Master's Thesis

Vintage Clothing Retail Business Models in Amsterdam and Rotterdam

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Abstract

This thesis is an explorative study comparing the differences between vintage clothing retail business models in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, particularly since 2010. The vintage clothing retailing sector was researched as an urban function within first-tier cities and second-tier cities and creative cities contexts. The business model canvas (BMC) framework was adapted and used as a primary theoretical guideline with specific attention to digital transformation and location. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected through 1) 16 interviews with vintage shop owners, marketers, and neighborhood managers, 2) field research on the online and physical presences of vintage stores and neighborhoods, and 3) policy documents, business databases, and academic literature. This thesis also identifies two vintage neighborhoods, The 9 Streets in Amsterdam and the Zwaanshalskwartier in Rotterdam, followed by an analysis revealing the development patterns of vintage clothing retailing in their urban contexts. This thesis argues that Amsterdam's "first city bonus" as a creative and vintage city has allowed it to have a long history and a more significant current presence of vintage clothing retailing. In contrast, as a second-tier city, Rotterdam must invent itself as creative and vintage and be late in developing vintage clothing retailing. This bonus also exists in digital marketing regardless of the availability of digital platforms that allow vintage clothing retailers to overcome location constraints. While the findings of this research are specific to the Dutch context, they have provided a valuable framework in comparing the vintage clothing sector between first-tier and second-tier cities in other national contexts.

Keywords: vintage clothing, creative cities, creative industries, creative class, experience economy, first-tier and second-tier cities, business model canvas, SMEs retail, digital transformation

Acknowledgments

In the summer of 2014, I moved from Qingdao to Beijing for work. My friend Luka introduced me to various vintage clothing stores clustering with restaurants, bars, clubs, and tourist shops in the world-famous Hutongs in the center of Beijing city. A grasp of cool, modern, and perhaps westernized lifestyle. Since I was a child, I have always been curious about cultural encounters brought by globalization. Globalization allowed me to visit vintage clothing stores, cafes, and bars in the 2010s in China; it also brought the Japanese art influence on Vincent van Gogh, and the Chinoiserie in the west in the 18th century. It is “otherness”, but also “togetherness” and “sameness”.

All kinds of inspirations, encounters, and choices brought me to the journey of the two-year master’s in Global Markets, Local Creativities between 2019 to 2021 in three European universities (mostly located in second-tier cities), which results in this thesis, combining my interests in creative industries, urban development, history, and business.

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Yichao Zhang (Lilac)
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1.Introduction

In the past decade, the number of vintage stores around the world has increased tremendously partly due to the growing sustainability concerns towards fashion industry; wearing vintage has become mainstream; the image of vintage has evolved from the secondhand military uniforms on Beatles Sergeant Pepper record in the 1960s to a current newly produced dress in a fast-fashion store claiming to have a vintage outlook.[1] The significant growth of the vintage sector, especially vintage clothing, and its distinct characteristics have attracted the attention of scholars in the fields of business, fashion, culture, and urban planning.[2]

While business scholars find interest in how the vintage sector develops successful management, marketing, and branding efforts, the growing significance of digital transformation has drawn particular attention.[3] Digital transformation has allowed this sector to explore and expand its activities online, resulting in new models of vintage retailing. The lockdown measurements imposed between 2020 to 2021 to combat the COVID-19 pandemic also speed up the digital transformation process. Dominated by Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), vintage clothing entrepreneurs are flexible and can adapt to changes quickly. Meanwhile, they are also facing a lack of human and financial resources.

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[1] Lindsey Carey et al., "Vintage Fashion: A Cross-Cultural Perspective," in *Vintage Luxury Fashion: Exploring the Rise of the Secondhand Clothing Trade*, ed. Daniella Ryding, Claudia E. Henninger, and Marta Blazquez Cano, Palgrave Advances in Luxury (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), 187, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-71985-6_12.

[2] Omar Khaled Abdelrahman, Emma Banister, and Daniel Peter Hampson, "Curatorial Consumption: Objects' Circulation and Transference in the Vintage Marketplace," *Journal of Business Research* 114 (June 2020): 304–11, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.03.029; Phil Hubbard, "Hipsters on Our High Streets: Consuming the Gentrification Frontier," *Sociological Research Online* 21, no. 3 (August 1, 2016): 106–11, https://doi.org/10.5153/sro.3962; Julie McColl et al., "It's Vintage Darling! An Exploration of Vintage Fashion Retailing," *Journal of the Textile Institute* 104, no. 2 (February 2013): 140–50, https://doi.org/10.1080/00405000.2012.702882; Aleit Veenstra and Giselinde Kuipers, "It Is Not Old-Fashioned, It Is Vintage, Vintage Fashion and The Complexities of 21st Century Consumption Practices," *Sociology Compass* 7, no. 5 (2013): 355–65, https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12033.

[3] Tessa Pauw, "Online Fashion Resale in the Netherlands" (Hogeschool van Amsterdam, 2015), https://hbo-kennisbank.nl/details/amsterdam:oai:hva.nl:587813; Julie McColl et al., "Vintage Fashion Retailing: Building the Store Brand," in *Contemporary Case Studies on Fashion Production, Marketing and Operations*, ed. Pui-Sze Chow et al., Springer Series in Fashion Business (Singapore: Springer, 2018), 59–71, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-7007-5_4; McColl et al., "It's Vintage Darling! An Exploration of Vintage Fashion Retailing."

The rise of vintage fashion has been researched as a global phenomenon in several countries, such as the United Kingdom and the United States. Still, the Netherlands has not gained much attention.[4] Besides, city context differences call for a more micro-level scope. However, existing research has been focusing on first-tier global fashion cities such as London and Paris; although there is a growing scholarship in researching vintage clothing in cities without a global fashion reputation, research on cities of the Netherlands has remained limited.[5][6]

To evaluate the connection between vintage clothing retailers and cities, urban theories including first-tier and second-tier cities and creative cities could be of great help. First-tier cities tend to have a surplus in urban functions, such as business, culture, and tourism, than second-tier cities; therefore, a first-tier city could be more successful in developing itself as a creative city, and having a larger vintage clothing retail sector.[7] According to urban scholars, the presence of vintage retail stores in cities also reflects a gentrifying process of urban neighborhoods.[8] Naturally, vintage shops have also been included in numerous tour guides and lifestyle posts to attract visitors. In the Netherlands, Amsterdam is the culture, fashion, and vintage capital, and it is also home to the biggest flea market IJ-Hallen of Europe.[9] As a second city, Rotterdam has been building the city image as a creative city. Still, it has not created an image as being "fashion" or "vintage" as Amsterdam, regardless of the growing presence of vintage shops. However, the difference between these two cities concerning vintage clothing has not been thoroughly explored in research. Considering this, a comparative study between vintage retail sectors in the two cities seems worthwhile.

This thesis uses an interdisciplinary approach, drawing on business, urban and fashion theories to fill the current knowledge gaps of vintage clothing retailing in cities. Relying on a mix of

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[4] Karen Tranberg Hansen, "Other People's Clothes? The International Second-Hand Clothing Trade and Dress Practices in Zambia," *Fashion Theory* 4, no. 3 (August 1, 2000): 245–74, https://doi.org/10.2752/136270400778995499.

[5] Anja Overdiek, "Opportunities for Slow Fashion Retail in Temporary Stores," *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal* 22, no. 1 (January 1, 2018): 67–81, https://doi.org/10.1108/JFMM-05-2017-0042; Veenstra and Kuipers, "It Is Not Old-Fashioned, It Is Vintage, Vintage Fashion and The Complexities of 21st Century Consumption Practices"; Tamara Kneese and Michael Palm, "Brick-and-Platform: Listing Labor in the Digital Vintage Economy," *Social Media + Society* 6, no. 3 (July 1, 2020): 2056305120933299, https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120933299; Carey et al., "Vintage Fashion."

[6] McColl et al., "It's Vintage Darling! An Exploration of Vintage Fashion Retailing"; Kneese and Palm, "Brick-and-Platform."

[7] Rodrigo V. Cardoso and Evert J. Meijers, "Contrasts between First-Tier and Second-Tier Cities in Europe: A Functional Perspective," *European Planning Studies* 24, no. 5 (May 3, 2016): 996–1015, https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2015.1120708.

[8] Hubbard, "Hipsters on Our High Streets."

[9] "IJ-Hallen - The Largest Flea Market in Europe," IJ-Hallen, accessed July 12, 2021, https://ijhallen.nl/.

quantitative and qualitative methods covering data from academic literature, business database, semi-structured interviews with shop owners, neighborhood managers, vintage promoters, as well as field research on the online and physical presences of vintage stores and neighborhoods, this research finds empirical insights of vintage clothing business in Amsterdam and Rotterdam. It also takes on a holistic approach of looking at the evolution of the vintage clothing sector in cities while paying particular focus to the location factor and the making of vintage neighborhoods, and the digital transformation of this industry. This explorative research offers several innovative aspects to the academic field relating to fashion, urban, and business studies. It provides empirical findings to the theories of business model canvas, first-tier and second-tier cities, creative cities, and digital transformation.

This research explores how vintage clothing entrepreneurs define vintage, which contributes to understanding the hybrid nature of vintage. The Dutch context also contributes to the gap in researching vintage fashion in the Netherlands. Adding location to the business model canvas (BMC) theory offers a valuable framework for comparative research of cities' vintage clothing retail sector. Besides, this thesis sheds light on the role of vintage clothing retail development in neighborhoods and cities, contributing to the creative cities discourse. Finally, by evaluating digital transformation within the business models of vintage clothing retailers, this thesis contributes to understanding the impact of digital transformation in a specific sector of SMEs retailing.

1.1 Research Question and Sub-Questions

This thesis aims to address the following research question: what are the differences between vintage clothing retail business models in Amsterdam and Rotterdam (2010-2021)? Specifically, it focuses on the following sub-questions:

1. What is vintage clothing, according to vintage clothing retailers?
2. What components construct vintage clothing retail business models in Amsterdam and Rotterdam?
3. What is the role of location in vintage clothing retail business models?
4. How have vintage clothing retail business models evolved since 2010 in Amsterdam and Rotterdam?
5. How has digital transformation impacted this evolution?

The thesis is structured as follows. Chapter 2 will discuss the theoretical underpinning and literature review of this research, covering theoretical frameworks including vintage, first-tier and second-tier cities, creative cities, and the choice of business model canvas. It will also discuss the underlying trend of digital transformation in vintage retailing. Chapter 3 will introduce the sources and methods. Chapter 4 will discuss the first part of the research findings, presenting the context of vintage clothing retailers in the Netherlands, covering history, challenges, and the definition of vintage. Chapter 5 will discuss and compare the components of vintage clothing retail BMC between the two cities, introducing the evolution of vintage clothing retail and the impact of digital transformation. Finally, Chapter 6 will conclude and discuss the limitations of this research and present implications for future research.

2. Theoretical Concepts and Literature Review

This chapter outlines the theoretical concepts and reviews the literature that offers a foundation for answering the research questions, allowing further comparative analysis between Amsterdam and Rotterdam. In particular, this thesis draws inspiration from vintage fashion theory, urban development concepts of first-tier and second-tier cities and creative cities, the business model canvas framework, and digital transformation in vintage retailing.

2.1 Vintage

2.1.1. Defining Vintage Clothing

The usage of "vintage" has a French origin from winemaking. According to Oxford English Dictionary, since 1450, vintage meant "the produce or yield of the vine, either as grapes or wine"; it was only until 1746 that vintage was connected to a positive image as it was "used with reference to the age or year of a particular wine, usually connoting one of good or outstanding quality," which is still the case today. [10] Vintage has been used to "describe clothing, accessories, furniture, cars, and other artefacts that come from an earlier era" in recent years.[11] Although scholars do not have a consensus of the definition of vintage in fashion, some agree on McColl et al.'s definition of "more than twenty years ago, which represent a particular fashion era, and which are valued for their uniqueness and authenticity."[12] They agree that vintage should be produced between the 1920s to 1980s, and any item before that is "antique".[13] While their research was conducted about ten years ago, recent research has identified that vintage consumers are also buying items produced in the 1990s and even 2000s.[14]

In academic research and business practice, the boundary between vintage and several clothing types is blurring. Identifying the overuse of the term vintage by secondhand stores, Cervellon et al. defined vintage items as pieces made between the 1920s to 1980s and secondhand clothes

[10] "Vintage, n.," in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed January 22, 2021, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/223593.
[11] Gülen Sarial-Abi et al., "Stitching Time: Vintage Consumption Connects the Past, Present, and Future," *Journal of Consumer Psychology* 27, no. 2 (2017): 183, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2016.06.004.
[12] McColl et al., "It's Vintage Darling! An Exploration of Vintage Fashion Retailing," 148.
[13] McColl et al., 145.
[14] Daniella Ryding, Claudia E. Henninger, and Marta Blazquez Cano, eds., *Vintage Luxury Fashion: Exploring the Rise of the Secondhand Clothing Trade* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), 188, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-71985-6.

as modern used clothes in a 2012 research.[15] However, a trend of secondhand or thrift shops claiming to be vintage has emerged in recent years by adding “vintage” to their signs and marketing materials. While some have upgraded their shop image by more sophisticated curation, some shops still have little curation efforts and portray an old and dusty retail image. Researchers also tend to include vintage, secondhand, and sometimes “retro” or “vintage style” together into their scope.[16] Retro or vintage style items, which are “brand new, old-fashioned’, are newly produced items but with old style, contrasting old vintage items.[17] In practice, in a shop claiming to be vintage, one might find vintage clothing made between the 1920s to 1980s, secondhand fast-fashion clothes, newly produced clothes with an old style that offers various sizes and colors, and even eco-friendly brand clothes that do not have a specific old-fashion style. Many newly established, mostly online firms adopt the term “resale” to differentiate themselves from the existing secondhand firms, claiming that they include “more curated product assortments, often well merchandised and/or higher end.”[18]

2.1.2 The Rise of Vintage Fashion

DeLong et al. identify that wearing vintage as a trend started from the 1980s; since then, an aesthetic shift has occurred, elevating thrift stores and flea markets from their stigma into acceptable fashion. Celebrity and pop culture’s adoption and the seek for uniqueness also fuelled this trend. [19] Carey et al. believe the vintage trend has grown for over fifty years, starting from the Beatles Sergeant Pepper record (released in 1967) in the United Kingdom, associated with military uniforms and Edwardian dresses bought from vintage stores in London. Afterward, the 1970s student movement adopted the trend, and the anti-fashion Punk movement, the utilitarian New Romantic fashions etc., all showed interest in using vintage

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[15] Marie-Cécile Cervellon, Lindsey Carey, and Trine Harms, “Something Old, Something Used: Determinants of Women’s Purchase of Vintage Fashion vs Second-hand Fashion,” ed. Stephen M. Wigley and Pammi Sinha, *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management* 40, no. 12 (January 1, 2012): 956–74, https://doi.org/10.1108/09590551211274946.
[16] Ryding, Henninger, and Blazquez Cano, *Vintage Luxury Fashion*; Helene Brembeck and Niklas Sörum, “Assembling Nostalgia: Devices for Affective Captation on the Re:Heritage Market,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 23, no. 6 (July 3, 2017): 556–74, https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2017.1300928.
[17] Stephen Brown, Robert V. Kozinets, and John F. Sherry, “Teaching Old Brands New Tricks: Retro Branding and the Revival of Brand Meaning,” *Journal of Marketing* 67, no. 3 (July 1, 2003): 20, https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.67.3.19.18657.
[18] thredUP, “2020 Fashion Resale Market and Trend Report” (thredUP, 2020), 39, https://www.thredup.com/resale/.
[19] Marilyn DeLong, Barbara Heinemann, and Kathryn Reiley, “Hooked on Vintage!,” *Fashion Theory* 9, no. 1 (March 1, 2005): 25, https://doi.org/10.2752/136270405778051491.

items to express individuality. [20] Cervellon et al.'s research finds that the main antecedents to vintage consumption are fashion involvement, nostalgia proneness, and need for uniqueness through the mediation of treasure hunting, while frugality drives vintage consumption.[21]

While most scholars consider the rise of vintage fashion as a global phenomenon, some scholars also discuss it in different national contexts.[22] By the 1750s, "the Netherlands and London were centers for the wholesale trade in used clothes."[23] Nowadays, the Netherlands is still one of the global leaders in the used clothing industry. In 2018, it was ranked 7th in used clothing exporting with a value of 207.7 million dollars and ranked 6th in import with 159.6 million dollars.[24] The data shows that the Netherland has been active in the global secondhand clothing market, and it also has a significant local demand for used clothing. However, limited resources have discussed the rise of vintage fashion in the Netherlands and usually considered it a part of the European or global vintage fashion trend. Based on interviews, Burneo finds that since the 1980s, the secondhand shops "with unique and exclusive items" have been called "vintage shops" in Amsterdam. [25] One of her interviewees, who started in the 1980s as a market vendor selling vintage clothing, also recalled that the trade was already popular in the Netherlands in the 1960s.[26]

2.2 First-Tier and Second-Tier Cities

Cardoso and Meijers examine second-tier and first-tier cities regarding their urban functions.[27] They categorize cities in Europe into first-tier and second-tier cities by the presence and distribution of their urban functions, including political-admin, business, science, culture,

[20] Carey et al., "Vintage Fashion," 187.
[21] Cervellon, Carey, and Harms, "Something Old, Something Used," January 1, 2012.
[22] Maria Cristache, "The 'Vintage Community' in Bucharest: Consumers and Collectors," *Things in Culture, Culture in Things. Approaches to Culture Theory*, Approaches to Culture Theory, 2013, 158–71; Hansen, "Other People's Clothes?"
[23] Hansen, "Other People's Clothes?," 249.
[24] United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs, *International Trade Statistics Yearbook 2018, Volume II: Trade by Product.* (New York: UNITED NATIONS, 2019), 75, https://comtrade.un.org/pb/downloads/2018/VolII2018.pdf.
[25] Verónica Burneo, "The Life, Death and Resurrection of Second Hand and Vintage Clothes in Amsterdam: An Ethnographic Account of the Biography of Clothes" (Amsterdam, University of Amsterdam, 2015), 9, https://www.academia.edu/28657246/The_Life_Death_and_Resurrection_of_second_hand_and_vintage_clothes_in_Amsterdam_an_ethnographic_account_of_the_biography_of_clothes.
[26] Burneo, 25.
[27] Cardoso and Meijers, "Contrasts between First-Tier and Second-Tier Cities in Europe."

sports, tourism, and transport.[28] Vintage shops are not considered part of these urban functions, although the author argues that vintage shops are businesses with cultural and creative aspects, attracting tourism. As a result, it represents three urban functions of this framework. As a result, it represents three urban functions of this framework. Cardoso and Meijers also find a "first city bonus" that historically, first-tier cities tend to have urban functions surplus than the second cities and play a dominant role in their urban regions. They also argue that second-tier cities in polycentric countries like the Netherlands will be less economically and politically neglected than those in centralized states like the United Kingdom. When referring to the Netherlands, Amsterdam and Rotterdam are considered first-tier and second-tier cities, respectively.[29] This thesis will analyze the presence and distribution of vintage retailers in Amsterdam and Rotterdam cities as an urban function in the historical and current analysis and evaluate their differences.

2.3 Creative Cities, Creative Industries, Creative Class, and Experience Economy

To further understand the vintage clothing sector's relationship with cities, the scholarship of creative cities and other relating concepts are introduced in the following. Since the 1980s, the recognition of cultural industries' economic importance to urban development has led to both policymakers and scholars giving culture a more central role in the local economy, marked by an early example of a set of policies in London between 1981 and 1986.[30] The term "cultural industries" is later also broadened to "creative industries" to include other non-cultural activities such as design and advertising.[31] However, there is no commonly accepted definition of creative industries in academic or policy documents, and different countries and regions also use their definitions. Fashion design is considered a creative industry for many definitions, but vintage clothing is usually excluded.[32] This thesis argues that due to the cultural and creative

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[28] Cardoso and Meijers, 1011.
[29] Cardoso and Meijers, 997, 1004, 1007.
[30] David Hesmondhalgh, *The Cultural Industries*, 4th ed. (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2019), 178–79; Franco Bianchini, "GLC R.I.P. CULTURAL POLICIES IN LONDON 1981-1986," *New Formations 1*, 1987, 15.
[31] Hesmondhalgh, *The Cultural Industries*, 187.
[32] DCMS, "Creative Industries Mapping Documents 2001" (Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, April 9, 2001), https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/creative-industries-mapping-documents-2001; Erik Stam, Jeroen P. J. De Jong, and Gerard Marlet, "Creative Industries in the Netherlands: Structure, Development, Innovativeness and Effects on Urban Growth," *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography* 90, no. 2 (2008): 119–32, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0467.2008.00282.x.

nature of selecting clothing, curating retail spaces, as well as marketing, the vintage clothing sector should be considered as a creative industry even if it does not include clothing design and production.[33]

Believing that developing the creative economy is the key to saving deindustrialized cities, whose industrial activities have moved to cheaper locations and leaving empty spaces and unemployment, city and state managers turn to creative cities scholars for help.[34] One of the most popular prescriptions is given by Richard Florida in his thesis on the "creative class", with the belief that cities should create cultural related facilities and other amenities to attract the creative class (professionals who create new ideas, new technology, and new creative content, usually highly educated), and the economic growth will follow.[35] Numerous scholars have criticized his view for the causal relationship between the creative class and job creation (do people follow jobs or jobs follow people?), the one-size-fits-all approach, etc.[36] Cohendet et al. introduce a more comprehensive vision of the creative processes and look at various actors, including individuals, communities, firms, and institutions. They argue that creative cities policies should advance all actors of the creative processes, not only attracting the creative class.[37]

In practice, creative cities policies are closely related to urban regeneration, ranging from cultural flagship developments (e.g., Bilbao's Guggenheim Museum), single event mega projects (e.g., the 1992 Summer Olympics in Barcelona) to regenerated neighborhoods.[38] In the so-called "hipster" neighborhoods, art galleries, trendy cafes, and vintage stores have replaced the older retailers, offering creative and "authentic" consumption choices and

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[33] Some vintage clothing retailers design clothes using secondhand materials (upcycling), and some also own retro (new) clothing brands. Therefore, the boundary between fashion design and vintage clothing is also blurred.

