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From Excess to Restraint

Understanding Sustainable Anti-Consumption of Clothing as a Practice in a Consumption Community

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ABSTRACT:

This study examines the 'Rule of Five' consumption community's practices in fostering sustainable anti-consumption of clothing at both individual and collective levels. With rising concerns over fashion's overproduction and waste, the study highlights the importance of extending clothing lifecycles and opposing further acquisitions and waste of clothing through sustainable anti-consumption of fashion. Sustainable anti-consumption of clothes as a practice holds great potential in battling problems related to fashion overconsumption, for it entails reducing the overall volume of clothing purchased as well as the adverse effects of clothing consumption through examining the quality and sustainability of clothes. Additionally, the practice offers consumers ways to mitigate environmental harm and promote sustainable consumer behavior.

The thesis aims to determine what sustainable anti-consumption of clothes as a practice includes and how it is implemented in communal settings such as the studied 'Rule of Five' online consumption community. This paper also seeks to explore how and why consumers engage in such practices. Additionally, the study examines how group dynamics and personal factors such as personal values and motivations can affect participation in sustainable clothing practices.

The research is carried out using a qualitative approach, combining thematic analysis and a case study method. Data collection involved conducting 13 in-depth, semi-structured interviews, allowing for flexibility and exploring participants' personal perspectives and experiences. The interviewees were or had been actively involved in the online consumption community 'Rule of Five'. Through the chosen approach, both individual and collective dimensions could be examined, providing a deeper understanding of the interplay between individual and collective influences in promoting sustainable consumption habits.

Through the chosen approach, key practices, motivational factors, and challenges within the studied consumption community are uncovered and analyzed. The analysis is divided into personal and community level factors motivating or hindering participation in community practice. Additionally, the individual practices related to sustainable anti-consumption of clothes are recognized and examined. The studied consumption community is characterized through research data and then compared with commonly recognized community types in present literature.

Key findings of this study reveal that participants demonstrate a commitment to sustainability through their value base, informed and need-based choices, prioritizing durable materials, and extensive clothing care. The community actively engages in product and brand avoidance while exhibiting some generic anti-consumption behaviors. Key enablers include strong sustainability values and community support, whereas challenges arise from the challenge's restrictive nature and personal concerns about the effectiveness of individual actions, alongside limited social interaction among members.

KEYWORDS: sustainable clothing consumption, anti-consumption, consumption communities

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TIIVISTELMÄ:

Tässä tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan "Rule of Five" -kuluttajayhteisön käytäntöjä kestävässä vaatteiden antikulutuksessa niin yksilö- kuin yhteisötasolla. Muotialan ylituotannon ja jäteongelmien kasvaessa tutkimus korostaa vaatteiden elinkaaren pidentämisen tärkeyttä sekä uusien hankintojen ja vaatejätteen vähentämistä vaatteiden kestävän antikulutuksen avulla. Vaatteiden kestävä antikulutus ilmentää merkittävää potentiaalia torjua muodin ylikulutusta, sillä se tarkoittaa sekä uutena ostettujen vaatteiden määrän vähentämistä että vaatekulutuksen haittavaikutusten minimoimista keskittymällä vaatteiden laatuun ja kestävyyteen. Lisäksi käytäntö tarjoaa kuluttajille keinoja vähentää ympäristöhaittoja ja edistää kestävää kulutuskäyttäytymistä.

Tutkielman tavoitteena on määrittää, mitä vaatteiden kestävä antikulutus käytäntönä sisältää ja miten sitä toteutetaan yhteisöllisissä konteksteissa, kuten tutkimuksen kohteena olevassa "Rule of Five" -verkkoyhteisössä. Lisäksi tutkielmassa pyritään selvittämään, miten ja miksi kuluttajat osallistuvat tällaisiin käytäntöihin. Tutkimus tarkastelee myös, miten ryhmädynamiikka ja yksilölliset tekijät, kuten henkilökohtaiset arvot ja motivaatiot, vaikuttavat osallistumiseen kestäviin vaatetuskäytäntöihin.

Tutkimus toteutettiin laadullisen tutkimuksen keinoin. Tutkimusanalyysi toteutettiin temaattisen analyysin metodilla, jonka lisäksi tutkimuksessa perehdyttiin tapaustutkimusmenetelmän keinoin "Rule of Five" -yhteisöön. Aineisto kerättiin pitämällä 13 semistrukturoitua haastattelua, jotka mahdollistavat joustavan tavan tutkia osallistujien henkilökohtaisia näkemyksiä ja kokemuksia. Kaikki haastateltavat olivat tutkitun "Rule of Five" -yhteisön aktiivisia jäseniä tai olivat olleet mukana kyseisen kulutusyhteisön toiminnassa aiemmin. Valitun lähestymistavan avulla voitiin tarkastella sekä yksilöllisiä että yhteisöllisiä ulottuvuuksia, mikä tarjosi syvällisemmän ymmärryksen näiden tekijöiden vuorovaikutuksesta sekä vaikutuksista kestävämpien kulutuskäytäntöjen edistämisessä.

Valitun tutkimusmenetelmän kautta tutkimuksessa tunnistetaan ja analysoidaan keskeisiä käytäntöjä, motivaatioon liittyviä tekijöitä ja haasteita, joita yhteisön toimintaan osallistuvilla kuluttajilla ilmenee. Analyysissä tarkastelu jaetaan yksilötason ja yhteisötason tekijöihin, joilla on joko yhteisön toimintaan osallistumista ajatellen motivoiva tai negatiivinen vaikutus. Lisäksi tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan yksilöllisiä käytäntöjä, joilla vaatteiden kestävää antikulutusta harjoitetaan. Tutkittu kulutusyhteisö ja sen tunnusomaiset toimintaperiaatteet määritellään tutkimusdatan avulla, minkä lisäksi sen pääpiirteitä verrataan alan tutkimusartikkeleissa yleisesti tunnistettuihin kulutusyhteisöjen tyyppeihin.

Tutkimuksen keskeiset löydökset osoittavat, että yhteisön toimintaan osallistuvat kuluttajat osoittavat vahvaa sitoutumista kestävyyteen arvojensa kautta, tekemällä harkittuja ja tarpeisiin perustuvia kulutuspäätöksiä, suosimalla kestäviä materiaaleja sekä panostamalla perusteellisesti vaatteiden huoltoon. Yhteisö harjoittaa aktiivisesti tuotteiden ja brändien antikulutusta niiden välttelyn kautta ja osoittaa jossain määrin myös yleiseen antikulutuskäyttäytymiseen sitoutumista. Keskeisiä osallistumista tukevia motivaatiotekijöitä ovat vahva kestävyyteen liittyvä arvopohja ja yhteisön tarjoama tuki. Osallistujien kokemat haasteet liittyvät haasteen rajoittavaksi koettuun luonteeseen ja henkilökohtaisiin huoliin yksilötason toteutettavien toimien tehokkuudesta. Lisäksi haasteen jäsenten kesken käytävän sosiaalisen vuorovaikutuksen taso ilmenee tutkittavassa yhteisössä hyvin rajallisena.

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1 Introduction

These introductory chapters aim to present the topic of the thesis. Firstly, the background of the topic is addressed through existing literature and the research gap is identified to better understand the goal of this study. Secondly, the research problem and objectives of the thesis are presented. Thirdly, the delimitations of the study are discussed, and finally, the structure of the thesis is introduced.

1.1 Background of the Study

In recent years, concern over the impact of overproduction and overconsumption of fashion on the environment has steadily risen. The textile and apparel (T&A) industry has received an increasing amount of criticism over the problematic nature of their sustainability credentials. It has been widely recognized that the environmental impacts of the T&A industry are significant and far-reaching in nature. While the actual estimates vary, the industry has been estimated to produce up to 10 % of global CO_2 emissions, and the garment industry is the world's third largest manufacturing industry overall (UN, 2018; UK House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee, 2019).

Due to cheaper, faster manufacturing and shipping processes combined with increasing global population and affluence, fashion cycles have peaked in speed. According to the European Parliamentary Research Service or EPRS (2022), in just a few decades, the amount of clothes bought per person in the EU has nearly doubled. Similarly, the report states that the global production of fiber has doubled from 58 million tons in 2000 to 111 million tons in 2019. The resulting rise in textile waste is also increasingly recognized as a threat by many, for research shows that in nearly every clothing category, the average lifespan of a garment is only about half as long as it was just 15 years ago (McKinsey & Company, 2016). All in all, the state of current production and consumption of clothing can be recognized as unsustainable. The need to adopt more sustainable ways of fashion consumption is evident.

Clothing producers have been unable to deliver on their promise of environmental and social sustainability despite the continuous profit gains due to increased sales and decreased production costs (McKinsey & Company, 2016; Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2021). In addition to this, the T&A industry faces an issue of poor labor conditions due to long, international supply chains that are not transparent (McKinsey & Company, 2016; EPRS, 2022). As a result, it is generally considered important that the change is initiated by political regulation on both national and international level. The European Commission, for example, has taken initiative to 'make producers responsible for the full lifecycle of textile products' in line with the EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles, meaning that across the EU, circular textile economy might become reality soon (European Commission, n.d.). The strategy itself focuses on implementing change by 2030, but it is too soon to say whether the schedule will hold and to what extent the vision will be realized.

Other various ways to address the issue further have been proposed, including sustainable clothing consumption, which is consumption that aims to decrease the adverse effects of fashion consumption (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022). Consumers can participate in sustainable fashion consumption by buying garments of better quality, ethically produced, or made out of environmentally materials (Diddi et al., 2019) or even by purchasing clothes through alternative consumption methods such as secondhand clothing stores or participating in clothing swaps (Williams & Paddock, 2003; Kim et al., 2021; Brismar, 2017; Iran & Schrader, 2017). The latter two are a form of circular fashion. Circular fashion is garments designed, sourced, produced, and intended to be used and circulated responsibly for their entire lifespan before safely returning them to the biosphere (Brismar, 2017). Recycling, repurposing, and reusing clothes, therefore, can all be seen as ways of carrying out circular fashion.

According to research, the majority of the adverse effects of clothing consumption on the environment are caused by the clothing manufacturing process (Niinimäki et al.,

2020; European Environment Agency, 2022). Additionally, underutilization and accelerated obsolescence of clothing have become recognized issues that lead to overconsumption and increased textile waste (EPRS, 2022). Based on this, extending clothes' lifecycle should become a continuous effort from a sustainability point of view.

Clothing anti-consumption and sustainable anti-consumption of clothes hold great potential in helping solve major sustainability issues of current consumption models. Anti-consumption in general refers to voluntary reduction, resistance and rejection of consumption or its aspects (Lee et al., 2011; Makri et al, 2020). Anti-consumption is often, while not necessarily, based on concerns over sustainability (Seegebarth et al., 2016), including its environmental, economic, and social dimensions (Ministry of the Environment, 2023). That is also the case with sustainable anti-consumption of clothing, in which personal reduction of clothing consumption is carried out of free will and considering sustainability aspects (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022). Sustainable anti-consumption of clothes has been described as opposing further acquisitions or disposal of clothing while supporting their prolonged utilization.

Consumers can participate in anti-consumption and sustainable anti-consumption of clothing on both individual and collective basis (Basci, 2014). Consumers can choose to participate in different trends, movements, lifestyles, and initiatives, such as minimalism, slow fashion, and the sufficiency movement, that have emerged in the context of fashion. Sufficiency lifestyle or voluntary simplicity means a set of habits, behaviors, and values that press the importance of willingly limiting "expenditure on consumer goods and services, and to cultivate non-materialistic sources of satisfaction and meaning" (Etzioni, 1998, p. 620; Coscieme et al., 2022; Kagan, 2020). Sufficiency lifestyle or voluntary simplicity can be considered umbrella terms that encompass various downshifting or simplicity-focused lifestyles and terms, including the forementioned fashion-centered minimalism and slow fashion movement, for they share common principles despite having distinct nuances. A common theme is the desire to break away from unnecessary consumerism. These, for example, are forms of sustainable anti-consumption of clothing.

Within the context of communities, sustainable anti-consumption of clothes can be carried out consumption communities, described as groups interacting with the marketplace within their personal scope of interest as a collective (Hungara & Nobre, 2021; Garanti & Berberoglu, 2018; Patterson & Schroeder, 2010). In these communities, shared communal identity forms through shared interests and gets strengthened through engagement within the community (Patterson & Schroeder, 2010). Value is created through social interaction and relationships between community members (Arnould & Thompson, 2018, pp. 87-88), so through the community itself instead of through products or services.

Related to sustainable anti-consumption, a notable phenomenon has surfaced known as the 'Rule of Five' or the challenge of only acquiring five new clothing items or pairs of shoes per year (Varamäki, n.d.; Thurén, n.d.; Coscieme et al., 2022). The 'Rule of Five' challenge is a phenomenon where participants commit to purchasing no more than five new clothing items per year, excluding undergarments. This initiative originates from a clothing sustainability report by Hot or Cool Institute (Coscieme et al., 2022), which suggests that limiting new garment purchases is essential to align with the Paris Agreement's goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C (UN, n.d.). The challenge is based on calculations of sustainable consumption levels in G20 countries and is considered a key measure to reduce CO2 emissions from fashion consumption (Coscieme et al., 2022).

The 'Rule of Five' takes various forms, including individual and community-based approaches. Participants, either individually or as part of a community, take on the challenge for one year or in one-year periods. During this time, they commit to buying no more than five new clothing items, excluding undergarments, as this has been identified as the long-term sustainable level of clothing consumption (Coscieme et al., 2022). The challenge has been widely discussed and promoted through social media and traditional media (e.g. Darke, 2023; Chan, 2022; Murray Greenway, 2024; Kaipainen, 2023; Reenpää, 2023; Haikarainen, 2023), though it lacks a uniform set of rules and varies in practice.

In Finland, the 'Rule of Five' challenge gained prominence through social media influencers Aku Varamäki and Julia Thurén (Thurén, 2023; Varamäki, n.d.). Their promotion led to the widespread use of the Finnish hashtag #viidenvaatteenvuosi (the year of five garments), which as of September 18, 2024, appears in nearly 1,500 Instagram posts (Instagram, 2024). This reflects the challenge's significant presence and growing influence within the Finnish sustainable fashion and sustainable anti-consumption community. Given the fact that the phenomenon examined in this thesis is fairly recent, the related literature is scarce, and no scientific studies have been carried out regarding it. Nevertheless, for the challenge's focus is on voluntarily reducing consumption levels of clothing and due to the fact that Hot or Cool Institute's report on sustainable fashion consumption (Coscieme et al., 2022) acts as the basis for the notion of 'Rule of Five', the challenge ideologically fits under the scope of sustainable anti-consumption defined in a literature review on the subject (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022).

The 'Rule of Five' consumption community provides a valuable lens through which to examine sustainable anti-consumption of clothing within communal settings. There is an emerging need to reconsider traditional modes of consumption, especially as sustainable alternatives gain prominence in response to growing sustainability concerns. While much research has focused on how individuals alter consumption behaviors towards more sustainable alternatives (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022), the study of communal anti-consumption is a focus of few. Communal practices like those within the 'Rule of Five' community can challenge dominant narratives by promoting long-term behavioral changes and fostering collective responsibility. In fact, consumption practices are said to be intertwined with individuals' self-concepts, social identities, and group affiliations (Arnould & Thompson, 2007; Arnould & Thompson, 2018, pp. 29-30), and anti-consumption taking place in communal settings has been studied to influence both participants and those not currently involved but interested (Sekhon & Armstrong-Soule, 2020).

1.2 Research Question and Objectives of the Thesis

The purpose of this thesis is to determine what sustainable anti-consumption of clothes as a practice means, how sustainable anti-consumption of clothes is carried out in a communal setting in the context of consumption communities, and ultimately answer the question of how and why consumers participate in sustainable anti-consumption of clothes within communal settings. Additionally, an attempt is made to identify enablers and barriers related to the practice. Thus, the primary aim of this thesis is to answer the following research problem by means of empirical research:

1. How is sustainable anti-consumption of clothes practiced within the 'Rule of Five' consumption community on individual and collective level?

These following research questions have been developed in order to assist in helping the main research problem:

2. What are the key motivational factors and challenges for participation in sustainable anti-consumption of clothes?
3. How do personal factors and group dynamics influence participation in collective sustainable anti-consumption of clothes within the 'Rule of Five' consumption community?

1.3 Delimitations, Conceptualizations and Considerations of the Study

This thesis will focus on anti-consumption as a continuum that is likely to involve forms of traditional consumption practices, as an individual's involvement and intensity of behavior in anti-consumption lifestyles or practices can vary from light involvement to intensive involvement (Basci, 2014).

Traditional anti-consumption literature largely excludes all substituting forms of consumption, meaning only the actual reduction and opposition of consumption is considered anti-consumption (Makri et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2011), but some broader conceptualizations include need-based and other forms of sustainable substitute purchases (García-de-Frutos et al., 2018). A literature review on sustainable anti-consumption of clothing (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022), for example, conceptualized that while sustainable products can reduce the environmental impact of each item and even decrease raw materials used, sustainable anti-consumption specifically involves a reduction in the total volume of products consumed by the individual. In other words, the overall volume of purchases has to decrease but it is recognized that an extent of consumption remains and is still practiced by the consumer.

While this specific literature review (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022) separates between actual anti-consumption and sustainable acquisition, in practice, it is difficult to distinguish between these practices carried out by consumers. Consumers may view purchasing sustainable alternatives as aligned with anti-consumption, even though these actions still involve consumption. This blurring of boundaries between reduction and substitution complicates the assessment of whether consumer behaviors fall under anti-consumption or simply reflect more responsible consumption patterns.

Moreover, the necessity of clothing as a basic need (Niinimäki, 2010) further complicates the strict adherence to anti-consumption principles. Individuals must continuously engage in some level of consumption to meet functional requirements of clothing, and clothing, like other material goods, wear down in use. Thus, in the context of clothing, the line between practiced anti-consumption and sustainable consumption becomes particularly fluid and challenging to define.

