, *Women in Knit*, 13.03.2017, #42). To her, this is accomplished by “not making up stories, but telling the stories that are already there” (ibid., #98). The original, authentic stories that already exist for her brand are also something that the founder of *Elise Andersen* aimed to tell her customers. Andersen referred to a special festive flower that she used in her designs that has a special meaning in Thailand and explained that “this is what [they] [...] mean by the stories as well, it's there and it's authentic” (Interview 3, *Elise Andersen*, 13.02.2017, #134). The founder of *Respekt* highlighted how the brand's authenticity relates to Nepal. She articulated that: “Nepal is a part of this and [...] honesty for me is just normal the way we do it, this is the way I think business should be run (Interview 5, *Respekt*, 06.03.2017, #95). Honesty and transparency are just an integrated part of her daily business life.

4.3. The pitch exercise – Identity crash test

In order to see how their identity might work in ‘real-life situations’, the founders were given short pitch exercises that should mimic a potential situation where they need to present the organizational identity of their companies to others. This exercise also served as a good tool to see how they deal with their expressed dilemmas in a staged ‘real-life situation’. The pitch exercise was directed to a potential investor, a shop owner [potential buyer], or consumer, and a web designer or branding agency. Due to the spontaneity of the situation, not every founder was asked exactly the same question. Nonetheless, content – wise a consistency was overall maintained. The founders did not have time to prepare for the pitch in order to receive quite intuitive and not strategically prepared answers. Every pitch had a ‘time frame’ of a maximum of two minutes. The following section will present a short overview of the insights from this exercise. It should serve as additional data on how the founders of the investigated brands aim to be perceived and how they position and navigate through the presentation of their identity.

Investor pitch

Being asked, to present the organizational identity of their companies, the founders set different focuses. The founder of *Changemaker’s Apparel*, Morten Nielsen, presented particularly sustainability as a unique selling point while the product characteristics seemed to be pushed in the background (Interview 1, *Changemaker’s Apparel*, 01.02.2017, #33). On the other hand Camille Ribeiro from *Inside* started out with explaining: *Inside* “is a social business that manufactures in women’s prisons. We make exclusive clothes, made in 100% natural materials. We have a disruptive business model in the sense of we have no stock and sell exclusively online” (Interview 2, *Inside*, 08.02.2017, #85). The founder seemed to be to the point and continued explaining their risk range, sales concept, and growth plans over the next three years (ibid., #85). The founder of *Manifesto*, Alexander Eriksson, also focused on the business aspect of the brand and combined it with the creative part of the business, “working together with illustrators, artists from all over the world” (Interview 4, *Manifesto*, 16.02.2017, #67). The founder also underlined the brand’s sustainable mission and addressed the brands core belief of supporting “mankind’s ability to live within the boundaries of our planet” (ibid.). With regard to *Elise Andersen*, the business developer Anna Miller did the pitch and emphasized mainly the business values as well as growth and up-

scale potential of the brand (Interview 3, *Elise Andersen*, 13.02.2017, #177). After the pitch, the founder Elise Andersen remarked that Miller should have also mentioned the production. Miller replied, that she did not notice this, but the pitch was oriented toward investors anyway, who in her opinion are less concerned with the product (ibid., #180).

Shop owner pitch

The founders gave different answers when they were asked to hold a pitch of their brand to a shop owner that may want to sell their products. The founder of *Changemaker's Apparel*, Morten Nielsen, started out by talking about sustainable fashion in general and pointing out that “that 80% [of the customers] would prefer buying sustainable and they would pay even up to 20% more money for it” (Interview 1.2, *Changemaker's Apparel*, 02.03.2017, #35). Nielsen saw a potential for stores to sell organic clothes and believed that “it's going to go that way” (ibid.). In terms of his product, he mainly left the design aspect aside and focused more on the sustainable attributes of the product. He even left it open for the stores to decide if *Changemaker's Apparel* is a good option and he pointed out that his company still offers “a unique mix of organic materials and materials that are recyclable, so a quite ambitious giving back principle” (ibid.). The founder of *Respekt* also started out by explaining that the company makes sustainable clothing with using hemp produced in Nepal. According to her, she would present her collection and company very much depending on how much a potential shop owner is interested in different types of textile. She would display some of the models from the collection so that the shop owner can see the color as well as experience the hand feel of the textile (Interview 5, *Respekt*, 06.03.2017, #95). Tjellesen would like the shop owners to appreciate the product and its qualities and see that her clothes are “better in comparison to H&M where you would wash it once and then it would get destroyed” (ibid.).

The founder of *Ethical Essentials*, Thomas Madsen, also focused on the product and production process since according to him, “that is our story and our purpose” (Interview 6, *Ethical Essentials*, 06.03.2017, #111). He furthermore emphasized the good and soft quality of the fabric as well as the fair price placement of his product, which is “a little bit cheaper than the expensive Calvin Klein” (ibid.). He also explained that a potential shop owner should also know that the company did not use any chemicals or pesticides and the fabric is even organically dyed (ibid., #113). To sum up, he regarded his brand as “the new kid on the block that wants to turn the things around” (ibid., #111).

When asking the founder of *Women in Knit*, Ingrid Gústafsdóttir, to pitch her brand to a shop owner, she seemed quite experienced and began with presenting herself as well as her company and the unique features of the product. Gústafsdóttir pointed out that she is the designer of her Faroe Islands based company *Women in Knit* and that the company mainly creates hand knit collections for women, men, and kids. The founder presented some unique product details of the current collection and she explained during the pitch, “we have different parts in this season, we have been focusing on looking at sports elements but still in luxury, so if you see some sporty elements it's something that is very fragile still and that there [are] some very strong pieces” (Interview 7, *Women in Knit*, 13.03.2017, #126). For new buyers, she would even recommend to buy a special starter package (ibid.).

Customer pitch

The brands were then asked to pitch their identity to a customer. The founder of *Changemaker's Apparel* emphasized that the customer should know that they “try to do things a little bit better” (Interview 1.2, *Changemaker's Apparel*, 02.03.2017, #37). The founder, Morten Nielsen, explained the brand's sustainable, long-lasting styles as well as their engagement into charity. He believed that “people should start going in a more organic, sustainable direction in order to save the world” (ibid., #37). The founder of *Inside*, Camilla Ribeiro, on the other hand pointed out, “we use 100% natural materials, so you get extremely good quality, everything is hand-made, each sweater is unique” (Interview 2, *Inside*, 08.02.2017, #89). After having presented the technical details and features, Ribeiro continued with explaining the story behind the product and the production practices in the prisons in Peru. Besides creating stylish fashion, she aims to create better perspectives for her workers in prison and their families (ibid.). In comparison to some of the other founders, her pitch seemed quite organized and structured. Having asked Elise Andersen to present her brand to a customer as well, her business developer Anna Miller took that task by presenting one necklace that she got as a gift when starting to work for *Elise Andersen*. In her pitch, she explained the story behind the product, its technical details, and the additional values it incorporates in relation to the Thailand project (Interview 3, *Elise Andersen*, 13.02.2017, #195). She summed up the product details by stating, “it's also very special and very meaningful” (ibid.). Ingrid Gústafsdóttir, founder of *Women in Knit*, focused similarly on the product details and features when presenting the brand to a customer (Interview 7, *Women in Knit*, 13.03.2017, #130).

Branding agency and web designer pitch

The third pitching exercise dealt with presenting their brand to a potential branding agency or web developer. Starting out with the case of the branding agency, Morten Nielsen, the founder of *Changemaker's Apparel*, explained, “*Changemaker's Apparel* is a Nordic, minimalistic brand and we try to operate in very much kind of black and white, the way we use colours in everything we do” (Interview 1.2, *Changemaker's Apparel*, 02.03.2017, #41). He furthermore emphasized the transparency and simplicity when it comes to the design of the website as well as the addition of humor (ibid.). To sum up, the founder focused mainly on the visual details and presentation even though he was asked to talk to a brand agency. On the other hand *Inside's* founder Camilla Ribeiro stressed the story of the brand. Ribeiro explained that *Inside* is a fashion brand that also has a strong social impact and has its production located in women's prisons in Peru (Interview 2, *Inside*, 08.02.2017, #87). She emphasized, “it's very important that [they] use [their] story to be different but at the same time use it as a cool edge” (ibid.) *Inside's* customers should find their product appealing “not matter of the story” (ibid.).

When she was asked to pitch to a potential web designer, the founder of *Respekt* also stressed visual “simplicity” (Interview 5, *Respekt*, 06.03.2017, #111) combined with a “feeling of luxury” (ibid.). She illustrated a strong focus on the product as well as its natural appearance of materials and color (ibid.). The founder of *Ethical Essentials*, Thomas Madsen, also focused on the product as well as the purpose of the brand. He concluded stating that the “product is actually more in front than the purpose because through the product you can also tell your purpose” (Interview 6, *Ethical Essentials*, 06.03.2017, #119). The founder of *Manifesto*, Alexander Eriksson, mainly emphasized on presenting the company's style as “young and trendy” (Interview 4, *Manifesto*, 16.02.2017, #66). *Manifesto* “has to be a very attractive brand” (ibid.) [...] as well as operate “in an accepted price range” (ibid.). Eriksson also stressed that it needs to be produced very responsibly and sustainably as well (ibid.). For the founder of *Women in Knit* on the other hand, it is “very much about seducing [the customer]” (Interview 7, *Women in Knit*, 13.03.2017, #134). When visiting their website, the customer should not even know they are trying to sell something and just be intrigued by the brand's story and the universe it creates (ibid.). For Elise Andersen, it was quite hard to explain her concept to a web-designer; bringing all the different parts of the brand's identity equally together

and especially finding an ideal balance between the social side and business side of her company (Interview 3, *Elise Andersen*, 13.02.2017, #177).

Having presented the collected data, the research will now continue to discuss the research findings in relation to the presented theoretical concepts in order to answer the research questions.

5. Discussion

While discussing how the investigated companies perceive their organizational identity, a quote by Elise Andersen, the founder of the eponymous brand *Elise Andersen*, comes to mind. She pointed out that her brand is “not just fashion. It’s more than that.” (Interview 3, 13.02.217, #109). The following discussion chapter will look behind this statement to present what it means for the founders to be “more than just fashion” (ibid.) and discuss how their organizational identity is experienced and managed. In order to fully understand the organizational identity of the investigated brands the discussion will take a three-step approach, starting with briefly decoding the companies’ identity and its different dimensions, moving on with explaining the labels’ identity dynamics in relation to those dimensions and finally emphasizing on possible tensions and their sense making. It should be noted that the discussion will take an integrated approach using different theoretical concepts.

5.1. How do the founders perceive and construct the organizational identity of their companies?

5.1.1. Multi-dimensional organizational identity

With regard to how the founders describe their organizational identities, it can be noted, that they perceived their identity mainly through their product, production, business processes as well as external communication. When analyzing the gathered data by following Hatch and Schultz’s (2002) notion that organizational identity is a dynamic construct between culture, image and identity, it became clear that the founders perceived their organizational identity through different lenses and attributes. Even though all fashion labels shared different opinions and insights into their organizational identity, common identity patterns arose. Overall, the founders perceived their organizational identity through four different layers. Following the notion of the theoretical concept of hybrid identities (Albert and Whetten, 1985) and multiple identities (Pratt and Foreman, 2000) we refer to those layers as *dimensions* or *logics*. We argue that the four-identity-dimensions are

hereby a *sustainability dimension*, *business dimension*, *aesthetics* and *industry dimension*. The following part will explain them briefly.

The business dimension

The *business dimension* is quite central to the investigated companies and entails a strong necessity for profit. It forms a part of the companies' culture as well as organizational identity. The *business dimension* encompasses an understanding of the companies as a fashion business that "needs to make money" (Interview 5, *Respekt*, 06.03.2017, #12) and "at the end of the day [...] need[s] to make products and [...] needs to sell" (Interview 2, *Inside*, 08.02.2017, #10). In the analysis, it appeared especially when the founders were talking about their business practices. According to theory on hybrid identities (Albert and Whetten, 1985) this dimension can be referred to as the *utilitarian dimension* (Selznick, 1957; Etzioni, 1975). The *business dimension* is also important in relation to image, also referred to as organizational "me" (Hatch and Schultz, 2002, based on Mead, 1934). It becomes particularly relevant when the founders present their company to potential investors and need to prove that they are a promising business investment. It is also noticeable when talking to potential retailers and customers. In the present study, the *business dimension* will be presented in relation to the *sustainability dimension*. The *sustainability dimension* will be explained further in the following.

The sustainability dimension

Another dimension that is central to how the founders understand the organizational identity of their companies is the *sustainability dimension*. It addresses all efforts the companies make to act socially and environmentally responsibly and is also strongly related to the companies' identity as slow fashion brands (see Ertekin and Atik, 2014; Fletcher, 2007). With regard to Schultz and Hatch (2002) the *sustainability dimension* seems to be strongly anchored in the brands' organizational culture and constitutes "tacit organizational understandings (assumptions, beliefs and values) that contextualize efforts to make meaning" (p. 996). In the context of organizational culture, the *sustainability dimension* then serves as a tool for "internal self-definition" (ibid.). The founders, for example, believe that "sustainability is the future" (Interview 5, *Manifesto*, 16.02.2017, #6) and it felt "very natural to act responsible" (Interview 7, *Women in Knit*, 13.03.2017, #64) for them.

Additionally, the *sustainability dimension* helps answering identity questions about business practices and is particularly mirrored when the founders talk about their production. Besides the cultural aspect, the *sustainability dimension* is likewise visible in the organizations' images (Schultz and Hatch, 1997) and consequently included in the question about how their companies want to be perceived by others. Among others the founders note that being sustainable is not enough for a business to be successful (see Interview 1, *Changemaker's Apparel*, 01.02.2017, #26) and other parts, such as marketing or pricing, have to fall into place as well (ibid.). Considering culture and image and a hybrid identity context (Albert and Whetten, 1985), the sustainability approach can be regarded as the *normative identity dimension*, focusing on purpose and non-profit.

Altogether, the founders interpret the *sustainability dimension* differently and focus on different aspects. In order to gain an overview of how the founders interpret this dimension the following figure has been created (figure 5).

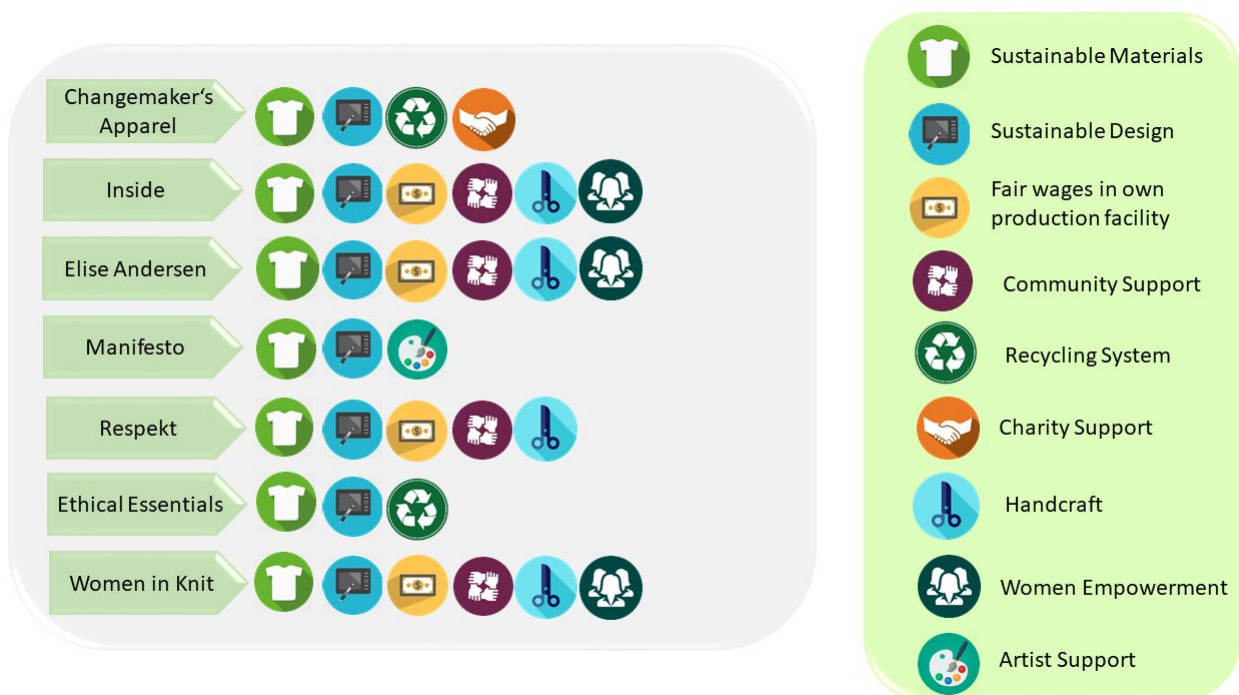


Figure 5. Overview of sustainability components.

It gets clear that the investigated brands altogether focused on different aspects in their *sustainability dimension*. While *Ethical Essentials* and *Changemaker's Apparel* focus more in

creating a recycling system, brands like *Inside* and *Women in Knit* choose to support and empower women in need. It should be noted that all dimensions are very closely related to the brands being part of the slow fashion industry (Ertekin and Atik, 2014, Fletcher, 2007). For slow fashion brands, a focus on handcraft or sustainable design (see figure 5) is quite natural and characteristic (ibid.). Apart from presenting an overview and showcasing a strong connection between a sustainability approach and a slow fashion approach, figure 5 also presents different levels of complexity. Here especially *Inside* and *Elise Andersen* seem to entail, for example, more complexity in their organizational identity than *Manifesto*. For more complex brands it might be even harder to find and express their true organizational identity. To sum up, the figure above is only focusing on the main aspects the founders mentioned during the interviews and should only serve as an overview of complexity and plurality among the *sustainability dimension* and not as a judgement on the brands' practices.

The aesthetics dimension

When analyzing the gained data, another identity dimension emerged. Especially related to the fact that the companies belong to the cultural creative industries (Knight and Harvey, 2015), a strong aesthetic understanding, here referred to as *aesthetics dimension*, forms an additional part of the companies' organizational identity. The *aesthetics dimension* seems to be related to the organizational culture as well as image and general identity perception. It is mainly connected to certain product attributes. For example, the founders stated that their goal is to “bring out the best designs possible” (Interview 5, *Manifesto*, 16.02.2017, #28) and creating “a really cool, fashionable mix” (Interview 4, *Manifesto*, 16.02.2017, #16). The *aesthetics dimension* also appeared within the perception of their competitors, when one of the founders explained that she admired *ACNE* for their high aesthetics (Interview 2, *Inside*, 08.02.2017, #62). Nevertheless, we are aware that the *aesthetics dimension* might not appear in all business environments and types of industries. Due to its nature it might especially make sense in the field of the cultural creative industries (Knight and Harvey, 2015; Lampel et al., 2000) and slow fashion (Ertekin and Attik, 2014; Fletcher, 2007) (see also Introduction). However, especially in the given research context it can serve as an example of why investigating organizational identity, within the CCI and especially in a sustainability context, can be quite interesting for researchers, as it gives the opportunity to explore organizational identity in a more intensive and multi layered context.

The industry dimension

Since the undertaken study looks upon the internal as well as external identity construction, another dimension needs to be considered. This fourth dimension is referred to as the *industry dimension* and is regarded as a sub-dimension in this study; a frame around organizational identity that influences organizational identity from the outside. Pratt and Kraatz (2009) argue that organizations can internalize the expectations of their external partners, which consequently influence the organizational identity and *organizational self* (see also Hatch and Schultz, 2002). The fact that the founders, for example, perceive the traditional fashion industry as harmful and destructive in turn influences their general organizational identity as well and makes them see their business approach as a “new way of doing fashion vs. the old way of doing fashion” (Interview 1, *Changemaker’s Apparel*, 01.02.2017, #66). This notion also shows a clear interaction between the understanding of “how do we NOT want to be as a company” and the complementary notion of “how do we want to be” (see also Paradox Theory, Smith and Lewis, 2011). In that sense, the *industry dimension* serves as a tool to make sense of organizational identity and its positioning in the industry.

5.1.2. Multiple and hybrid identities

When looking at the identity construction of the investigated companies it can be argued – to some extent – that they fit the description of what Albert and Whetten (1985) call a *hybrid identity*. Following their definition of a hybrid identity, the brands combine two different dimensions that under usual experience would not be “expected to go together” (p. 270), commonly referred to as *normative* (non-profit oriented) and *utilitarian* (profit-oriented), (ibid.). As explained above, the *utilitarian* dimension of their identity can be referred to as the *business dimension*, being mainly profit-oriented, while the *normative dimension* can be related to the *sustainability dimension*, being mainly purpose-driven. Both identity dimensions are very closely interrelated, since the investigated brands also depend on being a successful business in order to foster their social and environmental mission; “the more we sell the more good we do” (Interview 2, *Inside*, 08.02.2017, #72). Thus, it can be noted that both logics are grouped together in a “holographic” way (Pratt, 2016). Nonetheless, the very definition of hybrid identities indicates a potential for arising tensions.

Nevertheless, the *sustainability* and *business dimension* were not the only dimensions that have been noticed, the *aesthetics* and *industry dimension* seemed likewise important. It could be argued that the *aesthetics dimension* is on the one hand closely related to a *normative identity dimension*, since it is rather purpose-orientated and there is essentially no direct profit involved. On the other hand, it is also related to the *utilitarian* one, since a highly aesthetic product can still create customer aspiration and drive sales. As it seemed hard to categorize this identity dimension, we argue that in this discussion the *aesthetics dimension* forms an extra dimension. In the following, it will be investigated in relation to the *sustainability dimension* to better understand its interconnectivity. As mentioned earlier, the *industry dimension* is regarded as a sub-dimension that influences the organizational identity more from an image-related point of view (Schultz and Hatch, 1997). This should be kept in mind while looking at how the other dimensions are interrelated.

Due to the fact that both logics could not fit into the scheme of *utilitarian* and *normative*, we argue that the classification as a pure hybrid identity according to Albert and Whetten (1985) is not entirely valid and the theoretical concept of multiple identities (Pratt and Foreman; 2000) has to be added as well. This argument is also supported by the fact that all dimensions are interconnected and share a certain type of dynamic. Additionally, all four dimensions do not only stand oppositional towards each other, but can also appear to be neutral or complementary (see also Corley et al., 2006). Even though the opposition between the *sustainability* and *business logic* is often a central tension among organizational identities in a slow fashion context (Ertekin and Atik, 2014, Fletcher, 2007), the concept of hybrid identities should still be considered. In order to understand the organizational identities of the given study fully and in a more complete way, we argue that both concepts need to be integrated. This is supported by Pratt (2016), who regards both concepts as complementary, as well as Albert and Whetten (1985), who suggested that organizational identities can be extended along multiple dimensions.

Perhaps considering the investigated organizations as having a “multiple-hybrid identity” could lead to the integration of both concepts into one flexible and holistic understanding. This could aid in investigating organizational identity and its complexity from different angles, taking different dynamics into account, and focusing on tension-focused identity dynamics, as well as on the

relationship among the different identity dimensions (oppositional, neutral or complementary; see also Corley et al., 2006).

We argue that all four dimensions are perceived differently by the founders and appear in different constellations in the daily life of the organizations. Some of those dimensions are more closely related to the external environment of the organization and some to the internal, which constitutes their organizational identity as filled with dynamism (Hatch and Schultz, 2002). In the following part, we will present the main identity dynamics in that context. The focus will be set on the *sustainability dimension* and its relation to the business and *aesthetics dimension*.

5.1.3. Interrelation of identity dimensions

Drawing a dynamic framework

When looking at how the different dimensions are understood by the founders, we argue that there are certain interrelations that create tensions and dynamics, especially with regard to the companies' organizational identity (figure 6). They consequently call for sense-making and management.

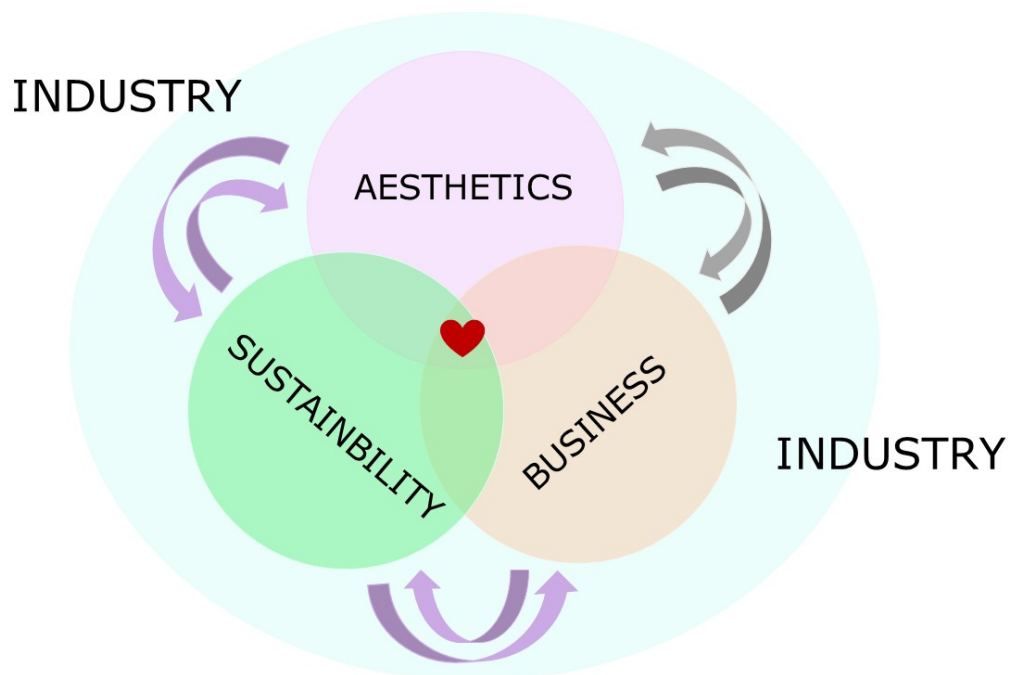


Figure 6. Interrelation of identity dimensions.

Figure 6 displays how the different dimensions are seen to be in a constant dynamic process and strongly connected to each other in the organizational identity. According to the analysis, we see a strong connection between all parts. The melting point in the middle (see heart – figure 6) forms the core of the organizational identity, while the *industry dimension* forms the described surrounding. The arrows symbolize that there are constant dynamics between the different dimensions. Those dynamics can be complementary, oppositional or neutral (see also Corley et al., 2006). The discussion will further focus on the dual dynamics that are related to the *sustainability dimension*: *sustainability* and *business*; *sustainability* and *aesthetics* (see purple arrows – figure 6) in order to give a first understanding of the given complexity.

To investigate upcoming dynamics and discuss possible tensions, the discussion will – among others – draw upon the meta-theoretical perspective of the paradox theory (Smith and Lewis, 2011), which in our case can provide guidance on how to understand the inherent tensions in the hybrid type of organization. Applying a paradox lens acknowledges possible tensions as competing demands that “are inherent in organizations, emerging through the act of organization or emerging through relational dynamics or individual sense-making” (Smith and Tracey, 2016; p. 457). We argue that all four logics are strongly interconnected since they were part of the organization from “birth” and not added to the organizational identity, in a later process, as it could be the case with companies adopting CSR strategies to maintain competitive advantage (Krüger et al, 2012). Thus they form a natural part of the founders’ daily life as an organization (Smith and Tracey, 2016), and naturally also have a strong potential for entailing paradoxical tensions (ibid.) We argue that all dimensions when grouped together can entail those paradoxical tensions, even if they seem well organized and integrated in some cases.

In terms of the nature of the competing demands we furthermore argue that two and even more competing demands can exist in relation to each other. The competing demands in the case of the investigated fashion brands can be both contradictory and interdependent (ibid.). We argue that their nature depends very much on the situation and the context. Since paradoxes in general “provoke dynamic interaction” (Smith and Tracey, 2016; p. 457), we will elaborate on these dynamics in the following part of the discussion. The main competing demands and their identity dynamics will be presented by relying on Hatch and Schulz’s (2002) model of organizational

identity and identity dynamics. The model will not be analyzed in depth but rather serve as a frame to explain identity dynamics. We hereby also acknowledge that organizational identity is being constructed in a constant interaction between the external and internal environment and see identity as a very fluid concept (Hatch and Schulz, 1997).

5.2. How do the founders navigate their organizational identity?

5.2.1. Internal perspective – culture and identity dynamics

In this part the discussion will focus on the internal perspective of the founders' identity perception and navigation. By relying on Hatch and Schulz's (2002) identity dynamics model, the interaction between the cultural part and the identity part will be discussed as a referent for defining the organizational "I" (ibid., p. 996). In general we acknowledge that both logics interact in the identity and culture frame through the acts of *reflecting* as well as *expressing* (ibid.).

The sustainability dimension and the aesthetics dimension

Looking at how the *sustainability dimension* is related to the *aesthetics dimension* in an internal environment shows that both dimensions are closely connected with each other and seem more complementary than oppositional (Pratt and Foreman, 2000). The founders seem to naturally integrate both dimensions into their organizational identity and trying to embrace emerging paradoxical tensions, rather than avoiding them (Smith and Lewis, 2011). Overall, the *sustainability dimension* seems to give the founders a certain operational framework and tool for reflexivity (Hatch and Schultz, 2002) in relation to the *aesthetics dimension*. To give an example, the investigated companies stated that even though they "can't go 100% with the trend" (Interview 1.2, *Changemaker's Apparel*, 02.03.2017, #16), they accept this as a limitation in the *aesthetics dimension* and interrelate it with the *sustainability dimension*, by emphasizing longevity, and wanting to create something that "is designed to last" (ibid.).

Even though the founders seem to be influenced by the *sustainability dimension*, they still see a strong need to emphasize their *aesthetics dimension* likewise. This can be an indicator of latent

tensions among the organizational identity (Smith and Lewis, 2011). The founder of *Inside* combined both identity dimensions stating, “so you have the material, you have the possibility of the machine and then you have the limitation or the consideration that it needs to be really, really beautiful in its expression” (Interview 2, *Inside*, 08.02.2017, #46). Emphasizing on “really, really beautiful” (ibid.) supports this argument. One founder even admitted that organizations could fall into danger of focusing too much on the *sustainability dimension* and consequently neglecting the aesthetics dimension (Interview 4, *Manifesto*, 16.02.2017, #48). This already foreshadows a potential for additional identity tensions for the organizations.

The sustainability dimension and the business dimension

When it comes to the realization of the *business dimension* together with the *sustainability dimension* in the organizational identity, it seems that both dimensions need to be managed simultaneously. When talking about their organizational “I” (ibid.) (Hatch and Schulz, 2002) in relation to the mentioned identity dimensions, the founders seem to express a strong sense of a unity (Pratt and Kraatz, 2009). They furthermore seem to accept and embrace both competing demands similar to the dynamics within the *aesthetics dimension* (Smith and Lewis, 2011). One of the founders summarized this by stating “we try to combine both doing good in production, doing good besides making money, and also doing good in giving back to charity” (Interview 2, *Changemaker’s Apparel*, 02.03.2017, #2). Very often, an integration of both dimensions also took place in relation to the production, where the *sustainability logic* such as providing fair working conditions or mutual respect in the business became relevant (see also slow fashion, Fletcher, 2007; Ertekin and Atik, 2014).

Even though their identity perception is strongly influenced by the *sustainability logic* the founders still felt a need to express the fact that they perceive their companies foremost as a business. It seemed very important for them to underline that even though they see their organizational identity through a *sustainability dimension* – “want to be the sustainable alternative” (Interview 6, *Ethical Essentials*, 06.03.2017, #56) – they are a business that needs to be profitable. Even though the *sustainability logic* is interpreted quite differently by each brand and can have different layers of complexity, it still seemed to be very strongly connected to the aspect of making money. One founder pointed out that “you cannot be green [sustainable] with having red numbers [being non-

profitable] (Interview 7, *Women in Knit*, 13.03.2017, #30). Also in this case a notion for the emergence of paradoxical tensions can be noted, even though the tension still seems latent (Smith and Lewis, 2011). Despite the fact that the founders perceive their companies as incorporating both identity dimensions, they also explicitly expressed the need to be perceived as a business that is dependent on profit in order to achieve their goals represented by the *sustainability dimension* of the organization.

Summary

Discussing the competing demands in the internal environment, which are strongly related to culture and identity (Hatch and Schulz, 2002), it seemed like the *sustainability dimension* forms a sort of cultural guideline for the design and creation of the companies' aesthetics and their general business values and practices. Thus, the *sustainability dimension* seems to play an important part in the identity construction of the investigated brands. Nevertheless, it should not be ignored that the founders still see a need to emphasize a focus of the company on the *aesthetics* as well as *business dimension* in their identity. The founder's strong emphasis on these two dimensions indicates a certain tension or potential conflict. Consequently, the *aesthetics* as well as the *business dimension* should not be neglected, but instead balanced out all together in order to achieve a "dynamic equilibrium" (Smith and Lewis, 2011). This is also important in the sense that, even though the mentioned tensions appear to be latent and co-exist in the internal environment, they might turn salient when being placed into external complexity or plurality (ibid.).

5.2.2. External perspective – image and identity dynamics

In the following part, the discussion will look upon the external perspective of the founders' perception of identity, especially in relation to the different identity dimensions. The discussion will reply upon the framework of Hatch and Schulz (2002), suggesting that all three dimensions interact within the image and identity frame through a process of constant *mirroring* and *impressing* (ibid.). The discussion is hereby considering "image" as a referent for defining the organizational "me" (Hatch and Schultz, 2002, p. 995).

The sustainability dimension and the aesthetics dimension

When being asked how they want to be perceived by others, the founders addressed both identity dimensions. With regard to the external perspective that revolves more around the *organizational self* (Hatch and Schultz, 2002), both dimensions seem to be integrated and connected within the founders' organizational identity perception. However, in relation to organizational image, both dimensions are not only complementary related, but to also create certain tensions that become more salient in the external environment (Smith and Lewis, 2011). Perceptions from the industry (*industry dimension*) seem to additionally have an influence on these tensions. Considering the identity dynamics within the organizations and their environment, a strong process of mirroring can be noticed (Hatch and Schultz, 2002), where traces of the stakeholders' images sneak into the organizational identity and influence their dynamics (ibid.).