[34] Allen John Scott, "Beyond the Creative City: Cognitive–Cultural Capitalism and the New Urbanism," *Regional Studies* 48, no. 4 (April 3, 2014): 565–78, https://doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2014.891010; Andy C. Pratt, "Creative Cities: The Cultural Industries and the Creative Class," *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography* 90, no. 2 (2008): 109.

[35] Richard L. Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2002).

[36] Kristina Andersen et al., "One Size Fits All? Applying the Creative Class Thesis onto a Nordic Context," *European Planning Studies* 18 (October 1, 2010): 1591–1609, https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2010.504343; Michael Storper and Allen J. Scott, "Rethinking Human Capital, Creativity and Urban Growth," *Journal of Economic Geography* 9, no. 2 (March 1, 2009): 147–67, https://doi.org/10.1093/jeg/lbn052.

[37] Patrick Cohendet, David Grandadam, and Laurent Simon, "The Anatomy of the Creative City," *Industry and Innovation* 17, no. 1 (February 1, 2010): 91–111, https://doi.org/10.1080/13662710903573869.

[38] Pratt, "Creative Cities"; Doreen Jakob, "Constructing the Creative Neighborhood: Hopes and Limitations of Creative City Policies in Berlin," *City, Culture and Society*, Advancing the Creative Economy Approach for Urban Studies, 1, no. 4 (December 1, 2010): 193–98, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ccs.2011.01.005.

attracting both local creative class and tourists.[39] The connection of vintage stores and the creative cities can also be explained by Pine and Gilmore's "Experience Economy" concept since vintage retailers could use "services as the stage, and goods as props, to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event." Therefore, physical vintage shopping is based on experience in a specific location, encompassing shop, neighborhood, city, and country levels.[40] The "Experience Economy" also explains why brick-and-mortar retailing can and should sustain and grow despite the growing popularity of online shopping, since the physical shopping experience cannot be replaced.

However, the making of these hipster neighborhoods could also lead to retail and residential gentrification. Hubbard argues that the arrival of vintage stores and other creative retail businesses leads to a displacement of older retailers; these hipster businesses could also attract new and usually more affluent residents and tourists and drive up the property and rental prices, possibly leading to residential gentrification as well. Therefore, Hubbard calls for a reconsideration of popular policy instruments that promote a hipster-led model of retail gentrification in regenerating shopping streets. A thesis also addresses this argument on the regeneration of the Zwaanshalskwartier neighborhood in Rotterdam. This thesis finds that although a top-down approach in introducing vintage shops to regenerate the neighborhood leads to displacement of older retailers, the process is impacted by local actors and context. It might not lead to the ultimate outcome of residential gentrification.[41]

2.4 Amsterdam and Rotterdam in the Context of First-Tier and Second-Tier Cities and Creative Cities

Amsterdam and Rotterdam are only 60 km away from each other, and they both belong to the Randstad conurbation. But they are different in many senses and see each other as rivals. They are competing with each other at times, either in football or other matters such as "who will

[39] Hubbard, "Hipsters on Our High Streets."
[40] B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore, "Welcome to the Experience Economy," *Harvard Business Review*, July 1, 1998, https://hbr.org/1998/07/welcome-to-the-experience-economy; Anne Lorentzen, "Cities in the Experience Economy," *European Planning Studies* 17, no. 6 (June 1, 2009): 829–45, https://doi.org/10.1080/09654310902793986.
[41] M. Peeters, "The Fairy Tale Neighborhood of Rotterdam Gentrification and Social Identity in the Zwaanshalskwartier" (Rotterdam, Erasmus University Rotterdam, 2019), https://thesis.eur.nl/pub/49920.

have the National Photo Museum" (Rotterdam won the latter). [42] Amsterdam has a much older history as a trading center, and it is currently the center for commerce, financial and cultural services with a higher living cost than Rotterdam.[43] Amsterdam's rich cultural heritage and international fame have made it a creative city in essence. Still, the policymakers of the city have been enthusiastic with the thesis of creative cities since the 2000s, aiming to enhance creative industries, preserve and promote heritage, increase the attractiveness to foreign tourists, etc. [44] One of the most famous approaches is the "I amsterdam" marketing campaign in 2004 – too successful and too famous that the giant letters spelling out this motto in Museumplein were removed in 2018. [45] This is just one example of the city's recent struggles with overtourism, which according to locals, turning Amsterdam into an "amusement park" and put pressure on the city's resources, impact residents' life, and drive up property prices and rent.[46]

Home to the largest port of Europe, Rotterdam has long been an industrial city. After the bombardment by the Nazis during the Second World War, Rotterdam has taken on an image of modern and young to brand itself, especially referring to architecture. A series of creative cities policies have been published since the 2000s, including enhancing innovations in several creative branches that are supposed to have the most economic potential (fashion is not included), strengthening creative production (e.g., offering affordable working spaces to creative entrepreneurs and starting artists), quality improvement of public spaces, development of Rotterdam as a festival city, etc.[47] The cultural policies have been successful in several aspects in Rotterdam. For example, Rotterdam is considered as a city of event and a city of

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[42] Han Entzinger, "A Tale of Two Cities: Rotterdam, Amsterdam and Their Immigrants," in *Coming to Terms with Superdiversity: The Case of Rotterdam*, ed. Peter Scholten, Maurice Crul, and Paul van de Laar, IMISCOE Research Series (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019), 173, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-96041-8_9.
[43] Entzinger, 174.
[44] Jamie Peck, "Recreative City: Amsterdam, Vehicular Ideas and the Adaptive Spaces of Creativity Policy," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 36 (June 3, 2011): 462–85, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2427.2011.01071.x.
[45] Natashah Hitti, "Amsterdam Council Removes 'I Amsterdam' Sign after It Becomes Selfie Spot," Dezeen, December 5, 2018, https://www.dezeen.com/2018/12/05/i-amsterdam-sign-removed-council-mass-tourism/; Jimmy Stamp, "Rebranding Amsterdam and What It Means to Rebrand a City," Smithsonian Magazine, August 30, 2012, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/rebranding-amsterdam-and-what-it-means-to-rebrand-a-city-19539392/.
[46] "Local Businesses Add to Pressure on Amsterdam to Clean up Sex and Drugs Reputation," *DutchNews.Nl*, October 19, 2020, https://www.dutchnews.nl/news/2020/10/local-businesses-add-to-pressure-on-amsterdam-to-clean-up-sex-and-drugs-reputation/.
[47] Arie Romein and Jan Trip, "Beyond the Hype: Creative City Development in Rotterdam," *Journal of Urban Regeneration and Renewal* 2 (January 1, 2009): 216–31.

architecture, and the number of tourists has increased.[48] However, Rotterdam remains second to Amsterdam as a creative city, a fashion city, and a destination city. In 2019, Amsterdam had over 9 million visitors, and Rotterdam had 1.2 million.[49] The port city impression is still predominant in the city image, portraying a working-class and down-to-earth image, which is generally contrary to a fashion image. Although Amsterdam is not considered as one of the major global fashion cities, which are London, New York, Milan, and Paris, it is the fashion capital in the Netherlands.[50]

The former introduction does not mean to argue that the presence of the fashion industry in a city will undoubtedly result in a blooming vintage retail sector since vintage items do not come directly from design and production, which are general practices in the fashion industry. However, the vintage consumers and the vintage retail owners tend to be related to or interested in fashion and culture. More generally, they tend to be the creative class. Therefore, Amsterdam might have a higher number and more types of vintage retail shops than Rotterdam**.**

2.5 Vintage Clothing Retail Business Models

Business and management literature has discussed business models extensively.[51] Among the various definitions and components to construct a business model, the business model canvas (BMC) designed by Osterwalder and Pigneur is the most popular one.[52] This model is used among managers and consultants, and it is also widely accepted by researchers. It has gained 13654 citations on Google Scholar (January 2020). BMC defines business model as it "describes the rationale of how an organization creates, delivers, and capture value".[53] This

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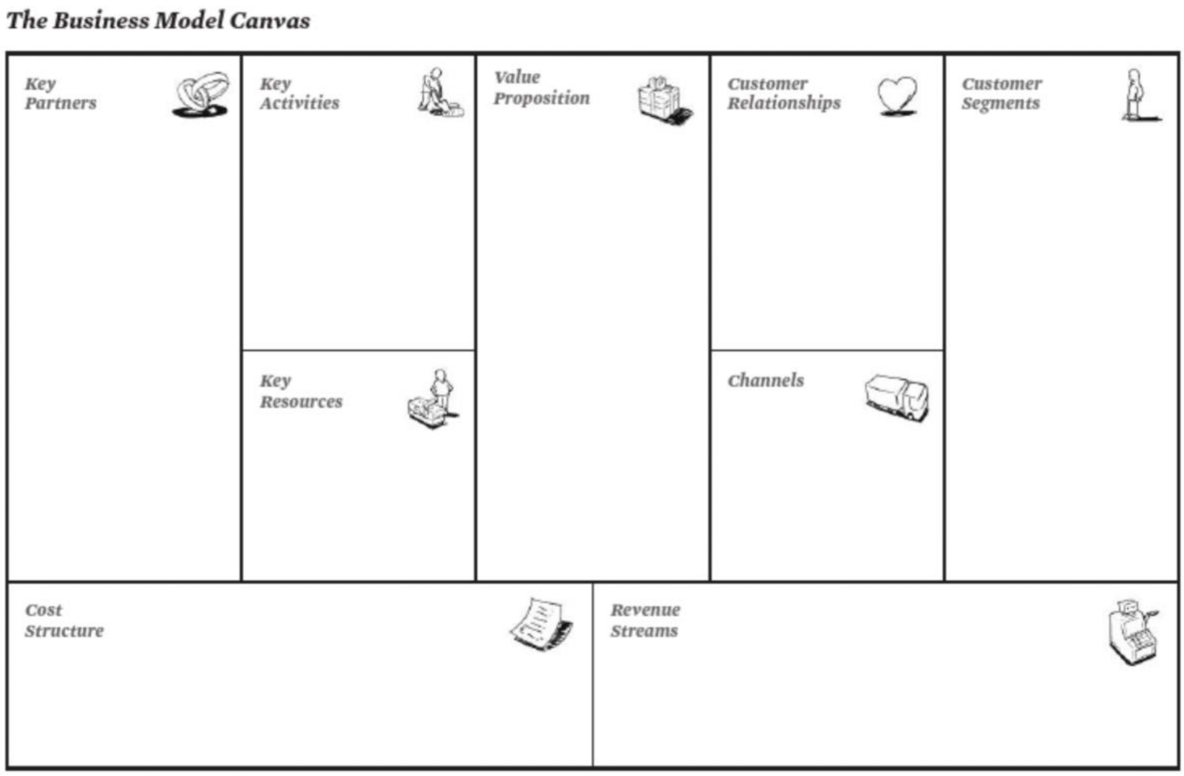
48 "Sustained Growth of Tourism in Rotterdam," Rotterdam Partners, February 5, 2019, https://en.rotterdampartners.nl/sustained-growth-of-tourism-in-rotterdam/.
49 Statistics Netherlands, "Number of Overnight Tourists up to 46 Million in 2019," Statistics Netherlands, March 9, 2020, https://www.cbs.nl/en-gb/news/2020/10/number-of-overnight-tourists-up-to-46-million-in-2019.
50 Patrizia Casadei and Neil Lee, "Global Cities, Creative Industries and Their Representation on Social Media: A Micro-Data Analysis of Twitter Data on the Fashion Industry," *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 52, no. 6 (September 1, 2020): 1195–1220, https://doi.org/10.1177/0308518X20901585; Rik Wenting, Oedzge Atzema, and Koen Frenken, "Urban Amenities and Agglomeration Economies?: The Locational Behaviour and Economic Success of Dutch Fashion Design Entrepreneurs," *Urban Studies* 48, no. 7 (May 1, 2011): 1333–52, https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098010375992.
51 James Richardson, "The Business Model: An Integrative Framework for Strategy Execution," *Strategic Change* 17, no. 5–6 (2008): 133–44, https://doi.org/10.1002/jsc.821; Christopher Williams and Daniel Schallmo, "History of Digital Transformation," 2018, 3–8, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-72844-5_2.
52 Alexander Osterwalder and Yves Pigneur, *Business Model Generation: A Handbook for Visionaries, Game Changers, and Challengers*, ed. Tim Clark (Chichester, UNITED STATES: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2010), http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/gla/detail.action?docID=581476.
53 Osterwalder and Pigneur, 14.

model uses nine building blocks (customer segments, value propositions, channels, customer relationships, revenue streams, key resources, key activities, key partnerships, and cost structure) to cover four primary business areas (customers, offer, infrastructure, and financial viability). In the following, Table 1 shows the visual canvas of BMC, and Table 2 explains the meanings of different components of the BMC.

Table 1. *Business Model Canvas.*



Source: Osterwalder and Pigneur[54]

[54] Osterwalder and Pigneur, 44.

Table 2. *Business Model Canvas Component Definitions.*

Component	Definition
Customer Segments	Groups of people or organizations a company is aiming to reach and serve.
Value Propositions	"The bundle of products and services that create value" for Customer Segments.
Channel	"How a company communicates and reach its Customer Segments to deliver a Value Proposition."
Customer Relationships	"The types of relationships a company establishes with specific Customer Segments."
Revenue Streams	"The cash a company generates from each Customer Segment."
Key Resources	"The most important assets required to make a business model work." They can be physical, financial, intellectual, or human.
Key Activities	"The most important things a company must do to make its business model work."
Key Partnerships	"The network of partners and suppliers that make the business model work."
Cost Structure	"All costs incurred to operate a business model."

Source: Adapted from Osterwalder and Pigneur[55]

However, the BMC has also received criticism. Some researchers argue that the relationship between building blocks is not clear in the BMC. Some argue that it does not include the social

[55] Osterwalder and Pigneur, 16–43.

and environmental aspects of a company.[56] As a result, scholars have created various new frameworks to evaluate business models.[57]

Nevertheless, the BMC is valuable in this thesis as it offers a detailed evaluation guideline based on its precise components. Although it is usually used for researching individual organizations, it could still be used as a preliminary guideline for studying each vintage shop and eventually organizing and categorizing the findings of individual businesses to understand sector-level characteristics. It also allows this research to investigate the evolution of the business models within different components. Besides, semi-structured interviews allow the interviewees to add their insights, which overcomes the possible shortcomings of the BMC.

There are several adaptions of the BMC to be used as a framework for this research. Considering different locations could result in diverse business models such as higher rent, different customer segments, products, etc., location is added to the business model canvas. Within the location component, various levels (i.e., street, neighborhood, city, and country) could impact a shop's business model. As a comparative study between cities in the same country, this research focuses on city and neighborhood levels while keeping in mind the country and street level characteristics. Besides, as vintage clothing retailers are usually small businesses that are lack of funding, funding sources is added to the finance category, as this could be of importance for them to start and grow. These components are further grouped into eight components: location, value propositions, customers (i.e., customer relationship and customer segments), channels (i.e., marketing and selling), key partners, key activities, key resources, and finance (i.e., cost structure, revenue streams, and funding sources).

The adapted BMC for this thesis is presented in Table 3.

[56] Jim Euchner and Abhijit Ganguly, "Business Model Innovation in Practice," *Research-Technology Management* 57, no. 6 (November 1, 2014): 33–39, https://doi.org/10.5437/08956308X5706013; Nancy Bocken et al., "A Value Mapping Tool for Sustainable Business Modelling," ed. Mollie Painter Gilbert Lenssen Aileen Ionescu-Somers and Simon Pickard, *Corporate Governance* 13, no. 5 (January 1, 2013): 482–97, https://doi.org/10.1108/CG-06-2013-0078.

[57] Alexandre Joyce and Raymond L. Paquin, "The Triple Layered Business Model Canvas: A Tool to Design More Sustainable Business Models," *Journal of Cleaner Production* 135 (November 1, 2016): 1474–86, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2016.06.067; Michelle Carter and Chris Carter, "The Creative Business Model Canvas," *Social Enterprise Journal* 16, no. 2 (January 1, 2020): 141–58, https://doi.org/10.1108/SEJ-03-2019-0018.

Table 3.*Vintage Clothing Retail Business Model Canvas.*

<table>
<tr><th colspan="6">Business Model Canvas (BMC)</th></tr>
<tr><th colspan="3">Infrastructure</th><th>Offer</th><th colspan="2">Customers</th></tr>
<tr><th>Location</th><th>Key Partners</th><th>Key Activities</th><th>Value Proposition</th><th>Customer Relationship</th><th>Customer Segments</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Country
City
Neighborhood
Street</td><td rowspan="4">Network of partners and suppliers that make the business model work.</td><td>Things a company must do to make its business model work.</td><td rowspan="4">The products and services that a company offers.</td><td rowspan="2">Types of relationships a company establishes with customers.</td><td rowspan="2">Groups of people or organizations a company is aiming to reach and serve.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Key Resources</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Assets required to make a business model work (physical, financial, intellectual or human).</td><td colspan="2">Channels</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Selling Channels
Marketing Channels</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">Cost Structure</th><th colspan="2">Revenue Streams</th><th colspan="2">Funding Sources</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">All costs incurred to operate a business model.</td><td colspan="2">The cash a company generates.</td><td colspan="2">The sources that funding comes from to start or grow a business model.</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="6">Finance</th></tr>
</table>

Source: Elaborated by the author based on the model by Osterwalder and Pigneur.[58]

2.6 Digital Transformation in Vintage Clothing Retail

2.6.1 Defining Digital Transformation

The concept of digital transformation has gained significant interest from both academia and business practitioners.[59] However, there is a lack of shared understanding of this concept. Based on a systematic review of literature, Morakanyane et al. define it as "an evolutionary process that leverages digital capabilities and technologies to enable business models, operational processes and customer experiences to create value."[60] Consulting firm i-SCOOP defines digital transformation as "the profound transformation of business and organizational activities, processes, competencies and models to fully leverage the changes and opportunities

[58] Osterwalder and Pigneur, 16–43.
[59] Resego Morakanyane, Audrey Grace, and Philip O'Reilly, "Conceptualizing Digital Transformation in Business Organizations: A Systematic Review of Literature" (30TH Bled eConference: Digital Transformation – From Connecting Things to Transforming Our Lives, Bled, Slovenia: University of Maribor Press, 2017), 427–43, https://doi.org/10.18690/978-961-286-043-1.30.
[60] Morakanyane, Grace, and O'Reilly, 437.

of a mix of digital technologies and their accelerating impact across society in a strategic and prioritized way."[61]

It is worth mentioning that digitalization is sometimes used interchangeably with digital transformation. Like digital transformation, there is no consensus on this concept. i-SCOOP defines digitalization as "the use of digital technologies and of data (digitized and natively digital) in order to create revenue, improve business, replace/transform business processes and create an environment for digital business, whereby digital information is at the core". [62] i-SCOOP also argues that digital transformation was initially used to describe the transformation of adopting digital technology; nowadays, it is a concept that is broader than digitalization. As this thesis adopts a historical approach to understanding a specific sector, it is fruitful to adopt a more comprehensive concept to identify the historical change. Therefore, this thesis defines digital transformation as the transformation of various aspects of business enabled by digital technologies, tools, and platforms. Digitalization is used interchangeably for the scope of this research.

2.6.2 Digital Transformation in Vintage Retail

Since there is limited literature that discusses digital transformation of the vintage retail business model, this thesis reviews the literature on digital transformation in SMEs retail in general, as shown in the following.

Before diving into the literature on SMEs retail and digital transformation, it is crucial to specify what this thesis means by SMEs. The EU defines SMEs (micro, small and medium-sized enterprises) as "enterprises which employ fewer than 250 persons and which have an annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million, and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million."[63] In the Netherlands, SMEs is "MKB, Midden- en Kleinbedrijf", and the Dutch Chamber of Commerce defines it as an enterprise with 2-249 full-time

[61] i-SCOOP, "Digital Transformation: Online Guide to Digital Transformation," i-SCOOP, accessed January 23, 2021, https://www.i-scoop.eu/digital-transformation/.
[62] i-scoop, "Digitization, Digitalization and Digital Transformation: The Differences," 2020, https://www.i-scoop.eu/digital-transformation/digitization-digitalization-digital-transformation-disruption/.
[63] European Union, *User Guide to the SME Definition*, Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (Luxembourg: European Union, 2020), https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/42921.

employees (≥ 15 hours per week) to differentiate it from the self-employed sector.[64] Enterprises with less than ten employees are micro firms, 10-50 employees are small firms, and 50-250 are medium firms.[65] Considering that vintage retailers can be self-employed, in this thesis, this thesis will adopt the EU definition of SMEs and include self-employed enterprises.

Regarding digital transformation in SMEs retail, scholars approach this topic with diverse focuses. Mazzarol finds that it is feasible for firms to engage with digital technologies despite potential costs and risks, which will provide SMEs with access to much more market opportunities. However, most small business operators are time-poor, and they remain hesitant to invest in digital technologies.[66] Karjaluoto and Huhtamäki look at the adoption of electronic channels. They find that micro-sized brick-and-mortar firms adopt digital channels for informational purposes, sales, pre-sales, and post-sales services. Eventually, they are an integral part of the business.[67]

2.6.3 Digital Transformation in Vintage Clothing Retail

The digital transformation literature on SMEs retailing offers broad frameworks for understanding the vintage retail sector. However, frameworks of the SMEs retail sector cannot capture the exact implications of digital transformation in the vintage retail sector due to this sector's unique characteristics, such as the uniqueness of each product. In the following section, I will look at the literature investigating digital transformation in vintage clothing retail.

