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Sustainable Consumption and Practice Theories: Connecting Elements of Clothing Sharing

Márcia R. Cavalcante Costa¹

marciacosta@gmail.com |  0000-0002-2540-6870

Minelle E. Silva¹

minele.adm@gmail.com |  0000-0003-2074-6478

Marcia de Freitas Duarte¹

marciaduarte@unifor.br |  0000-0001-8622-108X

ABSTRACT

Changes in lifestyles and clothing consumption patterns as paths to a sustainable society defines sharing as one of the strategies of slow fashion. Through practice theories, this research explores materials, competences and meanings that make up the practice. Thus, we sought to identify how the elements and the dynamics of clothing sharing are configured. Using a qualitative case study, data were collected through observations, semi-structured interviews (individual and group), and a focus group carried out with practitioners and providers of a collaborative store. Our results revealed that: (a) for practitioners, the practice of sharing means exclusivity, economy, and sustainable consumption; (b) for providers, the practice is linked to a conscious consumption as an opportunity for more sustainable business, including financially (c) and different materials guide the practice of sharing clothes. The elements of clothing sharing are similar between practitioners and providers; therefore, they indicate the effectiveness of the practice, in addition to pursuing sustainable consumption. The research then contributes to the development of research on sustainable consumption once it identifies management practices aimed at the collaborative consumption of clothing.

KEYWORDS

Sustainable Consumption, Collaborative Consumption, Slow Fashion, Practice Theories, Clothing Sharing

¹Universidade de Fortaleza,
Fortaleza, CE, Brazil.

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RESUMO

As mudanças nos estilos de vida e nos padrões de consumo de roupas, que vêm sendo debatidas como caminhos para uma sociedade mais sustentável, definem o compartilhamento como uma das estratégias do *slow fashion* para promover o consumo consciente. Por meio das teorias da prática, esta pesquisa explora materiais, competências e significados que compõem a prática. Assim, buscou-se identificar como se configuram os elementos e a dinâmica do compartilhamento de roupas. Utilizando um estudo de caso qualitativo, os dados foram coletados por meio de observações, entrevistas semiestruturadas (individuais e em grupo) e grupo focal, realizados com praticantes (consumidores) e provedores (fornecedores) de uma loja colaborativa. Os resultados revelaram que: (a) para os praticantes, a prática do compartilhamento significa exclusividade, economia e consumo sustentável; (b) para os provedores, a prática está atrelada ao consumo consciente como oportunidade de negócios mais sustentáveis, inclusive financeiramente; e (c) diversos materiais orientam a prática do compartilhamento de roupas. Os elementos do compartilhamento de roupas são semelhantes entre praticantes e provedores, portanto indicam a eficácia da prática, além de buscar um consumo sustentável. A pesquisa, então, contribui para o desenvolvimento de pesquisas sobre consumo sustentável, uma vez que identifica práticas de gestão voltadas ao consumo colaborativo de vestuário.

PALAVRAS -CHAVE

Consumo Sustentável, Consumo Colaborativo, Slow Fashion, Teorias da Prática, Compartilhamento de Roupas

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years, sustainable consumption and production strategies have been increasingly aimed at reducing environmental impacts (Jackson, 2014). Represented by the twelfth sustainable development goal (SDG), established by the United Nations (UN), sustainable consumption and production aim to combat the current social and environmental crises (Bengtsson et al., 2018), and to promote transformation in business practices for sustainability (Silva & Figueiredo, 2020; Vita et al., 2019). The literature on the subject has been growing in recent years (Roy and Singh, 2017; Wang et al., 2018) and emphasizes the need to see production and consumption as interdependent and inseparable factors (Tukker et al., 2008). In addition, it is necessary to expand critical research on sustainable consumption, since this is seen heterogeneously in the literature (Silva et al., 2013). To expand the understanding of the theme, sustainable consumption is studied based on theories of practice in the context of clothing sharing.

To understand how daily practices develop, establish themselves, how they change and, fundamentally, how they can be changed to become more sustainable, are potential contributions of practice theories to the field of sustainability (Gherardi, 2009; Hargreaves, 2011; Sahakian & Whilite, 2013; Spurling et al., 2013). Thus, studies with an emphasis on practices point to better efficient interventions for sustainable consumption policies, to the detriment of individual behavior and technological innovations (Nicolini, 2017; Spurling et al., 2013; Sahakian & Wilhite, 2013; Shove et al., 2012; Shove, 2010). There is, in this understanding, the investigative shift from the individual's intentionality to reflexive action occurring through a network of "connections in action", to the weaving of society (Gherardi, 2009).

