

**Sustainability and vintage fashion: a study of
Dutch vintage fashion retailers.**

Name: Arina Gerdyush

Student number: 467580

Supervisor: Lenia Carvalho Marques

Second reader: Frans Brouwer

**MA Cultural Economics and
Entrepreneurship**

**Erasmus School of History, Culture, and
Communication**

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Thesis

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Abstract:

Vintage fashion is a fascinating niche that shows that not only is new not always better, but there are multiple reasons to fall in love with the old which are no less relevant than the convenience and glitter of the fast fashion world. At a time when big business seems to dominate the sphere, the role of small, local, and passionate retailers can provide an important insight into how the industry can and must change from its practicalities to its values.

This thesis presents a study in vintage fashion retailers and their successes and challenges in following sustainability as a guiding principle for business and the choices they make to keep this idea central to their activities and bring it to the community around them.

Key words: vintage fashion, retail, sustainability, community

1. Introduction

Clothes can be an incredibly emotional subject. Our choices make bold statements about our identities and communities. Agents of the fashion industry often devote their entire lives to the pursuit of beauty. Fashion is also no stranger to politics; in fact, it is not uncommon to use garments to declare our allegiances for all to see. However, mainstream fashion has traditionally spoken the language of changing seasons, new trends and not just keeping up but rather staying ahead of the times. This has led to a deeply unsustainable culture of consumption and ushered in the era of sweatshops, landfills and microplastics (Buchel et al, 2018).

Vintage fashion presents a curious departure from this system, relishing in the rejection of newness in favour of yesteryears designs, fabrics, and actual garments. Despite all odds, vintage fashion in all its different iterations gained popularity to the point where it is difficult to visit any major and not so major city and not run into a vintage, second-hand, upcycling, charity, or thrift store. The Netherlands in particular the cities of Randstad attract locals and tourists to quaint and fashionable small shopping streets where many of these businesses congregate. Vintage fashion requires time and effort to find the style, size, and colour in the collection of one-of-a-kind, whereas fast fashion provides convenient solutions at a moment's notice. As vintage fashion retailers tend to operate as small businesses, the unique challenges of 2021 from Brexit to Covid-19 lockdowns complicate matters further. Vintage offers consumers a

different mode of consumption with significant consequences for sustainability within the fashion industry.

In order to examine the effect of this niche on the most pressing issue of the industry, the purpose of this thesis is to explore the relationship between the Dutch vintage fashion sector and sustainability by asking the question what role does sustainability play in the business practices of Dutch vintage fashion retailers? The importance of this question lies in its relevance to the main debates within the fashion industry and the discussion of the dominant consumption model in 2021. As the industry attempts to find solutions the small, local shops are often overshadowed, but their impact should not be underestimated, this thesis will attempt to shine a light on the unique contributions and struggles of a fashion business niche that is often overlooked. By bringing forward the insights of Dutch vintage fashion retailers, this thesis will explain how small, mission-oriented businesses confront the global issue of sustainability and influence the consumers around them as a community.

2. Literature review

Vintage fashion is not a new phenomenon, and many of the conversations around using older, often pre-owned clothes as a fashion statement have been around since at least the 1980's (Palmer, 2005). However, the current situation around vintage shopping can be complicated because of the diversity of motivations for participating in the industry for all agents but also due to its entry into the mainstream. For many people vintage fashion has grown and changed from a necessary sacrifice to a freely chosen green lifestyle. While fast fashion is a key source of clothing in wealthy nations, there is increasing awareness and interest in alternatives from sustainable brands, as well as altogether different ways of consuming (Fox, 2018). Examples of these different types of consumption include rented fashion, vintage, self-made or even digital fashion. This changes the landscape of the fashion business and how different agents interact with one another. Many of these alternative modes are popularised on the internet and are a complex statement about consumption as a whole. Clothing consumption choices can communicate different aspects of identity from fashionability to politics. It has to be acknowledged that clothing plays a role much bigger than a basic necessity

as that fact has consequences on the business priorities of many brands and consumers (Buchel et al, 2018).

While vintage fashion as a trend has been a mainstay for some time and is only increasing in popularity, some scholars position it as something more important still. Vintage may be a necessity for the fashion industry to embrace in order to have another tool in its arsenal to address the issues of sustainability that plague the sector. With this quality in mind, it becomes important to understand not only the *raison d'être* and enduring appeal of vintage clothing and the businesses that specialise in it. Additionally, to understand the potential it is important to look at how sustainability is perceived in the sector, its relative importance and how it is reinforced through the business of vintage fashion retailers. Observing these traits can help assess the potential vintage has to change the industry in this trying time.

2.1 Definition of Vintage

The first problem arises in the definition of the term vintage. The three most common focuses by researchers from the most tangible traits to the least are the date of design or make, identification by fashion media and consumer, or a symbol of individuality (McColl et al, 2013). Vintage may not always be defined by its age, even if this is the most obvious attribute, but often by the perception that it is by completely abstract criteria. This way it becomes an easy vector for the fashion industry to project any number of messages onto.

To a certain extent, the difference for retailers and consumers is the breadth of the definition, and whether it includes extra services such as repairs, upcycling, styling, and others (Ryding et al, 2018). Different parts of the definition have further implications for some consumers, which determine their interest in the business and willingness to spend as well as what it means for them. For example, to some it is less vintage as a whole that is attractive, but rather the aesthetic of a specific era, for example shift dresses from the Sixties exclusively (Jenss, 2005). Alternatively, to some vintage is only valid if it is an authenticated designer piece, like a Chanel Kelly bag, the rarity is compounded by the fact that most of these pieces have been discontinued by the brand (Ryder et al, 2018).

There are also prejudices and stigmas as with any other fashion sector. Traditionally, second-hand clothing loses most of its value and is not associated with fashionability, but rather with low-income groups. Increasingly this is changing as the concept of 'thrift shopping'

is commercialised by high-street brands and also retailers that replicate their business model. As a result, there has been discussion around appropriation and gentrification by the affluent of these cheaper second-hand retailers, especially in big cities such as New York, Berlin, or Amsterdam which further blurs the definition in its practical use (McColl et al, 2013). Additionally, as can be seen in the categories of definitions above it can be argued whether second-hand and vintage are actually synonyms, or if vintage is a marketer's term for second-hand, or if they are distinct and vintage should fulfil a criteria to be identified as such (McColl et al, 2013). Some researchers also argue that the concepts are closely linked and not mutually exclusive, and even if they must have some feature (like a particular age), vintage can be second-hand and second-hand can be vintage on a case by case basis (Turunen et al, 2018). Due to the lack of concrete rules outlined by the researchers, the indicator for being designated vintage can also be supplemented by self-identification (McColl et al, 2013). The various definitions, therefore, describe many related but distinct aspects of the vintage fashion industry.

For the purpose of this study, which is situated in the Netherlands, it is useful to allow for multiple facets of the vintage market, from anonymous second-hand to aged designer items as I would hypothesise that for many retailers, both are a part of their business. Additionally, both are included in their sustainability considerations which is necessary to the study. There must also be significant space allowed for self-identification by businesses themselves. Therefore, the working definition of vintage for this paper is:

Clothing and accessories that are pre-owned, not new in design and/or made from new materials, and that are sold in stores that identify themselves as vintage.

2.2 The Perspective of Vintage Retailers

When analysing how vintage fashion retailers operate, it is important to point out their unique qualities. As most vintage retailers are characterised as small, owner-manager run businesses, it also gives rise to the view that these retailers act as a community, blurring the distinction between themselves and the consumer because of their similar interests and motivations (Jenss, 2015). This community aspect will be particularly important when discussing sustainability, as the development of eco-consciousness and demand for more accountability

often happens on a community level, and societal support makes it a viable and resilient focus (Buchel et al, 2018). However, retailers are the ones who have to keep in mind the balance of demand and supply. Moon et al (2015) argue that at this point sustainable principles in fashion have not been popularised enough to have a strong influence on consumers, therefore what retailers do with their influence becomes important (Moon et al, 2015). Customers and retailers must share sustainability goals as a community for them to be an integral part of the business. The mutual influence can then shape the landscape of the industry. Exploring the way these goals fit into the overall picture of the business also requires discussion on the how's and why's of vintage fashion retail.

2.2.1 How do they sell?

In a study on vintage retailers in Scotland, McColl et al. (2012) found that most vintage retailers operated on a small owner-manager business model, preferring to maintain personal relationships with their customers in the local community. Likewise, they have also found that retailers believe themselves to be in synergy with their customers when it comes to clothing and aesthetic choices, therefore their main tool of trade is their own personal taste as well as acquired expertise on fabric, style, and story of the piece (McColl et al, 2013). This close relationship may point to a high degree of influence the retailers may be able to exercise on the consumers, and the added value that this link presents for the entire experience (Rudawska et al, 2018). There are differences in methods of procurement of stock. Some retailers buy in bulk from recycling plants, others are particularly selective and shop around other collectors, many also take donations and work on consignment. But given the individual nature of the retailers, everything presented in the stores is a carefully selected part of their aesthetic and chosen by them to represent their specific criteria of vintage fashion (McColl et al, 2013). However, Kent argues that in order to grow, retailers do have to incorporate more mainstream selling practices, keeping up with trends within vintage fashion and sourcing from abroad for those in demand items (Kent et al, 2018). However, this does not remove the influence of the owner-manager who is still responsible for the informal market research and makes the final choices of which offerings represent them in their business and contribute to their shared vision with their consumers (Kent et al, 2018). Therefore, considering the importance of the individual motivation and drive of the owner-manager, many of the observations for vintage retailers will

also apply to consumers, and vice versa. The personal connection becomes as much a part of the business choice as more practical considerations.

