

Encouraging Transformative and Sustainable Consumption Behaviour



MASTER THESIS

A Study in the Rising
Climate Awareness,
Conscious Consumption
and Second-hand
Clothing for Children

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Hand in: 15th of May 2019
Pages included in total: 113
Pages for assessment: 69
Characters: 148,751

Ignorance is bliss. But please be enlightened
– and act accordingly!

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Abstract

The planetary boundaries are closing in and people are increasingly becoming aware of mankind's responsibility to change the current unsustainable consumption of earth's resources. This thesis investigates how climate concerns and increased awareness on sustainability affect the apparel industry. The focus is on re-use, and in particular on second-hand clothing in Danish children's wardrobes.

Various sources of literature from academia, industry and popular media are reviewed in order to paint a contemporary picture of the current debate of the topics of sustainability and consumption. The literature review provides insight on the development of the apparel industry and how sustainability and environmental concerns are affecting consumer's clothing consumption.

Based on the reviewed literature, the market for second-hand children's clothing in Denmark is investigated through an in-depth case study of the peer-to-peer second-hand platform Reshopper and its users. The result is a comprehensive overview of mothers' second-hand clothing consumption on behalf of their children, from which it was possible to detect patterns and formulate concrete recommendations for businesses within the market for second-hand children's clothing.

Based on key findings, the recommendations are divided in three key categories concerning functionalities and services, social media presence and going beyond sustainability. It is concluded that businesses within this market, will be able to accommodate the demands of the conscious consumers and encourage transformative and sustainable consumption behaviour, if they incorporate these recommendations.

Acknowledgement

Researching and writing this master thesis allowed me to dedicate my time and attention something that is close to my heart and affects my life on a daily basis – sustainability and re-use. Many people took part in this process and I wish to thank them all for their contribution.

First of all, I thank Reshopper, and especially Nicolai Danmark Johannesen, for their corporation throughout the process. Without Nicolai's support and willingness to share his insights on Reshopper and distribute my survey through their social media channels, I would not have been able to connect with the reshopping mothers and collect comprehensive data on their second-hand consumption. In this context I also owe thanks to all the mothers, who took the time to answer the survey and allowed me to gain insight on their values and consumption.

For sharing your thoughts and for discussing consumption, sustainability and motherhood with me, I further thank Malene, Sofie, Brit and Elizabeth. Your honest interviews provided me with real understanding of the multitude of aspects affecting mothers' wardrobe choices for their children.

A special thanks goes to my thesis supervisor, Lara Monticelli, who guided me to find my focus and stay structured in a process overflowing with ideas and ambitions. Her support was indispensable to stay on track and finish on time. Also I would like to thank CBS and especially Vibeke Ankersborg, for the thesis seminars, webinars and workshops, which were a big help in the thesis writing process.

Lastly, a thank you goes to my friends and family, who throughout the process asked interested questions, challenged my hypotheses and kept me continuously excited about the thesis and increasingly passionate about sharing my knowledge on the topic of sustainability and conscious consumption.



- Introduction -

1. Subject Field – The Planetary Boundaries are Closing In

It is no news that the climate is changing and it is scientifically proven that we, the humans and our overconsumption of the world's resources, are to blame (NASA, 2018). It has been known through decades that “we have come to a critical stage” and that “we need to change our ways in order for the planet to sustain us” (Petersen, 1988). In 1972, the international think tank, the Club of Rome, dedicated to promote understanding of the global challenges facing humanity, released their first report entitled “The Limits of growth”. This report drew attention to environmental problems connected to continuous economic growth, such as depletion of natural resources and pollution of the ecosystem (Meadows et al., 1972). In 1987, the United Nations (UN) sponsored a report entitled “Our Common Future”, which stresses that we need to think about “the global economy and global ecology together in new ways” (WCED, 1987, 2:15). The UN International Panel on Climate Change was formed in 1988, but still in the second decade of the 2000nds we have not changed our ways – if anything even more people have started carelessly over-consuming (Korsgaard, 2018).

Waight (2013) state that the two greatest threats to the future environmental security of our planet are escalating population growth and unsustainable consumption. “In the past fifty years, we have consumed more goods and services than in all previous generations put together” concludes Botsman & Rogers (2011, p. 5). Within the last 50 years, the human population on earth has doubled (Our Planet, 2019) and we are now entering the Anthropocene era, where the consequences of human development have “begun to change the course of the planetary evolution” (Club of Rome, 2019). This era is characterised by environmental uncertainty – represented by the threat of reduced biodiversity, climate change, and depletion of natural resources as well as the pollution of air, water, and soil (Johnson et al., 2017). Dietz & O'Neill (2013, p.62) explain how “the appropriation of materials, energy and land for economic activity has significantly reduced the space available for nonhuman species, leading to ecosystem breakdowns, extinctions and decreased biological diversity”. Watts (2018) argue that “we are experiencing the worst loss of life on Earth since the demise of the dinosaurs” and that “humanity could be the first species to document our own extinction”.

These are all gruesome facts. They are harsh to hear, and it can seem intimidating to even try to solve problems of this magnitude. Individuals find themselves paralyzed to take action or left with a sense that their little share does not have any effect, but however far our actions pull in a negative direction, just as far can our potential efforts stretch in a positive direction (Wijnberg, 2017). “The climate crisis calls for changes in everyday life” (Hansen, 2014, 181) and it is important that we never underestimate our impact as individuals and consumers (Wijnberg, 2017; Korsgaard, 2018). The UN’s biodiversity chief (Cited by Watts, 2018) state, “We should be aware of the dangers but not paralysed by inaction. It is still in our hands, but the window for action is narrowing. We need higher levels of political and citizen will to support nature”. Fortunately this will is starting to show. Concito (2018), the green Danish think tank, has in its 2018 report on climate awareness amongst Danes; [DK: Klimabarometeret 2018] found that a significant percentage of the Danes are willing to take action in order to lower their personal emission of greenhouse gasses. 47% of the Danes asked proclaim that they have made changes to their daily routines within the last three years, with the primary purpose of reducing their own contribution to the global emission of greenhouse gasses (Minter, 2018). Meanwhile 45% answer that they find it necessary to change their lifestyle to limit climate changes (Minter, 2018). Further studies have shown that 91 % of Danes wish to have a sustainable lifestyle, when taking climate into consideration. However, only 18 % live as eco-friendly as they wish to (Dansic, 2018).

What is interesting to note is that the climate awareness amongst individuals in Denmark has now spread so much, that it is starting to put real pressure on society’s institutions. Results of a new study performed by the Danish analysis institute Kantar Gallup show that 57% of the Danish voters want a future government to prioritise climate concerns over concerns regarding immigrants and fugitives (DN, 2019). In an interview with The Danish Society for Nature Conservation [DK: Dansk Naturfredningsforening] Kasper Møller Hansen, professor in political science, explains that “We have never previously seen that climate and environment have been such prominent themes in the election debate” and continues; “This underlines that the green agenda will be very important in the upcoming election campaigns” (DN, 2019). This opinion was widely supported at the Election Debate on Circular Economy, held by Copenhagen Business School on March 12th 2019, where panellists from all the represented political parties agreed that the sustainability agenda will dominate the forthcoming election campaigns.

It is especially the younger voters, who are pushing for an increased focus on climate issues. Co-founder of The Green Student Movement [DK: Den Grønne Studenterbevægelse], Emil Månnson, argues that Denmark is at a democratic dilemma, where the older generation is making decisions for the younger generation's future (Månnson, 2019). Narud (2019) explains this as a gap between generations, where we are seeing a young generation, who treats sustainability as a given, while the older generation – those who are at power today – are caught up in old patterns. This is why information and awareness need to spread fast, and not just in young, urban environments, but throughout the nation and between all generations. Denmark, as well as the rest of the planet, needs collective action to make an impact that counts. We need to (re-)learn how to live in harmony with nature (Månnson, 2019; Korsgaard, 2018).

Edmund Burke (cited by Månnson, 2019) expressed it beautifully way back in 1790: "Society is a partnership. [...] a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are dead and those who are to be born".

Studies support that consumption urgently needs to be reduced to sustainable levels in the developed and emergent economies (Waight, 2013) and scientific findings emphasise the need for "comprehensive cultural changes" (Hansen 2014, 178). This change is on the rise with the millennial generation, born between the early 1980s and the early 2000s, growing into adulthood. This generation is through education, news and social media faced with climate change and the horrible state of the planet on a daily basis. 96% of the Danish millennials believe that climate changes are a serious problem (Concito, 2018) and 45% believe that it is the greatest challenge of our time (Deloitte, 2017). This generation is showing frustration with society's individualistic and materialistic values as well as the inaction of governments to take action on the climate challenges. The millennials instead put their faith in companies to take the lead and pave the way to a more sustainable future (Deloitte, 2017). Flemming Møldrup, Danish lifestyle expert and climate advocate, describes the millennials as a generation who, through their firm grip on their iPhone, has the entire world just a flick of the finger away. "They know more about what is going on in Venezuela than in Vendsyssel" and "They are in first row to see the world burning" (Møldrup, 2019). This is their motivation to take action and demand change. With 16-year-old Norwegian climate activist Greta Thunberg as a front figure and with massive support from international climate scientists (Nielsen, 2019), young people, all around the world, are taking to the streets and demonstrating for a

more sustainable future.

The young people fighting for change were even on the agenda, when the Danish Queen gave her annual speech on New Years Eve 2018. Her Royal Highness Queen Margrethe II said; *“The young are taking the lead. They are the ones that understand that the problems of the future will be their problems. They will not – like us who are older – remain stuck in old habits”* and continues *“...this is why we must listen attentively to the young, when we discuss how to avoid challenging the balance of nature”* (Kongehuset, 2018).

1.1. Second-hand Clothing – Consumption that Makes a Difference

Even though the young are taking the lead in taking action on the climate crisis, they are also partaking in unsustainable consumption patterns with their fashion choices and purchases. Fast fashion has over the last few centuries become a central part of many Danes' wardrobes, and the pace of clothing consumption has increased dramatically as price has been prioritised over quality.

Klein (2011, p. 14) concludes that “Climate change is a message that is telling us that many of our culture's most cherished ideas no longer are viable”, including overconsumption of clothing. Change is urgent, and an obvious place to implement radical changes is within the apparel industry, as it alone accounts for 10% of global carbon emissions and remains the second largest industrial polluter, second only to oil (Conca, 2015; Gwozdz et al., 2017).

Adding to the worry is the fact that the clothing production has approximately doubled in the last 15 years (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017). This increase is due partly to population growth, but as mentioned the population has doubled over the past 50 years, hence the doubling of clothing production in just 15 years represents the trend of fast fashion. The availability of low priced, low quality goods have contributed to an escalating buy-and-toss-culture, that urgently needs to stop (Nyvold, 2018). The main environmental issues facing the textile industry are greenhouse emissions, ecosystem pollution, immense water use, toxic chemicals used in production and waste generation (Gwozdz, 2017; Sandin & Peters, 2018).

The good news is that we [the citizens of the developed countries] “may be coming out of the consumer trance we have been living in for the past fifty or so years” (Botsman & Rogers, 2011, p. 44). We are beginning to acknowledge the consequences of our actions (or inactions) and realise that “we have one planet that we all share” (Johnson et al., 2017, p. 13). In the annual McKinsey report on the fashion industry, “The State of Fashion”, it is noted that for the first time ever sustainability has entered their respondents’ list of the most important challenges (McKinsey, 2019). This notion is part of a “value shift” (Botsman & Rogers, 2011) or “paradigm shift” (Klitgaard, 2019), which indicate that we have become aware - we have become conscious.

When it comes to the clothing industry and how to limit the environmental impact of our consumption, it is well known that textile re-use and recycling in general reduce environmental impact (compared to incineration and landfilling), and that re-use is more beneficial than recycling (Woolridge et al., 2005; Sandin & Peters, 2018). This makes re-use the most viable way to efficiently and urgently reduce the environmental impacts of the fashion industry. We already have more than we need and enough for everyone’s needs to be covered (Johnson et al., 2017). Enough has been produced that we do not need to deplete the limited resources of the planet anymore. Our stuff; our clothes, our home applications, our furniture, our everything is not being used up. The Salvation Army has estimated that disposed clothing in general still has at least 70% of its useful life left (Woolridge et al., 2005).

The question is therefore no longer how to produce more, but how to “share and distribute what we already have in new and fair ways” (Johnson et al., 2017, p. 14). There are many alternative ways this sharing and distribution can be performed, but one traditional way that in recent years has received significant attention is second-hand consumption (Steffen, 2016; DBA, 2019; ThredUp, 2019). Danish Social Innovation Club (Dansic, 2018) concludes that it becomes easier to live more sustainably, as soon as you become aware of the possibilities of re-use. Consequently, the emergent challenge for governments, businesses, entrepreneurs, influencers and the rest of us, is no longer to invent or produce anything new, but rather to re-invent and re-vamp re-use. To bring re-use and all its environmental benefits to the minds and eyes of the consumers, so that it becomes obvious that we can still have it all, as long as it has had a previous owner.

Therefore the field of investigation of this paper is not to find ways to limit the desire and shopping for fashion, but rather focused on limiting the desire for *newly produced* clothing.

1.2. Children's Wardrobes – Shaping the Consumers of the Future

For the sake of focus, this thesis is limited to concern second-hand clothing in children's wardrobes, by investigating mothers' clothing consumption on behalf of their children. This focus is selected, because children go through 8 clothing sizes within the first two years of life, leaving much of their clothes seemingly new, if at all worn, when they outgrow it. Therefore children's clothing is the category most appropriate for re-use within apparel consumption (Waight, 2013). Additionally, a study by the Danish Consumer Agency [DK: Forbrugerstyrelsen] shows that 35% of Danish parents have bought baby equipment that they have never used (Schmidt, 2007). This is a clear example of overconsumption on behalf of the children, who never asked for the equipment in the first place, and who are the ones facing the environmental consequences of this excessive consumption in the future.

The choice to focus on mothers, particularly, rather than the parents in general, is based on the fact that it is primarily the mothers who buy clothing and equipment for the children (Svensson, 2016, Michelletti, 2003) as well as the recognition of women being more likely to engage in sustainable consumption (Michelletti, 2003; Bedard & Tolmie, 2018).

Waight (2013, p. 2) propose that a change in consumption on behalf of the children could foster "a new breed of sustainable consumers before they can even make consumption decisions themselves". Within the last years, parents in Denmark have embraced second-hand consumption and statistics show that 76% of Danish families with children have participated in second-hand consumption in 2018, which is the highest percentage ever reported (DBA, 2018). This thesis attempts to investigate how businesses in the market for second-hand apparel can respond to this willingness to consume second-hand and further encourage transformative and lasting sustainable consumption behaviour.

2. Research Question

With this thesis it is attempted to show how the apparel industry and consumption of clothing is being affected by the growing environmental concerns and sustainability awareness in society. Through empirical research, the thesis will go on to zoom in on second-hand consumption specifically for children's wardrobes and investigate mothers' consumption patterns and environmental consciousness. Concluding from this research, I strive to answer the following research question.

How has the growing climate awareness become apparent in the apparel industry, and how can businesses within the market for second-hand children's apparel use this current awareness to attract and sustain customers, as well as encourage transformative and sustainable consumption behaviour?

The objective of this thesis is two-fold. I attempt to collect data in order to give a comprehensive overview on mothers' second-hand clothing consumption on behalf of their children. As my modest contribution to encourage more conscious consumption in the future, I further aim to formulate concrete recommendations for businesses within the second-hand apparel industry on how to benefit from consumers' increased sustainability awareness and pave the way for more sustainable consumption.



- Literature Review -

3. Literature Review

Sustainability and consumptions are widely discussed and researched topics. To make a comprehensive and exhaustive literature review of these subjects would be much too ambitious for this paper. Instead, it is attempted to give a varied and contemporary picture of the current debate of the topics – primarily how it is conveyed and perceived in Denmark. This is done through a review of a combination of academic papers, large studies and researches, industry reports, government funded projects, independent newspapers, popular journals, cultural references and debated documentaries. This combination of media sources is selected in order to showcase the awareness and comprehension level on the topics in the same way it is present among the general public, who will be the main actors in a lasting change towards a sustainable society (Kolster, 2019).

Due to the magnitude of the sustainability topic, there is naturally many different aspects of its various sub-topics as well as several, sometimes radically different, opinions on concepts and phenomena discussed under the umbrella of sustainability. The following chapters aim to shed light on the discussions relevant to this paper. Starting on a communal level, and diving into the rise, development and popularity of committing to a sustainable lifestyle. Hereafter it is investigated how the growing climate awareness is manifested in individuals' consumption behaviour under the term *conscious consumption*. As conscious consumption emphasises the importance of re-use, a look into this subject comes next, followed by an evaluation of the changing terminology and discourse around second-hand consumption in the chapter *Reshopping and Preloved Clothing – Words Shaping the World*. The last chapter of the literature review provides an examination of the second-hand economy and attempts to clarify how all of this affects businesses within the apparel industry and changes the future market fundamentally. The concepts will be defined for the purpose of understanding throughout the thesis, but also discussed, in order to reflect the situation in current academia with critics and “activists” continuously arguing pros, cons and alternatives to the many responses to the climate crisis.