McColl et al.'s book chapter *"Vintage Fashion Retailing: Building the Store Brand*" uses three case studies in Glasgow to define successful features of vintage fashion retailing regarding brand image, telling the brand story and discussing the operational issues involved with maintaining the brand.[68] Their empirical research offers detailed insights into vintage fashion retail branding and their business model. This research also discusses how retailers use e-

[64] KVK, "Data over de bedrijvendynamiek jaaroverzicht 2019" (Utrecht: KVK, January 2020), https://www.kvk.nl/download/Bedrijvendynamiek-jaaroverzicht-2019_tcm109-486705.pdf.
[65] "What Do the Financial Statements Comprise?," KVK, accessed January 25, 2021, https://www.kvk.nl/english/filing/what-do-the-financial-statements-comprise/.
[66] Tim Mazzarol, "SMEs Engagement with E-Commerce, e-Business and e-Marketing," *Small Enterprise Research* 22, no. 1 (January 2, 2015): 79–90, https://doi.org/10.1080/13215906.2015.1018400.
[67] Heikki Karjaluoto and Maija Huhtamäki, "The Role of Electronic Channels in Micro-Sized Brick-and-Mortar Firms," *Journal of Small Business & Entrepreneurship* 23, no. 1 (January 1, 2010): 17–38, https://doi.org/10.1080/08276331.2010.10593471.
[68] McColl et al., "Vintage Fashion Retailing."

commerce and social media to communicate their brand image, source, sell, and offer customer services.[69] Kneese and Palm research the platformization of vintage brick-and-mortar shops. Drawing on empirical research in the United States, they find that retail jobs are transformed by platformization, and vintage entrepreneurs and employees need to promote the vintage brands on social media and use sales platforms and other logistical media to manage inventory, process transactions, and handle shipments.[70] After interviewing successful vintage e-tailers (three in London, one in Italy, one in Amsterdam, and three in different cities of Sweden), Bank et al. find that vintage e-tailers provide a memorable customer experience, and the most important factors leading to their success are a unique and wide assortment, establishing trust, and adequate multi-channel communication.[71]

Internet of Things has also been implemented in secondhand retail. In 2012, de Jode et al. tagged donated items in two projects collaborated with Oxfam charity retail outlets with RFID and QR codes.[72] Shoppers could watch video stories or listen to the stories behind the donated items by scanning the codes. They found that adopting Internet of Things technology and adding tales to secondhand objects could enhance both the emotional and monetary value of the object. Nevertheless, this project is funded under the UK Research Council's Digital Economy program.[73] It is difficult for secondhand or vintage retailers with limited resources to adopt the Internet of Things in their retail settings without external funding.

There is little research conducted in the Dutch context. Pauw researched the online resale in the Netherlands in 2015. In her research, she introduced the growing Dutch online resale market and discussed several platforms and their resale models (e.g., Marktplaats, Facebook, and United Wardrobe).[74] Overdiek examines the pop-up retailing in The Hague and identifies some challenges of vintage pop-up retailers, such as the lack of financial resources and the lack of knowledge and skills in business modelling.[75]

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[69] McColl et al., "Vintage Fashion Retailing', 66.
[70] Kneese and Palm, "Brick-and-Platform," 10.
[71] Linn Bank, Ludwig Skalare, and Mathilda Widerberg, *Creating Memorable Customer Experience : The Case for Vintage E-Tailers of Apparel and Fashion Pieces*, 2020, http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:hb:diva-23449.
[72] Martin de Jode et al., "Enhancing the 'Second-Hand' Retail Experience with Digital Object Memories," in *Proceedings of the 2012 ACM Conference on Ubiquitous Computing - UbiComp '12* (the 2012 ACM Conference, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: ACM Press, 2012), 451–60, https://doi.org/10.1145/2370216.2370284.
[73] de Jode et al., 459.
[74] Pauw, "Online Fashion Resale in the Netherlands."
[75] Overdiek, "Opportunities for Slow Fashion Retail in Temporary Stores," 77.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the literature and theories concerning vintage fashion, first and second-tier cities, creative cities and its relating concepts, business model canvas, and digital transformation. Firstly, concerning the literature of vintage fashion, scholars tend to consider it as a global trend, and there is a lack of consensus on the definition of vintage. Besides, comparative approaches between vintage retailing in cities are missing. There is a lack of studies in vintage clothing in the Netherlands, especially not in Rotterdam. By evaluating the theories of first-tier and second-tier cities, creative cities and applying them to understand Amsterdam and Rotterdam contexts, this thesis finds a valuable new angle to research vintage retailing within the cities' contexts as first-tier second-tier creative cities.

After evaluating the business model canvas framework and applying vintage clothing retail characteristics to it, this chapter has also presented an adapted BMC as the main theoretical framework of this research. Vintage clothing retail business models are constructed by the following components: location, value propositions, customers, channels, key partners, key activities, key resources, and finance. Location makes up an important component of the BMC, and it could also impact various other components and eventually impacting the business model.

Finally, while the literature on digital transformation in vintage retail discusses the physical retailers adopting e-commerce and online platforms, pop-up retailers, and the Internet of Things, a holistic approach to evaluate digital transformation's impact on vintage clothing physical retailing is missing. Therefore, this research aims to address these gaps by exploring and comparing the vintage clothing retailing BMC between Amsterdam and Rotterdam, considering their city contexts based on empirical data.

3. Source and Method

This research uses a mixed approach of qualitative and quantitative methods to collect data to answer the research question. It is challenging to use a mixed approach as it requires careful consideration when designing the methods, collecting the data, and interpreting and integrating the findings. Nevertheless, the mixed approach allows this thesis to gain results from different methods, and they could be complementing each other.[76] Besides, a lack of secondary resources on the research topic, the author's language ability, the COVID-19 impact, as well as the time limit require the thesis to adopt different methods to gain a full picture and allows data triangulation.[77]

The first part of the data collection was gaining information about vintage clothing retailers in Amsterdam and Rotterdam. To explore the meaning of "vintage" from the Dutch vintage clothing retailers' perspective, if a shop sells clothing, claims to be "vintage", has a branch open for visit, they will be included in the sample. The claim could be either on its name, website, social media, or other promoting materials that the shop is using, such as appearing on the *Vintage Route Rotterdam* map.[78] However, as retailers that sell new clothing and secondhand clothing are different in many aspects, a shop will be excluded if it is only selling new clothing. The collected information includes these retailers' names, shop addresses, opening times, and digital infrastructures (including their chosen digital selling and marketing platforms, number of followers of these platforms, etc., see Appendix 1).

The sample was restricted to physical retailers because this research is conducted within the city context. While online stores have a physical location for their storage, the connection between them and their cities is not as closed as physical retailers'. Besides, many physical retailers have been selling and marketing online, which offers enough findings on the topic of

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[76] Judith Schoonenboom and R. Burke Johnson, "How to Construct a Mixed Methods Research Design," *Kolner Zeitschrift Fur Soziologie Und Sozialpsychologie* 69, no. Suppl 2 (2017): 107–31, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11577-017-0454-1.
[77] It would have been helpful if the author could conduct archival research on Dutch fashion magazines and newspapers to find evidence of the historical evolution of vintage clothing in both cities. However, due to the COVID-19, it was challenging to access archival institutions, and the author also only understands very little Dutch, which makes archival research almost impossible. Nevertheless, other methods have already offered enough data for this research.
[78] *Vintage Route Rotterdam* (Rotterdam: Uitgeverij 11, April 11, 2020).

online retailing. The information of these retailers was found by using Google search engine, Google Map, Orbis database, and KvK database to search "vintage" in each city, as well as reviewing these retailers' online presences (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest, Blogs).[79] The data was collected during January 2021 and April 2021. For the data consistency, during June 14 and 15, the author renewed the data of these shops to exclude closed shops, include newly opened shops, and update the digital infrastructure data. Eventually, 28 vintage brands with their 29 shops in Rotterdam and 48 brands with their 66 shops in Amsterdam were identified and mapped on Google Map.

For the second step of the research, interviews were conducted as a qualitative method to gain in-depth insights (see Table 4). During March and May 2021, 30 vintage brands in Amsterdam and 25 vintage brands in Rotterdam were contacted via Instagram or email for an in-depth interview. Among them, six vintage retailers in Amsterdam and six vintage retailers in Rotterdam accepted the invitation, allowing balanced presentations from each city. During this period, the regulations of the Netherlands to combat the COVID-19 pandemic had been gradually relaxed. Vintage retailers were required to close from December 15, 2020; since March 3, 2021, they were allowed to open by appointment; starting from April 28, they could open without appointments.[80] The gradually relaxed regulations allowed most interviews to be conducted face-to-face with owners of vintage brands at their shops with social distance.[81] The average time for each interview is 1 hour and 52 minutes. The interviews were conducted using semi-structured questions to understand their background, definition of "vintage", their business models, as well as their observations of the industry (see Appendix 3). Other than the interviews, the author also conducted field observations on the interviewed shops' physical spaces and online presences. As introduced before, all vintage shops' online presences were reviewed and evaluated to gain a complete picture of the BMC of vintage clothing retailers;

[79] "Zoeken," KVK, accessed June 15, 2021, https://www.kvk.nl/zoeken/; Bureau van Dijk, accessed June 15, 2021, https://orbis.bvdinfo.com/.
[80] "Full List of All Coronavirus Lockdown Restrictions as of Dec. 14," News, NL Times, December 14, 2020, https://nltimes.nl/2020/12/14/full-list-coronavirus-lockdown-restrictions-dec-14; "Step 1: Shops and Outdoor Seating at Restaurants and Cafés Will Partially Reopen; Evening Curfew Lifted," News, Government.nl (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, April 20, 2021), https://www.government.nl/latest/news/2021/04/20/step-1-shops-and-outdoor-seating-at-restaurants-and-cafes-will-partially-reopen-evening-curfew-lifted.
[81] There are two exceptions. The interviewee representing Past Vintage is the social media manager, but she introduced enough information about Past Vintage. Due to the busy schedule of the owner of Rêveuse, the interview was conducted via email. Still, the email interview offered enough information, and the author also visited the shop and gained much data from Rêveuse's website and Instagram. See Appendix 2 for details.

they were also used for cross-checking the interview data and quantitative data from the Orbis database (see Appendix 1).

After mapping the vintage shops and interviewing the retailers, this research identified two vintage neighborhoods (i.e., The 9 Streets in Amsterdam and the Zwaanshalskwartier in Rotterdam) where vintage shops cluster. Furthermore, the author conducted three interviews via Zoom and phone with actors behind the management and promotion of these neighborhoods. Besides, the author also visited both neighborhoods multiple times from January to June 2021 to conduct field research. Interviews with them gain insights into these vintage neighborhoods' development and allow comparison from a more micro-level perspective. The average time of these three interviews is 1 hour and 8 minutes. A brief email interview with the publisher of *Vintage Route Rotterdam* was also conducted to understand the mechanism behind this physical marketing method.

Table 4. *List of Interviewees.*

Name	**Occupation**	**Conducted in / via**
A	Owner of Vintage Brand A	Rotterdam
Lisette	Owner of Vintage Brand Atelier Ekster	Rotterdam
Rosanne	Owner of Vintage Brand Von Deux	Rotterdam
Henk	Owner of Vintage Brand by Hendrikus	Rotterdam
Laura Dols	Owner of Vintage Brand Laura Dols	Amsterdam
Carien	Owner of Vintage Brand Rosa Rosas	Amsterdam
Muriël	Co-owner of Vintage Brand Vind It	Amsterdam
Jacob	Co-owner of Vintage Brand Concrete Matter	Amsterdam
Sara	Owner of Vintage Brand Retro in & out Styles	Amsterdam
Claudia	Co-Owner of Vintage Brand Phixi	Rotterdam
Romy	Social Media Manager of Vintage Brand Past Vintage	Rotterdam

Paul	Program Manager from Havensteder who worked on Zwaanshalskwartier during 2010-2014	Zoom
Lony	Street Manager of The 9 Streets since 2012	Phone
Anil	Street Manager who has worked for Zwaanshalskwartier BIZ since April 2020	Zoom
Anouk	Owner of Vintage Brand Rêveuse	Email
Anne	Organizer of Vintage Route Rotterdam	Email

Source: Elaborated by the author. See Appendix 2 for details.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed and then processed through the Grounded Theory by Glaser and Straus.[82] This means that this research uses an inductive approach to develop a theory from the empirical data. Although the BMC model has been chosen as a guideline for interview questions, a semi-structured interview format allows this research to gain new findings outside the existing theory and modify the theory. The transcribed interviews and field observations were coded using the qualitative analysis program Atlas.ti through three processes: opening coding, axial coding, and selected coding.[83] Opening coding implied the development of categories based on the collected data, yielding 308 codes. After coding each interview, the author also wrote a short Memo as a summary of the interview. Then, axial coding divided these codes into 16 subcategories. These subcategories include Definition of Vintage, BMC components (Value Propositions, Customers, Channels, Finance, Location, Key Activities, Key Partners, Key Resources), Digital Transformation, Background, Challenges, Vintage Observation, COVID-19, as well as the two neighborhoods. Finally, the selective coding step aimed to find connections and patterns of the subcategories and exclude irrelevant subcategories to the research question. Vintage Clothing in the Netherlands (including Definition of Vintage, Challenges, Vintage Observation) and BMC components and Digital Transformation Impact (including the existing BMC components and Digital Transformation; the 2 neighborhoods became part of the Location component) were two main themes identified through this process. Background and COVID-19 were excluded as they did not offer enough

[82] Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, *Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* (Routledge, 2017).
[83] Michael Williams and Tami Moser, "The Art of Coding and Thematic Exploration in Qualitative Research," International Management Review, 15, no. 1 (2019): 45–55.

valuable data for the thesis. The information that was relevant from these three subcategories was coded differently to fit in the above two themes (see Appendix 4 for the coding tree).

The findings of the quantitative method will contribute to a comparative overview of vintage retailers of the two cities in terms of number, type, and distribution on the city map. The digital infrastructure part also offers an overview of the channels component of the BMC and contributes to the understanding of digital transformation impact on the BMC. The interview method is also a source of variables of quantitative data, such as a shop's opening time. More importantly, the qualitative approach offers in-depth insights into the evolution of vintage clothing in the Netherlands, the empirical findings of the BMC, and the digital transformation impact on it, allowing a detailed comparison between the two cities. Other than interviews and field research, academic literature and policy documents were also consulted as a part of the qualitative method for understanding the historical and policy contexts.

It is crucial to admit that there are several limitations of the chosen sources and methods. Firstly, the quantitative method could only gain data by the time it was conducted, and it could not access enough information on the historical transformation of these retailers. Besides, some variables, such as the opening time of each shop, are not available or might not be accurate from online sources.[84] Therefore, interviews were used to collect data that the quantitative method might be biased or not able to collect. Still, interview answers are highly dependent on the interviewees' memory and personal experiences, which could also be biased and inaccurate; it is impossible to conduct interviews with all vintage retailers. Nevertheless, the sufficient number and length of in-depth interviews allow a thorough understanding of the vintage clothing sector. It is also the strength of this research as it fills the gap of the absence of literature in the research topic in English. As the author also did field observations on their shops' physical environments and online presences, the accuracy and objectivity of the findings of the interviews could be improved. Finally, while most interviewees are Dutch and the author is Chinese, the interviews were all conducted in English. Besides, various online sources were

[84] As some brands are opening multiple shops, moving their locations, and starting as a webshop and only opening a physical shop a few years later, the Opening Times of the current opened physical shops were collected and calculated for the Average Opening Time. When available, the author also includes the brand's start time in Appendix 1. The data was retrieved from brands' online presences, interviews, and the Orbis database (priority level from highest to lowest). However, interviews and a brand's online presences are subject to people's memory, and they are sometimes not precise. Orbis database registers a company's incorporation time, but sometimes it is not corresponding to a particular shop's opening time. Besides, some shops' Opening Times could not be found in the above three sources. Regardless of the limitations, Opening Time still offers valuable insights to the research.

written in Dutch, and the author used Google Translate to read online resources. It is crucial to admit that using English for cross-cultural research, especially for interviews, might result in inaccurate data as participants might neglect or misuse the interview questions and answers.[85] Nevertheless, the author and all interviewees are fluent in English, and the Dutch words and expressions mentioned by the interviewees were either translated by themselves during the interviews, or later transcribed and translated by Dutch friends of the author. Besides, specific Dutch expressions that are hard to translate to English have been excluded in direct quotations in this thesis to avoid misinterpretations.

[85] Piekkari Rebecca and C. Reis, "Language and Languages in Cross-Cultural Interviewing," in *Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods for International Business*, 2004, 224–43, https://doi.org/10.4337/9781781954331.00027.

4. Vintage Clothing in the Netherlands

This chapter introduces the historical context of this thesis and the challenges the vintage clothing sector is currently facing, laying a foundation for further vintage clothing retail BMC analysis in the next chapter. It also answers how vintage clothing retailers define vintage clothing based on the interview data.

4.1 History of Vintage Clothing in the Netherlands

In the Netherlands, vintage clothing emerged in the late 1960s and 1970s as a part of the hippie countercultural movement.[86] Although the hippie movement started in the United States, as the youth culture capital of the Netherlands, Amsterdam was not left out from this global cultural movement. With music by Beatles, Jimi Hendrix, and Led Zeppelin becoming popular, the well-known Magic Bus bringing people from Amsterdam and various other spots in Europe to India, and social gatherings in Vondelpark, the young generation in Amsterdam also started to dress in secondhand clothing to represent the hippie culture, look like music stars, and differentiate themselves from mainstream culture.[87] Some hippies put it into business practices. Laura Dols, the owner of the vintage brand Laura Dols, started her engagement with vintage clothing by buying 20s to 40s secondhand flower dresses from the Waterlooplein flea market. This is a market with a history dated back to 1885, and it was also where hippies started to find treasures from secondhand clothing.[88] She opened a stall in Waterlooplein in 1970 and then her first shop in 1976 in Blauwburgwal. In 1978, she moved the shop to Wolvenstraat, a street located in the present-day The 9 Streets area. Several vintage shops shared a similar background, such as Zipper and Lady Days. By picking the nicest secondhand clothes that fit into the youth's tastes, these young entrepreneurs in the 1960s and 1970s transformed the old and dusty image of secondhand clothing into a cool countercultural practice.

[86] Laura Dols, interview with author, Amsterdam, March 20, 2021.
[87] Laura Dols, interview; "Vondelpark, Summer 1971: A Hippie Paradise," Ons Amsterdam, September 6, 2016, https://onsamsterdam.nl/vondelpark-zomer-1971-een-hippie-paradijs; Sharif Gemie and Brian Ireland, *The Hippie Trail: A History* (Manchester University Press, 2017).
[88] "Waterlooplein Became a Day Market in 1885," *Waterloopleinmarkt Amsterdam* (blog), March 16, 2016, https://waterlooplein.amsterdam/en/waterlooplein-werd-1885-dagmarkt/.

Wearing vintage clothing was soon adopted by a bigger audience outside the hippie circle. "Like, every secretary from a little bit well-known lawyer office, they all wanted those flower dresses. Because it was really cool to wear those kinds of vintage flower dresses… to my great surprise."[89] In the 1980s, stylists and editors from fashion magazines also began to be interested in vintage shops.[90] Fashion magazines used items from vintage stores in their photographs and listed the vintage shop names next to other fashion brands.

However, "vintage clothing" was not used by Dutch vintage shop owners at the beginning. They called themselves "hip" secondhand (*tweedehands*) to differentiate themselves from regular secondhand stalls and thrift shops (*kringloopwinkels*).[91] The word "hip" was derived from "hippie". According to Laura Dols, the introduction of "vintage" into the Netherlands started in the early 1990s. "Vintage was a kind of more commercial approach of our trade."[92] The popularity of vintage clothing attracted more actors into the business, which speeded up the commodification process of wearing vintage clothing from a counterculture into the mainstream. Lony, the director of a 1996 documentary that showcased the secondhand clothing trade in Amsterdam, also recalled a similar transformation, "…the old persons who started it say the name 'vintage' is far too commercial. […] It's not all about culture. […] It's more about money-earning. It's more commercial than culture."[93] Nevertheless, Laura Dols and other "hip" secondhand clothing shop owners adopted the term "vintage" to go with the trend and for the convenience of the public to recognize them.[94]

In the past twenty years, an increased number of vintage shops and consumers in the Netherlands can be observed in big cities such as Amsterdam, Utrecht, Rotterdam, The Hague, and other smaller cities. Especially in the past ten years, the urgent need to live a more sustainable life has become common sense for the public. The growing awareness of the fashion industry's negative environmental impacts, including the massive usage of resources, pollutions, and unsafe working conditions, has brought concerns to consumers and encouraged them to go for a more sustainable alternative way of consumption, such as buying secondhand

89 Laura Dols, interview.
90 Laura Dols, interview.
91 Laura Dols, interview.
92 Laura Dols, interview.
93 Lony Scharenborg, telephone interview with the author, May 11, 2021; Lony Scharenborg, *Ongeregeld Goed*, Documentary (NCRV TV, 1996).
94 Laura Dols, interview.

or vintage clothing.[95] Buying and wearing vintage has transformed from a countercultural practice to a mainstream consumption activity.

4.2 Characteristics and Challenges of the Vintage Clothing Sector

Although the past decades experienced a transformation of vintage clothing from niche to mainstream and the blooming of vintage shops, challenges persist in this sector. First, vintage clothes are one-of-a-kind. Most of the time, one will only find an item with one style and one size. This results in difficulties for shop owners to sell it online. New fashion brands can take pictures of one item and use these pictures to sell it online in different sizes with a large quantity. But if a vintage item is sold, it is gone forever, and the efforts put in taking pictures and updating the product descriptions online cannot be reused. This characteristic also results in difficulties for consumers to shop because of the unavailability of sizes. Second, clothing sizes have differed over time and by region. As individuals' body shapes are also different, a size "M" or "38" blouse does not tell precisely how this blouse fits a person. To sell it online, the most precise way for the customers to fit will be offering the measurements and advise the customers to measure their bodies. Still, it is extremely time-consuming for the sellers, and some customers also prefer not to measure themselves. Third, improvement in nutrition and health allows people to grow taller and bigger, and the Netherlands is also famous for being a nation with one of the tallest populations in the world.[96] As a result, people are highly likely not able to fit into clothes made decades ago. Fourth, however beautiful or high-end vintage clothes are, since they were made in the past, it is very easy to come across imperfections, such as a hole, a missing button, some stains, some old smell, etc. Vintage shop owners will have to look for treasures in a large number of clothes, check every item, fix some fixable parts, and even throw away some clothes.

Fifth, fashion trends change over time, and some modern preferences or imaginaries of the past might not be available. For example, the owner of Vind It Vintage shop mentions one experience with a customer, "I have people asking me for an original 20s style hat in that kind of red. And I said, 'You are not gonna find it because that color is the color of prostitution.

[95] The sustainability transformation and the growing number of vintage shops and consumers are observed and mentioned by most of the vintage retail interviewees.
[96] Adam Hadhazy, "Will Humans Keep Getting Taller?," May 14, 2015, https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20150513-will-humans-keep-getting-taller.