In order to explain the above a bit more vividly, it was noted that when talking about their *sustainability dimension* the founders referred to quality, material and the production process of their product (see also slow fashion; see Ertekin and Atik, 2014; Fletcher, 2007) and not so much towards their social and environmental practices. It seems to be very important for some of the founders that in no case they should be perceived as an “eco-brand” (Interview 7, *Women in Knit*, 13.03.2017, #20). This indicates a general notion of the fashion industry that fashion brands who chose to apply sustainability in their organizational identity consequently will need to make compromises on design, which in the end results in less attractive aesthetics. In that context, it also becomes clear why one of the founders states that the company wants to “prove that it can be done in a better way without in any way compromising the coolness and the sexiness of fashion” (Interview 2, *Inside*, 08.02.2017, #12). Even though none of the founders stated it, there appeared to be a certain pressure on the organizations, claiming a high aesthetic standard in order to prove oneself in the market.

Additionally, a salient tension between the *aesthetics* and *sustainability dimensions* also appeared when the founders tried to pitch their company and product and tried to combine both dimensions in the best way. Some of the founders even moved away from the *sustainability dimension* explaining that “the product needs to speak for itself” (Interview 2, *Inside*, 08.02.2017, #30) and the brand does “not [want] to be perceived as a social label but as a fashion label” (Interview 2, *Inside*, 08.02.2017,

#20). While in the internal environment, both dimensions aimed to be integrated in harmony, in the external context the founders seemed to feel a need of setting a clear focus in their organizational identity, either being a “social label” (ibid.) or being a “fashion label” (ibid.). When looking at how the founders try to navigate through these two dimensions, some of them seemed to use communication tools such as investing on strong visuals, branding and marketing to mark their aesthetic focus. This process can additionally be understood as mirroring according to Hatch and Schultz (2002).

The sustainability dimension and the business dimension

When it comes to the external dynamics of the *sustainability dimension* and the *business dimension*, a certain complexity seems to appear as well. Tensions between both dimensions seem to be closely related to image and identity dynamics (Hatch and Schulz, 2002). In the context of organizational identity and the *organizational self* (Hatch and Schultz, 2002) those tensions appear complementary, yet oppositional and paradoxical as well (see Lewis, 2000). Even though the founders generally know who they are as a company (see internal perspective) and also have an idea of how they want to be perceived by their external environment, they still seem to have difficulties in expressing the totality of their identity to their external environment. One founder stated, “it is very difficult to try and communicate both things [ref. to sustainability and *business dimension*] at once to the same person” (Interview 2, *Inside*, 08.02.2017, #20). Some founders seem to experience this as a constant paradox and feel the need to find the best solution. The tension of not knowing how to best present their identity to their external partners especially becomes salient during the pitch (Smith and Lewis, 2011).

Additionally, when looking at the feedback the founders received when communicating their identity, tensions seem to occur as well, since the external environment sometimes got confused when the founders communicated all the dimensions of their identity. According to the founders, it seemed like “sometimes [their] proposition is a bit too complex” (Interview 1, *Changemaker’s Apparel*, 01.02.2017, #10) and some people did not get the essence, since it was all “too much” (Interview 3, *Elise Andersen*, 13.02.2017, #52) and “too confusing” (ibid.). This is a good example to illustrate that the communication of organizational identity and image leaves an impression on the external partners of the organization (impressing), which in turn affects the actions of the

founders as well as how they perceive themselves (Hatch and Schultz, 2002). The pressure caused by how the external person understands the interrelation between the sustainability and *business dimension* (most often at odds), urges the founders to find a solution for tensions, rather than accepting or embracing them (Smith et al, 2010).

Their difficulty of presenting themselves to the external environment and being understood also appeared during the pitch to potential investors. Some founders even left the *sustainability dimension* completely aside, while some others stressed it particularly. The founder of *Inside* tried to find a balance between all three dimensions (including the *aesthetics dimension*). Decoding her pitch to a potential investor, into the different dimensions, illustrates the company's complexity quite well. She explained: *Inside* “is a social business (social dimension integrated into *business dimension*), that manufactures in women’s prisons (social dimension). We make exclusive clothes, made in 100% natural materials (*aesthetics dimension*). We have a disruptive business model in the sense of we have no stock and sell exclusively online” (social dimension integrated into *business dimension*), (Interview 2, *Inside*, 08.02.2017, #85). As mentioned before, the strong tension of not knowing how to position themselves best calls for a solution for the founders. In order to try to balance both tensions out, the founders emphasize the need to improve their communication or general message. Hence, there seems to be a strong need to adapt and adjust their identity accordingly so that it is understood best (Smith and Lewis, 2011). Another way of sense-making and adjustment is also transforming the *sustainability dimension* into an authentic story, for example, a story about explaining “what we are doing and how we are trying to change the world” (Interview 1.2., *Changemaker’s Apparel*, 02.03.2017, #12).

Summary

Discussing the competing demands in the external environment which are strongly related to image and identity (Hatch and Schulz, 2002), the *sustainability dimension* appeared to add additional complexity and a need for balance. The complexity arises especially with regard to the image perception and external communication. In this context, the former latent paradoxical tensions seem to “become salient to organizational actors [due to] environmental conditions of plurality” (Smith and Lewis, 2011, p. 390). Since the external environment of the fashion industry, including potential customers, investors, retailers or brand managers, directly addresses the brands’ multi-

dimensional identity by not understanding their core message, those tensions get visible and call for dynamic solutions as presented in the “dynamic equilibrium” (Smith and Lewis, 2011). Consequently, the mentioned tensions in the external environment trigger a response in order to avoid a negative response and create a vicious cycle (Smith and Lewis, 2011). With regard to the external perspective the companies can be in danger of adjusting and adapting their *organizational me* (Hatch and Schultz, 2002) to such an extent, that the *organizational I* is also affected (ibid.). If this process happens only for the sake of solving paradoxical tensions, identity parts can mutate and get lost.

5.3. Concluding thoughts

Research question part I

When looking at the founders’ perception of their organizational identity, it became clear that they see their identity through different lenses and dimensions. Each dimension is present in parts of the entire identity as well as culture and image. Following that logic, the founders perceive the identity of their companies as a quite multi-faceted and multi-dimensional construct. In this study, we have noticed three major identity dimensions and one additional sub-dimension, namely *sustainability*, *aesthetics dimension* and *business dimension* as well as the *industry dimension* functioning as a sub-dimension. They emerged as *patterns*, when the data was analyzed and categorized. Especially the *sustainability dimension* seemed to have a strong impact on the organizational identity of the companies and seemed to serve as a cultural guideline in the different parts of the identity. Integrating all different dimensions in one organizational identity, internally as well as externally, raises the issue of complexity that needs to be managed and balanced out.

Furthermore, it can be noted that all four dimensions are closely interrelated and co-exist since the “birth” of the organization. Nevertheless, due to their interrelation competing demands and tensions arise, especially in connection to the *sustainability dimension* (Smith and Lewis, 2011; Lewis, 2000). All dimensions, including the sub-dimension of the industry, are part of the daily life of the organizations and reappear constantly in different situations and constellations, which calls for a constant act of balancing by the founders (Smith et al, 2010). Tensions arise when two different

dimensions are grouped together. Since our focus lies mainly on the interrelationship between the *sustainability dimension* with the other dimensions, the combination of the *business* and *aesthetics dimension* was left aside. Tensions arising in this dimension would mainly concern tensions that naturally arise in the cultural creative industries, as broadly presented in the introduction (Lampel et al, 2000).

Research question part II

The types of tensions vary, when comparing the internal and the external environment. In the case of the investigated fashion companies, it seemed that the tensions that arise with regard to their internal identity are rather latent and more sub-consciously noticed by the founders. When it comes to managing those tensions the founders embrace and try to balance them out rather than searching for a final solution. It seems that, unintentionally, perhaps instinctively, they are trying to apply what Smith, and Lewis (2011) call a “dynamic equilibrium”. In the internal environment, the founders seem to have the ability “to respond effectively to constantly shifting environments” (Teece et al., 1997, as cited in Smith and Lewis, 2011, p. 392). While with regard to the external environment the founders experience tensions between the different dimensions, such as for example the *sustainability* and *business* one, as more salient (ibid.), those tensions seem to have an impact on the perception of the organizations’ identity. They seem to create an unspoken need for the organizations to choose one dimension over the other and even adapt ideas and values to provide consistency. According to Smith and Lewis, in this case there is a danger of “mindless commitment”, which he calls a *vicious cycle* (Smith and Lewis, 2011, p.391). The founders try to resolve and balance these tensions by improving their communication or emphasizing on visuals and authentic storytelling (see analysis).

To sum up, we argue that the identity of the investigated companies generally needs to be approached from a holistic perspective, following one of the founders’ statements that “everything is connected” (Interview 5, *Respekt*, 06.03.2017, #6). Since this is the case, there is a need for balancing and integrating the tensions rather than finding an infinite solution. Following Hatch and Schulz (2002), organizational identity is perceived as a fluid and dynamic concept that calls for constant adjustment and re-questioning, which is also something the Paradox Theory agrees with (Smith and Lewis, 2011). After all, we argue that there might be no final balance – managing the

organizational identity of such brands is rather a constant process of accepting, embracing and rearranging tensions (ibid.), a process of finding a middle way of living and experiencing identity. It seems that the founders are aware just to a certain extent of the competing demands in their identity and mainly experience them as part of their everyday life and decision-making (Berglund and Schwartz, 2013). It might help them to create an open awareness towards these demands in the external and internal environment in order to prevent themselves from being trapped in the “vicious cycle” (ibid.) and eliminate the danger of making decisions that could harm the multi-faceted nature of their organizational identity.

6. Conclusion

6.1. Answering the research question

Based on the concluding thoughts of the discussion the research question can be addressed as follows. With regard to how the founders perceive the organizational identity of their companies, it can be recapped that their perception encompasses different dimensions (see discussion: *business; sustainability; aesthetics; industry*), which appeared to form a strong part of the companies' identity and could help the founders make sense of their identity. Especially the *sustainability dimensions* could provide guidance for general business values and practices.

All four dimensions are dynamically interrelated. Besides complementing each other, they can also stand in opposition towards each other, which can create certain competing demands and tensions. Even though the *sustainability dimension* forms a strong part of the identity, it is also the main source for emerging tensions and complexity; especially in relation to other dimensions (see *sustainability and business dimensions; sustainability and aesthetics dimension*). This creates a strong need for the founders to navigate their organizational identity among the different dimensions. Finally, it should be added, that all founders were dealing with this complexity despite different organizational sizes, backgrounds and experiences.

The navigation through those tensions seemed to take place in the internal, as well as external environment. In relation to the internal environment, it appeared to be easier for the founders to make sense of the different identity dimensions. A reason for this might be that as founders, they were the ones, who integrated the different identity parts into the organization, when starting the company. Hence, it seemed natural for them to accept their multi-layered identity, since they are most closely related to it. Also when tensions related to the *sustainability dimension* become more evident, the founders seem to accept them and try to embrace them rather than finding a final solution.

On the contrary, when tensions are brought to the external environment it seemed like they are mostly perceived as problematic, in that case *especially* in relation to the *sustainability dimension*. Here navigation as well as sense making of their organizational identity seemed harder for the founders. The reason for this difficulty might be that outside of the organization external opinions, like those of stakeholders or external partners need to be taken into account and be addressed as well. Moving from an internal scheme into an external one made clear that it is imperative that organizational identity is understood both by the founders and by the external environment. Consequently, tensions and difficulties need to be addressed, accepted and lastly managed by the founders in order to maintain the success of the organization.

6.2. Contributions

Based on the research findings and the discussion we argue that our research is able to contribute to the literature of different empirical contexts. Firstly, a contribution to a broader understanding of organizational identity is made. This understanding has different layers. To begin with, it can be argued that the research provides a broader understanding of organizational identity in the context of the cultural creative industries (CCI), the fashion industry in particular and even more specifically slow fashion companies. The findings add to CCI-literature in the sense that they give insight into a sustainability-focused organizational identity of companies operating in the CCI. The CCI, however, mainly served as a starting point of the research in order to put the investigated labels into perspective. Since particularly the organizational identity of slow fashion companies was the subject of this study, a contribution also lies here. Nonetheless, it is argued that the presented insights could be also applicable to other industries and organizations that deal with a similar complexity and issues in their organizational identity.

Hence, our research contribution is not only directed towards the CCIs or the fashion industry, but should also call for a more holistic and integrated approach towards organizational identity in general. By combining different research concepts, we intended to make sense and explain organizational identity in a broader perspective, taking differences between the external and internal environment, identity dynamics as well as competing demands equally into account. More

specifically concepts like the *Hybrid* and *Multiple identities* (Albert and Whetten, 1985; Pratt and Foreman, 2000) have been challenged and contributed to, by combining them with two additional concepts, such as the *Identity Dynamics Model* (Hatch and Schulz, 2002) and *Paradox Theory* (Smith and Lewis, 2011). We consider our research also as a suggestion for new approaches towards organizational identity.

Furthermore, we can contribute to a better understanding of the content of organizational identity. By looking beyond common categorizations and arguing that organizational identity can be stretched along different dimensions, we contribute particularly to identity literature of hybrid and multiple identities (Albert and Whetten, 1985; Pratt and Foreman, 2000). With regard to the content of organizational identity, the research could detect four different parts of identity – here referred to as identity dimensions (*sustainability, business, aesthetics and industry*). Especially investigating and discussing their complexity and interrelation helped to understand organizational identity in a broader perspective. Seeing it from a paradox perspective also shed light on the content of identity and the importance of tensions and their characteristics.

The research could also help to understand sustainability in the context of organizational identity better. It showed how this aspect can be integrated into the companies' identity and what impact it has. It should be added that this understanding is only based on the founders' perspective and experiences that were shared during the data collection process. We, as researchers, hope to have given an authentic insight into the understanding of this particularly part of identity. This was especially important, since the organizations inherit their sustainability focus from the birth of the company and did not present it as an add-on to their identity.

To sum up, we suggest that researchers explore organizational identity by looking beyond their own research fields, since other concepts could help in exploring organizational identity from a broader perspective. This is especially important since external and internal environments are gaining more and more complexity and organizational borders tend to vanish.

6.3. Managerial implications

The research additionally presents some managerial implications that could be utilized by founders of slow fashion companies as well as other companies that deal with similar organizational issues or operate in a similar field. Due to the given identity, tensions are part of the daily life of the founders and their organizations. We therefore suggest that, firstly, the founders should gain certain awareness for their identity and its complexity. Following the suggested approach of viewing identity through four different dimensions could also be helpful. Even though we noticed that the founders perceive their identity through different dimensions, it was not clear that they are actually aware of the fact that they entail different logics. In that context, reflecting upon their identity is recommended as well. Being aware of their own organizational identity could help in detecting possible tensions and difficulties within the organization more easily and help in managing them in a more effective way.

As a second strategic recommendation, we suggest that the founders are not only aware of their identity dimensions and their tension potential, we also suggest that the founders accept and even embrace the existence of those tensions. We hereby argue that accepting the fact that they find themselves in a complex and dynamic context could help the founders manage their organizational identity in a universal and integrated way. By embracing tensions, the focus is set away from having to ultimately solve them and is rather set on balancing them out and finding the best way to leverage them. Following the presented insights and research findings, we argue that not every tension necessarily needs to be solved. Being open for tensions and having the ability to address them rationally without focusing too much on the problematic parts is an important skill that the founders of the investigated fashion brands should develop. A dedication towards honest reflection and self-assessment, responsive attitudes toward stakeholders, and respect for the values of external parties could additionally be helpful.

Finally, the strategic implications also go beyond connecting the internal as well as external perception and navigation of organizational identity, and suggest to apply an attitude of openness, awareness and acceptance towards the management of the entire organization. Managing the entire organization based on that premise, could help to create a company that is flexible and open to learn.

Hereby a special awareness should be placed on the external environment to address changes in a fast and authentic way. Such an approach might help the entire organization to better react to competing demands from the internal as well as external environment and deal more efficiently with change and innovation, and thus be better prepared for the future.

6.4. Research limitations

Besides the limitations presented in the methodology, the research has some additional limitations that should be explained. The main limitation that we, as researcher experienced was limited time and space. As mentioned previously, it would have been interesting to undertake a longitudinal research with some of the brands to explore their development process further, especially since some of these brands currently found themselves in the process of restructuring. However, since the research had to be completed within the given time and space frame this was not possible. Furthermore, we had to coordinate with the founders and their quite busy time schedules. In total, we tried to collect data that was as rich and diverse as possible, considering the given conditions as well as limitations.

Secondly, it is important to mention that even though we trust that the founders gave us honest answers – regarding their responsible practices and their views on the discussed subjects – it should be noted that all our findings are based on their insights. No additional data from employees or external partners was considered. On the one hand this is legitimized by the fact that the research is focused on the founders' insights and therefore only took them into account, still it should be addressed that final conclusions about the content, realization and general management of their organizational identity could only be made to some extent and should be considered carefully. Therefore the credibility of the presented data might also be partial to certain limitations. Emotional and factual bias of the founders might have influenced the research findings as well. The founders are emotionally very close to their organization and in some cases might not be able to maintain a completely professional distance when talking about their organizations.

6.5. Propositions for future research

The present research leaves room for further research in the field. First, we suggest further research within the field of organizational identity in relation to the CCIs. Research could be made in cultural creative industries, taking some of the presented phenomena into account, such as plurality among organizational identity as well as organizational dynamics and paradoxical tensions. Moreover, we argue that it is important to also investigate the CCIs and especially the fashion industry from a paradox perspective. Tensions seem to be quite central when it comes to understanding how to better make sense and manage organizations in the contemporary setting of our times, in which complexity and an ever-changing environment seem to slowly become the norm.

Further studies could hereby focus on investigating the factor of sustainability more accurately in an identity context. We argue that the *sustainability dimension* has not been given much attention within the CCIs. This is an additional point researchers could draw upon in order to understand this aspect of organizational identity in all its totality. Additionally, it would be interesting to investigate if sustainability is generally a source of tensions in the cultural creative industries. Besides that, this context is interesting in relation to other companies in the field to find out more about the relevance of sustainability in an organizational identity context of the CCIs.

Apart from that, we suggest further research on organizational identity and sustainability in the fashion industry. All presented factors of this research could be investigated in further detail, conducting a study that focuses on exploring fashion identity in general, as well as on the factor sustainability in a fashion context. We think that the given research could also serve as a good starting point for other researchers to draw upon. The data pool could be enriched by not only interviewing the founders but also interviewing other organizational members. It might be interesting to see how the employees actually perceive the organizational identity in comparison to the founders. The focus of the study would consequently switch. Additionally, a long-term study on two or three slow fashion companies could lead to a better understanding of the aspect of sustainability and organizational identity in a more process-oriented way. Here also companies outside the Scandinavian market should be considered.

In the context of a bigger data pool, it would also be relevant to integrate a perspective of external partners and stakeholders, in particular customers. Since the customers form an important part of the success of the investigated companies, it would be interesting to see how they perceive the organization's identity and how they make sense of it. This would not only be interesting in the sense of academic research but also from a managerial point of view – investigating how complex identity can be communicated in an effective and still authentic way. Especially some of the investigated slow fashion brands set a strong focus on authenticity and transparency. To sum up, the given research should be regarded as a starting point that provides more ideas for additional research. Researchers could benefit from those ideas, since they provide material for richer discussions around the theme of organizational identity in general and sustainability in particular.

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Website links

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Mckinsey&Company, <http://www.mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/the-state-of-fashion>

European Commission, http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/sme-definition_de

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8. Appendices

8.1. Appendix I – Interview process

Email Examples – Thesis Collaboration Request

Examples 1 – Founder of *Manifesto*, Alexander Eriksson

Note: The research focus was further changed and adapted after

To: Alexander Eriksson, founder of *Manifesto*
From: Alisa Buckel; Iliana Alexandra Papargyri
When: 08.02.2017

Dear *Alexander*,

My thesis partner Iliana and me had the chance to meet you and talk to you last week at Revolver in Copenhagen. We told you about our thesis project at Copenhagen Business School and that we are quite interested in having *Manifesto* as a case company in our thesis. Based on your business and brand concept, we believe that you could contribute with quite valuable content to our thesis and would be happy working with you. Generally, we are interested in value-driven entrepreneurship in the fashion industry and its connection to branding. We want to learn more about the origin of the specific values, their execution, and how they influence the fashion brand and its brand image. Possible questions are: Where do specific business ethics and values originate? How are certain business ethics used to build the brand personality and the brand overall value proposition? How do those ethics influence the overall business activities?

In order to work with you we would like to conduct an interview via Skype. The interview would last about one hour and would be recorded if you agree.
Possible dates for interviews can be from the beginning of March on. For example a date in the week from 6th - 10th of March would fit well.

We are quite interested in your company and would be very happy, to work with you.
Please let us know what you think and which date possibly would fit for you.
Looking forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes,
Iliana & Alisa

Examples 2 – Founder of *Respekt*, Ida Tjellesen

To: Founder of *Respekt*, Ida Tjellesen
From: Iliana Alexandra Papargyri, Alisa Buckel
When: 23.02.2017

Good evening,

My name is Iliana Papargyri. I am a student at Copenhagen Business School, currently doing my master on Management of Creative Business Processes. For our final semester, we are doing our thesis together with my partner Alisa Buckel, regarding Branding, Brand Identity and Brand creation. What we are looking for are companies with a purpose and a strong story such as yours, which belong in the category of social entrepreneurship.

We are quite interested in having *Respekt* as a case company for our thesis.

Based on your business and brand concept, your compelling story and products make you a great fit and we believe that you could contribute quite valuable content to our thesis and would be happy working with you.

Generally, we are interested in value-driven entrepreneurship in the fashion industry and its connection to branding. We want to learn more about how social entrepreneurs and in particular CEOs and Brand managers perceive their brand's identity and how they communicate it (are these two aligned?). Moreover, we are investigating the relationship between the brand's story and the actual product and how those two are presented.

Possible questions are: Where do specific business ethics and values originate from? How are certain business ethics used to build the brand personality and the overall brand value proposition? How do those ethics influence the overall business activities?

So far we are collaborating with companies such as *Changemaker's Apparel*, *Inside or Ethical Essentials*, and we are in the talks with a few more.

In order to work with you we would like to conduct an interview. The interview would last about one hour and would be recorded if you agree. We are located in Copenhagen so in this case a Skype interview would work great!

Please let us know, what you think of us collaborating for our thesis and then we can discuss possible dates to set up an interview. We promise on our end to be 100% transparent and for you to have access to our findings. We see this as a partnership where both ends will learn a lot from each other. Looking forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes,

Iliana & Alisa

Interview Guides

Interview Guide 1 – *Changemaker's Apparel*

Date:	01-02-2017
Company:	CHANGEMAKER'S APPAREL

Respondent	Morten Nielsen/Founder
Interviewers:	Alisa Buckel & Iliana Papargyri
Duration:	47:04

BACKGROUND & PERSONAL VALUES

- **Tell us a bit about you?**
Background (Education, Work, Anything they like to share)
- **What are your personal values?**
(Ethics, Moral compass)
- **How did it all start?**
(Inspiration, Role models, Idea generation)
- **What made you decide to start your own brand?**
(Trigger, Motivation, Reason)
- **How would you describe your brand?**
(What they choose to enclose and present, main element)
- **What is your goal with the brand?**
(Ambitions, Value related questions, testing the identity)
- **In what extend are you values incorporated in the Brand?**
(Connections between personality-values-brand)

INTRO-PERSONAL

- Tell us a bit about you? Background (Education, Work, Anything they like to share)
- How did it all start? (Inspiration, Role models, Idea generation)
- What made you decide to start your own brand? (Trigger, Motivation, Reason)
- Tell us about your personal values?
- What inspires you as an individual?
- What motivates you as an individual?

BUSINESS ETHICS & VALUES

- Do you know what you believe in?
- Do you have stories that deserve to be told?
- In what extend are you values incorporated in the Brand? (Connections between personality-values-brand)
- How do you ensure that your values are incorporated to the brand's culture?
- Does the company practice the values it preaches and how?
- How important is the environment and trends when it comes to adapting/changing maintaining the values? (how does the external affect the core)?
- Is it difficult to uphold your values/ethical principles when running the business?
- Is there a part of your business processes, where you personally think that you don't act "ethical" at moment?

VISION

- Do you nourish your vision?
- Is the organisation able to transform its vision into reality?
- Do your stakeholders share your vision and culture?
- Are your vision and culture truly differentiating?
- How do you stay connected to the outside (needs of customers etc)?

THE ENTREPRENEURIAL LIFE

- What is your role in the company? How did it change or evolve since the beginning of the company until now?
- What is the most difficult part of being an entrepreneur?
- What is the greatest part of being an entrepreneur?
- How do you perceive your role in the company?
- Can you name a few of your strategic techniques/tools?
- Do you have different guiding principles when leading the company? Which is the most important one? Which one would you give up first, if necessary?
- Do you see yourself as a social entrepreneur?
- Why did you get into social entrepreneurship?
- What general challenges are you facing at the moment?

CORPORATE CULTURE

- What is your definition of an ethical company? Is this important to you?
- How do you recruit people (based on what criteria)?
- How do you train/educate your employees?
- What are the “right people” for you as employees in your team? What characteristics should they have?
- Does your brand identity reflect on the company’s culture? What do you do to align these two parts of the company.

BRAND

- How exactly would you describe your company? What exactly do you sell (i.e products or impact)?
- What do you think makes your brand unique? Is uniqueness something you strive for?
- How important is brand authenticity for you?
- What is your vision for the brand?
- Is there balance between the brand’s identity and its activities?
- What do you experience as limits when it comes to building and running an ethical brand?
- Name a few of the brands that inspire you
- Who do you think are your competitors and why?
- How difficult or easy do you find communicating the brand essence?
- **What challenges did you face when you were creating the brand? (Identity/choices)**
- **What challenges are you facing now, running a “socially responsible” company?**

- What is your biggest challenge
- Do you think your brand is influential? Why and how?

CLOSING QUESTIONS

- How do you see the relationship between the fashion industry today and an ethical brand?
- Do you feel like there is a knowledge gap or service lack for ethical fashion entrepreneurs?

FUN PART

Draw your values in every possible way? Then draw them from the most important to least important.

Draw the Brand DNA

Did they use business model canvas? If yes can they share it with us?

Interview Guide 1.1. – *Changemaker's Apparel* – Follow up Interview

Date:	02-03-2017
Company:	CHANGEMAKER'S APPAREL
Respondent	Morten Nielsen/Founder
Interviewers:	Alisa Buckel
Duration:	25:40

Personal Note: ASKING FOR EXAMPLES

HOW DO YOU PERCEIVE YOURSELF?

- What does *Changemaker's Apparel* do? "Any market we get into we have to first explain who we are"?
- What does your brand offer to the consumer?
- What do you think makes your brand unique / different from others?
- What does brand authenticity mean to you?

HOW DO YOU WANT TO BE PERCEIVED?

- What do you want to be for the consumer (perceived as)?
- Who is your target audience? How do you address them? (media etc)

HOW DO YOU PRESENT YOURSELF?

- How do you think you are perceived by the outside at the moment? Do you want to change that?
- How are your experience with communicating *Changemaker's Apparel* 's story to your stakeholders, customers, retailers?
- **Do you experience difficulties communicating your brand? (What/Why)**

- **But I also have online stores where they sell *Changemaker's Apparel* and it is quite difficult because there is no one to tell the story. This is also something we are working on? How are you working on it?**
- **Where do they start? How do you try to solve them?**
- Can you give an example of when you had this experience
- Can you describe the way you branded *Changemaker's Apparel* when you first started and the way you do it now? Did you use any brand building tools to define the brand?
- What is success for you?

PITCHING EXERCISE

- We are potential investors and you want our money! Pitch the brand to us. You have 2 min! GO!
- You are a salesperson talking to a consumer interested in buying a necklace! You have 2 min! GO!
- You decided to change your website to better communicate your brand. You have hired a web designer to build you new visual identity. What would you tell them about you? You have 2 min! GO!

Interview Guide 2 – *Inside*

Date:	08-02-2017
Company:	<i>Inside</i>
Respondent	Camilla Ribeiro/Founder
Interviewer:	Alisa Buckel & Iliana Papargyri
Duration:	57:00

INTRODUCTION - PERSONAL QUESTIONS

- Tell us a bit about you and your **background** (Education, Former work, Anything they like to share)?
- How would you describe yourself as a **person**? (Interests; etc)
- What **inspires** you?
- What **motivates** you?
- **What made you decide to start your own brand?**
- What was the **reason** for starting a brand like that?
- What **inspired** you to start you brand?
- What **influence** you the most?
- Who were your **role models**?
- How did you **generate your idea**?
- Describe a **typical day** at work?

BUSINESS ETHICS & VALUES

- Please **describe your company** for us?

- What is the **purpose** of *Inside* - as a brand? - as a company?
- How would you personally define the term “**value**”?
- How would you describe *Inside*’s values? Do you differentiate between **core** values? - **organizational** values? - **customer** values?
- **What made you decide on those values?**
- How do you **incorporate** those “values” into the brand & company?
- In what way do you **practice** those “values”?
- How important is the **environment & trends** when it comes to adapting/changing maintaining the values? (how does the external affect the core)?
- What does it take to run an **ethical business**?
- **Which part** of your business processes is the **hardest** one to continuously act ethically?
- **Could you draw your value chain/business processes for us and describe where you realize your main values ? Where is it hard to realize them?**

VISION & MISSION

- How would you describe *Inside*’s **mission**?
- How would you describe *Inside* ’s **vision**?
- What do you do to **realize** those two?
- Who are your **stakeholders**?
- In what extend do your **stakeholders** share your vision and culture? How do you stay **connected to the outside** (needs of customers etc)?

THE ENTREPRENEURIAL LIFE

- What is **your role** in the company?
- How do you **perceive** your role in the company?
- How did your **role change** or evolve since the beginning of the company until now?
- What is the **most difficult part** of being an entrepreneur?
- What is the **greatest** part of being an entrepreneur?
- **Do you have different guiding principles when leading the company? Which is the most important one? Which one would you give up first, if necessary?**
- How do you see yourself as **part of the fashion industry**?
- There are many labels for entrepreneurship? How do you see **yourself as an entrepreneur**?
- **Do you see yourself as a reflexion of the company? Why? Is that important to you?**
- What’s your **biggest challenge** at the moment as an **entrepreneur**?

CORPORATE CULTURE

- What is your definition of an **ethical company**? Is this important to you?
- How would you describe *Inside*’s **organizational culture**?
- How do you **recruit** people (based on what criteria)?
- How do you **train/educate** your employees?
- What are the “**right people**” for you as employees in your team? What characteristics should they have?
- Does your **brand identity reflect on the company’s culture**? What do you do to align these two parts of the company.

BRAND

- If *Inside* would be a **person**, **how** would you describe it?
- How exactly would you describe your company? What exactly do you sell (i.e products or impact)?
- Can you tell us the story of your most sold product?
- What do you think makes your **brand unique / differentiate** from others?
- Is brand **authenticity important for you**?
- What do you experience as **limits** when it comes to **building and running an ethical brand**?
- **Did you use any brand building tools to define the brand?**
- Name a few of the **brands** that inspire you?
- Who do you think are your **competitors** and why?
- How do you **communicate** the brand essence? Do you find it hard/ easy?
- **What challenges did you face when you were creating the brand? (Identity/choices)**
- **What challenges are you facing now, running a “socially responsible” company?**
- What is your **biggest challenge** as a brand right now?
- What do you think your brand can influence the most?
- How does your **customer** look like? Are you **influence** by them?
- What kind of **customer** do you want to attract?
- Do you want to influence your customer?
- **How do you communicate *Inside*’s story to them?**

CLOSING QUESTIONS

- How do you see the **relationship between the fashion industry today and an ethical brand**?
- Do you feel like there is a **knowledge gap or service lack** for ethical fashion entrepreneurs?

Interview Guide 2.1 – *Inside* - Follow Up Interview

PITCHING EXERCISE

- We are potential investors and you want our money! Pitch the brand to us. You have 2 min! GO!
- You are a salesperson talking to a consumer interested in buying a necklace! You have 2 min! GO!
- You decided to change your website to better communicate your brand. You have hired a web designer to build you new visual identity. What would you tell them about you? You have 2 min! GO!

Interview Guide 3 – *Elise Andersen*

Date:	12-02-2017
Company:	ELISE ANDERSEN

Respondent	Elise Andersen/Founder & Anna Miller/ Business Developer
Interviewer:	Alisa Buckel & Iliana Papargyri
Duration:	01:20:48

PERSONAL & BASIC COMPANY QUESTIONS

- Tell us a bit about you and your background (Education, Former work, Anything they like to share)?
- What made you decide to start your own brand?
- Could you share the journey of the Brand?
- Who works in the company at the moment? How many people?
- What is your role in the company?
- Who are your stakeholders?
- What does *Heartful* do?
- What does *Heartful* sell?
- What does your brand promise?
- What does your brand offer to the consumer?
- What do you want to be for the consumer (perceived as)?
- What do you want to achieve with *HEARTFUL*? (purpose+mission)
- How do you plan on achieving these goals?
- How do you promote the brand?
- Who is your target audience? How do you address them? (media etc)

VISION & MISSION

- How would you describe *HEARTFUL*' vision?
- How would you describe *HEARTFUL* mission?

BUSINESS ETHICS & VALUES

- How would you describe *HEARTFUL*' values?
- How do you incorporate those "values" into the brand & company?
- How do you see yourselves as a brand?
- How do you think you are perceived?
- How do you feel about the terms "social entrepreneurship" "ethical brands" etc? Do you think you fall in this category and why?
- What does it mean to you be an "ethical entrepreneur"?
- What does it take to run an ethical business?
- How do you measure your success?
- Can you describe the way you branded *HEARTFUL* when you first started and the way you do it now?
- What is the biggest challenge of running an "ethical brand"?
- How do you see yourself as part of the fashion industry?

BRAND

- What do you think makes your brand unique / different from others?
- What does brand authenticity mean to you?
- What do you experience as challenges & limits when it comes to building an ethical brand?
- Did you use any brand building tools to define the brand?
- Which brands do you see as competitors and why?
- Which brands do you admire and why?
- What is your biggest challenge right now?
- How do you communicate the *HEARTFUL*’ story to them?
- Do you experience difficulties communicating your brand? (What/Why)

CLOSING QUESTIONS

- How do you see the relationship between the fashion industry and an ethical brand today?