In examining anti-consumption in the context of clothes, this should be considered. However, beyond these basic functions, clothing has evolved into a cultural and social symbol, often reflecting personal identity, status, and trends (Creusen & Schoormans, 2005; Elliot

& Wattanasuwan, 1998). Through fashion, inner personality can be conveyed through "external marks and symbols, brands, and status items" (Niinimäki, 2010, p. 153), meaning that clothing has a dual role of being both a necessity and commodity of choice. As for many, clothing is likely to embody both of these things, examining clothing consumption through only the reduction process leaves out an important aspect of how sustainably conscious consumers choose to acquire the remaining of their clothing.

Moreover, the concept of anti-consumption remains ambiguous due to the lack of clarity around what qualifies as 'less,' the reference point for comparison, and whether consumption must be continuously reduced to align with anti-consumption principles. While much of sustainable anti-consumption literature generally deems reduction of personal consumption levels as conceptually fitting (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022), the reference point matters. If a consumer reduces new clothing purchases, a practice supported by research to be the single most effective way to reduce environmental impacts of fashion consumption (Coscieme et al., 2022; Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022), compared to national or even international consumption norms, are they not, to an extent, reducing the global impact of clothing consumption even if they substitute some of that consumption with sustainable consumption?

Relatedly, this ambiguity is further complicated by the fact that consumers who may have previously engaged in unsustainable levels of consumption may find it easier to adopt anti-consumption behaviors, such as in the form of an extreme example of a year-long shopping ban, simply because they already possess an excess of goods. In such cases, short-term studies may not reflect genuine anti-consumption ideologies. Additionally, if the consumer shifts back to old consumption patterns after said year, the practiced sustainable anti-consumption cannot be considered sustainable in the long-term. Based on all this, this thesis focuses on the broader limitation of clothing consumption, whether it involves reducing consumption relative to societal norms or one's previous

personal consumption patterns. Given the absence of a strict definition requiring continuous reduction, this research does not impose such a requirement but acknowledges this contradiction in assessing true sustainable anti-consumption.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five key chapters. The first introductory chapter provides an overview of the thesis' topic and presents relevant findings from prior studies. The overall relevance of the examined phenomenon is highlighted. This is followed by a chapter on the study's delimitations, and lastly, the research problem and supporting research questions are outlined.

The second main chapter comprises of the literature review on the subject. In it, anti-consumption in the context of clothing consumption is introduced. First, anti-consumption as an ideology and a practice is brought up. Following this, sustainable anti-consumption is conceptualized and defined as a practice related to clothing consumption. Ideologies and practices that are related to sustainable anti-consumption of clothes are determined. Additionally, the topic of communally practiced anti-consumption is explored through existing literature. Finally, the theoretical framework is presented.

The next chapter focuses on the methodology and methods of the study. Additionally, the case 'Rule of Five' is introduced. Chapter four presents the empirical findings of the study. The findings are then analyzed in relation to the literature review. In the final section, conclusions, a summary of the findings is presented, followed by discussion of the managerial implications and suggestions for further studies.

2 Anti-Consumption and Clothing

In this main chapter, the dynamics of anti-consumption and sustainable anti-consumption within the fashion industry are discussed. First, anti-consumption in general is conceptualized. Following this, sustainable anti-consumption of clothing is determined. Ideologies and practices fitting under the concept are brought up and analyzed as well as consumer motivations for partaking in such notions. Following this, anti-consumption taking place in communal settings is examined. After this, the theoretical framework is presented.

2.1 Understanding Anti-Consumption in Fashion

Anti-consumption can be defined as resistance of or reasoning against consumption, including avoiding or boycotting brands or products, with only conscious efforts with meaning to reduce, resist, or reject consumption being considered anti-consumption (Makri et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2011). The literature review by Makri et al. (2020) expresses that research efforts have defined anti-consumption in a variety of ways but establishing common conceptual limitations has proved challenging. Their paper also highlights that anti-consumption overlaps with several related concepts, many of which are connected to motives rooted in sustainability.

Anti-consumption can include both rejection and resistance (Makri et al., 2020). Rejection involves intentionally not purchasing certain products or brands. Therefore, in clothing anti-consumption, rejecting involves deliberately avoiding certain brands, types of clothing, or fashion trends. Consumers can reject certain brands or products due to personal preferences, clashes with identity, dissatisfaction with quality (Lee et al., 2009b; Makri et al., 2020) or even or a desire to stand against current popular trends or to make a distinction from certain social groups (Ma et al., 2012).

Resistance, on the other hand, means reducing overall consumption by limiting the amount consumed (Makri et al., 2020). Resistance in the context of clothing anti-consumption refers to the intentional effort to reduce the overall quantity of clothing purchased (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022). This can, for example, involve a consumer choosing to buy fewer clothes as a form of self-discipline or to avoid the clutter and complexity associated with having a large wardrobe. Some individuals might resist the fast fashion cycle simply because they prefer timeless, durable pieces that do not require frequent updating. This form of resistance might also stem from a desire to avoid the social pressures of keeping up with constantly changing fashion trends, for fashion cycles have continuously accelerated (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017).

In both rejection and resistance, the consumer is engaging in behaviors that reduce their engagement with the fashion industry, whether through selective purchasing decisions or by limiting the overall quantity of their clothing purchases (Makri et al., 2020; Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022). These actions may be driven by various personal motivations and preferences, including a desire for simplicity, individuality, financial prudence, or sustainability concerns. Sustainability-driven anti-consumption will be analyzed in more detail in subchapter 2.2.

Anti-consumption behavior can be considered over a continuum, meaning an individual's involvement and intensity of behavior in anti-consumption lifestyles or practices can vary from light involvement to intense involvement (Basci, 2014). Consumers participate in anti-consumption practices on either an individual or collective basis and it can be either generic or brand- or product-specific in nature. The categories are not exclusive, meaning a consumer can participate in one or more categories simultaneously.

While some may consider anti-consumption political, radical, or even bad for the economy, from the perspective of marketing, enhanced quality of life related to consumption is dependent on both the quantity and quality of consumption (Lee et al., 2009a). Based on this, the same authors suggest that consumer research efforts should be increasingly

focused on other aspects of consumption rather than just the mere volume of it. Lee et al. (2009a) emphasize anti-consumption as a method to gain valuable information about consumers, products, and society alike.

In this context, anti-consumption provides a valuable lens through which to gain deeper insights into consumers, products, and societal dynamics. Fashion, for example, holds symbolic, aesthetic, and cultural meanings to consumers (Creusen & Schoormans, 2005; Elliot & Wattanasuwan, 1998). Literature has commonly accepted the view of fashion consumption being related to self-concept, identity, and its social dimensions such as roles and memberships in groups or other social settings (McNeill & Venter, 2018; Niinimäki, 2010; Gabrielli et al., 2013; Ma et al., 2012). By examining these aspects through the perspective of anti-consumption, researchers can better understand the underlying motivations and values driving consumer behavior, leading to more effective strategies that better align with consumer well-being and satisfaction, sustainable practices, and the quality of consumption as referred to by Lee et al. (2009a).

2.2 Sustainable Anti-Consumption in Fashion

Anti-consumption is not intrinsically bound to sustainability efforts (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022), as it may be motivated by many factors. Despite this, recent marketing research has increasingly focused on anti-consumption as a potential pathway to more sustainable consumption (e.g., Makri et al., 2020; Lee, 2021; Kropfeld et al., 2018; Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022, García-de-Frutos et al., 2018). Sustainability has several dimensions, including ecological or environmental sustainability, economic sustainability, and social sustainability (Ministry of the Environment, 2023).

Clothes, by nature, fulfill functional and physical needs (Niinimäki, 2010) and thus cannot be entirely rejected. In defining anti-consumption of clothing, this should be considered. Reducing clothing purchases, however, is the single most effective way to reduce environmental impacts of fashion consumption (Coscieme et al., 2022; Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022). A literature review by Vesterinen and Syrjälä (2022) specifies sustainability-driven

anti-consumption of clothing as driven by opposing the acquisition and disposal of them while supporting their usage.

As the majority of the detrimental effects on the environment are caused by the clothing manufacturing process (Niinimäki et al., 2020; European Environment Agency, 2022), and since underutilization and accelerated obsolescence of clothing have become recognized issues leading to overconsumption and increased textile waste (EPRS, 2022), extending clothes' lifecycle should become a continuous effort for both practices related to sustainable fashion and anti-consumption of fashion. Based on this, clothing anti-consumption holds great potential in solving major sustainability issues of current consumption models.

Sustainability-focused anti-consumption has been referred to by varying terms, depending on the authors and scope of study. For example, the term sustainability-rooted anti-consumption (SRAC) refers to consumers' varying practices, lifestyles and ideologies regarding willingly carried out consumption reduction done out of concerns over sustainability matters (Seegebarth et al., 2016). Another sustainability-related term used in research is focused on the environmental side of anti-consumption and is called environmentally oriented anti-consumption or EOA (García-de-Frutos et al., 2018). On the other hand, Vesterinen & Syrjälä (2022) approach the subject of anti-consumption and sustainability of clothing by combining the two into the term 'sustainable anti-consumption'. Sustainability-rooted anti-consumption or SRAC is not a theoretical approach but rather a general term in a singular study for varying sustainability-focused practices and lifestyles of consumers (Seegebarth et al., 2016), and therefore will not be analyzed in detail like the latter mentioned concepts will.

Environmentally oriented anti-consumption is a theoretical approach to sustainable anti-consumption (García-de-Frutos et al., 2018). For EOA is presented as a subordinate concept of sustainable anti-consumption that overlaps with EOA, it will be considered a valid

concept in this theory chapter. In EOA, more specifically its broader definition, all individuals are acknowledged to consume, and therefore persisting needs are allowed to be met by rejecting a certain product and choosing another deemed more environmentally sustainable, for example acquiring clothing second-hand or through sharing economy. While substituting one product with another does not fit into the traditional definition of anti-consumption (Makri et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2011), in broader EOA that is allowed if prerequisites of needs are acknowledged. According to García-de-Frutos et al. (2018), need-based consumption choices are considered green consumption allowed within the scope of broad EOA. According to the same model, this can be applied to broader, otherwise sustainability-focused anti-consumption, as well.

In stricter delimitation of EOA, only specific actions focusing on reducing or rejecting consumption directly to minimize adverse environmental effects are considered anti-consumption (García-de-Frutos et al., 2018). In other words, strict EOA does not include actions where a form of consumption is simply shifted or replaced by another, even if this replacement consumption is more environmentally friendly. Since clothes are consumable goods, stricter EOA may not be as applicable to clothing compared to other commodities. On the other hand, the broader definition lacks clarity in separating between sustainable consumption and anti-consumption.

Other definitions of clothing anti-consumption have drawn a clearer line between sustainable clothing consumption and anti-consumption. In Vesterinen and Syrjälä's (2022) literature review on sustainable anti-consumption of clothing, sustainable anti-consumption of clothing is considered to be an intersection between sustainable clothing consumption and anti-consumption (Figure 1). According to their conceptualization, sustainable clothing consumption is a broader concept that may include aforementioned green consumption but also reducing overall consumption levels.
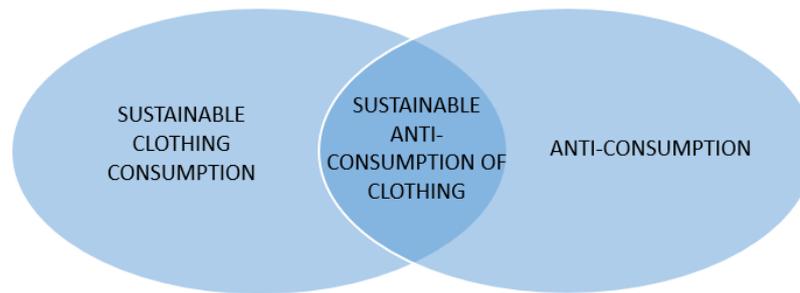
Figure 1. Vesterinen & Syrjälä's (2022) conceptualization of sustainable anti-consumption as the common ground between sustainable consumption and anti-consumption.

Sustainable clothing consumption has been referred to as consumption aiming at decreasing the adverse effects of fashion consumption (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022). Diddi et al. (2019) define this as including buying garments of better quality, ethically produced, or made out of environmentally friendly materials. Additionally, this can include consumption habits related to decreasing the amount of newly produced clothes purchased or the overall volume of clothing purchased. However, this may not always be the case and is not a prerequisite to consume in a sustainable manner. Based on this, Vesterinen and Syrjälä (2022) have divided sustainable clothing consumption into sustainable acquisition and sustainable anti-consumption of clothing.

Anti-consumption in its most fundamental sense, on the other hand, can be defined as resistance of or reasoning against consumption, with only conscious efforts to reduce, resist, or reject consumption being considered anti-consumption (Makri et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2011). Therefore, anti-consumption alone focuses on limiting consumption but not necessarily for sustainability reasons (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022). As Vesterinen and Syrjälä (Figure 1) suggest, sustainable clothing consumption can include aspects of sustainable anti-consumption of clothing, and vice versa. It is the common ground between the broader categories of sustainable consumption and anti-consumption. However, Vesterinen and Syrjälä (2022) distinguish between different consumption approaches by highlighting that while sustainable products can reduce the environmental impact of

each item and even decrease raw materials used, sustainable anti-consumption specifically involves a reduction in the total volume of products consumed by the individual.

Anti-consumption, in addition to often being associated as environmentally oriented, also holds connotations related to other aspects of sustainability. As established, sustainability has several dimensions, including environmental sustainability, economic sustainability, and social sustainability (Ministry of the Environment, 2023). García-de-Frutos et al. (2018) and Vesterinen and Syrjälä (2022) implicate that a consumption choice can represent different types of sustainability concerns, with them overlapping. A key focus, however, is often chosen by the consumer (Rindell et al., 2013).

Due to the fact that this thesis delves into themes of consumer communities, sustainability, and anti-consumption, in this thesis, the examination of sustainable clothing anti-consumption will refer to the sustainability efforts associated with reducing both the volume and adverse impact of clothing consumption. These efforts involve decreasing the volume of clothes purchased and, alternatively or additionally, examining the quality of purchases. This can often include ideologies such as green or sustainable consumption, ethical or moral consumption, alternative consumption, consumer resistance, voluntary simplicity, and brand or product avoidance, provided they align with the broader goal of decreased personal consumption. These ideologies will be analyzed in more detail in chapter 2.2.1.

Overall, the scope of sustainable clothing anti-consumption in this thesis mostly aligns with the definitions and frameworks provided by Vesterinen and Syrjälä (2022), Makri et al. (2020), and García-de-Frutos et al. (2018), despite some exceptions. The approach applied in this thesis strives to broaden the scope of sustainable anti-consumption by highlighting the complexity of applying anti-consumption ideals to partially essential goods like clothing where absolute rejection is not feasible but conscious and informed purchasing decisions and practices still align with the spirit and definition of sustainable consumption. This is not to imply that any form of consumption should be automatically

accepted within the scope of anti-consumption, but rather that sustainable practices, even when involving some level of consumption, can be consistent with the general ideology of sustainable anti-consumption. That is to say, as long as the overall volume of clothes purchased is intentionally reduced (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022; Makri et al, 2020; García-de-Frutos et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2011).

In addition to these considerations, it is important to acknowledge that the concept of anti-consumption remains ambiguous due to lacking definition on what constitutes as 'less', the basis of comparison, and whether consumption should be continually reduced in order to be considered anti-consumption. Therefore, this thesis focuses on the general limitation of clothing consumption, whether it refers to reducing consumption in comparison to societal norms or previous personal consumption levels. Additionally, given the absence of an established definition requiring continuous reduction in consumption, this paper does not impose such a requirement.

2.2.1 Ideologies within the Scope of Sustainable Anti-Consumption of Clothes

The ideology of sustainable anti-consumption of clothing promotes continued use while discouraging further purchases and waste (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022). Research shows that manufacturing up to the use phase accounts for 70-80 % of a garment's total CO_2 emissions (Niinimäki et al., 2020; European Environment Agency, 2022). Overconsumption is also a growing concern, for the average lifespan of garments is about half what it was 15 years ago (McKinsey & Company, 2016), and global clothing utilization has decreased by 36 % since 2002 (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017). This has resulted in issues like overconsumption, underutilization, and waste, which sustainable anti-consumption seeks to address.

While most research focuses on environmental sustainability, slowing down fashion cycles can also promote social and economic sustainability (e.g., Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022; Velasco-Molpeceres et al., 2023). Sustainable anti-consumption aims to extend clothing use and reduce purchases and waste (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022). Unlike traditional anti-

consumption, which opposes the entire cycle of consumption (Lee et al., 2011), sustainable anti-consumption specifically targets acquisition and disposal (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022).

Due to ambiguity of definitions, sustainable anti-consumption of clothing is really an umbrella term that many ideologies and concepts can fit under, as long as the ideology is practiced within its scope. The same applies to research done on general anti-consumption; Makri et al. (2020), for example, have approached the subject in their literature review by stating that many theories related to anti-consumption hold similarities with it but also include aspects that do not strictly fit into it. Furthermore, sustainability is multidimensional in nature (Ministry of the Environment, 2023), and therefore a multitude of lifestyles and practices fit under it, as well. Additionally, as was introduced in chapter 2.1, anti-consumption can range between both individual and collective non-consumption as well as generic and brand- or category-specific non-consumption (Basci, 2014). Consumers may participate in anti-consumption to varying degrees and partake in multiple anti-consumption practices or lifestyles simultaneously.

In this subchapter, concepts strictly fitting into sustainable anti-consumption are analyzed in more detail. In other words, ideologies that are focused on restricting personal consumption as well as sustainability. The concepts analyzed are ones that much of anti-consumption research (e.g. Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022; Makri et al, 2020; Leet et al., 2011) considers fitting within its scope but does not necessarily include all of them, for all of them are not truly focused on reducing personal consumption nor sustainability-focused.

Table 1. Concepts that fit into sustainable anti-consumption.