3.1. Sustainable Lifestyles – A Growing Claim

Through the Fifties and Sixties, manufacturers and marketers encouraged workers to “give up their hobbies and free time for the choice of bigger cars, better homes and more technology” (Botsman & Rogers, 2011, p. 43). Materialistic goods became a goal in itself and a way to measure life quality. The popular and award winning American TV show “Mad Men”, which takes place primarily in the 1960s, successfully illustrates how material goods in that time came to change the look of our homes, the routines in daily life and created a shift in the values individuals strived for. The recipe for a successful life was clear, and even conveyed in the music of the time, where The Beatles sang “*I work all day to get you money to buy you things*” in their hit song “A Hard Days Night” (1964). “The production methods and consumption patterns [of this period] are responsible for environmental pollution and the depreciation of resources” that we are now witnessing (Steffen, 2016, p. 191), and the values of this time have survived up until today. Belk (2007, p. 136) claims that modern men and women “cling to an identity forged in the crucible of materialism”. “Satisfaction of [material] needs has become our most important moral compass” (Wijnberg, 2017), and it has reached a level where the CO₂ emission from production of consumer goods for the average Dane’s private consumption is greater than the CO₂ emission stemming from production of electricity or heat for the average Dane’s home (Nyvold, 2018).

A key challenge is that “many of our consumer behaviours have become so habitual that we are unaware of our impact” (Botsman & Rogers, 2011, p. 6). Most consumers still do not link their clothing consumption patterns with environmental degradation (Gwozdz et al., 2017) and few consumers have sufficient knowledge about their purchases’ impact on the environment (Makower, 2005). Most people still hold the perception that “progress means to consume more” (Johnson et al., 2017, p. 9), to the extent where “we have become divorced from what we buy” (Makower, 2005, p. 293). This overconsumption is at the roots of the current environmental crisis and “the problem is that the prevalent picture of sustainability, nature, and society that we encounter today is framed within the values of this consumerist society” (Johnson, 2017, p. 8). Klein (2011, p. 16) argues that this problem “must be addressed not just by improving the efficiency of our economies but by reducing the amount of material stuff we produce and consume”. These arguments are gaining momentum and there is indication that the general fascination with consumerism is beginning to be questioned, as the debate on our

environmental responsibility is growing. The environment and climate concerns are prevalent throughout the public discourse and the number of academic publications [on the environmental impact of textile re-use and recycling] has increased from about 1.5 per year a decade ago to about 4.5 per year in recent years (Sandin & Peters, 2018). This suggests that the consumers are beginning to acknowledge that shopping involves more than just economic considerations. The social, ethical, and political issues embedded in shopping decisions, discussed by Micheletti (2003) have gained more attention, as “the drawbacks of the way we design, produce, and use clothes are becoming increasingly clear” (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017, p. 3). This was another issue emphasised by the Danish Queen, in her 2018 New Years speech, where she addressed this change in, or even lack of; *“Denmark is doing well economically, but we need to take time to contemplate what this prosperity is doing for us and doing to us. [...] Our country is getting richer, but are our lives getting richer?”* (Kongehuset, 2018 – translated from Danish)

Parguel et al. (2017, p. 49) refer to these changes in consumerism and lifestyle choices as “a paradigm shift towards more frugal ways of living” and “the progressive decay of materialism”. This is in society expressed through a conscious movement to return to the virtues of previous generations. Quality is again beginning to win over quantity and it has become socially acceptable, even trendy, within the young and urban environments, to claim to a sustainable, no-waste or minimalist lifestyle (Weinswig, 2016).

As a response to the previous focus on economic capital and material possessions, some people are now expressing an urge to “revive neglected forms of social capital and regain meaning and community” (Botsman & Rogers, 2011, p. 46). People are slowly beginning to realise the price or sacrifices that comes with the materialistic values and react to the fact that “there are burdens to possession” (Belk, 2007, p. 137). Some Danes, in refuse of these burdens, start changing their lives to centre around family, friends and social values, rather than monetary and materialistic values. They are adapting to what Klein (2011, p. 19) calls “an alternative worldview to rival the existing at the heart of the ecological crisis”. Micheletti (2003, p. 150) describes how “consumers in growing numbers shop with and for virtues” and that “politics are entering the marketplace through the pocketbooks of consumers”. This change in values and behaviour is further explored by Klein (2011, p. 19), who states that “focus has shifted to inter-dependence rather than hyper-individualism, reciprocity rather than dominance and cooperation rather than hierarchy”. Hansen (2014) argues that these new values could be realised through

a more environmental friendly lifestyle, as research suggests that “sustainable living will be a path to more meaningful living and social relatedness, as well as a decreased personal carbon footprint” (Hansen, 2014, p. 176)

From the previous we can conclude, that the changes we see occurring in society today, are based on many different but interconnected influences. The roots can be traced back to the industrialisation, where mass-production changed the market and the way people consume. The current reaction in society is found to be a response to both the accumulated pressure from material values built up over several decades, as well as an indication of increasing awareness around how these values affect the planet.

3.2. Conscious Consumption

Moving from the community focus of the last chapter, the following chapter examines how the raised level of climate awareness in society manifests in individuals’ consumption.

Consumers practicing *conscious consumption* are called by many different names. McKinsey & Company uses the term “woke consumers”, when referring to the consumers who value sustainability and responsibility in their daily consumption (McKinsey, 2019). Waight (2013) uses the term “the ethical consumer” and Micheletti (2003) presents “the political consumer”, whom she distinguishes from “the economic consumer” and “the lifestyle consumer”. Accordingly, several terms are used to describe the phenomenon of conscious consumption itself. The most widely used is the term “sustainable consumption”, as it is simple to understand and contains the buzzword of today – Sustainability. In this thesis, a variation of terms will also be used, as this reflects the many different aspects and qualities of the phenomenon. However, the term *conscious consumption* is preferred, as it underlines a path to take (to become conscious), rather than the end goal (sustainability), and because it has positive connotations (of being informed, enlightened and interested) rather than the more judgemental or demonstrative connotations that can be associated with “ethical” or “political”.

Looking at the consumption patterns in Denmark and its neighbouring countries, it is a fact that Scandinavians spend the better part of their days at work, in order to achieve a

salary with high purchasing power (Hansen, 2014), to consume continuously more, as is the current norm in society. Even though Scandinavians generally prefer shorter work weeks (Boje and Ejrnæs 2013), high materialistic living standards make this difficult to realise (Hansen, 2014). One part of these materialistic living standards is a high consumption of clothes, as clothing functions as “a means of personal communication by which individuals express themselves” (Gwozdz et al., 2017, p. 1). Clothing has in this way become more than just something to cover our bodies and keep us warm. It has become a means to show who we are and to a large extent also how successful we are. This is a part of a national (even international) mind-set, as consumption has become a driver in society and “we have been conditioned to buy, from the moment we emerge from the womb” (Makower, 2005, p. 292).

The excessive consumption of clothing items generates an overflow of discarded clothing; a throwaway culture that is particularly evident in the developed economies (Gwozdz et al., 2017). Textile consumption in Denmark has increased more than 30% since year 2000 - on average every Dane consumes 16 kg of textiles every year (Dakofa, 2017). This equates about 10 full outfits per person being discarded annually (Parcl, 2018) and only about one third of this textile is being re-used or re-cycled in the Nordic countries (Schmidt et al, 2016).

This is a striking example of the fast fashion industry, which is characterised by “short-term use, symbolic obsolescence, and increasing waste generation, meaning that its rise has had detrimental consequences for the environment” (Gwozdz et al., 2017, p. 2). Klein (2011) argues that “the cheap goods being produced—made to be replaced, almost never fixed—are consuming a huge range of other non-renewable resources while producing far more waste than can be safely absorbed”. Therefore sustainable consumption is seen as “the antithesis of current modes of consumption in the so-called *throwaway society*” (Castellani et al., 2015, p. 373) – an antithesis that urgently needs to catch on, as it is calculated that “the impact of garment use in western countries must be reduced by 30-100% by 2050 if the industry is to be considered sustainable with regard to the planetary boundaries” (Sandin & Peters, 2018, p. 354).

These facts of man’s impact on the state of the planet have increasingly been broadcasted in popular media over the last years, resulting in the raised awareness in the general population, discussed in the previous chapter. This spreading awareness is

becoming apparent in how individuals shop for clothes and alternatives to the conventional shops have recently become more popular, particularly in urban areas. Examples of new initiatives are clothing libraries, swap markets, fashion rentals, and high-end second-hand stores (Gwozdz et al., 2017). Jensen (2019) describes how the combination of “a nostalgia-trend within fashion combined with a growing interest for sustainability is creating continuously good conditions for the second-hand industry”.

Another indicator that the consumption patterns are beginning to change towards more conscious consumption is the spreading acknowledgement that “there is a negative relationship between materialism and well-being” (Makower, 2005, p. 290) and that “material progress is not giving well-off persons more existential meaning, which has previously been assumed” (Hansen, 2014 p. 176). Hansen (2014) describes how stress and depression have become common diagnoses in Denmark due to an imbalance between work hours and leisure time, to an extent where Denmark has lost its place as the happiest nation in the world (Alfort, 2019). The Danes are now feeling the burden of possessions (Belk, 2007) and are realising that “economic prosperity is not a key factor in providing meaning and personal flourishing” (Hansen, 2014, p. 175).

Seyfang (2004) describes sustainable consumption as a practice of consumption to meet our basic needs and bring about a better quality of life, whilst minimising the use of natural resources and waste outputs across the whole life cycle, to avoid jeopardising the needs of future generations. The simple and sustainable lifestyles, which were previously assumed to demand sacrifices, deprivation or hardship (Hansen, 2014; Shirani et al., 2015) are attracting more positive attention as people realise that a simpler, less materialistic life could provide greater satisfaction, less stress and more time to yourself and your family. Shirani et al. (2015) argue that this change in perception may be crucial for the wider uptake of such ways of living. Michael Birkjær, Danish researcher of happiness at the think tank Happiness Research Institute, says that “the current challenge for Denmark is to succeed in working with the immaterial factors as well as we [the Danes] historically have worked with the material factors” (Alfort, 2019)

Zralek (2016) points out that adapting to conscious consumption, or the values of minimalism as she studies under the term *Voluntary Simplicity*, begins with activities involving disposition in material possessions. She continues to explain that the initial

steps towards a simpler lifestyle are usually connected with throwing out, recycling or giving away what has not been used for a long time. The following and more advanced steps focuses around environmental concerns, product quality, shared ownership, buying second-hand and prioritising ethical products (Zralek, 2016).

The common population in Denmark might not have reached the advanced steps towards conscious consumption yet, but several things indicate that we are taking steps in the right direction towards conscious living and consumption. An example of this is the extreme (and surprising) popularity of the Netflix show “Tidying with Marie Kondo” in the beginning of 2019, which resulted in Danes around the country letting go of excess stuff and started discussing and sharing their progress as well as process towards a less cluttered life. Another example is the fact that, after decades of a stable, high consumption of meat, the curves have recently started to decline, as the Danes are accepting a more plant based diet (Signe D. Frese, CSR director of Coop Denmark). Along the same lines, we see trends such as downsizing and minimalist wardrobes gaining much more and increasingly positive attention, both in social debate and on social media (Weinswig, 2016). Furthermore, second-hand consumption is growing and changing rapidly, with a revival of flea markets, a growing numbers of second-hand shops (both brick & mortar and online) as well as new business models that stimulate re-use in various ways. Shirani et al. (2015, p. 64) describe this as “a generational change in the attitude to recycling, energy conservation and a whole host of environmental issues”. They continue to argue that “life events are crucial in developing an environmental consciousness” (Shirani et al., 2015, p. 62), which could possibly explain why the long working hours that are causing stress and depression, could trigger a change in lifestyle.

To the people who have become conscious, change cannot come soon enough, as their conscious choices can be both hard to accommodate and remarkably expensive as they are still quite niche and specialised. It can also be both tiresome and frustrating to keep fighting the system and always explaining and justifying your choices (general consensus at the election debate on circular economy, CBS, march 12th 2019). However, ethical expectations on the marketplace take time to implement and require patience. Micheletti (2003) emphasises that even though individualised action may not have an immediate impact, they are still necessary for the process to continue in the right direction.

Even if progress can seem slow, this chapter has attempted to highlight that steps towards more conscious consumption are being taken by increasing amounts of people throughout Denmark, and by many different actors in society. In the chapter after the next, on words shaping the world, it is further examined how these steps develop new discourse on sustainability and consumption, and how this discourse in turn affects action. But first, the following chapter will zoom in on an essential issue for the realisation and success of conscious consumption, namely the concept of re-use.

3.3. Re-use and Circular Consumption

The movement towards sustainable lifestyles and conscious consumption, examined in the previous chapters, is a multi-faceted task, but one of the key elements, both at community level and the individual level, is re-use. Re-use is different from recycling, where a product is disseminated in order to use the contained resources in a new product, and different from down- and up-cycling, where the product is processed in one way or the other to give it a new function. Re-use means to use the same product for its intended purpose several times, which is a fundamental aspect in working towards a more sustainable society. All of the above ways of using resources again are valuable in the efforts to reduce depletion of the planet's resources and limit waste-generation. However, direct re-use holds the most environmental benefits, as it requires fewer resources, minimal additional processing and less energy consumption, compared to recycling, disposal, or the manufacturing of new products from virgin materials (Castellani et al., 2015). Direct re-use hence has many implications and aspects relevant in the context of clothing production and consumption, which are the subject of the following chapter.

Within current consumption patterns, many products become waste when there is still a potential for re-use (Castellani et al., 2015). The clothing industry has vast potential to increase re-use. Globally only around 20% of clothes are re-used or recycled (BBC Trending, 2017). In Denmark about 50% of disposed textiles are collected, mainly for re-use domestically or abroad (Dakofa, 2019). However, even though many consumers discard their used clothes by donating it to charity or passing it on to friends or family, "binning unwanted clothing is still common, leading to much clothing ending up in

landfills or incinerators that could have been re-used, recycled, or otherwise down-cycled” (Gwozdz et al., 2017, p. 4). The potential market for re-use grows even bigger when taking into account that “clothing items typically are disposed of long before the end of their technical service life” (Sandin & Peters, 2018, p. 355).

Gwozdz et al. (2017) conclude that the greatest energy and carbon emissions savings within the apparel industry is possible by increasing the durability of the clothing produced and advancing direct re-use. As mentioned, direct re-use is preferred over recycling as “recycling requires further input of energy and materials” (Waight, 2013, p. 4), but further re-use is preferred as the benefits of re-use are believed to be not only environmental, but potentially also socioeconomic, as reuse provides disadvantaged segments of populations with second-hand goods that are cheaper than new ones (Castellani et al., 2015).

In the build-up to the forthcoming election in Denmark, there is currently a heavy public debate around the issues of recycling and re-use. Politicians, companies and trade organisations are debating how to standardise collection and sorting of disposed goods, how to maximise the resource output of disposed goods and how to determine the rightful owners of this mass of resources, which per definition should no longer be categorised as waste (Klitgaard, 2019). This discussion is part of a much larger international discourse on incorporating sustainability and re-use in society, as well as achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by the members of the United Nations in 2015 (United Nations, 2015).

Even though the environmental aspects of sustainability are the main focus of this thesis, it is important to note that sustainability means more than environmental responsibility and climate concerns. The business world now operates with three different bottom lines; People, Planet and Profit (CBS Wire, 2019), and the 17 UN SDGs further elaborate on the intricate web between these three aspects, which are all essential for future life within the planetary boundaries of earth (United Nations, 2015). In Denmark, especially SDG number 12, regarding sustainable production and consumption, is emphasised in the public debate, because this is the area Denmark (and the rest of the European countries for that matter) is performing poorest¹. To reach the 12th SDG, the Danish government has in 2018 presented a very concrete and ambitious suggestion on

¹ Appendix 1, p. 99: SDG Index for Denmark 2018

circular economy (Finansministeriet, 2018), allocating 60 million DKK to 11 initiatives, all aimed at making companies decrease their waste, and to make re-use, recycling circularity a greater part of the Danish economy (Ritzau, 2018).