FUN PART

- We are potential investors and you want our money! Pitch the brand to us. You have 2 min! GO!
- You have found a perfect candidate for a new employee and you want to convince them to work with you. Tell them about *HEARTFUL*! You have 2 min! GO!
- You are a salesperson talking to a consumer interested in buying a necklace! You have 2 min! GO!

Interview Guide 4 – *Manifesto*

Date:	16-02-2017
Company:	MANIFESTO
Respondent	Alexander Eriksson/Founder
Interviewer:	Iliana Papargyri
Duration:	38:20

PERSONAL & BASIC COMPANY QUESTIONS

- Tell us a bit about you and your background (Education, Former work, Anything they like to share)?
- What made you decide to start your own brand?
- Could you share the journey of the Brand?
- Who works in the company at the moment? How many people?
- What is your role in the company?
- Who are your stakeholders?
- What does *Heartful* do?
- What does *Heartful* sell?
- What does your brand promise?

- What does your brand offer to the consumer?
- What do you want to be for the consumer (perceived as)?
- What do you want to achieve with *HEARTFUL*? (purpose+mission)
- How do you plan on achieving these goals?
- How do you promote the brand?
- Who is your target audience? How do you address them? (media etc)

VISION & MISSION

- How would you describe *HEARTFUL*' vision? Why do you think this is important?

BUSINESS ETHICS & VALUES

- How would you describe *HEARTFUL*' values?
- How do you incorporate those "values" into the brand & company?
- How do you see yourselves as a brand?
- How do you think you are perceived?
- How do you feel about the terms "social entrepreneurship" "ethical brands" etc? Do you think you fall in this category and why?
- What does it mean to you be an "ethical entrepreneur"?
- What does it take to run an ethical business?
- Do you experience difficulties communicating your brand? (What/Why)
- How do you measure your success?
- Can you describe the way you branded *HEARTFUL* when you first started and the way you do it now?
- What is the biggest challenge of running an "ethical brand"?
- How do you see yourself as part of the fashion industry?

BRAND

- What do you think makes your brand unique / different from others?
- What does brand authenticity mean to you?
- What do you experience as challenges & limits when it comes to building an ethical brand?
- Did you use any brand building tools to define the brand?
- Which brands do you see as competitors and why?
- Which brands do you admire and why?
- What is your biggest challenge right now?
- How do you communicate the *HEARTFUL*' story to them?

MAYBE QUESTIONS (Culture-product)

- How does a day in *HEARTFUL* look like?
- How would you describe *HEARTFUL*' company culture?
- Can you tell us the story of your most sold product?
- What makes your products special?

CLOSING QUESTIONS

- How do you see the relationship between the fashion industry and an ethical brand today?

FUN PART

- We are potential investors and you want our money! Pitch the brand to us. You have 2 min! GO!
- You have found a perfect candidate for a new employee and you want to convince them to work with you. Tell them about *HEARTFUL*! You have 2 min! GO!
- You are a salesperson talking to a consumer interested in buying a necklace! You have 2 min! GO!
- You decided to change your website to better communicate your brand. You have hired a web designer to build you new visual identity. What would you tell them about you? You have 2 min! GO!

Interview Guide 5 – *Respekt*

Date:	06-03-2017
Company:	RESPEKT
Respondent	Ida Tjellesen /Founder
Interviewer:	Alisa Buckel & Iliana Papargyri
Duration:	01:24:06

Personal Note: More focus on 3 question:

How do you perceive yourself?

How do you want to be perceived?

How do you present yourself?

Aim: Asking For Examples And To Elaborate On Content

PERSONAL & BASIC COMPANY QUESTIONS

- Tell us a bit about you and your background (Education, Former work, Anything they like to share)?
- What made you decide to start your own brand?
- Could you share the journey of the Brand?
- Who works in the company at the moment? How many people?
- What is your role in the company right now?
- Who are your main stakeholders?
- What does *Respekt* do?
- What does *Respekt* sell?
- Tell us about your different projects that you are doing at the moment? (jewellery; nepal; natural dye)
- What does your brand promise?

- What does your brand offer to the consumer?
- Who is your target audience? How do you mainly address them? (media; sale channel) etc)?
- How do you promote the brand?

VISION & MISSION

- What do you want to achieve with *Respekt*? (purpose+mission)
- How do you plan on achieving these goals?
- How would you describe *Respekt* vision? Why do you think this is important?

BUSINESS ETHICS & VALUES

- How would you describe *Respekt*'s values/guiding principles?
- (How do you incorporate those “values” into the brand & company?)
- How do you feel about the terms “social entrepreneurship” “ethical brands” etc? Do you think you fall in this category and why?
- What does it mean to you be an “ethical entrepreneur”?
- What does it take to run an ethical business?
- What is the biggest challenge of **running** an “ethical brand”?
- How do you define success?
- How do you see yourself as part of the fashion industry?

BRAND PERCEPTION & COMMUNICATION

- What kind of brand does *Respekt* aim to be?
- **How do you make sure to present yourself like that?**
- What do you think makes your brand unique?
- What does brand authenticity mean to you?
- **How do you think you are perceived at the moment? Is there something you'd like to change in this perception?**
- What do you want to be for the consumer (perceived as)?
- How do you communicate the *Respekt*'s story to them? EXPERIENCES
- **Do you experience difficulties communicating your brand? (What/Why) EXAMPLES!?**
EXPERIENCES
- Can you describe the way you branded *Respekt* when you first started and the way you do it now?
- Did you use any brand building tools to define the brand?
- What do you experience as challenges & limits when it comes to **building** an ethical brand?
- Which brands do you see as competitors and why?
- Which brands do you admire and why?
- What is your biggest challenge right now?

CLOSING QUESTIONS

- How do you see the relationship between the fashion industry and an ethical brand today?

FUN PITCHING PART

- We are a shop owner and you want us to sell your products. Make a pitch for us! You have 2 min! GO!
- You are a salesperson talking to a consumer interested in buying a top! You have 2 min! GO!
- You decided to change your website to better communicate your brand. You have hired a web designer to build you new visual identity. What would you tell them about you? You have 2 min! GO!

Interview Guide 6 – *Ethical Essentials*

Date:	06-03-2017
Company:	ETHICAL ESSENTIALS
Respondent	Thomas Madsen /Founder
Interviewer:	Alisa Buckel
Duration:	49:26

AIM: ASKING FOR EXAMPLES AND TO ELABORATE ON CONTENT

PERSONAL & BASIC COMPANY QUESTIONS

- **Tell us a bit about you and your background (Education, Former work, Anything they like to share)?**
- **What made you decide to start your own brand?**
- Could you share the journey of the Brand?
- Who works in the company at the moment? How many people?
- What is your role in the company right now?
- Who are your main stakeholders?
- What does *Ethical Essentials* do?
- **What does *Ethical Essentials* sell?**
- Tell us about your different projects that you are doing at the moment? (jewellery; nepal; natural dye)
- What does your brand promise?
- What does your brand offer to the consumer?
- Who is your target audience? How do you mainly address them? (media; sale channel) etc)?
- How do you promote the brand?

VISION & MISSION

- What do you want to achieve with *Ethical Essentials*? (purpose+mission)
- How do you plan on achieving these goals?

- How would you describe *Respekt* vision? Why do you think this is important?

BUSINESS ETHICS & VALUES

- How would you describe *Ethical Essentials* values/guiding principles?
- (How do you incorporate those “values” into the brand & company?)
- How do you feel about the terms “social entrepreneurship” “ethical brands” etc? Do you think you fall in this category and why?
- What does it mean to you be an “ethical entrepreneur”?
- What does it take to run an ethical business?
- What is the biggest challenge of **running** an “ethical brand”?
- How do you define success?
- How do you see yourself as part of the fashion industry?

BRAND PERCEPTION & COMMUNICATION

- What kind of brand does *Ethical Essentials* aim to be?
- **How do you make sure to present yourself like that?**
- What do you think makes your brand unique?
- What does brand authenticity mean to you?
- **How do you think you are perceived at the moment? Is there something you’d like to change in this perception?**
- What do you want to be for the consumer (perceived as)?
- How do you communicate the *Ethical Essentials* story to them? EXPERIENCES
- **Do you experience difficulties communicating your brand? (What/Why) EXAMPLES!?**
EXPERIENCES
- Can you describe the way you branded Organic Basics when you first started and the way you do it now?
- Did you use any brand building tools to define the brand?
- What do you experience as challenges & limits when it comes to **building** an ethical brand?
- Which brands do you see as competitors and why?
- Which brands do you admire and why?
- What is your biggest challenge right now?

CLOSING QUESTIONS

- How do you see the relationship between the fashion industry and an ethical brand today?

FUN PITCHING PART

- We are a shop owner and you want us to sell your products. Make a pitch for us! You have 2 min! GO!
- You are a salesperson talking to a consumer interested in buying a top! You have 2 min! GO!

- You decided to change your website to better communicate your brand. You have hired a web designer to build you new visual identity. What would you tell them about you? You have 2 min! GO!

Interview Guide 7 – *Women in Knit*

Date:	13-03-2017
Company:	WOMEN IN KNIT
Respondent	Ingrid Gustafsdottir/Founder
Interviewer:	Iliana Papargyri
Duration:	01:09:41

PERSONAL & BASIC COMPANY QUESTIONS

- Tell us a bit about you and your background (Education, Former work, Anything they like to share)?
- What made you decide to start your own brand?
- Could you share the journey of the Brand?
- Who works in the company at the moment? How many people?
- What channels do you use to sell the products?
- What is your role in the company?
- Who are your stakeholders?
- What does *Women in Knit* do?
- What does *Women in Knit* sell?
- What does your brand promise?
- What does your brand offer to the consumer?
- What do you want to be for the consumer (perceived as)?
- What do you want to achieve with *Women in Knit*? (purpose+mission)
- How do you plan on achieving these goals?
- How do you promote the brand?
- Who is your target audience? How do you address them? (media etc)
- (JORDAN AND PERU AS PART OF OUR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PROJECTS.) Talk about the projects
- I see that you have done a lot movies why did you choose this medium to communicate the brand?

VISION & MISSION

- How would you describe *Women in Knit*'s vision? Why do you think this is important?

BUSINESS ETHICS & VALUES

- How would you describe *Women in Knit* values?

- How do you incorporate those “values” into the brand & company?
- How do you see yourselves as a brand?
- How do you think you are perceived?
- How do you feel about the terms “social entrepreneurship” “ethical brands” etc? Do you think you fall in this category and why?
- What does it mean to you be an “ethical entrepreneur”?
- What does it take to run an ethical business?
- Do you experience difficulties communicating your brand? (What/Why)
- How do you measure your success?
- Can you describe the way you branded *Women in Knit* when you first started and the way you do it now?
- What is the biggest challenge of running an “ethical brand”?
- How do you see yourself as part of the fashion industry?

BRAND

- What do you think makes your brand unique / different from others?
- What does brand authenticity mean to you?
- What do you experience as challenges & limits when it comes to building an ethical brand?
- Did you use any brand building tools to define the brand?
- Which brands do you see as competitors and why?
- Which brands do you admire and why?
- What is your biggest challenge right now?
- How do you communicate the *Women in Knit* story to them?

MAYBE QUESTIONS (Culture-product)

- How does a day in *HEARTFUL* look like?
- How would you describe *HEARTFUL*’ company culture?
- Can you tell us the story of your most sold product?
- What makes your products special?

CLOSING QUESTIONS

- How do you see the relationship between the fashion industry and an ethical brand today?

FUN PART

- We are potential investors and you want our money! Pitch the brand to us. You have 2 min! GO!
- You are a salesperson talking to a consumer interested in buying an item from your collections. You have 2 min! GO!
- You decided to change your website to better communicate your brand. You have hired a web designer to build you new visual identity. What would you tell them about you? You have 2 min! GO!

8.2. Appendix II – Transcriptions

See Master Thesis Attachments (USB – Stick / Digital PDF Document)

8.3. Appendix III – Coded material

Part contains coded samples – Full Coded Material see Master Thesis Attachments (USB – Stick/Digital PDF Document)

Overview Codes

Note: in some cases additional codes were added in the process of coding

1. ACTIVITIES (Job design; What they do?)
2. PRODUCT
3. COMMUNICATION
4. FASHION INDUSTRY (Process)
5. SUSTAINABLE FASHION INDUSTRY (Process)
6. INSPIRATION (Influences; Competitors)
7. SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (Mission related)
8. MONEY
9. AESTHETICS
10. GOALS (Vision)
11. FOUNDER

Coding Interview 1 – *Changemaker's Apparel*

Date:	01-02-2017
Company:	CHANGEMAKER'S APPAREL
Respondent	Morten Nielsen/Founder
Interviewers:	Alisa Buckel & Iliana Papargyri
Duration:	47:04

Coding Sample – 2 Pages

1. A: As a starting question, tell us a bit about you just briefly your background?

2. K: I am Kasper, I am 41 years old and my education was engineering and then I worked in sales and marketing and worked in the textile industry and now I started this.

Comment [AB1]: Founder (Story)

3. A: What made you decide to start your own brand?

4. K: A combination of many things, but I have always been this career oriented guy who wanted to climb the career ladder and become CEO, and then I became the CEO and kind of find out that it was not interesting and also my wife got ill and I think my whole life's priorities-maybe it was midlife crisis- I started thinking about life and then I was inspired by this Einstein quote "Try not to become a man of success but rather a man of value" and then "A Man Of Value" *Changemaker's Apparel* became the brand. So a lot of kind of life changes led me here.

Comment [AB2]: Inspiration

Comment [AB3]: Founder (Story)

5. A: What about your personal values, general things that you would say are your personal values?

6. K: I think there is a quote saying "it is nice to be important but it is more important to be nice", and I think that is one of my main things, that no matter what you do you have to be nice in the way you do it and I think the personal values that I took into this company from the beginning I created seven values that I wanted to lead with in this company and these are Hope-Dare-Discover-Achieve-Enjoy-Give-Inspire. So for me this has been a personal journey of trying to really go for a big goal and daring to go for it and try to achieve it while also give and enjoy and inspire.

Comment [AB4]: Company Values?

Comment [AB5]: Founder (values)

7. A: What influenced your decision to specifically take those values?

8. K: I think it was a counter effect to what I have previously doing in my life. I come from a generation where probably we did not think much about sustainability and kind of went for a full career and in midlife I started thinking am I spending my life in the right way? So, when I want to hope and dare it is probably because I never really dared before and never did something like this before.

Comment [AB6]: Founder (Personal Story)

9. A: What inspires you as an individual?

10. K: One of the things that inspired me to do this was the book by the founder of TOMS shoes, Mycoskie I think it is and the it is called "start something that matters" and I remember reading that, actually I am listening to audio books so I remember hearing that and I was in an airplane, and when I came back I actually had to drive from CPH airport to my summer house and when I arrived at my summer house at 03.00 at night the book had not finished so I was just sitting in my car until 04.00 at night to finish the book cause I was so inspired so I think people who have really made a jump inspired me.

Comment [AB7]: Inspiration (Personal)

11. A: Is there also stuff in your everyday life that inspires you, do you like to travel for example, stuff that seem to trigger your emotions?

12. K: I like my kids and I like my family, I like to travel. It is actually quite basic. And that is also why I found out that I don't really need a big salary cause my individual needs are like I am the happiest when I am sitting on my couch with my two kids at home and my wife, and I don't need to be lying in a beach in Mauritius –it is nice but I don't have need it.

Comment [AB8]: Founder (Personal)

13. A: What motivates you as an individual?

14. K: A mix of many things, I would really like to create my own company but what I really want is to create something that has meaning. So I am kind of a development guy. I like to develop things and this time around is that I want to build from nothing to a company.

Comment [AB9]: Founder

15. A: And would you like to stick with Changemaker's Apparel? I mean if say in the future it becomes really really big? Or would you like to do something new?

16. K: I think what I like for example what Blake Mycoskie did now he is the chief shoe giver and I like that so I think over time I would to move to a kind of board position and be involved with press and charity-that would be cool so that would be my dream. We will see how it goes.

Comment [AB10]: Founder (position)

17. A: How do you make sure that those values are incorporated in the brand?

18. K: I think right now it is pretty easy because we are such a small team. It is me, Liney the designer and Daniel who starts today-the sales guy- so I think it is quite easy for me to sit in a very small office and say we have to dare-hope-do we have to give we have to inspire. Over time it might be difficult but I will do what I can to keep the values into everybody.

Comment [AB11]: Activities (Value Incorporation)

Coding Interview 1.1 – *Changemaker's Apparel* Follow up

Date:	02-03-2017
Company:	CHANGEMAKER'S APPAREL
Respondent	Morten Nielsen/Founder
Interviewers:	Alisa Buckel
Duration:	25:40

Coding Sample – 2 Pages

1. A: So we have a couple of questions more. The first one is in our previous interview you said that if you go into another market you always have to explain first, who you are as a brand and we'd like to know again how you would describe that, what does *Changemaker's Apparel*?
2. K: Yeah. *Changemaker's Apparel* is a... especially what we try to do is being as sustainable as possible. We are not perfect yet, but we are trying to work with material and production in a very sustainable way, we are trying to make apparel that fits and last for a long time and we are building a recycling and reuse system. And then we also try to give back to our charity programme. Basically, an apparel company where we try to combine both doing good in production, doing good beside making money, and also doing good in giving back to charity.
3. A: What does the brand offer to the consumer?
4. K: There are a lot of consumer studies, where are asked whether they would like to buy sustainable apparel and use sustainable apparel and lot of them say yes. I think what is great for people is that, **there is kind of a need to live more healthy**. I think that a lot of people are getting to know, that the body is also one big organ, so if you put something on your body that is not very sustainable and very chemical is also hurts your body.
5. A: What would you think does make the brand unique? Different from other?
6. K: That is a good question. I think one of the main things is - I don't want to sound narcissistic - but I think one of the reasons why get on TV a lot, is my back ground. I came from a CEO job in a more money and commercial oriented industry and I left that in order to built something of value. So the whole idea of the name of the company, of not becoming a man of success but becoming a man of value, I think that a lot of people see as very unique. You know, taking that job from the commercial industry and do something else. But then I think in the concept itself. There are a lot of companies doing something about organic apparel, being sustainable, long-live textile and there are also some companies doing something with charity, but I think we are the only ones doing combining all of this in one concept. I am not saying we are perfect or completetly unique, but I think we are one of the ones doing the most.
7. A: And regarding your presentation in the industry how important is brand authenticity for you as a brand?
8. K: It's **very important for us to be transparent and authentic**. Always say everything exactly as it is. I think that is also how people know us so far. And we are quite honest about what we do. I also give a lot of lectures, and I also tell where we are not doing that well. And I think it should include that people know, that we are not afraid of that as a brand. So I think being authentic is one of the most important things

Comment [AB12]: Activities

Comment [AB13]: Product

Comment [AB14]: Activities

Comment [AB15]: Communication (Consumer offer)

Comment [AB16]: Founder (Story/ Brand Uniqueness)

Comment [AB17]: Activities (Brand Uniqueness)

Comment [AB18]: Communication (Brand authenticity)

9. A: How do you in general want to be perceived by the consumer? How should the consumer perceive you as a brand?
10. K: I think they should have some kind of perception of *Changemaker's Apparel* as a company that is trying to do good. I think **sometimes your proposition is a bit too complex, when it comes to understand every part of it**. But I think as long as they **understand some parts of it** and then in general think, "well this company is trying to - well at least make minimal harm and to do things a little bit better" That's my vision.
11. A: How do you try to communicate that to the customer, that the customer gets the message what the brand is about?
12. K: I am trying something on Facebook and something on TV. **But to be honest I don't think that we are communicating enough**. It's a constant problem when you're a **start-up** company that you **don't have enough time**. So if I would really have the time I would like to every week tell a story about explaining what we are doing and how we are trying to change the world. So I think we are doing a lot but we don't have time to explain all parts of what we are doing.
13. A: Do you plan on elaborating a special strategy how to work more on that? How to find a better way to communicate it? Or will that just be something that comes over time?
14. K: Well, I keep hoping that I have more time at some point. I don't know. But when I started, half a year ago, I was the only employee, then I hired a designer person first, and he started and the process helps me a lot, because not I don't have to handle the production anymore. Then I hired a sales-guy, who just started Feb. 1st and right now I am actually driving to Sweden, to drive the sale. But from April 1st we decided that I am not going to sell any more. So I am hoping over time I get to go more and more back to the office, and work more and more in Marketing. I used to work as a Marketing Director for B&O, so it's not that I am a marketing expert, but I know quite a lot about marketing, **so I hope someday we have more time to work on a strategy and everything**.
15. A: In the future marketing how would you combine the product- the fashion product that you have - and the story that you want to tell, that is connected to the product?

Comment [AB19]: Vision

Comment [AB20]: Communication (Complexity)

Comment [AB21]: Communication (Challenge)

Comment [AB22]: Communication (Reasoning) Activities

Coding Interview 2 – Inside

Date:	08-02-2017
Company:	INSIDE
Respondent	Camilla Ribeiro/founder
Interviewer:	Alisa Buckel & Iliana Papargyri
Duration:	57:00

Coding Sample – 2 Pages

1. A: To start tell us a bit about your background, your education, your journey as an entrepreneur?
2. V: I have a background from CBS and I have specialized in social entrepreneurship and sustainable business. I did my minor in that. I went to business school to figure out how I could infiltrate capitalism so I can change it for the better. And I guess we met half way, so capitalism also infiltrated me. I was fed up with how the non-existing change of how NGOs have acted for the last 60 years. Not being able to move the needle and I guess lack of faith in intergovernmental organizations for actually coming together from all over the world and actually and really making the changes needed to alleviate poverty and climate change. So I was inspired by business and approached to create solutions and to react in a non-competitive world where you can partner. So not the classical old school Porter shit. So of course I fell in love with social entrepreneurship and particularly base of the pyramid business. We were inspired by that and studied all I could and I had some different jobs and when I was doing my masters I started my own company called Ruby Cup, a social business in Kenya, and moved there to try to do all the things that I read and of course it was much different than books. So the first strategies we did failed but then we succeeded. So I also realized I really like this way of working of creativity of building your own business and team and finding out how you work. Then I moved to Denmark and I was pregnant had the idea of *Inside* but I waited because I realized it would a bit before I could travel around women's prisons. Had some other jobs as a consultant for a big company and was very confirming that it is not the environment that I thrive in cause there are too many decision makers and policies and takes too long. I am better at capitalizing (?) things in early stages and so on. So in February last year I started thinking about *Inside* or what was "made in prison" at the time and then went to Peru and everything started.
3. A: And how did you get the idea for *Inside*? What inspired you? What triggered you to do exactly that and go to the fashion industry from Ruby cup to *Inside*?
4. V: I have actually been in the fashion industry for 10 years on off if anything from fitting model to sales agent to distribution to working at the fairs cause when I was broke I had a friend who had a distribution agency and I always promised him that I would never ***be in the fashion industry. It was definitely not for me. The business of selling, not the business of designing and creating, but the rest I thought of it was a tough business with a lot of risk for the agents for the shops. So it was actually funny that I ended up in fashion but I think it was actually obvious to me when I visited the women's prison in Kenya that they would all be sitting, sewing and knitting every day and I was just annoyed by the fact that these factories – basically- prisons or whatever and that reason that they were there was poverty. They committed some kind of crimes out of need and they were stuck there for so many years and they sat there for so many hours a day trying to do something which they could not sell cause they didn't have any design expertise and no access to market. I think it is definitely the dissatisfaction with looking at this world were we all have too little time and there are people with way too much time and it is about creating the right demand for the right products. So that is why it made sense to do fashion and I guess I believe a lot in creating aspirational solutions and again there has always been this contrast in the field of social products that tend to compromise in design it is getting better today but 10 years ago 5 years ago you would have a very almost

Comment [I23]: Social Responsibility

Comment [I24]: Founder

Comment [I25]: Founder

Comment [I26]: Fashion Industry - Money

Comment [I27]: Social Responsibility

Comment [I28]: Social Responsibility

religious way of trying to sell products that did social good to tell people from moral that they should support. Which for me is very un-dignifying for the person who makes it. If you really want to show dignity you need to create a want, a desire for that product and not compromise on the design. So we have very high ambitions of creating some of the best design also based on sometimes when there is a lack of resources where you can turn that up and say how you can turn it into a gift. And I think that this unused resource of women in prison its labour but it is also this country's was of accessing one of the most valuable materials. So that made sense to me and I got excited about it and there is a lot of things in fashion that I like it just the way of producing in fashion is completely fucked up. But there are a lot of things about identity creation and beauty that could do a lot of good things for people so I think the Industry needs a big makeover.

Comment [I29]: Sustainable fashion Industry

Comment [I30]: Goals/Aesthetics

Comment [I31]: Fashion Industry

5. A: When you decided to start *Inside* and you decided to go for that product, did you write a business plan? What tools and steps did you follow to turn the idea into action?

6. V: I worked on it in 2014 when I came back from Kenya. I did a concept note a 3 pager to write down what it was so I had something to send people, advisors that I could meet with and when I look back on that concept note it is exactly what it is today so I think it was very clear to me the key concept and the corner stones and there was also a lot of intuition. All the things that have been built on since then has been inspiration, also since the business model had to be completely different cause the concept was completely different it would never fit into seasons it would never fit into the classic way of selling into retail so I have been studying those pure online models and pre-order models. How can you alleviate risk how can you make a small bulks turn into higher margins. So the core concept has been set from the start. I did write a business plan at some point, it's a good process to do and then you put it in a drawer.

Comment [I32]: Founder

Comment [I33]: Sustainable Fashion Industry/Money

7. A: Who were the people you went to with the idea in 2014?

8. V: I have a good network. That is the great thing of being in the social business field, people really want to help and there some really smart intelligent people. It is also easy to come with half baked ideas, you don't need to have anything finished cause everybody knows that as soon as you are trying to put it into action everything is going to change. So the business plans is pretty useless until you start doing something it is just good to put your thoughts in place. So everything I knew from people in finance and business and retail but also production and logistics so the whole heavy side of it because you know. And then talking to people about brand- perception of brand that has been more of this phase since the start in 2016 and then getting the right people involved. The right team very important to know what you are good at what I am good at what I need other people to come in with and give that space.

Comment [I34]: Sustainable Fashion Industry

Comment [I35]: Sustainable Fashion Industry

Coding Interview 3 – Elise Andersen

Date:	12-02-2017
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Company:	ELISE ANDERSEN
Respondent	Elise Andersen/Founder & Anna Miller/ Business Developer
Interviewer:	Alisa Buckel & Iliana Papargyri
Duration:	01:20:48

Coding Sample – 2 Pages

1. C: That's why at the CBS presentation, when Elise was talking about the work she does in Thailand, it wasn't necessarily something that she said, "oh I am a social initiative, or I am doing social entrepreneurship, but in my head that was what she was doing.
2. L: I didn't even know that there was a kind of title for it. (Laughing)
3. I: Yeah, that was what we were discussing. We already had two other interviews. And we're gonna have about 5 more after this one. And one of the entrepreneurs actually talked about the product a lot and the other one basically not even mentioned it. Just a tiny bit at the end like, "oh now we are thinking of putting a lot of more effort into the collection. When you have a I mean...
4. L: Where does it come from? Where? ... Yeah exactly.
5. I: When you run a company and you don't talk about the product and you mainly talk about why you are doing it. And your still part of the fashion industry, maybe that's not the ideal way, because you need to sell right?
6. L-C: Ja.... Yeah (confirming)
7. C: It's funny, it's the same in some way for us, I mean Elise already has the product, the jewellery collection. And I mean there will be more collections to come. But now we are also looking at, how are we gonna kind of re-brand the company, so that it is more than just another jewellery company. I mean how is this different. And it's kind of, I think it's something that we are realizing. It kind of depends on whom we are speaking to, what we place more emphasis on. Like now we have been preparing to get some funding. And you know, we're trying to figure out the message on what's important to them. And we've come kind of back and forth, of "okay should we kind of leave the Thailand project aside and focus more on the jewellery cause that is kind of what they get and what they know. And people can understand: okay we wanna scale that up. And then if that works, of course those who are producing it in Thailand are happy, that they have more, you know, income and more you know... But for us.. you know.
8. L: But we are doing it actually because of the other half. Yeah that is....
9. A: Yeah seems kind of hard for brands to decide where you should set the focus.

Comment [I36]: Product/Communication/Challenges

Comment [I37]: Communication/Social Responsibility/Money/Challenges

Comment [I38]: Social Responsibility

10. L: I mean, it is.. what we have to find a way for now, is kind of a way to know, how we should kind of align it, but maybe we should talk about the jewellery through the story of ...of how we do things, from the vision, about the vision. Because it is actually about building communities and school in a new way. And there are a lot of things going on now, I realized. For me it was a gift to get to know about the social entrepreneurship and CBS and get to know, about you, on how you work, your generation. That's really uplifting. That you have some focus there and of course I was mostly alone, I have had employees up to 7 people even in Denmark. But it was always only about the money. You see. So the other thing, I was just running it myself because I had to in a way. So I was trying to spread my wings in a way.. until I kind of realized now I get to learn. I mean it was when we (pointing at C.) we started to work together after CBS and that was exactly what I needed, that we can built a healthy business, also healthy financial, but we had to make it value based- based, based on same values. Because every time some people have tried to get into my company, to support or to finance. They don't care about the social, eh, what do you call it. The social impact. They just go for a very old-fashioned style, in a way.
11. C: Yeah... (Confirming)
12. A: Was it like that since you started basically?
13. L: Yeah, in the beginning I didn't even tell anyone, about it, because it was like people didn't get it. But now. I mean it's nine years ago and at that time when I started it was actually because we..... I am a craftsman basically, and I love crafts. But I really also love design. And I think, this is where it merges, kind of. I think that is where the interesting part happens. And since I started my education in the early 80s, I just realized that we kind of forgot in our part of the world, to kind of.... (looking for a word)..to give it to the next generation. Because you learn from a master to an apprentice. This is how you teach in these fields. So there were so much more niches, when I was young. And it is gone now. It is gone, because the masters are dead and we forgot about bringing in new apprentice. So when I needed more production for my collection for some years ago. I couldn't find the people who want to do the repetitive work here, because everyone wants to be a designer. And that was what brought me to Thailand. It was not actually not to have a cheap production. It was actually the case that I could not find people here, to reproduce. Because you have to focus on being a craftsman, but you have to make one piece, and then another, and another and it's a production even it is handcrafted. So that's what brought me out there, and I realized it while living with them and I love to teach actually and this group of people they were very isolated at that time and I came by coincidence to an area where no one invests and this is a very isolated part of Thailand. And they are very poor and it's all small villages and there are 1000s of those and it's based on family clans. So there are about 100 to 200 people in each. And they live there. Because this is how they do. This is how they live there together. But they can't really get any work there. They only have small rice fields, but they cannot really live from it. So they to the big cities for stupid work. To be honest. Where a huge companies go and make big production, only to get cheap production. And what I realized when I was out there, is that they are so skilled with their hands still, but we forget they cannot brand themselves. And the whole world generation has only been focused on different kinds of production. But now something starts to change. Just during the past two or three years I think more interest has grown and even from schools and your generations are more interested in the hand-crafted and the stories behind. So we could help a lot.

Comment [I39]: Product/Social Responsibility/Communication

Comment [I40]: Social Responsibility/Money/Challenge

Comment [I41]: Goals/Money/Social Responsibility

Comment [I42]: Money/Social Responsibility/Challenges

Comment [I43]: Communication/Challenges

Comment [I44]: Founder/Social Responsibility

Comment [I45]: Fashion Industry/Money

Coding Interview 4 – *Manifesto*

Date:	16-02-2017
Company:	MANIFESTO
Respondent	Alexander Eriksson/Founder
Interviewer:	Iliana Papargyri
Duration:	38:20

Coding Sample – 2 Pages

1. I: So the first question is: Can you tell us a bit about you and your background, just like education, work or something that you think it's important to the journey of you creating *Manifesto*?
2. J: Okay, I started with business very early. So I have been buying and selling things since I was about 7. And then I started importing skateboards when I was about 14 and was very involved in skateboarding and that culture, from when I was 14. Also went to California to Hugoton? Beach just to skateboard when I was 15. So that was quite an experience. Living with the older skaters and going to parties with the punk bands and hard core bands and police coming and going to all the spots and so on. So that is probably the reason why I ended up in fashion, because I got a very good understanding of what street culture was. And go the right references. And in skateboarding, style is very central, so one thing kind a led to another. And after my skateboard business I was studying in London at European Business School, 4 years and the first term of my studies I started my first fashion company, with fashion accessories and I was selling almost all over Europe any time I had, like at the same time as my studies. So I was driving around Germany, selling to the best stores and sleeping in a car and take a few cities every day. And it was pretty mental for the first 10 years.
3. I: So you did that for 10 years?
4. J: Oh, well, on like building the business. But this company we started in 2006 (meaning *Manifesto*) and by then we been already in the business, you know, with my own brand, for 10 years (so he started in 1996).
5. I: Was the accessories brand also sustainable, did it have like a story behind it?
6. J: No, it was just trendy accessories, a brand called SHPO, which was just shoes, watches and sunglasses and things like that. Now it's, you can have a look at SHPO Brand.com and see those products. But in 2006 one of my customers started a retail concept called T-shirt store, which has designs curated from talented artists, illustrators and photographers from all over the world. And he wanted me to join the company and I did that in 2007 and we formed a limited company and on this opened more stores and ran that as a franchise, you know franchising our concept to other entrepreneurs for a few years and in 2012 we started to wholesale the product under the name, *MANIFESTO* but the product was always sustainable, with this clothing business. So we had a GOTS Certified Cotton T-shirts. But when we wholesaled in 2012. The idea was to create a sustainable

Comment [I46]: Founder/Personal Journey

Comment [I47]: Aesthetics/Product

lifestyle brand, basically a sustainable streetwear brand, because there were only sustainable fashion brands for babies, women, kids and outdoors but nothing for young men. And since sustainability is the future obviously we thought that was very strange. So we wanted to create that brand, basically. So that's what we are working on still.

Comment [I48]: Aesthetics/Product/Sustainable Fashion Industry

7. I: So the reason you decided to go with the sustainability is because it's the future, it's a trend or does it also represent a personal choice.