Concept	Definition*	Analysis on Relation to Sustainable Anti-Consumption	Sources*
Voluntary Simplicity, Sufficiency Lifestyle	Behaviors and values emphasizing willingly limiting consumption and focusing on non-materialistic sources of meaning and frugality. Involves favoring local, ethical, and/or sustainable alternatives as well as quality and design.	Is sustainable anti-consumption. Includes downshifting lifestyles such as lowsumerism and the slow fashion movement.	Coscieme et al. (2022); Kagan (2020); Etzioni (1998, p. 620); Vesterinen & Syrjälä (2022); Taljaard & Sonnenberg (2019); Campos et al. (2023); Liu et al. (2022); Todeschini et al. (2017)
Consume Less, Consume Better	Promotes reducing quantity of consumption while increasing the quality and longevity of clothing items. Encouragement over buying fewer items but choosing those well-made, and often more sustainable.	Is sustainable anti-consumption. Intentional reduction of personal clothing consumption and aligns with sustainable consumption.	Bly et al., (2015); Vesterinen & Syrjälä (2022)

*Definition of concepts is based on listed sources.

Voluntary simplicity or sufficiency lifestyle means a set of habits, behaviors, and values that press the importance of willingly limiting "expenditure on consumer goods and services, and to cultivate non-materialistic sources of satisfaction and meaning" (Etzioni, 1998, p. 620; Coscieme et al., 2022; Kagan, 2020). Research suggests voluntary simplicity to involve favoring local, ethical, and sustainable clothing alternatives as well as embracing frugality as a practice (Taljaard & Sonnenberg, 2019; Campos et al., 2023). Sufficiency lifestyle or voluntary simplicity can be considered umbrella terms that encompass various downshifting or simplicity-focused lifestyles and terms, including lowsumerism and slow fashion movement, for they share common principles despite having distinct nuances (Table 1). However, some ambiguity regarding the terminology persists, for some studies (e.g. Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022) separate between these concepts.

Slow fashion is the opposite concept to fast fashion and its ideology; it emphasizes quality, design, and craft behind clothing, sustainability, as well as ethics of production (Liu et al., 2022). In lowsumerism, the consumer commits to ownership and use of a limited amount of clothing items for set time frame and additional clothing acquisition is considered carefully, sustainably, and critically (Todeschini et al., 2017). For the common

theme between all of these forementioned concepts is the desire to break away from unnecessary consumerism and willingly lower consumption levels and consume more sustainably (Etzioni, 1998; Coscieme et al., 2022; Kagan, 2020; Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022), they fully fit under the broader ideology of sustainable anti-consumption. In this thesis, the latter discussed concepts are considered secondary concepts to voluntary simplicity and sufficiency lifestyle (Table 1), but it is a matter of approach chosen.

The concepts 'consume less, consume better' (CLCB) and style consumption have sometimes been brought up simultaneously or even interchangeably (Bly et al., 2015; Vesterinen & Syrjälä). However, studies focusing on this are lacking in clarity of conceptualization, even more so than many of the others included that overlap in a multitude of ways. In research, for example, consumers that buy less, buy higher quality items, and strive for sustainability are not necessarily referred to as partakers in CLCB but rather 'sustainable fashion consumption pioneers' or other vague terms (Bly et al., 2015). Despite this, a clear distinction between the two is evident (Table 1; 2). Style consumption strives for consumption based on individuality, distinctiveness, and uniqueness of a person's style rather than based on the currently existing fashion trends (Cho et al., 2015; Gupta et al., 2019) and CLCB mainly focuses on reducing consumption levels while increasing the quality and longevity of clothing items purchased (Bly et al., 2015). While both hold potential in sustainable practices, only CLCB strictly falls under the scope of anti-consumption (Table 1).

2.2.2 Practices within the Scope of Sustainable Anti-Consumption of Clothing

In defining ideologies and practices that fit under sustainable anti-consumption of clothing, clothing's role as a necessity has to again be considered. While much of research (e.g. Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022; Makri et al, 2020; Leet et al., 2011) only considers actions, practices, and whole ideologies solely focused on limiting or restricting consumption as anti-consumption, this thesis follows the natural overlap between sustainable clothing consumption and clothing anti-consumption (Figure 1), in which multiple conscious, informed, and sustainable consumption habits and ideologies may fall under the

thesis' delimitations. Therefore, sustainable anti-consumption ideologies really include the requirement of intentionally lowering consumption levels but on top of that, doing it and substituting remaining consumption in a way that considers sustainability aspects. Thus, sustainable anti-consumption of clothes includes aspects of both anti-consumption and traditional consumption. More traditional and ambiguous consumption practices within determined scope are analyzed next (Table 2).

Table 2. Concepts that fit into sustainable anti-consumption under certain preconditions.

Concept	Definition*	Analysis on Relation to Sustainable Anti-Consumption	Sources*
Green/Ethical/ Sustainable Consumption	Consumption that minimizes environmental impact by choosing eco-friendly, better quality, or ethically produced products. May involve reducing consumption. Overlaps with various alternative consumption methods.	Can be sustainable anti-consumption. **Prerequisite:** Intentional reduction of clothing consumption is involved.	Vesterinen & Syrjälä (2022); Diddi et al. (2019); Makri et al. (2020); García-de-Frutos et al. (2018); Iran & Schrader (2017)
Alternative Consumption	Non-mainstream consumption that offer different ways to satisfy needs. Includes, for example, buying second-hand or participating in clothing swaps, as well as other collaborative consumption and sharing economy practices.	Can be sustainable anti-consumption. **Prerequisite:** Motivated by sustainability concerns and involves intentional reduction of clothing consumption.	Williams & Paddock (2003); Kim et al. (2021), Brismar (2017); Iran & Schrader (2017)
Consumer Resistance	Oppositional responses by consumers to perceived dominant market practices. Includes opposing goods, practices, and partnerships as well as power dynamics within the markets.	Can be sustainable anti-consumption. **Prerequisite:** Motivated by sustainability concerns and involves intentional reduction of clothing consumption.	Makri et al. (2020); Lee et al. (2011); Vesterinen & Syrjälä (2022)
Brand/ Product Avoidance	Rejecting certain products, product types, or brands due to bad experiences, unmet value expectations, clashes with personal identity, or moral reasoning.	Can be sustainable anti-consumption. **Prerequisite:** Reasoning must be based on sustainability concerns. Rejection of goods cannot mean substituting them with other goods. Overall consumption levels decrease.	Lee et al. (2009b); Makri et al. (2020)
Minimalism	An ideology and practice in which physical possessions are limited and reduced to a minimum.	Can be sustainable anti-consumption. Sometimes associated with practices	Martin-Woodhead (2022); Todeschini et al.

		of style consumption and capsule wardrobe. **Prerequisite:** Motivated by sustainability concerns and involves intentional reduction of clothing consumption. Increased waste not allowed.	(2017); Cho et al. (2015); Gupta et al. (2019); Bly et al. (2015); Vesterinen & Syrjälä (2022)
Style Consumption	Strives for individuality-focused consumption, distinctiveness, and uniqueness of a person's style rather than the currently existing fashion trends.	Can be sustainable anti-consumption. **Prerequisite:** Motivated by sustainability concerns and involves intentional reduction of clothing consumption.	Cho et al., (2015); Gupta et al. (2019); Bly et al. (2015)

*Definition of concepts is based on listed sources.

As detailed earlier, existing anti-consumption and sustainable anti-consumption literature does not consider acquisition of clothes a form of anti-consumption at all (Lee et al., 2011; Chatzidakis & Lee, 2013), separate between sustainable acquisition and anti-consumption carefully (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022), or allow consumption under certain circumstances (García-de-Frutos et al., 2018). In this thesis, the volume and impact of consumption is required to lessen, not be wholly rejected.

Therefore, green, ethical, and sustainable consumption are considered potential forms of sustainable anti-consumption (Table 2). In these consumption types, environmental impacts, quality, ethical practices, and consumption amounts can all be considered in varying degrees by the consumer (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022; Makri et al., 2020; Diddi et al, 2019; García-de-Frutos et al., 2018; Basci, 2014). In order to fit under the scope of sustainable anti-consumption, intentional reduction of clothing consumption has to be involved in the practice.

Sustainable clothing consumption has been referred to as consumption aiming at decreasing the adverse effects of fashion consumption (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022). Diddi et al. (2019) define this as including buying garments of better quality, ethically produced, or made out of environmentally friendly materials. Therefore, green and ethical consumption also fall under its broader scope (Table 2). Additionally, this can include consumption habits related to decreasing the amount of newly produced clothes purchased

or the overall volume of clothing purchased. As Vesterinen and Syrjälä (2022) suggest, sustainable clothing consumption can include aspects of sustainable anti-consumption of clothing but only if the consumer is committed to decreasing personal consumption levels, not substituting existing consumption by choosing alternatives deemed ethically or sustainability-wise better.

Additionally, alternative clothing consumption fits within the scope of sustainable anti-consumption (Table 2). The concept stands for non-mainstream clothing consumption practices such as buying second-hand or clothing swaps (William & Paddock, 2003). Firstly, secondhand fashion means reusing clothes as a way to carry out circular fashion (Kim et al., 2021). Circular fashion is a fairly recent term meaning a non-linear, closed-loop economy that focuses on minimizing environmental pollution and strives to create greater ecological and social integrity (Kim et al., 2021). According to a simpler definition, circular fashion is garments designed, sourced, produced, and intended to be used and circulated responsibly for their entire lifespan before safely returning them to the bio-sphere (Brismar, 2017). Adopting circular economy means shifting from using linear pro-duction and consumption models (European Environment Agency, 2024). Recycling, be it reselling or redistributing, repurposing, and reusing clothes, therefore, can all be seen as ways of carrying out circular fashion.

Collaborative fashion consumption (CFC) is often presented as a sustainable consump-tion practice (e.g. Iran & Schrader, 2017; Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2020). CFC refers to the practice of accessing and using already-produced garments instead of acquiring new clothes both by acquiring ownership of the product or by temporarily acquiring the right to use them (Iran & Schrader, 2017). It includes gifting, sharing, lending, swapping, rent-ing, and leasing fashion, so it is also another form of alternative fashion consumption (Table 2). Additionally, secondhand fashion is considered a form of CFC. According to Iran and Schrader (2017), the notion of collaborative fashion consumption is not new, being

often utilized in communities such as families or friends. However, CFC can and is in-creasingly applied both in physical marketplaces as well as online, with both consumers and businesses practicing the model's aspects.

Sharing economy business models refer to the temporary access and renting of material goods (Kathan et al., 2016). In this business model, products share owners. In the scope of fashion, sharing economy can happen through consumer-to-consumer exchanges such as swapping or lending clothes, and within the business model scope, sharing econ-omy refers to business-to-consumer exchanges (Iran & Schrader, 2017). This means ex-changes based on renting or leasing clothes. Globally, sharing economy is applied widely (Liu et al., 2022).

Sharing economies as business models often ground their sustainability claims in re-duced net consumption but due to variance in business practices, the claim's adequacy is hard to prove (Curtis & Mont, 2020; Liu et al., 2022). Due to high levels of circulation, for example, fashion renting business models require increased washing of garments, which may cause the use-stage environmental effects to be significantly more environ-mentally unsustainable than in owned clothes (Liu et al., 2022). In owned clothing, this was estimated to be approximately 20 % of product's lifetime C02 emissions (Niinimäki et al., 2020; European Environment Agency, 2022).

Likewise, by nature, CFC offers immense potential for prolonging the use stage of cloth-ing (Iran & Schrader, 2017), especially with secondhand markets. According to the same authors, CFC offers consumers possibilities to avoid keeping garments they no longer wear and disposing of still wearable garments. This is especially the case with secondhand fashion. As the forementioned increased popularity of secondhand apparel suggests, consumers and businesses alike have begun to take advantage of this. Some research even supports secondhand fashion to be better environmentally. Regarding the whole supply chain of clothing production, were a kilogram of newly produced cotton or polyester replaced by secondhand clothing, 65 and 90 kWh is saved in energy (Woolridge

et al., 2006). Another study also supported that compared to the production of new garments, buying secondhand clothes significantly reduces environmental impacts (Farrant et al., 2010).

All in all, sustainable consumption, alternative fashion consumption, and collaborative fashion consumption offers potential in reducing the adverse effects of fashion consumption. Consumers can increase their sustainability by following some of the methods discussed above. However, many of the benefits offered by sustainable consumption of fashion as whole and more specifically CFC requires consumers to reduce the overall volume of fashion consumed and lengthen time used. As was mentioned, decreasing clothing consumption in general has the most positive environmental effects (Coscieme et al., 2022; Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022). Therefore, the prerequisite of reduced personal consumption is set for each of these concepts (Table 2) and is also heavily implied in related literature (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022).

Thirdly in the table (Table 2), concepts such as consumer resistance, defined as variable oppositional responses by consumers to perceived dominant market practices, potentially also overlap with anti-consumption (Lee et al., 2011). According to García-de-Frutos et al. (2018), if acting out of environmental concerns, for example, consumer resistance could technically fit into environmentally or sustainably oriented anti-consumption as it can relate to sustainability concerns when individuals perceive capitalism and mass consumerism as the cause of environmental degradation. In such case, consumer resistance could be considered sustainable anti-consumption, too, for it includes intentional resistance of consumption and is motivated by sustainability (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022; Makri et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2011). Some researchers, however, have excluded consumer resistance from their analysis (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022).

Same applies to brand or product avoidance, in which certain products, product types, or brands are not consumed due to bad experiences, unmet value expectations, clashes with personal identity, or moral reasoning (Lee et al., 2009b; Makri et al, 2020). It can be

validly applied to sustainable anti-consumption as long it is based on sustainability concerns and rejection of goods does not mean substituting them with others (Table 2). The overall objective has to be, as usual, decreased personal consumption, so therefore this concept can be considered more an additional tool or philosophy in carrying out sustainable anti-consumption than a stand-alone method.

To sum up this list of concepts, style consumption and fashion-centered minimalism are other rather ambiguous concepts used interchangeably with other terms or relating to each other (Table 2). In style consumption, a consumer practices individuality-focused consumption that involves distinctiveness, and uniqueness of a person's style rather than the currently existing fashion trends (Cho et al., 2015; Gupta et al., 2019; Bly et al., 2015). Minimalism stands for a broader lifestyle applicable to fashion consumption, too, in which an individual willingly reduces physical possessions to a personal minimum (Martin-Woodhead, 2022). Both can be considered concepts applicable to sustainable anti-consumption, as long as they involve willing reduction of personal clothing consumption and are sustainability-motivated. In minimalism, an additional prerequisite is that in striving for reduced physical possessions, e.g. wardrobe size, no wastage is allowed for that goes against the ideology of sustainable anti-consumption (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022).

Often related to fashion minimalism, capsule wardrobes stand for consumer commitment towards ownership and use of a limited amount of clothes worn for a certain time span (Todeschini et al., 2017). While the concept implies general criticism over excessive consumption, the prerequisite of lowered consumption levels stands, nevertheless. The consumer should not excessively purchase clothes, or it is not considered sustainable anti-consumption (Table 2), and the goal of the practice has to be lowered consumption levels motivated by sustainability issues.

As the final key practice of sustainable anti-consumption, increased use stage is encouraged, and unnecessary waste is avoided (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022). Around 20 % of a

garment's emissions are born in the utilizing stage (Niinimäki et al., 2020), so proper care is important but also helps increase the overall lifespan of them. Educating consumers on this is important, for research shows that while consumers claim to be able to recognize sustainability-related issues within context of fashion, they lack knowledge regarding supply chains, materials, recycling, and the implications of re-using garments (Papasolomou et al., 2023).

Furthermore, encouraging proper care and use of clothing may encourage consumers to increase the longevity of clothing. Caring for clothes includes care outside of laundry and may include practices like wearing house clothes and alternatives to laundry like airing clothes (Dao & Martinez, 2024). Care also includes laundry practices like knowing how to wash garments and preparing them for it, like turning them inside out. Repairing clothes is also important. Within repairs, invisible and visible mending were recognized ways to increase longevity of clothes. Clothes can be mended yourself or be taken to a professional.

2.2.3   Motivation Behind Sustainable Anti-Consumption of Fashion

Motivations behind anti-consumption have been studied. However, while sustainability-centered anti-consumption offers potential in solving sustainability problems related to linear models of fashion, as established, it has also been proven that consumer motivations in partaking in anti-consumption are numerous. Consumers may choose to avoid certain brands or products based on personal preferences, conflicts with their self-identity, dissatisfaction with quality (Lee et al., 2009b; Makri et al., 2020), or even a desire to oppose prevailing trends or distinguish themselves from specific social groups when it comes to fashion and self-actualization (Ma et al., 2012). Simultaneous participation in multiple forms and settings of anti-consumption is possible (Basci, 2014). The participants may be involved as individuals or as a collective and their involvement may vary.

While not all motivations behind anti-consumption are tied to sustainability, many are indeed related to it, including concerns about the impacts of meat consumption (Randers et al., 2021), plastic waste (Gu et al., 2023), and overconsumption (Scott & Weaver, 2018). Increased public awareness about the environment has been suggested to be the onset for environmentally oriented anti-consumption (García-de-Frutos et al., 2018; Lee, 2021), a form of anti-consumption driven by environmental concerns. Anti-consumption in general is often based on concerns over sustainability (Seegebarth et al., 2016).

This applies to fashion, as well. With overconsumption (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017; EPRS, 2022) and resulting textile waste (McKinsey & Company, 2016; Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017) being major challenges in today's fashion market, more sustainable clothing consumption options are interesting to many. According to a European Union report on sustainable fashion opportunities (2019), a trend of value-led consumption is to be recognized in multiple EU countries. In addition to this, due to increased consumer awareness of environmental issues related to fashion, the report estimates sustainable fashion holds potential for allowing development of new sustainable business models in the EU, especially for SMEs, despite variation between and within countries sometimes being considerable in both consumer awareness and behavior.