Circularity in this context refers to circular economy, which is a concept that has gained increasingly more attention over the last years, as the climate crisis has highlighted the downfalls of our current economic system. Defining this complex concept very briefly; circular economy is an alternative to the current linear systems of production and consumption. Inspired by the circularity of nature, where all resources are used and used again, never becoming waste, it offers a regenerative model able to decouple economic development from the consumption of finite resources (Webster, 2017). It is a business model or system where waste does not exist (Jesper Clement in CBS Wire, 2019). A loop-system developed with the core principles of designing out waste and pollution, keep products and materials in use and regenerate the natural systems (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2013).

To work towards circularity in society, re-use is a fundamental element. Upon presenting the suggestion of implementing circularity in the Danish economy, the Danish minister for environment and food, Jakob Elleman Jensen, states that “Circular economy is not only a green and golden opportunity. It is a necessity. We are obliged to re-think the way we produce and consume (Ritzau, 2018).

This need to circulate resources, reduce waste and consume smarter, which are the main elements in the circular economy (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2013), requires a radical and fundamental systems change (Jesper Clement in CBS Wire, 2019). A change that includes “planning our economies based on collective priorities rather than corporate profitability” (Klein, 2011, p. 15). Hence, there is naturally a great deal of research and development in the field of circular economy and it’s many implementation implications in society. Reports support not only the notion that this change is urgent, but further that it is positive, both for the planet as well as for the economy. The circular economy offers business leaders and governments a clear opportunity for long-term growth that is less dependent on cheap materials and energy, and which can restore and regenerate natural capital (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2015).

In the fashion industry, re-use in the sense of recycling is an option many companies introduce as part of their business. As examples H&M have in their *Conscious Collection*

introduced clothes and products in fibres made from recycled PET bottles (H&M Group, 2019). Adidas launched a collection of shoes made from ocean plastic (Adidas, 2018), and many other fashion companies are following this trend, while studying how to best recycle fabrics for re-use in the production of new clothing (theme at the event on Sustainable Fast Fashion during CBS Green Week 2019). However, as this chapter has established, from an environmental point of view, direct re-use is an even more conscious way to consume. The 27-year-old founder of the Danish high-end curated vintage universe Collect21 launched in Spring 2019, Julie Blichfeldt, describes second-hand consumption as the life vest of fashion in the future (Jensen, 2019). She continues: “Second-hand clothing consumption has the potential to reduce the sale and production of new goods and allow us all, as consumers, to share the resources that have already been used” (Jensen, 2019). Vintage stores such as Collect21 are seeing the light of day because consumers are demanding more and more varied second-hand options. This connection between the consumers and the market and how they influence each other is the subject of the following chapter, which also dives into how the words we use to describe the world, changes the reality around us.

3.4. Words Shaping the World – The Social Context of Consumption

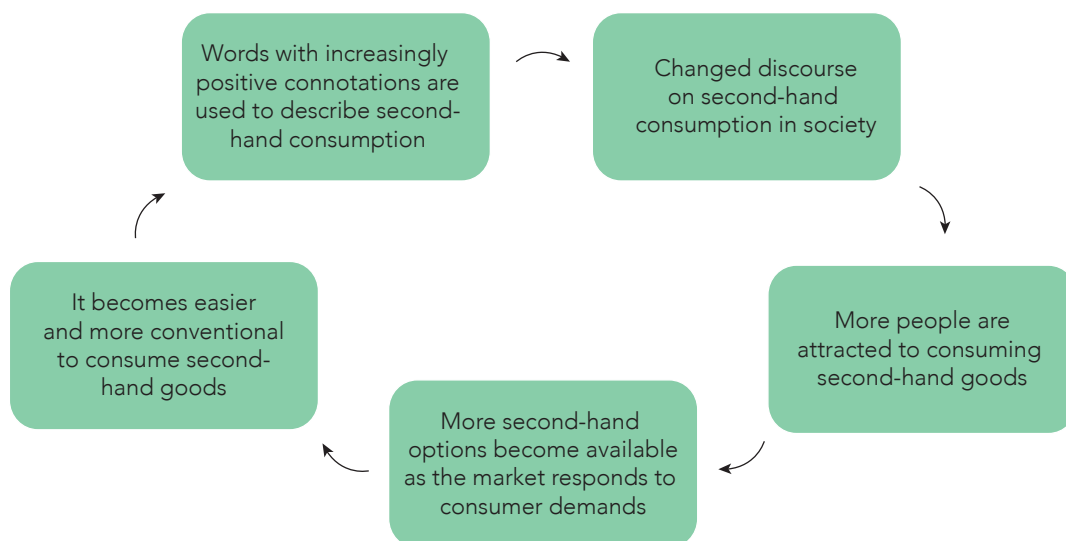
The debate on re-use and circularity is in many ways taking over the public discourse on sustainability and has forced these subject to become part of daily conversations in homes not previously concerned with sustainability matters. People throughout Denmark are discussing responsible consumption and ways to limit waste generation. As these subjects become ever more present in our daily life, the stigma previously associated with being environmental conscious and wearing pre-used clothes has begun to disappear (Steffen, 2016). How this change manifests itself, and how the power of communication, terminology and discourse can further eradicate stigma and in turn make buying and wearing second-hand clothing more acceptable, perhaps even preferred, is debated in the following section.

Terminology and Discourse

Adhering to a social constructionist approach, a relevant factor that has helped eradicate the stigma and has potential to grow the preference for second-hand clothing in the future, is terminology and discourse. According to critical discourse analysis, our ways of talking, do not reflect our world neutrally, but play an active role in both creating and changing the world (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Our world or reality is in this way reflected in our language, which in turn constitutes and construct that same reality. This means that we shape the world by talking about it, and that the way we talk about the world is a result of the reality around us. Looking at the words used to describe and discuss consumption and second-hand goods could in this regard work as an indicator of how the world is changing

In Denmark, the new and modern second-hand shops are branding themselves for the young consumers by using words as “preloved” instead of “used”, and “reshopping” has become an accepted concept in itself, rather than just a prefix to shopping. Johnson et al., (2017, p. 2) argue that “we need a new vocabulary that enables us to explore a society beyond growth”, and *preloved* and *reshopping* are part of this developing vocabulary. The discourse around second-hand consumption is changing with each introduction of new words. It is being attributed more positive associations and connotations, that continuously make it easier and more acceptable for people to change their consumption habits to include more second-hand.

Discourse on Second-hand Consumption Affecting Consumption Patterns



As the visual illustration displays, a change in discourse and terminology reflects that a change is happening in society, and can in turn have the potential to start a positive domino effect - not only for second-hand consumption, but also for sustainable lifestyles at large, as an increasingly positive discourse on the subject can motivate more people to consume second-hand, leading to more second-hand options as the market responds to the demand. More shops, apps or other channels of second-hand sales will make it easier for even more people to partake in the second-hand economy and help eradicate the popular notion that consuming more consciously is difficult, more expensive or demands a sacrifice of life-quality (Shirani et al., 2014).

The Social Context of Consumption

In her study on reducing parent's ecological footprint through second-hand consumption, Waight (2013) describe that the likelihood of choosing environmentally friendly products increases if people get information and inspiration to do so from their peers. This means that consumers are more likely to consume consciously if this is an issue discussed and agreed upon in their social relations. In their annual report on the second-hand economy, ThredUp, a popular American fashion resale website, has dubbed the millennials "The Instagram Generation" (ThredUp 2019, p. 11), as Instagram is their preferred social media to interact through, communicate their values, share opinions, search for inspiration and, for better or worse, compare themselves to each other. Studies of social media usage and sustainable consumption have shown that "millennials' purchase intentions are connected to their online social activity" and that "social media users are more likely to have high green purchase intentions" (Bedard & Tolmie, 2017, p. 1394). According to ThredUp (2019), second-hand shopping satisfies the two biggest demands of the Instagram generation; To be seen in new styles and outfits constantly while also being a sustainably conscious consumer (ThredUp, 2019).

In this context, social media, and in particular Instagram, plays a major role in spreading ideas and inspiration of sustainable lifestyles and conscious consumption. In Denmark, more instagrammers, bloggers and influencers are taking a stance and focusing on sustainability. A good example of this is the popular Danish blogger NeoHippie, who runs a blog on neohippie.dk as well as an Instagram account with the same name that currently has more than 26,000 followers. She blogs and posts about her minimalist, non-shopper,

no-waste, organic, vegan, sustainable life of both herself, her family and her "tribe" of likeminded friends, living together as one large family and supporting each other in their alternative lifestyle choices. Her rising popularity and growing number of followers on Instagram have resulted in several offers from TV-channels wishing to broadcast her lifestyle, a book release about minimalist living and continuous invitations to interviews, talks and conducting courses. Another example is the Danish TV personality, Frank Ladegaard Erichsen, known as "Bonderøven", whose TV show about himself, his family, their small farm and slow paced lifestyle is now airing the 10th season. A show he himself didn't think would even survive the first season (Munk, 2018). These are examples of people who are practicing sustainability and frugal values to a degree where they have disconnected themselves from society, but still use their social media presence to interaction with followers, affect public discourse and inspire people within their network to consider their choices.

Another, less radical but still impactful example of how Instagram can affect public discourse and increase awareness around sustainability, is one that took place while this thesis was being written. The colourful and popular Danish blogger RockPaperDresses, with more than 55,000 followers on Instagram introduced the hashtag #miljømandag [English: #environmentalmonday], where the idea is to share on Instagram how she and her followers start the week by doing something good for the environment. In the course of one day, another 10+ other bloggers were using this hashtag, and this way encouraging even more followers to consider the environment.

The awareness and positive attention these influencers are getting, indicates the emergence of a counter-consumerist trend, based on what Shirani et al. (2014, p. 58) call a "disenchantment with consumerist lifestyles and an alternative conception of the good life". Denmark and the rest of the Western world are undergoing "a mass re-evaluation of what and how we consume" (Botsman & Rogers, 2011, p. 51). The sharing of sustainable values on social media, as in all social gatherings, is essential in creating *the new mainstream*, because people are developing and maintaining shared cultural values of what "normal" and "common sense" means through everyday interaction (Hansen, 2014).

Mason (2015) argue that the availability and accessibility of information that has come with the internet "has created a new agent of change in history: The educated and con-

nected human being". The ease of sharing attitudes, values and actions over the internet, and in particular via social media, is becoming a powerful way to define everyday life, providing a frame for how people are supposed to think and act (Hansen, 2014).

With this statement we can conclude that social activities, both offline and online, as well as the words we use to discuss our consumption are significantly affecting our lifestyle choices and purchase decisions. The final chapter of the literature review attempts to clarify how the changes in awareness, lifestyles, consumption and discourse discussed in the previous chapters affects the second-hand economy and market, and push businesses to develop in ways that accommodate a more sustainable future and encourages transformative consumption.

3.5. The Second-hand Economy - A Business Perspective

The previous chapters have established that we are indeed experiencing a tremendous rise in awareness around Earth's climate and our responsibility to take action, both at political, communal, individual and discursive level. This chapter attempts to clarify how this affects the economy of second-hand consumption and how the change in consumption behaviour and preferences is forcing companies to learn new ways to navigate and exist in the market.

It is important to note that the second-hand market or the 'hand-me-down' culture is not new – sustainable ways of living and consuming have been practised for thousands of years, until the industrialisation and consumerist society took over. But for a long time, second-hand consumption has been described as a niche form of consumption (Waight, 2013). However, second-hand consumption is experiencing a revival these days, and new reports show that the second-hand market is booming, having grown 21 times faster than apparel retail over the last three years (ThredUp, 2019).

There are several aspects that affect the increase in second-hand consumption. One historically proven factor is that people tend to buy more second-hand during or after a financial crisis. In Denmark, consumption also changed as a result of the financial crisis in 2008. This crisis not only limited people's ability to spend, but also initiated a time

with a larger general consciousness regarding price, quality and scarcity of resources (Arnsberg, 2017).

Market analysts predict that the second-hand market will continue to grow rapidly, as it “uniquely meets consumers’ preferences for variety, value and sustainability” (ThredUp, 2019). McKinsey (2019) sets forth an even more radical hypothesis of future consumption patterns in their 2019 report *The State of Fashion*, where they write: “We foresee the end of ownership, as concerns about sustainability grow and consumers and companies alike worry about how to alleviate their impact on the environment”.

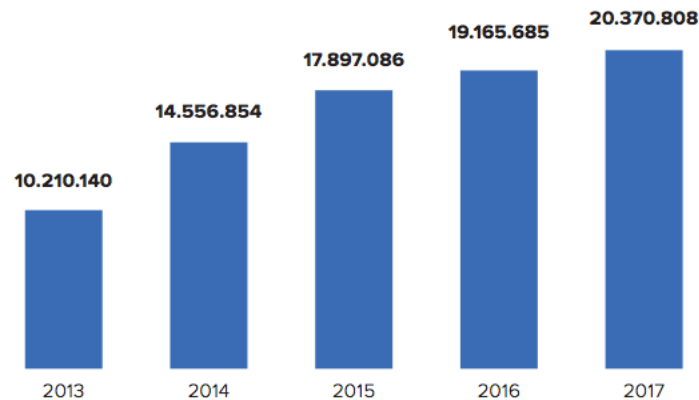
What these reports tell us, concurrently with what has been discussed in previous chapters, is that the negative associations previously connected with buying and wearing second-hand clothing are disappearing (Martinke, 2019; Steffen, 2016; Waight, 2013). Second-hand shopping is no longer an indicator of income or class, but rather a way to consume within the new conscious paradigm. To the Danes, second-hand shopping has become almost like a national sport (Hansen, 2018).

According to Parguel et al., (2017) the growing environmental consciousness, combined with the present consumerism, that has been developed since mass-production was introduced, is bound to enhance consumption on second-hand platforms. The explanation is that these platforms to some extent justify indulgent or impulsive shopping. A large part of the Danish second-hand shoppers are indeed emphasising this exact benefit of second-hand consumption - that it is more sustainable and climate friendly than buying new goods (Hansen, 2018), while at the same time still satisfies the urge to shop.

Thomsen (2016) explains how “we are [in Denmark] witnessing a clear tendency that people prefer to buy used items of high quality rather than cheap, new products”. The Danes’ second-hand shopping is accelerated through the accessibility of more and more second-hand shops, commission shops, flea markets, auction houses and several online market places for resale of used goods. This self-supporting spiral of the second-hand market is driven by the growing focus on sustainability as well as the fact that “more people are becoming less afraid of shopping for used items, as they hear of others’ good experiences” (Thomsen, 2016). This boasts a bright future for the second-hand market in Denmark, as it becomes increasingly socially acceptable both to adhere to frugal values and to express your environmental concerns. The market growth is documented in the report on the Danes’ second-hand economy and their second-hand habits and

actions, published annually by the largest Danish platform for selling and buying used goods Den Blå Avis (DBA). The latest report *Genbrugsindekset 2018* [English: The index of second-hand consumption 2018] shows a 99,5% increase in used goods set for sale over the last four years, with 2018 boasting over 20 million items set for sale.

Number of items set for sale on DBA



DBA further announces that 2018 was the year where the largest number of Danes have either bought or sold used items, resulting in sales for DKK 7.2 billion (DBA, 2018). Clothing is the category most Danes shop for second-hand (Hansen, 2018; DBA, 2018) and children's clothes are identified as being particularly popular second-hand buys, because babies and young children grow out of things before those items have reached the end of their useful life (Waight, 2013, Steffen, 2016).

Waight (2013) categorises and divides second-hand consumers into two groups: people 'who enjoy the process or simply want things'; and those 'who are forced to use alternative consumption channels due to financial hardship'. However, the reviewed research and articles suggest that a third group is becoming relevant as well; those who shop second-hand with the primary purpose of protecting the environment. These are the conscious consumers that are aware of the consequences of their purchases, and businesses need to take this changed consumer consciousness and consumption behaviour into consideration, when planning their strategy and choosing their business models. If not, they will not be "Future Fit" (Future Fit Foundation, 2019). "Future Fit" is a benchmark developed by the Future Fit Foundation to measure a company's path and progress towards a more sustainable future. Measurement tools and industry guidelines within this area are essential for businesses to know how to act in the changing playing field. Both for new businesses who are establishing their business models and their

sense of purpose for the first time, and for existing companies, as they all need to adjust to the changing market conditions.

Given the multitude of aspects included under the umbrella of sustainability, businesses need to choose what sustainable values or which of the UN Sustainable Development Goals they will focus on – which they are ready to fight for (Sustain Daily Tour, 2019). They need to do this in order to prioritise tasks within the organisation and also to send a clear message to all employees as well as the surroundings on the sustainable standpoint of the business. Just like individuals, businesses need to do this prioritisation in order to avoid the risk of biting over more than they can chew at once, and as a result ending up not being able to take any real action on any of the values.