8. J: No, the reason is that it is the only option. I have been travelling and creating different brands. And doing the production in Far East, anywhere from China, India, Pakistan, Morocco and in big production cities. You can clearly see the destructive impact from the textile industry, because it requires a lot of their water to clean and to dye and different processes for treating the textile and all those hubs around the world are in cities, where there is a lot of water or a big river. And that water of those rivers are always completely polluted, extremely full of chemicals that are just poured straight into the rivers. So rivers like that they used to have a lot of wild life, a lot of birds and insects and otters but now it's just a dead polluted river, floating into the ocean and then even having an impact, of those, you know eco-systems of the ocean and it's the most disgraceful thing you can ever imagine. Just for cheap clothing basically. You know. So even now there are laws against this pollution, it's still not repaired and especially company's like H&M, Primark, they just move to the next country and now they move to Cambodia and Vietnam and now it's only...in Vietnam for example there is only 20% of the industrial areas have a sewage system. So it's a big disgrace. So.. Fast Fashion is the big enemy of the planet.

Comment [I49]: Activities/Sustainable Fashion Industry

Comment [I50]: Fashion Industry/Activities

9. I: And how do you see *Manifesto* changing that?

10. J: **We want to educate and communicate the need for sustainable fashion**, because textile and the fashion industry is the second biggest polluter on the planet for no reason at all. We have been producing cotton for 6000 years, organically, but since the 60s, that's when the big chemical companies like Monsanto and Cargylers they started up buying all the seed wholesalers and then they had made the GMO on the cotton seeds, so now most of the conventional cotton is formed with this GMO cotton seeds that they don't produce any new seeds, so you have to buy new seeds every season. You have to use their pesticide and their fertilizers to grow the cotton and that's their big business of those chemical companies. They want to sell chemicals. But that's not in the interest of anyone. A million farmers get cancer every year. A lot of them die, which is good for those chemical companies also, they make the pharmaceuticals, the drugs so they can also sell their cancer drugs to those poor people. And if you look at some of the poorest people on the planet, they are the cotton growers in Northern India and they have been that for a long time now. Many years, probably since the 80s. And it's a big problem, because they get indebted to companies like Monsanto. And they can not pay the bills anymore, so they risk losing the land and that's when they commit suicide. So they take a couple of pesticides and drink that and then their colleagues come to their wife and say "oh your husband died in the fields today, but it was a suicide. It happens there very often. It used to be called the 10 day rule, so 10 of those suicides every day, there around. But now it's one every 30 min. So it's a big scandal, both humanitarian and environmental. And the consumer doesn't know anything about devistace? That fast fashion has on the planet. And since we have been in the business for such a long time, we know about it. And we think it's absolutely disgraceful. And want

Comment [I51]: Goals/Social Responsibility

Comment [I52]: Fashion Industry/Activities/Money

to be a positive alternative, and at the same time we want to communicate the need for it.

Comment [I53]: Social Responsibility/Goals

Coding Interview 5 – *Respekt*

Date:	06-03-2017
Company:	RESPEKT
Respondent	Ida Tjellesen /Founder
Interviewer:	Alisa Buckel & Iliana Papargyri
Duration:	01:24:06

Coding Sample – 2 Pages

1. A: Tell us a bit about your background, your education and when you formerly worked?
2. K: I am still a student at my last year, textile and design school in Copenhagen. Before that I did a bachelor at CBS in Sociology and business and I also through that business, I went to Nepal to do some development studies –if that is what you want to call it- for this NGO, where I also worked there as a volunteer. I think this is kind of my background within this development field even though I don't like the term development, where it also opened up a lot of doors to where I am today. In terms of work experience I have always been very fashion addicted especially as a teen but I started sewing when I was 17-18 and I always this thing that I wanted to create stuff not just like follow stuff but create things and of course the more you learn the more you understand the world and the system is fucked up and you are trying to create solutions. You look at other's business models and you try to find your own path and your own way so I guess this is how it kinda developed. But I never had like an experience in a fashion house or a brand. I never had the interest to be honest.
3. A: Why would you say that the fashion industry is fucked up?
4. K: Well... if you look at the way they use resources and the way they exploit the people hmmm, in terms of facts we know that the fashion industry is among the most polluted industries in the world in terms of the use of water and also the way they use chemicals and the use of synthetic fibers made from oils and also synthetic fibers is plastic and that is also something that goes in the water and goes in the fishes spines and everything, and in the end we also eat it so it is just a cycle. And I don't think that fashion in itself is bad but it is just the way you use fashion in terms of mass production and this is where it sort of goes crazy. Because of the mass consumption of products that are not long lasting and as in the west we end up giving it away or throwing it away. And when you give it away to some NGO you may give it to other people who need it but in a lot of cases they just send it down to developing countries who have so much already so they don't really need it so it ends up at the

Comment [AB54]: Founder (Background)

Comment [AB55]: Traditional Fashion Industry

Comment [AB56]: Inspiration

Comment [AB57]: Founder (Background)

dumpsters. And the synthetic fibers they don't really decompose so it will just going to stay there so it is all these mindless- **I would say it is mindless** because the economy part of it is about making profit and for us it is about feeling insecure and we need these trends to feel well and to feel good to have some kind of identify when that is mixed with this business model of producing and consuming then that is when there is a problem. And this is not new. We know this. Everybody knows this. That is what I mean with the fashion industry as fucked up.

Comment [AB58]: Traditional Fashion Industry

5. A: Can you share the journey of the brand *Respekt* with us?

6. K: **I believe that everything is connected** so it is not like "This is where *Respekt* started", but at CBS I learned and understood the bad effects of the way we mass produce and mass consume today and then of course my experience in Nepal, but what really kicked *Respekt* was the earthquake back in April 25th 2015. Because I have a lot of friends and network before and one week before I was there for a track just walking in the mountains and I came back and this hit and it is just so emotional because you have friends and relations to the country and then instantly you think ok "Do my friends live? Did they survive?" and then when everyone is ok, and then you know the roads schools everything broke down so you could not get medicines or any kind of supplies and then they asked for help and my partner who is also one of my best friend was thinking how to get as much money as possible. And from my own experience I know that giving money can be difficult for people who have no attachment to a place. So we started with this jewelry collection. It is not that I only do this jewelry collection because my friend Beni who works in Nepal with women's rights and she has a business on the side making products out of recyclable materials, when I was down there she has this idea she said "Kina, we should make jewelry" cause I working for her business when I was down there and then I said ok I will try to do some designs and we can take it further. So when I got home I had with me this rubber that we used in our jewelry collection to experiment with some patterns and stuff so I was kind of in that process with jewelry so that is how that the idea came up well all the profit then went to another NGO that I was working for –mountain people- where I know that they would be very efficient with the way they use the money and they would go quite directly to the people. So that is sort of where it started since then we were able to get a lot of money and then we also had a lot of great response with the design and also the concept. So this is sort of when it was created. That we understood that this could actually be a business model. **My friend she took her master at CBS something called – business and development studies- and she also had an internship for the UN so she is also very into this development field so for us we just needed that little kick- which was quite a disastrous kick in a way and it came from something really bad, but it what made us take action and form there it just has been development.**

Comment [AB59]: Social Responsibility (Background: A "need" into a business

Comment [AB60]: Social Responsibility / Activities

Comment [AB61]: Founder (Brand Journey)

Comment [AB62]: Founder (Brand Journey)

7. A: How did it go from the jewelry to the fashion part?

8. K: **If course we are still developing it but that is not where my passion lies, it is textile that is what I am studying but there is a lot of factories handcrafts that you find in different places so I guess it was much easier for me cause Nepal it is so easy to- I have a relationship with the country that I wanted to have the production there and I feel I have control- in terms that I know where everything is made and I have a direct contact with everyone who is a part of it so in terms of fashion and also moral and my own values I am more comfortable in doing it this way so that is**

Comment [AB63]: Founder (Reasoning)

how I ended in fashion.

Comment [AB64]: Activities (Production)

9. A: How successful was the jewelry?

10. K: What we left in Nepal from that jewelry collection until now was about 25.000 so 15.000 went to mountain people and then 10.000 went to steps foundation Nepal which is also run by my friend Beni.

Comment [AB65]: Money

11. A: And this where you where working after CBS?

12. K: No during CBS. I took an internship. Instead of exchange I did an internship and then I have been constantly going back maybe twice a year doing tracks cause I love the mountains. That was before we started *Respekt*. So 25.000 has been given to projects that we think are worth it to support and then it has been another 20.000 that has been reinvested to make the collection we are doing now. **So at the moment we are not earning any money cause everything goes straight into the development of the business. But in years time the business needs to make money.** But you can also say that the jewelry financed the clothing collection.

Comment [AB66]: Founder (Personal Story)

Comment [AB67]: Money (Challenge)

13. A: What do you think would need to change to make money in the business?

14. K: **Our weakness is branding and marketing. It is neither our strength nor our interest.** We see that we need more people to be part of this to take it further but what we have been focusing first is to be able to sell so we already made a pre-order now of 250 pieces to 8 different shops in Norway. Because in order for us to take this further we need to know **and see if it actually sells.** Cause of course marketing has a lot to do with brand identity and if you are able to create to this ideal world where people feel attached and emotional but one things is of course image but another thing is if the design is something that people would like to wear. And for me that is important cause if it is not something people would like then is should not do these things cause then it just ends up consuming things that people don't want and then you are part of the waste or "Stuff".

Comment [AB68]: Money

Comment [AB69]: Activities (Marketing)

Comment [AB70]: Aesthetics
Social Responsibility
Product

Coding Interview 6 – Ethical Essentials

Date:	06-03-2017
Company:	ETHICAL ESSENTIALS
Respondent	Thomas Madsen /Founder
Interviewer:	Alisa Buckel

Duration:	49:26
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Coding Sample – 2 Pages

1. A: To start tell us a bit about you and your background?
2. C: [I originally started my first company while I was still studying at the business school in Aarhus. That was a creative agency that we started 8 years ago. And I have been working with that as a side project next to the studies. And then half way through my masters we got the opportunity to go full time with the company and we did and then we invested in *Ethical Essentials* which was led by me but I was leading the investment in the underwear company which was newly started, so it was actually more of a partnership than an investment so I led the partnership and became CEO of the company.]
3. A: So when you invested in *Ethical Essentials* was the company already founded?
4. C: Not really our partner Mads, who had the idea about the business, he had contact with manufactures but there was no product there was no website it was the very beginning and as we entered we changed everything. He kinda had the idea with the business but it wasn't very far with the execution.
5. A: What made you interested in investing and being part of that company?
6. C: So before we entered it was more of a subscription service but what [I found more interesting was the purpose driven fashion brand] so yeah that was the reason.
7. A: And is that purpose of the brand something you find interesting from a business perspective or also personally?
8. C: Both.
9. A: Could you explain for us what exactly is it that EE does and what it sells?
10. C: Right now we only sell underwear. It is a fashion company where we develop and manufacture and sell sustainable clothing so we look at the production process the usage phase and then the after consumption phase. And we are taking steps, we started with the production phase and we are slowly moving into the usage phase to see how we can optimize the usage of our products and then the next phase is to look at the after consumption phase how can we make a closed loop system so we can recycle all of our underwear products. So it is a project and a company that develops sustainable fashion products.
11. A: How important is the fact that it is a sustainable company to you?
12. C: [I felt intrigued by *Ethical Essentials* and I saw big potential and especially in the underwear market nothing has really happened in the last 100 years so I saw a bigger opportunity.]

Comment [AB71]: Founder (Background)

Comment [AB72]: Founder (Company Background)

Comment [AB73]: Founder (Story)

Comment [AB74]: Social Responsibility

Comment [AB75]: Activities

Comment [AB76]: Founder (Opinion on Business)

13. A: What would you say EE promises?

14. C: The bigger promise is that we will keep innovating on the products that we sell so that we will change even though we have underwear for men that we have sold thousands upon thousands of we will keep making it better and when we find new netter and more sustainable materials we will change to produce them in the better way. So our promise is constant optimization, to make our products even more sustainable.

Comment [AB77]: Product (Brand Promise + Company Promise)
Activities (Promise)
Vision

15. A: What is your role now in the company?

16. C: I am head of product development.

Comment [AB78]: Founder (Background)

17. A: Have you started as that when you came in the company.

18. C: We are 4 founders and we are involved in the business quite heavily so we do have our own titles but to be honest we have a million things to do. You kinda have to be an octopus when you are a start up. I have been overlooking at a lot of other stuff I was also head of the marketing department a year almost and still quite involved with the marketing.

Comment [AB79]: Founder (Job Description)

19. A: What would you say is your target audience?

20. C: We do only performance marketing so I can tell you what converts best for us. It is both male and female at the age of 22-35. Mainly living in big cities. We sell to mostly to Europe but we market mostly at the Scandinavian countries.

Comment [AB80]: Activity

Comment [AB81]: Communication (Target Audience)

21. A: How do you address your audience?

22. C: We talk a lot about our values cause that is what is driving our brand and what gets people interested. So about sustainability and how by buying our products they can make the sustainable choice by using organic cotton instead of the other. So we have a lot of **unique selling points**. Also about production how the media is talking about us, and what our customers are saying.

Comment [AB82]: Communication

Comment [AB83]: Communication
Product (Values + Company Values)
Activities

23. A: How would you describe EE values?

24. C: We look for sustainable production and organic product and easy purchase. So these are the 3 core values that we use.

Comment [AB84]: Activities (Values)
Product (Values)

Coding Interview 7 – Women in Knit

Date:	13-03-2017
Company:	WOMEN IN KNIT
Respondent	Ingrid Gustafsdottir/Founder

Interviewer:	Iljana Papargyri
Duration:	01:09:41

Coding Sample – 2 Pages

1. I: We have prepared an interview guide so I am just going to go through it and if you have any questions please just let me know or ask me.
2. G: Of course
3. I: So the first question is if you can tell us a bit about you and your background both in terms of you as a person but also in the business.
4. G: Yeah... I am Ingrid Gústafsdóttir, we are two Ingrid's in the company the other Ingrid is the designer and I am the business part of the company. I have a master's degree in political science and before *Women in Knit* I had a completely different career. I was working as a EU expert. Worked a lot in Eastern Europe and in the Middle East. I was stationed in the Middle East, in Jordan for half a year and I was travelling a lot in Eastern Europe in those years before they entered the EU. So basically that was my... I had a background in international politics before.
5. I: How come you decided to go into business in fashion and drop working for EU?
6. G: I always had both a passion for fashion and also for entrepreneurship. And I always had a dream of having my own company but working with fashion it was very important to me that we umm. I would never be the one making cheap t-shirts in China or something. It had to be a deeper meaning with it and that is why we started our company based on the fact that there were some natural resources on the Faroe Islands that were not used properly, the wool was burned and the skins were destroyed at the time we started and we found we had to do something about it. It was a wake up call for us that we had to do something about it. We started the company we wanted to take care of the resources and as we started, we started having knitters on the Faroe Islands, friends and family and of course you treat them properly not only because you know them but because it is natural for you and that is why, when we expanded the company we also wanted to work on the same way and we wanted to know the faces of all the knitters we have and to give them a proper salary and that we could always be able to see them into their eyes and be proud of what we are doing with them.
7. I: Yeah. Could you share a bit more the journey of the brand? I imagine you quit your job and then how did all come to be?
8. G: We started already in 2000 when I contacted the other Ingrid and said shouldn't we do something about this together? And I was first of all thinking about the lambskins as a starting point we tried different tanneries and we found this tannery in Iceland that could make really good quality for us and she said "Omg we can even make clothes out of it", for many many years no one made clothing out of the Faroese lambskins and then we bought an old industrial sewing machine and installed it in the basement of the other Ingrid's house and she was sewing down there and we were selling it locally and it went really well. We did it for a couple of years, I still had my job she also had a job at

Comment [185]: Founder/Personal Journey

Comment [186]: Founder/Goals

Comment [187]: Social Responsibility/Activities

the Faroe island she had nothing to do with the design because it was very difficult- or there was no designer company so she was working at a kindergarten. After a couple of years we decided to try to apply for a fashion fair in Copenhagen for (cannot make out what she says...). And that point when we started there she took some of her hand-knitted sweaters she had made for her mentor in Copenhagen and what we found at that fair was that it was especially the hand-knit more than then lambskin that people found interesting and also that it was the Japanese customer that found our product interesting. So those two pieces of information I guess they have been deciding in the way of the company and helped in what we focus on and Japan is still a market we really would like to do more.

Comment [188]: Activities/Product/Sustainable Fashion Industry

9. I: I am not surprised that Japan was interested. And by the way when we also saw the clothes at Revolver festival- cause my mother also knits- I fell in love with your products. They are so beautiful and they have this eerie feeling- looks like they come from a dream or a fairytale but kind of dark. I love them. Can you tell me who works in the company at the moment? How many people are you?

10. G: We are working 7 people in the company and we have the knitters. Knitters are not fully employed they are freelancer so we have about 30 on the Faroe Islands and the same amount in Jordan and Peru.

Comment [189]: Activities

11. I: And it's you and the other Ingrid who make all the business decisions?

12. G: Yeah she is making the creative decisions she is making the collections and she has the final word in everything that has to do with the creative work. And when we are talking about strategy and economy and so on and doing agreements with agencies and providers and different kind of providers for wool and yeah I am doing all the business part and she is doing the creative part.

Comment [190]: Activities/Role in the company

13. I: And your official role in the company is it CEO or is it something else?

14. G: Yeah you can call it CEO. We sometimes call it commercial director but call us whatever. CEO or Commercial Director.

Comment [191]: Activities/ Role in the company

15. I: Could you tell me what channels do you use to sell your products?

16. G: We have a retail shop on the Faroe Islands. That is a very important part of our business and we had pop up shops also. Twice in Norway and twice in London and once in Copenhagen and then we are selling wholesale as well. So yeah we have the e-commerce. So we have retail, e-tail and wholesale.

Comment [192]: Communication/Activities

**“THE GOLDEN QUOTES”
(relevant extracts from collected material)**

Use of Colour:

INDUSTRY

ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY

PRODUCT

PRODUCTION

COMMUNICATION

#1 *Changemaker’s Apparel*

- I think the personal values that I took into this company from the beginning I created seven values that I wanted to lead with in this company and these are Hope-Dare-Discover-Achieve-Enjoy-Give-Inspire. #6
- There are some people who say we should only be in sustainable stores but if I am only in those stores I only hit the people who are already sustainable. I want to go to the fashion stores to hit the people who are less or not sustainable to change them. #24
- : I think it has to be a mix. It can’t just be that I say it is organic and people buy it. The brand has to be nice from the beginning. We still think about the P’s in marketing like “product-pricing-promotion-packaging” . #26
- people see a product like this, then they will take a look at it and say “ ok I like this shirt, the pricing is nice, the product is nice”, and then they will start reading and see “oh it is also sustainable, and organic” and then I think overtime you can change or influence something like this. #26
- I think this is kind of my dream also that we get a lot of marketing attention for what we are doing and we can never fool ourselves and say marketing is enough or we are an organic brand so this is enough. We have to make sure that our products are always competitive and can sell themselves. #28
- and we get a lot for free (marketing) because we have the philosophy that we do, and if we were just a “normal” “boring” brand with “cheap ass” t-shirts we would not get any of this. #28
- and in the whole point of giving back I think we are one of the best cause we have high ambitions #30
- Our philosophy is to be extremely open about it and everything is laid on the table so everybody can see what we are doing and if someone says we are not doing something the right way, we listen and we react quite fast to it. #32
- we might figure out that it is cheaper to just print the code somewhere else. This is a change that could happen but the main principles would remain. It has to be organic sustainable, made for reuse and something where we give back! #38
- . But like I said before it is also difficult because when I meet very fashionable people out here like 21 year old guys you know they don’t have people asking for organic apparel so when they come to by booth they think the apparel is quite cool but they don’t have anybody asking for it. So it is really

a sales process right now. We had a great start but it is not easy it is really a hard work and because it is a new philosophy you need to get people on board. #40

- In the beginning my vision was to create a fun and fast company that matters. My personal vision was to create a cool place to work and I had to be able to make fast decisions. #43
- that in 5 years we will be a very profitable company which means we will have resources and money to do a lot of charitable things so that is one of the first things. And now we started with organic cotton for our collection but we are also thinking to become more sustainable so more tinsel-bamboo and hemp #45
- It is not my vision to make the world's biggest company but a niche company. So I would like to have to have 20 markets on board and sell for around 5.000.000 kr per market. Which is not a lot but I want to be a niche player in a lot of different markets #47
- The normal answer would be to name “*Manifesto*” and “Knowledge Cotton Apparel;” but I think the main challenge for me is to get into a fashion store so basically to kick some of the other kind of “normal” brands out of the store and have a sustainable brand. So I would much rather cooperate with some of the other sustainable brands and then try to compete with the fast fashion brands. So I don't have any specific brands to say they are my competitor but it is more my philosophy that “the new way of doing fashion vs. the old way of doing fashion”. #66
- enough and we do a lot of lectures at business schools. We talk a lot about the values but there is no structure right now. That will come later on. #70
- My buying price is a lot higher than anybody else in this fair cause I have so many principles and you see buyers who are more ethical so I think that is the main thing that you have stores that don't know yet that consumers are looking for it cause they are not asking since the store does not have it. The whole catch 22 there is the whole problem. #78
- So it is taking me longer to get to the market than for a lot of other people. It takes a lot of capital to get there. #80
- I think in the ethical fashion industry we stay open and pretty much help each other, which is cool! #86
- It takes a while to explain. For a store to communicate it to their customers it is if I have the option to go to a morning meeting in the store and explain the story to everyone cause then it is easier to remember *Changemaker's Apparel* and what does it stand for and this tag and the heart and the dollar sign, just remember the 4 key things then it is fine #88
- But I also have online stores where they sell *Changemaker's Apparel* and it is quite difficult because there is no one to tell the story. #88
- But the concept is not enough you also have to have very strong collections. #88
- Also building a brand for me is like building a brick house so every time you get a new customer and new press you get one brick that it all adds up and makes the house #90

#1.2. *Changemaker's Apparel* – Follow up

- an apparel company where we try to combine both doing good in production, doing good beside making money, and also doing good in giving back to charity #2
- I think one of the main things is - I don't want to sound narcissistic - but I think one of the reasons why get on TV a lot, is my background. I came from a CEO job in a more money and commercial oriented industry and I left that in order to built something of value. So the whole idea of the name of the company, of not becoming a man of success but becoming a man of value, I think that a lot of

people see as very unique. You know, taking that job from the commercial industry and do something else #6

- I think in the concept itself. There are a lot of companies doing something about organic apparel, being sustainable, long-live textile and there are also some companies doing something with charity, but I think we are the only ones combining all of this in one concept. I am not saying we are perfect or completely unique, but I think we are one of the ones doing the most. #6
- It's very important for us to be transparent and authentic. Always say everything exactly as it is. I think that is also how people know us so far. And we are quite honest about what we do. #8
- So I think being authentic is one of the most important things #8
- *CHANGEMAKER'S APPAREL* as a company that is trying to do good. I think sometimes our proposition is a bit too complex, when it comes to understand every part of it. But I think as long as they understand some parts of it #10
- But to be honest I don't think that we are communicating enough. So if I would really have the time I would like to every week tell a story about explaining what we are doing and how we are trying to change the world. So I think we are doing a lot but we don't have time to explain all parts of what we are doing #12
- I think it is very important to communicate in general that we want to be very sustainable but we also want to be fashion. And I think it is also a balance and it is very hard to find, whether we should be completely..... organic or whether we should be - and also when we develop our collection it's the same. #16
- We need to have some kind of fashion trend in it, but we also want to create long term items that lasts for a long time, that we can't go 100% with the trend. #16
- we talk really a lot about the principles we have of a long term life-time product, that is sustainable and then of course we also talk about our styles and we also show that we actually also follow a trend, and are not outdated, just because we are not part of a very trend driven approach #16
- We tried to put in items, we tried to show that we are not totally boring we also kind of know what is going on. #16
- I think most persons will kind of like the company, which does not mean that they would buy anything but mostly they would think that it's kind of an interesting brand. #19
- But some of the stores that I talk to, they are afraid that they won't be able to explain the story to consumers. So it is a little bit a conflict #19
- selling online to people - it's a little bit easier on my webpage to tell the story, because I would eventually place a video there and people could be forced to see kind of what the company is about #21
- the biggest problem for me right now is stores. Getting into stores and make people buy the product in the stores. They have to know the story, and it's hard to tell the story. #21
- So I tried to do it in terms of thinking of what is the problem out there and how can create a product that is different in a market. I did some analysis but it is mainly coming from within, I would say. #25
- *Changemaker's Apparel* is a new sustainable business, that is kind of going for the blue ocean in the market of sustainable apparel. It aims to become the most sustainable brand in the market. And at the position, that I don't think that this is something that is yet in the market. The way we want to try to earn money is by making products that are more or less in a negotiable price range. Create a cool brand that can be in some of the nicest stores #33 (pitching exercise-stakeholders)
- I would probably say that a lot of studies show that consumers would like to have more organic apparel. That 80% would prefer buying sustainable and they would pay even up to 20% more money

for it. So the stores might not have people ask for organic apparel but it is basically because people don't know they can ask yet. Because they don't know where to look for it. So the stores should go more into the organic direction because it's going to go that way. Just like supermarkets. And whether *Changemaker's Apparel* is the right choice for them or not that is something else. But *CHANGEMAKER'S APPAREL* offers a unique mix of organic materials and materials that are recyclable, so a quite ambitious giving back principle. #35 (pitching exercise- shop owner)

- With *CHANGEMAKER'S APPAREL* we try to do things a little bit better, we try to use organic materials, we try to use good production, we try to create styles that last for a long time. We make these cool new codes, so people can resell and reuse them. And also the tracking tool that you can use, you can show in which year it was made. In order to say, wow this is actually from the first collection. And we also engage very much into charity. So we believe people should start going in a more organic, sustainable direction in order to save the world, whether they pick *Changemaker's Apparel* or not that's up to them. But they should start looking in that direction. #37 (pitching exercise-consumer)
- Well, *Changemaker's Apparel* is a Nordic, minimalistic brand and we try to operate in very much kind of black and white, the way we use colours in everything we do. We try to kind of have a clean and simple look and we try to also add humour and kind of authentic and transparent look to everything #41 (pitching exercise-branding agency)

#2 Inside

- it is about creating the right demand for the right products. So that is why it made sense to do fashion and I guess I believe a lot in creating aspirational solutions #4
- there has always been this contrast in the field of social products that tend to compromise in design it is getting better today but 10 years ago 5 years ago you would have a very almost religious way of trying to sell products that did social good to tell people from moral that they should support. Which for me is very un-dignifying for the person who makes it. If you really want to show dignity you need to create a want, a desire for that product and not compromise on the design. #4
- the way of producing in fashion is completely fucked up. But there are a lot of things about identity creation and beauty that could do a lot of good things for people so I think the Industry needs a big makeover. #4
- the business model had to be completely different because the concept was completely different it would never fit into seasons it would never fit into the classic way of selling into retail so I have been studying those pure online models and pre-order models. How can you alleviate risk how can you make a small bulks turn into higher margins. #6
- It is a business. *Inside* is a business we have a goal of employing women in prison but they are producers so for us of course there is a social purpose but at the end of the day it is business we need to make products and we need to sell. #10
- The purpose is obviously to create meaningful jobs for women in prison who are currently not employed with good salaries so that we can hopefully alleviate poverty for them and their families. That is the main purpose. But there is a sub-purpose as well which is to do that through fashion through clothes that inspire in a world of textile production that is extremely harmful to the environment and we can prove that it can be done in a better way without in any way compromising the coolness and the sexiness of fashion. #12
- You design from the limitations that you have and that becomes the strength of the production and the design. #14

- So you have the material you have the possibility of the machine and then you have the limitation or the consideration that it needs to be really really beautiful in it's expression let the material live and speak and it should not be very difficult in the construction because it is going to be hard for us to succeed and for the women to succeed. #14
- good quality materials but fairly simple construction and shapes. What is important about the design is that it is designed to last, meaning that we don't do any season so none of our styles will go out of style in 6 months or later. And saying okay, "sorry now it's autumn/fall, now we cancel this sweater". So we think it very differently, that it's not seasonal hype. It's something that the sweater needs to look very cool also in a year and half. How can we produce product that are long-lasting #14
- I have never done just NGO work where you don't think how to create a sustainable business. I believe that, and that is why I guess capitalism infiltrated me a little bit as well, that the sexiness of showing that you can create a successful business also on the bottom line by trying to solve some of society's biggest challenges. I think that is interesting for the future of business for the future of NGO's as well #16
- I think it is a sparking and inspiring light that you design your way to better solutions and I hate moralistic approaches. It does not work for me when people say take a shorter shower to save water I don't believe in being a different person and thinking differently and that human nature can be changed by morale that is also why I dislike the concept of corporate responsibility. I believe in motivation and inspiration and aspiration, so design me a shower that reuses the water if it exists let's get it on the market that looks great and it is cheaper. So let's just design better solutions that are inspiring instead of trying to change human nature. #18
- . It is Very important for us not to be perceived as a social label but as a fashion label #20
- success for us is to get a lot of customers who don't necessarily support amnesty international and preaching for the choir but to get people on board who like beautiful clothes #20
- I think it very difficult to try and communicate both those things at once to the same person #20
- communicate it the way that we believe is a fashion communication but still being extremely transparent about our messaging. But a key visual touch point for us has been is fashion and aspiration and want and desire #20
- We have talked a lot about what we want people to understand and for example I would never say that our brand values is socially responsibility. But it is. It is inherent in the DNA but I would never say that as a brand value #22
- but I would never say social responsibility cause I don't think it is appealing for the customer and that it communicates what we want to say. #24
- It is more of a feeling of who we are and definitively also a feeling of who we do not want to be. We do not want to be the socially responsible fashion brand that really helps these poor women that are suffering. #24
- I am really happy that this company does really good for the planet that does not make me want to buy the product. There are a lot of fashion products that on paper are doing great things. That is fantastic but they don't appeal to me as a customer. #26
- I would rather that people would not even know that it was made in prison. I mean if I had to choose (...)The shirt and the product need to speak for itself. The brand needs to speak for itself . That is very important. #30
- I think NGOs and people who really sometimes believe on their social mission tend to forget that. And say that if the can communicate how important their platform is and how many people are suffering and the planet is dying that the cause will convince people to buy. But the cause is going to convince people to care but it does not mean that you will want the product #32

- For example you have fashion labels that sell clothes and a percentage of the sales goes to a school in Wanda. For me that has nothing to do with each other. I wouldn't call that a social business, in my opinion. For me when you have something that sells a product or provides a service and by doing that by every transaction you create more social good then it is completely ingrained and 100% integrated and that means that every time you are trying to improve your business you work on improving the world. So that is ethical and that is why it does not apply to my framework to try and talk about ethical standards and then business standards cause they are completely aligned. #38
- . So that is business but it also has the social impact perspective whereas a classic business would be like yeah we employ them but why would spend extra energy in doing this extra thing?! So there is of course a leg to it but the better we do that the better they produce the better we can communicate their success stories the better we can sell. #38
- The classic stuff whether or not they are paying customers you still need to create attractive solutions for the people you are trying to serve. So to sum up the basic understanding of marketing and branding within the social field was missing. The thought that when you went into the social field you thought you did not need the classic perception of creating a want #40
- There is also not a very good tradition for making nice detailed sewing. So they are really good at making baskets, like more ethical stuff, which I didn't believe that this is the starting point for the brand to begin with, especially to avoid falling into the stereotypes of social fashion, because it needs to be cool on a really different level. So the journey for me was to find the best raw materials in the world. #46
- But since it is very slow fashion - they can produce 1,5 sweaters a day, per machine, per woman. They also have very short working hours every day. So it's more like, right now we have much more demand than we can produce. So for us it is more like, "in one month, how many sweaters can they make of this type of sweaters?" #56
- We can maximum make 50 of those a month. So it's going to be more exclusive more expensive. #56
- So it's not the goal to just have more prisons. It's the goal to have more women. #58
- I think it's a difficult conversation because I think there is definitely a trade-off between buying an ACNE sweater or buying a *Inside* sweater for a customer, right? I mean that is in the same price class also. So it's not like there is no competition. But it's definitely more those types of brands, the brands that are cool that are in that price league. Young professional women, who can afford to spend 2500 DKK on a sweater, right? #62
- So if you position your brand in line with other brand that might actually be something that also make you want to buy our clothes. #62
- And I don't think it's because people just want the yellow sweater, I don't know, I think it's because they heard about *Inside* it sounds cool, they want to be part of that universe. So I think brand building is super important. More than focusing on one product. And I think that is the same for those labels, I don't think that it is one sweater from ACNE, I think people buy ACNE because they want something from ACNE and then they find something in the universe. It's like "okay then I am kind of creative, but also a little bit edgy but still normal.. #64
- I think it's appeals a lot to exactly that type of customer, who has been fed up with either you kinda feel guilty but we don't want to know where your clothes is made but you like how it looks. Or you just don't ask because you can't be bothered, but also you feel fed up with a social story being pushed on your throat. And it just looks like a social project and not like a design product. So I think there is an audience how is like, it's cool that they are doing something great and it just looks fabulous. #66
- it both is equally important. But equally important for me. But it's not 50/50% in every communication platform #68

- but the purchasing driver is the brand. You need to want to be part of that, you need to say "I really want to look like that girl and buy that sweater, for example" #70
- . But I think it's all about the key objective here is of course to the more we sell the more good we do. It's not to teach people that they should change their cognitive brains about what motivates them. That's back to not being an angry feminist. I don't wanna be an angry feminist. #72
- So of course we want to be part of a solution to a new way of doing fashion, very important. And completely disrupt some parts of the systems and the norms and you know everything is built up in a traditional corporate language or this and this. Like, what is fashion? what is social? There are so many dichotomies?? Apparently. But I think they way to do that is - do it. And if that works, then it will speak for itself, then it means that it will get a lot of customers, who care about our brand #78
- So I don't think the brand is so important and the way you built it, but it's going to show whether you're actually influence people, depending on how many customers you get. And in that sense, it's a classic business. #78
- Okay, *Inside* is a social business, that manufactures in women's prisons. We make exclusive clothes, made in 100% natural materials. We have a disruptive business model in the sense of we have no stock and sell exclusively online. This means that we have less risk, cause we manage our production, we never go on sale. We reduce the retail margin by only selling online, which means that we can compete in the luxury market without the retail/resale market. We gonna go within the first 3 years we are going to be in 3 different countries. We're going to be selling from 50 – to 250 units a month, that's our breakeven point, we're expecting to reach that within a month, a year and a half. #85 (pitching exercise-stakeholders)
- *Inside* is a fashion brand, we have a social impact, we manufacture in women's prisons and we are competing in the market where it's very important that we use our story to be different but at the same time use it as a cool edge. And that we want to sell to customers who think that our products are great no matter of the story. #87 (pitching exercise-branding agency)
- You should buy a *Inside* sweater because we use 100% natural materials, so you get extremely good quality, everything is hand-made, each sweater is unique. And behind each sweater you know the name of the woman who made it, an inmate in prison. The first collection is made in Peru, where we work in 100% baby alpaca. The reason why we do this is because, then women can make an income while they are in the prison, they can get more skills and send their children to school and have a viable way to create an income when they are out of prison. #89 (pitching exercise-consumer)