Prostitution doesn't wear hats. It doesn't come with the job. You will find it in Burgundy red, but not in that kind of red.'"[97] Finally, as time goes by, some vintage clothing becomes too fragile, and even if not, some pieces become unavailable. "It's finished. All the old ladies passed away. And we took over old beautiful dresses, and now there's nothing left. So, it's really, really hard to find really beautiful old flower dresses and old lace blouses. You know, when I was young, there were thousands of them, you can swim in them. But now when I find one, I go like 'Oh!'"[98] As the scarcity of vintage clothing increases, its price also increases.

4.3 Vintage Clothing Definition in the Dutch Context

Vintage clothing retailers offer diverse answers to the question of what is "vintage clothing". Most of them agree that vintage clothing is connected to the production time of clothing items. However, when asked to give a period of what they believe is vintage, retailers have diverse answers. While some say vintage clothing should be produced more than 20 years ago (i.e., Von Deux, Phixi, Atelier Ekster), others say 30 years ago (i.e., A, Rêveuse, by Hendrikus, Concrete Matter), 40 years ago (i.e., Rosa Rosas, Vind It), 50 years ago (i.e., Laura Dols), and even 70 years ago (i.e., Past Vintage).

Some retailers also introduce the concept of antique to define vintage. "It's the stage before something becomes antique."[99] Similar to the definition of vintage, retailers also disagree with the definition of antique. While some say it should be more than 100 years old (e.g., Rêveuse), some also use a shorter time frame such as 70 years old (e.g., Phixi). The differentiation also sometimes does not strictly link to time. "(For antique), you do not want to wear it out at (a) party. […] (For vintage), you can still wear them at a party because you can still find them."[100] Due to the overuse of the term vintage, antique is also used by vintage retailers to stress the history of their products. Laura Dols explains, "Vintage is used for all sorts of remakes and this and that... […] That's why I call my wedding dresses antique."[101] For some vintage retailers, whether a piece is vintage or not depends on factors other than time, such as scarcity and being

[97] Muriël, interview with the author, Amsterdam, April 15, 2021.
[98] Laura Dols, interview.
[99] Muriël, interview.
[100] Muriël, interview.
[101] Laura Dols, interview.

able to represent a specific style of a period. “It has to be very specific for a time or year. […] Like a time capsule. But it has to be scarce.”[102]

“Secondhand” is also mentioned to illustrate the characteristics of vintage. “Almost every vintage is secondhand, but not every secondhand is vintage.”[103] Vintage items were produced many years ago. Most likely, they have been used, and therefore, they are secondhand. When comparing these two concepts, most vintage retailers say secondhand clothing was produced in a more recent era, and it is less scarce. For some cases, vintage is also used interchangeably with secondhand. Romy, the social media manager of Past Vintage, a shop that is owned by a charity Clothing Bank (*Kledingban*k) Rotterdam, indicates that since it is for charity usage, it is acceptable to use vintage to refer to secondhand.[104]

Due to environmental concerns and aesthetic preferences, most vintage retailers hold a negative view of fast fashion or even fashion industry in general. “I hate this kind of shop. I cannot go into a shop where I see six of the same pieces of clothing.”[105] “Fashion is dumb, style is cool. […] There’s nobody saying that this has to be the fashion for 2020, and it cannot be the fashion for 2021. Doesn’t make any sense, right?”[106]

Finally, a hybrid usage of vintage referring to style is observed by many shop owners. Working in the industry for more than 50 years, Laura Dols notices that many young people recently start their businesses with a combination of old and new clothes. The old clothes they include do not have a long history. These young entrepreneurs create their styles and attract a group of customers who like their styles and visions. “So, you know, vintage is maybe more a sort of feeling, a sort of style. And it can be anything.”[107]

[102] Muriël, interview.
[103] Muriël, interview.
[104] Romy, interview with the author, Rotterdam, May 7, 2021.
[105] Henk, interview with the author, Rotterdam, March 19, 2021.
[106] Jacob, interview with the author, Amsterdam, April 30, 2021.
[107] Laura Dols, interview.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter finds that the rise of vintage clothing fashion in the Netherlands shares a similar background as that on a global scale. The appreciation of secondhand clothing by hippie culture had transformed the old and dusty secondhand image into a countercultural practice by young people. However, this trend emerged and bloomed in the first city Amsterdam. It only became significant in the second city Rotterdam when consuming vintage had become more mainstream in the past twenty years. It shows that a historical creative surplus of Amsterdam allowed it to be the frontier of the Netherlands when adopting and developing global cultural movement and creative business. Interestingly, the history of vintage clothing in the Netherlands also shows that vintage was called “hip” instead of “vintage” when it emerged in the Netherlands in the 1960s and the 1970s; it was only until around the 1990s that a more commercial approach started to use the term “vintage”, which was later adopted by the whole sector. However, this is different than the findings of Burneo, whose interviewee said “vintage” was used since the 1980s.[108] The contradiction between the results of Burneo and this research does not impact the overall conclusion that the usage of “vintage” did not come at the same time as exclusive secondhand clothing items becoming popular among the young generation. However, the contradiction reveals the limitation of the chosen interview method and calls for further research in Dutch archival sources to understand the adoption of the term “vintage”.

There are various characteristics that are unique to the vintage clothing sector, including one-of-a-kind clothing, different clothing sizes across time and region, current-day people’s body shapes are taller and bigger, vintage clothing imperfections, and a mismatch of contemporary imaginaries and vintage clothing realities. They result in challenges of this sector such as dealing with vintage clothing is a labor-intensive work, difficulties for online selling and purchasing, as well as a lack of availability for exclusive items.

Vintage clothing retailers do not share a consensus of what vintage clothing is. While most of them agree that it is connected to the production time of a piece, they have diverse answers in terms of until when a clothing piece could be considered as vintage, ranging from 20 to 70 years ago. Besides, some relate vintage clothing to scarcity rather than a specific period. Finally,

[108] Burneo, “The Life, Death and Resurrection of Second Hand and Vintage Clothes in Amsterdam,” 9.

vintage clothing retailers also observed a hybrid usage of vintage to refer to retro style and secondhand.

5. Vintage Clothing Retail Business Model Canvas

This chapter introduces a detailed analysis of vintage clothing retail BMC components. The similarities and differences of Amsterdam and Rotterdam retailers are discussed in each element. Building on the historical development of vintage clothing in the Netherlands discussed in the last chapter; this chapter also analyzes the evolution of vintage clothing retail business models in Amsterdam and Rotterdam and the digital transformation impact on it.

5.1. Location

Belonging to which street, neighborhood, city, and country significantly impacts a vintage clothing retailer in customer segments, value propositions, pricing strategy, cost structure, etc. Even within a central neighborhood, a busier street will bring more customers to a shop. Besides, as the customer experience is bounded with a shop's surrounding location, other shops (either vintage or not) and the neighborhoods general atmosphere also play a significant role in attracting customers. For the scope of this research, the following section analyzes the distribution of vintage clothing retailers in Amsterdam and Rotterdam; after identifying two vintage neighborhoods, it discusses these neighborhoods' contexts, making processes, advantages and challenges for the vintage retailers, and various stakeholders.

5.1.1 Overview of Vintage Clothing Retailers in Amsterdam and Rotterdam

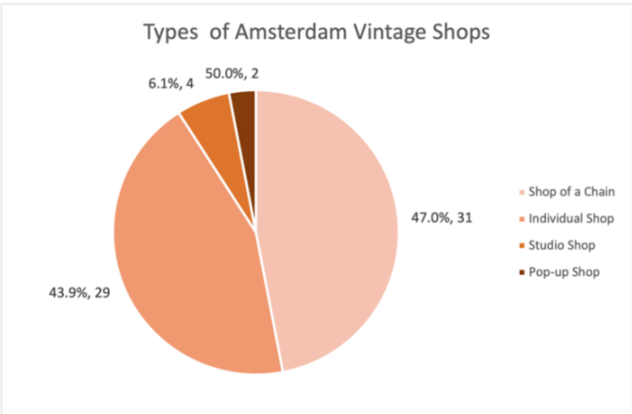
Five different types of vintage shops are identified in Amsterdam and Rotterdam. The first type is *shop of a chain*, meaning a shop belongs to a brand or a holding company, and this brand also opens other shops.[109] *Individual shop* does not have different branches. *Studio shop* uses its physical space for storage, photography, online selling, and other activities instead of opening for regular visits. But it is not just an e-tailer because it opens several days weekly or monthly for customers to have the brick-and-mortar shopping experience. *Pop-up shops* only open for a short period, such as a few weeks or months. Some brands that do not have their

[109] "Brand" is used in this research to refer to the holding company of multiple shops; if it is an individual shop, the brand name is the same as the shop name. Note that some vintage retailers, such as Very Cherry and Lily Scarlet, also have a new product line under the exact names of their brands.

own shops, and they sell their clothing in a type of shop called *collective shops* in this research. A *collective shop* usually sells products from various brands or entrepreneurs.

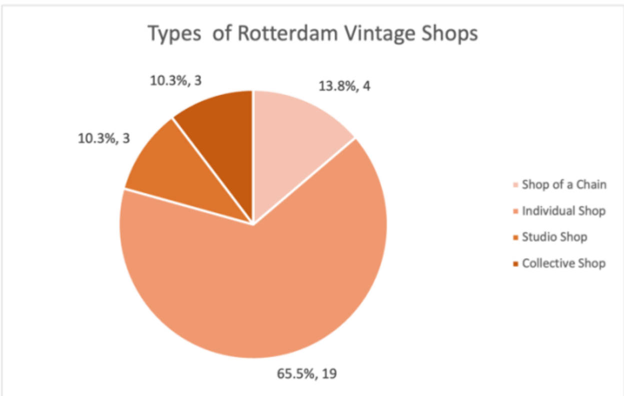
The most significant difference between vintage shops in Amsterdam and Rotterdam lies in the number of brands, shops, and the proportion of different types of shops. In Amsterdam, 48 brands open 66 shops; in Rotterdam, 28 brands have their vintage clothing sold in 29 shops (see Figure 1). Almost half of the shops (47.0%) in Amsterdam belong to a chain, making up the most prominent type, followed by 29 individual shops (43.9%). In Rotterdam, most shops are individual shops (65.5%), and only four shops belong to a chain (see Figure 2).

Figure 1. *Types of Amsterdam Vintage Shops.*



Source: Elaborated by the author based on data retrieved from Appendix 1.

Figure 2. *Types of Rotterdam Vintage Shops.*



Source: Elaborated by the author based on data retrieved from Appendix 1.

Even being a chain, the number of shops opened by a brand is quite limited. One brand usually only owns two to three shops in Amsterdam. While some brands generally sell vintage clothing in different branches (e.g., Rumors Vintage & Design and Marbles Vintage & Design), some brands also differentiate between their multiple locations. For example, Bis! has 3 shops that sell “Ladies Vintage”, “Army-Navy Classics”, and “Men and Ladies Vintage”, respectively. Laura Dols uses part of the warehouse as a bridal studio, and on Sundays, the warehouse will sell outlet by kilo to other vintage entrepreneurs. Similarly, Zipper opens its warehouse for shopping under appointments. Some brands that start in Amsterdam also expand to other cities. Concrete Matter’s first shop was in Haarlemmerdijk, and after opening its current shop in The 9 Streets, it opened a shop in Haarlem in 2020.

Among the four shops that belong to a chain in Rotterdam, two of them are the sole branches in Rotterdam (Episode and Reshare Store). Past Vintage, an initiative by charity Kledingbank Rotterdam, only opens their second shop as a pop-up store because the space was rent by the municipality for free.[110]

An extreme example representing the two cities’ differences is Episode, which has four shops in Amsterdam but only one shop in Rotterdam. It is also the only brand that has branches in both cities. Other than these shops, it has three shops in Utrecht, The Hague, and Haarlem, respectively. It even expands overseas to Copenhagen, Paris, Antwerp, and Brussels. The number of shops in Amsterdam could be a result of the fact that Episode started its trade in Amsterdam, but it also shows that the city has a considerable purchasing power for four shops to sustain.

Studio shop emerges because of digital transformation. These retailers rent an office as a studio to store their clothes and take pictures to sell them online. But as many customers still want to try the clothes and to feel the fabric, they open their studios several days a week or by appointment. Examples are Rumba and Atelier Ekster, who shared a shop until May 2021 when they moved together to a studio, and currently, they only open by appointment. By changing from a regular shop to a studio shop, they do not need to open the shop every day and dedicate more time on online activities. There are also webshops opening studio shops to offer a better customer experience, such as Ginger Aardbei and Serendipity Vintage Dreamer in Amsterdam. Having a webshop is a starting point for many vintage physical shop owners that started during the past decade. Concrete Matter, Von Deux, Rêveuse Vintage, Vintage & Labels by Hendrikus all started selling online, and when they realized that they enjoyed doing it and the business could grow, they opened their physical shops.

[110] Romy, interview.

Collective shop is the type of vintage shop that only exists in Rotterdam. Phixi, a vintage clothing brand that started as a webshop in 2012, does not have its own store. Instead, it is currently selling its vintage clothing in Pleur and Swan Market in Rotterdam and other collective stores all around the Netherlands. Both Swan Market and Pleur are stores that sell all kinds of "creative" or "lifestyle" related products, including clothing, jewelry, home decorations, accessories, etc.[111] Swan Market started as a creative market in the Zwaanshalskwartier neighborhood in the north of Rotterdam. After several years, the founder of it decided to open physical shops. Swan Market has six shops in six cities of the Netherlands, but none of them is in Amsterdam.[112] Claudia, co-owner of Phixi, explains, "They do would like one in Amsterdam, but it's just a very competitive market and very expensive."[113]

A more significant number of shops and chain stores and no collective stores in Amsterdam could be because Amsterdam's first-tier city bonus as a vintage, fashion, and creative city. There is enough purchasing power for the large number of shops to sustain and grow. Amsterdam shops with a specific focus could find their target customers, and there is not much need to combine different products in one space as Rotterdam shops do. With an experience of selling vintage in many other cities all around the Netherlands, Claudia also mentions the style differences between customers in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, "For Amsterdam, people are a lot more outspoken. So, if we go to Amsterdam, we can bring more extravagant clothing there. […] From all the cities we have, Rotterdam has like the most interesting public, but nothing compared to Amsterdam. And in Amsterdam you can just bring everything with glitters, feathers, I don't know, oversized... People just really love, like, interesting special items."[114]

To understand the historical transformation of shops in these two cities, the opening time of the shops and the brands holding them is a valid variable to review. On average, vintage shops in Amsterdam are only half a year older than those in Rotterdam (see Table 5). But the difference lies in the number of shops with a long history (see Figure 3). In Amsterdam, three shops that started earlier than the 1980s (i.e., Time Machine, Laura Dols, and Zipper) are still open today, but there are no shops with such a long history in Rotterdam. Vintage shops in Rotterdam with the longest history are Cheap Fashion, Vidi Vici, and Sizzling Crackers, which

[111] "Swan Market," Swan Market, accessed June 15, 2021, https://www.swanmarket.nl/; "Pleur," Pleur, accessed June 15, 2021, https://www.pleurrotterdam.nl/.
[112] "Onze stores," Swan Market, accessed June 15, 2021, https://www.swanmarket.nl/onze-winkels/.
[113] Claudia, interview with the author, May 1, 2021.
[114] Claudia, interview.

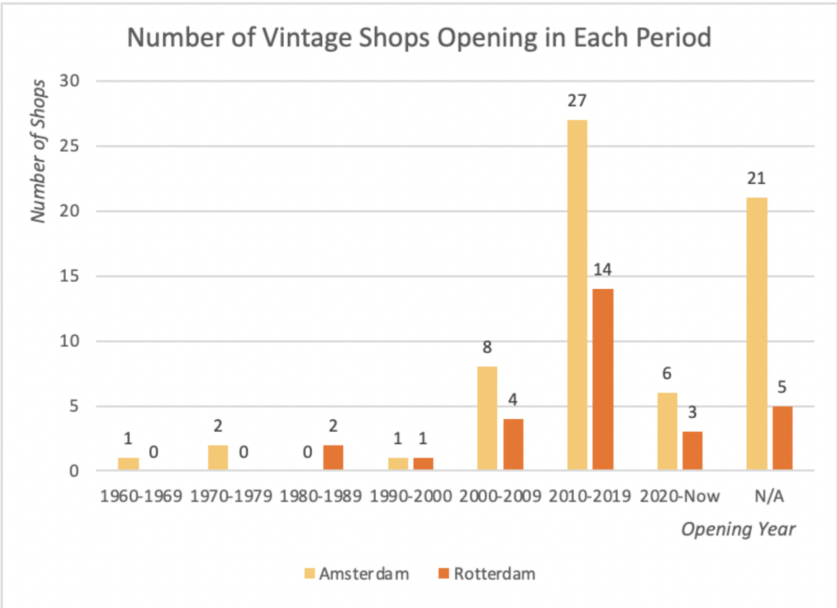
opened between the 1980s and the 1990s.[115] Since 2010, many new vintage shops have been opened in both cities; but the available data shows that Amsterdam has almost twice of new shops as Rotterdam.

Table 5. *Number of Vintage Brands and Shops, and the Average Opening year of Vintage Shops in Amsterdam and Rotterdam.*

City \ Number of	Brand	Shop	Average Opening Year
Amsterdam	48	66	2010.9
Rotterdam	28	29	2011.4

Source: Own calculations.

Figure 3. *Number of Vintage Shops Opening in Each Period.*



Source: Elaborated by the author based on data from Appendix 1.

Several brands started before 2000 have managed to open multiple branches, such as Zipper, Laura Dols, and Episode. [116] This does not mean a brand could only rely on its historical legacy to scale up in Amsterdam. Marbles Vintage, Rumors Vintage, and Concrete Matter are all

[115] The data of these three shops' opening times are retrieved from the Orbis database as their companies' "incorporation time". However, it is also possible that they did not sell vintage at the time of their incorporation. Nevertheless, it still shows that current vintage shops in Rotterdam have a shorter history than Amsterdam.

[116] According to the interview with Laura Dols, Episode has been in the business for a similar period as Laura Dols. But according to the Orbis database, their current shops' earliest registration time is 2005. This could be due to standard business practices such as change of registration information or shops moving addresses. Unfortunately, not enough information was available to clarify this issue.

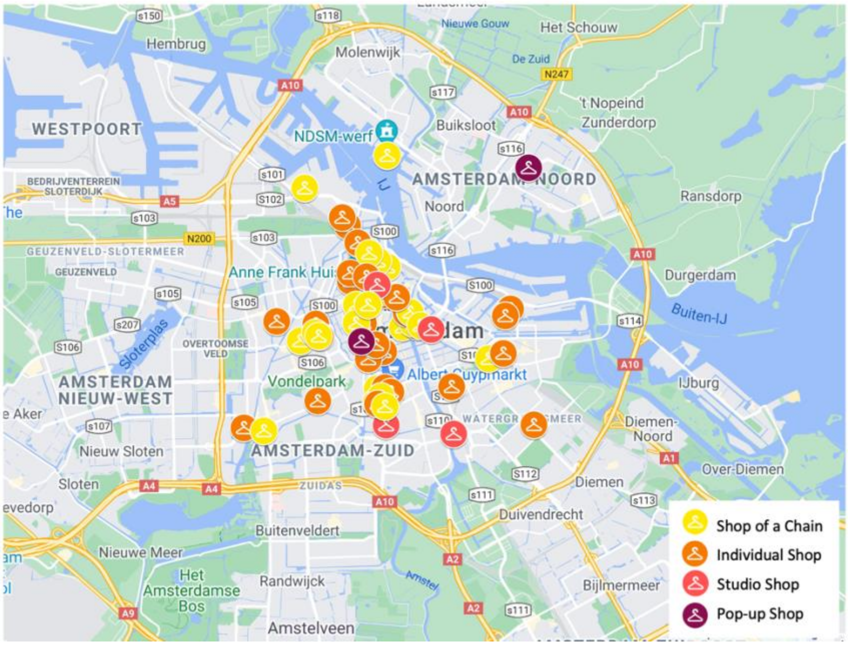
brands started after 2010, but they have managed to open two to three branches. There are also brands with a long history but still owning one shop, such as Droomfabriek Antiek (2001) and Time Machine (1969).

Looking at the vintage shops on the maps of Amsterdam and Rotterdam, it is clear to conclude that in both cities, most shops are in areas around the city center (see Figure 4 and Figure 5). Suburban areas have very little or even no vintage shops, such as Amsterdam Nieuw-West and the south of Rotterdam. Studio shops and the warehouses of vintage chains tend to locate in areas far from the center as they do not count on passersby to generate sales and make use of cheaper rent.

Both maps also show vintage shops clustering in several neighborhoods, such as The 9 Streets, De Pijp, and Haarlemmerdijk in Amsterdam, and Stadsdriehoek and Zwaanshalskwartier in Rotterdam. All three Amsterdam neighborhoods are in the city center and have been recommended by numerous traveling and shopping guides. However, when it comes to shopping vintage, The 9 Streets enjoy the highest fame as the vintage shopping destination.[117] In Rotterdam, Stadsdriehoek is in the city center, and it has many tourist attractions such as Cube Houses and Markthal. Naturally, it has various shops, including vintage clothing shops. The neighborhood that is more focused on vintage clothing in Rotterdam is Zwaanshalskwartier. Located in the Oude Noorden, Zwaanshalskwartier has seven vintage shops, and it also promotes "vintage" on its website.[118] Therefore, although situated in relatively different areas towards the city center, The 9 Streets and Zwaanshalskwartier are chosen as the "most vintage" neighborhoods in each city for a comparative case study to evaluate vintage shops neighborhood locations.

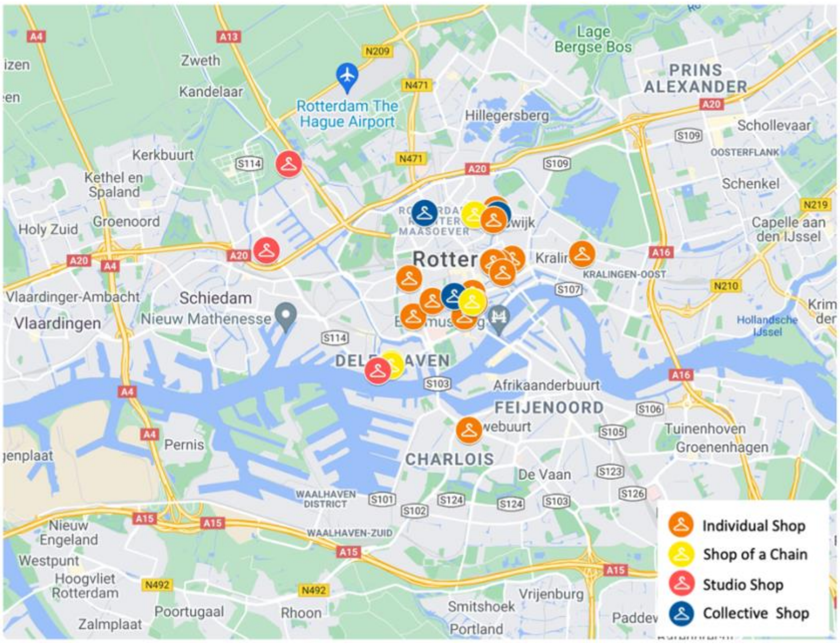
[117] Most vintage retailer interviewees in Amsterdam mention this.
[118] "Het Zwaanshalskwartier," Zwaanshalskwartier, 2018, https://www.zwaanshalskwartier.nl/.