When looking to the second-hand apparel industry, it is a quite straightforward hypothesis to claim that environmental sustainability already is at the forefront of the businesses value-set. When asked, 30% of consumers, using second-hand market platforms, indeed have environmental arguments as the first or second motive, making it the second largest motivator, only exceeded by economic motives (Parguel et. al., 2017). Waight (2013, p. 13) argues that “second-hand consumption is seen to be the ultimate in sustainable consumption, because it requires no further resource use and diverts products from landfill”, but still second-hand companies have their work cut out for them. As awareness continues to increase, it is no longer enough to claim “it is second-hand, therefore it is sustainable”. Consumers are requiring transparency and responsibility (ThredUp, 2019) and it becomes increasingly important for companies to promote their corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategy and sustainability efforts, to attract and secure the loyalty of their customers.

Throughout industries, we now see companies working actively with sustainability and CSR as a key element in their marketing. The new Danish pension fund, Matter Pension, is attracting customers by advertising their strategy of only investing in sustainable businesses. The new Danish management consultancy, Nordic Sustainability, who works to implement sustainability in larger corporations, additionally incorporate SDG #8 concerning decent work, by offering their employees decent working hours, which is a rarity in the consultancy world. The search engine *Ecosia.org* is trying to compete with Google, by advertising at least 80% of their profits goes towards funding reforestation projects.


In line with the health wave, that gained attention throughout Denmark in the early 2000's (Bølling, 2015), one of the first industries in Denmark to incorporate sustainable values and rhetoric was the food industry. Innovative business models use sustainability as their core purpose as well as in their marketing efforts. One of the most successful innovations to limit food waste is the app "To Good To Go" which allows restaurants, bakeries and grocery stores to sell their expiring goods or left-over food at highly reduced prices to consumers who have downloaded the free app. There are also initiatives that try to be even more circular than this. An example is BeyondCoffee, who is collecting used ground coffee beans from cafés and using it to mould new, compostable to-go cups.

Within the fashion industry, we are also seeing many new initiatives as a response to the rising awareness that clothing and textile production and consumption is the second largest polluter. The American active-wear brand Patagonia Inc, has developed a re-buy channel and is buying back and reselling their clothing of their own brand through a dedicated section of their webshop. H&M have, as part of their strategy to reach full circularity by 2050, done a re-take solution, offering customers 10% discount upon handing in a bag of used textile. The American online second-hand shop ThredUp offers their customers to sell the clothes they no longer want for them. They even developed a full clean-out-kit, including instructions on how to clean out your closet, as well as free shipping to their sorting warehouse, where sellable clothing is bought to be sold on their webshop and the rest is either send back or donated. Similar ideas are available in Denmark primarily through physical second-hand commissioned shops.

What is important to keep in mind is that people will choose the solution that is easy, cheap and creates value for them (Hvidsteen, 2019). Therefore, in order to succeed in shaping a more sustainable future, the industry needs to develop new solutions to the problems of consumption that are more attractive than the ones we leave behind (Svensson, 2016). In this regard, the internet and the smartphone revolution are essential. The internet has within years allowed consumers to shop in the comfort of their own home and in their own time. It has made it easier than ever to compare products and prices, and e-commerce has taken over a large part of the market. This is on its own not good for sustainable or conscious consumption, but conscious companies and the second-hand industry need to take these new opportunities into consideration, when establishing their business models. They have to be as easy to shop with, as their

traditional “from-new” competitors. They need to be Future Fit, both technology-wise and value-wise. Hansen (2018) indicates that easy-to-use and accessible thrift shop platforms are one of the reasons why the Danish consumers have increased their second-hand shopping (Hansen, 2018).

The exploration of second-hand consumption, and how the market has developed over time, have shown that despite second-hand consumption not being a new invention, recent years have seen it re-invented, through the increased awareness on sustainability and a growing desire from customers to consume with less environmental impact. This chapter has highlighted that the second-hand industry is growing faster than fast fashion, as the stigma previously connected with wearing second-hand clothing is dissolving. Further it has been made clear that the market is changing as consumers are raising demands regarding responsibility, transparency and sustainability. But it is also clear that consumers are continuously inclined to choose the most convenient options, emphasising that businesses and industries need to develop solutions, services and products that support the demand for sustainability, while also providing a user experience matching that of conventional options, or preferably even better. Building on this market knowledge and the insight of the entire literature review, the following chapter introduces the empirical research conducted in order to answer the research question of this thesis.

The background of the entire page is a close-up, high-contrast photograph of crumpled white paper. The folds and creases create a complex, organic pattern of light and shadow, giving the image a textured, three-dimensional appearance.

- Research Design & Methodology -

4. Research Design and Methodology

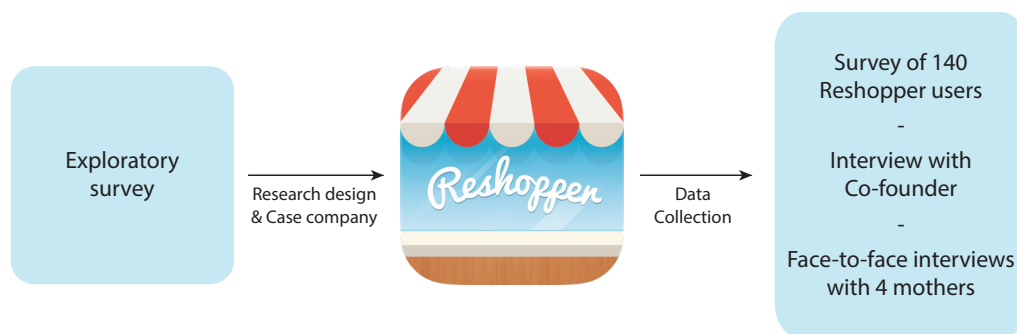
The literature review has made it clear that wide-ranging changes are happening in society, on the market and for individual consumers. It has further become clear that tackling the climate challenges ahead, demands that government, industry and consumers all take responsibility and engage in more sustainable actions. The following part will look to empirical data in order to research how the consumption changes are present in the market for children's clothing in Denmark and how companies can both explore and draw benefits from the changing consumption patterns, as well as support the transformation to increasingly sustainable clothing consumption.

Given the qualitative and inductive nature of the research question, it was natural to apply an exploratory research approach that allowed the project to change direction during the process, as new knowledge developed. Adhering to a Social constructivist paradigm, the grounded theory approach was selected, as the appropriate research design to explore a new field and develop useful hypotheses, on the way to answering the research question. Data collection and analysis was consequently conducted concurrently, so that theories on the subject could develop from the emerging patterns in the collected data and be investigated continuously throughout the process.

4.1. Data Collection

Data was collected using mixed methods. This approach was chosen to generate both qualitative and quantitative data, to illustrate the links between awareness in society, the mind-set and the values of the mothers using Reshopper, and how these values are apparent in their actual consumption behaviour. The mixed methods approach is in this sense used as a way to create both *completeness* and facilitate *understanding* (Bryman, 2012), as it is expected that employing both quantitative and qualitative research allows for a more comprehensive account of the subject, and that the qualitative research helps explain findings generated by the quantitative research.

Process of Data Collection



In entering the field of study, an exploratory approach was initially used to get insights to the market, the segment of consumers and to provide direction for the following research. After the initial insights had been analysed and provided direction for the subsequent research, in-depth data was gathered through a case study research design, including both the perspective of the industry and the consumers.

The case study included an initial survey of the Reshoppers, generating both quantifiable data, allowing us, amongst other things, to generalise and compare the case with the general market trends, as well as qualitative data, where respondents explain and comment on their answers, their consumption and motivations.

The business perspective was investigated through a qualitative interview and continuous communication with the co-founder of Reshopper, Nicolai Danmark Johannesen, because most facts and formal data is already available through articles and the online media channels of Reshopper (Website, Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram). Therefore

the aim of the interview was not to get the co-founder to re-list facts, but rather to offer insights into the people behind the business and their subjective opinion on the subject of second-hand consumption, their contribution to the market, the Reshopper app and how they envision the future of both Reshopper, the market and the Danes' consumption patterns.

Lastly, to tie a knot around all the data and new knowledge that had developed from both the survey of users and the interview with the founder, a series of semi-structured in-depth interviews with mothers using Reshopper were conducted. These interviews both worked to test hypotheses, to provide details of and explanations to the survey findings as well as open up to new aspects of the research of both this thesis and future projects.

The analysis of the both qualitative and quantitative data gathered, during the research was efficient in both answering the current research question and generating interesting and relevant hypothesis for future research, which will both be presented in the following chapter discussing the research findings.

4.2. Exploratory Survey

The first steps of research sprung from the initial curiosity regarding whether and how the growing sustainability awareness is affecting the market for children's clothing. An exploratory survey² was conducted online to gain insights on whether and how the current rise in climate awareness is affecting mothers' thoughts and actions when purchasing clothing for their children and which sales channels they used in their shopping. Questions were asked to clarify whether climate change and environmental concerns played a role in their consumption behaviour, to what degree and in what aspects of their lifestyle this has become apparent. Mothers of children aged 0-5 years were chosen as the most relevant respondents to the survey, as shopping for clothing for these young children is done almost entirely by the mothers (Svensson, 2016). Hence, the survey was distributed through various maternity groups. In total 13 mothers participated. The respondents all lived in or around Copenhagen, were aged between 28-38 and all had

² Appendix 2, p. 101-104– Exploratory Survey Question

one or two children aged 0-5 years. This small “launch” study provided initial insight to the minds and consumption behaviour of new mothers and gave indication as to how sustainability and re-use is part of their lifestyle.

On the basis of this initial insight, it became evident that 12 out of 13 attending mothers (92%) were familiar with the Mobile App Reshopper and that 69% of the mothers used Reshopper, when purchasing second-hand clothing for their children (compared to 31% using DBA, which is considered the largest and most used online second-hand marketplace in Denmark, and 8% using Facebook). 92% of the mothers stated that they also used physical second-hand stores and flea markets, but as industry reports (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017; ThredUp, 2019; McKinsey, 2019; Deloitte, 2017) argue that online markets and apps will take the lead in 2019, the mobile app Reshopper was chosen as the relevant case company for the continuing research.

4.3. Case Study - Reshopper

The case study research design was chosen, as it is a relevant research approach to investigate contemporary and complex phenomena (Yin, 2009), such as the case of mothers' consumption behaviour on this online, peer-2-peer, second-hand platform. In addition, the case study approach is a good tool for building new theory (Huberman & Miles, 2002), which is the objective of this project, venturing in to a research field that is developing and changing at an accelerating pace.

Reshopper was developed in 2012, after Jonas Funk Johannesen, one of the Reshopper founders, had the idea during a stroll with his newborn in the pram. The basic idea was that all the houses he passed were probably full of useful baby and children's items that could be put to use in new homes rather than collect dust in an attic or basement. Collaborating with his friends, Nicolai Danmark Johannesen, Anders Munk and Anders Dahl Pape, he developed and founded Reshopper with the purpose of circulating children's goods between families and to challenge the current culture of consumption. They themselves introduce the app with the following words:

“Reshopper is the local marketplace for families with children, where they can buy or sell used children's items. With the Reshopper app, it is easy and quick to

put the children's clothing and toys for sale. You can do it with a baby on your arm! Make good trades in your neighborhood and help spread the idea of Reshopper. Not only do you save money by buying used, but it is also good for the environment. It makes good sense.” (Reshopper, 2018)

Reshopper is developed with a mobile-first strategy, meaning that it is only available on mobile phones and tablets. Compared to other online second-hand marketplaces it has a very focussed target group and product segment, only including sales and purchases of used children's items. The app is free to download and works as a peer-2-peer marketplace. It was originally developed to accommodate re-use and second-hand shopping within the close neighbourhood of the users and support community feeling (Virksom, 2016), but has since developed to facilitate purchases from further away, through the newly launched secure payment and shipment plan, as well as the paid option to view goods from Reshoppers from all of Denmark.

Through organic growth and with no marketing budget, Reshopper had 100.000 users within the first years of existence (Virksom, 2016). Since then, they have attracted large investors and have expanded to Sweden, England and The Netherlands (Johannesen, 2019). Reshopper is currently dominating the market for second-hand children's items in Denmark and the founders expect to reach 500.000 users in Denmark within 2019. Reshopper has since its launch established and owned its niche for second-hand children's items, as well as established the terms re-shopper and re-shopping to describe buying used items - not only on the Reshopper app, but in general.

The Reshopper app focuses on four product groups; children's clothing, toys, equipment and maternity wear, however, as this project focuses on conscious consumption and the environmental impacts of clothing consumption, only the children's clothing category is part of the case study.

The Users of Reshopper

Even though it was a father who developed the idea for Reshopper, the target group and main user of the app are mothers (Johannesen, 2019). The interviews, performed during the research process, showed that the users often download the app on recommen-

dation from their network, while “building their nest” before the first baby is born. They use Reshopper both to scan the market for what they need, get inspiration, gain product knowledge and ultimately choose and buy the product best matching their need and budget. Further insight on the users of Reshopper will be presented and discussed in the research findings.

4.4. Online Survey of Reshopper Users

In collaboration with the Reshopper co-founder, a new, more targeted survey was developed for the users of Reshopper³. New questions were added, developed from findings in the initial survey, as well as consumer insights and ideas from the Reshopper co-founder. This survey was shared through the official Reshopper Facebook page, as well as in a closed Reshopper Friends Facebook group. Distributing the survey through these channels means it is biased in that it only reaches existing followers of Reshopper, and hence the consumers with a positive attitude towards not only Reshopper, but also towards online second-hand shopping in general. Therefore, the survey results may not reflect the general consumption patterns of all Danish mothers, but rather those who are already inclined to shop for second-hand goods. However, as the aim of the survey was to gain an insight into how and why mothers consume second-hand, and on this basis detect patterns and formulate recommendations for businesses within the second-hand industry on how to benefit from increasing sustainability awareness and initiate further conscious consumption, the survey served its purpose despite this bias.

The survey was distributed on April 10th and accessible for a week, but all respondents participated within the first four days. In total 140 answers were collected. The Respondents were between 24 and 53, but most (79%) were millennials, aged 24-39. All parts of Denmark (North-, West-, East and South-Jutland as well as Fynen and Sealand) were represented.

This structured survey included 22 question of both qualitative and quantitative quality, in order to provide measurable data to test, support or develop hypotheses, as well as descriptive answers providing insight to the mindset of reshopping mothers in a

³ Appendix 3, p. 105-108 – Reshopper Survey Questionnaire

manageable and uniform manner. The purpose of this survey was to create data about the second-hand clothing in Danish children's wardrobes, the mothers' thoughts on second-hand consumption and their motives to use Reshopper or other second-hand market platforms, as a basis for how Reshopper or other second-hand apparel shops can potentially impact sustainable consumption behaviour of this target group.

4.5 Interview with Reshopper Founder

To gain insight to the business aspect of the rising sustainability awareness, that went beyond what is accessible through the internet. The co-founder of Reshopper, Nicolai Danmark Johannesen was interviewed, using a qualitative, unstructured interview approach. He was initially sent a written list of topics for discussion⁴. The topics were discussed informally over the phone, before the Reshopper survey was developed and shared. During the period of the survey, follow up questions were answered via email and later discussed and elaborated over the phone. A face-to-face meeting would have simplified the process and made the communication more time-efficient, but due to the distance between the researcher and the interviewee, as well as the busy schedule of the co-founder, this unfortunately was not possible. It was planned and agreed upon to do audio recordings of the phone conversations, but they were largely unscheduled and fitted in at the convenient time of the interviewee, resulting in this option not being available. The conversations have therefore only been documented in interview notes and through email correspondence.

The informality and unstructured method of the initial phone interview resulted in plenty of what Bryman (2012, p. 470) labels as "rambling or going off at tangents", opening up to new aspects of the research and the possible implications of the study and future studies on sustainable consumption. The subjective insights from the interview was processed and analysed in coherence with available company and market data and the resulting new knowledge and developed hypotheses were incorporated in the continued research process.

⁴ Appendix 4, p. 109 – Interview Guide, Nicolai Danmark Johannesen


4.6. Face-to-Face Interview with Selected Sample of Mothers

After having reviewed the data from both surveys and interviews with the Reshopper co-founder, a series of questions and hypotheses arose. Four mothers were selected⁵ for qualitative, semi-structured, in-depth interviews⁶. The mothers represent the overall second-hand consumption of children's clothing as it became apparent in the survey, but hold diverse opinions on the matter of sustainability, as well as diverse consumption behaviour and motivation to re-use. The questions and hypotheses that had been developed from the survey and co-founder interview were discussed to the extent and in the order it was relevant for that particular mother. These final interviews served to test the hypotheses developed from previous review and data, as well as offer explanations or comments on the survey findings. They contained questions regarding the mothers' general consumption patterns, their general awareness on sustainability, their children's wardrobes, their use of the Reshopper app and the role of motherhood, but all mothers contributed with answers beyond these subjects. The interviews were conducted in informal settings either in the home or garden of the mother herself or in a cafe of their choosing. Most mothers naturally answered several questions, when they became engaged in a subject and started talking. This was encouraged through attentive listening and accepted silence by the interviewer. All of the interviews resulted in discussions of new subjects or aspects of the current research. This illustrates how differently people within a seemingly homogeneous group approach the complex subjects of sustainability and consumption. All interviews were audio recorded⁷, both to avoid interrupting the interview with excessive note-taking, as well as being able to return to the interviews, as patterns emerged and hypotheses formed from the body of data.