An important point is raised in that as sustainable anti-consumption includes a varying degree of ideologies and levels of involvement exist, it is highly likely that consumers partaking in anti-consumption behaviors may do it for a multitude of reasons, and not many studies may be directly applicable to this broad form of anti-consumption. Despite this, in a study on ethical brand avoidance (Rindell et al., 2013), it was revealed that consumers recognized and acted upon a primary focus when partaking in such type of anti-consumption. In the study, ethical concerns were considered a broader term for social sustainability or human well-being, animal well-being as well as the environment, so they can be, to certain extent, applicable to this context. In interviews conducted, respondents stated a key interest but considered other related issues important, too, just secondary to their primary focus (Rindell et al., 2013).

Relatedly, in a study focusing on ecological consumption behavior (Richetin et al., 2012), it was found that consumer intentions to reduce consumption were indeed primarily driven by pro-environmental motivations such as the general wish to reserve the planet or reducing ecological footprint. This indicated that people that focus on reducing consumption in their personal life often do it out of ecological concerns. On the other hand, intentions that implicated consumers as not willing to decrease consumption were to do with maintaining their current lifestyle, comfort, or convenience. In confronting the consumer with questions both about reasons for and reasons against, the researchers gained understanding of the variance in consumer behavior. Consumers may hold strong intentions for anti-consumption but still feel conflicted. Nevertheless, consumers that were able to prioritize ecological motivations were more likely to engage in anti-consumption in practice than those who did not.

A study by Hamari et al. (2016) similarly found that participation in sharing economy is often based on sustainability reasons but is the case only with consumers that prioritize it and harbor a positive attitude towards it. Additionally, another paper by Piligrimiené et al. (2020) found out that internal positive environmental attitudes affected consumers' likelihood to engage with sustainable consumption. Other internal factors affecting the likelihood in a positive manner was experienced perceived responsibility over sustainability matter by the consumer as well as perceived behavioral efficiency or how meaningful and effective the consumer considered their actions to be. Out of external factors, the social environment and surrounding attitudes, values, and behaviors affect consumer likelihood and motivation to partake (Piligrimiené et al., 2020; Kelly, 2011).

According to one study (Lagere & Kang, 2020), individuals who see moral or altruistic values as important to express through their non-verbal actions are more likely to intend to practice and commit to slow fashion consumption. Ideologically, slow fashion consumption fits into sustainable anti-consumption (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022; Table 1). This concept, known as symbolized moral identity, reflects consumers' belief in the importance of expressing values through non-verbal actions. In other words, consumers

who prioritize external expressions of their self-concepts are more likely to engage in slow fashion consumption.

Even in terms of ideologies widely recognized and categorized as sustainable anti-consumption, exceptions are possible. A study performed on the subject of voluntary simplicity, for example, proved that close to half of the studied sample chose to partake in the practice for motivations other than to restrict their consumption (Ozanne & Ballantine, 2010). Participants considered, for example, monetary gains and socialization more important. The study, however, was performed on the users of toy lending libraries (Ozanne & Ballantine, 2010) and may therefore not be applicable to other forms of sharing economy nor on forms of consumption generally acknowledged sustainably controversial, such as clothing consumption.

Based on all this, it is likely that consumers partaking in sustainable anti-consumption simply prioritize sustainability concerns over other factors, but this does not mean that said other factors do not coexist with the consumer's primary focus. It is deemed highly likely that depending on the form of sustainable anti-consumption and personal differences, secondary motivations for partaking vary greatly. Additionally, this all further indicates that in conceptualizing sustainable anti-consumption, actual motivations and goals of the practice matter more than the simplified ideology. Nevertheless, it is in the very definition of sustainable anti-consumption that the voluntary reduction of consumption is sustainability-driven (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022).

2.3 Communal Anti-Consumption

In this subchapter, sustainable anti-consumption is discussed in terms of the communal anti-consumption that takes place in consumption communities. First, consumer culture theory as a basis for communal anti-consumption research is analyzed in the light of available research. Next, consumption communities and anti-consumption communities are defined and different subtypes of said communities are discussed. Finally, the characteristics and dynamics of consumption communities are examined.

2.3.1 Consumer Culture Theory as Basis for Communal Anti-Consumption

Consumer culture theory (CCT) is a field of study focused on consumption and its patterns from a sociocultural perspective (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Arnould, 2018; 2023; Askegaard, 2015). In other words, CCT explores how consumption shapes and reflects societal values, identities, and behaviors within social and cultural dimensions. According to Arnould and Thompson (2023, p. 2) consumer culture can be seen as "a system of meanings, values, ideals, and norms that influence consumers' perceptions" both regarding worldview and also as a cultural blueprint. Hence, the culture in which consumers are embedded influences how they interpret and make sense of their experiences, especially in relation to consumption.

Consumer culture theory is built around studying consumption. Arnould and Thompson (2005; 2023, p. 3) state that the scope of CCT includes the entirety of the consumption cycle, meaning that it includes the acquisition, use, and discard stages of a product. CCT is studied both at the individual level and within groups, for consumption often takes place in social contexts and has social dimensions (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Askegaard, 2015). In fact, within CCT, consumption is seen as a social activity that is a means for consumers to shape their identity, build social connections, and establish social distinctions (Arnould & Thompson, 2023, p. 3). Consumer culture theory posits that consumption practices are deeply intertwined with individuals' self-concepts, social identities, and group affiliations (Arnould & Thompson, 2007; Arnould & Thompson, 2018, pp. 29-30).

The scope of consumption within consumer culture is vast. Consumers can consume within different scopes and be involved in different hobbies, different lifestyles, niche products, or social circles (Arnould & Thompson, 2018, pp. 1-4). This is due to the availability of an increasing selection of goods and services as well as more aspects of consumers' everyday life becoming commercially attainable (Lury, 2011, pp. 1-7). Therefore,

it is recognized that consumers likely have different, interlapping, often even contradictory consumption habits or consumer identities.

Within CCT, identity and a sense of self within the scope of consumption are often deemed connected to social dimensions despite being personal and individually configured. For example, Arnould and Thompson (2018, pp. 20-21) argue that identity formation is intentional and consistent behavior and patterns that are shaped by the social contexts the individual belongs to. An individual is recognized to have multiple roles in different social settings, often simultaneous, changing, connected, or conflicting in nature. Factors such as norms, obligations, passing of time, politics, or economy also shift these roles. Identity, therefore, is not constant or unchanging in nature but evolving.

This is all of a similar standard to anti-consumption behavior and identities of consumers. As has been discussed, consumers' involvement in different anti-consumption behavior can vary in intensity and consumers can be involved on either individual or collective basis (Basci, 2014). Furthermore, anti-consumption behavior can be generic or product- or brand-specific in nature. The categories, much like according to Arnould and Thompson (2018) are not exclusive in anti-consumption, meaning the consumer can participate in a multitude of anti-consumption behaviors simultaneously (Basci, 2014). Based on this, what can be applicable to traditional consumption is applicable to non- or anti-consumption, as well.

One often-studied approach of CCT is marketplace cultures (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Askegaard, 2015). In this theoretical approach, the socio-cultural dynamics of different consumer communities are studied. In other words, the analysis is focused on different cultural communities, such as subcultures, brand communities, networks, microcultures, or brand communities and their activities, norms, and shared meanings (Askegaard, 2015; Arnould & Thompson, 2007; Hungara & Nobre, 2021). Marketplace culture is considered to be one of the most studied approaches of CCT (Hungara & Nobre, 2021). This last approach is the focus of this thesis, for the focal points of study in this approach are

centered around communal anti-consumption behavior. Therefore, consumption communities, and more specifically anti-consumption communities, will be analyzed next.

2.3.2 Consumption and Anti-Consumption Communities

Marketplace cultures is one of the theoretical approaches within the traditional scope of CCT (Askegaard, 2015; Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Hungara & Nobre, 2021). The field of study focuses on consumer groups, also known as consumption communities, and how they interact with the marketplace within their personal scope of interest (Hungara & Nobre, 2021; Garanti & Berberoglu, 2018; Patterson & Schroeder, 2010). According to Patterson and Schroeder (2010), for example, shared communal identity forms through shared interests and is strengthened through engagement within said community. Consumption communities are suggested to be social and cultural in nature, and to create value through social interaction and relationships between community members (Arnould & Thompson, 2018, pp. 87-88). The primary value creation, in this instance, is not achieved through actual products or services but rather the community formed around the subject.

Therefore, the study of consumption communities is applicable to anti-consumption communities on top of traditional ones. No prerequisite of the community having to be focused on acquisition of goods or services exists. Similarly, other research on the subject suggests that while within the scope of anti-consumption and reducing consumption, perceived and experienced functional benefits are lost in regard of avoided purchases, symbolic benefits related to anti-consumption can still be valuable in the eyes of consumers (Sekhon & Armstrong-Soule, 2020).

As prefaced above, consumption communities, typically centered around shared consumption practices and values (Hungara & Nobre, 2021; Garanti & Berberoglu, 2018; Patterson & Schroeder, 2010; Arnould & Thompson, 2018), can indeed also be focused on and applicable in the context of anti-consumption. Anti-consumption involves the deliberate reduction or rejection of consumption, often driven by various motivations

such as environmental concerns, social justice, or personal well-being (Makri et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2011; Lee & Ahn, 2016; Seegebarth et al., 2016). Much like in traditional consumption communities, anti-consumption and sustainable anti-consumption can take place in both individual and collective level and form around both generic and brand- or product-specific contexts (Basci, 2014).

In subchapter 2.2.3, it was established that consumers partaking in sustainable anti-consumption, the primary motivation is likely to be sustainability concerns, but other motivations are likely to coexist with the key focus of partakers. As for sustainable anti-consumption taking place in communities, shared group-level meanings of (anti)-consumption practices and values are likely to be equally shared by group members as in traditional consumption communities (Hungara & Nobre, 2021; Garanti & Berberoglu, 2018; Patterson & Schroeder, 2010; Arnould & Thompson, 2018).

2.3.2.1 Types of Anti-Consumption Communities

In this subchapter, the two main types of collective anti-consumption are introduced first. These types are brand and product-specific as well as generic anti-consumption. Following this, different consumption community types are brought up. First, the community types within the traditional literature's scope are brought up. Additionally, newer and less researched community types are discussed.

Collective sustainable anti-consumption of clothes can be brand or product-specific in quality (Basci, 2014). In the context of brand or product-specific collective anti-consumption, sharing negative experiences related to a particular product or brand can foster a communal tendency to avoid those brands (Jayasimha et al., 2017). Within communities focused on sustainable anti-consumption, it is likely that certain clothing brands or product categories are regarded as undesirable or inferior alternatives. In practice, this could be based on personal or communal perceptions regarding clothing, its sustainability, durability, or other factors (Table 1; 2).

On top of these, collective sustainable anti-consumption can be generic in nature (Basci, 2014). Generic anti-consumption can be based on voluntary reduction, rejection and resistance of consumption's different stages (Lee et al., 2011; Makri et al., 2020) but in sustainable anti-consumption, as has been established, the focus is on reducing both the volume and adverse impact of clothing consumption (e.g. Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022). Out of the ideologies presented in subchapter 2.2.1, the ones not focused on brand or product avoidance, specifically, can be considered to fit under the concept of generic sustainable anti-consumption.

Consumer culture theory (CCT) dates back to the 1980s, its official term only recognized a few decades later, and actual research in the field still very much in its emerging stages (Askegaard, 2015; Hungara & Nobre, 2021). Between 2005 and 2015, the number of studies done on CCT within the scope of consumption communities doubled from 7 to 14 (Hungara & Nobre, 2021). Similarly, from 2011 to 2020, the number of studies increased from 14 to 25. While the topic is growing in popularity, the fragmented nature of the field is evident. CCT and the study of consumption communities have gained traction within the field of marketing, but research on the subject is still inadequate and fragmented in nature (Hungara & Nobre, 2021). Despite this, different types of communities have been studied and established. These will be discussed next.

Traditionally, consumer culture theory has divided consumption communities into subcultures of consumption, brand communities and consumer tribes (Arnould & Thompson, 2023, p. 98; Canniford, 2011; Hungara & Nobre, 2021). Subcultures of consumption are communities formed around collectively experienced oppression of mainstream consumer culture such as consumerism and capitalism, with shared community, values, and activities (Ulusoy & Firat, 2018; Canniford, 2011). From an anti-consumption point-of-view, it has been researched that anti-consumption is often based on counter-cultural stances that focus on opposing dominant ideologies of consumerism (Cherrier, 2009), much like in consumer resistance (see Table 2). However, subcultures of consumption are not to be confused with subcultures as whole, which are understood to form around

varying characteristics and factors such as gender identity, social class positions, ethnicity, or age groups (Arnould & Thompson, 2023, pp. 3-4).

Brand communities refer to communities built around a specific brand and its admirers (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). Its members share meaning and rituals, with the social interaction between members acting as a way to co-create value. Brand communities often operate partially online, sharing tips, information, and support regarding the brand or its products (Arnould & Thompson, 2023, p. 98). As for anti-consumption in the form of brand and product avoidance (see Table 2), it holds some ideological similarities, if considered as an opposite to traditional brand communities. It has been studied that in community settings, consumers partake in consumer advocacy and share negative brand experiences in communal settings, leading to communal brand avoidance (Jayasimha et al., 2017). In this instance, anti-consumption is carried out in the form of brand-specific avoidance (Basci, 2014).

Consumer tribes, as Cova and Cova suggest (2002), are communities of people with heterogeneous backgrounds that share a passion or an interest, experiences, and meaning with one another. These tribes can form around hobbies, for example, with not a specific brand acting as a means of connectivity but rather consumption as whole forming around the common interest shared by the group. This can be done through various brands, products, or services. Tribes have been described as not as dominating as brand communities or subcultures of consumption (Goulding et al., 2013). Consumers can belong to multiple consumer tribes. Additionally, tribes are considered to be less serious, with lesser obligations or shared sense of responsibility as well as less long-lasting or permanent than brand communities, for example. In the context of anti-consumption, this type of community could carry out generic anti-consumption that is not brand or product-specific in nature (Basci, 2014).

These forementioned traditional theories have been the focus of much of the research within the scope of CCT and consumption communities (Hungara & Nobre, 2021; Arnould & Thompson, 2018, 87-103). In fact, this shift from traditional theories based on economic utility and consumers as independent individuals seeking to maximize said utility to recognizing the collective and social nature of consumption has been one of CCT's main achievements. The shift towards the so-called re-tribalization of society has been supported by online platforms, more specifically social media platforms (Arnould & Thompson, 2018, p. 89) that enable consumers to interact with like-minded people and share their ideas. More importantly, consumers have become active co-creators of value, with the company-centric value creation and consumers as passive recipients no longer accurately describing the value creation process (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Goulding et al, 2013).

Researchers have also suggested the current theoretical division of consumption communities into the forementioned categories is not sufficient (Hungara & Nobre, 2021). Recently, lifestyle consumption communities or LCCs, characterized by active and deep involvement within shared lifestyle, norms, and practices (Närvänen et al., 2013; Gordon et al., 2015), have emerged in consumption community research. Depending on the LCC, knowledge and skills in the domain may be valued and hierarchy of the community may be dictated by them (Gordon et al., 2015). In addition to LCCs, consumer constructed organizations or CCOs have been proposed to be one subtype of consumption communities (Mamali et al., 2018). According to Mamali et al. (2018), CCOs are hybrid communities that have evolved from consumption communities and share characteristics with consumer tribes but are differentiated by their deeper pursuit of a mission as market actors. CCOs have been proposed to occupy an intermediary position between consumer tribes and market demands (Hungara & Nobre, 2021). CCOs, if considered on the basis of anti-consumption, could be a form of consumer resistance (see Table 2).

Lastly, consumption communities have been recognizably formed around shared feelings of principles regarding consumption practices or outcomes of said practices (Hungara &

Nobre, 2021). This sets this type of community apart from the traditional consumption communities that traditionally focus on consumption itself. According to Hungara and Nobre (2021), these types of consumption communities are new consumption communities (NCCs) and principle-based consumption communities. NCCs form around a sense of community that people share regarding their stance on market practices considered unfair, unjust, or inadequate (Moraes et al., 2010). Principle-based consumption communities, on the other hand, develop around environmentally conscious consumers that share principles and values related to the subject (De Vincenzo & Scammon, 2015; Hungara & Nobre, 2021).

Conspicuous anti-consumption, similar to principle-based consumption communities (De Vincenzo & Scammon, 2015; Hungara & Nobre, 2021), refers to the rejection and avoidance of consumption such as brands or products that is done in a visible way by signaling one's values, beliefs, and identity (Sekhon & Armstrong-Soule, 2020). Said research report supports that communicated environmental motivations and benefits can appeal to consumers that share similar values. Anti-consumption communities, therefore, can act as important influences on consumers already a part of the community but also those not currently partaking in anti-consumption habits.

2.3.2.2 Group Dynamics of Consumption Communities

As has been established, anti-consumption communities form around shared consumption practices and values (Hungara & Nobre, 2021; Garanti & Berberoglu, 2018; Patterson & Schroeder, 2010; Arnould & Thompson, 2018) and do not differ in their basic functioning from traditional consumption communities. This is due to the fact that in consumption communities, social interaction and relationships creates value for participants, not the actual consumption or non-consumption taking place within the community (Arnould & Thompson, 2018, pp. 87-88).

Consumption practices are closely related to individuals' self-concepts (Arnould & Thompson, 2007; Arnould & Thompson, 2018, pp. 29-30). Since anti-consumption communities form around shared consumption practices, values, and interests (Hungara & Nobre, 2021; Garanti & Berberoglu, 2018; Patterson & Schroeder, 2010; Arnould & Thompson, 2018), these factors also influence participation in consumption communities. In the case of brand communities, for example, participants engage with the community based on their shared interest, as a study on motorcycle groups reveals (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2006). Another study on collaborative consumption communities proves that participation is based on a multitude of factors related to perceived benefits, such as overall sustainability, personal enjoyment, or economic gains (Hamari et al., 2016).