2.2.2 How is the community maintained?

The special relationship can be seen as a community. The community around vintage fashion is maintained in various ways. Historically, it has been highly localised with close relationships between local retailers and consumers. Oftentimes the main method employed in marketing is word of mouth, because of the high level of trust within the community (McColl et al, 2013). Physical stores allow for hedonic shopping behaviours, whereby the experience of shopping is part of the attraction and interactions with retailers is a main component (Cervellon & Vigreux, 2018). However, commercialisation and especially the popularisation of the internet has brought about visible changes to these interactions and widened the base (Cervellon & Vigreux, 2018). As shopping through online platforms becomes more and more common for the fashion industry, communities can lose their physical spaces but also the informal engagement with vintage 'treasure finding' as an experience, as online shopping is driven by a desire for economical and efficient purchases and is an individual pursuit (Cervellon & Vigreux, 2018). Naturally, that alone does not tell the entire story as social media is closely associated with online shopping and communities, while no longer so local or present, can still be maintained online and the media environment is important to the fashion industry as a whole (Fox, 2018). In fact, vintage retailers are inherently well-positioned for community building online, as consumers turn away from commercial campaigns and favour individual, authentic media presence instead that individual owner-managers can provide (Fox, 2018). Given the individualism of the vintage retailer, social media can be geared towards self-promotion as much as business promotion, with personal content from the owner who is only answerable to themselves for their media strategy. Retailers can become their own influencer if they are seen as a friend in their community (Fox, 2018).

2.2.3 What are the future facing developments?

With these qualities in mind, it is important to discuss how the vintage retailer is evolving with time and what new business activities are gaining ground.

As vintage fashion gains popularity and loses some of the less appealing connotations, many particularly successful retailers are moving away from the small business model. Interior arrangements becoming more boutique-like, social media presence becoming cleaner, and more care given to curation have all helped to make vintage fashion trendy (Rudawska et al, 2018). It is now also not uncommon to see chains of vintage stores in multiple cities and large web shops with international shipping. Rudawska et al argue that there has been a significant rebranding since the 1990's, especially in previously hesitant markets such as Poland as well as the Far East, and now vintage retailers need to focus on the specific values they offer, more so than their traditional low prices (Rudawska et al, 2018). The community aspect of the entire shopping experience is an important, intangible attribute and has to be kept a central part of the mission (Rudawska et al, 2018).

A direction that online platforms are moving the vintage fashion community is towards even more collaborative consumption (Cervellon & Vigreux, 2018). While traditional vintage fashion retailers are usually run by enthusiasts who also consume vintage clothing, platforms like Etsy, Vinted or Depop are decreasing the barriers to entry and allowing for the rise of resellers who operate on the same principle but solely online and as private persons (McColl et al, 2013). As discussed before, there may be less interaction and the building blocks of the community might often be missing without the nucleus that is the owner-manager/expert, but this can certainly be avoided. The consequences are more prominent with this model in the spheres such as logistics of delivery, unsecure payment methods and poor after-sales services as well as a lack of trust from not being able to see the purchases, so often bigger platforms and official organisations still have competitive advantages and even ability to purchase these marketplaces, decreasing the disruptive effect of the customer to customer platforms for vintage fashion retailers (Cervellon & Vigreux, 2018).

Vintage retailers benefit greatly from acting as a community and creating trust and mutual interest with their consumers. Future business models may rely more on the internet, but more research will need to be done to understand how that will affect not only the vintage fashion business but also the communities around it.

Resulting sub-question:

- To what extent can the vintage retail industry be described as a community online and in physical spaces?

2.3 The Perspective of Vintage Consumers

Meanwhile, consumers are relevant to analyse the factors behind demand for vintage fashion. Following the argument of McColl et al, if they are to be distinguished as a hybrid community with retailers, their characteristics and motivations are going to overlap. The study of consumers has also brought up interesting and often contradicting characterisations which would be of interest to retailers as those features may determine how retailers may choose to define and market their businesses in the future, especially in light of increased competition from commercial agents (Fox, 2018). Marketing specifies and shapes the motivations, and the counter-cultural origins of vintage fashion implies a different paradigm compared to mainstream fashion for how the business is communicated through various organisations and activities, as discussed before authenticity is an important asset for consumers (Kent et al, 2018). Multiple authors cite the traditional demographic for second-hand and vintage clothing consumption as students and low-income groups. Over time there has been a shift whereby celebrities and designers threw their weight behind vintage fashion also, which in turn brought new consumers in or strengthened the preferences of existing consumers (Ryding et al, 2018). This shows the different forces behind vintage fashion and their relationships, and the difficulty of finding a dominant demographic.

Moon et al (2015) discuss the concept of fashionism. The idea helps to shine a light on how communities and individuals interact with fashion products and fashion activities which helps position vintage fashion in relation to conventional fashion and further show the interrelation of consumers and retailers. Moon et al (2015) place a special importance on those with high involvement with fashion as they are the ones that end up exercising influence on the dissemination of fashion but also are responsible for upholding its seasonal cycle of trends, which makes sustainability less appealing. Although vintage is not recently produced and therefore does not exert pressure on a primary producer to provide, the trends do not exist in a vacuum. The concept of fashionism can still be applied to vintage consumers and retailers as

there is still active trendsetting within the community and some items are much more valued. O’Cass (2001) makes the link between how involved a consumer is in fashion and how much they know about the products, and how informed their choices are. This can be applied to vintage consumers who are particularly discernible in regard to authenticity or preference in era as wearing dated pieces in a way that does not come off as a costume requires pre-existing knowledge (O’Cass, 2001). Similarly, the retailers who make complementary consumption choices and also possess the knowledge, are entirely immersed in the world of vintage fashion. Additionally, researchers often posit the choice to wear vintage as a lifestyle choice, making it more immersive than other shopping practices as it influences their sense of identity and their worldview (Clark, 2005). The same is true for retailers, as discussed above. Kent et al (2018) provide a supporting argument that vintage fashion cannot be understood from a conventional economic perspectives of the fashion industry, as the emphasis on lines of new products delivered each season does not hold, instead the vintage market emerges as a result of complex negotiations between networks of retailers and suppliers, with input from consumer wants that are further shaped by niche media (Kent et al, 2018).

2.3.1 Why do they consume?

The reasons to consume vintage fashion are varied but literature discusses five themes that fall within three broad categories that can help to position the strategy of the retailers and the general affiliations within the community (Fox, 2018).

- Nostalgia

The appeal of vintage fashion is often rooted in nostalgia which can manifest in many ways, from the real or imagined stories of former owners to the specific aesthetics of a particular time period (Fox, 2018). Oftentimes, the consumers need not have been even born yet at the time when the clothes were new, but at the same time this is a style choice that can be enjoyed simultaneously by multiple generations (Jenss, 2005). There can also be an aspect of collecting that overlaps with this appreciation for the meaning of the item, and this is especially common for luxury second-hand goods which are also prized for their uniqueness (Fox, 2018).

- Uniqueness

An important motivation for vintage consumers that has been observed in literature is the search for a unique identity and a certain level of rebellion against conventional fashion standards (McColl et al, 2013). Vintage fashion has great individual value to the consumer as it reinforces their sense of identity and allows them to stand out for their fashion sense (Rudawska et al, 2018).

- Price

Naturally, the question of price is different depending on the focus of the vintage retailer. Vintage designer goods can be just as expensive, if not more so, than new, but oftentimes purchasing a vintage designer item with some signs of wear and tear is still a more accessible way of consuming luxury goods (Turunen et al, 2018). In the sense of price, the chasm between luxury and normal goods remains within the second-hand sphere, but there are often great bargains to be made and a greater variety of people can participate in the lifestyle aspect. Vintage shopping is legitimised by the popularity of discount culture, the idea of getting a high-quality and desirable product for a cheaper price, making the bargain a motivation in and of itself (Palmer, 2005).

- Sustainability

It is well known that shopping second-hand is more sustainable and reduces the strain on natural resources from the fashion industry. The appreciation of sustainability as a fashion trend helped legitimise shopping vintage and second-hand (Cervellon & Vigreux, 2018). The appreciation within the community as well as discussions on social media creates a buzz where clients are just as excited if not more so about their vintage purchases (Cervellon & Vigreux, 2018). This motivation is often a part of a lifestyle and is the key focus of this paper, therefore will be explored further.

- Trend and influencers

An important motivation for shopping vintage is the fact that in recent years it has been an established trend, and there are many influencers both in local communities and online spaces

who exhibit their interest and appreciation for vintage as the manifestation of the above mentioned factors such as uniqueness, sustainability, and price. The 'Vintage Cool' as described by Palmer, encompasses influencers who are not the unreachable supermodels of the past but rather everyday women who creatively mix second-hand and new, an achievable ideal that still takes a lot of effort to fully realise and build expertise in (Palmer 2005). As mentioned before retailers themselves can take on the part of these role models. Cervellon & Vigreux observe that many consumers who gravitate towards second-hand luxury goods in particular have a high need-for-status, and while vintage allows them to spend less money it does not lose its authenticity the way counterfeit items do (Cervellon & Vigreux, 2018). Therefore, vintage allows one to gain the social benefits that come with being seen as fashionable and on-trend, in a more accessible, more ethical way (Cervellon & Vigreux, 2018).