⁵ Appendix 5, p. 110 – Socio-demographic information on the interviewed mothers

⁶ Appendix 6, p. 111-112 – Interview Questions for Reshopping Mothers

⁷ Appendix 7, p. 113 - Audio Recordings (uploaded as digital appendices)



- Discussion of Findings -

5. Findings and Discussion

The mixed method research resulted in a large body of data, in which it is both possible to detect patterns and search for explanations. Including both the perspective of the consumers as well as the case company, has added an extra layer to the findings, beneficial to understanding the case company in its context.

To communicate the findings in the most coherent and useful way, they are in the following sections organised into five thematic categories, incorporating both the collected quantitative and qualitative data regarding the certain theme, directly followed by a discussion of subjects addressed under the theme.

The chapter starts with a dissemination of the anatomy of the children's wardrobes, as to provide a basis and context for the following findings. Secondly the findings regarding mothers' considerations and preferences concerning new vs. second-hand clothing is discussed, prior to a presentation and discussion of the findings more specifically regarding Reshopper and the mothers' use of the app. Hereafter, the mothers' motivations for both buying and selling second-hand clothing through Reshopper is presented. The chapter rounds off with a presentation of the mothers' values, feelings and thoughts about consumption, sustainability and environmental considerations.

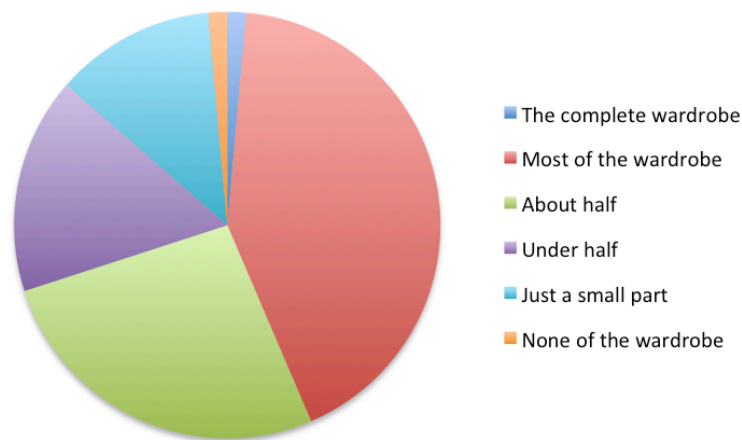
5.1. Anatomy of Children's Wardrobes

To get familiar with the content of the wardrobes of the small children, the mothers were, in both the Reshopper survey and during the subsequent interviews, asked a series of questions regarding the clothing their children own and wear. Their answers illustrate a very varied consumption of second-hand clothing, but throughout both survey and interviews, it becomes clear that sustainability and consciousness are concepts that most mothers consider and concern themselves with, in regard to their children's wardrobes.

To get an idea how children's wardrobes are put together in the Danish families, the Reshopper survey asked not only about the second-hand items within the wardrobe, but attempted to facilitate a more comprehensive image of the full wardrobe. One aspect that is particularly relevant when discussing conscious consumption is **the amount of clothing within the children's wardrobes**. In this regard, the mothers were not asked to put a number on how many pieces of clothing they owned, as this would naturally vary tremendously, according to the family's lifestyle, the age of the child etc. The mothers were instead asked whether the amount of clothing matched the child's needs. To this question 66% of the mothers said that their children owned more clothing than they needed. 3% even said that they owned in abundance. 29% felt that their children had the exact amount of clothing that they needed and only 1% claimed that the child had too little clothing. These findings illustrate clearly the unsustainable overconsumption on behalf of the children. However it was an expected find, based on the trends and consumption patterns investigated in the literature review.

The mothers were further asked to supply an estimate of how much of the clothing was **new vs. second-hand**. 99 % of the surveyed mothers said that their children's wardrobes contained second-hand clothing. 42% said that most of their children's clothing was second-hand. 26,5% said that it was about half. 16,5% said that it was below half and 12 % said that second-hand clothing only made up a small part of the wardrobe. 1,5 % claimed to solely have second-hand clothing, which was the same percentage of mothers who claimed to have no second-hand clothing at all.

Second-hand Clothing in Children's Wardrobes



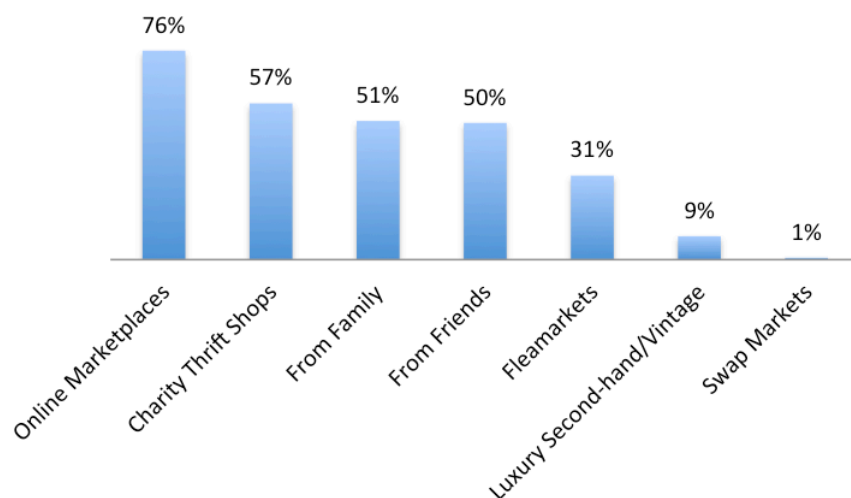
Watching these numbers illustrated in the above figure, makes it obvious that second-hand clothing makes out a significant share of children's wardrobes, also making it a big market for companies to cater.

Nicolai from Reshopper describes that this division of new and used matches the founders' image of their consumers. He explains: "most purchases are still made from new, but the attitude towards fast fashion and overproduction of new goods is changing and we are seeing a changed **"hunting pattern"**, where parents start their search for children's items by checking what is available second-hand, before looking to traditional stores". This notion is further supported during the face-to-face interviews, where one mother, Sofie, takes us through her "hunting pattern" when realising she needs something for her child. "First step is to look through the bags in the attic, whether someone has already handed us down, that particular item. If that is not the case, I look through Reshopper" explains Sofie. She adds; "I always search for a product type or a function, as I don't care much about which brand it is". Another mother, Malene, explains that she unfortunately doesn't have a lot of people to inherit clothing from, therefore she usually goes straight to Reshopper. But her search pattern is quite different from Sofie's. Malene describes her search to be first narrow, as she search for a function she needs, then spreading out, as she gets inspired from the initial search and than finally, when she has an idea of her options, the brands, models, prices etc. available, she makes a narrow search for the preferred product within walking distance of her home. Brit also looks to Reshopper first but, unlike the other interviewed mothers, she is more aware about brands and styles that she prefers for her daughter Nora. Therefore her hunt is more

specified from the onset and she explains that she will rather search over a longer period or bike a little longer for the exact thing she wants, than to buy something right away that “just” supports the needed function.

To gain further insight on **the second-hand part of the children’s wardrobes**, the mothers were asked to identify from where the second-hand clothing had come to their possession. As the survey was performed via Reshopper channels, the participants naturally have an inclination to use online marketplaces, which was also the result of the survey. 76% answered that their primary way to access used clothing was via online marketplaces. As a comparison, the initial exploratory survey, which was distributed through maternity groups rather than by Reshopper channels, showed that 40% of these mothers primarily bought second-hand clothing on online platforms. To detect the realistic division of where and how mothers shop for second-hand clothing, a larger study should be done, unbiased of any company. But for the sake of this thesis, the focus was rather to investigate **the share of bought second-hand vs. inherited**, as to get some direction on how the market for businesses within second-hand children’s apparel currently looks. Therefore the interesting finding to the survey question of how the mothers accessed second-hand clothing was that, in addition to the 76% who bought through online channels, 57% claimed to buy through NGO driven thrift shops, strongly followed by 51% and 50% stating that they inherited clothing from family and friends respectively. 31% said that they bought children’s clothing at flea markets and 9% said that they found it in luxury second-hand or vintage shops.

How Mothers Access Second-hand Clothing



What we can see from these numbers is that, even though hand-me-downs from friends and family still works as a popular way to access used children's clothing, more mothers are actively searching for and buying the second-hand clothing themselves.

This finding was elaborated on during the following face-to-face interviews with mothers. One mother in particular addressed the topic when describing her little girl's wardrobe. Brit explained; "We have inherited a good amount of used clothing, but most of the used items in her wardrobe, I have purchased myself. Simply because I like to choose for myself, what style, colour and brands I like for Nora". To provide some context, Brit meant that about 20% of Nora's wardrobe is second-hand and 80% of this, she has bought herself. In addition, Brit explained how the percentage of second-hand clothing in Nora's wardrobe increased, as Nora outgrew the baby clothing they had received (from new) as presents, at the time of Nora's birth. Brit was the interviewed mother with the least second-hand clothing in her child's wardrobe. To compare, Elizabeth and Sofie, who represent the mothers with almost all of their children's clothing being second-hand, claim that they have bought respectively 10% and 40% of the second-hand clothing in their children's wardrobes, the rest has been hand-me-downs. Malene, who claimed that about 50% of her sons wardrobe was second-hand, explained that she herself bought the larger and more expensive items, as snowsuit, coats and rain wear through Reshopper and the smaller thing like bodies, jumpsuits, pants and socks, are either hand-me-downs from friends or bought from new.

To the interviewed mothers, Reshopper facilitates a way that children's clothing can circulate in the neighbourhood rather than just between family members or friends. The surveyed and the interviewed mothers use Reshopper to access the specific function or style they are looking for, when the need develops. They search for their favourite brands and styles, and maintain their preferred look and budget for their children's wardrobe. In this way Reshopper can be seen as a way of allowing mothers to choose who they will inherit from, as well as a way to make the used clothing actually be appreciated by all its users, as the mothers access exactly what they want and need, when they need it. The answers from both survey and interviews make it clear that the children's wardrobes would still contain second-hand clothing without Reshopper, but Reshopper allows mothers to choose the clothing for themselves, without contributing to the production of more clothing.

5.2. Second-hand vs. New Clothing

When mothers choose to dress their children in second-hand clothing, it is a result of many different aspects. Price has been proved to be of big importance (see subsequent section on motivation), but also mothers' brand preferences and personal style was seen to play a role. These subjects are discussed in the following section, followed by a discussion on the substitution rates of the second-hand clothing as well as how motherhood and the generally growing climate awareness is affecting mothers' consumption of new and second-hand clothing.

Pricing of second-hand clothing in comparison to retail prices was an issue that was identified through the comments included in the Reshopper survey. The participating mothers both expressed the opinion, from a buyers point of view, that clothing was often priced too high compared to the price from new, but also, from the point of view of the seller, that buyers are primarily interested in branded, luxury clothing, so that otherwise well-kept clothes from brands that are less popular or considered less fashionable either took very long to sell or people expected to buy them at extremely low prices.

Elaborating on the issue of pricing in the face-to-face interviews, Sofie expressed that she felt items should be priced according to condition, but other than that she didn't think too much about the prices or how much she saved in comparison to buying from new. "I evaluate whether it is a price that I think that product is worth to me". Brit and Elizabeth both said that they would expect to save around 20-30% compared to retail price, when buying through Reshopper, but then the clothing should be as good as new. If the clothes were visibly used, they would expect a cheaper price. Brit comments; "it should be fair, so that people don't feel that they are just giving away the items, that they have paid a lot of money for". Malene explained that she, like Sofie, also primarily considered the condition of the clothing and whether she could afford the indicated price, rather than a specific reduction. But she added that she, like the opinion expressed in the Reshopper survey, in general felt that people put their items for sale at too high prices, which she found too commercial and unappealing as, to her, Reshopper is more a means of sharing and re-using goods, than a way to make money.

An interesting subject, concerning prices of second-hand vs. new clothing for children, came up during the interview with Malene. As Malene indicated that she often searched for specific **brands** and was motivated by price, Malene was asked to answer which raincoat she would choose for Elliot; either a no-brand raincoat, from new, at 150 Danish kroner, or a fashion-brand, second-hand version at 200 Danish kroner. Malene, choose the used but branded raincoat, even though she had indicated that her primary motivation was price (see subsequent section on motivation). This led to the realisation that price was a motivation in the sense that shopping second-hand allowed her to afford more expensive or higher quality brands than she could from new, rather than just allowing her to save money. Second-hand consumption in this way allowed her to dress Elliot in more branded, high-end clothing than he would be with a wardrobe solely bought from new. If this aspect of being motivated by price is relevant for the mothers in the survey as well, this could explain why sellers experience a hard time selling the no-brand clothing.

Malene explains her choice and her reluctance to stand by it; “Ideologically it shouldn’t matter. The kids do not care what they wear, what the brand is or whether it is new or used, but it matters to me that he appears well-dressed. I think it reflects back on us as parents. People see our child and judge what kind of parents we are. If he looks clean, neat and properly dressed according to size and fashion he will get more positive attention”. In this way the clothing the mothers choose for their children, become a part of their own **image and the stories they tell** about themselves and their family. To some mothers this story will be about functionality (Sofie), for others it is about style (Malene and Brit) and for some it is the story of second-hand for the sake of sustainability (Elizabeth).

In general, looking to the interviewed mothers’ comments on brands, a picture emerges of mothers who are rather uninterested in branded fashion clothing being more inclined to dress their children in second-hand clothing. Further they also seem more inclined to use hand-me-downs over bought second-hand. In contrast the mothers who pay attention to brands and have stronger opinions on the look and style of their children are more inclined to buy the second-hand clothing themselves, but the part of second-hand in these children’s wardrobes appear to be significantly smaller.

Malene's decision to choose the second-hand item, even though the price was higher, indicates a trend, that second-hand is actually the preferred option (on a budget) as a substitute for cheap new goods. This is an extremely important aspect of second-hand consumption as high **substitution rates** are the only way second-hand purchases are actually benefitting in reducing consumption and the environmental consequences of the clothing industry.

The substitution rate of second-hand clothing refers to whether a piece of clothing purchased second-hand directly replaces a dress that would have otherwise been bought from new. If for example a girl buys a pair of pants from a second-hand because she actually needs a pair of pants, these pants would completely substitute a new purchase. But if she instead buys two pairs of second-hand pants because she isn't able to find that exact fit she wants, the substitution rate is naturally lower, but still she has not contributed to new production of the pants. However, if she decides to buy the pants from new and on her way home sees three tops in the second-hand store that matches her new pants, these tops would be extra consumption. Therefore, the substitution rate matters a great deal, in regard to calculating whether or not consuming second-hand helps to decrease consumption. A child's wardrobe might contain 50% second-hand clothing, but if all the second-hand items are extras and the child's needs are actually fully covered by the new-purchases, the second-hand consumption would have no positive environmental impact. Therefore, the mothers, who we have previously seen all claimed to have second-hand clothing in their children's wardrobes, were in the survey asked to indicate the substitution rate of this second-hand clothing.

Before discussing the mothers' answer, it seems relevant to note that most literature on the subject of sustainable lifestyles and conscious consumption agree that there is a gap in knowledge of the potential decrease in CO₂ emissions that will come from substituting new products with second-hand purchases. This gap is based on lack of comprehensive knowledge on which and how many resources that are used in the process of consuming second-hand, such as transporting, sorting, cleaning, maybe repairing and repacking of the used goods and other processes the clothing go through between owners. However, direct re-use within a local community, as is the type of second-hand consumption that Reshopper facilitates, has very few additional processes and a used piece of clothing accessed through Reshopper, is therefore considered to decrease the resource consumption connected with being the item from a new by close to 100%.