Figure 4. *Map of Vintage Clothing Shops in Amsterdam.*



Source: Elaborated by the author based on data from Appendix 1. Created via Google Map. Accessed June 20, 2021.
https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1it9sGRbgisuunFn_MxI1gp0TQqahE5lU&hl=en&ll=52.374264702004766%2C4.894032850000007&z=13.

Figure 5. *Map of Vintage Clothing Shops in Rotterdam.*



Source: Elaborated by the author based on data from Appendix 1. Created via Google Map. Accessed June 20, 2021.
https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1nY2UajVbxiV08r5ee6s2KIZS2JRmkoXz&ll=51.91707963799072%2C4.463904399999992&z=13.

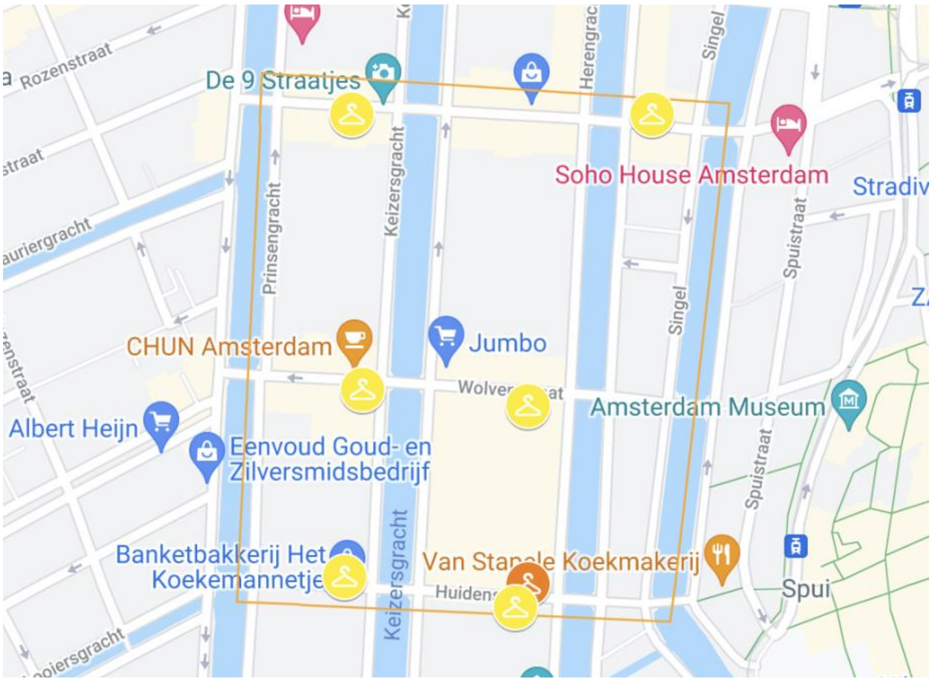
5.1.2 Vintage Neighborhoods: The 9 Streets and Zwaanshalskwartier

5.1.2.1 The 9 Streets

In the 17th century, the Netherlands had its Golden Age, during which Amsterdam was a crucial center for international trade. The Grachtengordel (Canal District) was built due to the expansion of Amsterdam city.[119] The whole district has become a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2010.[120] To the west of Dam Square, the area of the Canal District between Raadhuisstraat and Leidsegracht has nine little streets connecting canals Singel , Herengracht , Keizersgracht, and Prinsengracht. Historically, these nine streets have always been a busy business area. It was home to many shops that specialized in the leather business, which could be still found in their names, such as Huidenstraat (Skin Street), Reestraat (Deer Street), and Berenstraat (Bear Street).[121] This area only gained the name The 9 Streets (De 9 Straatjes) in the 1990s, when entrepreneurs in these streets organized themselves as a business association, and they came up with the name The 9 Streets (see Figure 6).[122]

[119] "Amsterdamse grachtengordel," I amsterdam, 2021, https://www.iamsterdam.com:443/nl/in-en-om-amsterdam/grachtengordel.
[120] "Seventeenth-Century Canal Ring Area of Amsterdam inside the Singelgracht," UNESCO World Heritage Centre, accessed June 21, 2021, https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1349/.
[121] Tanja, "9 Streets – What's up with Amsterdam," What's up with Amsterdam, accessed June 21, 2021, https://whatsupwithamsterdam.com/9-streets/.
[122] "De 9 Straatjes woekeren met de ruimte," Straatbeeld, June 2018, https://www.straatbeeld.nl/nieuws/de-9-straatjes-woekeren-met-de-ruimte.

Figure 6. *Map of The 9 Streets.*



Source: Elaborated by the author based on data from Appendix 1. Created via Google Map. Accessed June 20, 2021.
https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1it9sGRbgisuunFn_MxI1gp0TQqahE5lU&hl=en&ll=52.374264702004766%2C4.894032850000007&z=13.

During the 1960s, the economy flourished, car possession increased, and people wanted to buy single-family houses. The Canal District became too crowded, and the housing quality was not in a good situation. As a result, large suburbanization occurred as people moved to other towns such as Almere.[123] Not everyone left The 9 Streets. In fact, in the 1960s and 1970s, some young hippies, together with their vintage clothing business, moved to The 9 Streets because of its central location and cheap rent. Sometimes they also squatted the empty spaces. Within a few years, they bought the properties thanks to the low price. For the past fifty years, vintage shops and The 9 Streets grew together and have accumulated fame in Amsterdam and the whole country. Currently, there are seven vintage shops located in The 9 Streets (i.e., Bij Ons Vintage, Zipper, Episode, Laura Dols Vintage, Concrete Matter, The Darling, Carla Palermo Vintage &

[123] Sako Musterd, Marco Bontje, and Wim Ostendorf, "The Changing Role of Old and New Urban Centers: The Case of the Amsterdam Region," *Urban Geography* 27, no. 4 (May 1, 2006): 360–87, https://doi.org/10.2747/0272-3638.27.4.360; Ralf Laurijsen, "Edge Cities in the Netherlands" (Groningen, University of Groningen, 2001), 38, http://www-sre.wu.ac.at/neurus/laurijsen.pdf.

New Fashion). King Louie, a famous retro brand from Amsterdam, also has its flagship store in The 9 Streets, although they no longer sell vintage clothing.

Nevertheless, according to Lony, the street manager who has worked for the business association since 2012, the popularity of The 9 Streets and Amsterdam has also brought numerous challenges to the vintage shops in this neighborhood.

> "When things get alright and grow, and you get famous... Real estate… They are coming over again. Also, they think we can make money here, so the rent and the prices of properties went sky high. And it made it quite impossible for a lot of vintage or secondhand stores to survive. […] These real estate agents […] for years and years now […] They put letters for all the people (property owners). They tell all the people you better rent out for a lot of money because you can get far more money than you are now doing the job. […] They only think about now and making as much money as possible." [124]

Some shops who came during the early days sold their properties and retired from the business. For example, Lady Day, a shop that moved into The 9 Streets in 1970, sold the property in 2012.[125] "They just got a really good offer to sell their property. And then they think, 'Okay, this is my pension.'"[126] For new vintage shops, the high rental cost also keeps most of them out of The 9 Streets. Nevertheless, there are still shops who have opened a branch in The 9 Streets during the 2010s, such as Concrete Matter and Bij Ons Vintage.

Lony tried to preserve the atmosphere of the neighborhood by talking with property owners and real estate agents, "We must think long term, not short term. And it's important to keep the area nice and attractive to a lot of people." However, as most properties are privately owned, the decision is up to the property owners.[127] Besides, renting retail spaces to individual vintage shops who might not have a very high budget does not meet the interests of real estate agents and landlords. "It's in their interest to raise up the rent. […] And they (real estate agents) want to sign as many contracts as possible. So, it doesn't interest them if they stay for one year or for five years. Actually, they want them to leave after one, because then they can make a new

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[124] Lony, interview.
[125] "De 3 Lady's of Vintage," *De 9 Straatjes Nieuwsbrief*, 2012.
[126] Lony, interview.
[127] "Information about Neighbourhood Felix Meritisbuurt," All Charts, October 3, 2020, https://allcharts.info/the-netherlands/neighbourhood-felix-meritisbuurt-amsterdam/.

contract."[128] In recent years, Amsterdam's inner-city residents have also organized themselves to protest against the "Pretpark Amsterdam" (Amsterdam Amusement Park) phenomenon, as they find their home city has become an amusement park where tourists could enjoy themselves. Still, the local residents' needs are neglected.[129] When communicating with local residents of The 9 Streets, Lony also heard opposition against the current retail makeup in the neighborhood. "They also said there are no shops anymore for the neighborhood. It's also a difficult thing because they also buy everything on the internet or go to other neighborhoods. And they are not spending a lot of money…"[130]

The municipality has several rules to protect the historic buildings of the Canal District, combat overtourism and try to reach a middle ground for the interests of various groups. The 9 Streets area is not allowed to combine two retail spaces together into a bigger area. This rule keeps large chain stores such as Zara, H&M, and supermarkets away since their retail models require a larger space. Besides, to promote diversity of shops in the city center, new tourist shops such as bike rental shops, ticket agencies and the so-called "Nutella shops" are forbidden.[131]

These rules help in keeping the "authenticity" of The 9 Streets and the vintage shops in staying competitive with other types of retailing. Still, vintage shops in The 9 Streets face numerous challenges and are heavily hit by the COVID-19. The rental and personnel costs are high, but the COVID-19 has kept the main customer group tourists away. While some retailers own the shop and do not need to pay for rent, some are still struggling to pay the rent. For shops that specialize in certain styles, the challenge is even more evident. Laura Dols is specialized in 50s glamour and glitter clothing which is usually used as party dresses, but because of the COVID-19, social gatherings are banned, and the sales of the clothing dropped considerably. Nevertheless, the status of its brand and a loyal local clientele that has grown over time helped the business to overcome the COVID-19 challenge. Besides, the central location and status of The 9 Streets also give vintage retailers confidence for their future development. As Jacob, the

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[128] Lony, interview.

[129] Pretpark Amsterdam, "Pretpark Amsterdam," Facebook, accessed June 30, 2021, https://www.facebook.com/pretpark020/; Marieke de Ruiter, "Bewoners Wallen: 'We Zijn Decorstukken in Een Pretpark,'" *Het Parool*, August 10, 2018, https://www.parool.nl/gs-bd76fe16.

[130] Lony, interview.

[131] Nutella shops are "places that sell waffles and pancakes smeared with the nutty spread, whose presence has grown exponentially in central Amsterdam in recent years." Tother with other tourist shops, they are considered as a sign of overtourism in Amsterdam. See Feargus O'Sullivan, "Amsterdam Doesn't Want Any More Stores for Tourists," *Bloomberg.Com*, October 11, 2017, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-10-11/amsterdam-bans-new-tourist-shops; Gemeente Amsterdam, "Policy: City Centre Approach" (Gemeente Amsterdam, May 2020), https://www.amsterdam.nl/en/policy/policy-city-balance/policy-city-centre-approach/.

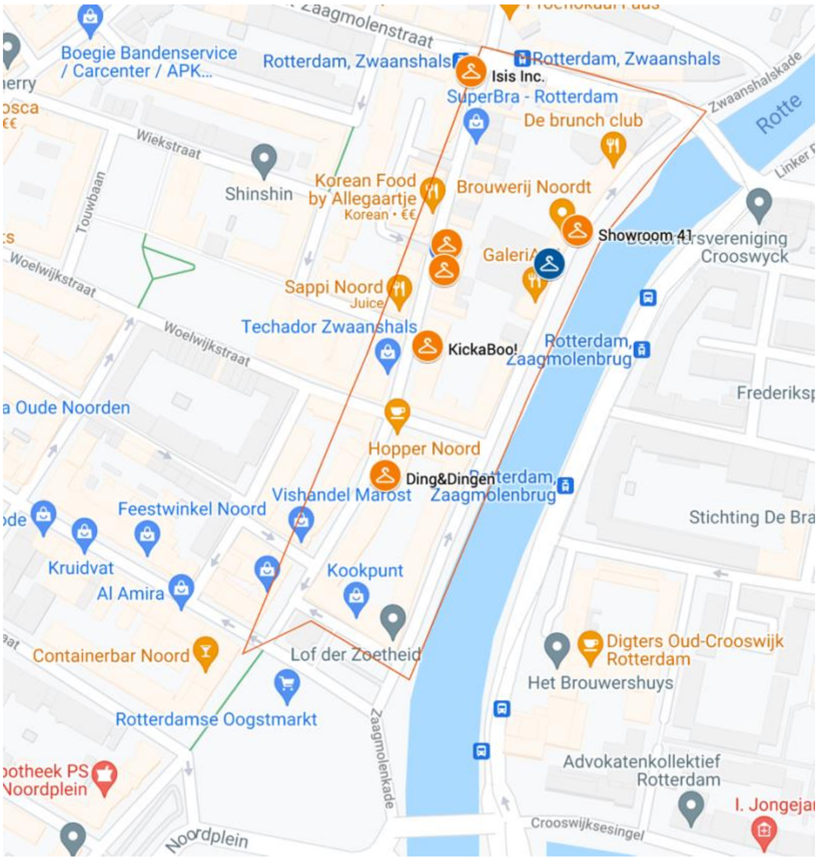
owner of Concrete Matter says, “We are at the best place. If you say location, location, location... It’s true. People from all Netherlands and outside know about The 9 Streets district. That’s just perfect for us now.”[132]

5.1.2.2 Zwaanshalskwartier

Located to the north of the historic city center Stadsdriehoek, the Oude Noorden neighborhood was constructed as an urban area from polders since the mid-19th century due to the growth of the city’s port activities that required more residential spaces.[133] The area on the west bank of the river Rotte, circled by shopping streets Zwaanshals, Zaagmolendrift, Zaagmolenkade, and Noordeplein is called the Zwaanshalskwartier (see Figure 7). In 2018, entrepreneurs in Zwaanhalskwartier established a Business Investment District (Bedrijven Investeringszones, BIZ) under the BIZ Act, and all entrepreneurs in the area are required to pay an annual fee for the shopping area.[134]

[132] Jacob, interview.
[133] “Het Oude Noorden,” Het Oude Noorden, accessed June 25, 2021, https://www.hetoudenoorden.nl/over-het-oude-noorden/wonen/.
[134] “Verordening BI-Zone Gebruikers Zwaanshalskwartier 2018,” *Gemeenteblad van Rotterdam*, December 29, 2017, https://lokaleregelgeving.overheid.nl/CVDR483208/1#.

Figure 7. *Map of the Zwaanshalskwartier*.



Source: Elaborated by the author based on data from Appendix 1. Created via Google Map. Accessed June 20, 2021. https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1nY2UajVbxiV08r5ee6s2KIZS2JRmkoXz&ll=51.91707963799072%2C4.463904399999992&z=13.

In the 1970s, the process of modernizing housings in the Oude Noorden started. As a result, shops were concentrated in shopping streets, such as Zwaanshals, Zaagmolenkade, Zwart Janstraat, and Noordmolenstraat (the latter two together making up the Noorderboulevard).[135] Another critical approach adopted by the municipality since the 1970s was the acquisition of private housings for urban renewal. By 1984, about 70% of the Oude Noorden was acquired by the municipality, thus under management by housing corporations.[136] In 2020, housing

[135] Paul Stouten, *Changing Contexts in Urban Regeneration. 30 Years of Modernisation in Rotterdam* (Amsterdam: Technepress, 2010), 164, https://research.tudelft.nl/en/publications/changing-contexts-in-urban-regeneration-30-years-of-modernisation.
[136] Stouten, 140, 148.

corporations still owned 59% of the homes.[137] Since the 1970s, an influx of people with different ethnic backgrounds moved into the Oude Noorden, in particularly Surinamese, Antilleans, Turks and Moroccans; some other minority ethnic groups also moved in during the 1990s; together, they have made the Oude Noorden a multicultural neighborhood and bringing diverse ethnic stores to the Noorderboulevard.[138]

During the past twenty years, the Oude Noorden has been experiencing several socio-economic problems, such as low average income and a high unemployment rate compared to the average of Rotterdam.[139] In 2003, The Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment identified 56 so-called priority areas in need of urban renewal for socio-economic improvement in the Netherlands, including the Oude Noorden.[140] A more detailed plan to improve the Oude Noorden was published in 2007 by the municipality of Rotterdam, aiming to create more contact between residents, upgrade the quality of the shops, and attract new and more diverse entrepreneurs.[141] A major actor of the urban renewal is the housing corporation Havensteder, which owns about 3000 dwellings in the Oude Noorden and most of the retail spaces in Zwaanshalskwartier. Havensteder started to renovate their residential dwellings and retail spaces in the middle of the 2000s. Together with the municipality, Havensteder came out with the idea to use Zwaanshalskwartier as a tool to improve the image of the whole Oude Noorden neighborhood and attract new residents to the area.[142]

"Food, Fashion, and Design" were identified as the desired retail categories in the Zwaanshalskwartier. Havensteder used the renovation as a chance for negotiations to keep the retailers who fell into the desired categories and got rid of those who did not. Havensteder also used these categories to select new renters for their retail spaces. According to Paul, the Havensteder program manager who worked in the neighborhood from 2010 to 2014, vintage shops belong to the design category, and Havensteder has welcomed them in the

[137] "Information about Neighbourhood Oude Noorden," All Charts, October 3, 2020, https://allcharts.info/the-netherlands/neighbourhood-oude-noorden-rotterdam/.
[138] Stouten, *Changing Contexts in Urban Regeneration. 30 Years of Modernisation in Rotterdam*, 164.
[139] Stouten, 205–6.
[140] Paul Stouten, "Urban Design and the Changing Context of Urban Regeneration in the Netherlands," *European Spatial Research and Policy* 6, no. 1 (2016): 112, https://doi.org/10.1515/esrp-2016-0006; "Wijkenbeleid," Platform 31, accessed June 27, 2021, https://www.platform31.nl/wat-we-doen/kennisdossiers/stedelijke-vernieuwing/zeventig-jaar-stedelijke-vernieuwing/wijkenbeleid.
[141] Gemeente Rotterdam, "Rotterdammers vooruit! : Rotterdamse Krachtwijken : (Deel 2) Wijkactieplannen in ontwikkeling, samenvatting" (Rotterdam: Gemeente Rotterdam, 2007), 33–37, Stadsarchief Rotterdam, https://stadsarchief.rotterdam.nl/zoek-en-ontdek/beeld-en-geluid/zoekresultaat-beeldgeluid/?mivast=184&mizig=176&miadt=184&miaet=14&micode=3038&minr=33976834&milang=nl&misort=ver%7Casc&mizk_alle=trefwoord%3ASociale%20vernieuwing&miview=ldt.
[142] Paul, interview with the author, Zoom Interview, May 3, 2021.

Zwaanshalskwartier. For vintage retailers, Zwaanshalskwartier also offers a favorable condition. Clustering with other creative entrepreneurs could potentially bring them customers, and the relatively non-central location and small retail space also lead to affordable rent.

Havensteder has adopted numerous approaches to promote Zwaanshalskwartier. They set up a website and the Facebook account of the Zwaanshalskwartier and helped the entrepreneurs to create an entrepreneur association.[143] Besides, they also helped the organizers of the organic food market Oogstmarkt and the creative market Swan Market to get started with licenses from the municipality. These two markets organize weekly or monthly events in Noordplein that attract visitors to the neighborhood.[144] While a regular rental period for retailers is five years, Havensteder is also open to renting empty spaces as pop-up stores or even offering some spaces for free to artists or curators to organize events and festivals that attract visitors.