Research suggests that in online consumption communities, membership and interaction allows members to reinforce and express their commonly shared values and identity, giving additional meaning to the experience (Watson et al., 2008). This can take place in varying kinds of consumption and non-consumption communities. For example, people of African-American cultural and demographic background have been studied to use consumption to shape their collective identity, share values important in American society, and supporting their cultural distinctiveness (Lamont & Molnár, 2001). Similarly, an online group of food enthusiasts have been studied to have developed a shared identity that is strengthened through online discussions and shared experiences (Watson et al., 2008).

Shared identity formation in consumption and anti-consumption communities is affected by group affiliation. According to one research paper, if an individual's group affiliation and belonging to a certain group is commonly acknowledged, this supports cooperation within the group (Guala et al., 2013). Similarly, another paper highlights that strong group identification, or group affiliation, drives collective action, whereas participation in collective action affects individual attitudes and perceptions (Kelly, 2011). This may support the development of new personal identities in line with the group's (Kelly,

2011, p. 77). As another paper regarding the subject states, as well, the social environment of a group, such as surrounding attitudes and behaviors, encourages consumers to act in like-minded ways (Piligrimiené et al., 2020).

As has been previously established, individuals can participate in a multitude of consumption communities simultaneously (Basci, 2014). Additionally, consumption and anti-consumption behavior has been recognized as a continuum, meaning that individual consumers' depth and intensity of involvement, behavior, and commitment to a practice or lifestyle can vary greatly. Basci (2014) proposes that involvement can range from light to intensive involvement within the practice.

As for what affects the level of personal involvement within the consumption or anti-consumption community, they are partially the same as personal motivations and interest for participation. Perceived benefits, personal or societal, were seen as influencing participation (Hamari et al., 2016). In another study on online communities, perceived benefits were found to mainly affect extra-role participation or additional effort put into the cause willingly by the participant (Yen et al., 2014).

The aforementioned proves that the relationship between a consumption community and its individual participants is reciprocal in nature. The individuals are who form the community based around their personal interests, motivations, and self-concepts (Hungara & Nobre, 2021; Garanti & Berberoglu, 2018; Patterson & Schroeder, 2010; Arnould & Thompson, 2018; Hamari et al., 2016). Therefore, it is the individuals behind the community that partially form the group to be as it is. On the other hand, as was analyzed above, the group is said to affect and influence its members, too (Kelly, 2011, p. 77; Yen at al., 2014). This seems to be based on the level of collective action and practices taken (Kelly, 2011) and deepening involvement based on perceived benefits and relationships and shared experiences within the community (Yen et al., 2014; Watson et al., 2008).

2.4 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework consists of two main theorical approaches, 'sustainable anti-consumption of clothes' and 'sustainable clothing consumption' (Figure 2). The first approach, sustainable anti-consumption of clothes, addresses the sustainability-motivated resistance and reduction of clothing consumption with a goal or reduced levels of clothing consumption (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022; Makri et al., 2020). These efforts are focused on reducing both the volume and adverse impact of clothing consumption and involve decreasing the volume of clothes purchased and, alternatively or additionally, examining the quality and sustainability of purchases. This approach involves ideologies of voluntary simplicity and consume less and consume better (CLCB) but can involve other ideologies, too, as they meet the prerequisites of reduced overall consumption and sustainability focus (Figure 2). The latter mentioned connection to other ideologies are marked in the theoretical in bright red dotted line (Figure 2).

These latter ideologies are more clearly linked to the other main theoretical approach, sustainable clothing consumption. Sustainable clothing consumption aims to reduce the negative impacts of fashion (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022). According to Diddi et al. (2019), this includes purchasing high-quality, ethically produced, or environmentally friendly garments and even reducing new clothing purchases. However, reductions may not always be the case and is not a prerequisite to consume in a sustainable manner. However, sustainable consumption practices are an important aspect of the remaining traditional consumption carried out by consumers participating in sustainable anti-consumption of clothes. Therefore, as long as these forms of consumption meet the prerequisite of overall reduced consumption and are sustainability-motivated, they can be carried out in a way that fits under the concept of sustainable anti-consumption. These forms of consumption are marked with a black connection line in the framework (Figure 2). For voluntary simplicity and CLCB also fit under the broader concept of sustainable clothing consumption but are not strictly so, they are marked by red dotted lines (Figure 2).

All of these forementioned ideologies can be carried out on both individual and collective level (Basci, 2014). In collective settings, anti-consumption can take place in consumption communities, often formed around shared consumption practices and values (Hungara & Nobre, 2021; Garanti & Berberoglu, 2018; Patterson & Schroeder, 2010; Arnould & Thompson, 2018), much like in traditional consumption communities. In these consumer collectives, value is created through social interaction and relationships between community members, not products or services consumed (Arnould & Thompson, 2018, pp. 87-88), so the concept is valid in the context of anti-consumption as well as traditional consumption.

Consumers participating in collective anti-consumption are driven to do so based on both personal and group level factors (Figure 2). On a personal level, the consumer's interests and perceived benefits affect willingness to participate (Hungara & Nobre, 2021; Garanti & Berberoglu, 2018; Patterson & Schroeder, 2010; Hamari et al., 2016). In addition to this, it has been established that values and motivations also affect this; while anti-consumption alone is not necessarily driven by sustainability-related motivations (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022), sustainable anti-consumption of clothes always is so (e.g. Seegebarth et al., 2016; García-de-Frutos et al., 2018; Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022). Therefore, sustainability-related anti-consumption is carried out by consumers willingly and consciously, driven by personal motivations and values. Thus, consumption practices are fundamentally related to individuals' self-concepts (Thompson & Arnould, 2007; Arnould & Thompson, 2018, pp. 29-30). In the case of sustainable anti-consumption of clothes, consumers partaking are, on a personally determined level (Basci, 2014), involved in the practice due to environmental, social, and economic sustainability (Hamari et al., 106; Ministry of the Environment, 2023).

As for group setting, both shared communal identity and group affiliation factors affect consumer participation (Figure 2). Consumption communities and anti-consumption communities share a communal identity that forms through shared interests and prac-

tices between individuals partaking (Patterson & Schroeder, 2010; Kelly, 2011). This identity and a sense of belonging is strengthened through engagement, shared experiences, and relationships between community members (Figure 2; Watson et al., 2008). According to research, consumption practices are not only affected by individual self-concepts but also social identities and group affiliations (Arnould & Thompson, 2007; Arnould & Thompson, 2018, pp. 29-30; Kelly, 2011; Piligrimiené et al., 2020). Additionally, anti-consumption taking place in communal settings has been studied to influence both participants and those not currently involved but interested (Sekhon & Armstrong-Soule, 2020).

The interactive relationship between personal factors and group settings, therefore, is evident. This is marked with an arrow in the theoretical framework (Figure 2). Personal factors can be recognized to affect group settings and vice versa. Even as a part of these communities, consumers are still carrying out acts of individual consumption, marked in grey in the framework (Figure 2), despite the individual consumption being affected by collective contexts (e.g. Sekhon & Armstrong-Soule, 2020; Närvänen et al., 2013; Gordon et al., 2015). The grey color indicates that while these consumption practices are recognized as taking place on an individual level, and individuals consuming as a part of consumption communities is what forms the practices of the overall community itself, it is not the focus of this thesis, specifically.

Finally, collective sustainable anti-consumption of clothes can vary in nature. More specifically, collectives can carry out sustainable anti-consumption that is either brand or product specific or generic in quality (Figure 2; Basci, 2014). In practice, it is likely that these types are practiced, to a level, simultaneously (Basci, 2014). In brand or product specific collective anti-consumption, sharing negative product or brand experiences can lead to communal brand avoidance (Jayasimha et al., 2017).

Within communities of sustainably conscious consumers, it is likely that certain clothing brands or product types are generally deemed avoidable and worse options than their sustainable counterparts available on the market. This could include product types like

fast fashion and brands consumers associate to carry out fast fashion or any other personal or communal perception regarding clothing, its sustainability as well as factors related to usability and durability of clothing (see Tables 1 and 2). On top of this, due to the acknowledgement that sustainable anti-consumption of clothing includes a degree of traditional clothing consumption and acquisition, conscious brand selection is likely to take place within the communities, as well (Figure 2). This, again, can be personal in practice but it is likely that the communal group setting affects individuals participating in the communal practice (Figure 2).
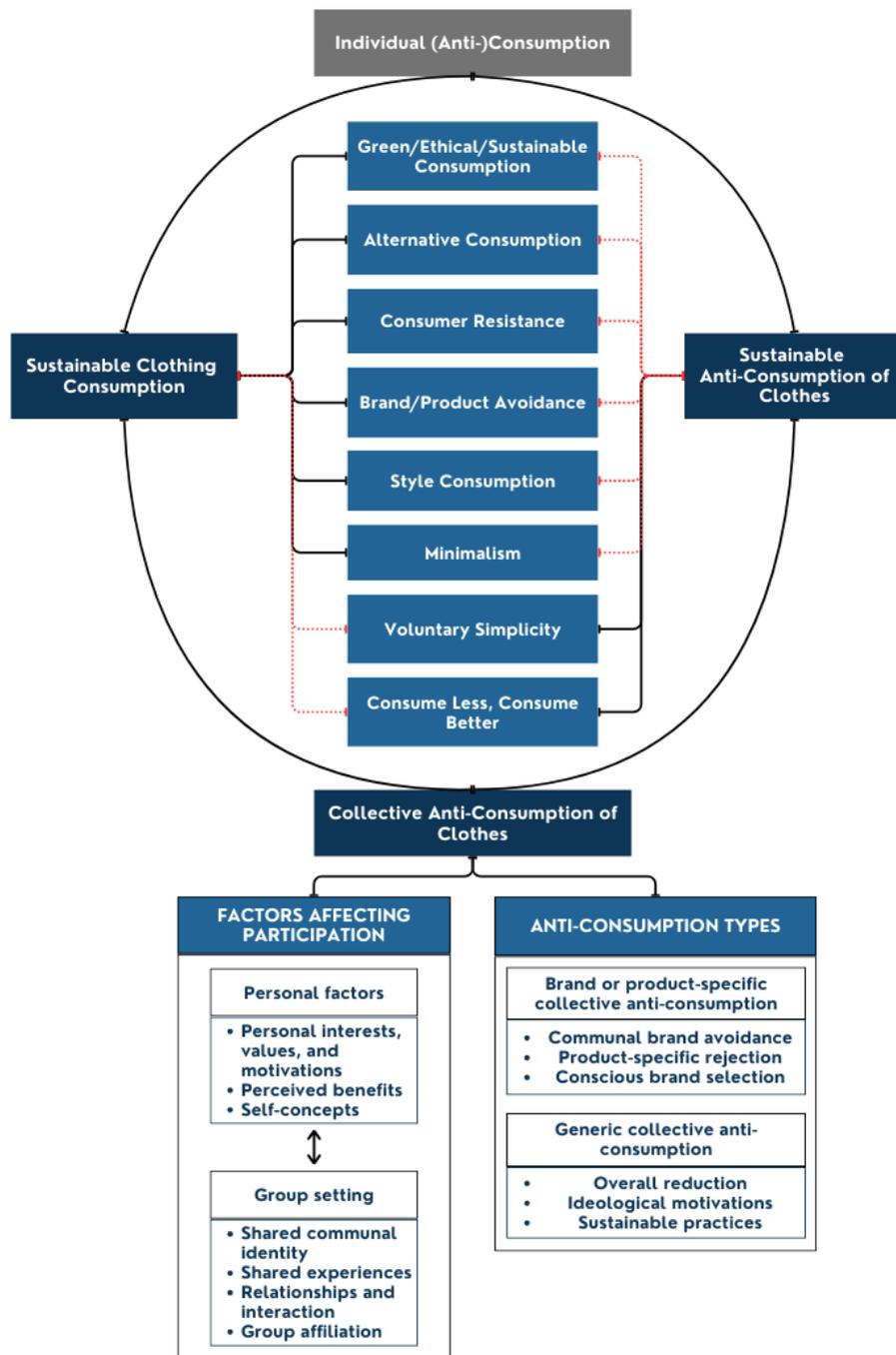
Figure 2. Theoretical framework on overlaps between sustainable anti-consumption and sustainable clothing consumption at individual and community levels.

As for generic communal sustainable anti-consumption of clothes, it applies to all practices that are not brand or product specific in nature (Figure 2). As has been established, sustainable anti-consumption of clothes refers to sustainability-motivated resistance

and reduction of clothing consumption (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022; Makri et al., 2020). In it, the goal is overall reduced level of clothing consumption. In this thesis' definition, the efforts were recognized to be focused on reducing both the volume of clothing purchases as well as often the quality and sustainability examinations of remaining clothing consumption. Therefore, the focus is often on establishing more sustainable practices around clothing consumption as well as cutting the overall volume of it. The motivation behind the communal effort, as the discussion of personal motivation revealed, has to be sustainability. The community, group affiliations and shared communal identity are likely to affect the types of practices carried out by its members (Figure 2; e.g. Sekhon & Armstrong-Soule, 2020; Närvänen et al., 2013; Gordon et al., 2015; Kelly, 2011). Nevertheless, it is the individual members that determine their level of involvement (Basci, 2014) as well as personal motivations and other factors, which in turn affect the practices they choose to carry out (Hamari et al., 2016).

3 Methodology

This chapter introduces the methodology used in this study. First, the description of the study's chase, 'Rule of Five' is introduced. Following this, the methodological approach of semi-structured interviews applied in this study is presented. The content and structure of the interviews is discussed. Additionally, the description of selection criteria for interview participants is given. Next, the data collection and data analysis are explained. Finally, the validity and reliability of the study are scrutinized.

3.1 Description of Case 'Rule of Five'

Within the context of consumption communities, a notable phenomenon has surfaced known as the 'Rule of Five' or the challenge of only consumers acquiring five new clothing items, including shoes, per year. According to researchers of the Berlin's Hot or Cool Institute (Coscieme et al., 2022), in order to stay in line with the Paris Agreement of limiting global warming to 1.5 °C (UN, n.d.), "purchases of new garments should be limited to an average of five items per year". The suggestion is based on calculations of sustainable consumption levels in G20 countries if no other actions such as adopting supplementary measures such as repairing, utilizing lower washing temperatures, or buying second-hand, are taken. While measures like the ones listed above may mitigate the need for drastic reductions on clothing consumption, the report presses that reducing purchases of new clothing is the single most effective way to reduce CO_2 emissions of fashion consumption.

This forementioned report (Coscieme et al., 2022) serves as the main contributor to the emergence of the 'Rule of Five' phenomenon, a consumer-led challenge or directive that advocates the need to purchase only five new clothing items per year. The challenge lacks definite, commonly acknowledged rules, given its origin as a consumer-driven movement deriving from a sustainable fashion consumption report that gained widespread traction across online platforms such as social media and blogs but also traditional media (e.g. Darke, 2023; Chan, 2022; Murray Greenway, 2024; Kaipainen, 2023;

Reenpää, 2023, Haikarainen, 2023). As can be deduced from the media available, it has spread in the UK, the US, and Europe, but it is hard to estimate how popular the notion currently is and how vast the media reach is.

Participants, either individually or as part of a community, take on the challenge for one year or in one-year periods. During this time, they commit to buying no more than five new clothing items, excluding undergarments, as this has been identified as the long-term sustainable level of clothing consumption (Coscieme et al., 2022). During the challenge, buying secondhand fashion is allowed but is generally advised to be limited to only a few purchases. This is due to the fact that no actual proof of buying secondhand fashion slowing the current surge in new clothing sales exists. Moreover, questions regarding it inadvertently contributing to the acceleration of fast fashion trends, have arisen (Darke, 2022; Fullerton, 2023; Cartwright, 2023). However, the rules and goals of the challenge exhibit a degree of ambiguity, seemingly depending on variables such as geographical location, source, and the individuals participating in the challenge (e.g. Darke, 2023; Chan, 2022; Murray Greenway, 2024; Kaipainen, 2023; Reenpää, 2023, Haikarainen, 2023).

All in all, it is evident that the report has gained attention, and the media has spread either the report results or consumer initiatives challenging others to participate (e.g. Darke, 2023; Reenpää, 2023). As the average US consumer buys 68 pieces of clothing per year (American Apparel & Footwear Association, 2022) and as Finnish consumers buy 38 pieces of clothing per year on average (Aaltonen, 2024), it is evident that the 'Rule of Five' directive is, in terms of principle, an anti-consumption ideology. The focus is on voluntarily reducing personal consumption levels of clothing, which sits into the general ideology of anti-consumption (Lee et al., 2011; Makri et al., 2020). Due to the fact that the Hot or Cool Institute's report on sustainable fashion consumption (Coscieme et al., 2022) acts as the basis for the notion of 'Rule of Five', the challenge also ideologically fits under the scope of sustainable anti-consumption (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022).

The 'Rule of Five', therefore, complies with the basic ideology of both anti-consumption and sustainable anti-consumption of clothing (Lee et al., 2011; Makri et al., 2020; Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022). The individually taken consumer action resulting from press releases, news reports, and blog texts, however, are individual level anti-consumption (Basci, 2014). Only when the notion of 'Rule of Five' is spread, practiced and shared within a communal setting, does it fit into the theoretical territory of communal or collective anti-consumption.

Given the fact that the phenomenon examined in this thesis is fairly recent, the related literature is scarce, and no scientific studies have been carried out regarding it. Despite this, the origins of the challenge and community within Finnish online platforms will be presented as follows. In Finland, the 'Rule of Five' challenge was made popular by social media influencers Aku Varamäki and Julia Thurén, their social media presence, and other news articles created regarding the subject (Reenpää, 2023; Thurén, 2023; Varamäki, n.d.; Kaipainen, 2023; Haikarainen, 2023). In early 2023, they informed their followers that they were initiating a challenge of only buying five new clothes a year and challenged their followers and readers to do the same (Reenpää, 2023; Thurén, 2023; Varamäki, n.d.; Thurén, n.d.). As mentioned above, the rules included only buying five new clothes during the following year, with socks and underwear not being a part of the challenge but shoes being. The initiative was based on the aforementioned Hot or Cool Institute's report (Coscieme et al., 2022).