2.3.2 Limitations of their motivations

However, the existence of the motivations listed above is limited by an important factor that is the commercialisation of vintage fashion and the saturation of the market, which may erode the uniqueness of these motivations for the vintage sector in particular. As traditional vintage fashion stores are often more niche and alternative to the dominant shopping practices, many consumers may be drawn to the vintage-themed lines of high-street mainstays such as Topshop and ASOS which provide the trend without the other considerations, such as sustainability (Kent et al, 2018). As the existence of these commercial outlets can present strong competition to the original vintage retailers at the very least for the products alone, some motivating factors such as trend and the related need to remain fashionable can work against popularisation of vintage fashion, if the aesthetic is replicated onto a fast-fashion model. The existing stigma towards buying second-hand, and the additional effort required to participate in the hybrid consumption of vintage fashion, can make the more accessible mainstream versions more attractive (Moon et al, 2015). While Moon et al (2015) do not find a significant correlation between a customer's fashion involvement and their concern for sustainability, they also do not find the two concepts to be in conflict, despite the inherent over-consumption the fashion industry tends to promote (Moon et al, 2015). This suggests that the motivations may be quite fluid and influenceable, and the sway they will have over each

individual consumer is quite diverse. The personal qualities of vintage retailers therefore must provide the counterweight to convenience of the fast fashion model.

Many of the motivations for consuming vintage overlap, and equally as many contradict each other. However, this discussion is important to the business models of vintage fashion retailers. All the listed motivations are a mediation between the retailer and consumer and are created and reinforced as a community. Even authenticity of vintage, which provides a strong pull to consumers, cannot in reality be seen as untouched as each item has to pass first through the judgement of the retailer and their expertise (Kent et al, 2018).

Resulting sub-questions:

- What are the different motivations for pursuing vintage within the community?

2.4 The Role of Sustainability

With the role, features and motivations of the community of consumers and retailers clarified, the principles of sustainability in relation to the fashion industry and this specific case can be further explained. The benefit of the use of vintage fashion contributes to sustainable shopping practices by extending the end-of-life viability that garments usually have (Ryder et al, 2018). As a direct substitute to newly manufactured goods, vintage fashion not only allows consumers to avoid buying new things, but also to repurpose old clothing and encourage them to retain their own. As mentioned previously, sustainability has been discussed as an important critical motivation for the consumption of vintage (Turunen et al, 2018).

2.4.1 What is sustainability

The fashion industry often finds itself on the receiving end of much criticism when it comes to sustainability. The current situation and goals for improvement are defined in the 'Transition to good fashion' report from DRIFT research institute. Transition studies offer an important insight into how the industry has to change and what goals the main actors can pursue. The wider trends within sustainability principles within the fashion industry can be applied to vintage fashion retail in order to assess their influence and relationship with the industry as a whole. The need for the fashion industry to become circular, to not only minimise waste, but also change the culture that is wasteful and address the cost of highly disposable

fast-fashion to people and planet, is at the heart of the sustainability conversation (Buchel et al, 2018).

2.4.2 What role does sustainability play for the vintage retailer and consumer?

Vintage retail is particularly attractive to those who have a distrust of big companies, especially because of their tendency to not take their sustainability commitments seriously, which gives rise to the prevalence of greenwashing, which is giving a business misleading marketing to claim sustainability (Wilson, 2016). As awareness increases of these issues, the sustainability aspect becomes an added value, a way for consumers and retailers to 'do their bit' (Wilson, 2016). For many vintage retail is as close as it comes to guilt free consumption.

Fredriksson and Aslan (2018) argue that sustainability is often a political, lifestyle choice coming from consumers who experience great reluctance at consuming, for the belief that they and those around them are consuming too much. In fact, this view is becoming more prevalent in the norm systems of consumers (Fredriksson & Aslan, 2018). The knowledge that they are consuming fashion sustainably is important to the sense of identity experienced by not only consumers but retailers themselves, further reinforcing the relationship between the two groups.

Similarly, to Moon et al, Harris et al also provide reasons for why sustainability presents a challenge to promote and highlight the need for a collaborative approach. While vintage fashion is by virtue of not being newly made a more sustainable choice, the arguments of Harris et al still apply to the mindset of consumption. Harris et al (2016) argue that sustainability still represents a challenge for three reasons; complexity of the sustainability issues, variety in ethics considerations between different consumers, as well as the fact that clothing is often purchased for hedonistic reasons (Harris et al, 2016). Most research focuses on the role of consumers here, but not so much on the retailers who arguably often have an even stronger ethical and emotional response to sustainability.

2.4.3 Is sustainability equally important to all actors within the community?

An important limitation to the exploration for this aspect is that the concern for sustainability cannot be taken as a given for all vintage consumers and retailers. If the environmental impact is not a priority, it is important to discuss why and if that makes the consumers more likely to engage in other shopping behaviours, such as fast-fashion (Turunen et al, 2018). As sustainability is shown to be a contributing motivation for vintage fashion enthusiasts, it is rarely discussed in literature as the predominant one, overshadowed by more individualistic preferences like fashionability (Turunen et al, 2018).

This also raises the question what effect internet-driven changes will have on the importance of sustainability in the vintage fashion communities and how much sway the retailers themselves will have, in the case that they have a stronger preference. Shen et al (2014) discuss the importance of education provided by fashion retailers to promote commitment to sustainable choices by consumers (Shen et al, 2014). As many consumers are unaware of the complexities of the fashion industry, they may underestimate the problem. Therefore, they would be unwilling to make personal sacrifices or put in more effort where it is necessary in order to make a sustainable choice (Shen et al, 2014). When applied to vintage fashion this idea can be significant as vintage fashion requires much more effort, knowledge, and sometimes even money, when compared to conventional fast-fashion retail (Palmer, 2005). Therefore, this is an area where the business interests of vintage fashion retailers align with a sustainability mission. However, whether an emphasis on education will make a tangible difference for existing vintage fashion consumers, and if it is able to attract new interest also has not been studied in literature in detail.

Resulting sub-questions:

- How does the community consider sustainability in their interactions and retail choices?
- What challenges are present when factoring in sustainability for vintage fashion retailers?

The findings of this literature review determine the way forward in this research. It establishes not only a working definition of vintage to specify which businesses are targeted but also confirms their unique characteristics. Discovering the tight-knit relationships established between consumers and retailers is important to hypothesise a hybrid community within the

vintage fashion industry. The exploration by researchers of the way characteristics and motivations of retailers and consumers are synchronised in motivation and reliant on one another in all stages of the business, helps to position how they function as a community, and therefore guide this research into exploring the role sustainability plays for vintage fashion retailers and its potential for the sector as a whole.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Strategy and design

In order to explore the concepts discovered by researchers in the literature review the research design of this study focused entirely on semi-structured interviews of 10 vintage fashion retailers in the Netherlands. The purpose was to discuss their experiences with their businesses and their attitudes towards the sector as a whole, with special focus on the community aspect, sustainability principles and the overlap of these themes. Given the subjective and highly personal questions asked of the interviewees, which had to do with community, identity and motivation, the data was entirely anonymised, and a personal, conversational approach was encouraged. The study aimed to bring forward an exploration of practitioner experience in the Netherlands in 2021, for practical reasons but also because the Netherlands, in particular Amsterdam, is well known for vintage fashion retail and the trend relevance of vintage in 2021 is perceptible. The interviewees were queried particularly on how their experience related to the proposed concepts of hybrid community and its importance to promotion of sustainability in vintage fashion consumption, as well as how these aspects translate into online spaces (if they do).

Based on the theoretical framework given in the last chapter, the following research question and sub-questions were settled on.

What role does sustainability play in the business practices of Dutch vintage fashion retailers?

- To what extent can the vintage retail industry be described as a community online and in physical spaces?
- What are the different motivations for pursuing vintage within the community?

- How does the community consider sustainability in their interactions and retail choices?
- What challenges are present when factoring in sustainability for vintage fashion retailers?

Given the nature of these questions, the semi-structured interview was chosen for several reasons. Semi-structured interviews are best suited for topics with high degrees of personal investment from the respondent (Bryman, 2012). In this case the personal nature of these businesses as well as the emotional investment of their owners in their work made it necessary to be flexible and discuss the information that they felt was the most important to focus on based on the prompt questions. Most of the retailers interviewed run their business by themselves or with close family, and the additional strain of the pandemic was felt by many but not identically, and that also had to be allowed for. Another important reason for choosing a semi-structured interview was that much of the biography of the interviewees was relevant for the study, from their education to their opinions on different phenomena within the fashion industry but also more political views on such hot-topic issues such as sustainability. For this reason, the anonymisation of data was particularly important as it put the interviewees at ease about expressing their stronger opinions and speaking plainly if they had grievances on a topic. This showcases the benefit of qualitative research for this case as the data extracted from the interviews is handled from an interpretivist position, taking into account the interviewees' context and their own interpretation of the concepts and definitions (Bryman, 2012). The goal was to see the community through their eyes and understand their role within it.

3.2 Method and Data Collection

The research aimed to focus on social context and interpretation of the data to understand the role of sustainability. A constructionist view can be useful to highlight the contingencies within the data offered, and their scope for change (Bryman, 2012). As the practitioners recount their stories, they have future plans and ambitions, and missions that evolved over the years. It is also important to note that following the literature, the development of vintage fashion businesses is also seen as a collaborative process with the consumers who also influence the way these businesses evolve. Therefore, the approach was overall deductive as the themes and concepts were extracted from existing theory within

literature on vintage fashion retail, vintage fashion consumption and sustainability within fashion consumption.