A social housing corporation's main task is related to residential dwellings. Why does Havensteder invest in renovating and promoting retail spaces of Zwaanshalskwartier extensively? This is due to the belief that by turning Zwaanshalskwartier into an attractive shopping area, people in Rotterdam will visit Oude Noorden and find that the whole area has changed into an attractive residential area. As a result, Oude Noorden can gain new tenants who enjoy the busy and creative atmosphere of the neighborhood, thus creating a more diverse group of residents. And in the long run, the value of Havensteder's assets will also increase, either as shops or homes. However, as housing corporations are required to rent most of their social housing to people with an annual income of less than €36.798, middle- and upper-class tenants are most likely kept out of Havensteder's dwellings.[145] As a result, most Oude Noorden social housing tenants could not afford the creative goods and services sold by shops in Zwaanshalskwartier. According to Paul, it was never a goal for their residents to consume in the "Food, Fashion, and Design" shops. "We had some remarks from older people who lived there like, 'I will never come to the Zwaanshals because the grocery shop is not there anymore.' […] Yes, the environment is changing. But they also saw that the new shop owners were

[143] "Zwaanshalskwartier | Facebook," Facebook, accessed July 12, 2021, https://www.facebook.com/Zwaanshalskwartier/; "Het Zwaanshalskwartier."
[144] Oogstmarkt is currently still organizing weekly events in Noordplein. Swan Market started in Noordplein, but they changed locations from time to time. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, Swan Market has stopped its open markets. See http://www.rotterdamseoogst.nl/home/ and https://www.swanmarket.nl/ for their websites.
[145] "Rented Housing - Housing - Government.Nl," Government of the Netherlands (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken), accessed June 27, 2021, https://www.government.nl/topics/housing/rented-housing.

sweeping their street. Before, they didn't. And they (residents) liked that they swept their street. So, they couldn't buy something in the shop, but they liked the guy who was in the shop."[146]

Paul believes that the fifteen years' work of Havensteder in Zwaanshalskwartier has been a success; it has made Zwaanshalskwartier and the Oude Noorden more attractive and introduced a new group of entrepreneurs to this neighborhood. "It takes a lot of time to build an image and to live up to that image that you create. […] Now, if you say that you are going to live there, people don't say you're crazy anymore. But ten years ago, they would say, well, you don't want to live in the Oude Noorden."[147] Besides, new private residential buildings have also been built (e.g., Tuin van Noord), and more affluent residents move in and become regular customers of the shops of Zwaanshalskwartier. Currently, the task of promoting the area has transferred to the BIZ, and Havensteder works closely with the BIZ to select retail businesses. When a prospective renter approaches Havensteder, Havensteder will also consult the BIZ for their opinions. Shopping district manager Anil acts as the contact person of BIZ who communicates with the municipality, entrepreneurs, property owners and the residents, as well as promotes the Zwaanshalskwartier via Facebook and Instagram. Although representing the BIZ and the entrepreneurs, he needs to consider the needs of different actors and he admits that Havensteder still has the final say of who could get to rent the retail space.[148]

At the moment, there are seven vintage shops in the Zwaanshalskwartier (i.e., Betje Krul Vintage, Lily Scarlet, Showroom 41, Isis Inc., KickaBoo!, Ding & Dingen, Jouw Marktkraam Rotterdam-Noord). According to Anil, although there are tourists coming to the vintage shops in Zwaanshalskwartier because of the *Vintage Route Rotterdam* map, most of the customers are regular customers from Rotterdam. Vintage shops have gained some traffic from the general promotion of the neighborhood by the BIZ foundation, but each shop needs to market itself extensively online to grow its own clientele. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19, most vintage shops have tried selling online and some of them are currently even selling more online than offline.[149] Nevertheless, when passing by the neighborhood on a weekend, one could easily notice the relatively quiet vintage shops in Zwaanshalskwartier, compared with the bustling atmosphere of the Noorderboulevard. Leaving the neighborhood in 2020, a vintage

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[146] Paul, interview.
[147] Paul, interview.
[148] Anil, interview with the author, Zoom interview, May 28, 2021.
[149] Anil, interview.

shop owner recalled the reason, “The traffic was very low. […] The Zwaanshals… It is not the street where people will pass by. You have to know it to go there. ”[150]

5.1.2.3 Comparison and Discussion

The 9 Streets and the Zwaanshalskwartier have a different historical context, relative location within their cities, and socio-economic realities, which result in their respective advantages and challenges for vintage shops in the present time. The emergence of vintage in The 9 Streets came from entrepreneurs as a result of cultural movement; in Zwaanshalskwartier, it came from the initiative of the government and housing corporation to develop the neighborhood by selected shops, including vintage retailers. Besides, the ownership structure of the retail spaces of Zwaanshalskwartier is also a crucial context for its development into a vintage neighborhood. “If they (retail spaces) were only 20 years old, we wouldn’t have renovated it, then maybe the Zwaanshals would still be like (how) it was 15 years ago.”[151]

Located in Amsterdam center and being part of the historic Canal District, The 9 Streets has a long history of being a vintage neighborhood, and it has gained national and international fame. Because of that, vintage clothing retailers in The 9 Streets could attract many tourists to pass by and become their customers. Besides, established brands could also count on their loyal Amsterdam customers. The Zwaanshalskwartier is relatively new as a vintage neighborhood, and due to the concentration of retail spaces owned by the housing corporation, a clustering of vintage shops is made possible. Its non-central location also allows small and individual entrepreneurs to start-up, making use of the low rent.

However, while most retail spaces are privately owned, vintage clothing retailers in The 9 Streets are dealing with the challenges of a rising rental price and an overreliance on tourism. This is especially evident in the time of COVID-19, questioning the resilience of The 9 Streets. In Zwaanshalskwartier, Rotterdam’s second city position results in fewer tourists and local vintage consumers. Besides, the non-central location and short history as a vintage neighborhood also add to its limitation. As a result, vintage shops in this neighborhood are still

[150] A, interview with the author, Rotterdam, May 4, 2021.
[151] Paul, interview.

on their way of developing a collective brand of the neighborhood and attracting more customers.

While both neighborhoods invite various stakeholders to discuss the development and management of the neighborhoods to reach a middle ground for all groups' interests, tensions exist. Welcoming vintage shops in a "deprived" neighborhood led to the displacement of original retailing in the case of Rotterdam; while new private dwellings have welcomed new and more affluent residents, the process of Zwaanshalskwartier reaching ultimate residential gentrification is restrained by the large proportion of social housing dwellings. Although Havensteder argues that welcoming vintage shops leads to a positive mix of residents and shops, to what extent residents and displaced entrepreneurs agree with it remains a question. On the other hand, The 9 Streets is going through retail and residential gentrification; the vintage retailers are also suffering from a high rental cost and a possible displacement by other types of retailing.

In brief, as a vintage neighborhood, The 9 Streets has grown as a bottom-up approach owing to its first city's creative bonus. The Zwaanshalskwartier has developed from a top-down initiative as a plan to create an attractive image of the neighborhood.

5.2 Value Proposition

Vintage clothing retailers offer vintage clothing with good quality fabrics, such as silk, cotton, wool, and leather, at an affordable price compared with new clothing. They also differentiate themselves with new clothing in terms of sustainability and unique style. Besides, all interviewed vintage retailers mention that they clean and check the clothing before presenting them to the customers. Specifically, the growing sustainability awareness in the past ten years is observed and promoted by many vintage clothing retailers to grow their business, and it also offers a more extensive customer base for their businesses.[152] Many shops opened in the past ten years were also born out of sustainability awareness (e.g., Atelier Ekster).

[152] While most vintage clothing retailers have observed this trend, many of them (e.g., Laura Dols, Rosanne and Carien) also recall that they did not know about the fashion industry's environmental impact when they started being interested in vintage (between 20 to 50 years ago).

To stand out among other vintage retailers, they adopt different strategies such as selling a specific type of vintage clothing, adding additional products including new clothing, accessories, bags, shoes, beddings, interior accessories, books, and their curation of stores and online presence.

Most of the time, the shop owners' backgrounds and preferences determine the product selections. As a store owner specializing in street style, Isis says, "My store reflects what I do as a fashion stylist."[153] Historian Jacob has loved collecting old things since he was a kid, which resulted in his "mantique" shop Concrete Matter, selling antiques or collectibles that appeal mainly to men. As the business develops, the shop has shifted its focus to selling men vintage clothing.[154] Some vintage retailers also describe their products as "I sell what I like", which might not connect to a certain period or style. For example, the founder of by Hendrikus says, "I buy what I like. […] I have a lot of designer clothes, but it's not necessary. When it's nice, it's nice." [155]

Due to considerations regarding preferred items' scarcity and price, shop location, and clientele, some vintage retailers must compromise and exclude their favorite items from the shops. Located in Amsterdam South, Rosa Rosas is a neighborhood shop with a many 70s' items, and customers also bring their secondhand clothes to the shop by consignment. The owner Carien does not want to include items from her favorite period, the 1920s. "I try to be not too expensive. So, the really, interesting stuff... I don't have a lot of it. Because, yeah, that's more for other shops."[156]

Some retailers highlight their combination of vintage clothing with other products. When Vind It was founded by couple Muriël and Menno in 2004, their idea was to combine their passion for CD and vintage clothing together in one shop to target both male and female customers. "If you go shopping, and you are heterosexual couples... If the man comes into the music shop, he takes his time. If a woman comes into a clothing shop, it takes some time. And they're both bored because of the other. So, we decided to make that in one shop. So, you both have your

[153] "About," Isis Inc., accessed June 22, 2021, https://www.isisinc-online.com/c-2121709/about/.
[154] Jacob, interview.
[155] Henk, interview.
[156] Carien, interview with the author, Amsterdam, March 26, 2021.

time."[157] However, shortly after the opening of their store, CD was not popular anymore. Vind It had to take the CDs out of the shop to make room for clothing.

Selling new clothing in a vintage shop is also a common practice. Many retro brands emerged from vintage retailers who wanted to recreate the clothing of their favorite eras, such as King Louie, a retro brand from Amsterdam, which is currently only focusing on new clothing. Very Cherry, Vidi Vici, and Lily Scarlet are vintage retailers with their retro clothing lines, and they combine it with vintage clothing in their shop. Some shops choose to include new clothing from suppliers, such as Phixi, Concrete Matter, and Vind It.

The choice of new clothing is also made from divergent considerations from shop owners. Some shops include new clothing because of the scarcity of certain types of vintage clothing, and they do not plan to add more new clothing if the supply of vintage clothing is sufficient. Vind It started selling new hats in vintage style because they could not find enough vintage straw hats to meet customer demand. Meanwhile, selling new clothing is a natural choice for some other shops. Phixi, a brand owned by a mother and her two daughters, combines new clothing with vintage clothing to promote a sustainable way of buying clothes and changing customers who might never want to wear vintage. "Basically, I think we're the only ones telling you that we did not wear vintage before we started the vintage store." Among the three co-owners, only the older sister wore and liked vintage. After knowing wearing vintage could look as nice as wearing new, the family started running a vintage business. Coming from their own experience, they want to attract more people who still hold the stigma of vintage and introduce them to include more vintage in their wardrobe by their product combination.[158]

Some products become specializations of the retailers. For example, both Von Deux and Rosa Rosas have a lot of jewelry.[159] Before closing, Retro in & out Styles specialized in renting large size costumes for cross-dressing, targeting a niche clientele.[160] Laura Dols has a bridal store specializing in wedding dresses with tailoring service for the best fit for customers.[161] Another example comes from Vind It. The owners of Vind It found that although hats were very suitable for e-commerce due to a relatively easy measurement approach and limited differentiation in

[157] Muriël, interview.
[158] Claudia, interview.
[159] Rosanne, interview with the author, Rotterdam, March 13, 2021; Carien, interview.
[160] Sara, interview with the author, Amsterdam, April 30, 2021.
[161] Laura Dols, interview.

sizes. There were also no e-tailers selling vintage hats on a large scale. Therefore, Vind It started a webshop Vintage Hatter to sell vintage hats in 2014. It went well, and it has also brought more customers to the Vind It physical shop.[162]

The differences in value propositions between shops are more evident than the differences between vintage shops in the two cities. However, due to a larger number of shops and a larger customer base, individual vintage shops in Amsterdam are more likely to focus on a niche category of vintage clothing. Considering all the shops in one city, Amsterdam's vintage shops also have more diverse value propositions than the ones in Rotterdam.

5.3 Customers

Whether online or at a physical shop, creating and maintaining a friendly and personal relationship with customers is common for vintage retailers. When selling on Instagram, Anouk learns her customers' names and occupations through their Instagram profiles and addresses them in a personal way.[163] Retro in & out Style did not charge a deposit when renting a piece of item because it could harm the friendly relationship with the customers.[164] For some retailers, building a community between the brand and the customers is also essential. Von Deux is currently running a blog on her website, and in the future, she wants to expand it to an online community where vintage lovers can communicate and connect.[165]

Location plays a vital role in a shop's customer segments. As discussed in Chapter 5.1, for shops in the city center of Amsterdam, tourists represent one of the most significant customer segments. As a result, these shops have been impacted heavily during COVID-19, since tourists have been kept away from visiting the city.[166] Compared with Amsterdam, the tourist segment of Rotterdam shops is much less evident. Shops located in the city center do receive tourists, especially during summer, but most shop owners indicate their customers are Rotterdam people.[167] This might be due to a much smaller number of tourists coming to Rotterdam

[162] Muriël, interview.
[163] Anouk, interview with the author, email interview, May 29, 2021.
[164] Sara, interview.
[165] Rosanne, interview.
[166] Jacob, interview; Laura Dols, interview; Muriël, interview.
[167] Claudia, interview.

compared to Amsterdam. For shops located in a non-central area and without clustering with other vintage shops, customers are primarily from their own neighborhoods (e.g., Rosa Rosas in Amsterdam South and Past Vintage in Delfshaven of Rotterdam). Meanwhile, urban transformation of a shop's surrounding environment and the steady development of a shop could also impact a shop's customer segments. Having her shop in Amsterdam South for more than a decade, Carien noticed that she had been receiving more and more customers from other neighborhoods of Amsterdam in the past few years. "Sometimes people come especially here because they heard about me. […] They got to know me on Instagram, or they heard from someone." Besides, because more Airbnb apartments have been opened in the neighborhood, she has also received new customers who are tourists.

Digital transformation has allowed vintage shops to reach customers beyond their neighborhoods, cities, or even outside the Netherlands. Most shops selling online, either physically located in Amsterdam or Rotterdam, have orders from everywhere in the Netherlands, including big and small cities. However, due to the high shipping costs and marketing limitations, most do not or rarely have international online orders. Even if they have, these orders usually come from nearby countries such as Belgium. [168] An exception among the vintage retailers is Concrete Matter, which was founded with an international orientation. "The first thing we sold was a school chart that went to New York in 2012. […] It has nothing to do with COVID. We always did international stuff."[169]

The customer demographics (e.g., age, gender, education level, occupation) vary by shop, and the value proposition of a shop also impacts it. For example, due to a relatively high price and the aesthetic choice of their styles, Concrete Matter's main customers are men who are "30 to 55, with a bit more money, slightly higher educated, and I think very international, especially here."[170] Generally, vintage retailers (e.g., Rêveuse and Rosa Rosas) have many young, highly educated customers with a creative background, which fall into the typical creative class group. For shops (e.g., Phixi) with a more affordable price, students are the main group. However, most retailers also find their customers coming from all kinds of backgrounds, which shows that the consumption of vintage clothing has become a mainstream activity. Laura Dols even has customers coming from three generations of the same family. "It's amazing. There are

[168] Rosanne, interview; Lisette, interview with the author, Rotterdam, March 11, 2021.
[169] Jacob, interview.
[170] Jacob, interview.

mothers and daughters and even grandmothers, who came to visit me. […] We have a third generation coming in. Very young customers."[171]

5.4 Channels

While the sample of this research is made up of physical vintage clothing retailers, the most prominent channel to communicate and deliver their value propositions is their physical shops. Retailers use digital platforms and tools for marketing and selling. Still, many of them also express their concerns regarding the growing dominance of large digital platforms and the challenges imposed on small vintage shops. They try to preserve the brick-and-mortar and individual nature of their shops and offer customers the physical shopping experience, proving that consuming vintage clothing is part of the experience economy.

Carien is happy that the strict lockdown measures have come to an end, and she can finally open her shop again, "I think it's important that little shops stay… to fight against all the internet stuff. […] I think at the end, people will be sorry. When (the) internet is taking too much over, then shops will close. And I think then people will miss it."[172] Laura Dols sees the physical shopping experience as something online shopping could never replace. "Even if you photograph things really well and describe everything, it's still not the same as being physically in a store. And I like that. I think it's a little bit sad that everybody's living in his own world behind (a) computer, you know. Go out, meet people, and it's part of our life."[173]

Nevertheless, consensus exists in terms of the importance of adapting to digital transformation. While all vintage retailers in Amsterdam and Rotterdam could be found online on at least one digital platform, not all are selling their products online. This differentiation makes it interesting to look at what channels vintage retailers are using and how they are used in marketing and selling.

[171] Laura Dols, interview.
[172] Carien, interview.
[173] Laura Dols, interview.

5.3.1 Marketing

Vintage retailers have adopted numerous ways to market their shops, either physically or online. Laura Dols introduces that being included in fashion magazines has been crucial to their brand getting well-known. Currently, online fashion media and influencers are playing a more critical role.[174] However, none of the interviewed shops mentions that they pay fashion magazines and influencers for promotions.

Several collective marketing approaches are identified in both cities. Founded in 2004, Vind It is one of the first Amsterdam vintage shops to have a website. The owners of Vind It were approached by many customers asking if they knew any other vintage shops. Therefore, they created a website to include other vintage shops' websites in Amsterdam for the convenience of customers but also to promote their own shop.[175] "The more they're in our area, the more you feel like, 'Oh, let's go there.' […] So, we want to show people there are actually more (vintage shops) over here, and I'm actually on the main street. But we did want to have it as complete as we could be." Muriël also mentions a free map of Amsterdam that would be distributed to hostels and cheap hotels. While not all the shops on it were vintage shops, it helped Vind It as it was free, and it targeted the group of tourists that were her potential customers. To attract more customers, she tried to persuade her neighbors to be included in the map. "If you're in a book and you have to buy the book for €12 or something, then nobody's gonna buy that, and nobody's gonna come. So, I like the idea that it's free. And if […] more people are on the map, then you have more money, you can print more, you can be in more places."[176]

Another interesting example in Amsterdam is the collective marketing approach of five brands (Mood Indigo, Penny Lane Vintage, Candy Store Vintage, Kilo Store, and Kilosale) that own seven shops. When the lockdown measurements were relaxed, and vintage shops could open by appointment, they combined their booking systems into one website.[177] Currently, all their Instagram accounts are linked to an account called "Vintage People Magazine," which features pictures of all shops, as well as a page that claims to be "Amsterdam's largest network of

[174] Laura Dols, interview.
[175] "Vintage Amsterdam," accessed July 7, 2021, http://www.vintageamsterdam.com/.
[176] Muriël, interview.
[177] "Private Shopping," Amsterdam Vintage, accessed July 7, 2021, https://amsterdamvintage.simplybook.it/v2/.

vintage stores."[178] While there is no clear evidence to see if these brands belong to the same holding company, the collective marketing approach allows them to create a network that could attract more customers with a lower marketing cost.

In Rotterdam, *Vintage Route Rotterdam* started as an initiative by the owner of Tony's Garage Sale a few years ago. This is a vintage brand that started in Rotterdam but has moved to The Hague. After one or two years, *Vintage Route Rotterdam* was taken over by publisher Anne. A shop will need to pay an annual fee to be on the map, which covers designing, printing, and distributing fees. *Vintage Route Rotterdam* is distributed to over fifty locations in Rotterdam, including museums, hotels, and tourist attractions. Anne estimates that every year about 75% of the shops will remain paying to be on the map, and the rest comes and goes.[179]

Besides collective marketing efforts, most of the marketing activities are conducted on a brand or shop level. In the following, this research will analyze the usage of various marketing tools and platforms (see Table 6). Around 80% of vintage brands in Amsterdam and Rotterdam have their websites. Compared with social media platforms, a website could communicate the brand image and information more thoroughly. It allows website design based on the retailers' needs and not restricted to the features of social media platforms. Some of them (e.g., Von Deux) also keep a blog as part of the website to introduce vintage knowledge, updates, and stories of the shop, etc. However, due to the popularity of Facebook and Instagram, some retailers also think it might not be necessary to have a website since it requires extra design and management efforts.[180]

[178] Vintage People Magazine, "Posts [Instagram profile]," [@vintagepeoplemagazine], accessed July 7, 2021, https://www.instagram.com/vintagepeoplemagazine/; "@vintagecompany," Linktree, accessed July 7, 2021, https://linktr.ee/vintagecompany.
[179] Anne, interview with the author, email interview, March 16, 2021.
[180] A, interview.

Table 6. *Overview of Marketing Platforms Used by Vintage Clothing Retailers in Amsterdam and Rotterdam.*

City	**Amsterdam**	**Rotterdam**
Brand	48	28
Website (% Website/ Brand)	37 (77.1%)	23 (82.1%)
Facebook (% Facebook/ Brand)	42 (87.5%)	25 (89.3%)
Active Facebook (% Active Facebook/Facebook)	31 (73.8%)	17 (68.0%)
Average Facebook Followers	3,531	2,082
Instagram (% Instagram/ Brand)	49 (102.1%)	29 (103.6%)
Active Instagram (% Active Instagram/ Instagram)	44 (89.8%)	26 (89.7%)
Average Instagram Followers	5,716	2,339
Newsletter (% Newsletter/Brand)	9 (18.8%)	3 (10.7%)
Pinterest (% Pinterest/Brand)	2 (4.2%)	1 (3.6%)
Twitter (% Twitter/Brand)	1 (2.1%)	1 (3.6%)
LinkedIn (% LinkedIn/Brand)	0 (0.0%)	1 (3.6%)
Tik Tok (% Tik Tok/Brand)	2 (4.2%)	0 (0.0%)
YouTube (% YouTube/Brand)	1 (2.1%)	0 (0.0%)

Source: Own calculations based on data from Appendix 1.

Most vintage retailers use both Facebook and Instagram. While almost all brands have their Instagram accounts, more than 10% of brands do not have Facebook accounts. Some brands also have multiple Instagram accounts, such as Laura Dols, with an account for vintage and another for antique wedding dresses. Besides, a higher percentage of Instagram accounts are active among these accounts than the active Facebook accounts.[181] Furthermore, among the active Facebook accounts, many of them are automatically reposting contents of Instagram accounts (e.g., Von Deux).

[181] If an account has posted a post or a story within the past month of June 14 and 15, 2021, it is considered active.

Instagram has become the most popular platform for vintage retailers. Most interviewees also observe this trend; shops that have opened for more than five years all experience a shift of the dominant marketing platform from Facebook to Instagram. Opening her shop in 2015, A recalls, "[…] for the first two years, Facebook was really booming. And you can also make events on Facebook, and there are a lot of people coming, also young people. I think after two years, you saw the change in customers. So, older people went to Facebook, and younger people went to Instagram. And I have to attract the younger people. So, I also had to make the switch to do more on Instagram. And now it's only Instagram. It's not Facebook anymore."[182] Still, many shops remain active on Facebook because some customers remain using Facebook.

Even when marketing online, geographical constraints exist for vintage retailers; Amsterdam still enjoys a first city bonus. The average number of Instagram followers of Amsterdam brands is more than twice of Rotterdam brands'; Amsterdam brands' average Facebook followers is also about 1.7 times of Rotterdam brands (see Table 6). This surplus could be because the long history of Amsterdam brands has offered them a long time to grow their online followings, and online followers could come from customers visiting physical shops, of whom Amsterdam has a more significant number.