The challenge's main presence takes place on the social media platform and app Instagram (Varamäki, n.d.; Thurén, n.d.), where the challenge has a Finnish hashtag #viidenvaatteenvuosi (directly translating to "the year of five garments"). However, the phenomenon is generally referred to as a "challenge" under the posts regarding the subject, often as whole named "viiden vaatteen vuosi -haaste" or "five garment year challenge". As of September 18, 2024, the hashtag #viidenvaatteenvuosi has been used in nearly

1,500 Instagram posts (Instagram, 2024) by those participating in the challenge. This does not, however, include posts under private Instagram profiles.

3.2 Methodological approach

This thesis approaches the research problem by means of qualitative research that stands for the study of subjective meanings and experiences of people (Silverman, 2020, p. 3-4). Within qualitative research, the aims are often on studying and understanding human experience and the study's focus, focus groups, are seen knowledgeable in the subject, and therefore act as direct access to the study's subject. As the goal of this study is to determine how sustainable anti-consumption of clothes in collective settings, more specifically in the context of the 'Rule of Five' consumption community, can lead to over-all more sustainable consumption practices, qualitative research is a justified choice.

The research was carried out in the form of semi-structured in-depth interviews. According to Silverman (2020, p. 71), interviews as a qualitative research method can range from highly structured ones to semi-formal guided conversations and even informal conversation settings based on exchange of information. This study used semi-formal guided conversations due to their ability to balance structure and flexibility. The semi-structured format allows the researcher to explore key themes while also giving participants the freedom to elaborate on their personal experiences and perspectives. This is particularly useful when studying a complex topic, as the interviewer's guide helps ensure that all relevant aspects are covered, but the conversation can also take unexpected and insightful directions based on the participants' responses. By guiding the discussion toward specific areas of interest, the interviewer can ensure that the diverse dimensions of the research topic are addressed without limiting the depth of personal narratives.

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

Respondents were all contacted on the basis of their publicly available participation in the 'Rule of Five' consumption community challenge on Instagram. The participants

were not chosen based on demographic information, nor was their selection influenced by specific demographic criteria. Instead, the focus was on engaging with individuals who actively participated in the challenge, regardless of their background. This approach ensures a diverse range of perspectives on the challenge participants, reflecting the broader experiences and views within the community.

Each interview was held individually and was not carried out in a group setting. The interviews were conducted through a remote connection. Depending on the interview, their duration ranged from approximately 40 minutes to an hour and a half. Each respondent was encouraged to freely share as much information regarding the interview questions asked without interruptions. The respondent information can be seen in Table 3 below. In the table (Table 3), the respondents' involvement timeline stands for the time period they have been involved with the community, and if they have quit, how long they altogether were involved with it. Information about the number of years of participation is provided in parentheses. Lastly, the current status of the participants' involvement is presented on the far right of the table. The status was determined by the participants themselves, and any level of involvement they defined as participation within the challenge or community was marked as 'involved' in the table. Likewise, if the participant stated they were no longer 'officially' involved in the challenge, this is how they were categorized.

All in all, 13 interviews were recorded with the participants' consent and subsequently transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy of analysis. The transcripts were then systematically analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis as an approach allows for identifying recurring themes, patterns, and insights (Clarke & Braun, 2017) related to participants' experiences within the 'Rule of Five' consumption community challenge. Coding, a practice of capturing units of potentially relevant data (Clarke & Braun, 2017), was carried out to categorize the data into meaningful themes. These themes were then reviewed and used to understand both individual and communal practices, along with enablers and challenges that influenced the practice of sustainable anti-consumption.

Table 3. Respondent information.

Respondent	Gender	Length of interview	Involvement timeline	Involvement status
1	Female	47 minutes	Since 2023 (2nd year)	Involved
2	Female	1 h 3 minutes	Since 2023 (2nd year)	Involved
3	Female	33 minutes	Since 2023 (2nd year)	Involved
4	Female	45 minutes	Since 2023 (2nd year)	Involved
5	Female	45 minutes	Since 2024 (1st year)	Involved
6	Female	1 h 19 minutes	Since 2024 (1st year)	Involved
7	Female	50 minutes	Since 2024 (1st year)	Involved
8	Female	40 minutes	Since 2024 (1st year)	Involved
9	Female	57 minutes	Since 2023 (2nd year)	Involved
10	Female	38 minutes	Since 2024 (1st year)	Involved
11	Female	57 minutes	First few months of 2023	No longer officially involved
12	Female	1 h 15 minutes	Since 2023 (2nd year)	Involved
13	Female	50 minutes	Since 2023 (2nd year)	Involved

3.4 Trustworthiness of Study

In order to ensure trustworthiness of qualitative research methods such as the ones used in this thesis, several options arise. The credibility of the study can be strengthened and ensured through prolonged engagement with participants, reflexivity, and triangulation (Sirwan, 2024; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 292). Spending an adequate amount of time with interviewees is crucial for establishing connections, trust, and rapport and in order to gain insight on their personal perspectives (Sirwan, 2024). Reflexivity means the researcher's capability and self-awareness related to acknowledging and resisting any personal biases or presumptions. By practicing reflexivity, a researcher can ensure objectivity of the data collection, analysis, and the entire study. In triangulation, a combination of different data sources, methods, and theories are used in order to increase the credibility of interpretation (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 292; Sirwan, 2024). In order

for a qualitative study to be considered valid, the findings have to be supported by available evidence (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 292).

In the context of this study, in-depth interviews were conducted individually in order to ensure prolonged contact with interviewees (Sirwan, 2024). All participants were encouraged to share as much information as they felt necessary. This was also endorsed by additional questions if respondents struggled to answer some questions asked. Furthermore, participants were reminded of their right to ask questions or for clarification at any point they felt necessary. The reflexivity of this study was considered by regularly reflecting on interactions with participants, ensuring that the interviews were not led or shaped by the interviewer. Triangulation was practiced by choosing enough participants for interviews to ensure diversity of data and by ensuring an adequate number of cross-verified findings supported by theory.

Secondly, the transferability of a qualitative study is an important aspect in defining trustworthiness (Sirwan, 2024). Transferability refers to the adequate contextual details of research context and selection of participants offered by researchers in order to help readers evaluate the findings' relevance. This thesis offers a detailed description of the research case 'Rule of Five' and offers adequate information regarding selection of participants. The description of the case acknowledges the limited availability of information due to the novelty of the studied phenomenon but offers cross-referenced news pieces as supporting evidence. The selection of participants was described and rationalized. In the context of the study conducted, it was acknowledged that the selected interviewees may not truthfully represent the entire community and their commitment or engagement with the community, for the participants were picked on the basis of active participation and engagement. Despite this, the participants ultimately represented variance in experienced commitment and engagement with the community.

Lastly, dependability and confirmability affect the trustworthiness of a qualitative study (Sirwan, 2024). Dependability or the reliability and traceability of a study is strengthened

through ensuring adequate documentation of the research process (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 294). According to the same source, confirmability refers to the data and interpretations being based on real evidence, not just ideas. Confirmability, for example, can be strengthened through peer or expert feedback (Sirwan, 2024). This master's thesis was conducted in guidance of a personal supervisor. The process involved regular meetings and feedback from the said supervisor. Additionally, peer reviews were conducted in the beginning of the process.

3.5 Utilization of Artificial Intelligence in the Study

Artificial intelligence (AI) models were utilized in the research process of this study. Their utilization was based on the purpose of enhancing the quality and efficiency of the process. At no point did the AI models used replace the independent judgement or thinking of the author of this thesis. Instead, the use of AI in this thesis functioned as a supplementary tool. This thesis follows the University of Vaasa's writing guidelines (University of Vaasa, n.d.) and respects responsible and ethical research practices.

The models used in this study were OpenAI's ChatGPT (OpenAI, 2024), Consensus (Consensus (2024), and Transkriptor (Transkriptor, 2024). OpenAI was utilized in the writing process and data management of this thesis. This model was used in refining provided language, clarity of existing statements, and verifying logicality of sentence structures. The entire input provided to the model was created by the author of this thesis, and only parts of the suggested changes created by the AI model were used, all of which were manually reviewed by the author. OpenAI was additionally used to evaluate the objectivity and validity of data analysis carried out by the author; the related data was provided to the model and a comparison of founded similarities and differences of analyzed findings was then compared to the original deductions of the author. The model was not utilized in actual data analysis.

Consensus was utilized in finding suitable scientific sources. Consensus is an AI-powered academic search engine that provides relevant, timely, and reliable academic papers to

specific research questions asked by the user (Consensus, 2024). All of the sources provided by Consensus and used in this thesis were double-checked, the accuracy and context of studies was manually reviewed by the author, and only if they were deemed appropriate, were they then used. These sources were all cited according to the University of Vaasa's writing guidelines (University of Vaasa, n.d.).

Transkriptor is a subscription-based service that offers conversions of audio to text (Transkriptor, 2024). It generates transcriptions with the help of artificial intelligence. The AI-based service was utilized in the transcription process of this study's interview material and only served as a tool to make carrying out the conversions more efficient time-wise. All of the text material provided by the model was manually checked by the author in order to ensure accuracy of interview material.

4 Sustainable Anti-Consumption of Clothes as a Practice

4.1 Community Characteristics

In this subchapter, the studied consumption community 'Rule of Five' is first defined by its points of confluence with different types of consumption communities. The analysis shows that the community shares characteristics with various consumption community types, highlighting the fragmented and somewhat overlapping nature of this field of study. Building on this, the broader types of sustainable anti-consumption outlined in the framework and carried out by the community are recognized and examined in greater detail.

Out of the current research-based consumption community types presented in this thesis' theory chapters, the 'Rule of Five' community most distinctly resembles consumer tribes, lifestyle consumption communities (LCCs), or principle-based consumption communities. Additionally, the community showcases some key characteristics often associated with subcultures of consumption. These characteristics will be analyzed next.

Participants of this challenge showcased general interest in sustainable lifestyles, and while the very definite sustainable value base of the participants becomes evident in later analysis, actual reasoning behind participation for many seemed to stem from a 'why not' type of thinking. This suggests that they saw an opportunity to engage without a compelling reason to decline. Example (1) pinpoints this.

> (1)   *I guess I've been intrigued for a while now by the idea of living more sustainably. And to be honest, it was easy for me to get involved in this because, given my situation, I just didn't have the time to be a big shopper anyway. Honestly, I find the whole idea of shopping as a hobby distasteful. So, aiming for sustainability just made sense. I thought it'd be fun to give this a try since I knew it wouldn't be a huge leap from what I was already doing. It felt within reach. (respondent 13)*

This may hint that the challenge may be perceived as relaxed at nature and that the threshold for participation was considered low by members. This would ideologically fit under the scope of consumer tribes (Goulding et al., 2013; Cova & Cova, 2002). Within such communities, the focus is often on consumption practices as whole within the chosen context rather than specific brands or products like in brand communities (Cova & Cova, 2002; Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). This consumption community type is considered less absolute, more relaxed in the sense of lesser obligations, shared responsibility, and less permanent in nature (Goulding et al., 2013). The studied community generally typified these characteristics well, as was seen above.

The 'Rule of Five' consumption community also embodies characteristics often associated with lifestyle consumption communities or LCCs. As later analysis on personal enablers and challenges experienced by members will reveal, the community generally considers the practiced ideology to go beyond its initial idea of a challenge. Many recognized the need for continuous effort and practiced restraint to a point of it resembling an entire lifestyle. LCCs have been characterized as being actively and deeply involved in shared lifestyles, norms, and practices (Närvänen et al., 2013; Gordon et al., 2015). This generally fits the community type, for it shares distinct practices and a lifestyle formed around it. However, LCCs have often been characterized by being very knowledge and skill-centered, to a point of it possibly creating a hierarchical setting (Gordon et al., 2015), and that did not manifest in the study of this particular group, at all.

Additionally, the 'Rule of Five' consumption community clearly fits ideologically under the scope of principle-based consumption communities. They have been described as groups of environmentally conscious consumers that share principles and values related to the subject (De Vincenzo & Scammon, 2015; Hungara & Nobre, 2021). While this is mostly very fitting, analysis will reveal that this community is interested in various aspects of sustainability, not just its environmental type.

Finally, the studied consumption community showcased characteristics of subcultures of consumption. The 'Rule of Five' community was analyzed to have a clear value base that they as community shared, as will be established in later analysis in more detail. The community was found to strive for mindful consumption that is mostly need-based, and the participants expressed wishes to spread their ideology. This can, at heart, be considered the community's way of challenging existing modes and norms related to clothing consumption. Another detail later analyzed in more detail, the community's output regarding the wish to awaken others did not stand out as a practice and does not bear resemblance to actual consumer activism. Subcultures of consumption form around collectively experienced oppression related to mainstream consumption culture and share base values (Ulusoy & Firat, 2018; Canniford, 2011). This type of anti-consumption is carried out of counter-cultural stances related to opposing dominant ideologies of consumerism (Cherrier, 2009).

As the community has now been ideologically characterized, the community's practiced types of sustainable anti-consumption of clothes is analyzed next. In the following section, the whole community's practices related to sustainable anti-consumption and sustainable consumption of fashion are analyzed. With the help of the theoretical framework, the analysis strives to answer which types of sustainable anti-consumption of clothing the community most clearly engage in.

As a collective, the Rule of Five consumption community clearly harbors negative associations related to fast fashion items and brands. The community can be recognized to largely carry out product or product type-specific collective anti-consumption related to the avoidance of fast fashion (Basci, 2014). While the interviewed members showed the capability to recognize and list fast fashion brands and chain stores, the true target of the avoidance was the product type itself, fast fashion. No specific fast fashion brand itself stood out as considered especially bad and therefore to be avoided; all of them were, to a level, condemned by the participants and equated to belong to the same level.

This was visible in the examples given by the interviewees. This is highlighted in example (2):

> (2) Stores like Ellos, Temu, and such no longer attract me. If I really need some-thing, I might browse online, but then I pay attention to how and where the product is made. There's also the fact that when you want to buy something of higher quality and sustainability, you have to be willing to pay for it, but then you might buy them less frequently. It's a completely different thing to buy a top for ten euros than one for eighty euros. [...] I have avoided certain chain stores, like H&M, for years now. (respondent 2)

Communal brand avoidance based on shared negative experiences was not evident in the community (Jayasimha et al., 2017). Similarly, brand-specific avoidance was not con-veyed in interviews despite respondents listing some chain stores as an example (Basci, 2014). A level of conscious brand selection was expected but as the interviews proved evident, the community mainly practices product type rejection. Any practiced brand selection or preferences proved personal, not something the community shared.

In addition to product and product type-specific collective anti-consumption, the 'Rule of Five' community also practices generic sustainable anti-consumption. This form of anti-consumption refers to overall reductions in clothing consumption (Basci, 2014). Ge-neric anti-consumption is often driven by ideological motivations, and in this commu-nity's case, the central ideology proved to be sustainability (Makri et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2011; Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022). See example (3) below.

> (3) I think the most motivating thing is that I am aware of how many clothes are produced in the world and how much is produced excessively. That is the most motivating factor. And then perhaps the second is that when we acquire less, we can buy better quality clothes. (respondent 9)

As the example proves, the communal practice involves a voluntary personal reduction of clothing consumption, carried out with an emphasis on sustainability. Therefore, the community's practice aligns with the fundamental principles of sustainable anti-con-

sumption of clothes (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022). As discussed in the theoretical framework and in the delimitation chapter, anti-consumption often coexists with traditional forms of consumption, too.

4.2   Motivations and Challenges in Implementation

In the following section, motivational factors and challenges or barriers are analyzed in regard to participation. First, personal level motivational aspects and challenges are recognized and analyzed with the help of the theoretical framework. Following this section, the dynamics and group settings of the 'Rule of Five' consumption community are analyzed in order to identify key facilitative factors and challenges at the communal level.

First, the respondents' concepts of self are analyzed by means of thematic analysis to recognize motivations and barriers regarding their participation in sustainable anti-consumption of clothes. In the theoretical framework, personal factors that affect participation in sustainable anti-consumption were established to be related to personal interests, values, and motivations (Hungara & Nobre, 2021; Patterson & Schroeder, 2010; Richetin et al. 2012; Hamari et al., 2016; Piligrimiené et al., 2020; Kelly, 2011). Consumption, at heart, has also been suggested to be affected by self-concepts (Arnould & Thompson, 2007; Arnould & Thompson, 2018, pp. 29-30). Additionally, perceived benefits related to participation can be considered drivers (Hamari et al., 2016; Yen et al., 2014).

4.2.1   Personal Level Motivational Factors and Challenges

This subchapter presents the primary and secondary motivators for participation in the 'Rule of Five' community. Additionally, the interests and values of participants are analyzed. The related challenges experienced by the participants will also be presented.

Sustainability as a primary motivator, interest, and benefit to participation

The first and clearest of the motivational factors found affecting members' participation and implementation of sustainable anti-consumption of clothes was sustainability reasons. Example (4) points this out.

> (4) *I am specifically interested in sustainable consumption and ecological values. I believe it is important to try to favor, for example, cycling instead of driving a car for short distances in the city, or to recycle and consume responsibly in all other areas as well. Of course, everyone makes mistakes, and there are always weak moments in everything, but I find it difficult to understand people who order clothes from China without considering their ecological impact. (respondent 8)*

Participants partaking in sustainable anti-consumption of clothing and in the 'Rule of Five' community prioritize sustainability reasons, as example (4) proves. Interviewees brought up sustainability reasons as their primary reason for participating in the practice and communal activity. While example (4) specifically points out overall interest in more sustainable ways to live, not just regarding clothing, sustainability—including its environmental, social, and economic aspects (Ministry of the Environment, 2023)—clearly stood out as the main motivation for participants. Example (5), for instance, highlights a respondent's concern with fair labor practices and the broader implications of low clothing prices.