The data collection consisted of conducting 10 semi-structured interviews with Dutch vintage fashion retailers, found through generic purposive sampling on blogs and Instagram as well as personal experience as a consumer, and towards the end also through snowball-sampling with recommendations from interviewees, leading to a couple of clusters who knew one another, which is not surprising given their niche.

The criteria by which participants were scouted was whether they owned or managed a store in the Netherlands which specialised in vintage fashion, as defined in the literature review. If they owned a small store that identified itself as vintage and sold clothes that were not new in design or make (unless made with vintage materials), and/or pre-owned, they fit the criteria of the research. None of the shops had more than one location under them (though some had reselling partners) and were easy to categorise as very local. After obtaining consent the interviews were audio recorded onto a phone and later transcribed with Otter.ai software.

The interviewees had access to the interview guide beforehand (see Appendix A), but were not required to prepare it in advance, so the answers came with a fair bit of spontaneity. The questions were sent over primarily to ensure the interviewees were comfortable as all spoke Dutch natively and while fluent in English, some were less confident expressing themselves on difficult topics in a second language. To smooth over the process printed interview questions were also supplied during the interview, though turned out to be unnecessary in most cases. The interview consisted of three parts, though in practice as the approach was semi-structured, sometimes the categories overlapped or came in a different order, depending on the flow of the conversation and specific interests of the retailers. The categories questioned were as follows:

1. General background and introduction to the business and interviewee (including sample questions for inspiration)
2. Community
3. Sustainability

A few of the retailers expressed that they found the interview useful as an exercise because it allowed them to reflect again not only on the original mission of their business but also on the importance of the community they built up and the difference they can make in the industry.

3.3 Operationalisation of concepts

The semi-structured interviews for this study were built up with concepts that featured prominently in the theory and were constructed to discover if those concepts were relevant for Dutch vintage fashion retailers, if they identified with them and if there were any phenomena that they saw in their industry that agreed or disagreed with the theory.

The following concepts were primarily focused on within the categories of community and sustainability, serving as the backbone of the interview questions and leading to the other inquiries and follow-up questions also.

Table 1

Concept	Description	Literature
Motivations for engaging with vintage fashion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trend and influencers • Price • Uniqueness • Sustainability • Nostalgia • Personal attachment 	(Palmer, 2005) (Turunen et al, 2018) (Rudawska et al, 2018) (Heike, 2005)
Community	Hybrid, synergy between retailers and consumers, use of online spaces versus physical spaces, shared interest	(Fox, 2018) (O’Cass, 2001) (Rudawska et al, 2018)
Sustainability and long-term goals	Conscious consumption, recycling, extension of end of life, lifestyle	(Cervellon & Vigreux, 2018)

		(Moon et al, 2015) (Ryder et al, 2018) (Buchel et al, 2018)
Commercialisation of vintage and opinions on mainstream fashion industry	Appropriation of aesthetic by fast-fashion, trend, greenwashing	(McColl et al, 2013) (Cervellon & Vigneux, 2018)

3.4 Units of analysis and sample

As mentioned previously, the interviewees were chosen according to whether their business fit the criteria and were all Netherlands based. Oftentimes it was not known prior to the invitation which demographic they belonged to but given that the selection criteria was more focused on their business, this was not prioritised. The most significant diversity was in the ages of the retailers, with the youngest in their twenties and the oldest in their sixties. Most of the practitioners were women, but two were men, which is more representative for a female-dominated sector. Overall, the interviews came to on average 1 to 2 hours each, equalling 13.4 hours in total. The interviews were carried out with the founder of the shop by themselves, except for two, one was an interview with two co-founders, and one was with a retailer who took over an existing shop. All but one interview were carried out in person, either at the shop of the retailer or a nearby cafe in an informal setting, which all of the respondents expressed a preference for. In person settings allowed for easier conversation and a greater degree of trust and were also much easier to schedule as there was no need for any external software. As the interviews took place during working hours, the ones that took place in shops were sometimes interrupted by customers which was not problematic in the end as it allowed for an experience of observing interactions between retailers and their community first-hand and understanding the context of the shop.

The table below presents an overview of the interviewees and their background, the location of their shop, its age as well as broadly what it sells and how the collection is sourced.

Table 2

Interviewee	Type of shop	Location	Features of business and retailer
1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Founder 	Vintage and second-hand shop	The Hague	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ten years old • Exclusively consignment • Sells online also • Other background
2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Founder 	Sustainable and vintage shop	Amsterdam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web-shop four years old, physical shop one and a half years old. • Source from wholesale, markets and agencies • Fashion business background • Mainstream fashion experience
3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Founder 	Vintage store	Amsterdam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eight years old • Source from markets and abroad • Design background

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainstream fashion experience
4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Founder 	Upcycled, second-hand and vintage store	Rotterdam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Founder • Three years ago • Sources consignment as well as bulk buying discarded fabrics. • Design background • Mainstream fashion experience
5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two person team 	Vintage, second-hand and upcycled store	Amsterdam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two years old • Source from suppliers abroad • Have resellers in four locations in the Netherlands • Design and fashion business background • Mainstream fashion experience
6&7 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Husband and wife founding team 	Vintage and upcycling store	Rotterdam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eleven years old • Source from markets, stores, including abroad

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design background • Mainstream fashion experience 	
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Founder 	Vintage and second-hand store	The Hague	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five years old • Exclusively consignment • Fashion business background • Mainstream fashion experience
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Founder 	Vintage and second-hand store	Enschede	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than a year old • Exclusively online, starting a physical pop-up in the summer • Sources from other second-hand stores and markets as well as personal contacts • Art background
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Took over an existing shop 	Vintage and second-hand store	The Hague	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six years old • Exclusively consignment • Education background

The interviewees were happy to talk about not only their experiences and struggles but also their values, ideals, and political opinions with a great degree of enthusiasm, but the condition of anonymity was appreciated. As towards the end of the interviewing period snowball sampling was used, some retailers knew each other or knew of each other, and that also helped to lead them onto discussions of the industry as a whole and compare their businesses. Overall, the interviewees took great pride in representing their business and its value.

3.5 Transcription and data analysis

As mentioned previously, the interviews were transcribed in Otter.ai software and manually edited for clarity in Word in accordance with the audio recordings obtained during the interviews. This was necessary because of the background noise, accents, and disruptions during the interview itself, for example by customers. The transcriptions were then transferred to Atlas.ti software to be analysed. The interview transcripts were coded individually by the researcher with open coding to label important parts of the text that were indicated by interviewees as important or particularly interesting, corresponded to the main theoretical concepts, pointed to a popular sentiment, or displayed new ideas. After initial codes were completed, they were further placed into twelve code groups according to the aspect of the research they were referring to and these groups could consequently be matched to the sub-questions proposed earlier to compile the relevant data from the interviews for each question. The Atlas.ti report on these code groups can be seen in Appendix C for a more detailed breakdown.

3.6 Evaluation

As with all qualitative research, absolute reliability and validity can be a challenge in this research. The same questions were asked of all participants though sometimes in different order or phrasing depending on the answers given, but still ensuring a degree of external reliability (Bryman, 2012). Internal reliability was encouraged by revisiting the recordings of the conversation in order to not rely on initial impressions and analyse more closely what the interviewees meant, untangling any inconsistencies or vagueness in their answers. As the retailers have a high level of control over their business, much of the time their method and

mission are unique and hard to compare to others limiting external validity because of the small sample size however internal validity greatly benefitted from the length of the interviews and the openness of the conversations to gauge the big picture of not only the vintage fashion sector but also intimate knowledge of the role of the retailers and their communities.

Due to the conversational and personal nature of the interviews the expression of opinions of the researcher may have influenced the flow and tone of the conversation but it was done in good faith, additionally some of the interviewees expressed that they tone down their opinions around those who do not engage them in these conversations so this could have also had the effect of helping them open up. All biases were carefully considered and elaborated, explicit answers were encouraged to decrease subjectivity while maintaining that much of the gathered data is the retailers personal opinion and therefore even they could not guarantee that it always objectively holds up. However, as the research focuses on their own personal considerations of sustainability, this approach is preferable.

4. Results

The results are best reported according to the sub-questions proposed earlier in the research in order to begin answering the research question. As mentioned previously, the code groups were matched up to the questions they related the closest to which helped to combine and highlight the relevant insights from the interviews.

4.1 To what extent can the vintage retail industry be described as a community online and in physical spaces?

The question of community and sense of community was posed to the retailers from two angles. The community of retailers as well as the community of shoppers and they often offered different levels on which they were involved. The personal relationships, online interactions, returning customer base as well as feelings for their community were explored in order to justify the theoretical designation of hybrid community that acts together within the realm of vintage fashion.

All retailers confirmed that they felt a strong sense of community with their customers both online and even more importantly in their physical locations. Retailers have a personal

contact with the people who come in and ensure strong relationships that can last for years. Interviewee 1 shows how she maintains those connections and retains the loyalty of her customer base:

I know the names of their children, and their husband and even their dog. People come in because I can talk to them. It's personal, my approach to my clients. When I started, I told everyone that I want to be a 'warm baker', a shop where everyone knows my name and I know everyone's name. They come to me not only for clothes, but also for advice and chat.