Besides Facebook and Instagram, a small number of brands are also using email newsletters. Vintage retailers hold diverse views against this promotion tool. For the ones who do not send out newsletters, they tend to think using another marketing tool is too time-consuming. For the ones who use it, Phixi is concerned about its effectiveness, as people are receiving too many promotional emails, and their recent newsletter promotion was not very successful. Despite the challenge, Phixi still plans to keep on sending newsletters to generate more traffic. Concrete Matter finds email newsletter an effective marketing tool, and it has gained about 5000 subscriptions. One of the ways that Concrete Matter uses to grow its newsletter subscription is by inviting customers to leave their emails when visiting its physical stores.[183]

Other marketing platforms are also used in rare cases, including Pinterest, Twitter, LinkedIn, Tik Tok, and YouTube. Rosa Rosas has gained 6000 followers on Pinterest and the collection

[182] A, interview with the author, Rotterdam, March 4, 2021.
[183] Claudia, interview; Jacob, interview.

of pictures and contents on Pinterest also serves as a content bank for posts on her current marketing activities on Facebook and Instagram. The two brands using Tik Tok are targeting a young group of customers in their 20s and early 30s. Candy Store Vintage specializes in street wear; Rêveuse posts the videos created on Tik Tok to Instagram, which also helps with growing the Instagram followers.

While the most significant transformation of marketing platforms used by the vintage retailers is the shift of focus from Facebook to Instagram, various vintage retailers mention the usage of other platforms such as Tumblr and Hyves until they became not so popular.[184] This indicates that vintage retailers need to keep updated with the latest popular digital platforms to stay competitive and reach their customers.

Most of the contents vintage retailers post could be categorized by knowledge of vintage, fashion history, and sustainability, vintage pictures or videos, updates of the shop and new products, personal life and experience, happy customer pictures, etc. The format of contents on different platforms are determined by the platform functions and main group of users. For example, on Instagram, stories are used extensively to market new products, collect customer reviews, and understand customer preferences.

Many vintage retailers also pay for the promotion of their shops, which is usually done by paying to be included on a free physical map, pay for Google, Facebook, and Instagram advertisements. Several vintage retailers mention the growing difficulties of adopting paid promotions. Currently, they need to pay much more to gain a similar result of promotion on various platforms than about five years ago. “If you pay €50 for maybe a promotion on Instagram, you’re not even sure if people are going to click to your website. It’s very different.”[185] The brands who have been successful in growing their social media followers tend to think that a consistent strategy in their social media platforms’ aesthetic and content choices and an extensive understanding and usage of social media algorithms and functions are more important than paid promotions. With 15000 followers on Instagram, Jacob from Concrete Matter says, “You want to get people coming to your Instagram account. So, you need to make sure you have the right stuff there, which relates to your brand. So, it’s the effort.

[184] Hyves is a Dutch social networking site founded in 2004 and discontinued in 2013 due to the growing popularity of other social networking sites; Jacob, interview; Muriël, interview.
[185] Claudia, interview.

[…] Just keep on putting in the effort, and people will come. […] It is an integral part of our business."[186] Having a young brand, Anouk studies the Instagram algorithm to create contents and plan marketing activities. "I do a lot of homework on how the Instagram algorithm works and how to create content with higher value. From there (,) I translate the info to my own needs and style for Instagram. Then I prepare. This ranges from visual inspiration to research on climate change facts and planning video shoots. We make a weekly and monthly plan on how to keep the following engaged and get them motivated to come to the store." [187]

5.3.2 Selling

For most vintage retailers, their retail spaces are where most sales occur. Even with the growing popularity of e-commerce and the pressure brought by COVID-19, many still want to remain to sell offline because of personal preferences and vintage clothing characteristics. Some stores also organize sales events in their retail spaces to gain more customers and generate more sales. This is usually done monthly or during specific dates and seasons, such as the owner's birthday and the shop's anniversary; the owners need to balance the frequency of these events to get rid of old stock but not harm the sales of products without discounts.[188]

As early as the beginning of the 2000s, there were physical retailers trying to open a webshop for vintage clothing but failed, including Vind It, Laura Dols, and Episode, due to the challenges discussed in Chapter 4.2. Since vintage is one-of-a-kind and secondhand, the financial return spent on selling online could not meet the investments, especially when too many returns occurred. Besides, inventory management is also challenging when selling vintage online and offline at the same time. Nevertheless, in the past ten years, the growing popularity of online shopping has encouraged both young and old vintage retailers to sell online. Especially since March 2020, the lockdown measures to combat the COVID-19 have forced vintage retailers to sell online.

Since 2010, many retailers started as a webshop would try different physical selling channels, such as joining vintage events, markets, and renting a pop-up store, before having their physical

[186] Jacob, interview.
[187] Anouk, Interview,
[188] A, interview; Rosanne, interview.

shops. Due to the flexibility and relatively low entry cost, selling online is usually a first choice for vintage enthusiasts who try to turn their hobbies into a business. When the online business grows and they know more about the trade, they will consider selling offline and having their own shops. For example, Henk started selling vintage clothing and shoes on eBay around 2010. After joining several vintage events organized by his friends and selling on the Swan Market, he was invited to use the empty space of an optical store. As his business expanded, he rented his own shop.[189] Phixi started as a webshop, and after selling on Swan Market and other creative markets, they also joined Swan Market's physical stores. The transformation from a webshop to a physical shop is usually also a decision made after considering online selling challenges and dedicating limited resources to more financially sustainable channels. Claudia explains the transformation of Phixi, "If you can sell 20 items in a day in a store […] (To sell online,) just to photograph those items, to clean them, to send them, to package them, to write all the descriptions and images... So back then, […] we just stopped with the webshop."[190]

However, due to COVID-19, Phixi also restarted its webshop. Although Phixi is selling in multiple collective shops all around the country, the co-owners are trying to save money to open their own shop. "In our own shop, we can really build up an audience. […] You can do everything you like (in your shop)." This idea is also shared by Jacob, the co-owner of Concrete Matter, which was born as a webshop and has remained to sell online after opening physical stores.[191] Physical shops and online shops could bring traffic to each other, contributing to sales and brand awareness.

Like digital marketing, Instagram is the most popular platform for online selling, followed by webshop and Facebook (see Table 7). This is due to a large number of vintage targeted audiences on Instagram and the relatively little investment in selling on Instagram. To design a webshop and post products on it are not as easy as making an Instagram post or story. Von Deux also enjoys personal interactions with customers on Instagram. "When people order from the webshop, I have no idea who the person is. And sometimes they return it. And I don't know why. There's no contact. With Instagram, they will say, 'Oh, I receive your package. I'm so happy.' And they show you a picture. It is more interactive. Yeah, I really like Instagram."[192]

[189] Henk, interview.
[190] Claudia, interview.
[191] Jacob, interview.
[192] Rosanne, interview.

Nevertheless, having a webshop could allow the retailers to use the "Facebook Shop" function on both Instagram and Facebook, as new products uploaded on their own webshops could be automatically updated on both Facebook and Instagram, and followers can view the product pictures without leaving the social media platforms. To buy the clothes, customers still need to leave Instagram or Facebook and place the order in the webshop. This function enables direct marketing of new products and allows a centralized inventory management system when a retailer is running multiple digital platforms.

Table 7. *Overview of Selling Platforms Used by Vintage Clothing Retailers in Amsterdam and Rotterdam.*

City	**Amsterdam**	**Rotterdam**
Brand	48	28
Webshop (% Webshop/ Brand)	24 (50.0%)	12 (42.9%)
Facebook (% Facebook/ Brand)	18 (37.5%)	9 (32.1%)
Instagram (% Instagram/ Brand)	26 (54.2%)	17 (60.7%)
Etsy (% Etsy/ Brand)	6 (12.5%)	2 (7.1%)
Depop (% Depop/Brand)	2 (4.2%)	0 (0.0%)
Vinted (% Vinted/Brand)	2 (4.2%)	0 (0.0%)
eBay (% eBay/Brand)	1 (2%)	0 (0.0%)
Marktplaats (% Marktplaats/Brand)	1 (2.1%)	0 (0.0%)

Source: Own calculations based on data from Appendix 1.

Etsy, Depop, Vinted, Marktplaats, and eBay are also used by a small number of vintage clothing retailers. The first three platforms are all growing rapidly in the past few years in their focus on creative goods and secondhand clothing. Vind It uses Marktplaats as a free advertisement platform to gain traffic for their vintage hat webshop Vintage Hatter. Customers can view the price, pictures, and details of their items, but they still need to place an order on the webshop. Again, Vind It chooses this strategy considering inventory management, so an item will not be ordered on multiple platforms.[193] But for most vintage clothing retailers, Marktplaats and eBay are not suitable for selling vintage because people look for a bargain on them. Rather than selling, Concrete Matter sources from Marktplaats and eBay.[194] When asked about the possible adoption of other selling platforms, most vintage retailers reply negatively. They are happy with the current platforms they are using; they have limited time and human resources; selling in other platforms adds complexity to inventory management, which will be further discussed in Chapter 5.5. However, retailers are also aware of and are open to new changes. “Maybe someday, it is necessary? Because things change, and I have to change with it.” [195]

Although it is regulated by law that customers could return vintage products, many vintage retailers do not accept returns. “Girls would order three, four dresses. And they would all send them back and said they were not exactly like they expected it to be. And it was just not doable.”[196] Some shops accept returns but only offer store credits instead of money back. The ones who receive returns also come up with various ideas to deal with this problem. Vind It puts its tags on the most noticeable spots on the products, so the customers would have to cut the tags off when they want to wear them. Customer cannot order hats for a one-time usage of a party or a show without cutting the tags. But after cutting the tags, they cannot return these hats anymore. Besides, vintage clothing retailers also learn from their lessons and choose their products to sell online wisely. Bags, jewelry, hats are the easiest to measure, and people usually could imagine how a product fits themselves from pictures; loose blouses, pants, and dresses are also not so difficult; but for tight jeans and other clothes that require a tight fit, some retailers tend to not sell them online.[197] While some retailers measure the details of each piece of clothing, some also give an “M” or “L” size guide due to a lack of time in measuring each item.

To conclude, multichannel marketing and selling are preferred by most shop owners, as they could gain traffic to both physical and online platforms. While having multiple selling channels requires a more complex inventory management system, online marketing is essential for

[193] Muriël, interview.
[194] Jacob, interview.
[195] Carien, interview.
[196] Laura Dols, interview.
[197] Claudia, interview; Muriël, interview.

vintage retailers and should be considered an integral part of the business. Nevertheless, the physical spaces are still crucial to the retailers.

5.5 Key Activities

The activities vintage retailers are conducting include sourcing and preparing products, management of retail floor, inventory management, marketing and selling through digital platforms, administration, etc.

Sourcing and preparing products are the first steps vintage retailers need to take. Some vintage retailers buy clothes in bulk from sorting companies or wholesalers, but some also handpick from their suppliers. When buying in bulk, a certain amount of clothing will have unfixable stans or holes, which result in them being put back in the clothing recycle bin. Even if getting all clothes from handpicking, there might still be some clothes in poor condition. Vintage retailers will clean and steam their clothes, during which they will also check and sometimes fix the products.

Management of retail floor includes tasks such as managing and curating retail space, assisting the customers with questions and advice for items, etc. For small vintage shop owners who also work at the shop, this is the most time-consuming part and essential part, as it allows the owners to build personal connections with the clientele. “Let us say like their friend. […] They purchase faster when they trust you. Yeah. And you need to gain the trust.”[198] Even for vintage retailers who hire employees to work at the shop, they also need to create a friendly atmosphere for their customers and build a relationship with them. The curation of retail space and the presentation of products has also been more important for retailers. While more and more consumers are buying vintage clothing, they also preferred clothes to hang and presented in an organized order with careful aesthetic considerations. Not all consumers enjoy the old-fashioned vintage “treasure hunting” thrill of looking for beautiful pieces smashed with other clothes from a basket.[199]

As every vintage item is unique and perhaps also due to the lack of resources, most of the vintage retailers’ inventory management systems do not track every item. This results in some

[198] Rosanne, interview.
[199] Laura Dols, interview.

difficulties when they are selling in multiple locations or having people working for them. Rosanne recalls the offline vintage events she hosted after owning a webshop. She brought all her clothing to the events, but as she did not develop a system to register every piece of clothing and her friend was doing the cashier, she had to check every piece with the webshop listings to update the stock status.[200] Several retailers mentioned scenarios when they got an online order, but they could not find it anymore because it was sold in the shop. Because of this, some retailers prefer not to sell it online or separating the online and offline stocks. One example is Phixi. They are currently selling in eight locations and running a webshop. Because of this unique model, they must track every item. As a result, every piece of their brand has a unique article, and Phixi developed their inventory management system and linked it with the shops' cash registration system. This system helps them with clothing stock management and allows them to overview the sales of clothing types and stores where they sell. Besides, they also separate their stocks into online and offline.

> "What we do for the vintage is that we have just a separate stock for the shops and the webshop. So, we have, like, a lot of racks for the clothing. And then the first one is just for the webshop. And then, if something on the website doesn't sell for a few months, we take it off the webshop. And we'll bring it to a store. So, with the vintage, we never have the problem that something in-store can be sold online. […] With the new clothing, it's a bit more difficult. Because we want to have everything on the webshop. But to have hundreds of pieces of clothing lying around in the storage with maybe one order a day... You know? It has a bigger chance to sell in the store. So, sometimes we do put it in store. But then we just try to put it in Rotterdam or The Hague. So, if it sells online, we can pick it up."[201]

Marketing and selling through digital platforms are also essential activities of a shop, as discussed in the former section. In terms of administration, many retailers also hire an external accountant to help with the preparation and analysis of their financial records.

The activities that vintage retailers conducted do not have significant distinctions between the two cities. The extent to which activities are more important for a retailer depends on individual shop cases. For example, marketing and selling online are perhaps the most important for studio

[200] Rosanne, interview.
[201] Claudia, interview.

shops, compared with activities such as curating the retail spaces. In general, the activities above are all crucial to vintage shops.

5.6 Key Resources

Vintage clothing retailers identify intellectual resources such as knowledge, experience, taste, background, etc., as their key resources. Shops in Amsterdam (e.g., Laura Dols Vintage and Vind It) with a long history in the business believe that their knowledge and experience are the the most crucial resources. "If you do not have all these years of knowledge, and you do not know if something like this comes up very often or not… And if it's historically interesting or not… Then you actually do not know what you sell. And you need a lot of years… years of having things to your fingers to know that. And that's the difference between us and a lot of shops."[202] Meanwhile, shops in Rotterdam (e.g., Atelier Ekster and Von Deux) with a much shorter history believe that taste and an eye for style are more relevant. They highlight their choice of certain styles of clothing that are attractive to their customers. Some shop owners (e.g., Isis.inc, Rêveuse) also have a professional background in fashion, which brings them the knowledge for the trade and network for building the first clientele. While most vintage clothing retailers do not have a professional background in fashion, some also have related creative or cultural backgrounds such as history (e.g., Concrete Matter) and theater (e.g., Atelier Ekster). Still, many vintage retailers went into the business out of passion for vintage clothing without any educational background in creative work.

Financial resources and physical resources such as a healthy cash flow, their shops (either owning or renting it), and their products are also essential resources. Some shop owners (e.g., Atelier Ekster, by Hendrikus and Rêveuse) still have another job next to it. It offers financial stability to help them be resilient against challenges brought by the pandemic; on the other hand, it allows them to still treat their vintage business as a hobby instead of a job and maintain their passion and interest.

[202] Muriël, interview.

For bigger shops that need more staff (mainly in Amsterdam), human resources are also vital. Being able to have the right people to work with them allows the business to sustain and grow. Some shops can also connect with other business partners to include more human resources in the company. For example, Jacob founded Concrete Matter with two other business partners; Phixi is an initiative of a mother and two daughters; Zipper has included the second generation to run the business. For Retro in & out Styles, lack of human resources resulted in the closure of the shop. The former owner retired and sold the shop to interior designer Sara. After running the shop for a period, a long-time employee started to work fewer days and planned on retirement. Sara had been busy with her own business, and she also could not find suitable new employees to fill the gap. Eventually, when COVID-19 hit, she had to close the business.[203]

5.6 Key Partners

The most important partner for vintage clothing retailers is their suppliers, such as sorting companies, wholesalers, flea markets, thrift shops, or even individuals and digital platforms.

Amsterdam shops with a long history value the long-term and close relationships with the suppliers, resulting in good deals and exclusive goods. Laura Dols mentions, "I am lucky because I have some really good deals with really, really big sorting companies. And they give me access to their good stuff, so I can choose myself what I want."[204] Big sorting companies are usually not open for individual vintage retailers, and most shops get their products from wholesalers. Having a few good wholesalers is crucial for a business's success. "There is quite a big difference in quality between different wholesalers. So, you have one wholesaler, and if you go there, you will have to throw away 20 or 25% immediately because it's just with holes in it… and stains… and whatever. And there's another one where maybe 5 to 10% (that) you have to throw away. So, it's very important to keep a good relationship with the right one."[205] The names of the wholesalers are also top business secretes of vintage retailers; they usually will never tell others who their suppliers are to avoid competition.

Before buying from wholesalers, vintage retailers usually source from flea markets and thrift shops until the business has grown and they need a larger quantity since thrifting takes too much time. However, famous Amsterdam flea markets, such as Waterlooplein, IJ-Hallen, and

[203] Sara, interview.
[204] Laura Dols, interview.
[205] Claudia, interview.

Noordermarkt, are still crucial for some Amsterdam shop owners (e.g., Concrete Matter and Rosa Rosas). Rosa Rosas is also the only shop out of twelve interviewed shops (excluding Past Vintage, which has a unique charity model based on donated clothing) that does not buy from wholesalers. She enjoys thrifting in flea markets and thrift shops, and she has also built a close relationship with some sellers in markets who will keep good products aside for her.

Except for the suppliers, other important partners include recycling companies (for Past Vintage), fashion media (for Rêveuse), and models (for shops focusing on e-tailing and digital marketing such as Rêveuse and Atelier Ekster). These partners are usually determined by shops' individual cases.

While both brands in Amsterdam and Rotterdam value their partnership with suppliers, as Amsterdam has more brands with a long history, they (e.g., Laura Dols and Vind It) tend to value the stable relationship with their suppliers more. Younger brands in Rotterdam also value their relationship with suppliers; however, worrying about the instability of relying on a single source, they are also open to trying new suppliers and finding the best fit.[206]

Digital transformation allows vintage retailers to source internationally. This could be done via different digital platforms. For example, Concrete Matter sources from eBay, Marktplaats, and Vinted. Before COVID-19, the brand would purchase pieces from sellers in the United States through eBay and asked a friend who frequently travels between the Netherlands and the United States to bring them over.[207] When buying from wholesalers and sorting companies, some retailers have also started sourcing internationally. Rêveuse has an Italian wholesaler, and Laura Dols would even travel to the US to handpick her clothing before the outbreak of COVID-19.[208] While most retailers prefer to handpick their products, sourcing from a foreign country is usually too expensive unless ordering online or with a large quantity. Therefore, most vintage retailers source within the Netherlands and Belgium.

Digital transformation also increases transparency for all actors. Knowing the value of vintage clothing, wholesalers and sorting companies have raised the price of vintage clothing. Comparing with fifty years ago, Laura Dols believes that the price has increased by at least

[206] A, interview; Lisette, interview.
[207] Jacob, interview.
[208] Anouk, interview; Laura Dols, interview.

three times. “The wholesalers and the sorting place… They’re not stupid. They know now what is going on. And in my time when I was starting, they had no idea.”[209]

5.7 Finance

5.7.1 Cost structure

The cost structure of most shops includes rent and bills, personnel, purchasing clothing, marketing (from highest to lowest), etc. As rent in Amsterdam is generally higher than Rotterdam, the cost of opening a shop in a similar size and relative location compared with city center is higher in Amsterdam. Besides, retailers with a larger shop and multiple branches also need to pay for the personnel. There are also outliers like Phixi, which collaborates with the Swan Market and paying the latter €35 a month for the rent and 25% of their sales.[210] Charity shops also have a different cost structure. Past Vintage’s business runs with a basis on volunteering and donated clothing; the main costs are only rent and utility bills.[211]

5.7.2 Revenue Streams

Revenue streams of most shops come from selling clothing directly, either online or offline. Many retailers find that before the outbreak of the COVID-19, most sales occurred in physical shops. Besides, multiple other models emerge, such as selling clothes by consignment with individuals and paying them a percentage of the selling price if sold (e.g., Rosa Rosas); some shops also offer rental services (e.g., Vind It and Retro in & out Style).

5.7.3 Funding Sources

The start-up funding and funding for expanding the business mainly come from entrepreneurs' savings and family loans. Several vintage retailers indicate that it is difficult for them to get loans from banks. For example, in 2012, knowing that the landlord would sell the shop, Muriël and Menno wanted to get a €60,000 loan from the bank to buy the shop. However, they were

[209] Laura Dols, interview.
[210] Claudia, interview.
[211] Romy, interview.

told that they needed to earn €50,000 a year to gain the loan, which they obviously could not. In the end, they had to turn to their family for a loan.[212]

5.9 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed and compared the vintage clothing retail BMC components of Amsterdam and Rotterdam, and it has found that various components have evolved during the past ten years. The fact that buying vintage clothing has become a mainstream consumption activity, the growing sustainability awareness, and most significantly, digital transformation has impacted this evolution.

The number of vintage shops in Amsterdam and Rotterdam has grown tremendously, especially during the past ten years. However, the growth in Amsterdam is more significant. Amsterdam has more shops that belong to a chain, which shows that the first city bonus allows companies to expand. Besides, Amsterdam also has more shops with a long history than Rotterdam. The development of two vintage neighborhoods has also shown that while The 9 Streets has a bottom-up approach to develop vintage clothing since the 1960s, Zwaanshalskwartier as a vintage neighborhood was created by a top-down initiative fifteen years ago.

While various value propositions are found across vintage clothing retailers in both cities, sustainability awareness has been recognized and branded as a unique selling point of vintage shops in the past ten years. Younger shops also tend to combine vintage pieces with new products. Partly due to the presence of more shops, Amsterdam shops have a more diverse value propositions than those in Rotterdam. Retailers have also chosen different value propositions for online platforms and brick-and-mortar shops.

Vintage retailers find intellectual resources (e.g., knowledge, experience, taste), financial and physical resources (e.g., a healthy cash flow, owning or renting a shop), as well as human resources (for shops with employees, mainly in Amsterdam) crucial to the success of their

[212] Muriël, interview.

businesses. Shops with a more extended history (mainly in Amsterdam) tend to value their knowledge and experience more, while shops with a shorter history tend to value the taste more.

Vintage shops tend to build a friendly and close relationship with customers. In general, the main group of vintage consumers is still the creative class; as consuming vintage has become mainstream, customers also come from all kinds of backgrounds. Shops in Amsterdam center tend to have more tourists as customers, while most shops in Rotterdam are still counting on local customers.