> (5) *It's essential that the people who make the products and materials are paid a fair wage for their work. And that they're produced in conditions where workers have decent working environments, and where the production process also considers environmental aspects. [...] Before, clothes used to be a lot more expensive in relative terms, and people didn't buy nearly as many as they do now. It's obvious that if a new piece of clothing costs... on sale or not, less than five euros on the rack, then there's no way everyone involved is getting paid what they need. (respondent 9)*

This is consistent with other studies regarding the subject; sustainability reasons are a primary focus of participants to carry out anti-consumption (Rindell et al., 2013), sustainable consumption practices are motivated by pro-environmental motivations (Richetin et al., 2012), and consumers harboring positive attitude towards sustainability

are the most likely to carry out consumption practices related to it (Hamari et al., 2016). While sustainability was a dominant theme, participants expressed their interest in the matter in varying ways. Some interviewees predominantly recognized their general interest in all aspects of sustainable development in their life, as seen in example (4). In example (5), the respondent considered all aspects of sustainability to matter. However, others emphasized specifically one or a few aspects of it, such as environmental sustainability, related to clothing consumption specifically. This can be seen in example (6).

> (6) *Even before [I joined the 'Rule of Five' community], I've expressed the view that clothes should be bought in moderation, from an environmental perspective. (respondent 3)*

This variation simply means that participants are driven by different aspects and levels of sustainability. When asked for reasons for participation in the challenge, many specifically stated overall more sustainable ways of life or clothing consumption and recognized their efforts regarding in it varying parts of their current lifestyle. However, when prompted about which aspects of sustainability specifically were important to respondents when purchasing clothing, many recognized that when combined, sustainability of clothing was difficult to verify, leading to contradictions. This is highlighted by example (7).

> (7) *I haven't found clothing brands that meet all these criteria while also being clothes I could personally wear and buy. I just have to try to make some choice from what's available. What I can control is that I don't buy too much. I feel like right now, I can't really influence how much money someone gets for making a piece of clothing for me. But what I can control is not adding too much to the amount of overall waste. (respondent 13)*

All in all, participants' prime motivations were different aspects of sustainability, and therefore this aspect is something respondents also consider a perceived benefit (Hamari et al., 2016; Sekhon & Armstrong-Soule, 2020). Despite this, in carrying out the challenge, the complicated nature of verifying sustainability claims stood out as a clear barrier to many respondents. As example (7) proves, a broader tension related to sus-

tainable consumption and its different aspects is evident. This signals a sense of power-lessness, where some participants felt they can only control consumption volumes rather than ensuring their purchases are all ethically or sustainably made. One study on the subject had similar findings; the complex nature of sustainability is what makes making informed decisions on the subject difficult for consumers (Harris et al., 2016).

Sustainable anti-consumption as a tool for self-reflection

Another key motivational factor for participants on an individual level was finding concrete ways to reflect on personal consumption of clothing. Respondents recognized that the challenge brought concreteness regarding sustainable consumption levels and allowed them to reflect on their personal consumption, as well. This can be seen in example (8).

> (8) *I feel like this somehow gives a 'form' to what I have already been trying to achieve myself. (respondent 1)*

The Rule of Five challenge, therefore, acts as a set example for consumers primarily motivated by sustainability factors. Members may feel more attuned to their purchasing behaviors when engaging with the challenge. This may help participants achieve consumption behavior and volumes more aligned with their sustainable value base. Additionally, example (8) is related to the personal scope of interests of respondents. Since sustainability was established to be the primary motivator and perceived benefit for partaking in the challenge, self-reflection and learning about related practices and subjects may be important to the members of the community. Participation in consumer groups has been studied to be primarily driven my personal interests of consumers (Hungara & Nobre, 2021; Garanti & Berberoglu, 2018; Patterson & Schroeder, 2010).

Additionally, the previous example may suggest that the challenge, in a way, may help ease the otherwise felt uncertainty that example (7) expresses. Therefore, this finding could be linked to the aforementioned complexity of sustainability that consumers recognizably struggle with (Harris et al., 2016). Due to the fact that the challenge is based

on actual calculations (Coscieme et al., 2022), participants do not have to spend time on personally contemplating what is a sustainable amount of clothing purchases per year.

Personal economy as a secondary motivator

Finally, when specifically asked what the reason for respondents' goal of reduced consumption levels were, all identified interest or worry over sustainability as their primary reason, but the second most important consideration overall for respondents was personal economy. Respondents' answers proved that while not everyone was specifically motivated by saving money, they were interested in tracking their spending on clothing. See example (9) below.

> (9) *The environmental aspect is probably the first thing, but also definitely for my own finances. I want to be aware of how much I spend on clothes each year and how huge the amounts I've spent on clothes have been in the past. So, my personal finances are a close second after environmental concerns. (respondent 4)*

Therefore, personal economy was another motivation and a perceived benefit for participation (Hamari et al., 2016). Additionally, this further supports the ideology behind practiced sustainable anti-consumption which has been recognized to be primarily driven by sustainability motivations (Rindell et al., 2013; Hamari et al., 2016; Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022), despite allowing varying kinds of secondary motivations.

Sustainability as a core value

Next, the personal values of participants are analyzed in more detail. Although the nature of this study does not allow determining the absolute value base of participants, it allows to recognize values the participants prioritized in the context of sustainable anti-consumption and sustainable consumption of clothing. Much like in primary motivators for participation, sustainability emerged as the most frequently emphasized value across respondents when discussing sustainable anti-consumption practices. This is best highlighted in examples from (4) to (6) at the beginning of this chapter. These and the following examples further underline that consumers that already harbor positive attitudes

towards sustainability, or in this case even showcase it as a personal value, are the ones that are most likely to carry the ideology out in practice (Hamari et al., 2016).

The respondents' value base was showcased by evident commitment to sustainability-related consumption values. This manifested in attitudes towards conscious consumption and criticism towards traditional models of consumption. The respondents systematically recognized the importance of need-based, informed consumption choices and taking personal responsibility for their consumption habits. Example (10) highlights this.

> (10) *What's essential to me is that I only buy things I need. I think a lot about my purchasing needs and avoid impulsive buys. I carefully weigh whether the desire to buy something is a genuine need or just a momentary impulse. I often give myself time to reflect, and if I forget about it, I know it was just a passing whim. However, if I still think about a product after a long time, I know it's a well-considered decision. (respondent 12)*

Relatedly, choosing domestic brands emerged as an important way to enact the value of sustainability. Respondents emphasized that supporting domestic brands and producers was a sustainable option they preferred over offshore brands and producers. Participants felt like domestic brands offered ways to reduce the environmental and social impacts they often considered an uncertainty factor related to offshore production. Additionally, domestic brands acted as a way to support the domestic economy. Respondents often recognized that domestic brands have offshored some of their production but felt that the information regarding sustainability credentials were more easily available in domestic brands. This is brought up in example (11).

> (11) *Everyone kind of 'rates' the ethicality of a piece of clothing in their own way, and for me, it has always been about it being domestic. The idea is that the money stays in Finland. The designer gets paid, the seamstress gets paid— they need to earn a living from their work. Often, the clothes are still made somewhere in Europe, but for me, that's still better than somewhere farther away. (respondent 10)*

However, some contradictions around this common motif arose, for a number of respondents expressed doubt over domestic brands and clothing collections by underlining quality considerations. An earlier recognized barrier of the complexity of sustainability as a concept (Harris et al., 2016) proved a challenge for some respondents in this matter, as well. The quality of clothes purchased from domestic brands was not always consistent with the respondents' expectations; some stated the purchases they had made lasted just the same in use as any other brand available on the market despite costing more. Based on this, despite domesticity being an important expressed sustainability-related value, it is difficult to estimate realized purchasing behavior of respondents.

A final factor that arose equally in interviews as a factor emphasizing sustainable value base was commonly experienced personal responsibility and advocacy for sustainability matters. Respondents stated that their practiced anti-consumption and sustainable consumption of clothing was done out of personal obligation felt over sustainability. Therefore, this was a clear motivational factor for individual participants. Example (12) expresses the aforementioned.

> (12) *Well, [the challenge] does matter in the sense that I feel like I'm doing my part in these environmental issues, even though I'm not exactly perfect – my carbon footprint certainly isn't zero – but hopefully it has at least reduced over the years. Especially when it comes to consumption. (respondent 5)*

In a study done by Piligrimiené et al. (2020), it was found out that experienced personal responsibility predicted realized sustainable consumption. In other words, the sense of personal obligation reinforces members' commitment to align their actions with sustainability goals. Therefore, this intrinsic motivator may play a crucial role in sustaining these behaviors.

Personal commitment to sustainability as part of self-concept

A clear pattern for participants was that they recognized the 'Rule of Five' challenge to go beyond its initial idea; the practice is and should be a lifestyle in order to be influential sustainability-wise. Participants recognized the importance of continuous effort and reducing variance in year-to-year consumption levels. See example (13) below.

> (13) *This isn't a one-year challenge, but a lifelong goal. Primarily, this is how many clothes should be bought. It doesn't make sense to buy five pieces of clothing one year and fifty the next. That's how it is – for it to be meaningful, it must be a lifelong goal. (respondent 3)*

This perception, in fact, goes deeper than existing definitions of sustainable anti-consumption of clothes does; currently, the theoretical definition does not take into consideration the earlier consumption levels nor the continuity of the practice on carried out level (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022). The aforementioned also proves a deep commitment to the cause influenced by the personal values and motivations presented in the chapters above. Richetin et al. (2012) established in their research that consumers who prioritized sustainability matters were the ones most likely to commit to practicing it. This community's members felt, for the most part, that practicing sustainable anti-consumption resembled a lifestyle more than a one-time challenge and were committed to continuing with the practice. In fact, when asked directly, nearly all participants expressed willingness and intention to continue with the lifestyle or general practice of reduced clothing consumption.

Furthermore, this commitment expressed by respondents may indicate that the community's members value the expression of their self-concepts in relation to their values (Lagere & Kang, 2020). Their recognition of sustainable anti-consumption as a lifestyle choice rather than a fleeting challenge suggests a strong alignment between their values and actions. As Lagere and Kang (2020) found, individuals who prioritize expressing their moral values through consistent actions are more likely to engage in sustainable practices. This reinforces the notion that participants' ongoing commitment to the 'Rule of

Five' challenge reflects not only personal dedication to sustainability but also a desire to embody their values through their consumption behaviors.

Personal commitment levels to the challenge itself varied within the interviewees. A common theme in participants' answers was that they were interested in contributing to the cause of reduced and sustainable clothing consumption in the future, as well. Despite this, they were not necessarily willing to strictly follow the challenge's exact rules.

Actual behavior and commitment are considered along a continuum that factors like perceived personal benefits influence (Basci, 2014; Hamari et al., 2016). Therefore, it is likely that participants view the restricting nature of the challenge itself as a barrier, to a level. Many stated they did not want to limit themselves, feel too bound, or feel pressured about consuming, at most, the exact five pieces of clothing a year. Similarly, participants stated that the nature of clothing as a necessity (Niinimäki, 2010, p. 153) proved evident to them when participating, because mere five new purchases a year might not allow the fulfillment of all needs that surface if pre-owned clothing showed wear and tear that predicted end-of-life for the product. Therefore, if the participants felt like they were not allowed to fulfill the aforementioned need-based consumption (see example 10), that even some definitions of sustainable anti-consumption allows (García-de-Frutos et al., 2018), they may feel unmotivated to carry out the challenge as strictly as the definite rules expect them to.

Therefore, while the majority of participants expressed willingness to consider their personal consumption levels, and, to a level, practice the challenge's common ideology in the future, many were interested in making personal exceptions. The exact personal factors showed great variation between different interviewees. For example, participants expressed concerns about meeting personal requirements related to the functionality and health implications of their clothing choices, the aforementioned appearing sudden needs, and the overall personal effort that the challenge requires regarding thought processes and restricting consumption. Based on this, it is challenging to estimate if this

bigger recognized barrier and its components may ultimately lead to lowered motivation or interest, and fewer perceived benefits in some participants. Additionally, the experienced burden of excessive restraint specifically may cause some participants to shift from practiced sustainable anti-consumption towards general sustainable consumption of clothes.

4.2.2 Communal Level Facilitators and Challenges

This chapter analyzes the dynamics and group settings of the 'Rule of Five' consumption community, focusing on identifying the key facilitators and challenges at the group level. Drawing on the theoretical framework, the analysis is based on several factors that shape and affect the group setting, including shared communal identity, group affiliations and members' experiences, relationships as well as interactions,. Additionally, the chapter compares group-level motivations and values with personal-level findings to further recognize similarities and differences between the two as well as to accentuate the two-way nature of a consumption community and its members. The role of the community as either a supporting or restricting force is also examined.

Shared communal identity

The studied anti-consumption community has a clear communal identity centered around sustainability. When asked individually about the group's shared values, the majority of participants emphasized sustainability and its aspects as the core element of the whole group's identity. Example (14) highlights this.

> (14)   *Well, sustainable development and environmental values. (respondent 6)*

This finding suggests that the communal identity is deeply tied to the values that individuals of the community exhibit and bring to the community; not something separate or unique that forms on top of individual identity, but instead a shared core value. The primary motivation and sustainability-centered value base of individual members, there-

fore, is also the basis for the collective identity of the consumption community. As literature suggests, consumption communities allow members to reinforce and express their commonly shared values and identity (Watson et al., 2008).

The group's shared sustainability-centered identity were further accentuated through participants' references to current unsustainable consumption norms. Additionally, conscious or critical consumerism in which excess consumption is resisted and moderated, was highlighted by many interviewees as a key aspect of the collective identity. This aligns with the broader ideology of anti-consumption (e.g. Lee et al., 2011; Makri et al., 2020). This can be seen in example (15).

> (15)   *Well, probably consumer criticism and environmental values. Somehow maybe – getting rid of and recognizing unnecessary needs. (respondent 5)*

Additionally, several participants expressed the group's identity as being rooted in finding more meaningful ways to consume as a collective, despite sustainability remaining the primary focus. For many participants, this notion, at heart, was connected to rejecting unnecessary consumption. See example (16) below.

> (16)   *Sustainability. Then there's the idea of meaningfulness. Each piece of clothing should have a purpose in one's wardrobe, and there should be a reason why it is worth purchasing. (respondent 7)*

As these examples indicate, the group's identity is built on the shared value of sustainability, both on personal and collective level. The shared communal identity is central to understanding the community's dynamics. In consumption communities, membership and interaction allows for participants to express and reinforce commonly shared values and identity (e.g. Watson et al., 2008; Lamont & Molnár, 2001). Participation in collective action has also been studied to influence individual attitudes to become similar to the group's common ones (Kelly, 2011, p. 77; Piligrimiené et al. 2020). Since consumption communities often form around commonly shared interests and values of individuals participating (Hungara & Nobre, 2021; Garanti & Berberoglu, 2018; Patterson &

Schroeder, 2010; Arnould & Thompson, 2018), communal identity reflects these commonly shared identities at the group level.

Group affiliation

For sustainability proved a perceived benefit and primary motivation of participation in the individual level analysis (Hamari et al., 2016), and it clearly extends to collective level, it is likely that the shared value base and collective identity formed around it fosters group affiliation, the feeling of belonging to the group, uniting individuals around a common goal and motivations. As research indicates, reinforcing commonly shared values and identity is an important aspect of consumption communities (Watson et al., 2008). The surrounding social environment of a group was found to encourage participation in sustainable consumption manners (Piligrimiené et al., 2020). This is accentuated by example (17).

> (17) *I've found myself a few times in social environments that weren't at all like my usual ideological bubble. And I did notice that when I had to spend an entire evening answering questions like 'how do you manage this?' and 'how can you do this?', it was somehow wonderful to return to that bubble afterward. There, others share the same views and have a similar basis of understanding. It definitely acts as a supporting force. (respondent 10)*

In addition, the earlier discussed personal responsibility regarding sustainability proved to extend to group-level obligation. A shared group affiliation could be recognized around this value. In a study conducted (Piligrimiené et al., 2020), it was found that both personal obligation and a pro-sustainability social environment encourage consumers to participate in sustainable consumption, and the aforementioned factors indicate similar findings in this paper's studied group. See example (18).

> (18) *In a way, I want to contribute my part for the common good. On the other hand, I also want to teach [others] about responsible consumption. (respondent 9)*

In addition to shared values, group affiliation of members is displayed through shared common meanings, goals and motivations. These motivations proved vastly different

from those affecting personal level participation in the challenge. Despite this, the community's motivations were all clearly related to the shared communal identity of sustainability. When asked about the broader goals of the challenge, the majority of participants stated that the challenge and the community around it strives to raise awareness around the subject. Another factor considered equally important for participants was striving for change in common purchasing behavior. Lastly, a factor brought up nearly as often by participants was increased self-reflection and general slowing down that is closely related to practiced moderation. See example (19) below.

(19) *Perhaps [the challenge] prompts people to think. In this day and age, there are so many factors that demand our attention and also prompt us to buy and act impulsively without thinking. [The challenge] encourages people to slow down, to be more mindful of their actions. And when we slow down, we can reflect and potentially make better choices. (respondent 12)*

Despite this shared goal, some expressed personal doubts over the community's level of influence regarding the matter. Participants voiced the limited possibilities of influencing others both on a personal and communal level. On a personal level, feelings of ineffectiveness of taken behavior have been studied to lower the likelihood of participation in sustainable practices (Piligrimiené et al., 2020) and may therefore be an experienced barrier within some group members. This is to say, if participants consider the collective unable to influence others to a certain expected level, they may personally become unmotivated to participate and can therefore be considered a community-level issue.

However, even among those expressing aforementioned doubts recognizably mostly felt that their personal obligations felt over sustainability overruled the insecurities regarding the community. The personal obligation manifested in statements regarding the importance of individual action regardless of collective impact. Participants' expressions suggest that, while there may be reservations about the group's broader influence, the internalization of sustainable values and the group's collective identity being based said values acts as a counterbalance, encouraging continued engagement in sustainable anti-consumption practices.

Overall, the community around the subject proved an enabling, encouraging, and motivating force for many participants. The majority of participants expressed feeling empowered, supported, and inspired by likeminded participants. In fact, many respondents mentioned the community to offer support and social cohesion as seen in earlier example (17). For many, this support was based on the experienced unity of shared understanding, values, and concern over similar matters that the example embodies. Once again, this comes back to the participants' experiencing communal support that is related to shared communal identity (e.g. Piligrimiené et al., 2020; Watson et al., 2008).