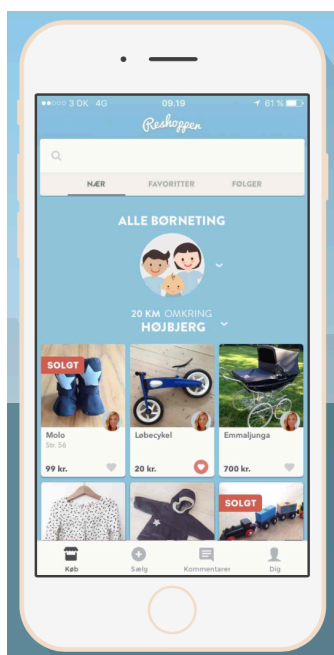
Returning to the survey, 89% of the Reshopper mothers stated that their second-hand purchases directly substitutes new purchases. This makes the Reshopper users stand out from the general consumption patterns, as this percentage is over three times as high as the substitution rate connected with second-hand consumption of clothing in general, as it was calculated from a large study in the United Kingdom I 2013 (WRAP, 2013). This study, including 3000 participants, concluded that 29 % of second-hand purchases within the textile category directly replaced the purchasing of new products (WRAP, 2013).

Malene explains the difference in substitution rates between Reshopper and the general market with the focused target group, limited product selection, and developed search filters in the app; "The Reshopper app lets me look for exactly what I need, when I need it, in an **efficient and easy** way. I can search for the function I need (e.g. windbreaker in a specific size), see what is available within my walking distance and buy it, where in a physical second-hand shop I do not know what they have available - and if they have what I need, I don't have anything to compare with [for style or price], therefore purchases through the app can easily cover a need and substitute a new purchase, whereas shopping in physical thrift shops are more likely to be impulse purchases that are extras." Malene's explanation matches the conclusion of the WRAP (2013) study, showing that the online displacement rate is much higher than from in-venue purchases.

Concluding on the aspect of second-hand vs. new clothing in the children's wardrobes, we have seen that expectations to price and the willingness to pay does not follow any particular detected pattern, but in general both the survey and the interviews show that mothers are more likely to search for and pay higher prices for branded products. In addition, it is indicated in the interviews, that price should reflect, both retail price, quality of materials and production and condition of the clothing, and that second-hand branded clothing of (perceived) high quality can even sell at higher prices than a similar un-branded new product. It was found that clothing bought through Reshopper had a particularly high substitution rate, which was found to be a result both of the given products and the fact that clothing for children are often less worn, as well as the ease of use of the Reshopper app. In the next section, this ease of use will be further discussed, as we dive further into the Reshopper app, its functions and design and take a look at how Reshopper has come to dominate the market for second-hand children's clothing in Denmark.

5.3. Reshopper and the Market

According to Reshopper co-founder, Nicolai Danmark Johannesen, what makes Reshopper unique from its competitors is the very narrow **focus** on children's goods, which allows them to target the entire app to the same audience and provide a user experience that offers both buyers and sellers on Reshopper a pleasant and focused platform. This focus is further emphasised through the **visual identity** of Reshopper, which centres on the children and the visual universe or state of mind that is relevant for the parents, when shopping for their children.



The interviewed mother, Brit, supports Nicolai's notion and explains: "Layout and aesthetics are super important. I think, compared to other apps, Reshopper has made it very easy and transparent what you can buy on this particular app. The **layout** is easy to use and the goods are easy to see when browsing the app". The perception and ease of use of an app, as Brit describes it, is a theme that is paid a lot of attention to for all apps hoping to succeed. In a news article from Danish TV2, this particular aspect of online businesses is described as "vital for the new generation of online thrift shops. That it is a good and uncomplicated experience on your cell phone has great importance [for the success of a company]" Hansen (2018).

According to Nicolai, the focus on children's good and mothers as the target group, is further beneficial, because, in his experience, this group of mothers feel a **trust** in one another and therefore feel safe and comfortable purchasing goods from each other.

Brit expressed the same feelings and say: "for sure I feel secure in making trades within this target group. My experience is that it is another type of people using Reshopper than e.g. DBA. On Reshopper I have always felt that there was a positive dialogue between buyers and sellers and that there in general is a big understanding, that we are all in the same boat and we might have to reschedule or change our plans, as that is just a fact of life when having small children." Malene concurs and explains; "It is nice that all Reshoppers know the premises of life with small children. But in general, I think I

find people who sell used children's clothing pretty trustworthy in general, regardless of whether they sell on Reshopper, DBA or other places."

Functionality

Nicolai Danmark Johannesen goes on to explain, that Reshopper further distinguishes itself from its competitors, with the newly launched solution for **secure payment and shipment**. "This is a game changer, which makes the user experience of Reshopper quite unique compared to competitors. With this solution we are solving one of the fundamental problems our users are experiencing connected to the efforts related to sending packages through the existing shipment services."

This new function is addressing a topic, which was relevant in a significant share of the (few) negative comments from the open questions in the Reshopper survey. These comments were from users from outside the larger cities, who felt that there was no real market in their neighbourhood as there simply were too few children's families – at least who uses the app. To these mothers the option to send and receive goods, without worrying about the practicalities, might help to increase their consumption of second-hand goods, as they can now have it delivered in the same way as conventional web shopping.

None of the interviewed mothers had used the function of secure payments and shipment. Sofie and Elizabeth both expressed that this was not a relevant option for them, as everything they had searched for on Reshopper had been available within close proximity of their home. Brit was unfamiliar with the function, but believed that it was a possible a way for her to still shop second-hand through Reshopper, even after her working hours made it difficult for her to coordinate picking up goods. Malene explained that she had never used the function, but not because she didn't need it, but because she felt that this function made the purchase of second-hand goods feel too commercial. She had difficulty explaining why this bothered her, as she believed that the function would actually make her second-hand consumption easier, but either way, she felt strongly that she would continue to only purchase goods from Reshoppers within walking distance from her home. This led to a very interesting discussion on what limitations mothers (and all consumers) might be placing on their second-hand consumption, which

they don't have for new purchases. Malene said that she would never go to a physical store to buy something from new, because it was too time consuming, when she could just order it online and have it sent. But when it came to second-hand, she imposed on herself that it had to be physically picked up. This issue was not further investigated, but would be a relevant subject of future research.

Returning to the function itself it is important to note that all the interviewed mothers lived in or around the capital area, making them less inclined to use such a function. Also the function was only introduced in this year and is still relatively new. It may take some time for this function to become an integrated part of the mothers' use of the Reshopper app.

Reshopper Users

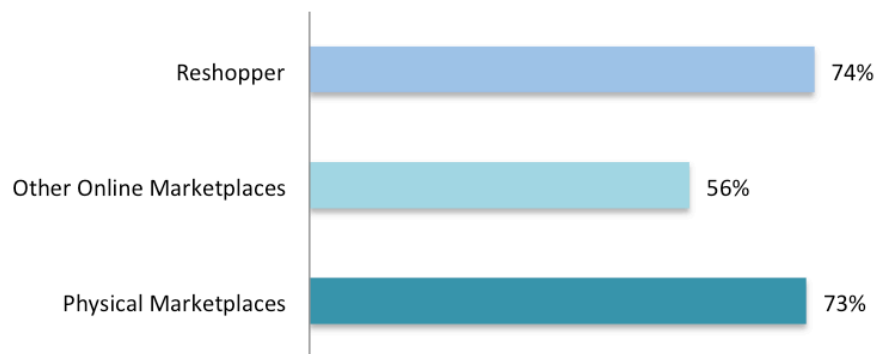
In addition to the layout and functionality of the app, Reshopper as a **peer-to-peer** marketplace is highly dependent on its users. This is clearly visible in the answers from the interviewed mothers, who all live in or around Copenhagen. They all describe how they find what they need, often right away and within walking distance of their home. Naturally this is only possible, because so many users of the app live in close proximity, which is also why the use of Reshopper is very different in other parts of the country. Reshopper is dependent on people to use the app, the more users, the more products available, the more sales resulting in more positive ratings. And Reshopper is currently experiencing this positive spiral occurring. Nicolai states that the active users of Reshopper have doubled within the last year. He continues, "We have very committed and engaged users, compared to our industry. 16% of our daily active users open the app 10 or more times a day." Nicolai adds that "Our users seem to be happy to use the app, as we have an average rating of 4,5 stars out of 5 in Google Play, with more than 3000 reviews and we were featured on Apples top 10 over the best apps of the year in 2016".

This satisfaction with the app was also apparent in the Reshopper survey, where 96% of the mothers participating, felt that Reshopper had made it easier for them to get access to and buy second-hand clothing for their children. Further, 61% said that Reshopper had increased their usage of second-hand clothing for their children.

Online vs. Physical Markets

For Reshopper and other companies within the second-hand industry it is important to know the market you are competing in, and the preferences of their customers. Therefore, the mothers, both in the Reshopper survey and in the face-to-face interviews, were asked to respectively indicate and elaborate on their preferences in regard to shopping for used clothing for their children.

In the survey, as already discussed, 76% replied that they used Reshopper when shopping for their children. In addition to this, 56% answered that they also used other online marketplaces. And 73% replied that they used physical marketplaces.



What the above graph shows us, is that online and physical marketplaces are used by almost equally many mothers. This is a surprising and interesting finding, as research in this field (TredUp, 2019; KcKinsey, 2019) seems to agree that the millennial generation (who the Reshopper target group is part of) in general do most of their purchases online. This finding indicates that, even though the stigma related to second-hand consumption is fading away as discussed in the literature review, people still purchase and consume second-hand goods radically different from new goods.

Diving into these data, the interviewed mothers were asked to elaborate on their consumption on online vs. physical marketplaces. Brit explains: “In regard to the quality of the clothing, I have no preference. But online I find that it can be a bit of a hassle coordinating picking up the goods. Sometimes you spend a lot of energy on the practicalities.” She goes on to conclude that her purchases are divided approximately 50/50, but adds “after I have gone back to work, I expect to go more to the physical shops, as I don’t have the time to coordinate and pick up items. I would make exceptions for bigger things, such as a winter coat, rain wear or something like that – then I would spend the time, in

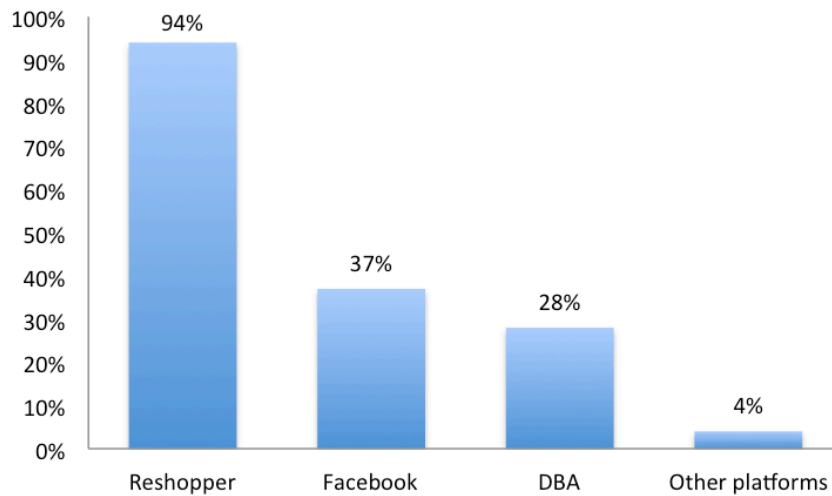
the evening. But during maternity leave I could also just go for a walk during Nora's nap and pick up smaller items in the neighbourhood".

Elizabeth also distinguished her consumption from a before and after, but to her the change in preferred marketplace took place at the time she gave birth to her son. And the change was the complete opposite than Brit's; from physical to online. Elizabeth answers, "Before birth I preferred to go to the charity thrift shops in my neighbourhood. Then I could browse around and look at all the cute baby items and look forward to having a baby of my own in my arms, but I just don't have time for that anymore. Or I would rather spend the time differently and search for the items from home and pick them up when it is convenient." She continues to explain that she uses Reshopper because "it gives me the option to shop very close to home and when it is convenient according to my schedule, where going to a shop is a hassle when you also have a job." She concludes by estimating that most of Wilbert's bought second-hand clothing is from physical shops, but outerwear, equipment or larger items are found through Reshopper.

The other two interviewed mothers, Sofie and Malene, both prefer the online marketplaces. Sofie explains, "The shops are too stressful. It is just much easier to sit on your couch and look for what you need and then just go out and pick it up". Malene explains that she has gone to the physical charity thrift shops several times, but never found any of the clothing that she needed for her son, Elliot. "I think that the items people donate are generally the things that are of lower quality, whereas the things that people sell are those that still has good quality and re-selling value."

In the Reshopper survey, where almost all mothers expectedly answered that they used Reshopper for buying second-hand clothing for their children, it was interesting that the surveyed mothers did not recognise DBA as the online platform they used second most, but rather Facebook Marketplace, which was launched in Denmark in 2017.

Online platforms used for mothers' second-hand consumption



This shows us that Facebook Marketplace has in just two years become a go-to platform for 37% of these mothers, making it a much larger competitor to Reshopper than DBA, which has otherwise been the largest second-hand platform in Denmark, for decades.

On that note, we can conclude that the market that Reshopper is competing in is evolving and Reshopper has to develop continuously if they wish to protect their market share and continue their growth. This chapter has illustrated how reliant Reshopper, as a peer-to-peer platform, is on its users' activity and that new users continuously join the "Reshopper community". Otherwise Reshopper will not be relevant or be able to facilitate second-hand sales in areas with lower population density than in the larger cities. Reshopper has managed to take over and dominate the market because of their narrow focus on children's goods and targeting the mothers, with an easy-to-use and aesthetically appropriate design and layout of the app. They have further introduced functions, such as the secure payment and shipment service, that gives them a market edge, but going forward they must keep developing services and solutions that make reshipping through the app replicate the convenience and ease of conventional online shopping platform, as this is how their customers prefer to consume. Looking further into the users of Reshopper, why and how they use the app, is the topic of the following chapter.

5.4. Motivations for Buying and Selling Second-hand

In the previous chapters the content of the children's wardrobes has been investigated and argumentation for using the Reshopper app has been displayed, both from the viewpoint of the company and its users. But as a peer-to-peer platform, Reshopper serves users both as buyers and sellers, and the motivations connected to each of these activities are very different. These motivations are the topic of the following section.

Motivation to Buy Second-hand

The Reshopper survey showed that 131 out of 140 (94%) of the users asked bought goods through the app. The category with most purchases was clothing, which 81% said they used the app for. Equipment and toys were bought by 56% and 50% respectively. Next, the participants were asked to identify their motivation to buy second-hand goods on Reshopper. They were offered a list of possible motivations, developed from both the reviewed literature and the notions of the co-founder, but they also had the option to state another motivation or to elaborate on their answer. Saving money was the absolute primary motivation, 93% of the mothers checked this as a motivator. The thought of sustainability and avoiding buying newly produced goods came in second followed by the possibility to buy bulk from other Reshoppers⁸. In fourth place came the motivation to avoid stressful situations in physical shops and the fifth motivation was the hunt for something unique.

In the following table, the motivations of the Reshoppers to buy through the app, is compared with the motivations of the general Danish second-hand consumers, as their motivations are listed in the second-hand consumption index by DBA.

⁸ To buy bulk in regard to Reshopper means that buyers purchase more items from the same seller. This can be either a bag of clothing in a specific size or the buyer can select specific items in the given seller's shop, be it clothing, equipment, toys or a combination.

Second-hand Index	Reshopper Survey
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Save money 2. Access good items, that would have been trashed 3. Make a good deal 4. Decrease overconsumption 5. Buy things you can not afford from new 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Save money (93%) 2. Avoid buying from new/sustainability (66%) 3. The possibility to buy “bulk” (33%) 4. Avoid stressful situation in physical shops (21%) 5. The hunt for something unique (14%)

The answer options in the survey differed from those in the DBA index, as they were developed from the literature review on Sustainable Lifestyles and Conscious Consumption. Based on the literature it was deemed more relevant to include more options related to spending both your time, money and energy in more conscious ways, compared to the motivations in the DBA second-hand index, that appear to be multiple versions of financial motivation and the aspects of peddling/bargain hunting,

The first motivation matches the list of the general Danish second-hand consumer, but with sustainability following so closely as second largest motivator, the mothers differ from the general population who has environmental concerns as number 4 (DBA, 2018). Emma Waight (2013) performed a similar study of parents’ second-hand consumption, that similarly concluded “Whilst primary justifications were almost universally found to be financial, participants showed a strong ethical desire to re-use items which, by their very nature, had not reached the end of their useful life before being made redundant by the family”.

Reshopper Co-founder Nicolai Danmark Johanneson expands on this ethical desire and argue “Many parents find some kind of meaning and sensibility in doing something beneficial for the family economy while increasing the life cycle of products and being part of a global shift in attitude, where we move from massive over-consumption towards more re-use, environmental consciousness and responsibility.”

In the face-to-face interviews, Malene agrees with the respondents of the survey. She explains that she is motivated by the price savings and being able to buy brands or items that she couldn’t otherwise afford and adds that “sustainability is a positive side effect”.