Interviewee 8 echoed this sentiment by describing how she personally and purposefully nurtures the accessible atmosphere:

"But a lot of people that come to my shop find that a nice little experience, a getaway from the problems. And I built that. I built that feeling that they can just look around and relax. And that's totally different than just opening a box."

Interviewee 8 further explained the relationship by referring to the shared interests and affinity for the same things which extends the sense of community past the personal connection and closer to the values of their business.

"I'm sure it does also have something to do with the fact that you have a thing in common, you both do value durability, we care about the environment and have a common interest in that way. And most of the time they are really interesting people."

The question of consumer demographics that were most likely to be active participants within the community, as well as the ones that were the most closely aligned to the retailers themselves came up with Interviewee 3. He describes the community as being composed of certain demographics, people who do not have passive opinions and who he finds to resemble his own attitude:

I do have a client base of guys that are really not interested in the regular fashion industry. They find it hypocritical, wasteful business. But most people

that shop here are also in creative work. Carpenters, designers, theatre people, freelancer. There's definitely always a cultural edge to my customers, the people that sort of move and shake society. You do need a certain attitude to have clothing like this.

Interviewee 3 is also very clear that the process of vintage shopping is a collaborative process that he cannot make 'happen' on his own initiative, making the openness to relationships crucial:

"Definitely guys that are interested in doing things with their hands, tinkering with motorcycles and the like. I don't have people with new cars pulling up, for example. I'm also not a guy like that. I offer a lot of service, but I can't make magic happen, it has to happen by itself."

As a result, the view proposed by Kent et al (2018) of interconnected networks of agents within the vintage industry is further reinforced, as consumer wants have to closely interact with the services offered by the retailer and this is made easier by the sense of community and camaraderie.

When it comes to online spaces, some of the older retailers expressed that they find it difficult to keep up with the pace of the different platforms, often relying on interns or family member for help. This leads to several different models of engagement that were observed between the retailers. Some use social media as an administrative tool to announce when they open or close, others use it to advertise their items and allow for questions or reservations that can be picked up at the shop, others use social media to interact with their customers on a personal level by posting not only themselves but also the values of their business. Naturally, these categories are fluid and most retailers who were minimal with their online presence expressed openness to changing that in the future, citing time or skills constraints. Interviewee 8 shares her experience:

I'm just not very good at it. Having a shop is a lot of work, and it takes a lot of time, so I don't have much time for a social media presence. I do it all by myself, my daughter helps the last half a year, but before I was all alone. One day a girl came into the shop and asked if she could help me, and she's great

so now she comes in every week to take the pictures. She also has a fashion background, and she makes great sets, then my daughter also does a few.

However, equally some retailers see the online space and especially the authenticity of how they come across on social media as a vital part of their business. Interviewee 9 describes the difference of how she perceives social media as a private person versus how it helps her connect as an entrepreneur:

I didn't really have good relationship with social media, I actually don't really like social media. But then it was, for me, the only way to try and operate this.

And from the start, I also really promised myself that I would build a community with people that I want to have around me, and that are just nice people. And I always believe that if you try to radiate something, that it also comes back to you. So, I just tried to create a space where people feel safe, and also feel like they can talk to me.

The pandemic lockdowns increased the importance of social media interaction, and the community of consumers went out of their way to support their retailers. Interviewee 10 describes how her customers kept her in mind:

I have over 1500 people bringing me items. And I think half of that, it's an estimation, are really close customers like the small group, the inner group?

Those are the people who followed me on Instagram. Check my website during the lockdown, sent me messages every day even. Are you okay? Can you manage? I wait for the day for you to open.

This is also important as Interviewee 10 was one of the retailers that had an expanded use of social media, preferring to use it as an extension of her business rather than an administrative or marketing tool. Interviewee 10 describes her reasons in no uncertain terms:

I use social media, which I tried to do I dislike just posting items I sell in the shop, it says nothing to me. It doesn't hold a story or a message. So, when I use social media, I try to use it as a story or a lesson rather than just showing what I have at the moment. I post something about who I am, why I do this.

This shows the longevity and resilience of this community as well as the success and influence of the owner/manager to nurture this bond. The one caveat is that naturally not all consumers fall within this tight-knit circle. Due to the significant stigma that is attached to second-hand as well as the current trendiness of vintage, some of the customers that come in do not align with retailers in values or goals. It is sensible to leave those customers out of the definition of the community, however they have a high potential to turn into members of the community by becoming appreciative of vintage fashion as their experience grows. Interviewee 4 explained her attitude towards hesitant first-time customers:

For me it's a bit of a sport to sell those people second-hand especially when they don't have second-hand. They say it's dirty but I'm sorry, it is actually washed, just for you. And it's repaired so it's quite new. For some people they just step over the line for the first time, it's not what they usually do but now they have it and they leave the shop happy. And that's a bit of a victory for me.

Even those who hold misconceptions or prejudices against the sector, are simply looking for a costume or something cheap, can take on the values of the community also with time.

All retailers similarly described the retail community as close and collaborative, as seen in the collaborative consumption concept of Cervellon and Vigreux (2018). While many lamented the lack of time their schedules leave for these interactions, given their similar opening hours, distance and relative lack of bigger organisations, all had stories of how they help or are helped by the community and expressed affection for how the consensus is that there is no need for competition, especially at the expense of collaboration. Interviewee 2 shows the level of collaboration as well as the dominant way of thinking about others within the vintage fashion niche:

And then in this sustainability community, everybody cares for each other. And like, of course, we are sort of competitors, but we don't see it that way. And also, we do things together, we host pop ups and the like. [...] And also, I'm selling from a local vintage brand. So, in that way, I first thought oh, yeah, they're like competitors, but then then I also look into possibilities. How can I work with them in a way that's beneficial to my store? They have handpicked

beautiful vintage, why shouldn't I also add those items to my store? [...] And we also brainstorm and talk about how everything is going.

Importantly this is also a community that grows itself through mentorship. The youngest interviewee, Interviewee 9, described the importance of accessibility to other practitioners early in her career:

You shouldn't be afraid to go and ask them (bigger vintage retailers) for tips. [...] why am I not going to sell vintage clothes, because that's where my passion is, actually. And I texted one of the larger vintage retailers. And I was like: 'Well, can you help me a bit with pricing items?' I've no idea how to price it and she sent me how she does it and what she looks at.

As sharing knowledge becomes the norm and input of other retailers is welcomed and acted upon, it becomes a perfect community to implement change and the ability to use the online spaces as well as their role as an authentic extension of the retailer only further increases their reach and connectivity. The close relationships and similar attitudes also invite the view that motivations within the community will be linked, allowing for research to not have to separate the retailers and consumers but rather see them as a collective.

4.2 What are the different motivations for pursuing vintage within the community?

All of the motivations within the literature interview were brought up by the retailers independently. A real ranking was hard for the retailers to determine, but some certainly came across as more prominent and met more enthusiasm from retailers themselves. Most retailers drew parallels between their own motivations and preferences and those of the consumers, as stated above, but for others some motivations like sustainability were underappreciated.

Uniqueness of vintage fashion, a certain 'Cinderella' quality whereby the garment exists in one copy and has to fit exactly right. Many of the retailers were highly emotionally attached to the clothing they sold, therefore the process of passing on ownership to the buyer was more than just a purchase. Interviewees 6 and 7 stated that the choice to make that transfer is emotionally as much on them as on the consumer:

“Because I want to see people fall in love with a piece. And our babies must fit the new parents. We’re not commercial at all. When someone tries on our sunglasses and they don’t look good on them, even if they like it I don’t want to sell it to them.”

Uniqueness and aesthetic of vintage fashion was frequently given as the main motivation for both the consumers and retailers themselves. This supports Rudawska et al (2018) as uniqueness becomes a point of identity. Interviewee 4 makes this link and ties it to the sort of counter-cultural, rebellious nature of vintage as seen in McColl et al (2012):

“Now there are more people that don’t want to be told what to wear. I am the same way, I don’t care about fashion, I don’t want to be told.”

However, sometimes the uniqueness and ambition of the retailer exceeded that of the consumer. Interviewees 6 and 7 found that their aesthetic choices were not yet easy for the customers to consume because of the knowledge and imagination needed for vintage designs:

“You have to be adventurous in a place like this. And we found this is a very small demographic. And also, people can be a little bit intimidated to ask us for our expertise. We don’t even give so much feedback anymore because people get defensive. But it’s a shame.”

Nostalgia as described in Jenss (2005) did not prove to be a particularly popular motivation. Just three of the retailers brought it up and only really in relation to themselves and their background rather than the community. There was no strong preference exhibited for a particular style or decade and none of the retailers really targeted a specific time period, not even in terms of vintage. Interviewee 3 describes the role of nostalgia and fashion history in informing his interest and design choices, but it is a more forward thinking view rather than attempting to recreate historical dress:

“I always looked at the history of menswear fashion clothing. I always found that fascinating and it also always showed the origin of the item I’d design, so I always looked at what’s in fashion but also the icon pieces. I was always fascinated by the decorum of clothing and the origins of fashion.”

However, as was seen in the literature, price was a much more complicated motivation. This aspect showed more diversity between the retailers. While all retailers rejected money as an ambition of the business, they were also clear that they would not pursue it if it was not doing well. As price is something the retailers of small shops can decide relatively freely, the main disagreements between the retailers were how they should value their collection. Interviewees 6 and 7 frame the cheap price as a misconception on the part of the consumer and demands that quality and uniqueness be considered and appreciated in terms of price:

We do see some people come back but this is difficult business. This is not second-hand like people are used to. When people come in, they think it's going to be cheap. But it's often not. When the original costs over a thousand euro and we have it for three hundred, it's cheap for us but if you shop at Cheap Fashion and the like, it is expensive. We know that. Younger people don't feel the quality anymore.