Brick-and-mortar shops can overcome the physical constraints to reach national and international customers by adopting digital platforms. Nevertheless, Amsterdam still enjoys a first city bonus in online marketing. The past five years sees a transformation of Instagram taking over the position of Facebook and being the dominant marketing and selling platform for vintage clothing retailers. While numerous new platforms have emerged and old platforms have died out, website and webshop, Facebook and Instagram are the three main marketing and selling platforms used by retailers. Comparing with Pauw's research in 2015, which indicates the dominant platform of selling vintage was Facebook, and Marktplaats and United Wardrobe (the latter was taken over by its competitor Vinted in 2020), the finding of this research shows that trends of digital transformation change rapidly, and vintage clothing retailers need to constantly adapt to these changes.[213]

Digital transformation has also allowed a change in the key activities of vintage clothing retailers. While retailers still need to source and prepare the products, manage the inventory, retail space, etc., they have dedicated more time to online marketing and selling. Besides, some shops have started to source from digital platforms and even internationally. The finance of the vintage clothing retail business has also been impacted by digital transformation. Studio shops that do not need a central location could save some rental costs; more investments are put in selling and online marketing, such as paying for models to be photographed. Still, the highest cost for brick-and-mortar shops is the rental cost, which is generally lower in Rotterdam; unlike larger shops (mainly in Amsterdam), most Rotterdam shops do not or only have little personnel

[213] Pauw, "Online Fashion Resale in the Netherlands"; "Overname United Wardrobe Voelt Als 'Een Messteek in de Rug,'" RTL Nieuws, October 29, 2020, https://www.rtlnieuws.nl/economie/business/artikel/5193256/overname-united-wardrobe-vinted-wegvallen-inkomsten.

cost. Besides, it remains difficult for vintage retailers to gain external funding for starting and expanding the business, and most of them must count on family loans and own savings.

The significant impact of digital transformation on the evolution of this sector has shown that although the physical shopping experience is unreplaceable, vintage clothing retailers need to adapt to digital transformation trends to remain competitive and resilient. Digital marketing and social media usage should be an integral part of the business; vintage retailers need to have a thorough understanding of platform features and customer characteristics; if resources allow, online selling could be beneficial for the business.

6. Conclusion

This research has compared and evaluated the vintage clothing retail business models in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, in particular since 2010. Identifying the interdisciplinary nature of the vintage clothing retail sector as a fashion and business practice, urban function, and cultural movement, this research brings an innovative angle by combining theories from various fields in evaluating the characteristics of the vintage clothing retail sector. The choice of two cities aims to address the lack of research regarding vintage clothing in comparative studies and the Dutch context. Specifically, this research looks at Amsterdam as a first-tier creative, fashion, and vintage city and Rotterdam as a second and evaluates the relationship between city context and the vintage clothing retail sector. After reviewing the rise of vintage clothing from the academic literature, digital transformation is also thoroughly discussed as it brings new platforms for the vintage clothing businesses to conduct activities.

This thesis has centered the data collection on 16 interviews with vintage shop owners, marketers, and neighborhood managers and extensive field research on online and physical presences of vintage stores and neighborhoods. Academic literature, policy documents, and business databases are also consulted. In doing so, the research has combined quantitative and qualitative approaches, allowing triangulation and complementing missing information.

A consensus exists among vintage clothing retailers that vintage is connected to the production time. Still, they hold different views on during which period of production time that a piece could be considered vintage, ranging from 20 to 70 years ago. This research also finds that a hybrid usage of vintage in referring to retro style and secondhand also exists in the Netherlands, which the vintage literature has identified in other contexts.[214]

This research has also introduced the characteristics of the vintage clothing retail sector and its resulting challenges. It has found that vintage consumption can be considered as an example of the experience economy, and therefore, the physical experience and location of a shop matter. Vintage clothing retail business models have been researched with a BMC framework with

[214] Marie-Cécile Cervellon, Lindsey Carey, and Trine Harms, “Something Old, Something Used: Determinants of Women’s Purchase of Vintage Fashion vs Second-hand Fashion,” ed. Stephen M. Wigley and Pammi Sinha, *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management* 40, no. 12 (January 1, 2012): 956–74, https://doi.org/10.1108/09590551211274946.

eight components, including location, value propositions, customers (i.e., customer relationship and customer segments), channels (i.e., marketing and selling), key partners, key activities, key resources, and finance (i.e., cost structure, revenue streams, and funding sources).

In the past ten years, Amsterdam and Rotterdam have seen significant growth in vintage shops and their adoption of digital channels for marketing, selling, and sourcing. The growing awareness of sustainability has allowed vintage clothing consumption to become a mainstream activity, not limited to the creative class. The COVID-19 has also accelerated digital transformation in the vintage clothing sector. However, the lack of funding and resources of vintage retailing as SMEs persists, restricting its development of digital transformation. Nevertheless, most vintage retailers have adapted to new digital platforms, such as Instagram replacing Facebook as a dominant social media platform for marketing and selling during the past five years.

In answering the main research question, compared with Rotterdam, Amsterdam has a higher number and a long history of vintage shops and more vintage consumers, either tourists or residents. As a result, Amsterdam brands are more likely to have multiple branches and in need of paying personnel. Meanwhile, most shops in Rotterdam are individual shops without or with a tiny number of employees. Amsterdam's vintage clothing retailing sector also has more diverse value propositions than Rotterdam. Shops with a long history in Amsterdam values their knowledge and experiences more. In contrast, young shops in Rotterdam believe that the most valuable resource is their taste and the ability to select nice clothes. Although both consider suppliers the most important partner, the former values the long-term relationship with suppliers more than the latter. Besides, Amsterdam is also home to various famous markets for the vintage sector, such as Waterlooplein flea market, where wearing vintage as fashion emerged in the Netherlands, and the biggest European flea market IJ-Hallen. These markets still play a crucial role for some vintage clothing retailers in sourcing. Although digital transformation has allowed vintage shops to reach customers online and overcome the location constraints, Amsterdam shops still tend to be more successful in digital marketing, as shown in their number of social media followers

An important reason for this surplus in vintage clothing is Amsterdam's reputation as a first-tier creative city, which allows it to have the first city bonus with more tourists and residents as vintage consumers (mainly creative class) and a long history of vintage clothing development related to a global cultural movement. This context offers fertile soil for vintage clothing retailing to grow in Amsterdam. In Rotterdam, the growth of vintage clothing has a much shorter history, and Rotterdam must invent itself as a creative and vintage city. But as a second city, it lacks visitors, local customers, and retailers for vintage compared with Amsterdam.

Looking at the two vintage neighborhoods, in particular, The 9 Streets emerged by a bottom-up approach from vintage clothing entrepreneurs in the 1960s and 1970s, and it is connected to where the rise of vintage clothing in the Netherlands occurred. In Rotterdam, the development of Zwaanshalskwartier as a vintage neighborhood is a top-down initiative since fifteen years ago by the housing corporation Havensteder and the municipality as a tool to regenerate the neighborhood by selected shops, including vintage retailers. As a result, vintage shops in Zwaanshalskwartier can take advantage of a relatively low rental cost. However, they are still at an early stage of branding the neighborhood to attract more customers. Vintage shops in The 9 Streets can naturally attract passersby tourists as customers. Still, the neighborhood is too famous that the rising rental cost keeps most young and resource-poor entrepreneurs away, which might weaken the neighborhood image as vintage.

Besides, the analysis of these neighborhoods also shows that the connection of the vintage shops in neighborhoods regarding retail gentrification and residential gentrification should be evaluated within local contexts with a historical perspective. The arrival of vintage shops in the Zwaanshalskwartier resulted in the displacement of old shops, corresponding to Hubbard's argument.[215] But it might not lead to ultimate residential gentrification because of the existence of a large percentage of social housing dwellings in this neighborhood. In The 9 Streets, rather than displacing the older retailers, the arrival of vintage shops in the 1960s and 1970s resulted from large-scale suburbanization. The vintage entrepreneurs took over unwanted and run-down retail spaces. But these shops are currently facing displacement threats brought by retail gentrification.

The findings of this research have several limitations. Firstly, sources from databases and interviews could be inaccurate or unavailable. As such, this research tried to compare and cross-check data such as the opening time of a shop or the emergence of "vintage" in the Netherlands from various sources, but it might still be insufficient and lead to some inaccurate data. While it does not impact the conclusion of this research, further research could be done

[215] Hubbard, "Hipsters on Our High Streets."

in clarifying these issues, such as archival research on Dutch fashion magazines and websites. Secondly, this research's interview sample primarily focuses on vintage retailers and their business models, leading to a lack of representation from other actors such as customers, residents, etc. It also results in the difficulty for this research to draw further implications on the outcome of vintage clothing retail's development in neighborhoods perceived by different stakeholders and to what extent it leads to gentrification. This could be an interesting further research topic.

Nevertheless, this explorative research offers great value as it sheds light on the vintage clothing retail sector in the two cities where scholarship has been missing. The semi-structured interviews allowed the retailers to be open to their experiences and knowledge, and they were further cross-checked and complemented by other sources. It is also crucial to stress that local contexts significantly impact this research's findings and cannot be generalized to first-tier and second-tier cities in other national contexts. Still, the implications of these findings are to provide a new angle in understanding the vintage sector using the BMC framework in comparative studies between first-tier and second-tier cities. It calls for more research in other national contexts in comparing the vintage clothing sector between first-tier and second-tier cities.

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Appendix 1. List of Vintage Shops in Amsterdam and Rotterdam

See full list of vintage shops in Amsterdam and Rotterdam as a worksheet via this link.

Appendix 2. List of Interviewees in Amsterdam and Rotterdam

Number	Interviewee Name	Occupation	Date	Length	City	Interview Conducted in
1	A*	Owner of Vintage Shop A	March 4, 2021	02:03:00	Rotterdam	A's Studio
2	Lisette	Owner of Vintage Shop Atlier Ekster	March 11, 2021	01:54:48	Rotterdam	Atlier Ekster Shop (Benthuizerstraat 33A)**
3	Rosanne	Owner of Vintage Shop Von Deux	March 13, 2021	01:51:56	Rotterdam	Von Deux Shop (Goudsesingel 69)
4	Henk	Owner of Vintage Shop by Hendrikus	March 19, 2021	01:09:57	Rotterdam	33A)
5	Laura Dols	Owner of Vintage Shop Laura Dols	March 20, 2021	02:33:26	Amsterdam	Laura Dols Bridal Studio (Nieuwe Hemweg 7G) and Laura Dols Vintage Shop (Wolvenstraat 7)
6	Carien	Owner of Vintage Shop Rosa Rosas	March 26, 2021	01:26:09	Amsterdam	Rosa Rosas Shop (Rietwijkerstraat 33)
7	Muriël	Co-owner of Vintage Shop Vindit	April 15, 2021	03:20:31	Amsterdam	Vindit Shop (Tweede Egelantiersdwarsstraat 7)
8	Jacob	Co-owner of Vintage Shop Concrete Matter	April 30, 2021	01:22:11	Amsterdam	Concrete Matter Shop (Gasthuismolensteeg 12),
9	Sara	Owner of Vintage Shop Retro In & Outstyles	April 30, 2021	01:44:12	Amsterdam	Retro In & Outstyles Shop (Tweede Constantijn Huygensstraat 57)
10	Claudia	Co-Owner of Vintage Shop Phixi	May 1, 2021	01:48:48	Rotterdam	One of Phixi's Selling Point Swan Market Store Rotterdam (Oude Binnenweg 137)
11	Romy	Social Media Manager of Past Vintage	May 7, 2021	01:27:12	Rotterdam	Past Vintage (Oostkousdijk 13c) and Past Two (Westzeedijk 577) pop-up shop
12	Paul	Program Manager from Havensteder who worked on Zwaanshalskwartiers during 2010-2014	May 3, 2021	01:16:26	Rotterdam	Zoom
13	Lony	Street Manager of The 9 Streets since 2012	May 3, 2021	01:16:26	Amsterdam	Telephone
14	Anil	Street Manager who works for Zwaanshalskwartiers BIZ since April 2020	May 28, 2021	00:48:57	Rotterdam	Zoom
15	Anouk	Owner of Vintage Shop Rêveuse	May 29, 2021	N/A	Amsterdam	Email
16	Anne	Organizer of the Vintage Route Rotterdam	March 6, 2021	N/A	Rotterdam	Email

*: A wishes to remain anonymous.
**: Atlier Ekster and Rumba Vintage moved to a studio at Thurledeweg 85 shortly after the interview.

Appendix 3. Semi-Structured Interview Framework for Vintage Clothing Retailers

<u>Thank you for participating in this research</u>

1. Short introduction of the research
2. Short explanation of interview procedure and content (story, business, location, transformation)

<u>The Shop: Story</u>

1. When and how did you start this shop?
2. How did you have interest in vintage?
3. Where did you learn the knowledge about vintage?

<u>Definition of Vintage</u>

1. What is vintage?
2. What is not?
3. How did you come up with this definition?

<u>The Shop: Business</u>

1. [Value Proposition]: Can you introduce a bit about what are the products and services you offer?
2. How are they different from other vintage shops?

1. Who are your [customers] (age, gender, education, etc.)?
2. Where are they located?
3. Are there any changes overtime? Are they due to digital technologies?
4. [Customer Relationship]: can you explain a bit how and what is your relationship with customers? (Friends? Community?)

1. [Key Resources]: What resources do you think are crucial for your business? (Physical, intellectual, financial, and human… For example, your knowledge, you have this shop, you have the colleagues…)

1. [Key Activities]: What are the key activities in your business (Sourcing, sales, advertising, and marketing…)?
   How do you do that?

1. [Revenue Streams] and [Cost structure]: what are the main costs (rent, buying…)?
2. How do you gain revenue?

1. [Key Partners]: Who do you consider are the most important partnerships you have? (For example, your suppliers of vintage clothing?)

We talked about the business of the shop, and you talked about….
Now I would like you to recall that <u>which part is most heavily impacted by digital transformation and which part has changed most significantly?</u>

<u>The Shop: Digital Transformation</u>

1. What online platforms and digital tools are you using now?
2. When you started your shop, did you set up email, website, facebook, Instagram at the same time?
3. If not, which ones first and which ones later, why?
4. Do you have any shifts of using these digital platforms overtime?
5. Which digital technology, could be email, social media platforms, or even online payment, etc., impacted your business the most? What is the biggest change overtime?
6. Can you introduce a bit, what do you use different platforms for? (E.g.: for online selling, for marketing, or just for people can see you?
7. Do you plan to expand your online presence to other social media platforms?

<u>The Shop: Location</u>

1. Why did you choose ____ city to open your store?
2. Why did you choose your current shop address?
3. Is there any change of location over time?
4. Are the changes impacted by digitalization? (Able to source overseas? Reach more people?)

Industry and City Observation

5. Can you think of your earliest experience in ____ city about the vintage sector? (name, location, type, etc.)
6. Overtime, what are the main changes of vintage fashion shops in ____ city?
7. Could you tell me how this sector is impacted by digital transformation?

Personal Information

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Education: highest and major
4. Employee number

Thank you so much! I think I do not have other questions. Is there anything you thought of during our interview, but you did not mention it?
Do you have any questions?

Appendix 4. Coding Tree

BMC Components and Digital Transformation Impact	9 Streets	9 Streets and new business initiative
		9 Streets-brand
		9 Streets-change
		9 Streets-choice of shops
		9 Streets-context
		9 Streets-corona
		9 Streets-different actors
		9 Streets-history
		9 Streets-history-90s
		9 Streets-makeup
		9 Streets-ownership of properties
		9 Streets-prices of properties
		9 Streets-residents
		9 Streets-rules to protect
		9 Streets-shop owner association
		9 Streets-shops
		9 Streets-vintage
		9 Streets-young
		9 Streets-website
	Zwaanshalskwartier	Feelings towards change of shops
		Number of houses
		Sense of new and cool
		Zwaanshals
		Zwaanshals as a tool for Oude Noorden neighborhood
		Zwaanshals attract new renters
		Zwaanshals development time schedule
		Zwaanshals marketing
		Zwaanshals perception of vintage
		Zwaanshals relative position in the city
		Zwaanshals Renovation Aim
		Zwaanshals Rental Period
		Zwaanshals: Anil’s Job
		Zwaanshals: BIZ
		Zwaanshals: choice of shop

		Zwaanshals: competition
		Zwaanshals: customer
		Zwaanshals: empty space
		Zwaanshals: Havensteder's role
		Zwaanshals: Kookpunt
		Zwaanshals: markets
		Zwaanshals: number of shops
		Zwaanshals: Pop up shop
		Zwaanshals: Renewing shops by rennovation
		Zwaanshals: Residential transformation
		Zwaanshals: shop owners
		Zwaanshals: Stichting’s role
		Zwaanshals: success
		Zwaanshals: Vancancy
		ZwaanshalsKwatiers
	Location	9 Streets: Impression
		9 Streets: reputation
		Amsterdam and Rotterdam Comparison
		Amsterdam Impression
		Antwerp
		Choice of Neighborhood
		Choice of shops
		Clustering
		Criminal Activities
		Diversity of shops
		Haarlemmerstraat
		Ideal Location
		Japan
		Location
		Location of Vintage Shop
		Location Transformation
		City and preference of vintage style
		Living
		Street
		Vintage lover will come to you
		Where are you from
		Why choose Amsterdam
		Why choose Rotterdam

		Neighborhood Relationship
		Neighborhood Residents
		Regulation: public and private
		Rotterdam Impression
		Small City and Vintage
		Street Manager
		Help or Organization Effort
		Placemaking
		Placemaking: consistency
		Placemaking: gentrification
		Placemaking: property value
		Placemaking: visitors
		US
	Value Proposition	Affordable
		Boutique
		Business Transformation
		Collection/expensive item
		Consignment
		Consistency
		Curation/Space of Shop
		Customer service and experience
		Differentiation
		Future Business Plan
		Imperfection
		Importance of knowledge
		Looks like new
		Mix of vintage and new
		Neighborhood shop
		Pop-up shop
		Price
		Product outliers
		Products
		Products or Styles: Preference
		Products: Gender
		Products: style and focus
		Quantity
		Return Policy
		Service
		Upscale

		Value Proposition
		What makes my shop special
	Channels	Blog
		Physical Shop Experience
		Branding
		Communication
		Digital Transformation
		Facebook Events
		Facebook shop
		Google
		Instagram
		Instagram planning and operation
		Instagram sale
		Instagram shop
		International selling
		Loyalty programme
		Marketing Vintage
		Marktplaats
		Newsletter
		Paid Promotion
		Multichannel
		Online
		Online Competition
		Online marketing challenges
		Online selling
		Online selling: challenges
		Online selling: Picture
		Online selling: reach other people
		Online selling: separate the stock
		Online selling: Size and Measurement
		Online to Physical
		Online VS Physical Sale
		Picture
		Post language
		Promotion of all stores
		Promotion of the Store
		Promotion: flyer or map
		Shop format preference
		Shopify

		Webshop
		Website
		Vintage Route Rotterdam
		Marketing
		Whatsapp
	Customers	Connection of Clothing Style and Customer Group
		Customer
		Customer relationship
		Customer: did not wear vintage before
		Customer: foreign
		Customer: gender
		Customer: local
		Customer: location
		Customer: regular
		Customer: tourist
		Passer-by
	Finance	Capital to fund the business
		Cost
		Other jobs
		Financial Situation
		Input VS Output
		Passion VS Reality
		Rent
		Relationship: Residents and Shops
		Revenue
	Key Activities	Administration
		Broken
		Checking products
		Curation according to festivities
		Deal with old stock
		Fix or alter
		Handpicking
		Key Activities
		Lawsuit
		Learning
		Renewable of stock
		Repairing and Reusing
		Shop Management

		Time and Energy Input
		Vintage Event
		Wash
	Key Partner	Diversity in Model
		Helping other entrepreneur/business
		Key Partners
		Market
		Model
		Rotterdam: Swan Market
		Sorting companies
		Source
		Source: buy in bulk
		Source: dealer
		Source: individual
		Source: International
		Source: Markets
		Source: Relationship
		Source: secrete
		Source: Sorting companies
		Source: Thrift Shop
		Source: wholesaler
		Thrift Shops
	Key Resources	Co-Worker Relationship
		Human Resources
		Knowledge of vintage and business
		Inventory management
		Key resources
		Name of the shop
		Ownership of shop
		Staff
		Sales skill or personality
	Digital Transformation	Age and digitalization
		Algorithm
		Depop
		Digital Infrastructure
		Digitalization challenge
		Digitalization Impact
		eBay
		Etsy

		Facebook
		Facebook to Instagram
		Facebook VS Instagram
		Hyves
		Internet
		Most Important Digital Technology
		Perception of digitalization
		Perception of online selling
		Physical to Online
		Pinterest
		Tik Tok
		Tumblr
		United Wardrobe
		Vinted
Vintage Clothing in the Netherlands	Vintage Observation	Attitude towards fashion
		Attitude towards other shops/competition
		Competition
		Concern about big money
		Episode
		From counterculture to mainstream
		Lony’s Documentary
		Netherlands vintage clothing
		Perception of new shops
		Policy: social housing
		Presentation of products
		Price Change
		Relationship with other shops
		Rotterdam Vintage
		Sale season
		Uniqueness of vintage style
		Vintage culture/ sector transformation
		Vintage global trade
		Vintage Product Transformation
		Vintage scarity
		Celebrity
		Creative Work
		Cross-dressing
		Cultural Appropriation
		Culture

		Designer and vintage
		Environmental Concern
		Fashion transformation/history
		Fast Fashion
		Hippie movement
		Influencer
		Integration of local culture
		Music
		Story behind a vintage piece
		Sustainable new brands
		Vintage: who likes it
	Challenges	Challenges
		Lack of time
		Property problem
		Stigma of vintage
		Uniqueness of item
		Vintage sector challenges
	Definition of Vintage	Antique
		Secondhand
		Secondhand becomes vintage
		Vintage
		Vintage Definition
Background	Background	“It needs to be somebody's baby”
		Age
		Boredom
		Fun of Shopping
		Hobby
		Origin of Interest in Vintage
		Origin of joining the business
		Passion for Vintage
		Personality
		Professional and Educational Background
		Reason for starting the business
		Small Shops
		Start time
		Styling people
		Success
		Treasure hunting
COVID-19	COVID-19	COVID-19 Event

		COVID-19 Finance
		COVID-19 Impact
		COVID-19 Reaction