#3 Elise Andersen

- C: That's why at the CBS presentation, when Elise was talking about the work she does in Thailand, it wasn't necessarily something that she said, "oh I am a social initiative, or I am doing social entrepreneurship, but in my head that was what she was doing.#1-2. L: I didn't even know that there was a kind of title for it. (Laughing)
- C: But now we are also looking at, how are we gonna kind of re-brand the company, so that it is more than just another jewellery company. I mean how is this **different**. And it's kind of, I think it's something that we are realizing. It kind of depends on whom we are speaking to, what we place more emphasis on. Like now we have been preparing to get some funding. And you know, we're trying to figure out the message on what's important to them. And we've come kind of back and forth, of "okay should we kind of leave the Thailand project aside and focus more on the jewellery cause that is kind of what they get and what they know. And people can understand: okay we wanna

scale that up. And then if that works, of course those who are producing it in Thailand are happy, that they have more, you know, income and more you know...But for us.. you know. L: But we are doing it actually because of the other half #7

- L: I mean, it is.. what we have to find a way for now, is kind of a way to know, how we should kind of align it #10
- L: That's really uplifting. That you have some focus there and of course I was mostly alone, I have had employees up to 7 people even in Denmark. But it was always only about the money. #10
- L: We started to work together after CBS and that was exactly what I needed, that we can build a healthy business, also healthy financial, but we had to make it value based- based, based on same values. Because every time some people have tried to get into my company, to support or to finance. They don't care about the social, ehm, what do you call it. The social impact. They just go for a very old-fashioned style, in a way.#10
- Yeah, in the beginning I didn't even tell anyone, about it, because it was like people didn't get it..... I am a craftsman basically #13
- The studio is run by one of the woman, and I send out the materials, and they know the design, we send books out for that and order and they send it back and I finish it here. So we will also build a workshop here, when we grow. Someone will do the end work. And even we will have work that is only done in Denmark. #28
- So there is the one-off for the kind of private clients and then there would be the more kind of design – mainstream collection. So there is... because both... because we looked at it and the figure, both are equally as important financially, while they are both equally popular. #31
- C: It's quite, some people just say it's quite timeless. I mean it's quite an investment, I mean you keep it forever. I mean there is quite an expiration date on clothes and only so many times you can wear them. It may go in and out of fashion. I mean some people's maybe. #35
- L: It's kind of a relationship. Jewellery is a lot...I mean you have the fashion jewellery, which is more what's the style is right now and then there is more the design jewellery. The clients are very loyal and you often have families in all generations. #36
- L: But there is a potential in that, we haven't really used. And we know about that.#41
- L: I started it and Anna will work on that also, that is a new website. And we will really invest in that, to kind of kind of make the whole universe. [I1] The one right now is not reflecting the whole thing, it is more just like a visit card. And we will make a very good web shop there but also sharing knowledge more like how to make it and what is the inspiration behind and what is the philosophy. #41
- C: It's kind of the **collaboration process in Thailand. So it's kind of how to kind of separate the commercial side and then there is the kind of job creation in rural villages.....** we want to push

more forward, to bring Elise , seeing as it is, it is her story, her brand, her project and knowledge to really pull that out and have her as a figure. Someone you can learn from, someone you can be inspired by #48

- Share experience and adventures #49
- **C: ...for the moment we will be the jewellery and that's almost the excuse to do something good in rural areas. #50**
- Giving artisans who wouldn't have anything to do, training. Elise gave them training, she trained them as goldsmiths, she gave them the tools and the training and created that as part of the *Elise Andersen* value chain...Can the workshop be used as a place for artists in residence... L: For design schools. #50-51
- **And it is almost too much and too confusing for people to kind of grasp in their heads: Okay, but you're making jewellery? Why are we talking about a kindergarden.#52**
- [input about confusion of some people]...Oh Elise , please don't spread yourself too much. You know..You have a lot of good ideas, but please don't think about it.... So it's a little. I don't talk so much about it. #54
- **I mean we met with some other social entrepreneurs, who totally get it.#55**
- **[on her business] L: So it will all be together. I don't want to carry it on two lines#56**
- we are actually looking at Elise 's work now to find investment first, before approaching other partners. **And it's then that we have to really emphasize the more traditional approach, with like a sprinkling of the nice social side. Because it's what they understand and it makes it less risky of an investment because everyone understands, you know, PANDORA, or something like that. It's like "okay yeah I get it, I understand that industry" that business. Where else, I think, it's social enterprises are such a new concept and people just confuse it with "oh that's just a non-profit, right? That's just their charity". There is no money in that. You know I am not doing this for the good of my health, I wanna make money from my investment. #59**
- L: I mean with Anna it came after the work with CBS last summer. And that was the best. **That was eye opening for me to realize, that there is kind of a definition on this.** And that to me the meeting was very good as well. And before I tried to talk with already organized companies, who are not that strong in design but very strong in business. But we could never meet, because they actually didn't get the importance about design. They only focused on money. #66
- ...when they buy a piece of jewellery, they kind of know they buy a piece of this whole story. It's not a story that came after. It's like they know that they are supporting something new, buying a piece of a new world sort of. #69
- Yeah, I think it's important to know the back story about how this was made, with both Thailand....**how, Elise works and how special that is, compared to how other jewellerys are made.** So if you buy something, it may not necessarily be hand-crafted or hand-made, but maybe have a unique design, but then **it's just mass produced.** Whereas this is more **personal** it's more

- artistic and I think I would, when working with the brand and the communication, I want people to be able to appreciate, that what they are buying is special and that it is made by someone who values very good design, someone who is gifted with working with this materials, with stones, **that it is very value driven. Like there are principles here, like we are only working with the highest quality materials**, you know we are creating – not even a **good working conditions** - like really really – ahm, it's **hard to talk about Thailand without sounding demeaning** in a way. I think that's hard when you are dealing with developing countries, with sounding patronizing. But like **Elise pays them really good wages**. They get holidays. They are supported. So it's more than just creating a good working environment, it's more about creating something that they feel proud to work for and that honours their skills and their crafts. So to be able to try and for people to understand that they buy something that they can wear in good conscience, that they can understand exactly where it traces back to. And also the fact that for example this gold, is not taken from the ground, it's **recycled gold**. So this issues of ethical production, sustainability, supporting handcraft. #70
- L: **It's holistic in a way. It's like the whole thing. But also the craftsmanship is of high quality. So it lasts long. So even if you buy a piece of silver, you don't have to buy another one next year again.**#71
 - [vision]To grow a community#75;
 - [vision] To have a lot of people who is wearing this part of jewellery. Is kind of supporting the whole thing.So in the very end, we want to have an impact on students, from different universities and design schools.#78
 - **I think as a brand, she is perceived as a very strong jewellery designer. I don't think there is much recognition or emphasis as a social entrepreneur or as a maybe a designer**#89
 - The jewellery industry in Denmark is very old-fashioned. And he contacted me and said **“no Elise , not you” You are not on the list**. So I am not belonging to fashion designers in a way#90
 - Elise has the story and such rich stories and such strong collections. But new things will come along. So we need, what we've been looking at for the website, is having someone, who is really strong in creating a strong visual identity, and like company concept. Because it is something really difficult, when you're in it to be able to step out of your brand and say okay, this is us. It's something that you just know, oh that's really how we work.#93
 - [it's communication + identity] [explaining the struggle] If you explain **you brand identity or the core** to a web developer what do you say then?: L: Laughing ... Yes that's hard. We have to start with the values about us. I mean what it means. It is kind of holistic, that everything from the... I mean in the jewellery making process even from materials from the ground to the table and for me it's really important to think about the client in the end. Because it has to work out on the body. So all processes are equal to me. And I like that we actually take care of all processes. That's one point that we talk about. **We just had this presentation**. But then the whole vision behind the production, the Thailand project and the people is important as well. C: Because then it is about honouring traditional handcraft but making it more contemporary, with contemporary design. So how to marry these two things together. To kind of... like there is a part of a cultural heritage and art and history

and bringing that back #97-99 → **C: What is the hard thing is to get it all down, in one sentence.#101**

- **You know.. and that's really hard, when people ask you, "so what is your core?" I mean there are some companies that then just say, we do this and this and this. And we are like,hm....** But it's actually a process of kind of development. Right now it is kind, the final line is still up here and we kind of realize like "oh yeah that's important, and that's important and that" and hopefully with the help of this web site development or it's more of a concept company for a design concept. Hopefully they will help trim it down, word by word working with them together and getting it nice and neat and sharp and simple, because I think that's really important.#103 → Because it was actually also hard to find someone who understood. #106
- **C: Yeah it's kinda like an aspiration. Kinda like the VIPP bin or the Bang & Olafson. So this is a type of experience and kind of life style, people want to be part of.**
- **L: So it's not just fashion. It's more than that.#109-10**
- Because I was always between two sides. I was not very good at focusing on making money, because I thought it was either or. Because either I am a business or I am non-profit and I can't take money out of it and then I always took a very little payment for myself and it was actually sometimes too hard in a way. And now I think it's much more balanced in a way and more realistic, because it is the money that will make it possible for us to make something good. So we want a healthy business. #114
- But if we start saying this is made in a particular way by a particular disadvantaged group that we are helping and they are part of a story and we wanna support them. Suddenly were the money is going for this, people will suddenly pay more attention to and question more and I think it is only recently that people are okay with us as a company still earning at profit out of that. Because you know, a company still has to live in order to be effective. Whereas is was either buy this cup or here it is for free. And that is the charity model. And I think it is also a shift in the mind set that it is maybe just okay to earn money and be a profitable business at the same time as trying to make an impact. Because those two have just been completely treated separately up until recently. And actually the financial flow, suddenly become like "so how much percentage of the profit goes back to reinvest it back into the community and how much do we get" And all that is way more under a spotlight. It's like once you start saying I am a social entrepreneur. #115
- Because once you go down the route of establishing yourself as a non-profit. You're more bound to a particular way of doing things. You are not as free or as flexible as entrepreneurs should be you know. "Oh maybe we should develop a line of scarves, that are ethically produced #120
- And I am not really connected to the jewellery industry. I don't really belong there and I cannot really find. I tried to get into the more commercial. But because I value the craft and how you make it so much, it's like you buy another value, when you buy my jewellery, than if you just buy it from the industry, where it is mass produced. So I don't really fit. And I don't really fit into the fashion. #125

- L: I see, I think when you work as a social entrepreneur, I look more towards other projects and I think we lift each other and we are on the same page. #127
- So it's another way of purchasing. And I think once you start purchasing a that way, you then pay attention to other things. #128
- [on product: necklace] And they often give those white flowers in a straw to them. It's so cute.#133
C: So this is what we kind of mean by the stories as well, it's there and it's authentic.#134
- So I don't want to make something that they tell me, I want to present them something and present them an experience.#136
- **What do you experience as challenges or limits when building this universe L: My poor ability to communicate clear. C: I also think because there is so much, it's the way to simplify all this.#139**
- And but I think I did a lot of pre-work for the brand. So we have something to build upon now. C: Definitely we have a huge amount.#147
- [on success] Hmm... (thinking) L: I mean. I feel like the success is that we are here together. But it is actually when we are established our place in Thailand and the communication is clear. I will feel kind of relieved. And if we will have more people in. Even very sooner. I feel that my vision is kind of landed. When I see the structure there and I start to work on what I am good at. I think then that's success.#161-2
- ...I saw the vision for so long ago and it took me so long to go here. Because you know it's the time and a lot of different factors that are important in the process.#164
- [on success]So I don't think that it is about earning a particular amount or reaching a particular goal in a market, like reaching a particular size in the US. Or dominating Denmark. It's about a state where we can work and achieve what we want to achieve, at least.#165
- [Investor pitch]: So you have an amazing opportunity to invest in a company with a legacy of a well-known collection. It is beautifully made. It has huge potential to grow and scale internationally. It is a contemporary jewellery collection that we know is popular in the US, in places in Europe, Italy and Germany. We are looking for investment, so that we can grow and scale to build the brand, tell our story and share meaningful product.#177. L: Maybe the production phase.C: Oh yeah, **the production really didn't make it into it. Well it was for the investors#180**
- [employee pitch] Because here we really appreciated the hand-crafted. It's not mass production. But we value the skills of craftsmanship and that's what we know what you are very good at.#188
- [product pitch]: So, why I got this necklace. Elise gave this to me when I first started, as a way to mark the memory that we are working together. **So I always think about jewellery is that it is symbolic, that is says something. And what I love about this, is that I can wear it every day. It's strong, even though it's delicate. It's oxidised silver, so it's dark. It can go with a lot of colours and**

clothes that I wear. And I like to wear dark colours, because I am in Denmark. And what is lovely about it is that after while the oxidised get brighter. So with wear it can change over time. The pendant itself, Elise will always have this signature, the stamp on it. And it's a lock system. So if you see here, you can change the pendant. So that is the DOC RAC, it's the love flower from Thailand. And each piece is hand-made in Thailand by Thai artisans, so it's very contemporary, it goes with a lot of things. But it's also very special and very meaningful. So it's very good investing in, if you like it. (Laughter) #195

#4 *Manifesto*

- [history before]in 2012 we started to wholesale the product under the name, *Manifesto* but the product was always sustainable, with this clothing business . So we had a GOTs Certified Cotton T-shirts. But when we whole-saled in 2012. The idea was to create a sustainable lifestyle brand, basically a sustainable streetwear brand, because there were only sustainable fashion brands for babies, women, kids and outdoors but nothing for young men. And since **sustainability is the future obviously we thought that was very strange. So we wanted to create that brand**, basically. So that's what we are working on still #6
- No, the reason is that it [sustainable fashion] is the only option. I have been travelling and creating different brands. And doing the production in Far East, anywhere from China, India, Pakistan, Morocco and in big production cities . You can clearly see **the destructive impact from the textile industry**, because it requires a lot of their water to clean and to dye and different processes for treating the textile and all those hubs around the world are in cities, where there is a lot of water or a big river. And that water of those rivers are always completely polluted, extremely full of chemicals that are just poured straight into the rivers. So rivers like that they used to have a lot of wild life, a lot of birds and insects and otters but now it's just a dead polluted river, floating into the ocean and then even having an impact, of those, you know eco-systems of the ocean and it's the most disgraceful thing you can ever imagine. **Just for cheap clothing basically**. You know. So even now there are laws against this pollution, it's still not repaired and especially company's like H&M, Primark, they just move to the next country and now they move to Cambodia and Vietnam and now it's only...in Vietnam for example there is only 20% of the industrial areas have a sewage system. **So it's a big disgrace. So.. Fast Fashion is the big enemy of the planet. #8**
- **We want to educate and communicate the need for sustainable fashion[explains about Monsanto & cotton farmers]... And want to be a positive alternative, and at the same time we want to communicate the need for it.#10**
- We believe in the mankind's ability to learn and live with the boundaries of the planet, we have inherited. So we want to communicate that need. Like we want to communicate the beliefs and the positive things that can be done. And we make clothing that are part of the solution. #14
- We want to combine creativity with sustainability [...] And it is important for us in the clothing to make a really cool, fashionable mix. #16
- [to be seen by the customer]Fashionable and positive, like a positive alternative in the clothing market. The look at the product, the fit, the price, the quality those are the main factors, that if you don't have those, you don't have a business in this market#18
- [vision]Well, the vision is that we need to communicate... Pause.. Thinking ...positive alternatives so that we can live within the planet's boundaries.#26

- [values] It's basically... to bring out the best designs possible. By using the talent that are available around the world and to produce as responsible as possible. #28
- We can also see that successful business people, feel that they want to leave a positive impact on the world and they start to work towards a more positive future for mankind on the planet. So they see that it is pretty pointless to stack money in a bank. Everyone has a responsibility to work towards a better future. #30
- [challenge] **We have a very small reach; we don't have a very big platform to communicate from. That's a big problem. And we need to sharpen our message.** #34
- Like our stores are still called T-shirt stores. We are re-branding them to *Manifesto* now and that is our biggest platform. So when we re-brand we can be more clear and push more for the sustainable aspects. And we also need to invest in some instore material for our wholesales customers around the world, so that they can communicate the *Manifesto* values in a way. We haven't done so much before. #34
- **Our customers mainly buy the product because of the design and the fact that it is sustainable is a positive thing for them, but they are not willing to pay extra for it.** So that is a challenge. **So that's one of the things that make it a bit complicated.** #40
- we want to be a kind of aspirational brand but it's hard to, it can be hard to really bring attractive fabrics and things, that we need, that are also sustainably produced, without having huge minimums. So that's a challenge. [I1] And we also...eh...**if you focus on sustainability, sometimes you are not focusing on a style and a trend or an image**[I2] . So that's also a big challenge, so there are basically way too many brands on the market. And there's stores that carry different brands, are the big loser in the market. They are shutting down a lot of them, because fast fashion is killing them and the strong brands open mono brand stores that are killing them and e-commerce is killing them. So they are eaten up from all sides. And those are kind of the breeding grounds for fashion brands to develop, is the independent multi-brand stores. So that's a challenge . It's hard to sell online unless you create a big buzz, like a hype or that you have some kind of edge to draw traffic, because online business is basically like you know, you open up a store in the woods, no one can find you, you have to drag every customer in there. #48
- Yeah, people buy cheap fast fashion now. But weekday or cheap monday could be a competitor #54 [admiration] Patagonia and eh...Lazy Oaf, Supreme, OBEY#56
- They don't hide it. But they promise that, because they are not 100% sustainable, maybe some of the products are not sustainably produced, they don't put the Fair Trade logo or the GOT, in the clothing because then the customer might wonder, why this GOTs but this is not. They will think that it is not consequent. So I guess they don't want too many logos, except their own in their clothing. So they use street wear as a hygiene/hiding? Factor. Fast fashion is much more green washed, you know, if they have something organic it's usually baby clothing and so on. And then they maybe do some gimmick collection like conscious collection and they market that heavily, so people think the whole shop is sustainable, but it's only those 2% of the turnover that's really conscious. #60
- When it comes to brands, we try to talk to as many brands as possible and kind of push them towards a goal, to use organic cotton and certified and recycled fabrics, so I try to bully them in a way. And sometimes we succeed with that actually. So and for the bigger, fast fashion companies a lot of shaming is necessary from the media. We can't really talk to those brands. But smaller brand that exhibit at the same trade shows as us, we can talk to. #64
- [pitch visual identity] Then I would say, we want to create a brand that is young and trendy, that is kind of the future. So first comes style, because it has to be a very attractive brand, look super fresh it has to be in an accepted price range. So it's fairly high value for money. It needs to be super

sustainably produced, very responsibly, fair trade, GOTS, all the certifications. And we want to create an image of kind a being a bit rebellious. So that becomes a selling point as well. #66

- [Investor pitch]yeah, well. *Manifesto* is a Swedish, sustainable street fashion brand, working together with illustrators, artists from all over the world. We have 20 years' experience in the business, that means that we also have a super big network of distributors, retailers and creators around the world, that we utilize to bring the product out. We want to expand with the retail stores, in the big cities. In locations where local fashion shoppers, as well as tourists are moving. We want to have a foot folk and convert from that, and not spend too much money on marketing, because people are coming regardless on those locations and we want to have a strong online presence. Pretty much think, online first. Do professional seating?? Of products to good influencer, who are knowledgeable about sustainability and promote that to their "forworks"?? and also promote their brand. So a few strong influencers in every country as ambassadors for *Manifesto* and make campaigns with those and work very closely with them and communicate the values and our new products. Our underlying idea is that we believe in mankind's ability to live within the boundaries of our planet. And we can learn to achieve this. At the moment we are not doing it because we are basically consuming many times more, than what the planets can regenerate. This is very short sided and has to change. And we will promote and lead that development in this change. #67

#5 Respekt

- I wanted to create stuff not just like follow stuff but create things and of course the more you lean the more you understand the world and the system is fucked up and you are trying to create solutions. You look at other's business models and you try to find your own path and your own way so I guess this is how it kinda developed . But I never had like an experience in a fashion house or a brand. I never had the interest to be honest.#2
- if you look at the way they use resources and the way the exploit the people hmmm, in terms of facts we know that the fashion industry is among the most polluted industries in the world...And I don't think that fashion in itself is bad but it is just the way you use fashion in terms of mass production and this is where it sort of goes crazy. Because of the mass consumption of products that are not long lasting and as in the west we end up giving it away or throwing it away...I would say it is mindless because the economy part of it is about making profit and for us it is about feeling insecure and we need these trends to feel well and to feel good to have some kind of identify #4
- I believe that everything is connected... [telling her story before] which was quite a disastrous kick in a way and it came from something really bad, but it what made us take action and from there it just has been development#6
- I have a relationship with the country that I wanted to have the production there and I feel I have control- in terms that I know where everything is made and I have a direct contact with everyone who is a part of it so in terms of fashion and also moral and my own values I am more comfortable in doing it this way so that is how I ended in fashion #8
- So at the moment we are not earning any money cause everything goes straight into the development of the business. But in a years time the business needs to make money#12
- Our weakness is branding and marketing. It is neither our strength nor our interest. We see that we need more people to be part of this to take it further but what we have been focusing first is to be able to sell so we already made a pre-order now of 250 pieces to 8 different shops in Norway. Because in order for us to take this further we need to know and see if it actually sells. Cause of

course marketing has a lot to do with brand identity and if you are able to create to this ideal world where people feel attached and emotional, but one thing is of course image but another thing is if the design is something that people would like to wear. And for me that is important cause if it is not something people would like then we should not do these things cause then it just ends up consuming things that people don't want and then you are part of the waste or "Stuff"#14

- She stresses out how many delays there are because of the corruption and unpredictable things that happen during the production and that is difficult to control). When I started this I had this western way of thinking about efficiency and speed unconsciously#17
- Of course we sell products but it is also a story I would say. A story that is community based, you know it is selling shirts but also supporting **communities** and families who are a part of this factory or showroom or however you want to call it. It is of course a **story** because there is this process of coloring for example it is handcraft. So it is also **handcraft**. Which is not so explicit right now through our webpage hopefully we will make this movie about this soon I hope.#23
- **The promise is to be as transparent as possible** . That is also a thing we need to work on and that is because I am so into it, I am down there myself and I know what I am doing, but of course that is not something our customers at the moment would see. In the way that we are branding ourselves. #25
- But in terms of values they get something that is **durable**. Hemp is like on of the strongest natural fibers that you can find and you also get something that is more #25
- So I think it is a better alternative and a more sustainable one #25
- And then in terms of the color you really support handcraft and local production. It is a very small factory there are only 9 people employed and where they sew it its like 5-6 people. So not so many people but if you look at the effect, I know it is a nice place to work and **there are some good values that are also representative in these people who do these things and they also have the same values as we do**. So it is **all these effects** that I found fascinating in doing this. So what we can promise is as sustainable a supply chain as we can make in terms of the conditions that we are in and also long term **durable textile** that will last. #25
- In the design process I also look into patterns and silhouettes that would last for many many years so what is sort of **timeless** in a way so it is not trend based. Of course you always have to look at them time. What is **cool** now what was cool 10 years ago, or 50 years ago..#25
- But it is a way to create hype and people talking about us. So the more we have these shop owners who like us and love us they will maybe get direct contact with the customers and a good relationship so that is where we start to make a good reputation#33
- **Yes. But I think that is when people get a little confused. Our textile brand and jewelry brand is called "Respekt" but the company name is "Respekt Project" and that means in Respekt project we are project based that's how it started as, cause my friend also does music and we are working on this documentary for the women's situation in Nepal, so I guess we like to be creative but in different fields so it is not just about textile it's part of it but this is our "money machine" if you can call it that, that we are able to get the profit to of course give salary to ourselves but also support other projects like a movie or some music or maybe some fashion shows or exhibitions in some terms.** #41
- That is in terms of who we talk to. Like if I go to a shop, I would never talk about the film project. Maybe if we start talking and we go in even further but just like an introduction to ourselves then we are only a fashion brand and that is it. Because it becomes too complicated. #43
- [development prize CBS] So that was good for me in terms of business because for me when I am interested in something it is easy to sell but the business part it's not so interesting. For me it is more

about what we can create in Nepal, which I find fascinating. So that is why regarding marketing and PR and those things I don't like it. I think it is a little embarrassing. It is like a different world, some rules that you need to play.#49

- but it is just the world that they create through these perfection standards which is very disgusting it think#51
- I am a big fan of Patagonia the sports brand. Of course it is mass production that they are doing which I am against but they really try to make an effort especially in the sports industry, making products that are more sustainable in terms of the environment and people and also all these side projects that they are doing. #53
- I don't really see myself as original and *Respekt* today is very much part of my identity, it is my baby... You can always marketing something in a way that it looks new, but if you go down to what it actually is behind all these fancy pansy marketing stuff you can always find something similar.#59
- **[speciality] actually about being truthful to yourself #63**
- What I want with *Respekt* project is to... it is political as well. I want again with this being truthful to yourself, to emphasize this more in this type of society that we are living today. Our brand is also something that represents honesty. And I think that is what I would like in the end with *Respekt* project that people are more honest with themselves and what they do even though it is hard in the society to do that with all these complexity where everything is changing all the time and all this information that gives us thoughts "oh you can do this and that and explore". So that is about the consumerism in the western societies thing and it is also about Nepal. We have some projects with Beni that we support with the jewelry. So these projects of Steps Foundation Nepal of Beni are projects that I would love to support cause you can see the positive effects of a small community. And that is where I would like to see *Respekt* in the future. I would never be in charge but I would always like to support stuff#65
- **Everything within Social Entrepreneurship, Sustainability, and development all these terms are very complex and difficult I think. That is why you really need to be conscious of what you are doing also know that things will not turn out the way you want them to turn out and again being open with the idea that you are not perfect, the project is not perfect #67**
- **Because I think the way that people marketize themselves is not how the reality really is and that is a big problem within the sustainability paradigm however you want to call it#67**
- In this situation the people we are collaborating with and they do the coloring, they are the experts so for them they have been trying to teach me and explain so many things it gets crazy. **But it is very important to have this equal relationship and collaboration where you learn from each other#71**
- [earlier challenge: to make profit#73] To be honest I think we can always sell. If we have the direct contact with a person we usually end up with a sale to our experience. To reach those people, without having direct contact in terms of our marketing and PR, yes that is a challenge.#75
- [communication challenge]I think it's a mix. Cause about the network if you have a powerful person or an influencer however you want to call it [AB1] **you get credibility as a company. This is also something that *Respekt* lacks at the moment.#79**
- We just go in. We don't set up meetings most of the times. We are quite like a salesperson from the 80's or 70's. We just come with our collection and it's all about being humble I think. That is the most important because if you are something you are not then they will see through it straight away. And then with this approach we get a lot of feedback because we are new and then we talk about Nepal and people have a hard time to say no. #83

- In terms of the price level we are of course targeting people who want quality, comfort but also something that is a timeless design. I don't know if luxury is the right term but something that is better than H&M . The quality is very important. Norwegian design is something that especially Norwegian customers like #89
- [Knowing about Nepal] Yes for sure. It is very much part of our identity.#91
- I want people to feel that it is good quality. And I want them to feel comfort. And I want them to know that it is long lasting design. **We use the term aesthetic sustainability, which is the aesthetic expression that can last a long time and for me that is what I want the customer to feel. #95**
- And for me that is the most important cause I know that they are going to keep it and not throw it away and that is the main goal with this kind of design. That you are going to have it for a long time without feeling the need to always buy new. #95
- The thing is Nepal is a part of this and **again about this honesty for me** is just normal the way we do it this the way I think business should be run. **And of course we can use it as a marketing tool but for me the design is the most important in changing these habits that people have about consuming** things also “What is good design. What is beauty? What is perfection?” .Because today everything is linked to mass production or mass marketing paradigm that needs to change that way of thinking what is a good design and what is a good product#95
- This is what we want to work on for next year. It is the movie that shows our supply chain. And then it is also through – of course I hope when we get the clothes into shops there would be some people who would like to write articles about us- but I also hope that we can write something ourselves. Not maybe about *Respekt* but about the issues that we are interested in like for example this aesthetic sustainability how important that is in order for something to be sustainable.#97
- Feelings as much as our logic and consciousness it plays a role in the way you act and everything you do so if you are more in contact with your feelings which aesthetics can give you I think you can also get a better understanding of how we act as human beings. So it is a lot of things. Some politics, some philosophy...probably some ideology. **We don't want to teach people we just want them to question stuff.#97**
- but would be perfect is to get a new partner who could join us and that would be their sort of field, PR and Marketing somebody who likes to do those things. And that is also what we are in search of. **And that is what we learned this past year that is mainly our biggest weakness #99**
- I guess of course they are competitors but I don't see them as competitors cause we there are not a lot of people who use hemp in high fashion so maybe this is our advantage in terms of sustainability and quality cause hemp feels like linen. Maiyet is also a competitor but a lot of these brands I also look up to. So it is also inspiration in many ways #101
- But what distinguishes us – and I guess that is the relation, but I mean it is the same industry- the way of producing is different than ours they are trend conscious and I don't think we are trend conscious. People say slow fashion and sustainability could be a trend thing we don't know. But the way we use our resources the way our construction way is going then these thoughts need to be considered in the future so in that way I don't see it as a trend #103
- [pitch - store]yeah it's just my approach would not be this pitching –bang,bang,bang thing- it would be more about, I would always start with “if you had a chance to look at the collection we make sustainable clothing in Nepal and we use the material hemp”, and then I would go further into hemp, but it depends also if the shops are more into the material so then I would talk about that and how it is better than other types of textiles and then put the models there so they can feel it and touch it and then talk about the coloring, and how it would change with use and wash, and become better in comparison to H&M where you would wash it once and then it would get destroyed and then I

would answer questions and so on. So I don't have a pitch in those terms in 2 minutes.#107 I would talk about the product itself and the qualities#109

- [pitch web-designer]I would ask them to make something that expresses simplicity but something also that in that simplicity it needs to get a feeling of luxury. Something that you would see that the materials are not fake but natural. And it would be interesting to experience with different color setting what kind of setting should there be, furniture, color on the wall.#111
- So for me it needs to be very easy for people to find information. **Now I think it is complicated it needs to be simpler.** The way you find information needs to be simple, less of these boxes if possible **and I would like to have more pictures and less text to show the process.** That is why I want the movie in there cause you are able to explain so much more in much less time.#113
- Yes that is something we are lacking I think. I am also very bad with words. I am a bad communicator in that sense. I can communicate through my clothing #117
- Visual is what we lack but that's what we need. Again that is how we are connected with the industry you need to play by the rules in a way and if you look into branding today and how they create these aesthetic worlds that create emotions the triggers us, a world that we want that feels amazing and we need to be part of that even though I don't like that, in terms of selling #119

#6 Ethical Essentials

- I originally started my first company while I was still studying at the business school in Aarhus. That was a creative agency that we started 8 years ago. And I have been working with that as a side project next to the studies. And then half way through my masters we got the opportunity to go full time with the company and we did and then we invested in *Ethical Essentials* which was led by me but I was leading the investment in the underwear company which was newly started, so it was actually more of a partnership than an investment so I led the partnership and became CEO of the company #2
- So before we entered it was more of a subscription service but what I found more interesting was the purpose driven fashion brand so yeah that was the reason.#6
- It is a fashion company where we develop and manufacture and sell sustainable clothing so we look at the production process the usage phase and then the after consumption phase. And we are taking steps, we started with the production phase and we are slowly moving into the usage phase to see how we can optimize the usage of our products and then the next phase is to look at the after consumption phase how can we make a closed loop system so we can recycle all of our underwear products. So it is a project and a company that develops sustainable fashion products.#10
- I felt intrigued by *Ethical Essentials* and I saw big potential and especially in the underwear market nothing has really happened in the last 100 years so I saw a bigger opportunity.#12
- So our promise is constant optimization, to make our products even more sustainable.#14
- We do only performance marketing so I can tell you what converts best for us.#20
- We talk a lot about our values cause that is what is driving our brand and what gets people interested. So about sustainability and how by buying our products they can make the sustainable choice by using organic cotton instead of the other. So we have a lot of **unique selling points**. Also about production how the media is talking about us, and what our customers are saying #22
- We look for sustainable production and organic product and easy purchase. So these are the 3 core values that we use.#24

- Not really. Because it is such a complex picture and we have so much data. It differs from day to day the straight up good sales approach is working and then the other day is your blog post about how to travel sustainably #30
- **We grew the company a lot during the first year without a business strategy and about a year ago we sat down and we made a proper strategy...**For us it was really helpful to start analyzing the data. #34
- But also on a small level being responsible for the products and getting good product feedback that is a success and we make something that people write to us that they have for a long time and that they are happy that they found us that is also success.... #38
- Success is also being invited to give lecture to universities and we are also invited to give a Ted talk here in April about sustainable fashion. So there are a lot of different factors around success but mostly is about reaching what you set out for #38
- [achievement]**I think with all our projects we want to make an impact on the fashion industry to make a sustainable alternative to H&M, Zara and all the big players that are created and grown on fast fashion, trend based and stand in opposition to that #42**
- Our vision is to grow and create a sustainable alternative while causing the least environmental harm in doing so.#44
- It is not hard to stay sustainable; we have spent a lot of time talking to experts. To make an impact it is kind of hard because you need to have scale to be able to be impactful. I mean the size we have now is not doing that much to be honest because we are very small and that is why want to grow the company to become a global company cause then we can really have a voice in the market.#48
- **We are friends with them and we treat them as friends and try to be honest and very transparent when we communicate our values.#50**
- **We see ourselves as a business we don't think of ourselves as social entrepreneurs. First and foremost we are a business cause if we are not a business then we cannot make the impact that we want.** So if we were social entrepreneurs we would have started an NGO or something but **I think the fastest and most impactful way to change this industry is by doing something alternative in the business where you can really challenge the big players#52**
- [impact]**I think we are getting customers from old brands like Calvin Klein and Tommy Hilfiger and I think that is part of the consumers becoming more aware of who they are rooting for. #54**
- I think we are taking a more "tesla" approach where we want to create something **really truly valuable and unique in a more sustainable way but we should make the choice because it is a good product and you want the product not because it is a sustainable one so we need to compete on prize and on quality and on top of that we want to be the sustainable alternative!#56**
- We are doing a sustainable fashion company and we are doing it in a cool way.#58
- So they should have the idea that they are buying a **quality** product not just in terms of the quality of the fabric but the whole of the product together. **Not just buying a product but actually supporting a whole cause. So kind of feeling as being a part of a movement where they are doing something good by making an informed choice. #60**
- People they buy from us because they think it is a **valuable purchase-so it is a good price point and it is easy because it is online and it is sustainable so that is like the 3 main reasons.#62**
- I think you can really see the **transparency** of the young companies and some them are really taking off and that is definitely that things are changing and we are moving back to that people would rather want a quality product than just a 5\$ T-shirt#64
- **Since we want to grow so fast our biggest challenge is probably to follow our growth pace #70**