This view was also mirrored by others as the shops are not only their livelihoods but also take a lot of time and money to maintain and source the garments. Price was also seen as a way to counteract a consumerist culture, with higher pricing encouraging more conscious consumption. However, other retailers offer a different point of view to say that second-hand (and vintage here falls under second-hand), should be priced low and remain accessible. Five out of ten retailers specified that they do not want to be an expensive shop. Interviewee 1 offers her position from the point of view of what she values about her business:

I don't want to be an expensive vintage shop, for sure, I don't want to just sell to people with a lot of money. People often tell me I can ask for a lot more for certain things and I know that, but I want normal people in my shop, who love beautiful things. Normally you ask for a third of the new price but when it's very expensive things I often go below that. I always think what would I pay for this, that's sort of how I decide.

Fashionism, the concept introduced by Moon et al (2015), is further explored in the discussion of trends by the retailers. The high levels of involvement from the retailer in curating their collection may set the trend in what customers look for from their business. Two retailers

confirmed they do market research with current trends to style their offerings after them.

Interviewee 5 explains the reason for this:

We also aim that you feel confident, especially I'm talking about people that never bought a vintage. You buy a blazer from us, and then you wear it and then you feel like it's new. You know, we try to stay a little bit away from these garments that you see from a mile away that you feel like okay, that is vintage. Fully so loud, you know, so crazy that it feels almost like a costume. We try not to go in there because, there's no connection for us with that aesthetic.

Additionally, it is the trends that have the most detrimental effect on the green potential of vintage fashion. The retailers were quizzed on whether the commercialisation of vintage by big brands is a problem for their business and all ten said it was not because of the other qualities they add as well as the personal relationships they create within the community. They were convinced that authenticity and honesty is more important, and their core community would not return to mainstream fashion in a big way. However, importance of trend is also in how easy it is to attract new consumers to vintage fashion, and, in that sense, popularisation was appreciated by three of the retailers. Interviewee 1 expressed her appreciation for how trendiness of vintage design has helped her business:

And I like the variety of fashion these days. Maybe it's my age, but I like things coming back. Plus, it makes it easier for me to sell my things, it's easier to sell flared jeans now than it used to be, for example. So, it helps me in a way. What I sell is what is fashionable, but also authentic. Not made in China. And that means a lot to my customers and to me as well.

The ability of vintage fashion to combine recurring trends with authenticity is what presents as a strong benefits and attracts customers that want to engage and go deeper into the story of their clothes.

Other motivations offered but not explored in detail in the literature were independence of being an entrepreneur as well as the ability to bring their own vision into everything they do. The retailers enjoyed having their own space, deciding on the direction of

their business themselves and ultimately doing what they liked. Additionally, from the point of view of the consumers, their involvement in the community is further emphasised by four of the retailers who claim that for many of their consumers it is imperative that they are supporting a small store. Interviewee 10 shows how this is a motivation for her visitors:

” They also love to shop here. It's more about the idea. More and more people are conscious about recycling and small business owners. So even people that can afford new, shop second-hand.”

Exploring the motivations of the community is useful to gauge the value of the business as well as understand how it gets popularised. The motivations presented by the literature were matched and expanded with the data of the Dutch vintage retailers. The justification for the initial reading of the agents within the vintage fashion sector as a community was the synergy of their motivations and this is confirmed by the retailers who all confirmed that they also consume vintage fashion, from their own business and from others. With this analysis in the background, the sustainability motivation that needs to be addressed in order to answer the research question is explored in the next section.

4.3 How does the community consider sustainability in their interactions and retail choices?

While sustainability is an important motivation for the vintage fashion community, it can be seen separately from the rest of the motivations as there can be more factors that feed into an individual's choice to engage with sustainability. To make sense of how the vintage fashion community considers sustainability the interviewees were asked about their opinions on the mainstream fashion industry, role of sustainability as a motivation as well as the role of retailers in using their business as a sustainable platform. Importantly all retailers said sustainability was important to them, and four said it was the main reason behind starting their shop. The discussions of this subject were, therefore, of great personal interest to all interviewees.

Fredriksson and Aslan (2018) put forward the idea that sustainability is often a political, lifestyle choice and some retailers have in fact seen this category of consumers, going as far as

to say the share of these within the broader demographic is growing. Interviewee 8 shared her observations in the time she had been running her business:

There is a percentage that will only shop second-hand, and I think that percentage is definitely growing. They won't go downtown for their shopping anymore. First when I started it was both, now the percentage is definitely going up. I have people tell me they haven't bought anything new in months. Those are also the people that will go to other vintage shops too. I think that's already maybe 30% of my customers.

Likewise, Interviewee 5 noted that the community that interacts with her business is more like to be receptive to the idea of sustainability:

They are in a way little bit more open minded, they are more flexible, they are more of a sponge. They see more possibilities in fashion, so they also see more possibilities in other things. I think they are most likely to see other changes in food and stuff like that. But definitely, I think the bigger part of our consumers, vintage fashion is not the only sustainable thing they do in life.

These observations show that the sustainability principles that the community follows are not limited to fashion and the level of investment in sustainable consumption. This all-encompassing interest can prove important as these members of the community will not engage with vintage fashion if it is not sustainable. The personal interest of the retailers themselves is also expressed by Interviewee 5 who clarifies her reasons for starting the store:

“That (sustainability) was the main reason. I will say definitely, that was the main reason, everything else just came along. Because the green side and the sustainable side really make an impact and a change in fashion was the main reason.”

No single shop was started with a single idea in mind as personal enjoyment of vintage and second-hand was the inspiration, but the frustrations with mainstream fashion and desire to make an impact were key incentives.

However, the interviews also revealed that it is not as straightforward as that. The interviewees that felt strongest about their sustainable mission describe how they often hold back when it comes to expressing their opinion to customers and can become exasperated with the lack of awareness the community still exhibits on the big picture of sustainable consumption of fashion, from sustainable fabrics to workers' rights. The fear of being off-putting by expressing opinions too strongly is also rooted in the precarious financial position. Interviewee 2 describes the situation as follows:

That was what I was trying to do when I began to also look into a concept or in a way of working that stayed true to my ideals but also, I didn't want to push it so that people who are not as much into it aren't alienated. When they come in, I can tell them a little bit about it and they also realise.

This potentially negative perception of sustainability by the consumer and the fear of coming off as preaching or repetitive by the retailer, gives way to other motivations that are more individual such as fashionability to be expressed more frequently. Interviewee 3 puts it succinctly:

“No, I just try to make them look good. I don't talk much politics with my clients. Never mix fashion and politics.”

While this does not negate the benefits of vintage fashion for the environment, it does have the potential to change the business focus to sustainability as a bonus feature. Interestingly, the reasoning for this difference in focus is not always due to the negative perception, equally often it is due to the personal focus of the community itself. Interviewee 8 shows that the conversations are simply mostly too casual to focus on subjects like sustainability:

“When people bring clothes sometimes you get conversational. But it depends, we mostly talk about personal stuff rather than politics, of course.”

In rare cases, retailers discovered a subset of consumers that are indifferent to the question of sustainability. This was observed by seven retailers and while those consumers did not express

hostility, they also were not interested in finding out more. Interviewee 4 describes engaging this subset:

“Yes, it’s not so much that they react negatively but rather they say that’s very nice, but it’s not for me. Most of the time they want to listen, but they think it’s not for them.”

This attitude is often conflated by others with a lack of awareness, which gives retailers an important new role.

In light of this, many retailers expressed their knowledge and appreciation of their educational role, as proposed by Shen et al (2014). Not all of the retailers had a background in design, or even fashion, with four out of the ten interviewees having an education outside of fashion. However, the knowledge that comes from experience cannot be underestimated, and multiple retailers expressed how much they learned on the job on the subject of sustainability. This knowledge is something many expressed a willingness to share with their community. Interviewee 4 uses her business as a platform and draws connections to better known sustainability battles:

“For me it’s important that I make people aware that they throw away a lot and that the fashion industry is one of the most polluting industries in the world. They just don’t realize. They just say oh, driving a car, Shell, planes those are all bad, but they don’t realize fashion is also very bad.”

Education is also posited as a solution to the issue of unsustainable consumption of fashion by five of the retailers. Retailers propose not only using themselves as a platform but also including this knowledge in the public school system and in education for future fashion industry actors. Interviewee 5 who has a design background proposes this:

We need to adapt and rethink what we are teaching. Like when you learn about materials. You need to know about the sustainable alternatives to silk and wool or to polyester, to cotton, to whatever. If you don't know them, it's

gonna take forever and you will not never make the link between all these factories and brands making new materials sustainable and these people learning the old way. They need to be connected from the beginning.

There were, however, also two retailers where the educational role was given to consumers and society as opposed to their experience. Two retailers expressed that their investment in the sustainability aspect of vintage fashion grew as the interest of their clients grew, or as the awareness within society at large increased. This shows a circular exchange of information within the community and the fact that in order to consider sustainability within vintage fashion, a certain level of awareness and education is always needed.