Elizabeth displays the completely opposite viewpoint and states that her primary motivation is environmental, in that she does not want to be responsible for the production of more stuff. To her, price savings is just a positive side effect. Brit also finds the sustainability perspective of second-hand to be her primary motivation, but emphasises that the financial perspective is important as well. She adds, “most of all I just think it is silly not to re-use the clothes. They use it for such a short time, so trashing or burning it [referring to incineration of garbage] is just unbearable”. Sofie is the only mother to explain her motivation in regard to her daughter, Elin. Sofie says: “buying it used just makes it easier for me to say “okay, go play”, it doesn’t matter that the clothes get ripped or dirty, because it was already worn and it didn’t cost much” she comments that she was raised in this way, to be careful when wearing fancy or expensive outfits, and says “there is just no need for small children to have that in the back of their heads”.

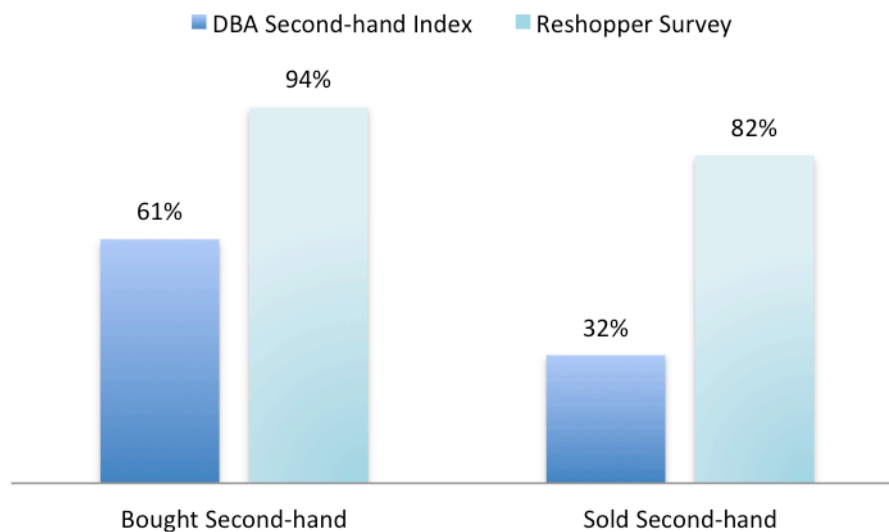
Both Sofie and Elizabeth argue that a motivation for them is the fact that shopping for their children via the Reshopper app is easier and more convenient than going to shops and saves both time and money. What is interesting is that Malene and Brit are of the complete different opinion, arguing that shopping second-hand and using the Reshopper app, is very time consuming, compared to going to a store. This again illustrates the division between the consumers searching for brands vs. the consumers searching for function.

In order to provoke the mothers to self-reflect they were asked if they thought that their consumption of second-hand clothing for their children would change if money wasn’t an issue – if they e.g. won or inherited a lot of money. This question in particular provoked some ideological discussion with Malene, who, after thinking for a while, answered: “I want to say “of course!”, because it just doesn’t make sense not to re-use, because children wear the clothing so shortly, but I also have the aspect that I just really like to dress him in nice and branded clothing. Ideologically I want to say yes, but I am not sure I would in reality, because it is just so much easier to buy the things I like from new”. Brit indicated that she would still buy second-hand, but most likely in some more convenient way. She explains, “I wouldn’t spend my time coordinating and doing pick-ups. Maybe I would choose some subscription service (like Danish Vigga) or some other easy option that could just be sent to me.”

Again, Sofie and Elizabeth differ from the two other mothers and both immediately answer “No” to whether their use of second-hand clothing would change. Sofie says, “That is simply the way I was raised”. Elizabeth explains that for her and her partner “it has never been the money that motivates us. We could afford to buy the things we want from new, but we don’t like adding to the mass-consumption. That wouldn’t change, no matter how rich we were”.

Motivation to Sell Second-hand

The Reshopper survey showed that fewer mothers are using the app to sell goods than to buy goods (82% compared to 94%). This pattern matches the general picture of the Danes’ second-hand consumption as illustrated in the DBA second-hand index, but with significantly higher rates for the users of Reshopper than the general population, as illustrated in the following graph:



Clothing is the primary product sold with 76% of the participating mothers answering that they sell clothing through Reshopper. 74% sell equipment and 59% sell toys. The mothers were asked to state the factors motivating them to sell goods on Reshopper and again the answers are compared to those in the DBA second-hand index.

DBA Second-hand Index	Reshopper survey
1. Clean out home	1. Clean out home (80%)
2. Dislike throwing out usable items	2. Make money (69%)
3. make money	3. Sustainability (61%)
4. give items new life	4. Give items new life (60%)
5. Sustainability	5. Other motivation (3%)

The Reshopper survey shows that the Reshoppers differ from the general public. In regard to selling children's clothing 80% said they were motivated by getting a less cluttered home, 69% were motivated by making a little money and 61% of respondents had sustainability as motivation, closely followed by the desire to give items a new life with a new family. Compared to the DBA index, the mothers hold the same first motivator, but both the financial aspect and sustainability are more motivating for the users of Reshopper than for the general second-hand consumer.

Many mothers in the Reshopper Survey answered that instead of reselling the clothing; they kept it if they expected to have more children. This should result in a higher percentage of second-hand clothing in the wardrobe of the second child, whether this is the case would be interesting to investigate through more interviews with mothers of more than one child.

In the face-to-face interviews, the mothers explained that rather than selling their children's clothes through Reshopper, they preferred to pass it on to friends or family, or charities allowing them to help those less fortunate. A significant reason for donating the clothing was also that the mothers (both in the interviews and in the survey, found it to be too much work to take pictures, upload products, evaluate the price and have to discuss and coordinate a potential sale, for the small sum that they would make from the process. Brit and Elizabeth both argued that they saved the clothing for future siblings, Sofie said that she passed in on through friends and family, the same way she got it, and Malene donated to charities for ideological reasons. Brit was the only one who had tried to sell through Reshopper, and it had only been larger items that they did not have room to store for a second child or seasonal clothing, that she could not be sure that their next child will fit, given that it might be born in a different time of year.

Summarising the Reshopper user's motivation to use the app, it becomes clear that the financial aspect is of high importance, which is also the case for the general Danish second-hand consumer. However, sustainability and environmental concerns as motivation rank higher for the mothers using Reshopper, both as motivation to buy as well as sell second-hand clothing, than for the general second-hand consumer. This focus on sustainability within Reshopper's target group will be further discussed in the following section on the mothers' environmental considerations in regard to consumption.

5.5. Mothers' Environmental Considerations

To further explore the finding that mothers using Reshopper are more motivated by the thought of sustainability than the general second-hand consumer, questions on sustainability and environmental concerns in regard to consumption were included in the face-to-face interviews. The mothers were encouraged to reflect on how sustainability affected their consumption, both of clothing for their children and in general, as well as what they believed has triggered environmental concerns to become part of their consciousness. The following section holds a presentation and discussion of their opinions.

Brit states "I have definitely become more conscious about my consumption within the last couple of years. I believe primarily it is due to the amount of information you get through the news and that the general awareness on sustainability has gone up in society". She adds "...but of course becoming a mom has also played a role, as I am now aware that I am passing on the planet to Nora and her generation." Malene agrees that "there has been a lot more awareness concerning sustainability in the last years" which has affected her mind-set, awareness and choices. She explains that sustainability and consumption has increasingly entered her conversations with friends and family and she feels that there is a movement of people inspiring and motivating each other to "do better". She continues "My pregnancy also made me think about chemistry in the home. This concern has developed into preferring organic food and avoiding micro plastic. I became aware of all the things I was passing on to the baby during the pregnancy". She explains that this awareness continues to make her consume more consciously, now that her son is a year and a half.

Sofie had the same experience during pregnancy and explain: "Since I became pregnant, I have thought a lot more about what we eat. And buy much more organic food now. Both for myself, but in particular for Elin. Also, pregnancy made me care about chemicals in lotions and personal care." She adds "Motherhood has also changed my consumption in another way, as having a child has effectively stopped me from going to stores when shopping for my own wardrobe. I just don't want to spend my time that way."

Elizabeth explains that she has always considered herself a conscious consumer, as she has never enjoyed shopping or taking part in fashion trends. She adds that she has experienced a rise in climate awareness in society the last years, which has resulted in more and better options for her to live more sustainably. She comments: "It is nice that society is kind of catching up to the values that my family has always lived by. It makes it so much easier to live by these values and has encouraged a lot more people to act more sustainably."

The interviewed mothers were generally in doubt as to whether motherhood or general awareness in society had affected them most, but all expressed that they had become more conscious about what, how and how much they consume over the last years. They further agreed that they were especially conscious in regard to consumption on behalf on their children. According to the hypothesis by Emma Waight (2013), presented in the subject field of this thesis, this consciousness on behalf of the children might foster a new generation of more sustainable consumers. To get a sense of whether the mothers supported this hypothesis, they were asked how they imagined the future wardrobe of their children would look in comparison to their own. The mothers were further asked to elaborate on what role they believed second-hand clothing would play in the wardrobes of the future

Brit immediately expressed that she believes the future wardrobes will be radically different and more sustainable. "I think Nora's wardrobe will be much more sustainable than mine. No doubt about it. I think there will be more clothing that is designed for style over fashion, so it doesn't go out of fashion. And I think that the clothing industry itself will be more sustainable, recycling materials and using less resources." She adds: "I also think that Nora's generation will use more second-hand, but primarily I think the fashion industry will change. I expect that future generations will own less and I believe we will see an increase in rented clothing and subscription wardrobes".

Elizabeth comments “I think people will start being more aware of over consumption and that people will realise that they do not need wardrobes of the magnitude that we have now. But I think the change will come based on geographical areas, education and such factors.” She continues: “In my experience these changes start from the young educated people, often in the large cities. It needs to become fashionable to be sustainable and from there we can hope that awareness spreads and changes the consumption in the rest of the country.”

Malene also expressed scepticism in regard to the pace of change: “I think those who are teenagers today, are still very affected by the fast fashion seasons, but I believe and hope that the my son’s generation will be more conscious, both about the amounts they buy and the sustainability of production and fabrics.”

Unlike the other mothers, Sofie expresses little faith that increased awareness has the power to change future generations consumption. She explains; “I think that the industry needs to change, if we want to see people becoming more sustainable. The individual consumer is just too comfortable to change.” Like Elizabeth she thinks that awareness has the biggest impact in urban areas and adds “people might change in the big cities, which I think is often the case, but the rest of the country often don’t react.”

Even if the mothers disagree whether the future wardrobes will be changed by general awareness, changes in production of clothing or by changes in how we consume clothing, they all believe that their children will have radically different wardrobes than they have had themselves while growing up and as adults.

The rise in second-hand consumption, described in the literature review, may be a step on the way towards these wardrobes of the future. But the interviewed mothers all agreed that there were limits to second-hand consumption, as it is currently performed and perceived. More mothers mentioned that they believed that the ways we re-use is changing, and that second-hand options providing the services and aesthetics of the conventional stores, would be a much bigger player in the future. In this context, the subject of terminology and discourse was introduced, and the mothers were asked to explain whether and how they were affected by public discourse and the words used to describe second-hand goods and how these words manifests in their consumption.

Malene was fast to respond that terminology definitely affected her perception of

second-hand goods, as e.g. “used” to her sounded unappealing, but “pre-loved” on the other hand had positive connotations. She explained: “Even though I don’t particularly like this about myself, labels and words definitely affect which associations my mind connects to the given product”. Brit argues that “the words themselves don’t matter to how I view a used product, but often it is the aesthetics and sensory input that have an effect, and they are often connected to the words a given shop use”. She continues to explain “In traditional charity thrift-shops, the clothing is often stacked together, unsorted and has that certain smell of second-hand that is unappealing, whereas the new stores, that use new terminology, often display the clothing in a clean, stylish way, that is much more likely to lure me in”.

Elizabeth and Sofie both state that terminology has no effect on their opinion of a piece of used clothing, but agree that the discourse in society in general affects the likelihood of the people around them to consume second-hand. Further they agree that the increased focus on second-hand has developed a market for a new type of second-hand stores that offer services and aesthetics similar to those known from conventional stores. Both mothers say that they would be more likely to visit these new second-hand stores than the conventional charity thrift-shops, when looking for clothing for themselves.

The mothers further agreed that for more people to engage in second-hand consumption it needs to be as easy and convenient as shopping conventionally. Two mothers spontaneously stated that they felt that there was a need in the market for a “Reshopper for adults” – which they further described as differentiating itself from the current platforms for second-hand clothing, by being an aesthetically well designed, easy-to-use, locally based (as to facilitate trying on the clothes), mobile-first solution, preferably with products that were somehow selected through criteria of quality and condition. Waight (2013, p.1), however conclude that “baby clothes, toys and equipment are particularly suited for the second-hand market as their useful life often extends beyond the needs of one family”. Therefore, a platform of this sort might not reach the success rate or substitution rates of Reshopper, but there is evidently a market request for such a platform, targeting these women.

Summing up the environmental considerations of the interviewed mothers, it becomes evident that sustainability and climate concerns are increasingly affecting their consumption. They all agree that general awareness has increased in society, paving the

way for even more people to engage in conscious consumption as well as encouraging businesses to produce and sell in more sustainable ways. Most mothers additionally felt that pregnancy and motherhood had accelerated their awareness on sustainability and planetary boundaries and had effectively changed their consumption patterns in order to bring up healthy children, as well as to fight for the state of the planet these children will grow up on. In discussing the future, the mothers all believed that consumption patterns will change and that wardrobes of the future will have a radically different anatomy than what is the case today. They expected that a change should come both from the fashion industry, through minimising consumption, initially of newly produced clothing, but eventually in general, as well as through a general awareness and understanding that the consumption patterns of today can not continue.

- Conclusion -

6. Conclusion

Based on the initial wondering about how increasing climate concerns and environmental awareness are affecting the fashion industry and consumption of clothing in Denmark, this thesis set out to investigate second-hand consumption of children's clothing, through the research question:

How has the growing climate awareness become apparent in the apparel industry, and how can businesses within the market for second-hand children's apparel use this current awareness to attract and sustain customers, as well as encourage transformative and sustainable consumption behaviour?

Through a review of literature from academia, industry and popular media the relevant topics and phenomena for answering this question was defined, discussed and contextualised. The literature review indicated that there is a new type of consumer in the market, the conscious consumer, who prefers and prioritises second-hand consumption, as part of a sustainable lifestyle and as a response to the current materialistic values of society. This conscious consumer is raising demands on sustainability, responsibility and transparency, as well as affordability and ease-of-use, in order to make informed and conscious purchase decisions. As a result of these demands, the market of both second-hand and conventional clothing is changing. Direct re-use of clothing were found to be rapidly on the rise as consumers are realising that second-hand consumption allows them to satisfy their desire to shop and express themselves, their lifestyle and their personal narratives through possessions, without contribution to the devastating climate consequences of the apparel industry through conventional shopping.

The insight from the literature review provided a basis for conducting empirical research. Based on the qualitative and inductive research question, the research was conducted using a grounded theory approach, facilitating new knowledge to emerge and be researched through the applied mixed methods.

The aim of this mixed methodology study was to investigate mothers' consumption of second-hand clothing, when shopping for their children's' wardrobes as well as whether and how climate awareness affects their purchase decisions. First step into the empirical field of research was an exploratory survey, through which it was found that the app Reshopper is the dominant player in the second-hand market for children's clothing in

Denmark. Therefore the continued research was conducted using a case study research design with Reshopper as the case company. More specifically, a survey including both quantitative and qualitative questions was conducted along with in-depth qualitative interviews with both one of the Reshopper founders and a selected sample of mothers. The survey preceded the interviews, opening up for the possibility to elaborate on patterns found in the survey data as well test hypotheses during the interviews.

Integrating the qualitative and quantitative data from both the questionnaire survey and interviews and presenting the findings in tandem gave a comprehensive view on mothers' consumption of second-hand clothing as well as their general awareness on sustainability and climate concerns and how this awareness affects their consumption decisions.

Based on key findings from both the reviewed literature and the empirical study, I conclude that businesses within the market for second-hand children's apparel will be able to attract and sustain costumers as well as encourage transformative and sustainable consumption behaviour by adhering to the following recommendations.