- ...want to do is kind of facilitate how our products are shown in stores so we want to make our own point of sales where we can inform people when they make the purchase so that they can get some information and also we want to educate our sales staff in stores where they can get a little booklet and they can read about our brand #76
- **That is something we are optimizing right now to make our website more understandable. The thing is you need to keep it really short and when you are a company you really want to tell the whole story it's hard to keep the whole thing short but if you don't people will not really read it so we used to have a lot of text on the website but we are trying to cut that down make it more to the bone.#82**
- I see it going up, we get a larger and larger middle class that has more money and these are some of their values that people really start to focus on cause it what creates a better life of them start making more sustainable choices it's not about having more crappy products it is about purchasing fewer but more high quality products when you know that people haven't suffered in order to make it. #100
- blog posts with customers asking them about sustainable consumption there are numerous ways of how to communicate this.#102
- **Yes educate and inspire. #104**
- We want to sell to small cool stores that are interested in telling our stories. We are not snobbish we do want to do some high end stores because they have more time to tell the story but anyways the more people who buy the products the more impact we do#108
- [pitch-stores] **EE is the alternative** to kind of all the other fast fashion brands you see out there. We focus on the production and the product itself and we use that as our story and our purpose so instead of hiring an expensive football player or a model we use the same money to put into higher quality both for our workers but also in fabrics we use. We use mainly organic cotton cause right now it is the cheaper way of producing the best quality product and that also enables us to make a very price competitive product so our products are a little bit cheaper than the expensive Calvin Klein that you find in stores that has been doing stuff for the last 30-40 years so we are kind of the new kid on the block that want to turn the things around [AB3] and we want to tell our customers what they are wearing and why they are wearing EE. That is what I would say. **Focus on the product and why we are doing what we are doing. #111**
- [pitch sales person]That would probably be a conversation so it is a bit harder but I would pitch the product and say that even though it is actually a really good price the quality of the product is actually put into the people who produce it and the fabrics used and that is made from organic cotton and ask them to feel it is super soft and it is actually among the softest cotton that we have in this store. There has been no usage of nasty chemicals or pesticides and this is good when it is something that is so close to the body so everything is kept organic even the dye. #113
- [pitch-website]So we actually did change the website and what we focused on was to **get the values more in front** but also make it a better purchasing experience so **to focus on the product and the purpose so we focus on the two P's of course price is also important but to the consumer we are talking to it is not really that important so Purpose and Product is really what we focus on.#117**
- **Product is actually more in front than the purpose because through the product you can also tell your purpose.#119**

#7 Women in Knit

- We are specialized in hand-knitted clothes for men women and kids and that we produce in an ethical way where we take care of the natural resources and the people involved in the process and for consumers who yet want to be stylish so it's not an Eco brand. The look the design the aesthetics is what we want the people to buy it for but we want all the other things to be in place #20
- **We want to make a difference so we want to make clothing that lives up to the standards of the conscious consumer. #22**
- As I said before that we would like people to buy our clothes because they are beautiful but we also want them to know, to assure that we have been taking care of the resources that we had a thoughtful decision of what kind of materials we use and how they are produced #24 /// communication
- That is also a way to talk about slow clothing rather than fast clothing. That the clothes can both that in quality you can be sure it will last many seasons but also style wise that they are not going out of fashion. We can easily take a collection from five years ago and sell it now it would not be out of fashion it is still relevant #24
- We offer stylish clothes that they can wear with a very good conscious. #26
- We want to be the leading hand-knitting company in the world and there are not a lot of companies actually who have full collections hand-knitted, so we want to be known as a hand-knitting specialist #28
- [doing good and doing business] Of course we would like to make a good business, because “you cannot be Green being Red” and that is quite interesting. You cannot be green with having red numbers so you have to make a good business for being able to do it in a green way because it is more costly to do business in a green way and for us to be able to support our knitters in Jordan and Peru #30
- We address them by telling stories. We are telling stories about what we do and who we are and where we come from. The Faroe Islands are a very very important part, an embedded part of the company without them there would be no *Women in Knit* and it's very important that all the design process and the production and the shop and everything is based on the Faroe island because that is the DNA of the company. #40
- and this is part of having kind of the “dream like story” and the dream of a cleaner world, a view of a simpler life and transparency where you are not hiding behind chemicals and low labour costs and so on. So we wanted to be really transparent and really authentic. #42
- it is about dignity where you can say I'm not just giving money to some poor people but I am delivering some very important labour so I can grow my business so I find it is a very beneficial and very equal. We are all on equal terms when we meet them and it is very interesting to hear their stories a well and hear “Look at this wall. I could built this wall last year at my house because I got the money from you”. So it is a very warm and special cooperation we have. #48
- Already when we started the business we knew that our visuals were our business card to the world because very seldom I am in the right spot having cocktails with influential people, because we are so isolated our way of communicating is very visual so already from day one the first money that we ever had to spent we did not spend it on salary for me for example but on the best photographers, the best models and aimed for the best visuals we did that already from day one that we spent money for the best visuals. #52
- Because this is the kind of change we need to do for the world for preserving our planet earth not only that consumerism is a very important part of it- that we have to limit our consumption but also being able to deliver a better world to our kids and our grandkids. So consumerism is only part of it

- and environmentalism in all kinds of ways is another part of this but consumerism is very very important to try and have a limitation to that and this message to the world and to my children #56
- It all starts with human relations. When we talk about values... our philosophy it's handmade it's responsible it's ethical it's exotic- coming from the Faroe Islands #60
 - "Well this what we do" and not trying to move from our values in order to sell more and be true to our original idea is to make ethical clothing and being responsible to the producers and then accepting that we cannot maybe grow as fast as we could if we produced at a lower cost. #62
 - I would say when you look at how small we are in the fashion world we are quite well know but we still lack that we are so successful that we really do make a difference in the fashion arena #64
 - **clothes we do hope that people buy it first of all because it is beautiful and then I think the conscious consumer they will require that all the other things are in place also. We don't like to brag so much about responsibility and ethical production ways because as we see it should be natural that you always do that. #64**
 - We just want to be decent and this is how we started our company #68
 - But first of all we want people to see that it is beautiful and then we go like step two in it is to talk about sustainability and ethical clothing, yes it's important as well. #74
 - It's accepting to... not making business for the sake of business but you have to...for me if I have to make fashion it has to have a deeper meaning to me. So I think it is very much what you come from and what kind of upbringing you have. We did not start just as a business school project- where can I earn the most money, because then you would not get into ethical clothing because that's not where you can earn your fastest money so it is very much about your basic values. It all starts with your basic values as a human being. #76
 - when we are at fairs the buyers can be so busy that they cannot absorb the full message so we have to give them the message very very shortly you have to make it in a word or at the most in a sentence #82
 - you have to have different levels of communication for different kind of people, so people are able to look further and further into it #82
 - I am telling them "This is a hand-knitted collection from the Faroe Islands and it is all produced in natural materials and it is produced by knitters in their own homes in the Faroe Islands and in Jordan and Peru and that Peru and Jordan are part of our women empowerment project #84 (also product and organization)
 - : And also getting the message out to people to have even more interesting in buying the clothing paying the price, to get them understand why ethical clothing is more expensive to produce than let's say t-shirts made in China so like opening the minds of people getting the consumers more conscious, having this group of conscious consumers growing #90
 - **It is that it is all hand-knitted and it is designed on the Faroe Islands. #92**
 - That is what is authentic in my world. Not making up stories, but telling the stories that are already there #98
 - when we are talking about hand-knit it's not like 10% that are hand-knitted or having a hand-knit machine, when we say hand-knit it's women sitting in the homes with two needles and making a sweater. That is the really hand-knitting story in our world. #100
 - I think that our clothes are also part of the new luxury. #104
 - . Our mission is to be decent and to do it in the best way possible and sometimes to do it the best way possible for us to do a beautiful product is not using kind of facilities that maybe use green energy and that are so expensive to produce that you cannot pay for it but it's about balance in things. #106

- Our biggest... when you look at what Chanel did you both see a revolutionary view on things you will see a very very strong woman you can see a creative force that was explosive and you can see timelessness in it that you can have a Chanel thing that is 50 years old and it still relevant and that is what luxury is about that is what hand-craftsmanship is about and that can be forever, very very very inspiring. So looking at those stories is very important #118 (maybe communication;)
- And we also admire some very good business successful people for example I think it's really inspiring to see what ACNE is doing. They are not focusing that much on ethical clothing as they produce also at higher prices assuming that they also paying more for the production they are also being creative but in a very modern way and that is also very inspiring to see and also to see that in Japan. We would very much like to be hand in hand with for example ACNE in Japan. #118 (communication)
- I am Ingrid Rogvandt half a part of G&G a designer company based on the Faroe Islands we specialize in hand knit and we make collections for men women and kids –I assume you are women's buyer, so I will show you the fashion collection we have here and we have different parts in this season we have been focusing on looking at spots elements but still in luxury so if you see some sporty elements its something that is very fragile still and that there some very strong pieces so if you are new buyer you should start with this package like this one and depending on what other brands you have I can help you with what pieces it would do well #126 (Pitching exercise - shop owner)
- The series with the velvet is a new series we made where we combine sport with our fragile design that we are known for. This very open weave knit that we are known for many many years might seem very fragile but you will be surprised to see that it is quite durable and if you have want the stitches can go out and you can wear it without the velvet. And you can have a set with the skirt or style it up and be stylish and cool it down with wearing jeans. You can style it in many different ways #130 (Pitching exercise - consumer)
- And having the dream story where you don't even know that you are promoting the product where you are just saying a very good story and you are trying to seduce people. Our website should try to seduce people and they should not even know that we are trying to sell something they are just telling a very good story and they can't help buying something in the end and this is for me a very sophisticated way of seducing people not saying like buy buy buy and we don't have a yellow sign saying sale sale sale, for example we talk about instead of sales we say last pieces and it's true we only have a couple of last pieces we sell we don't have sale's ever. So it is very much about seducing. #134 (Pitching exercise - web designer)

Main Themes – Grouped Data

	<p>VIEW ON THE PRODUCT</p> <p>Aesthetics & Design</p> <p>Trends</p> <p>Seasons</p>
<i>Changemaker's Apparel</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the main principles would remain. It has to be organic sustainable, made for reuse and something where we give back! #38

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to have some kind of fashion trend in it, but we also want to create long term items that lasts for a long time, that we can't go 100% with the trend. #16b • We tried to put in items, we tried to show that we are not totally boring we also kind of know what is going on. #16b
<i>Inside</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has always been this contrast in the filled of social products that tend to compromise in design it is getting better today but 10 years ago 5 years ago you would have a very almost religious way of trying to sell products that did social good to tell people from moral that they should support. Which for me is very un-dignifying for the person who makes it. If you really want to show dignity you need to create a want, a desire for that product and not compromise on the design . So we have very high ambitions of creating some of the best design also based on sometimes when there is a lack of resources where you can turn that up and say how you can turn it into a gift. And I think that this unused resource of women in prison its labour but it is also this country's way of accessing one of the most valuable materials. #4 [design] • we can prove that <u>it can be done in a better</u> way without in any way compromising the coolness and the sexiness of fashion#12 • I think <u>we design very differently</u> than other people because what we do is focusing on what is possible with the production. You design from the <u>limitations</u> that you have and that becomes the strength of the production and the design. You can both see it as a limitation – I mean Louise our designer and the design team she does not say of “I feel blue today” or we should blah blah blah she is like “So you have the material you have the possibility of the machine and then you have the limitation or the consideration that it needs to be really really beautiful in it's expression let the material live and speak. #14 • What is important about the design is that it is designed to last, meaning that we don't do any season so none of our styles will go out of style in 6 months or later. And saying okay, "sorry now it's autumn/fall, now we cancel this sweater". #14 • So <u>we think it very differently</u>, that it's not seasonal hype. It's something that the sweater needs to look very cool also in a year and half. How can we produce product that are long-lasting.#14 • Quality is for sure a thing we don't compromise on.#22 • So they are really good at making baskets, like more ethical stuff, which I didn't believe that this is the starting point for the brand to begin with, especially to avoid falling into the stereotypes of social fashion, because it need to be cool on a really different level#46

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • And then we don't do any seasons, we are going to design style by style, so that also means that we can launch a new product every month or every month and a half, or every three month or a new colour.#58 • <i>Inside</i> sweater because we use 100% natural materials, so you get extremely good quality, everything is handmade, each sweater is unique. And behind each sweater you know the name of the woman who made it, an inmate in prison. The first collection is made in Peru, where we work in 100% baby alpaca. The reason why we do this is because, then women can make an income while they are in the prison, they can get more skills and send their children to school and have a viable way to create an income when they are out of prison. #89
Elise Andersen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The studio is run by one of the woman, and I send out the materials, and they know the design, we send books out for that and order and they send it back and I finish it here. So we will also build a workshop here, when we grow. Someone will do the end work. And even we will have work that is only done in Denmark. #28 • C: It's quite, some people just say it's quite timeless. I mean it's quite an investment, I mean you keep it forever. I mean there is quite an expiration date on clothes and only so many times you can wear them#35 • L: It's kind of a relationship. Jewellery is a lot...I mean you have the fashion jewellery, which is more what's the style is right now and then there is more the design jewellery. The clients are very loyal and you often have families in all generations. #36 • <u>how, Elise works and how special that is, compared to how other jewelleries are made.</u> So if you buy something, it may not necessarily be hand-crafted or hand-made, but maybe have a unique design, but then it's just mass produced. Whereas this is more personal it's more artistic...#70 • Like there are principles here, like we are only working with the highest quality materials#70 • And also the fact that for example this gold, is not taken from the ground, it's recycled gold.#70 • But also the craftsmanship is of high quality. So it lasts long. So even if you buy a piece of silver, you don't have to buy another one next year again.#71 • So I always think about jewellery is that it is symbolic, that is says something. And what I love about this, is that I can wear it every day. It's strong, even though it's delicate. It's oxidised silver, so it's dark. It can go with a lot of colours and clothes that I wear. And I like to wear dark colours, because I am in Denmark. And what is lovely about it is that after while the oxidised get brighter. So with wear it can change over time. The pendant itself, Elise will always have this signature, the stamp on it. And it's a lock system. So if you see here, you can change the pendant. So that is the DOC RAC, it's the love flower from Thailand. And each piece is hand-made in Thailand by Thai

	<p>artisans, so it's very contemporary, it goes with a lot of things. But it's also very special and very meaningful. So it's very good investing in, if you like it. (Laughter) #195</p>
<i>Manifesto</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We want to combine creativity with sustainability [...] And it is important for us in the clothing to make a really cool, fashionable mix. #16 • if you focus on sustainability, sometimes you are not focusing on a style and a trend or an image[12] . So that's also a big challenge #48 • So first comes style, because it has to be a very attractive brand, look super fresh
<i>Respekt</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • But in terms of values they get something that is durable. Hemp is like on of the strongest natural fibers that you can find and you also get something that is more #25 • In terms of the price level we are of course targeting people who want quality, comfort but also something that is a timeless design. I don't know if luxury is the right term but something that is <u>better than H&M</u> . The quality is very important. Norwegian design is something that especially Norwegian customers like #89
<i>Ethical Essentials</i>	
<i>Women in Knit</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are specialized in hand-knitted clothes for men women and kids and that we produce in an ethical way where we take care of the natural resources and the people involved in the process and for consumers who yet want to be stylish so it's not an Eco brand. The look the design the aesthetics is what we want the people to buy it for but we want all the other things to be in place #20 • As I said before that we would like people to buy our clothes because they are beautiful but we also want them to know, to assure that we have been taking care of the resources that we had a thoughtful decision of what kind of materials we use and how they are produced #24 • That is also a way to talk about slow clothing rather than fast clothing. That the clothes can both that in quality you can be sure it will last many seasons but also style wise that they are not going out of fashion. We can easily take a collection from five years ago and sell it now it would not be out of fashion it is still relevant #24 • clothes we do hope that people buy it first of all because it is beautiful #64 • It is that it is all hand-knitted and it is designed on the Faroe Islands. #92 • we have different parts in this season we have been focusing on looking at spots elements but still in luxury so if you see some sporty elements its something that is very fragile still and that there some very strong pieces so if you are new buyer you should start with this package like this one and

	<p>depending on what other brands you have I can help you with what pieces it would do well #126 (Pitching exercise - shop owner)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The series with the velvet is a new series we made where we combine sport with our fragile design that we are known for. This very open weave knit that we are known for many many years might seem very fragile but you will be surprised to see that it is quite durable and if you have want the stitches can go out and you can wear it without the velvet. And you can have a set with the skirt or style it up and be stylish and cool it down with wearing jeans. You can style it in many different ways #130 (Pitching exercise - consumer)
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	<p>VIEW ON SUSTAINABILITY</p> <p>Production Process</p> <p>Design</p>
<i>Changemaker's Apparel</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes. I started in Africa and then went to India and then ended up in Denmark so it took me a year to find the right suppliers and the right fabrics #82
<i>Inside</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> And it should not be very difficult in the construction because it is going to be hard for us to succeed and for the women to succeed. So by simpler constructions those are really Danish elements from a long time ago, good quality materials but fairly simple construction and shapes. #14 Ok they have hand knitting machines, what can their machines do?“ It's very technical. It is 100% baby alpaca, it's a dogma, that is 100% natural materials from the origin of the country that we produce so in Peru everything is going to be 100% baby alpaca in India is going to be 100% organic silk for example. So you have the material you have the possibility of the machine #14 So the journey for me was to find the best raw materials in the world. Like leather in Argentina, Alpaca Wool Peru, Silk India and China. Linen in eastern Europe. [I1] I am not saying that we never gonna do cotton. But at least we want to wait with it, because it's so water intensive. And try to find other ways around it, to just make those materials shine. And I think Alpaca wool is a very sustainable type of wool. It's the most sustainable type of wool you can find, because of how they are raised and grazed??? So it made sense #46 But it's designed based on the knowledge we have about the machines there. So now we have the same machines, as they have in Peru. For example. We didn't have that in the beginning. But everything changed completely. In the beginning our designer Louise would have patterns out of textile and that became completely different in hand-knitted wool. It just changed so you couldn't really, you had no way to taking an idea from textile to knit. So that's why we had to also learn how to knit. So then they produce it. And until now, we had maximum 2 weeks because we both have children, so either we would be away for 2 weeks or you bring your children <i>Inside</i> the

	<p>prison, but it's also just two weeks. You can't let them run around the prison, it's just too chaotic. And then you need to get like a perfect sample produced, where you can say like. Yes let's take 60 of those. If you don't get to that level you can't start the production, because you don't have that one sample where you can say, if it doesn't look like this, you can't sell it.#52</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • And the women do already have the skills? No, we trained them, several times. So there is a training period and for each woman to join the team. #52 • But since it is very slow fashion - they can produce 1,5 sweaters a day, per machine, per woman. They also have very short working hours every day. So it's more like, right now we have much more demand that we can produce. So for us it is more like, "in one month, how many sweaters can they make of this type of sweaters?" [I1] And we have access to two types of these machines and they can make this sweater (giving an example). Two types of this can make this design, so we have a limited amount of the millennials? that we had at the kickstarter. We can maximum make 50 of those a month. So it's going to be more exclusive more expensive. And then we are just going to order 50 in electric blue and putting up 4 days before saying - countdown, pre-orders start now. And hopefully those will be sold out. Then we will have a few basic sweaters that are made on a different type of machine that is more scalable. Then we can hopefully make many more of them, so we have always some of them in stock and we can choose a few basic colours. So that will be not completely sold out #56 • Because there are a lot of challenges. And then somebody has depression or then there's a problem with the machine. There is a whole organisation that we need to build as well. #58 • So at the same time we are building the whole supply chain in the prison. It doesn't really exist. There are a lot of challenges, which is why I am always on Whatsapp a few hours a day #58 • So we decide based on our production capacity, what we sell. I think that is a main difference to most of other companies. It 's <u>very different way of thinking</u>. And a very different way of designing. It's really not like "hm I feel like, this and that fabric" it's more like "okay which machine is not in use - this one. Okay, what can it make? Okay it's really good at rip".#58 • it is a fun way to work and design, because you have like a box of opportunities and that's where you need to find your gold. #60 • But business wise it's very important for us, that we increase costs on production, we do the opposite, we don't move to the regions, where you can find the cheapest materials. We actually pay 2-3 times the minimum wage, and 5 times more than they normally get in prison and we are not willing to decrease that cost. But that also means for us to have a competitive price level. We can't have agents, distributors and retailers in our neck. So again the
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	<p>business model is based on the purpose of the production. Like designer. Everything comes back to the key core value in our business is the production. #80</p>
<i>Elise Andersen</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving artisans who wouldn't have anything to do, training. Elise gave them training, she trained them as goldsmiths, she gave them the tools and the training and created that as part of the <i>Elise Andersen</i> value chain...Can the workshop be used as a place for artists in residence... L: For design schools. #50-51 • you know we are creating – not even a good working conditions - like really really – ahm, it's hard to talk about Thailand without sounding demeaning in a way. I think that's hard when you are dealing with developing countries, with sounding patronizing. But like Elise pays them really good wages. They get holidays. They are supported. So it's more than just creating a good working environment, it's more about creating something that they feel proud to work for and that honours their skills and their crafts. #70 • So this issues of ethical production, sustainability, supporting handcraft. #70 • But if we start saying this is made in a particular way by a particular disadvantaged group that we are helping and they are part of a story and we wanna support them. Suddenly were the money is going for this, people will suddenly pay more attention to and question more and I think it is only recently that people are okay with us as a company still earning at profit out of that. #115 • And actually the financial flow, suddenly becomes like “so how much percentage of the profit goes back to reinvest it back into the community and how much do we get” And all that is way more under a spotlight. It's like once you start saying I am a social entrepreneur. #115
<i>Manifesto</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So we had a GOTs Certified Cotton T-shirts. #6 • sustainability is the future obviously #6 • No, the reason is that it [sustainable fashion] is the only option. [then he talks about the industry] #8 • it can be hard to really bring attractive fabrics and things, that we need, that are also sustainably produced, without having huge minimums. So that's a challenge. #48
<i>Respekt</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She stresses out how many delays there are because of the corruption and unpredictable things that happen during the production and that is difficult to control). When I started this I had this western way of thinking about efficiency and speed unconsciously #17 • In this situation the people we are collaborating with and they do the coloring, they are the experts so for them they have been trying to teach me and explain so many things it gets crazy. But it is very important to have this equal relationship and collaboration where you learn from each other #71

<i>Ethical Essentials</i>	
<i>Women in Knit</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are all on equal terms when we meet them and it is very interesting to hear their stories a well and hear “Look at this wall. I could built this wall last year at my house because I got the money from you”. So it is a very warm and special cooperation we have. #48 • when we are talking about hand-knit it’s not like 10% that are hand-knitted or having a hand-knit machine, when we say hand-knit it’s women sitting in the homes with two needles and making a sweater. #100

	<p>VIEW ON COMMUNICATION</p> <p>Customer profile</p> <p>how they want to be perceived</p> <p>sales</p> <p>Competition</p>
<i>Changemaker’s Apparel</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think it has to be a mix. It can’t just be that I say it is organic and people buy it. The brand has to be nice from the beginning. We still think about the P’s in marketing like “product-pricing-promotion-packaging” . #26 • people see a product like this, then they will take a look at it and say “ ok I like this shirt, the pricing is nice, the product is nice”, and then they will start reading and see “oh it is also sustainable, and organic” and then I think overtime you can change or influence something like this. #26 • I think this is kind of my dream also that we get a lot of marketing attention for what we are doing and we can never fool ourselves and say marketing is enough or we are an organic brand so this is enough. We have to make sure that our products are always competitive and can sell themselves. #28 • when I meet very fashionable people out here like 21 year old guys you know they don’t have people asking for organic apparel so when they come to by booth they think the apparel is quite cool but they don’t have anybody asking for it. So it is really a sales process right now. We had a great start but it is not easy <u>it is really a hard work and because it is a new philosophy you need to get people on board.</u> #40 • <u>It takes a while to explain.</u> For a store to communicate it to their customers it is if I have the option to go to a morning meeting in the store and explain the story to everyone cause then it is easier to remember <i>Changemaker’s Apparel</i> and what does it stand for and this tag and the heart and the dollar sign, just remember the 4 key things then it is fine #88 • But I also have online stores where they sell <i>Changemaker’s Apparel</i> and it is quite difficult because there is no one to tell the story. #88

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • But the concept is not enough you also have to have very strong collections. #88 • <i>Changemaker's Apparel</i> as a company that is trying to do good. <u>I think sometimes our proposition is a bit too complex, when it comes to understand every part of it. But I think as long as they understand some parts of it #10b</u> • But to be honest I don't think that we are communicating enough. So if I would really have the time I would like to every week tell a story about explaining what we are doing and how we are trying to change the world. So I think we are doing a lot but we don't have time to explain all parts of what we are doing #12b • I think it is very important to communicate in general that we want to be very sustainable but we also want to be fashion. And I think it is also a balance and it is very hard to find, whether we should be completely..... organic or whether we should be - and also when we develop our collection it's the same. #16b • we talk really a lot about the principles we have of a long term life-time product, that is sustainable and then of course we also talk about our styles and we also show that we actually also follow a trend, and are not outdated, just because we are not part of a very trend driven approach #16b • buy anything but mostly they would think that it's kind of an interesting brand. #19b • <u>But some of the stores that I talk to, they are afraid that they won't be able to explain the story to consumers. So it is a little bit a conflict #19b</u> • selling online to people - it's a little bit easier on my webpage to tell the story, because I would eventually place a video there and people could be forced to see kind of what the company is about #21b • the biggest problem for me right now is stores. Getting into stores and make people buy the product in the <u>stores. They have to know the story, and it's hard to tell the story.</u> #21b
<i>Inside</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>It is Very important for us not to be perceived as a social label but as a fashion label. #20</u> • And that success for us is to get a lot of customers who don't necessarily support amnesty international and preaching for the choir but to get people on board who like beautiful clothes and that you know there is a sharing and a caring factor and then there is a purchase driver and those things are different and I think they might even be different parts of the brain I don't know. One part of you donates to Amnesty International and another one buys a beautiful sweater #20 • <u>I think it very difficult to try and communicate both those things at once to the same person.</u> And we discussed that a lot and it was definitely with a lot

	<p>of help from Stine our brand manager and the designer Louise to figure out the right tone and the right images to make sure that we communicate it the way that we believe is a fashion communication but still being extremely transparent about our messaging. But a key visual touch point for us has been is fashion and aspiration and want and desire and then we can include in written and other images in some platform blogs longer facebook posts elaborate on the stories behind.#20</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't think it does any good for a fashion label. I think we can show it in images and we can storytelling and we can talk about the women and about what we do but I would never say social responsibility cause I don't think it is appealing for the customer and that it communicates what we want to say. [I1] That is why I hope it will be irrelevant to say social entrepreneurship and social responsibility but tell people about what it is. And I think that has worked for us. We talked about it a lot before we launched and how we would strike that balance and then we launched and it would be interesting to analyse what we actually did because it went really well. We got a lot of positive feedback. People signing up on our waiting list all the time and a lot of PR from fashion magazines which was very important for us that is was from there and not only from (something??). Fashion magazines thought we were really cool so I think we hit some kind of balance with the communication and the visuals are very important and that is also why Stine –our brand manager- she is fantastic. I think the graphic design and the logo all these things matter much more. Making sure at least at that part of the phase that 80% of our work was going into, really trying to work on our communication the perception of our communication and asking people what did they think and what type of images and what is important #24 • It is more of a feeling of who we are and definitively also a feeling of who we do not want to be. We do not want to be the socially responsible fashion brand that really helps these poor women that are suffering #24 • hopefully you don't have to choose [between story and product] you can communicate both and as long as we own the platform and we only say online we can decide- but let's say that one-day we sell in a shop where we don't have big posters. The shirt and the product need to speak for itself. The brand needs to speak for itself . That is very important.#30 • ...I think the important thing is to understand that nowhere in the world- and that is marketing 1.0- can you talk to a person about a need. You need to talk to that person about a want. And that is positioning. I can't tell you buy this vitamin pill because you will be a better person etc. I need to say this is going to make you feel like a better woman do better yoga, I don't know to create a picture that you want to be. That is how you sell and that is like the basics always in any marketing book. [I1] I think NGOs and people who really sometimes believe on their social mission tend to forget that. And say that if the can communicate how important their platform is and how many people are suffering and the planet is dying that the cause will convince people to buy. But
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	<p>the cause is going to convince people to care but it does not mean that you will want the product. So that is what I have been talking about. There are two completely separate things. So it might be beneficial for you if you want followers or support in signature or donation for saving the rainforest but it has nothing to do with why you should buy the rubber tree bag. # 30</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... the better we can communicate their success stories the better we can sell. #38 • V: When I was at CBS I did my master thesis on the importance of branding and marketing and the reason why we failed our first strategy at Ruby Cup was because we thought that we could communicate a need to 12 year old schoolgirls living in complete poverty and we could tell them that “it is sad for you that you cannot afford sanitary pads here you go here is the ruby cup and you can have it for 10 years and will improve your life and it is so cheap” and they were like “I don’t want to use this weird thing wtf is that? No no no I would rather not have anything”. And that it was the key learning that the poor Africans that you are trying to help they do not communicate like that. So we needed to do a lot of branding and design workshops and spent a year with the girls and the women in the slums asking if you were to desire this product “how should it look? Where would you buy it? How much should it cost?”. The classic stuff whether or not they are paying customers you still need to create attractive solutions for the people you are trying to serve. So to sum up the basic understanding of marketing and branding within the social field was missing. The thought that when you went into the social field you though you did not need the classic perception of creating a want.!!! #40 • I think it's a difficult conversation (ref. competition) because I think there is definitively a trade-off between buying an ACNE sweater or buying a <i>Inside</i> sweater for a customer, right? I mean that is in the same price class also. So it's not like there is no competition. But it's definitely more those types of brands, the brands that are cool that are in that price league. Young professional women, who can afford to spend 2500 DKK on a sweater, right? [I1] But again, it's not like she only buys one sweater a year, so you have a wardrobe, so I think it's also complementary at the same time. So if you position your brand in line with other brand that might actually be something that also make you want to buy our clothes. [I2] If you see a girl who is doing both, so I think it's both. #62 • For example we had 470 people sign up on our waitlist since we closed our kick-starter for products, without doing anything. No promotion. You login the website, and if you go there you can sign up for a pre-order for the waitlist. And I don't think it's because people just want the yellow sweater,I don't know, I think it's because they heard about <i>Inside</i> it sounds cool, they want to be part of that universe.#64 • It's both. But I think it’s the balance between the two. But it's definitively part of it. But it's just as much the fact that you can do both. I think it's appeals a
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	<p>lot to exactly that type of customer, who has been fed up with either you kinda feel guilty but we don't want to know where you're clothes is made but you like how it looks. Or you just don't ask because you can't be bothered, but also you feel fed up with a social story being pushed on your throat. And it just looks like a social project and not like a design product.[11] So I think there is an audience how is like, it's cool that they are doing something great and it just looks fabulous.#66</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, it both is equally important. But equally important for me. But it's not 50/50% in every communication platform. In instagram it's 75% fashion and 25%prison. In Facebook it's 70% prison or team or story and 30% fashion, and you know the website. I think it really is important to which one we talk to.#66 • It's a balance, but the purchasing driver is the brand. You need to want to be part of that, you need to say "I really want to look like that girl and buy that sweater, for example[11] " It would be really cool to have the women in prison be models for our clothes, that would be a cool idea. But I don't think, honestly that that would inspire as many people to say " hm, that would look good on me" Because they are just smaller and broader and look different. And you know it would be a cool team picture and we can use that somewhere, but not in the fashion campaign. So that's different perception of when do you speak to your audience about what. #70 • It's not to teach people that they should change their cognitive brains about what motivates them. That's back to not being an angry feminist. I don't wanna be an angry feminist. "It's like me again things. And people should be better people and you know. Corporate wealth sucks and the fashion business is shitty." #72 • But I think for me it is very much about doing it (being a brand with a social purpose) and not showing it. I mean just do it. I mean just create that brand that influences people. Just create that brand that makes it attractive to be part of <i>Inside</i> even though you never supported Amnesty. Like just make that. Create it. So I wanna built it. I don't necessarily want to walk around and tell people "so did you pay attention, did you know that you are actually.. have you changed your habits? are you part of our consumer group? You know? #78 • it will speak for itself, then it means that it will get a lot of customers, who care about our brand. I think [11] “Innocent”. Back in the days. The juice thing. They did a really cool brand thing right? This is 10 years ago, when you did not have a lot of really cool juices. But they were really good at it. It's been a commercial success. Why? - They made it fun to be part of a juice story, with a very personal story of the founders. And they had all people knit heads for their juices. It was a very cool idea and it sold well[12] . So I don't think the brand is so important and the way you built it, but it's going to show whether
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	<p>you're actually influence people, depending on how many customers you get. And in that sense, it's a classic business. #78</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think collaborations yes. But retail strategies are not part of our idea. We would like to have maybe some day some specific offline collaborations. That could be unique. For example to work with Colette in Paris or like some of these high-end stores, where it is a brand collaboration, it's a marketing status as well to say you are part of that universe. #80 • it's just normally when you pitch to an investor you prepare, for every pitch you prepare beforehand. But can I just tell you what I would tell them, like just explaining the brand. #83
Elise Andersen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • But now we are also looking at, how are we gonna kind of re-brand the company, so that it is more than just another jewellery company. I mean how is this different. And it's kind of, I think it's something that we are realizing. It kind of depends on whom we are speaking to, what we place more emphasis on. Like now we have been preparing to get some funding. And you know, we're trying to figure out the message on what's important to them. And we've come kind of back and forth, of "okay should we kind of leave the Thailand project aside and focus more on the jewellery cause that is kind of what they get and what they know. #7 • <u>Yeah, in the beginning I didn't even tell anyone, about it, because it was like people didn't get it.....</u> I am a craftsman basically #13 • L: I started it and Anna will work on that also, that is a new website. And we will really invest in that, to kind of kind of make the whole universe. [11] The one right now is not reflecting the whole thing, it is more just like a visit card. And we will make a very good web shop there but also sharing knowledge more like how to make it and what is the inspiration behind and what is the philosophy. #41 • <u>And it is almost too much and too confusing for people to kind of grasp in their heads: Okay, but you're making jewellery? Why are we talking about a kindergarden.#52</u> • [input about confusion of some people]...Oh Elise , please don't spread yourself too much. You know..You have a lot of good ideas, but please don't think about it.... So it's a little. I don't talk so much about it. #54 • I mean we met with some other social entrepreneurs, who totally get it.#55 • And it's then that we have to really emphasize the more traditional approach, with like a sprinkling of the nice social side. Because it's what they understand and it makes it less risky of an investment because everyone understands, you know, PANDORA, or something like that. It's like