An important aspect that is not explored in the literature but was prominent in the interviews, is the fact that these retailers often have sustainability ambitions that extend to other activities or even beyond fashion. They are passionate about giving back to their community. Interviewees 1, 5, 8 and 10 are all involved in charity work. Interviewee 1 explains her role and the role of the shop as follows:

Things that I don't sell after two months goes to charity here in the Hague where I know the people need it. For me personally that doesn't feel good to just do it for money. Especially because if we were all very rich and didn't need things like clothes, but there are many people in need, who have nothing. I believe you always have to do something for society. We live in a world where people need each other.

Interviewee 8 has a similar scheme where clothes that are not claimed back as part of the consignment deal are donated to charity. Both retailers express a great deal of investment and satisfaction from being able to give back not just to the environment, but to society, at expense to their own potential earnings:

I bring clothes that are not sold or claimed back to this charity, which is a charity that houses battered women. And I really like this bond I have with them. I thought very hard about which organization I want to support and where I am most needed. My items are still good, sometimes even expensive, so I'm happy to give them up. A lot of these women left their home in a hurry, they have nothing.

This characterises the community and gives a much more well-rounded view of the motivations behind their sustainability drive. If the values of sustainability are not limited to personal choices but extend onto their entire attitude towards society, a much stronger intrinsic motivation is created, making the values a defining feature of the business.

In conclusion the biggest contribution the vintage fashion retailers have for fostering sustainability is the promotion through their business, making sustainability appealing and educating where they are able, and they do it motivated entirely by their beliefs and the beliefs of their consumers, even if the relative importance between the two groups does not always match up.

4.4 What challenges are present when factoring in sustainability for vintage fashion retailers?

As mentioned before the main challenge identified by the retailers is lack of awareness and indifference for education. Regardless of whether sustainability was their original goal with starting their business or if it came with their own experience later, all retailers were informed and passionate about protecting the environment, but the same passion was not always reciprocated by the rest of the community which affected the way they interacted with the concepts themselves.

The reasons proposed by Harris et al (2016) for the challenges of promoting sustainability are also clearly seen within the interviews. The complexity of the sustainability issues are expressed by the retailers when discussing all the steps they take to ensure their actions can be defined as green in good faith, for most this is sustainable sourcing of garments and fabric but often this also includes diverse considerations such as the use of green dry cleaning services or a refusal to make use of a web shop and related shipping. This may not always be obvious to the consumers and therefore their value may not always be appreciated in willingness to spend, compared to other aspects like fashionability of the piece. Interviewee 10 highlights the importance of being practical:

“I think also you see the work behind it and the way taxes work and pay for this building, which is protected heritage. And they have no idea. Oh, the richer they are the less they know.”

Similarly, the variety in ethics considerations between different consumers are seen by retailers frequently. Interviewee 1 recounts a customer who showed how principles often present within a culture of consumerism:

I complimented her top and she said yeah, it's from Primark, it's only eight euros! I had to bite my tongue, I said oh, but you put it into the washing machine, is it still as nice. And she said, oh no, but I can just buy another. Is that really where we want to go with our planet? She had all these excuses, when it comes to wallets, people's principles fade away. That's the scary thing.

The last challenge proposed by Harris et al (2016) is the fact that fashion is often purchased for hedonistic reasons, and this is also a noted issue. Interviewee 1 also conveys her concerns when running her business according to her principles:

I can be very romantic about my shop and still, I have to pay my bills. I have to look with the eyes of my customers, will someone buy this? Is it wearable? I always have the motivation of sustainability, but it is a modern thing.

The above reasons are closely tied together, so much so that every anecdote from interviews that was selected to illustrate the point, can illustrate the other reasons just well.

A minority of retailers, three out of ten, also expressed an idealistic opposition to consumption in general, despite how they enjoyed it. These retailers illustrated the concepts put forward by Fredriksson and Aslan (2018) of consumers who are reluctant to consume in fear of overconsumption, as their motivations are related it follows that they would exhibit this trait. Interviewee 4 shows the inherent compromise in factoring sustainability into any sort of retail:

“What I think about like, the backside of vintage, but yeah, it's just hard because also with sustainable brands, you can never be 100% sustainable, so in that way consuming is always wrong. Hearing it from me as a retailer is a bit weird. But yeah.”

This point of view leads retailers to see themselves as more a lesser of two evils, when compared to mainstream fashion. A few others also found consumption very easy to get wrong and independently all agreed that they actively discourage overconsumption even if it comes with a loss to them. All retailers specified, without directly being asked, that they actively discourage consumers from buying things they are not sure about. Interviewee 1 discusses her reasons for this:

“And I try to maintain my values, when I see people doubt, I don’t tell them to buy it. I want everyone to be happy and value what they bought; I don’t want them to waste second-hand either, in the long-term that would still be waste.”

This ability to put values above profit define how these retailers choose to operate their business.

All retailers expressed that they knew there are limitations on their impact on the environment and culture around them on account of being ‘just’ a small shop. However, Interviewee 4 put it in a powerful way, qualifying her contribution to the change in the fashion industry:

I’ve been to some occasions with speakers who are designers from the Dutch industry, and they would talk about sustainability, and afterwards there would be drinks and it’s all very much in theory. And they would ask me what I do, and I say I have this little shop and they’d tell me, oh my god, we’re talking about it and you’re doing it. And yeah, I’m doing things, no matter how small.

Due to this limitation, however, an aspect that was brought up by multiple respondents that has not been explored widely in literature is government support and government

intervention, a sentiment felt even more strongly in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and related lockdowns which hit small businesses hard. Interviewee 3 put it best:

They (government) know people that own businesses, they'll die and resurrect before they stop. This here is my baby, so I'll fight until it's dead. No one thought oh, lets do something for the vintage shops because they're promoting recycling clothing. No, they just wanted to pay out the people at the regular clothing shops. It's another thing that isn't respected, whereas I have written that letter asking how is this support decided, it's not adding up to the price I'm paying for my location. And that means that whatever I'm doing, and inspiring people to get into in the clothing industry, you're not supporting it as a government. I could drop, but that's because I'm a single, stubborn entrepreneur.

While vintage fashion is inherently more sustainable than mainstream fashion, it does not come without significant challenges related to sustainability. From the difficulty of promoting sustainability to those within the community that are hesitant or unwilling to sacrifice, to the ontological complexities of sustainability issues due to the million aspects that feed into true sustainability and the limitation of their scope as small shops with a lack of government support. The vintage fashion community has to overcome many hurdles, but that hardly seems to diminish their passion.

5. Conclusion

The main goal of this research has been to answer the question of what role sustainability plays in the business practices of Dutch vintage fashion retailers. The answer is predictably complicated, and the insights of the retailers interviewed expanded the possible focus of the research immeasurably. This research proposed to combine the study of the retailers with insights about their consumers, this was necessary to establish the role of the community around vintage fashion as the literature offered up the idea that small vintage fashion retailers were inherently in synergy with their community of consumers and each other, an aspect that was enthusiastically confirmed by the Dutch retailers interviewed. This community determined the role of sustainability by showing how retailers and consumers could consider and interact with the different principles that make a business green. Asking these questions helped to show how sustainability is perceived in the sector, its relative importance to everyone involved and how it is reinforced through the business of vintage fashion retailers, to assess the potential

vintage has to change the industry in the future, which was an aspect the retailers were excited to discuss.

The role sustainability plays in the business practices of Dutch vintage fashion retailers is varied. Sustainability is a main motivation and inspiration behind many of the businesses. Regardless of the low financial return on their efforts, none of the retailers wanted to cease operating or expressed any sort of dissatisfaction with the way their business was running. These businesses were the definition of passion project and while personal interests in garments themselves was important, retailers went above and beyond to ensure that their businesses were as sustainable as possible and took the time to continuously educate themselves, each other, and their communities about the different aspects of sustainability within the fashion world and within their own supply chain and other business practices. Additionally, sustainability informed how retailers presented their businesses to the world and how they used their social positions to turn their business into a platform. Social media and online presence often involved discussion of sustainability and for many that was the main source of marketing they were willing to engage in, as authenticity was too important for them to sacrifice. The vintage fashion businesses were at the core resistant to being commercialised and a big reason for that was because without the value sustainable practices added to the way the business was run and perceived, the retailers would not want them. 'This way or no way' was a refrain that was heard often, showing how every other business concern took second place to promoting sustainability and sustainable development. Businesses also accrued significant challenges from maintaining sustainability as their overall focus, having to consider not only their impact but also the contradictions that will inherently arise from trying to run a successful business when the ideal is zero net consumption.

5.1 Limitations and future research

The limitation of the research naturally includes the small sample size and the small scope of the used materials. As the interviews were long and detailed it was difficult to incorporate all the different elements and ideas offered up by the retailers for thorough analysis. Additionally, even if the research went into great depth on the motivations of the consumers and their view of the community, there was no first-hand data from the consumers themselves, only the way they were perceived by the retailers. Naturally it would enrich the

study to get their context and opinions to ensure that they were accurately represented, and that the community really was as close knit as the retailers perceived it to be.

Future research must include the role of government as a supporting entity for small business and particularly small fashion designers and retailers. As only few of the retailers wanted to put themselves in a box of just one type of clothing that they wanted to sell now or in the future, it is important to look at what the government can do as a whole for the sector. The principles of sustainability and progressive values that these entrepreneurs live by are something a government must support in policy in order to assert its commitment to greener business as well as for them to thrive and especially grow when the market is saturated with big, international retailers instead. The Covid-19 crisis was far from being a great equaliser as it disproportionately hurt the smaller businesses and the government policies of long lockdowns and relatively small pay-outs for small business further increased the precariousness of their situation. This sort of research can be of interest to government body as it shines a light on another avenue for the promotion of entrepreneurship, local fashion, as well as environmental consciousness.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Interview Guide.