In addition to experienced social cohesion and support, participants emphasized the community's rule as an initiator or an inspiration. A majority of participants stated that the social media challenge and the community around it had a clear role that inspired and initiated involvement in sustainable anti-consumption of clothes. Apart from initial inspiration, some participants even recognized the community's social media presence and communication around the matter was a clear motivator. This can be seen in example (20).

> (20) It wouldn't have even crossed my mind to do this without this community. I think my attempts to reduce consumption have probably been a bit more vague before. Now, it's somehow in a more concrete 'form.' I find it incredibly inspiring to read about what other people are doing. (respondent 1)

Although most respondents recognized the community as supportive or inspiring, on a personal level, several interviewees either directly or indirectly expressed being pressured by the community and its goals. One of the respondents had officially withdrawn from the challenge as a result of this, despite stating intention to stay conscious of consumption levels in the future. Those still a part of the community expressed similar concerns. This can be seen in example (21).

> (21) It [the community] is motivating, but it's also maybe a bit distressing and pressuring. [...] Of course, I joined partly to fit in with the group. But there's also a level of comparison that comes with it. (respondent 4)

Even if the majority of respondents did not explicitly state feeling pressured or unmotivated by stress brought on by the community, as was previously recognized as a personal barrier in chapter 4.2.1, many indirectly stated that while they were willing and intending to stick to the lifestyle, the actual challenge awakened feelings of excessive restriction. This became apparent through expressed plans about personal modifications to the challenge. Many of the participants had already put said modification into practice and while they considered themselves a part of the community or partakers of the challenge, they were not willing to follow the exact rules of the challenge. On community level, this barrier should be, first of all, acknowledged and following this, addressed. This way, unnecessary pressure and, at worst, withdrawal from the entire community, could possibly be avoided.

Shared experiences, relationships, and interactions

Perhaps related to the aforementioned matters, another rather large finding was that while all of the respondents were picked out based on their participation in community discussion online, the majority of them did not consider themselves active members within the community or its discussion. Furthermore, many stated to partake in the challenge due to personal motivations over communal or societal goals related to sustainability. Some even claimed to have purposefully distanced themselves from the community or related discussion due to it recognizably adding onto their mental load or pressuring them.

This may indicate that while the community feels united over shared values and beliefs and consider the community an enabler to carry out personal goals (Piligrimiené et al., 2020; Watson et al., 2008), this community is lacking in shared relationships, interactions, and experiences between the members. Traditional literature on consumption communities highlights the role of social interaction in said communities as an enabler of value creation (Arnould & Thompson, 2018, pp. 87-88). This gap in shared relationships, interactions, and experiences could suggest that the community is largely value-driven, not

socially so. The particularly similar value base of participants may support this notion. While shared values evidently proved a foundation for experienced group affiliation between participants, the absence of strong interpersonal connections may limit opportunities for deeper engagement or value creation between members. Furthermore, creating opportunities for members to connect could address issues like feelings of pressure or limited experienced impact of the community's ideology.

4.3   Recognized Ideologies and Practices

In this subchapter, themes regarding personally practiced sustainable anti-consumption of clothing are identified and analyzed from the research material. The theoretic framework serves as the basis of the analysis, aiding in distinguishing respondents' practices and aspects related to them. In addition, the analysis explores the connection between these practices and the underlying ideologies to provide a comprehensive understanding of how individuals of the 'Rule of Five' consumption community engage in sustainable anti-consumption of clothes. The practices recognized were consume less, consumer better (CLCB), product and brand avoidance, alternative consumption, style consumption, minimalism, and sustainable consumption.

Out of the individually practiced ideologies, the notion of consume less, consume better or CLCB stood out most clearly. The general ideology of CLCB is focused on reducing consumption levels while simultaneously emphasizing the quality and longevity of clothing item purchases (Bly et al., 2015). As an ideology, CLCB fits into the scope of sustainable anti-consumption of clothes (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022). The respondents' answers reflected this ideology particularly in careful consideration of clothing purchases regarding materials, quality, sustainability, and durability. Additionally, nearly all respondents commonly expressed interest and commitment to buying less new clothes as well as clothing care to extend the lifecycle of owned clothes. Example (22) highlights this.

> (22)   *I personally think that we buy out of necessity, buy thoughtfully, and perhaps as a result of buying less new, we try to take better care of the old,*

> *existing clothes, maintain them, and keep them in circulation for longer. (respondent 13)*

Clothing care is an important aspect of increasing use stage and wastage of clothing (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022; Dao & Martinez, 2024). While research indicates that consumers lack knowledge regarding materials, recycling, and the importance of extended use stage of clothes (Papasolomou et al., 2023), this consumer group seemed deeply versed in related practices. Participants showed interest and skill in mending, laundry practices, and proper care. This, as example (22) suggests, may be due to the participants' acknowledgement over reduced new clothing purchases highlighting the importance of caring for already-owned ones. The consumers participating may be driven to educate themselves about the subject due to practical and necessitating reasons as well as perceived personal benefits. All in all, participants distinctly, first and foremost, practiced CLCB and due to it, also showed interest and adeptness in matters related to clothing care.

The next most clearly emerging theme in the interview material was practiced product and brand avoidance, in which products, product types, or brands are rejected due to bad experiences, unmet value expectations, or moral reasoning (Lee et al., 2009b; Makri et al, 2020). The majority of respondents stated to either fully reject or mostly avoid clothing products, brands, and stores that they associate with fast fashion producers. The interviewees expressed concern over said product types' sustainability credentials and stated that as primary reason for the rejection or avoidance. The lower perceived quality of fast fashion items was another reason for respondents; if new purchases were limited to a mere five, participants wanted to be certain of the quality of their purchase. While a number of community members expressed to have either always or for a longer period of time avoided said fast fashion products and brands, many also recognized to have specifically paid additional attention to it after participating in the challenge. See example (23).

> (23) *I have never purchased anything from these ultra-fast fashion brands, like Wish or TEMU. I also haven't bought from brands like H&M or Zara anymore. (respondent 4)*

While some interviewees were more absolute and had fully rejected fast fashion, most participants showed more leniency towards the matter. Multiple stated to still buy undergarments from fast fashion producers due to experienced obscurity of undergarment producers' sustainability credentials and quality considerations. Additionally, participants showed greater levels of flexibility when it came to clothing they considered as utility items, such as underwear, training clothes, or other basics like t-shirts or tights. The practiced product avoidance, therefore, was not absolute and showed some ideological clashes with participants' stated value bases.

Another form of collectively practiced product type anti-consumption was the rejection of synthetic materials (Basci, 2014). Respondents expressed preference for natural fibers and practiced avoidance of artificial fibers. This product type's rejection was mostly based on considerations related to the maintainability and the wearability of garments as well as the physical durability of them. This preference was most evident when considering the purchase of new clothes.

As another product type avoidance, ultra-fast fashion stood out as a separate category for respondents. Despite respondents' answers often including specific operating online brands, it was clear that they considered the product category as whole as something especially unsustainable and therefore wanted to avoid it entirely. The rejection of this product category proved more absolute, and respondents did not express similar leniency towards ultra-fast fashion as they did towards singular fast fashion purchases.

Another clear finding of the interviews was that participants practiced alternative consumption in varying levels as a substituting form of clothing acquisition during the challenge. Alternative consumption includes alternative consumption methods such as secondhand purchases, clothing swaps, or lending clothes (Williams & Paddock, 2003;

Kim et al., 2021; Brismar, 2017; Iran & Schrader, 2017). Many respondents recognized that while their acquisition of new clothes had decreased, especially the purchases of secondhand clothing had increased. Example (24) demonstrates this.

> (24)   *But [the challenge] has certainly increased visits to thrift stores a lot. The flip side is that it leads to buying more from thrift stores, which is both a good and a bad thing. I probably could have managed without many of those thrift store clothes. (respondent 2)*

In order for alternative consumption to be considered a form of sustainable anti-consumption, a prerequisite was that it had to involve intentional reduction of overall personal clothing consumption levels. This finding proved challenging to evaluate due to no definite information about the amounts of secondhand clothing acquired being available – as a part of the challenge, the participants only tracked purchases of new clothing. Furthermore, as noted in the delimitation chapter, existing theoretical definitions of anti-consumption and sustainable anti-consumption lack clarity, primarily due to the absence of a definitive reference point for consumption levels.

Some respondents' answers suggested that they did not personally limit secondhand clothing purchases due to it not being a rule of the challenge and may have therefore not practiced sustainable anti-consumption of clothing, to begin with. While research supports that secondhand purchases significantly reduce environmental impacts compared to the production of new garments (Farrant et al., 2010), the lack of awareness or intentionality regarding these purchases ideologically clash with the principles of sustainable anti-consumption of clothes (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022). Simply engaging with secondhand consumption is a form of green or sustainable consumption, in which consumers consider the environmental impacts, quality, and ethical practices (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022; Makri et al., 2020). However, as was established in the theory chapters, sustainable clothing anti-consumption refers to the sustainability efforts associated with reducing both the volume and adverse impact of clothing consumption (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022). These efforts involve decreasing the volume of clothes purchased and, alternatively or additionally, examining the quality of purchases.

Despite this finding proving somewhat problematic, many respondents, much like in example (24), recognized the problematic nature of secondhand purchases if practiced in excessive amounts. Some respondents had even placed a personal limit to secondhand purchases, and many stated to track said purchases. Additionally, some respondents' answers indicated critical thinking related to the matter and showcased personal development regarding it. This is illustrated in example (25).

> (25) I've started buying recycled clothes for myself as well. […] Last year, I concluded that I was just buying too much of them. I realized that not everything that looks nice and fits is something I actually need to buy. (respondent 9)

Based on this, it is challenging to evaluate to what extent the participants substitute reduced consumption of new clothes with alternative consumption methods. Example (25) might suggest that personal development does happen, and participants may find balance through trial-and-error type approaches. On the other hand, not all participants expressed critical thinking related to secondhand purchases, and with said individuals, it is possible that overall personal reduction of clothing purchase levels is not successfully executed.

Style consumption and, to some extent, fashion-related minimalism stood out other clear themes in the practiced sustainable anti-consumption of participants. Style consumption can be defined as individual-focused clothing consumption involving finding and sticking to a distinct, unique personal style over adhering to fashion trends (Cho et al., 2015; Gupta et al., 2019; Bly et al., 2015). Fashion minimalism refers to limiting personal possessions to a minimum (Martin-Woodhead, 2022) and often involves the practice of capsule wardrobes or dressing, in which consumers commit to owning and using a limited amount of clothes (Todeschini et al., 2017). In fashion-related minimalism, the collection of clothes is then used and mixed with one another in varying ways.

Participants expressed the practice of both ideologies in a way that somewhat over-lapped. On the one hand, the community members expressed varying degrees of inter-est in fashion, but none appeared or identified as particularly trend-driven. Many stated to prefer personal style, practicality, or comfort of clothes over their perceived current stylishness. On the other hand, participants were analyzed to generally strive towards owning less, and also expressed wishes over functional, combinable, and multi-purpose wardrobes. These findings could be applicable to both style consumption and minimal-ism, while fashion-related minimalism may often be more centered around owning a particular set of clothes, also known as a capsule wardrobe (Cho et al., 2015; Gupta et al., 2019; Bly et al., 2015; Martin-Woodhead, 2022; Todeschini et al., 2017). Despite this, the interviewees showed clear interest in transforming their wardrobes into a functional whole. This point is supported by example (26).

> (26) *In a way, the idea keeps getting stronger that it would be really wonderful to have a functional wardrobe where everything could always be combined with each other. (respondent 11)*

Sustainable consumption was primarily evident at principle-level behind all practiced forms of sustainable anti-consumption of fashion, not as a separate practice involving purchase preference or behavior of green or ethical products (Vesterinen & Syrjälä, 2022; Diddi et al., 2019). Participants, while clearly motivated and interested in sustainability of clothing to the point of partaking in the challenge and harboring a collective identity over the matter, did not directly engage in consumption practices aimed at reducing the negative impacts of fashion by purchasing 'greener' products. Nevertheless, secondhand fashion or alternative consumption can also be understood as a form of sustainable clothing consumption (Williams & Paddock, 2003; Kim et al., 2021; Brismar, 2017, Iran & Schrader, 2017), which was found to be practiced by many but was already analyzed as a practice earlier in this chapter.

5 Conclusions

The objective of this thesis was to understand what sustainable anti-consumption of clothes as a practice and ideology means, how it is practiced in communal settings, as well as determining how and why consumers participate in sustainable anti-consumption of clothes. In addition to this, the study strived to identify enablers and challenges related to the practice. Next, the key findings related to the research objective and questions are summarized. Following this, managerial implications are presented. Finally, suggestions for future studies are given.

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study explored how the 'Rule of Five' consumption community practices sustainable anti-consumption of clothes on both individual and collective levels. The analysis revealed that participants were driven by sustainability-related motivations and demonstrated a clear commitment to conscious consumption. In this chapter, key findings of the study are summarized.

Out of the individually practiced ideologies, the notion of consuming less but consuming better stood out most clearly. Participants emphasized need-based consumption choices, informed purchase decisions and paid mind to factors such as materials, quality, sustainability, and durability of clothes. As a part of this, another clear finding was that participants practiced extensive clothing care in order to extend the lifecycle of their clothes. The majority of respondents practiced alternative consumption, most commonly in the form of secondhand fashion purchases. As a practice, this proved problematic, for not all respondents showed similar restraint regarding secondhand purchases as they did with new clothes, and it was difficult to estimate if some participants had substituted simply some or all of the reduced new purchases with secondhand clothing items. Lastly, participants carried out style consumption, and their ideologies closely resembled forms of minimalism. Many preferred personal style, practicality, and comfort over trendiness, while aiming for minimal, versatile, and functional wardrobes.

In addition to personal practices, it was found that on communal level, two primary types of collective anti-consumption were practiced. Participants practiced product and brand avoidance in the form of rejection and avoidance of fast fashion and synthetic materials as a product category. Generic anti-consumption of clothes was also evident, characterized by participants' voluntary reduction in overall clothing consumption with an emphasis on sustainability. This latter finding, however, could not be generalized to apply to the entire community due to the undetermined levels of alternative forms of consumption.

A key enabler for sustainable anti-consumption of clothes was participants' strong sustainability-related values. They were motivated by a desire to live and consume more sustainably, although the specific aspects and levels of sustainability varied among them. The challenge was seen as a useful tool for reflecting on personal consumption. Participants consistently emphasized the importance of informed, need-based choices and personal responsibility for their consumption habits. Many expressed a personal obligation to adopt the challenge's ideology as a lifestyle, and although commitment levels of participants varied, all participants showing interest in conscious, reduced, or sustainable clothing consumption. On the group level, shared sustainable values and group affiliations were found to be key enablers. Additionally, the community's support and shared ideological connection proved most motivating.

A key challenge for participants seemed to be the restricting nature of the challenge. Some expressed feeling pressured and many respondents stated they either intended or had already made personal exceptions or modifications to the challenge. Despite this, all participants expressed interest in continuing to contribute to the cause of reduced and sustainable clothing consumption in the future. Another notable barrier was participants' perception that their personal and communal actions had limited effectiveness. Additionally, as a part of carrying out the challenge, some issues related to the experienced ambiguity and complexity of sustainability aspects of clothes arose. Verifying sustainability credentials of clothing purchases was found challenging, and many expressed

doubts as to whether it was possible for consumers to make fully informed decisions related to sustainability aspects.

As a consumption community, the 'Rule of Five' demonstrated characteristics of various consumption community types, including consumer tribes, lifestyle consumption communities, principle-based consumption communities, and subcultures of consumption. Despite these similarities, the studied consumption community appeared largely value-driven and did not exhibit clear indications of in-depth social interaction, relationships, or shared experiences that consumption communities largely practice as a form of value creation. Many participants did not consider themselves active members of the within the community in terms of social interaction or discussion.

5.2 Managerial Implications

As this study was conducted on sustainably conscious consumers and provided a valuable lens through which sustainable anti-consumption of clothing within communal settings could be examined. As a general implication of this study, the growing emphasis on sustainability has led to an increasing interest in sustainable consumption practices and alternatives in the fashion industry. As environmental concerns and awareness of over-consumption continue to rise, consumers seek ways to align their purchasing habits and levels with sustainable values.

This study highlighted that sustainably conscious consumers experience a strong sense of personal responsibility for their consumption habits. Additionally, the ambiguous and complex nature of sustainability credentials of products and brands was found to be a barrier in carrying out sustainable anti-consumption. Sustainably oriented organizations and brands should leverage this by providing transparent, truthful, and easily accessible information of their products, supply chains, and standards. Clear labeling, informative marketing, and educational campaigns could enhance trust and support informed decision-making of sustainably conscious consumers.

Participants additionally expressed a preference for practical, versatile clothing over trendy pieces. Quality, materials, and durability of the clothing were considered important. Companies willing to tailor their offerings to meet these preferences could find opportunities to appeal to this conscious consumer base. By creating high-quality, durable, and multi-purpose garments, clothing producers and brands can better resonate with their targeted customer base. As clothing care proved another important aspect, clothing producers could focus on offering more in-depth care instructions, tailored repair services or care products specifically designed for increasing the longevity of their products' lifecycle.

5.3   Recommendations for Future Studies

Future studies on sustainable anti-consumption could benefit from clearer theoretical definitions of sustainable anti-consumption. As was established, the concept of anti-consumption remains ambiguous due to the lack of clarity around what qualifies as 'less,' the reference point for comparison, and whether consumption must be continuously reduced to align with anti-consumption principles. Additionally, as this study did not consider demographic factors, future studies could focus on exploring the dynamics of sustainable anti-consumption across diverse demographic groups. Furthermore, exploring the impact of increased awareness of product lifecycles on consumers' decision-making regarding sustainable clothing consumption, along with a focus on the emotional aspects of these decisions – such as feelings of guilt, pride, or obligation – could prove beneficial in increasing the understanding of sustainable consumer behavior.

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