	<p>“okay yeah I get it, I understand that industry” that business. Where else, I think, it’s social enterprises are such a new concept and people just confuse it with “oh that’s just a non-profit, right? That’s just their charity”. There is no money in that. #59</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • And before I tried to talk with already organized companies, who are not that strong in design but very strong in business. But we could never meet, because they actually didn’t get the importance about design. They only focused on money. #66 • I think I would, when working with the brand and the communication, I want people to be able to appreciate, that what they are buying is special and that it is made by someone who values very good design, someone who is gifted with working with this materials, with stones, that it is very value driven. #70 • So to be able to try and for people to understand that they buy something that they can wear in good conscience, that they can understand exactly where it traces back to.#70 • I think as a brand, she is perceived as a very strong jewellery designer. I don’t think there is much recognition or emphasis as a social entrepreneur or as a maybe a designer #89 • So we need, what we’ve been looking at for the website, is having someone, who is really strong in creating a strong visual identity, and like company concept. Because it is something really difficult, when you’re in it to be able to step out of your brand and say okay, this is us. It’s something that you just know, oh that’s really how we work.#93 • If you explain you brand identity or the core to a web developer what do you say then?: L: Laughing ... Yes that’s hard. We have to start with the values about us.#97/99 • C: What is the hard thing is to get it all down, in one sentence.#101 • You know.. and that’s really hard, when people ask you, “so what is your core?” I mean there are some companies that then just say, we do this and this and this. And we are like,hm.... But it’s actually a process of kind of development. Right now it is kind, the final line is still up here and we kind of realize like “oh yeah that’s important, and that’s important and that” and hopefully with the help of this web site development or it’s more of a concept company for a design concept. Hopefully they will help trim it down, word by word working with them together and getting it nice and neat and sharp and simple, because I think that’s really important.#103 → Because it was actually also hard to find someone who understood. #106 • What do you experience as challenges or limits when building this universe L: My poor ability to communicate clear. C: I also think because there is so much, it’s the way to simplify all this.#139
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<p><i>Manifesto</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We want to educate and communicate the need for sustainable fashion[explains about Monsanto & cotton farmers]... And want to be a <u>positive alternative</u>, and at the same time we want to communicate the <u>need</u> for it.#10 • We believe in the mankind's ability to learn and live with the boundaries of the planet, we have inherited. So we want to communicate that need. Like we want to communicate the beliefs and the positive things that can be done. And we make clothing that are part of the solution. #14 • [to be seen by the customer]Fashionable and positive, like a positive alternative in the clothing market. The look at the product, the fit, the price, the quality those are the main factors, that if you don't have those, you don't have a business in this market#18 • [challenge]We have a very small reach; we don't have a very big platform to communicate from. That's a big problem. <u>And we need to sharpen our message.</u>#34 • Like our stores are still called T-shirt stores. We are re-branding them to <i>Manifesto</i> now and that is our biggest platform. So when we re-brand we can be more clear and push more for the sustainable aspects. And we also need to invest in some instore material for our wholesales customers around the world, so that they can communicate the <i>Manifesto</i> values in a way. We haven't done so much before. #34 • Our customers mainly buy the product because of the design and the fact that it is sustainable is a positive thing for them, but they are not willing to pay extra for it. So that is a challenge. So that's one of the things that make it a bit complicated. #40 • And there's stores that carry different brands, are the big loser in the market. They are shutting down a lot of them, because fast fashion is killing them and the strong brands open mono brand stores that are killing them and e-commerce is killing them. So they are eaten up from all sides. And those are kind of the breeding grounds for fashion brands to develop, is the independent multi-brand stores. So that's a challenge . It's hard to sell online unless you create a big buzz, like a hype or that you have some kind of edge to draw traffic, because online business is basically like you know, you open up a store in the woods, no one can find you, you have to drag every customer in there. #48 • They don't hide it. But they promise that, because they are not 100% sustainable, maybe some of the products are not sustainably produced, they don't put the Fair Trade logo or the GOT, in the clothing because then the customer might wonder, why this GOTs but this is not. They will think that it is not consequent. So I guess they don't want too many logos, except their own in their clothing. So they use street wear as a hygiene/hiding? Factor. #60 • When it comes to brands, we try to talk to as many brands as possible and kind of push them towards a goal, to use organic cotton and certified and recycled fabrics, so I try to bully them in a way. And sometimes we succeed with that actually. #64 • We want to expand with the retail stores, in the big cities. In locations where local fashion shoppers, as well as tourists are moving. We want to have a foot
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	<p>folk and convert from that, and not spend too much money on marketing, because people are coming regardless on those locations and we want to have a strong online presence. Pretty much think, online first. Do professional seating?? Of products to good influencer, who are knowledgeable about sustainability and promote that to their “forworks”?? and also promote their brand. So a few strong influencers in every country as ambassadors for <i>Manifesto</i> and make campaigns with those and work very closely with them and communicate the values and our new products. #66</p>
<i>Respekt</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The promise is to be as transparent as possible . That is also a thing we need to work on and that is because I am so into it, I am down there myself and I know what I am doing, but of course that is not something our customers at the moment would see. In the way that we are branding ourselves. #25 • But it is a way to create hype and people talking about us. So the more we have these shop owners who like us and love us they will maybe get direct contact with the customers and a good relationship so that is where we start to make a good reputation#33 • That is in terms of who we talk to. Like if I go to a shop, I would never talk about the film project. Maybe if we start talking and we go in even further but just like an introduction to ourselves then we are only a fashion brand and that is it. Because it becomes too complicated. #43 • Because I think the way that people marketize themselves is not how the reality really is and that is a big prolem within the sustainability paradigm however you want to call it#67 • [earlier challenge: to make profit#73] To be honest I think we can always sell. If we have the direct contact with a person we usually end up with a sale to our experience. To reach those people, without having direct contact in terms of our marketing and PR, yes that is a challenge.#75 • [communication challenge]I think it’s a mix. Cause about the network if you have a powerful person or an influencer however you want to call it [AB1] you get credibility as a company. This is also something that <i>Respekt</i> lacks at the moment.#79 • We just go in. We don’t set up meetings most of the times. We are quite like a salesperson from the 80’s or 70’s. We just come with our collection and it's all about being humble I think.I That is the most important because if you are something you are not then they will see through it straight away. And then with this approach we get a lot of feedback because we are new and then we talk about Nepal and people have a hard time to say no. #83 • want people to feel that it is good quality. And I want them to feel comfort. And I want them to know that it is long lasting design. We use the term aesthetic sustainability, which is the aesthetic expression that can last a long time and for me that is what I want the customer to feel. #95 • This is what we want to work on for next year. It is the movie that shows our supply chain. And then it is also through – of course I hope when we get the

	<p>clothes into shops there would be some people who would like to write articles about us- but I also hope that we can write something ourselves. Not maybe about <i>Respekt</i> but about the issues that we are interested in like for example this aesthetic sustainability how important that is in order for something to be sustainable.#97</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • but would be perfect is to get a new partner who could join us and that would be their sort of field, PR and Marketing somebody who likes to do those things. And that is also what we are in search of. <u>And that is what we learned this past year that is mainly our biggest weakness #99</u> • So for me it needs to be very easy for people to find information. Now I think it is complicated it needs to be simpler. The way you find information needs to be simple, less of these boxes if possible and I would like to have more pictures and less text to show the process. That is why I want the movie in there cause you are able to explain so much more in much less time.#113 • Yes that is something we are lacking I think. I am also very bad with words. I am a bad communicator in that sense. I can communicate through my clothing #117
<i>Ethical Essentials</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We talk a lot about our values cause that is what is driving our brand and what gets people interested. So about sustainability and how by buying our products they can make the sustainable choice by using organic cotton instead of the other. So we have a lot of unique selling points. Also about production how the media is talking about us, and what our customers are saying #22 • Not really. Because it is such a complex picture and we have so much data. It differs from day to day the straight up good sales approach is working and then the other day is your blog post about how to travel sustainably #30 • We are friends with them and we treat them as friends and try to be honest and very transparent when we communicate our values.#50 • [impact]I think we are getting customers from old brands like Calvin Klein and Tommy Hilfiger and I think that is part of the consumers becoming more aware of who they are rooting for. #54 • So they should have the idea that they are buying a quality product not just in terms of the quality of the fabric but the whole of the product together. Not just buying a product but actually supporting a whole cause. So kind of feeling as being a part of a movement where they are doing something good by making an informed choice. #60 • People they buy from us because they think it is a valuable purchase-so it is a good price point and it is easy because it is online and it is sustainable so that is like the 3 main reasons.#62 • ...want to do is kind of facilitate how our products are shown in stores so we want to make our own point of sales where we can inform people when they make the purchase so that they can get some information and also we want to educate our sales stuff in stores where they can get a little booklet and they can read about our brand #76

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That is something we are optimizing right now to make our website more understandable. The thing is you need to keep it really short and when you are a company you really want to tell the whole story it's hard to keep the whole thing short but if you don't people will not really read it so we used to have a lot of text on the website but we are trying to cut that down make it more to the bone.#82 • blog posts with customers asking them about sustainable consumption there are numerous ways of how to communicate this.#102 • We want to sell to small cool stores that are interested in telling our stories. We are not snobbish we do want to do some high end stores because they have more time to tell the story but anyways the more people who buy the products the more impact we do#108 • [pitch-website] So we actually did change the website and what we focused on was to get the values more in front but also make it a better purchasing experience so to focus on the product and the purpose so we focus on the two P's of course price is also important but to the consumer we are talking to it is not really that important so Purpose and Product is really what we focus on.#117
<i>Women in Knit</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We <u>want to make a difference</u> so we want to make clothing that lives up to the standards of the conscious consumer. #22 • As I said before that we would like people to buy our clothes because they are beautiful but we also want them to know, to assure that we have been taking care of the resources that we had a thoughtful decision of what kind of materials we use and how they are produced #24 • We address them by telling stories. We are telling stories about what we do and who we are and where we come from. #40 • Already when we started the business we knew that our visuals were our business card to the world because very seldom I am in the right spot having cocktails with influential people, because we are so isolated our way of communicating is very visual so already from day one the first money that we ever had to spent we did not spend it on salary for me for example but on the best photographers, the best models and aimed for the best visuals we did that already from day one that we spent money for the best visuals. #52 • I would say when you look at how small we are in the fashion world we are quite well know but we still lack that we are so successful that we really do make a difference in the fashion arena #64 • But first of all we want people to see that it is beautiful and then we go like step two in it is to talk about sustainability and ethical clothing, yes it's important as well. #74 • when we are at fairs <u>the buyers can be so busy that they cannot absorb the full message so we have to give them the message very very shortly you have to make it in a word or at the most in a sentence</u> #82 • you have to have different levels of communication for different kind of people, so people are able to look further and further into it #82

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am telling them “This is a hand-knitted collection from the Faroe Islands and it is all produced in natural materials and it is produced by knitters in their own homes in the Faroe Islands and in Jordan and Peru and that Peru and Jordan are part of our women empowerment project #84 (also product and organization) • : And also getting the message out to people to have even more interesting in buying the clothing paying the price, to get them understand why ethical clothing is more expensive to produce than let’s say t-shirts made in China so like opening the minds of people getting the consumers more conscious, having this group of conscious consumers growing #90 • [admirer; how they want to be perceived]Our biggest... when you look at what Chanel did you both see a revolutionary view on things you will see a very very strong woman you can see a creative force that was explosive and you can see timelessness in it that you can have a Chanel thing that is 50 years old and it still relevant and that is what luxury is about that is what hand-craftsmanship is about and that can be forever, very very very inspiring. So looking at those stories is very important #118 (maybe communication;) • [Admirer; how they want to be perceived]And we also admire some very good business successful people for example I think it’s really inspiring to see what ACNE is doing. They are not focusing that much on ethical clothing as they produce also at higher prices assuming that they also paying more for the production they are also being creative but in a very modern way and that is also very inspiring to see and also to see that in Japan. We would very much like to be hand in hand with for example ACNE in Japan. #118 (communication) • And having the dream story where you don’t even know that you are promoting the product where you are just saying a very good story and you are trying to seduce people. Our website should try to seduce people and they should not even know that we are trying to sell something they are just telling a very good story and they can’t help buying something in the end and this is for me a very sophisticated way of seducing people not saying like buy buy buy and we don’t have a yellow sign saying sale sale sale, for example we talk about instead of sales we say last pieces and it’s true we only have a couple of last pieces we sell we don’t have sale’s ever. So it is very much about seducing. #134 (Pitching exercise - web designer)
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	VIEW ON THE FASHION INDUSTRY
<i>Changemaker’s Apparel</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think in the ethical fashion industry we stay open and pretty much help each other, which is cool! #86

<i>Inside</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I always promised him that I would never be in the fashion industry. It was definitely not for me. The business of selling, not the business of designing and creating, but the rest I thought of it was a tough business with a lot of risk for the agents for the shops. • there is a lot of things in fashion that I like it just the way of producing in fashion is completely fucked up. But there are a lot of things about identity creation and beauty that could do a lot of good things for people so I think the Industry needs a big makeover. • a world of textile production that is extremely harmful to the environment and we can prove that it can be done in a better way
<i>Elise Andersen</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The jewellery industry in Denmark is very old-fashioned. And he contacted me and said “no Elise , not you” You are not on the list. So I am not belonging to fashion designers in a way#90
<i>Manifesto</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have been travelling and creating different brands. And doing the production in Far East, anywhere from China, India, Pakistan, Morocco and in big production cities . You can clearly see the destructive impact from the textile industry, because it requires a lot of their water to clean and to dye and different processes for treating the textile and all those hubs around the world are in cities, where there is a lot of water or a big river. And that water of those rivers are always completely polluted, extremely full of chemicals that are just poured straight into the rivers. So rivers like that they used to have a lot of wild life, a lot of birds and insects and otters but now it’s just a dead polluted river, floating into the ocean and then even having an impact, of those, you know eco-systems of the ocean and it’s the most disgraceful thing you can ever imagine. Just for cheap clothing basically. You know. So even now there are laws against this pollution, it’s still not repaired and especially company’s like H&M, Primark, they just move to the next country and now they move to Cambodia and Vietnam and now it’s only...in Vietnam for example there is only 20% of the industrial areas have a sewage system. So it’s a big disgrace. So.. Fast Fashion is the big enemy of the planet. #8 • Fast fashion is much more green washed, you know, if they have something organic it’s usually baby clothing and so on. And then they maybe do some gimmick collection like conscious collection and they market that heavily, so people think the whole shop it sustainable, but it’s only those 2% of the turnover that’s really conscious.#60

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So and for the bigger, fast fashion companies a lot of shaming is necessary from the media. We can't really talk to those brands. #64
<i>Respekt</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if you look at the way they use resources and the way they exploit the people hmmm, in terms of facts we know that the fashion industry is among the most polluted industries in the world...And I don't think that fashion in itself is bad but it is just the way you use fashion in terms of mass production and this is where it sort of goes crazy. Because of the mass consumption of products that are not long lasting and as in the west we end up giving it away or throwing it away...I would say it is mindless because the economy part of it is about making profit and for us it is about feeling insecure and we need these trends to feel well and to feel good to have some kind of identity #4 • but it is just the world that they create through these perfection standards which is very disgusting it think#51 • I am a big fan of Patagonia the sports brand. Of course it is mass production that they are doing which I am against but they really try to make an effort especially in the sports industry, making products that are more sustainable in terms of the environment and people and also all these side projects that they are doing. #53
<i>Ethical Essentials</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I see it going up, we get a larger and larger middle class that has more money and these are some of their values that people really start to focus on cause it what creates a better life of them start making more sustainable choices it's not about having more crappy products it is about purchasing fewer but more high quality products when you know that people haven't suffered in order to make it. #100
<i>Women in Knit</i>	

	<p>VIEW ON THEIR IDENTITY</p> <p>Values</p> <p>Purpose</p> <p>Story,-goals</p> <p>business activities</p> <p>founder identity & believes</p> <p>How they perceive themselves</p>
<i>Changemaker's Apparel</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think the personal values that I took into this company from the beginning I created seven values that I wanted to lead with in this

	<p>company and these are Hope-Dare-Discover-Achieve-Enjoy-Give-Inspire. #6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think there is a quote saying “it is nice to be important but it is more important to be nice”, and I think that is one of my main things, that no matter what you do you have to be nice in the way you do it and I think the personal values that I took into this company from the beginning I created seven values that I wanted to lead with in this company and these are Hope-Dare-Discover-Achieve-Enjoy-Give-Inspire. So for me this has been a personal journey of trying to really go for a big goal and daring to go for it and try to achieve it while also give and enjoy and inspire. #6 • I like my kids and I like my family, I like to travel. It is actually quite basic. And that is also why I found out that I don’t really need a big salary cause my individual needs are like I am the happiest when I am sitting on my couch with my two kids at home and my wife, and I don’t need to be lying in a beach in Mauritius –it is nice but I don’t have need it. #12 • The whole sustainability is something that came to the brand over time because for the beginning I wanted to create a brand that gave money back. Then I started developing the concept with some other people and we realized that if you have apparel and you give something away it is kind of a half ass solution cause. If you don’t do it in a sustainable way then you are still causing harm. So it was kind of over time that we picked up on sustainability and all these issues and wondered what to do in order to build the most sustainable model. So now it has also influenced myself and I get these vegetarian meals I kicked out my nespresso coffee machine because of the aluminum thing and it is kind slowly influencing my life and sometimes I also eat stake it is not like I am a saint but it has starting to influence me. #22 • There are some people who say we should only be in sustainable stores but if I am only in those stores I only hit the people who are already sustainable. I want to go to the fashion stores to hit the people who are less or not sustainable to change them. #24 • and we get a lot for free (marketing) because we have the philosophy that we do, and if we were just a “normal” “boring” brand with “cheap ass” t-shirts we would not get any of this. #28 • and in the whole point of giving back I think we are one of the best cause we have high ambitions #30 • Our philosophy is to be extremely open about it and everything is laid on the table so everybody can see what we are doing and if someone says we are not doing something the right way, we listen and we react quite fast to it. #32 • In the beginning my vision was to create a fun and fast company that matters. My personal vision was to create a cool place to work and I had to be able to make fast decisions. #43 • It is not my vision to make the world’s biggest company but a niche company. #47
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- I think the main challenge for me is to get into a fashion store so basically to kick some of the other kind of “normal” brands out of the store and have a sustainable brand. So I would much rather cooperate with some of the other sustainable brands and then try to compete with the fast fashion brands. **So I don’t have any specific brands to say they are my competitor but it is more my philosophy that “the new way of doing fashion vs. the old way of doing fashion”. #66**
- **My buying price is a lot higher than anybody else in this fair cause I have so many principles and you see buyers who are more ethical** so I think that is the main thing that you have stores that don’t know yet that consumers are looking for it cause they are not asking since the store does not have it. #78
- **an apparel company where we try to combine both doing good in production, doing good beside making money, and also doing good in giving back to charity #2b**
- I think one of the main things is - I don't want to sound narcissistic - **but I think one of the reasons why get on TV a lot, is my background. I came from a CEO job in a more money and commercial oriented industry and I left that in order to built something of value. So the whole idea of the name of the company, of not becoming a man of success but becoming a man of value, I think that a lot of people see as very unique.** You know, taking that job from the commercial industry and do something else #6
- I think in the **concept** itself. There are a lot of companies doing something about organic apparel, being sustainable, long-live textile and there are also some companies doing something with charity, **but I think we are the only ones combining all of this in one concept.** I am not saying we are perfect or completely unique, but I think we are one of the ones doing the most. #6b
- It's very **important for us to be transparent and authentic. Always say everything exactly as it is. I think that is also how people know us so far. And we are quite honest about what we do. #8b**
- **So I think being authentic is one of the most important things #8b**
- (pitching exercise-stakeholders) *Changemaker’s Apparel* is a new sustainable business, that is kind of going for the blue ocean in the market of sustainable apparel. It aims to become the most sustainable brand in the market. And at the position, that I don't think that this is something that is yet in the market. **The way we want to try to earn money is by making products that are more or less in a negotiable price range.** Create a cool brand that can be in some of the nicest stores #33b
- (pitching exercise- shop owner)
- **But *Changemaker’s Apparel* offers a unique mix of organic materials and materials that are recyclable, so a quite ambitious giving back principle. #35b**
- (pitching exercise-consumer)
- **With *Changemaker’s Apparel* we try to do things a little bit better,** we try to use organic materials, we try to use good production, we try to create styles that last for a long time. We make these cool new codes, so people can resell

	<p>and reuse them. And also the tracking tool that you can use, you can show in which year it was made. In order to say, wow this is actually from the first collection. And we also engage very much into charity. So we believe people should start going in a more organic, sustainable direction in order to save the world, whether they pick <i>Changemaker's Apparel</i> or not that's up to them. But they should start looking in that direction. #37b</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (pitching exercise-branding agency) Well, <i>Changemaker's Apparel</i> is a Nordic, minimalistic brand and we try to operate in very much kind of black and white, the way we use colours in everything we do. We try to kind of have a clean and simple look and we try to also add humour and kind of authentic and transparent look to everything #41b
<i>Inside</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I went to business school to figure out how I could infiltrate capitalism so I can change it for the better. And I guess we met half way, so capitalism also infiltrated me. I was fed up with how the non-existing change of how NGOs have acted for the last 60 years. #2 (founder identity) • So I was inspired by business and approached to create solutions and to react in a non-competitive world where you can partner. [I1] So not the classical old school Porter shit. So of course I fell in love with social entrepreneurship and particularly base of the pyramid business. We were inspired by that and studied all I could #2 (founder identity) • I started my own company called Ruby Cup, a social business in Kenya, and moved there to try to do all the things that I read and of course it was much different than books... So I also realized I really like this way of working of creativity of building your own business and team and finding out how you work. #2 • So in February last year I started thinking about <i>Inside</i> or what was “made in prison” at the time and then went to Peru and everything started. #2 • I always promised him that I would never be in the fashion industry#4 [...] So it was actually funny that I ended up in fashion but I think it was actually obvious to me when I visited the women’s prison in Kenya that they would all be sitting, sewing and knitting every day and I was just annoyed by the fact that these factories – basically- prisons or whatever and that reason that they were there was poverty. They committed some kind of crimes out of need and they were stuck there for so many years and they sat there for so many hours a day trying to do something which they could not sell cause they didn’t have any design expertise and no access to market. I think it is definitely the dissatisfaction with looking at this world were we all have too little time and there are people with way too much time and[I2] it is about creating the right demand for the right products. So that is why it made sense to do fashion and I guess I believe a lot in creating aspirational solutions #4

- ..there was also a lot of **intuition** [referring to writing a business concept]. **All the things that have been built on since then has been inspiration, also since the business model had to be completely different cause the concept was completely different it would never fit into seasons it would never fit into the classic way of selling into retail so I have been studying those pure online models and pre-order models.** How can you alleviate risk how can you make a small bulks turn into higher margins.#6
- **I have a good network. That is the great thing of being in the social business field, people really want to help and there some really smart intelligent people...** So everything I knew from people in finance and business and retail but also production and logistics so the whole heavy side of it#8
- **I don't believe that people should change or that you should convince anybody of social entrepreneurship. I also believe that the term is going to be irrelevant at some point.** So no I definitely don't see it as a field where you need people other from the *Inside* or the outside I think it is a fake border[I1] . It is a business. **Inside is a business we have a goal of employing women in prison but they are producers so for us of course there is a social purpose but at the end of the day it is business we need to make products and we need to sell. [I2] So if we want to achieve our social mission of employing women in prison giving them good wages and for them to give that to their children[I3] we need to make sure the business works so it much more important to get feedback from business people. The better we do business wise the more impact we can have #10!!!!**
- The purpose is obviously to create **meaningful jobs for women in prison who are currently not employed with good salaries so that we can hopefully alleviate poverty for them and their families. That is the main purpose.** [I1] But there is a **sub-purpose as well which is to do that through fashion through clothes that inspire**, in a world of textile production that is extremely harmful to the environment and **we can prove that it can be done in a better way without in any way compromising the coolness and the sexiness of fashion.** I think that's the How. The "what you need to do" to be successful about it.#12
- To take resource that is unused and produce a product that is desirable and create a business that hopefully one day will be profitable and through the business success you create your solution for the problem so to me it is completely aligned. [business activity] **And it is definitely both. I have never done just NGO work were you don't think how to create a sustainable business. I believe that, and that is why I guess capitalism infiltrated me a little bit as well, that the sexiness of showing that you can create a successful business also on the bottom line by trying to solve some of society's biggest challenges. I think that is interesting for the future of business for the future of NGO's as well.#16**

- I have always been early out seeking for ways to be part of the world and to discuss it and always was annoyed when things were not going well but it took me a while to figure out how to find a toolbox that was fitting for me where I thought I could be part of creating solutions and I love in this era of bleak dark global problems and all these other things I really love the growth of the social business thinking. #18
- I think it is a sparking and inspiring light that you design your way to better solutions and I hate moralistic approaches. It does not work for me when people say take a shorter shower to save water I don't believe in being a different person and thinking differently and that human nature can be changed by morale that is also why **I dislike the concept of corporate responsibility.**#18
- **I believe in motivation and inspiration and aspiration...So let's just design better solutions that are inspiring instead of trying to change human nature.**#18
- **I think it comes very much from within.** We haven't done the classic corporate brand value exercise. We have talked a lot about what we want people to understand and for example I would never say that our brand values is socially responsibility. But it is. It is inherit in the DNA but I would never say that as a brand value. Because it is so aligned with everything we do it is not something that we have to fight for[I1] . The more sweaters we sell the more women we employ that is how it works#22
- **I would rather that people would not even know that it was made in prison. I mean if I had to choose #30**
- **Yes. I feel like this are a little bit like classic corporate questions. Brand values and ethics... for me it comes from a paradigm that does not really fit my bill if I may say. #34**
- Yes cause that is what people study from the outside and then they go and say **"Oh they are really good ethically" and they call it ethics on this and this but when you build something it is not like you have a handbook where you say ok if I stop eating meat because I believe that it is really bad for the planet then that also means I have to take really sort showers. It is not like you if you do something just a little bit then you have to be perfect that is when you have academics criticizing you. I think from a business perspective it is about improving all the time #36**
- I have never done that before. So that is where I need to improve my skills. I had to learn how to knit cause we had to find a way to build prototypes in Denmark cause it took too long. So we went to a knitting course in Jutland (?).

	<p>And that is where there is impact. And I would not classify it as ethical but what that means is we can develop much faster meaning we can employ more women meaning we can scale our business so it is completely aligned for me.#36</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>the better we do that the better they produce the better we can communicate their success stories the better we can sell.</u>#38 • It was very easy. I really that that would be the hardest part. Just called up found the number of the prison president in Peru and said, "hello, hello we are coming from Denmark, we'd like to come and is it possible to visit prisons?" And he said, yes, yes it's possible. Just come. So we went to Peru, because many times you don't know anything before you are there. So we were like okay we can't get any more information, like through Google etc. and we thought okay we need to go there, so we went and he was very excited and said okay, it's great, where do you want to have access to?" And got access to all the different prisons. And they are really fantastic partners the prison system. And we are the first international partners they have. And they are super excited about all the things we are going to do together. So in Peru it's been easy. But in India or Thailand it might be very difficult, we don't know.#42 • Yes, but not too early. Because there are 180 women in this prison, so it's going to take a long time before we have another 80 jobs. So it's not the goal to just have more prisons. It's the goal to have more women. [11] But in a good growth rate.#58 • I think the story is part of the brand. But the brand which is what we are creating for the customer..... I think it's [why people signed up for pre-orders] because they heard about <i>Inside</i> it sounds cool, they want to be part of that universe. So I think brand building is super important. More than focusing on one product. And I think that is the same for those labels, I don't think that it is one sweater from ACNE, I think people buy ACNE because they want something from ACNE and then they find something in the universe. It's like "okay then I am kind of creative, but also a little bit edgy but still normal.." #64 • But do you think that your edge is the story? It's both. But I think it's the balance between the two. But it's definitively part of it. But it's just as much the fact that you can do both. #65/66 • (Story and business) Yes, it both is equally important. But equally important for me. #68 • But I think it's all about the key objective here is of course to the more we sell the more good we do# 71
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is nothing rebellious. There is no anger. That's not our project. It's like building something new that is inspiring and that includes. I think that is very much, at least my motivation.#72 • I guess I choose influential #76 • But I think for me it is very much about doing it (being a brand with a social purpose) and not showing it. I mean just do it. I mean just create that brand that influences people #78 • So of course we want to be part of a solution to a new way of doing fashion, very important. And completely disrupt some parts of the systems and the norms and you know everything is built up in a traditional corporate language or this and this. Like, what is fashion? what is social? There are so many dichotomies?? Apparently. But I think the way to do that, is - do it. And if that works, then it will speak for itself #78 • Everything comes back to the key core value in our business is the production #80 • (pitch to investor) Okay, <i>Inside</i> is a social business, that manufactures in women's prisons. We make exclusive clothes, made in 100% natural materials. We have a disruptive business model in the sense of we have no stock and sell exclusively online. This means that we have less risk, cause we manage our production, we never go on sale. We reduce the retail margin by only selling online, which means that we can compete in the luxury market without the retail/resale market. We gonna go within the first 3 years we are going to be in 3 different countries. We're going to be selling from 50 – to 250 units a month, that's our breakeven point, we're expecting to reach that within a month, a year and a half. #85 • (pitch to agency) <i>Inside</i> is a fashion brand, we have a social impact, we manufacture in women's prisons and we are competing in the market where it's very important that we use our story to be different but at the same time use it as a cool edge. And that we want to sell to customer's who think that our products are great no matter of the story.
<i>Elise Andersen</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That's why at the CBS presentation, when Elise was talking about the work she does in Thailand, it wasn't necessarily something that she said, "oh I am a social initiative, or I am doing social entrepreneurship, but in my head that was what she was doing.#1-2. L: I didn't even know that there was a kind of title for it. (Laughing) • But now we are also looking at, how are we gonna kind of re-brand the company, so that it is more than just another jewellery company. I mean how is this different. #7

- **L: I mean, it is.. what we have to find a way for now, is kind of a way to know, how we should kind of align it #10**
- **L: We started to work together after CBS and that was exactly what I needed, that we can built a healthy business, also healthy financial, but we had to make it value based- based, based on same values. Because every time some people have tried to get into my company, to support or to finance. They don't care about the social, ehm, what do you call it. The social impact. They just go for a very old-fashioned style, in a way.#10**
- **And we will really invest in that, to kind of kind of make the whole universe. #41**
- **It's kind of the collaboration process in Thailand. So it's kind of how to kind of separate the commercial side and then there is the kind of job creation in rural villages..... we want to push more forward, to bring Elise , seeing as it is, it is her story, her brand, her project and knowledge to really pull that out and have her as a figure. Someone you can learn from, someone you can be inspired by #48**
- **Share experience and adventures #49**
- **C: ...for the moment we will be the jewellery and that's almost the excuse to do something good in rural areas. #50**
- **[on her business] L: So it will all be together. I don't want to carry it on two lines#56**
- **You know I am not doing this for the good of my health, I wanna make money from my investment. #59**
- **That was eye opening for me to realize, that there is kind of a definition on this (on social entrepreneurship)#66**
- **when they buy a piece of jewellery, they kind of know they buy a piece of this whole story. It's not a story that came after. It's like they know that they are supporting something new, buying a piece of a new world sort of. #69**
- **Yeah, I think it's important to know the back story about how this was made, with both Thailand....how, Elise works and how special that is, compared to how other jewelleries are made... #70**
- **someone who values very good design, someone who is gifted with working with this materials, with stones, that it is very value driven #70**
- **It's holistic in a way. It's like the whole thing.**
- **[vision]To grow a community#75;**
- **[vision] To have a lot of people who is wearing this part of jewellery. Is kind of supporting the whole thing. So in the very end, we want to have an impact on students, from different universities and design schools.#78**
- **Elise has the story and such rich stories and such strong collections.#93**
- **I mean what it means. It is kind of holistic, that everything from the... I mean in the jewellery making process even from materials from the ground to the table and for me it's really important to think about the client in the end. Because it has to work out on the body. So all processes are equal to me.**