General

Please tell me more about your business: here are some questions as inspiration,

Would you define your business as vintage fashion? What qualities should clothing have to be considered vintage?

What were your motivations for starting your business? How is it different from other vintage fashion retailers? How long have you been running this business?

Do you consider yourself to be an expert in vintage fashion and if so, what are your specific areas of interest? What are your responsibilities within your business?

How do you choose which clothes to include in your shop? Do you accept all clothing or do you focus on designer items? Do you alter them in any way?

Community and motivation

Do you also consume vintage fashion?

Do you stay in contact with your consumers and other retailers, is there a sense of community?

If so, how is it centred on the Netherlands or do you have international connections also?

How has the internet/online spaces/social media affected your community? How are customers in your online store different from the ones in your physical store (if you have one).

Do you think vintage fashion is a fad or will it continue gaining momentum? Do you see a difference between luxury and plain second-hand?

What sort of demographics do you see gravitating towards vintage fashion? Has this changed in the time you've had your business?

What do you think the most important motivations for consumers to buy vintage are? How are they different from yours? Which motivations do you think are the most important?

How do you incorporate customer motivations into your business model?

Sustainability

How important is sustainability to you personally and as an entrepreneur? What is your opinion on sustainable practices in the fashion industry as a whole?

Which sustainability issues in fashion do you personally find the most compelling and how do you incorporate them in your business? If you do not do this yet, do you have plans to do so?

Do you believe you encourage consumers to shop sustainably through your business?

How does the vintage fashion community respond to the idea of sustainability? How does it compare to other, more individual motivations for buying vintage such as fashionability?

What do you think the biggest challenges are for promoting sustainability, how do you go about these conversations with your clients? If you do not, why not?

Do you work/collaborate/consult with any external organisations that promote sustainability?
Do you incorporate sustainability themes in your marketing?

How do you think commercialisation of vintage in high-street brands has affected the sector?

There are many fast-fashion shops that have lines that look vintage but are only styled like that, do you think they are competition for you personally? How do you adapt your business? Do you think those fast-fashion consumers will come to your business eventually?

Do you think vintage fashion is a viable solution for the damage the fashion industry is causing?
What do you hope to see in the industry as a whole, and for your business specifically?

Appendix B: Consent Form.

Project Title and version	What role does sustainability play in the business practices of Dutch vintage fashion retailers?
Name of Principal Investigator	Arina Gerdyush
Name of Organisation	Erasmus University Rotterdam
Name of Sponsor	N.A.
Purpose of the Study	This research is being conducted by Arina Gerdyush. I am inviting you to participate in this research project about the role of sustainability principles in the business of Dutch vintage fashion retailers. The purpose of this research project is to identify how Dutch vintage fashion retailers and communities contribute to sustainability in the fashion industry.
Procedures	You will participate in an interview lasting between 1 and 2 hours. You will be asked questions about: Sample questions include: How does the vintage fashion community respond to the idea of sustainability? How does it compare to other, more individual motivations for buying vintage such as fashionability? You must be at least 18 years old.

Potential and anticipated Risks and Discomforts	There are no obvious physical, legal or economic risks associated with participating in this study. You do not have to answer any questions you do not wish to answer. Your participation is voluntary, and you are free to discontinue your participation at any time.
Potential Benefits	Participation in this study does not guarantee any beneficial results to you. The broader goal of this research is to explore how sustainability informs the businesses of Dutch vintage fashion retailers.
Confidentiality	<p>Your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. No personally identifiable information will be reported in any research product. Moreover, only trained research staff will have access to your responses. Within these restrictions, results of this study will be made available to you upon request.</p> <p>As indicated above, this research project involves making audio recordings of interviews with you. Transcribed segments from the audio recordings may be used in published forms (e.g., journal articles and book chapters). In the case of publication, pseudonyms will be used. The audio recordings, forms, and other documents created or collected as part of this study will be stored in a secure location in the researchers' offices or on the researchers password-protected computers and will be destroyed within ten years of the initiation of the study.</p>
Compensation	Non Applicable
Right to Withdraw and Questions	<p>Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalised or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.</p> <p>If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or if you need to report an injury related to the research, please contact the primary investigator:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Arina Gerdyush – 06 85167704 467580ag@eur.nl</p>
Statement of Consent	<p>Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years of age; you have read this consent form or have had it read to you; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree that you will participate in this research study. You will receive a copy of this signed consent form.</p> <p>I have been given the guarantee that this research project has been reviewed and approved by the ESHCC Ethics Review. For research problems or any other question</p>

	<p>regarding the re-search project, the Data Protection Officer of Erasmus University, Marlon Domingus, MA (fg@eur.nl).</p> <p>If you agree to participate, please sign your name below.</p>	
<p>Audio recording (if applicable)</p>	<p>I consent to have my interview audio recorded</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> no</p>	
<p>Secondary use (if applicable)</p>	<p>I consent to have the anonymised data be used for secondary analysis</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> no</p>	
<p>Signature and Date</p>	<p>NAME PARTICIPANT</p>	<p>NAME PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR</p> <p>Arina Gerdyush</p>
	<p>SIGNATURE</p>	<p>SIGNATURE</p>
	<p>DATE</p>	<p>DATE</p>

Appendix C: Code Groups Atlas.ti.

Project: MA Thesis

Report created by Arina Gerdyush on 19.06.2021

Code Report – Grouped by: Code Groups

All (116) codes

Background of retailer

8 Codes:

- Age of shop
- Background
- Exposure to vintage

- Mainstream fashion experience
 - Personal sustainability
 - Reason for starting the shop
 - Technical expertise
 - Vintage as a design inspiration
-

Community motivations for vintage

25 Codes:

- Aesthetic
- Authenticity
- Body Image
- Combine modern with vintage
- Diversity of items
- Durability
- Emotional attachment to clothing
- Functionality in fashion
- How other motivations relate to the main one
- Idealism
- Nostalgia
- Peer influence
- personal connection with secondhand
- Personal consumption of vintage
- Price
- Quality
- real vintage as a bonus
- Same motivation
- Story of clothes

- Supporting small business as a motivation
 - Timelessness
 - Transparency
 - Treasure hunting
 - Trend
 - Uniqueness
-

Community sense

14 Codes:

- Charity/Social sustainability work
 - Collaboration
 - Community of retailers
 - Competition within vintage
 - Conversations with clients
 - Help from other retailers
 - How perception of vintage changed
 - How they want the customer to feel in the shop
 - Knowing what certain customers want
 - Online interaction
 - Personal connection with customers
 - Returning customers
 - Sense of community
 - Social media
-

Definition of vintage

3 Codes:

- Definition of vintage

- Difference between vintage and secondhand
 - Misconceptions about secondhand
-

Demographics of customers

3 Codes:

- Age of customer
 - Demographic
 - Female demographic
-

Differences in offering and consuming vintage by retailers

8 Codes:

- Combine modern with vintage
 - Competition with big brands
 - Competition within vintage
 - Designer vintage
 - Enjoyment of consignment
 - Fur and Leather
 - real vintage as a bonus
 - Upcycling
-

Features of business

25 Codes:

- Added Value
- Bulk buying
- Challenges of running a sustainable business
- Effect of pandemic

- Enjoyment of consignment
 - Giving and sharing
 - Hand-me-downs
 - How collection is built
 - How perception of vintage changed
 - How they want the customer to feel in the shop
 - Importance of place
 - Importance of touching garments
 - Locality
 - Personal care in business
 - Physical space
 - Popularisation
 - Relationship between physical and online
 - Role of physical shop
 - Shipping
 - Simplifying the process
 - Sizing
 - Small shop traits
 - Source
 - Stigma
 - Vintage niche
-

Long-term goals

6 Codes:

- Future hopes of consumption
- Future plans for business
- Hope for the future

- Need for education
 - Need for government intervention
 - Solution
-

Opinions on mainstream fashion

9 Codes:

- Big picture of sustainability
 - Consumerism
 - Corporate Greed
 - Design integrity
 - Difference of vintage from mainstream fashion
 - Greenwashing
 - Popularisation
 - Positives of commercialisation
 - Transparency of big brands
-

Personal attachment to business

3 Codes:

- Apprehension
 - Enjoyment by the retailer
 - Personal insecurity
-

Role of retailers in promoting sustainability

13 Codes:

- Business as a platform
- Compromise

- Consciousness
 - Conversations with clients
 - Discouraging overconsumption
 - Education
 - Need for education
 - promoting sustainability
 - promoting sustainability to customers
 - promoting sustainability to other retailers
 - Promoting vintage to first-time consumers
 - Role of education
 - Sustainability marketing
-

Role of sustainability in the vintage community

17 Codes:

- Business as a platform
- Challenges of running a sustainable business
- Charity/Social sustainability work
- consumer driven sustainability
- Disinterest from consumers for sustainability
- Other activities by retailers to promote sustainability
- Personal sustainability
- promoting sustainability
- promoting sustainability to customers
- promoting sustainability to other retailers
- Promoting vintage to first-time consumers
- Sustainability as a bonus
- Sustainability as a motivation for consumers

- Sustainability as the main value of business
- Sustainability in business
- Sustainability marketing
- Sustainable shopping practices