6.1. Recommendations from Key Findings

Functionality and Services

Sustainability awareness and climate concerns play a significant role for a majority of mothers during their purchase considerations, but consumers are still inclined to select the most convenient offer at the best price, so businesses need to not only become more sustainable, but to also develop products and solutions that are easy to use, cheap and accessible, in order to encourage customers to consume consciously. Learning from the Reshopper case study, the most essential elements are to:

- Focus on a narrow product group and specific target group. This makes your business relevant and attractive to its users, as well as increases substitution rates of the goods bought through your business.
- Provide simple but precise and relevant search functions. Especially the importance of a geographical search option was emphasised in this study.
- Develop a clean, stylish and appealing visual design, relevant for the target group and their consumption on the platform.
- Incorporate the services and convenience of conventional shopping.

Social Media Presence

Usage of social media, and Instagram in particular, is found to be directly connected to increased sustainable consumption for the young people who are most inclined to consume second-hand. Businesses should therefore aim to be highly visible on social media.

- Interact with current and potential users and take part in relevant debate e.g. by using popular hashtags as well as developing own hashtags so that followers can include your business in relevant situations.
- Engage relevant influencers and social media personalities, to connect with the feelings and values of your consumer.

- Engage relevant influencers and social media personalities, to connect with the feelings and values of your consumer.
- Advertise your purpose through social media. Emphasise the motivations most relevant to your target group, such as price savings, environmental consciousness and de-cluttering.
- Promote the most popular items of your target group, for example larger clothing items, such as outerwear, as well as branded products and clothing of high quality, which was found to be the most sought after and bought items, as these held the largest savings in comparison to purchasing from new.

Beyond Sustainability

Increased climate concerns and awareness makes sustainability and responsibility a general market demand rather than a unique selling point. It therefore becomes increasingly important to stress additional advantages of consuming second-hand.

- Emphasize the increased wellbeing of de-cluttering and letting go.
- Indicate that money saved leads to more freedom.
- Promote other efforts, besides your core business, where your business actively works with CSR or the UN SDGs

6.2. Avenues for Future Research

During the research process of this thesis several aspects were investigated, that were not directly applicable in answering the current research question, but which would be interesting to study in future research. A selection of these subjects is briefly presented in the following.

Finding that most mothers still prefer to shop second-hand goods face-to-face, even though they are not hesitant to have new goods shipped to their address, it would be interesting to look into which limitations and barriers consumption of second-hand goods has to overcome in order to be consumed and compete more equally with new goods. In this context, it would further be beneficial to do a more technical and practical study of how the ease of second-hand consumption can be improved, making it less time-consuming to shop second-hand, in order to encourage more consumers to engage in second-hand consumption.

As common assumption, which was supported in the interviews, is that change happens quicker in urban areas. Therefore it could be crucial for urgent action on the climate crisis to investigate what means can be used to spread not only awareness but willingness to act and make a change, beyond the young and urban population? Following this thought and inspired by research on circular economy, future research should try to map out to what degree politics and regulation can beneficially control clothing consumption and direct both industry and consumers to consume more sustainably.

In the face-to-face interviews it was repeatedly indicated that mothers were more concerned about the environment and sustainability when purchasing items for their children. It would therefore be interesting to investigate why one person contributes different considerations to purchases for different persons or purposes. The environmental impact is the same, regardless of who they purchase goods for, so given that they are obviously aware, why are they more conscious on behalf of their children? In this regard a future study might further look in to the difficulty of breaking consumption habits.

Lastly, I would like to highlight that research is needed to find out whether children's clothing affect how they are treated in Danish day-care institutions. This is based on a

worrying observation from the interviewed mothers, who felt a need to dress their children in branded and fashionable clothing in order to “win” the competition for attention in Danish day-care institutions, where personnel is a scarce resource. A study would need to investigate whether this is in fact the case, what the consequences are (both for the children and society) and how this competition, favouring some children over others, can be avoided.

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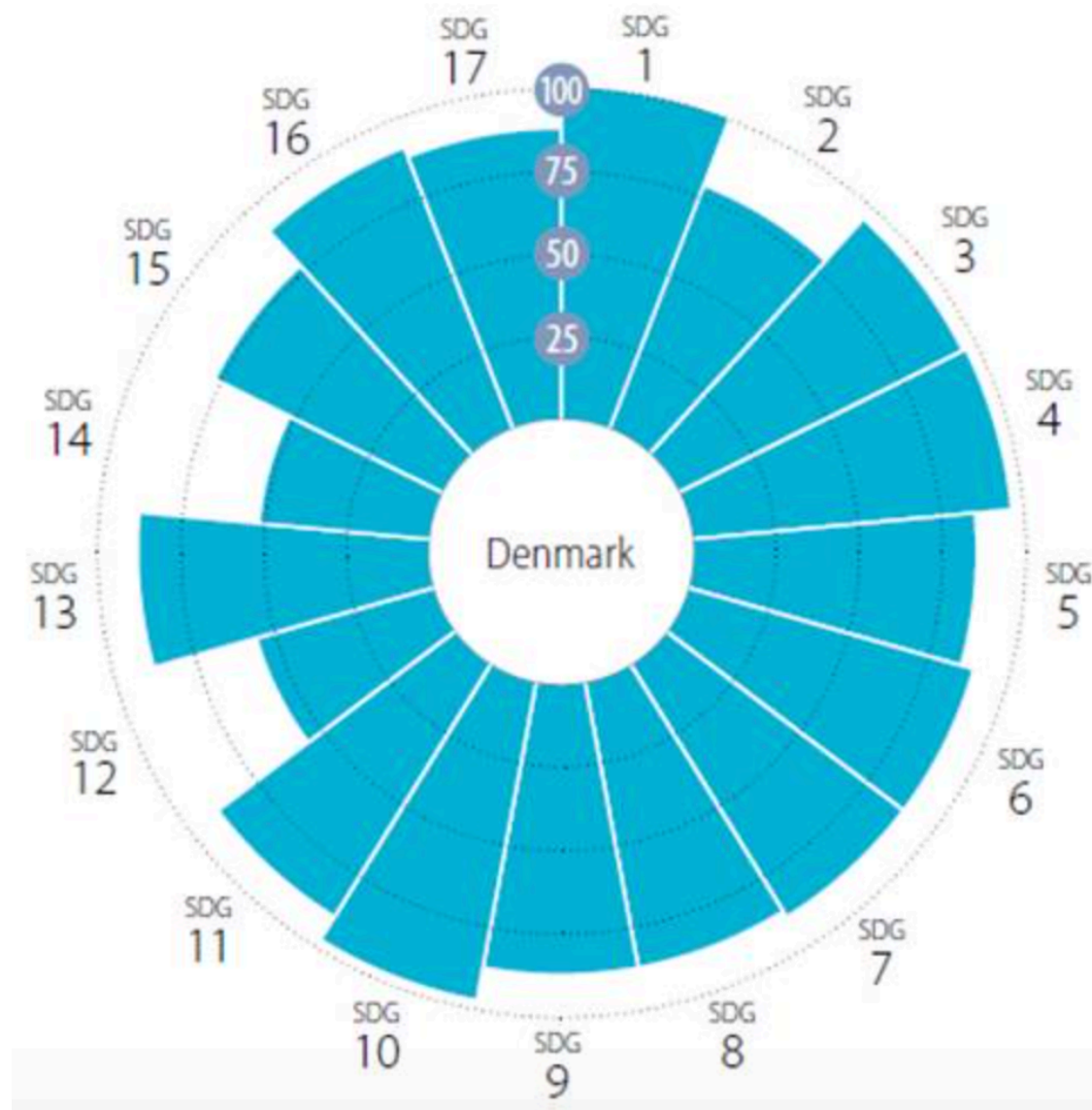
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- Appendices -

Appendix 1 |

SDG index for Denmark 2018



Source: Finansministeriet

[English: The Ministry of Finance]

Retrieved april 10th 2019 from:

<https://www.fm.dk/nyheder/pressemeddelelser/2018/09/danmark-er-naestbedst-til-at-implementere-verdensmaalene>

Appendix 2 |

Exploratory Survey Questionnaire

The survey was conducted in Danish, using the Online Survey Software SoGoSurvey

Personal Information:

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Number of kids and their age
4. Where in Denmark are you living

Questions on Reshopper

1. Have you heard of Rehopper?
2. Do you sell items on Rehopper?
 - Yes
 - No
3. If yes, what do you sell?
 - clothing
 - baby equipment
 - toys
 - other...
4. What is your motivation to sell through Reshopper?
 - to make a little money
 - to clear out space in the wardrobe
 - to meet other families in your neighbourhood?
 - to be more sustainable (be part of the sharing economy)
 - to give items new life
 - other...

5. If no, would you please explain why not?
6. Do you buy items on Reshopper?
 - yes
 - no
7. If yes, what have you primarily bought?
 - clothing
 - equipment
 - toys
 - other...
8. What is your motivation to buy through Reshopper
 - to save money
 - to make social ties to other families
 - to avoid buying newly produced clothing and be more sustainable
 - the hunt for something unique
 - the opportunity to buy more things at once (bulk)
 - to avoid stressful situation in conventional stores
 - other
9. If no, can you please explain why?
10. Do you use any other apps or (online) platforms or market places to sell children's clothing? Which?
11. Do you use any other physical market places to sell children's clothing? Which?
12. Please feel free to add any comments on your second-hand consumption or your use of the Reshopper app.

Questions on Vigga – Children’s Clothing on Subscription

1. Have you heard of Vigga?
 - Subscription-based service to rent/use organic children’s clothing
2. Have you used Vigga?
 - Why? Why not?
3. If yes, was/is Vigga your child’s main wardrobe or an addition to other buys?
4. Is yes, what do you like or dislike about the concept/business model?
5. If no, what do you think could make you want to use a concept such as Vigga?
6. What is your general opinion on the concept of renting your children’s wardrobe rather than owning it?

Questions on Re-use in general

1. If your child owns second-hand clothing, where do you get it from?
 - Online markets or apps
 - NGO driven second-hand shops
 - Luxury second-hand or vintage stores
 - Fleamarkets
 - From family
 - From friends
 - Through swap markets
 - other
2. Do your second-hand purchases replace something you would have otherwise bought from new? Or are they ”extras”?
3. How much of your child’s wardrobe is re-use?
 - All of it

- Most of it
 - About half
 - Under half
 - Only a small part
 - None
4. In regard to clothing, would you say that your kids have...
- ... just what they need
 - ... more than they need
 -excess
 - ... to little
5. Does the possibility of resale affect how much you buy? And how?
6. Do you consider the environment / climate in other aspects of your life?
7. If any, what changes have you made to lower your impact?
8. In your own words, can you describe what has inspired or motivated you to consider sustainability?
9. Please finish the sentence: A sustainable lifestyle is...
- ... more difficult
 - ... more time consuming
 - ... more expensive
 - ... more convenient
 - ... less time consuming
 - ... cheaper
 - ... other...

Appendix 3 |

Reshopper Survey Questionnaire

The survey was conducted in Danish, using the Online Survey Software SoGoSurvey

Personal information

- ☐ Gender
- ☐ Age
- ☐ Number of kids and their age
- ☐ Where in Denmark are you living

Regarding Second-hand Clothing in the Children's Wardrobes

Is second-hand items part of the child's wardrobe?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, where do you get the second-hand clothing from?

- ☐ Online
- ☐ Thrift shops
- ☐ Luxury second-hand/vintage shops
- ☐ Flea markets
- ☐ From family
- ☐ From friends
- ☐ Swap markets
- ☐ Other - Answer max 100 characters

Do your second-hand purchases replace something you would have otherwise bought from new? Or are they "extras"?

- ☐ Replace
- ☐ Extra
- ☐ Comments - max 100 characters

How much of your kids wardrobe is re-use?

- ☐ All of it
- ☐ most of it
- ☐ about half
- ☐ under half
- ☐ only a small part
- ☐ none

In regards to clothing, would you say that your kids have...

- ☐ ... just what they need
- ☐ ... more than they need
- ☐excess
- ☐ ... to little

Does the possibility of resale affect how much you buy (from new)? And how?

- ☐ Answer max 100 characters

Regarding Reshopper

Do you sell items on re-shopper?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, what do you sell?

- ☐ Clothing
- ☐ Baby equipment
- ☐ Toys
- ☐ Other...

What is your motivation?

- ☐ To make a little money
- ☐ To clear out space in the wardrobe

- To meet other families in your neighbourhood?
- To be more sustainable
- To give items new life
- Other...

If no, can you explain why?

- Answer max 100 characters

Do you buy items on re-shopper?

- Yes
- No

If yes, what have you primarily bought?

- Clothing
- Equipment
- Toys
- Other...

Has Reshopper made it easier for you to buy second-hand clothing for your child?

- Yes
- No

If no, can you explain why?

- Answer max 100 characters

What is your motivation to buy goods on Reshopper

- to save money
- to make social ties to other families
- to not buy new produced clothing / be more sustainable
- the chase of a good bargain/something unique
- the option to buy bulk/several items from the same seller
- to avoid busy stores
- other

Has Reshopper increased your consumption of used clothing for your child?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Do you use any other apps or (online) platforms or marketplaces to buy and/or sell childrens clothing? Which?

- ☐ Answer max 100 characters

Do you use any other physical marketplaces to sell childrens clothing? Which?

- ☐ Answer max 100 characters

In your own words, is there anything you think would make you substitute more new purchases with second-hand purchases?

- ☐ Answer max 100 characters

Please feel free to leave a comment

Appendix 4 |

Interview Guide - Nicolai Danmark Johannesen Reshopper Co-Founder

What was the idea behind Reshopper and the motivation to develop the app?

What are your vision, ambition and goals for the app?

What is your strategy? For growth, for change, for impact?

Regarding your growth and development:

- What is your growth in users and in individual sales on e.g. a yearly basis?
- Have you grown at a steady pace or do you notice any patterns in growth?
- Have you experienced increase in interest from media, collaborators or debate on social media?

What do you believe sets you apart from the competition? And who do you see as your competitors? (Second-hand apps? Online children's wear? Thrift shops?)

Why do you think that Reshopper has survived and grown, compared to other apps (for second-hand sales, sharing or giving away used items) that do not survive in the market?

What do you believe is the motivation of your users to use the app? (money, environment, sensibility, social...?)

How do you choose/accept advertisers for the app? And do you have any concerns regarding advertising for new items on an app for used goods?

Future projects and the potential of using sustainability and the SDGs in marketing strategy.

Appendix 5 |

Socio-demographic information on the four mothers selected for the face-to-face interviews

Interview 1:

Name: Sofie
Age: 31 years
Children: Girl - born 2018
City: Copenhagen NV
Education: Master in Biomedical Engineering

Interview 2:

Name: Brit
Age: 31 years
Children: Girl - born 2018
City: Copenhagen S
Education: Master of Science in Integrated Food Studies

Interview 3:

Name: Elizabeth
Age: 30 years
Children: Boy - born 2017
City: Copenhagen N
Education: Midwife

Interview 4:

Name: Malene
Age: 31 years
Children: Boy - born 2018
City: Frederiksberg
Education: Nurse

Appendix 6 |

Interview Guide – Selected Sample of Mothers

The child's wardrobe & second-hand

- In own words, describe your consumption behaviour in regards to sustainability.
- Has motherhood changed anything?
- Second-hand items in the child's wardrobe
 - How large a part is second-hand?
 - How much is bought vs. Hand-me-downs?
- What motivates you to buy second-hand?
- Do you prefer physical shop/market vs. Online shop/app
- What do you think/feel about second-hand purchases?
 - The worst/best aspects.
 - What is good, problematic...
 - Anecdotes?
- How do you think second-hand clothing should be priced?
- What is your "hunting pattern" when your kid needs something?
 - Google, shop, friends/family, thrift, Reshopper?
- (If no second-hand clothing, why not?)
- Do you sell used items?
 - Why/why not?
 - How do you get rid of what you no longer need?
- If money wasn't an issue, would you still buy/use second hand?
- Do you buy second-hand for yourself?
- Does terminology affect you?
 - Used vs. Re-use vs. Second-hand vs. Preloved etc.
- What could motivate you to change new purchases to second-hand purchases?
- How do you see the wardrobes of the future?

In regards to Reshopper:

*Inserted when relevant in interview

- Do you have a profile?
- How often do you...
 - ... click on the app
 - ... buy
 - ... sell
- Do you feel safer using an app with this particular target group (like minded mothers), than other second hand apps?
- Do you have a community feeling with other Reshoppers
- What do you think of implementing user-ratings?
- Any other comments or thoughts?

Appendix 7 |

Audio Recordings of Interviews with Selected Sample of Mothers

Appendix 6.1 – Interview with Sofie, 18 minutes, April 26th 2019

Appendix 6.2 – Interview with Brit, 20 minutes, April 28th 2019

Appendix 6.3 – Interview with Elizabeth, 26 minutes, April 28th 2019

Appendix 6.4 – Interview with Malene, 40 minutes, April 29th 2019

Please find the audio recordings of the face-to-face interviews as an attachment to the digital hand-in of this thesis.