	<p>And I like that we actually take care of all processes. That's one point that we talk about. We just had this presentation. But then the whole vision behind the production, the Thailand project and the people is important as well. C: Because then it is about honouring traditional handcraft but making it more contemporary, with contemporary design. So how to marry these two things together. To kind of... like there is a part of a cultural heritage and art and history and bringing that back #97-99</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C: Yeah it's kinda like an aspiration. Kinda like the VIPP bin or the Bang & Olafson. So this is a type of experience and kind of life style, people want to be part of. • L: So it's not just fashion. It's more than that.#109-10 • Because I was always between two sides. I was not very good at focusing on making money, because I thought it was either or. Because either I am a business or I am non-profit and I can't take money out of it and then I always took a very little payment for myself and it was actually sometimes too hard in a way. And now I think it's much more balanced in a way and more realistic, because it is the money that will make it possible for us to make something good. So we want a healthy business. #114 • Because you know, a company still has to live in order to be effective. Whereas is was either buy this cup or here it is for free. And that is the charity model. And I think it is also a shift in the mind set that it is maybe just okay to earn money and be a profitable business at the same time as trying to make an impact. Because those two have just been completely treated separately up until recently.#115 • Because once you go down the route of establishing yourself as a non-profit. You're more bound to a particular way of doing things. You are not as free or as flexible as entrepreneurs should be you know. "Oh maybe we should develop a line of scarves, that are ethically produced #120 • And I am not really connected to the jewellery industry. I don't really belong there and I cannot really find. I tried to get into the more commercial. But because I value the craft and how you make it so much, it's like you buy another value, when you buy my jewellery, than if you just buy it from the industry, where it is mass produced. So I don't really fit. And I don't really fit into the fashion. #125 • L: I see, I think when you work as a social entrepreneur, I look more towards other projects and I think we lift each other and we are on the same page. #127 • So it's another way of purchasing. And I think once you start purchasing a that way, you then pay attention to other things. #128
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [on product: necklace] And they often give those white flowers in a straw to them. It's so cute.#133 • C: So this is what we kind of mean by the stories as well, it's there and it's authentic.#134 • And but I think I did a lot of pre-work for the brand. So we have something to build upon now. C: Definitely we have a huge amount.#147 • [on success] Hhm... (thinking) L: I mean. I feel like the success is that we are here together. But it is actually when we are established our place in Thailand and the communication is clear. I will feel kind of relieved. And if we will have more people in. Even very sooner. I feel that my vision is kind of landed. When I see the structure there and I start to work on what I am good at. I think then that's success.#161-2 • <u>...I saw the vision for so long ago and it took me so long to go here.</u> Because you know it's the time and a lot of different factors that are important in the process.#164 • [on success]So I don't think that it is about earning a particular amount or reaching a particular goal in a market, like reaching a particular size in the US. Or dominating Denmark. It's about a state where we can work and achieve what we want to achieve, at least.#165 • [Investor pitch]: So you have an amazing opportunity to invest in a company with a legacy of a well-known collection. It is beautifully made. It has huge potential to grow and scale internationally. It is a contemporary jewellery collection that we know is popular in the US, in places in Europe, Italy and Germany. We are looking for investment, so that we can grow and scale to build the brand, tell our story and share meaningful product.#177. L: Maybe the production phase.C: Oh yeah, the production really didn't make it into it. Well it was for the investors#180 • [employee pitch] Because here we really appreciated the hand-crafted. It's not mass production. But we value the skills of craftsmanship and that's what we know what you are very good at.#188
<i>Manifesto</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • history before]in 2012 we started to wholesale the product under the name, <i>Manifesto</i> but the product was always sustainable, with this clothing business . So we had a GOTs Certified Cotton T-shirts. But when we whole-saled in 2012. The idea was to create a sustainable lifestyle brand, basically a sustainable streetwear brand, because there were only sustainable fashion brands for babies, women, kids and outdoors but nothing for young men. And since sustainability is the future obviously we thought that was very strange. So we wanted to create that brand, basically. So that's what we are working on still #6

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We believe in the mankind's ability to learn and live with the boundaries of the planet, we have inherited. #14 • <u>And we make clothing that are part of the solution. #14</u> • [vision]Well, the vision is that we need to communicate... Pause.. Thinking ...positive alternatives so that we can live within the planet's boundaries.#26 • [values] It's basically... to bring out the best designs possible. By using the talent that are available around the world and to produce as responsible as possible. #28 • Everyone has a responsibility to work towards a better future.#30 • we want to be a kind of aspirational brand but it's hard to, it can be hard to really bring attractive fabrics and things, that we need, that are also sustainably produced, without having huge minimums. So that's a challenge.#48 • But weekday or cheap monday could be a competitor #54 [admiration] Patagonia and eh...Lazy Oaf, Supreme, OBEY#56 • [pitch visual identity]Then I would say, we want to create a brand that is young and trendy, that is kind of the future. So first comes style, because it has to be a very attractive brand, look super fresh it has to be in an accepted price range. So it's fairly high value for money. It needs to be super sustainably produced, very responsibly, fair trade, GOTS, all the certifications. And we want to create an image of kind a being a bit rebellious. So that becomes a selling point as well. #66 • Manifesto is a Swedish, sustainable street fashion brand, working together with illustrators, artists from all over the world. We have 20 years' experience in the business, that means that we also have a super big network of distributors, retailers and creators around the world, that we utilize to bring the product out.#67 • Our underlying idea is that we believe in mankind's ability to live within the boundaries of our planet. And we can learn to achieve this. At the moment we are not doing it because we are basically consuming many times more, than what the planets can regenerate. This is very short sided and has to change. And we will promote and lead that development in this change. #67
Respekt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I believe that everything is connected so it is not like "This is where Respekt started", but at CBS I learned and understood the bad effects of the way we mass produce and mass consume today and then of course my experience in Nepal, but what really kicked Respekt was the earthquake back in April 25th 2015. #6 • I believe that everything is connected... [telling her story before] which was quite a disastrous kick in a way and it came from something really bad, but it what made us take action and from there it just has been development #6 • I have a relationship with the country that I wanted to have the production there and I feel I have control- in terms that I know where everything is made and I have a direct contact with everyone who is a part of it so in terms of

	<p>fashion and also moral and my own values I am more comfortable in doing it this way so that is how I ended in fashion #8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our weakness is branding and marketing. It is neither our strength nor our interest. We see that we need more people to be part of this to take it further but what we have been focusing first is to be able to sell so we already made a pre-order now of 250 pieces to 8 different shops in Norway. Because in order for us to take this further we need to know and see if it actually sells. Cause of course marketing has a lot to do with brand identity and if you are able to create to this ideal world where people feel attached and emotional, but one thing is of course image but another thing is if the design is something that people would like to wear. And for me that is important cause if it is not something people would like then we should not do these things cause then it just ends up consuming things that people don't want and then you are part of the waste or "Stuff" #14 • Of course we sell products but it is also a story I would say. A story that is community based, you know it is selling shirts but also supporting communities and families who are a part of this factory or showroom or however you want to call it. It is of course a story because there is this process of coloring for example it is handcraft. So it is also handcraft. Which is not so explicit right now through our webpage hopefully we will make this movie about this soon I hope. #23 • So I think it is a better alternative and a more sustainable one #25 • And then in terms of the color you really support handcraft and local production. It is a very small factory there are only 9 people employed and where they sew it its like 5-6 people. So not so many people but if you look at the effect, I know it is a nice place to work and there are some good values that are also representative in these people who do these things and they also have the same values as we do. So it is all these effects that I found fascinating in doing this. So what we can promise is as sustainable a supply chain as we can make in terms of the conditions that we are in and also long term durable textile that will last. #25 • In the design process I also look into patterns and silhouettes that would last for many many years so what is sort of timeless in a way so it is not trend based. Of course you always have to look at them time. What is cool now what was cool 10 years ago, or 50 years ago. #25 • Yes. But I think that is when people get a little confused. Our textile brand and jewelry brand is called "<i>Respekt</i>" but the company name is "<i>Respekt</i> Project" and that means in <i>Respekt</i> project we are project based that's how it started as, cause my friend also does music and we are working on this documentary for the women's situation in Nepal, so I guess we like to be creative but in different fields so it is not just about textile it's part of it but this is our "money machine" if you can call it that, that we are able to get the profit to of course give salary to ourselves but also support other projects like a movie or some music or maybe some fashion shows or exhibitions in some terms. #41
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- [development prize CBS] So that was good for me in terms of business because for me when I am interested in something it is easy to sell but the business part it's not so interesting. **For me it is more about what we can create in Nepal, which I find fascinating. So that is why regarding marketing and PR and those things I don't like it. I think it is a little embarrassing. It is like a different world, some rules that you need to play.#49**
- It is my baby... You can always marketing something in a way that it looks new, but if you go down to what it actually is behind all these fancy pansy marketing stuff you can always find something similar.#59
- **[speciality] actually about being truthful to yourself #63**
- What I want with *Respekt* project is to... it is political as well. I want again with this being truthful to yourself, to emphasize this more in this type of society that we are living today. **Our brand is also something that represents honesty.** And I think that is what I would like in the end with *Respekt* project that people are more honest with themselves and what they do even though it is hard in the society to do that with all these complexity where everything is changing all the time and all this information that gives us thoughts "oh you can do this and that and explore". **So that is about the consumerism in the western societies thing and it is also about Nepal.** We have some projects with Beni that we support with the jewelry. **So these projects of Steps Foundation Nepal of Beni are projects that I would love to support cause you can see the positive effects of a small community.** And that is where I would like to see *Respekt* in the future. I would never be in charge but I would always like to support stuff#65
- **Everything within Social Entrepreneurship, Sustainability, and development all these terms are very complex and difficult I think.** That is why you really need to be conscious of what you are doing also know that things will not turn out the way you want them to turn out and again being open with the idea that you are not perfect, the project is not perfect #67
- [Knowing about Nepal] Yes for sure. It is very much part of our identity.#91
- And for me that is the most important cause I know that they are going to keep it and not throw it away and that is the main goal with this kind of design. That you are going to have it for a long time without feeling the need to always buy new. #95
- The thing is Nepal is a part of this and again about this honesty for me is just normal the way we do it this the way I think business should be run. And of course we can use it as a marketing tool but for me the design is the most important in changing these habits that people have about consuming things also "What is good design. What is beauty? What is perfection?" **.Because today everything is linked to mass production or mass marketing paradigm that needs to change that way of thinking what is a good design and what is a good product #95**
- Feelings as much as our logic and consciousness it plays a role in the way you act and everything you do so if you are more in contact with your feelings

	<p>which aesthetics can give you I think you can also get a better understanding of how we act as human beings. So it is a lot of things. Some politics, some philosophy...probably some ideology. We don't want to teach people we just want them to question stuff.#97</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I guess of course they are competitors but I don't see them as competitors cause we there are not a lot of people who use hemp in high fashion so maybe this is our advantage in terms of sustainability and quality cause hemp feels like linen. Maiyet is also a competitor but a lot of these brands I also look up to. So it is also inspiration in many ways #101 • But what distinguishes us – and I guess that is the relation, but I mean it is the same industry- the way of producing is different than ours they are trend conscious and I don't think we are trend conscious. People say slow fashion and sustainability could be a trend thing we don't know. But the way we use our resources the way our construction way is going then these thoughts need to be considered in the future so in that way I don't see it as a trend #103 • [pitch - store]yeah it's just my approach would not be this pitching – bang,bang,bang thing- it would be more about, I would always start with “if you had a chance to look at the collection we make sustainable clothing in Nepal and we use the material hemp”, and then I would go further into hemp, but it depends also if the shops are more into the material so then I would talk about that and how it is better than other types of textiles and then put the models there so they can feel it and touch it and then talk about the coloring, and how it would change with use and wash, and become better in comparison to H&M where you would wash it once and then it would get destroyed and then I would answer questions and so on. So I don't have a pitch in those terms in 2 minutes.#107 • I would talk about the product itself and the qualities#109 • [pitch web-designer]I would ask them to make something that expresses simplicity but something also that in that simplicity it needs to get a feeling of luxury. Something that you would see that the materials are not fake but natural. And it would be interesting to experience with different color setting what kind of setting should there be, furniture, color on the wall.#111 <p>Visual is what we lack but that's what we need. Again that is how we are connected with the industry you need to play by the rules in a way and if you look into branding today and how they create these aesthetic worlds that create emotions the triggers us, a world that we want that feels amazing and we need to be part of that even though I don't like that, in terms of selling #119</p>
<i>Ethical Essentials</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a fashion company where we develop and manufacture and sell sustainable clothing so we look at the production process the usage phase and then the after consumption phase. And we are taking steps, we started with the production phase and we are slowly moving into the usage phase to see how we can optimize the usage of our products and then the next phase is to look at

	<p>the after consumption phase how can we make a closed loop system so we can recycle all of our underwear products. So it is a project and a company that develops sustainable fashion products.#10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So our promise is constant optimization, to make our products even more sustainable.#14 • We look for sustainable production and organic product and easy purchase. So these are the 3 core values that we use.#24 • We grew the company a lot during the first year without a business strategy and about a year ago we sat down and we made a proper strategy...For us it was really helpful to start analyzing the data. #34 • But also on a small level being responsible for the products and getting good product feedback that is a success and we make something that people write to us that they have for a long time and that they are happy that they found us that is also success.... #38 • Success is also being invited to give lecture to universities and we are also invited to give a Ted talk here in April about sustainable fashion. So there are a lot of different factors around success but mostly is about reaching what you set out for #38 • [achievement]I think with all our projects we want to make an impact on the fashion industry to make a sustainable alternative to H&M, Zara and all the big players that are created and grown on fast fashion, trend based and stand in opposition to that #42 • Our vision is to grow and create a sustainable alternative while causing the least environmental harm in doing so.#44 • It is not hard to stay sustainable; we have spent a lot of time talking to experts. To make an impact it is kind of hard because you need to have scale to be able to be impactful. I mean the size we have now is not doing that much to be honest because we are very small and that is why want to grow the company to become a global company cause then we can really have a voice in the market.#48 • We see ourselves as a business we don't think of ourselves as social entrepreneurs. First and foremost we are a business cause if we are not a business then we cannot make the impact that we want. So if we were social entrepreneurs we would have started an NGO or something but I think the fastest and most impactful way to change this industry is by doing something alternative in the business where you can really challenge the big players#52 • I think we are taking a more "tesla" approach where we want to create something really truly valuable and unique in a more sustainable way but we should make the choice because it is a good product and you want the product not because it is a sustainable one so we need to compete on prize and on quality and on top of that we want to be the sustainable alternative!#56 • We are doing a sustainable fashion company and we are doing it in a cool way.#58
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think you can really see the transparency of the young companies and some them are really taking off and that is definitely that things are changing and we are moving back to that people would rather want a quality product than just a 5\$ T-shirt#64 • Yes educate and inspire. #104 • [pitch-stores] EE is the alternative to kind of all the other fast fashion brands you see out there. We focus on the production and the product itself and we use that as our story and our purpose so instead of hiring an expensive football player or a model we use the same money to put into higher quality both for our workers but also in fabrics we use. We use mainly organic cotton cause right now it is the cheaper way of producing the best quality product and that also enables us to make a very price competitive product so our products are a little bit cheaper than the expensive Calvin Klein that you find in stores that has been doing stuff for the last 30-40 years so we are kind of the new kid on the block that want to turn the things around [AB3] and we want to tell our customers what they are wearing and why they are wearing EE. That is what I would say. Focus on the product and why we are doing what we are doing. #111 • Pitch sales person]That would probably be a conversation so it is a bit harder but I would pitch the product and say that even though it is actually a really good price the quality of the product is actually put into the people who produce it and the fabrics used and that is made from organic cotton and ask them to feel it is super soft and it is actually among the softest cotton that we have in this store. There has been no usage of nasty chemicals or pesticides and this is good when it is something that is so close to the body so everything is kept organic even the dye. #113 • Product is actually more in front than the purpose because through the product you can also tell your purpose.#119
<i>Women in Knit</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are specialized in hand-knitted clothes for men women and kids and that we produce in an ethical way where we take care of the natural resources and the people involved in the process #20 • We offer stylish clothes that they can wear with a very good conscious. #26 • We want to be the leading hand-knitting company in the world and there are not a lot of companies actually who have full collections hand-knitted, so we want to be known as a hand-knitting specialist #28 • [doing good and doing business] Of course we would like to make a good business, because “you cannot be Green being Red” and that is quite interesting. You cannot be green with having red numbers so you have to make a good business for being able to do it in a green way because it is more costly to do business in a green way and for us to be able to support our knitters in Jordan and Peru #30 • The Faroe Islands are a very very important part, an embedded part of the company without them there would be no <i>Women in Knit</i> and it’s very important that all the design process and the production and the shop and

	<p>everything is based on the Faroe island because that is the DNA of the company. #40</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • and this is part of having kind of the “dream like story” and the dream of a cleaner world, a view of a simpler life and transparency where you are not hiding behind chemicals and low labour costs and so on. So we wanted to be really transparent and really authentic. #42 • it is about dignity where you can say I’m not just giving money to some poor people but I am delivering some very important labour so I can grow my business so I find it is a very beneficial and very equal.#48 • Because this is the kind of change we need to do for the world for preserving our planet earth not only that consumerism is a very important part of it- that we have to limit our consumption but also being able to deliver a better world to our kids and our grandkids. So consumerism is only part of it and environmentalism in all kinds of ways is another part of this but consumerism is very very important to try and have a limitation to that and this message to the world and to my children #56 • It all starts with human relations. When we talk about values... our philosophy it’s handmade it’s responsible it’s ethical it’s exotic- coming from the Faroe Islands #60 • “Well this what we do” and not trying to move from our values in order to sell more and be true to our original idea is to make ethical clothing and being responsible to the producers and then accepting that we cannot maybe grow as fast as we could if we produced at a lower cost. #62 • We don’t like to brag so much about responsibility and ethical production ways because as we see it should be natural that you always do that. #64 • We just want to be decent and this is how we started our company #68 • It’s accepting to... not making business for the sake of business but you have to...for me if I have to make fashion it has to have a deeper meaning to me. So I think it is very much what you come from and what kind of upbringing you have. We did not start just as a business school project- where can I earn the most money, because then you would not get into ethical clothing because that’s not where you can earn your fastest money so it is very much about your basic values. It all starts with your basic values as a human being. #76 • I am telling them “This is a hand-knitted collection from the Faroe Islands and it is all produced in natural materials and it is produced by knitters in their own homes in the Faroe Islands and in Jordan and Peru and that Peru and Jordan are part of our women empowerment project #84 • That is what is authentic in my world. Not making up stories, but telling the stories that are already there #98 • when we are talking about hand-knit it’s not like 10% that are hand-knitted or having a hand-knit machine, when we say hand-knit it’s women sitting in the homes with two needles and making a sweater. That is the really hand-knitting story in our world. #100 • I think that our clothes are also part of the new luxury. #104
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • . Our mission is to be decent and to do it in the best way possible and sometimes to do it the best way possible for us to do a beautiful product is not using kind of facilities that maybe use green energy and that are so expensive to produce that you cannot pay for it but it's about balance in things. #106 • [admiration_could also be communication]Our biggest... when you look at what Chanel did you both see a revolutionary view on things you will see a very very strong woman you can see a creative force that was explosive and you can see timelessness in it that you can have a Chanel thing that is 50 years old and it still relevant and that is what luxury is about that is what hand-craftsmanship is about and that can be forever, very very very inspiring. So looking at those stories is very important #118 • [admiration_could also be communication]And we also admire some very good business successful people for example I think it's really inspiring to see what ACNE is doing. They are not focusing that much on ethical clothing as they produce also at higher prices assuming that they also paying more for the production they are also being creative but in a very modern way and that is also very inspiring to see and also to see that in Japan. We would very much like to be hand in hand with for example ACNE in Japan. #118 • I am Ingrid Rogvandotir half a part of G&G a designer company based on the Faroe Islands we specialize in hand knit and we make collections for men women and kids #126
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	<p>ABOUT THE CEOs</p> <p>bare background</p> <p>Education</p> <p>Reason for starting the business</p>
<i>Changemaker's Apparel</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am Kasper, I am 41 years old and my education was engineering and then I worked in sales and marketing and worked in the textile industry and now I started this #2 • A combination of many things, but I have always been this career oriented guy who wanted to climb the career ladder and become CEO, and then I became the CEO and kind of find out that it was not interesting and also my wife got ill and I think my whole life's priorities-maybe it was midlife crisis- I started thinking about life and then I was inspired by this Einstein quote " Try not to become a man of success but rather a man of value" and then "A Man Of Value" <i>Changemaker's Apparel</i> became the brand. So a lot of kind of life changes led me here. #4 • I think it was a counter effect to what I have previously doing in my life. I come from a generation where probably we did not think much about sustainability and kind of went for a full career and in midlife I started thinking am I spending my life in the right way? So, when I want to hope and dare it is probably because I never really dared before and never did something like this before. #8

<i>Inside</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have a background from CBS and I have specialized in social entrepreneurship and sustainable business. I did my minor in that. #2 • I had some different jobs and when I was doing my masters I started my own company called Ruby Cup, a social business in Kenya, and moved there to try to do all the things that I read and of course it was much different than books #2 • Had some other jobs as a consultant for a big company and was very confirming that it is not the environment that I thrive in cause there are too many decision makers and policies and takes too long. #2 • I have actually been in the fashion industry for 10 years on off if anything from fitting model to sales agent to distribution to working at the fairs cause when I was broke I had a friend who had a distribution agency #4 • I grew up in multicultural family my dad is Indian my mom is Danish. We are from a small village but we traveled a lot and always had people from all over the world living with us. When I was 15 I applied to go to one of the Nelson's schools around the world where, I spent two years in Italy and lived with people from 80 different countries, kind of like a boarding school when we worked in a refugee camp #18
<i>Elise Andersen</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [HEARTFUL STORY] I am a craftsman basically, and I love crafts. But I really also love design. And I think, this is where it merges, kind of. I think that is where the interesting part happens. And since I started my education in the early 80s, I just realized that we kind of forgot in our part of the world, to kind of... (looking for a word)...to give it to the next generation. Because you learn from a master to an apprentice. This is how you teach in these fields. So there were so much more niches, when I was young. And it is gone now. It is gone, because the masters are dead and we forgot about bringing in new apprentice. So when I needed more production for my collection for some years ago. I couldn't find the people who want to do the repetitive work here, because everyone wants to be a designer. And that was what brought me to Thailand. It was not actually not to have a cheap production. It was actually the case that I could not find people here, to reproduce. Because you have to focus on being a craftsman, but you have to make one piece, and then another, and another and it's a production even it is handcrafted. So that's what brought me out there, and I realized it while living with them and I love to teach actually and this group of people they were very isolated at that time and I came by coincidence to an area where no one invests and this is a very isolated part of Thailand. And they are very poor and it's all small villages and there are 1000s of those and it's based on family clans. So there are about 100 to 200 people in each. And they live there. Because this is how they do. This is how they live there together. But they can't really get any work there. They only have small rice fields, but they cannot really live from it. So they to the big cities for stupid work. To be honest. [I1] Where a huge companies go and make big production, only to get cheap production. [I2] And what I realized when I was out there, is that they are so skilled with their hands still, but we forget they cannot brand

	<p>themselves. And the whole world generation has only been focused on different kinds of production. But now something starts to change. Just during the past two or three years I think more interest has grown and even from schools and your generations are more interested in the hand-crafted and the stories behind. So we could help a lot.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [Her Background_Education] I was taught, well, when I realized I wanted to become a goldsmith, before that I studied music, very shortly. But I realized I would never be amazing at it. So it just came out of the blue that I wanted to try this. Because when it is that you have a kind of affinity. So when I tried it first, I just knew this was my media. So for me, it is if you are a creative it is about to find your media and I did that when I was quite young. I thought I was very old for that. So I went for an apprenticeship with George Jensen I didn't get that but I got one at OLE LÖNGAARD, who is quite big today, but at that time, was very small. But it was the old style of an apprenticeship, where it is actually only about to learn the craft skills I mean you have to repeat again and again. So we talk about the 10 000 hours, I guess you know about that. So and I actually love that, I could sit days and days doing that. But when I finished I didn't have any access to my creativity because it was all about the tools. And it takes really many years to really not think about it and just let the work pass through you. So I was really tense, so I kind of dropped it and I applied for an art school in New York. And I said no more jewellery and I went to do painting class in Parsons School of Design. And it was just a great semester. That was only one semester but I already had my son at that time. That was in 88. And then when I came home. I painted for about 2 years and then I decided to go back to the jewellery. And I realized that I still need to learn more ways to approach it from, so I decided to go to the big George Jensen brand who is an old brand and I asked to be in the production. I did that for almost 2 years. And I asked to only make his designs from the beginning of last century. Because I wanted to kind realized what he was thinking about why did he make the jewellery, the way he made it. Because it is really different the skills and that was really a great time. And when I was there I decided that I would start up my own business. And I realized later that doing the painting for two years, that going to a soft media, that it was easier for me to kind of go back to the hard metal and the tools because kind of through that then I had the feeling of more softness. That's probably because a lot of my jewellery is very thin, and it's very organic, still very strong. But it's like I learnt in a way to kind of get closer. So to make it short. In 91, I opened a gallery in Copenhagen, the first jewellery gallery and made it internationally and had a group of Danish Goldsmith, some of them are still there. And I showed international shows, and it was quite big in the city. And I did that for about 15 years and I also did shows in other countries. I did Artshows in the US. And at the same time I kind of developed my own style and in the beginning I was just quite impulsive I just created and I sold, created and sold. I had an apprentice myself and I sold a lot in New York and Chicago in Artfairs. And then there was more interest for it and I became a designer for George Jensen. And they took some of my designs and they taught me how to
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	<p>product develop out of an art piece, how to product develop it into a design that you can put into production. So I did that for about 3 years, then I got enough of George Jensen, actually from some people there. And I put all my creations into collections and I did that in 2004,5 and 6 and then I wanted to bring it out. And I realized that I need a production for that. That was when I realized that I couldn't find the people for that. And that was what brought me to Thailand, because one of my employees he lived there partly, and he said in my village where I live, there are many young people that have nothing to do and I realized that this is where I could built a workshop and we made actually a teaching programme, to teach them the same way, as I had my workshop in Denmark. And when I came there first I just fell in love with it and the people there. So yeah, that's nine years ago now.</p>
<i>Manifesto</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I started with business very early. So I have been buying and selling things since I was about 7. And then I started importing skateboards when I was about 14 and was very involved in skateboarding and that culture, from when I was 14. Also went to California to Hugoton? Beach just to skateboard when I was 15. So that was quite an experience. Living with the older skaters and going to parties with the punk bands and hard core bands and police coming and going to all the spots and so on. So that is probably the reason why I ended up in fashion, because I got a very good understanding of what street culture was. And go the right references. And in skateboarding, style is very central, so one thing kind a led to another. And after my skateboard business I was studying in London at European Business School, 4 years and the first term of my studies I started my first fashion company, with fashion accessories and I was selling almost all over Europe any time I had, like at the same time as my studies. So I was driving around Germany, selling to the best stores and sleeping in a car and take a few cities every day. And it was pretty mental for the first 10 years.#2 • But this company we started in 2006 (meaning <i>Manifesto</i>) and by then we been already in the business, you know, with my own brand, for 10 years (so he started in 1996).#4 • No, it was just trendy accessories, a brand called SHPO, which was just shoes, watches and sunglasses and things like that. Now it's, you can have a look at SHPO Brand.com and see those products. But in 2006 one of my customers started a retail concept called T-shirt store, which has designs curated from talented artists, illustrators and photographers from all over the world. And he wanted me to join the company and I did that in 2007 and we formed a limited company and on this opened more stores and ran that as a franchise, you know franchising our concept to other entrepreneurs for a few years and in 2012 we started to wholesale the product under the name, <i>Manifesto</i> but the product was always sustainable, with this clothing business[I1] . So we had a GOTs Certified Cotton T-shirts. But when we wholesaled in 2012. The idea was to create a sustainable lifestyle brand, basically a sustainable streetwear brand, because there were only sustainable fashion brands for babies, women, kids and

	<p>outdoors but nothing for young men. And since sustainability is the future obviously we thought that was very strange. So we wanted to create that brand, basically. So that's what we are working on still.#6</p>
<i>Respekt</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am still a student at my last year, textile and design school in Copenhagen. Before that I did a bachelor at CBS in Sociology and business and I also through that business, I went to Nepal to do some development studies –if that is what you want to call it- for this NGO, where I also worked there as a volunteer. I think this is kind of my background within this development field even though I don't like the term development, where it also opened up a lot of doors to where I am today. In terms of work experience I have always been very fashion addicted especially as a teen but I started sewing when I was 17-18 and I always this thing that I wanted to create stuff not just like follow stuff but create things and of course the more you lean the more you understand the world, and the system is fucked up and you are trying to create solutions. You look at other's business models and you try to find your own path and your own way so I guess this is how it kinda developed . But I never had like an experience in a fashion house or a brand. I never had the interest to be honest. #2 • My friend she took her master at CBS something called – business and development studies- and she also had an internship for the UN so she is also very into this development field so for us we just needed that little kick- which was quite a disastrous kick in a way and it came from something really bad, but it what made us take action and from there it just has been development. #6
<i>Ethical Essentials</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I originally started my first company while I was still studying at the business school in Aarhus. That was a creative agency that we started 8 years ago. And I have been working with that as a side project next to the studies. And then halfway through my masters we got the opportunity to go full time with the company and we did and then we invested in <i>Ethical Essentials</i> which was led by me but I was leading the investment in the underwear company which was newly started, so it was actually more of a partnership than an investment so I led the partnership and became CEO of the company #2 • So before we entered it was more of a subscription service but what I found more interesting was the purpose driven fashion brand so yeah that was the reason. #6 • I felt intrigued by <i>Ethical Essentials</i> and I saw big potential and especially in the underwear market nothing has really happened in the last 100 years so I saw a bigger opportunity. #12
<i>Women in Knit</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yeah... I am Ingrid Gústafsdóttir, we are two Ingrid's in the company the other Ingrid is the designer and I am the business part of the company. I have a master's degree in political science and before <i>Women in Knit</i> I had a completely different career. I was working as a EU expert. Worked a lot in Eastern Europe and in the Middle East. I was stationed in the Middle East, in

	<p>Jordan for half a year and I was travelling a lot in Eastern Europe in those years before they entered the EU. So basically that was my... I had a background in international politics before.#4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [story <i>Women in Knit</i>] I always had both a passion for fashion and also for entrepreneurship. And I always had a dream of having my own company but working with fashion it was very important to me that we umm. I would never be the one making cheap t-shirts in China or something. It had to be a deeper meaning with it [I1] and that is why we started our company based on the fact that there were some natural resources on the Faroe Islands that were not used properly, the wool was burned and the skins were destroyed at the time we started and we found we had to do something about it. It was a wake up call for us that we had to do something about it. We started the company we wanted to take care of the resources and as we started, we started having knitters on the Faroe Islands, friends and family and of course you treat them properly not only because you know them but because it is natural for you and that is why, when we expanded the company we also wanted to work on the same way and we wanted to know the faces of all the knitters we have and to give them a proper salary and that we could always be able to see them into their eyes and be proud of what we are doing with them.#6 • [Ingrid Story] G: We started already in 2000 when I contacted the other Ingrid and said shouldn't we do something about this together? And I was first of all thinking about the lambskins as a starting point we tried different tanneries and we found this tannery in Iceland that could make really good quality for us and she said "Omg we can even make clothes out of it", for many many years no one made clothing out of the Faroese lambskins and then we bought an old industrial sewing machine and installed it in the basement of the other Ingrid's house and she was sewing down there and we were selling it locally and it went really well. We did it for a couple of years, I still had my job she also had a job at the Faroe island she had nothing to do with the design because it was very difficult- or there was no designer company so she was working at a kindergarten. After a couple of years we decided to try to apply for a fashion fair in Copenhagen for (cannot make out what she says...). And that point when we started there she took some of her hand-knitted sweaters she had made for her mentor in Copenhagen and what we found at that fair was that it was especially the hand-knit more than then lambskin that people found interesting and also that it was the Japanese customer that found our product interesting. So those two pieces of information I guess they have been deciding in the way of the company and helped in what we focus on and Japan is still a market we really would like to do more.#8
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8.4. Appendix IV – Additional material

Impressions from the Data Collection Process



Figure 1. Impression of *Revolver Tradeshaw* Copenhagen



Figure 2. Fieldwork at *Revolver Tradeshaw* Copenhagen – Iliana Alexandra Papargyri & Alisa Buckel

Notes during coding and analysis process

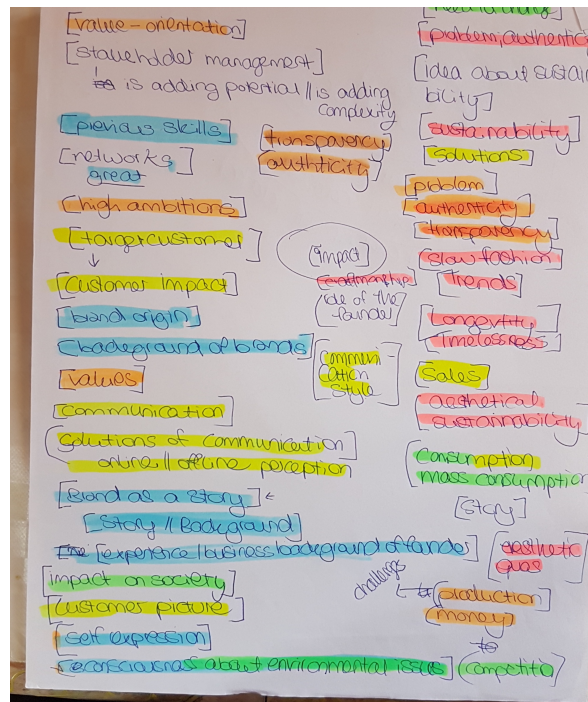


Figure 3. Notes during coding process – structuring data and codes

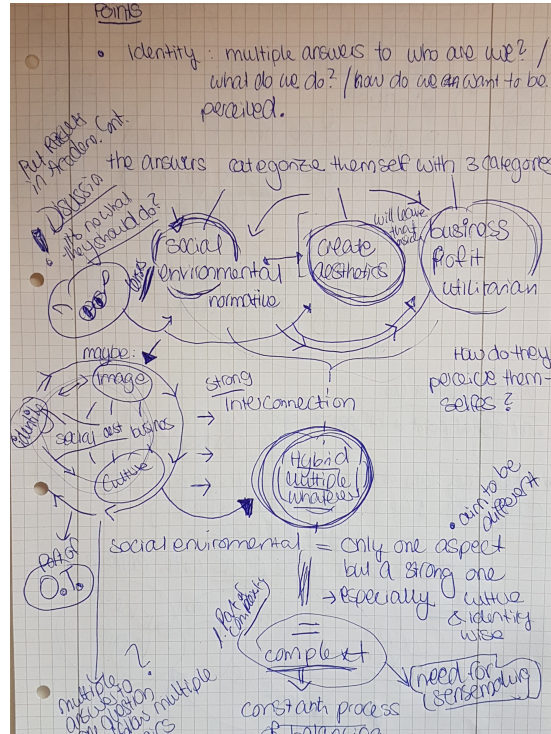


Figure 4. Notes during analysis & discussion process – sense making of data