To understand about consumption, its consequences and the practice of sustainable consumption, Fletcher and Grose (2012) indicate three areas that we deal with every day have a great impact on the world: fuel (energy), food and fashion. In fashion, most studies focusing on sustainability explore the scope of production, such as the supply chain and efforts of reducing the effects generated by the fiber, dyeing, and cutting manufactures among others (Fletcher, 2017). At the consumer level, research related to slow fashion is carried out predominantly using behavioral models and quantitative methods (Didi et al., 2019). The current research, however, is qualitative and analyzed under the lenses of the theories of practice, specifically by the sociotechnical approach presented by Shove et al. (2012).

The fashion industry, which is responsible for producing some of the worst consumption practices of individuals by legitimizing excessive consumption (Gupta et al., 2019; Didi et al., 2019), has been questioned and driven to redesign its system and its practices (Liu et al., 2018). In the last 20 years, the fast fashion business model has doubled the production of clothing and the average consumption has grown by 60%, per person. Disposal has also gone up, less than 1% of used clothing is recycled (Work Bank, 2019) and almost three quarters go to landfills (Legere & Kang, 2020). Consequently, the clothing industry is one of the most polluting in the world (Work Bank, 2019). Faced with this scenario, slow fashion acts as one of the ways to promote sustainable fashion (Mukendi et al., 2019; Trejo et al., 2019; Jung & Jin, 2014, 2016).

Although the garment industry is responsible for causing a great environmental impact in both the production and consumption stages (Didi et al., 2019), the latter is recognized as the most difficult to resolve, and political interventions aimed at it are grounded in a cognitive and individualistic perspective (Bellotti & Mora, 2016). Research on what happens after the production and sale of clothes, or, in other words, research focusing on consumer usage patterns, aimed at changes towards sustainability through practices based on real experience, are not yet frequent (Fletcher, 2017).

As a way of responding to this problem, this study addresses the following research question: *How are the elements and dynamics of clothing sharing configured?* Based on this question, we aim to identify the elements (materials, competences, and meanings) and the dynamics (links between the elements) that constitute the practice of clothing sharing. For this purpose, we conducted a qualitative case study within a collaborative store in the city of Fortaleza, Ceará, Brazil. It is important to highlight that, despite the research focusing on the practices carried out by the consumer, that is, on the mesh of practices-arrangements that the agent carries (Schatzki, 2005), according to Jarzabkowski et al. (2015), in the light of the theories of practice, the analysis of the practice has to be submitted to the context, contemplating in addition to the practices, which involves them, that is, practitioners and providers (Shove & Pantzar, 2005) and how they are carried out (Jarzabkowski et al., 2015).

Moving forward in relation to sustainability studies (Bengtsson et al., 2018), this research focuses on small, micro, or local practices to illustrate the practice of sustainable consumption (Silva & Figueiredo, 2020). Therefore, the research responds to the call by Süßbauer and Schäfer (2019) and Jarzabkowski et al. (2015), regarding the scarcity of empirical studies that contemplate a perception of the holistic body of practices. Thus, we contribute to the theory with the debate on the SDG 12, more specifically, with sustainable clothing consumption analyzed through the theories of practice. Additionally, the results also help academia, industries, public policy makers and consumers, through insights about practices as ways of change for sustainable fashion.

2. SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND SLOW FASHION: A SHIFT FOR THE FASHION PARADIGM

Consumption is inherent to the human species and a phenomenon as old as living beings (Bauman, 2008). However, the materialist ethos that guides much of society associates material possession with well-being, resulting in excessive consumption (Gupta et al., 2019; Erketing & Atik, 2015; Jackson & Marks, 1999). By producing environmental, mental, (Tunn et al., 2018; Erketing & Atik, 2015) and social degradation, excessive consumption ends up conflicting with well-being (Jackson, 2008; Jackson & Marks, 1999). One of the industries that stimulated the culture of excessive consumption was the fashion industry (Gupta et al., 2019), made up of textiles, clothing or garments, and footwear, due to the use of production and marketing strategies (Thorisdottir & Johannsdottir, 2019) based on obsolescence (Gupta et al., 2019; Erketing & Atik, 2015). In fashion, psychological obsolescence promotes both shortening the life of garments as well as creating short-lived products, as a function of the aesthetics outdated in a short period of time (Fletcher & Grose, 2012).

The high volumes of clothing acquisition and disposal are attributed to the fast fashion business model (Diddi et al., 2019; Erketing & Atik, 2015). For Jung and Jin (2014), the increases in production and consumption of fast fashion are brought about by some practices: shortening the life cycles of fashion collections, continually creating a desire for new products (Niinimäki & Hassi, 2011) and use of low quality materials (Fletcher & Grose, 2012). Globalization also plays a fundamental role in this phenomenon (Diddi et al., 2019), since the clothes are produced in countries that offer cheaper labor (Foudation Ellen Macarthur, 2017), often made up of women, minorities, immigrant workers and, in some cases, children (Boström & Micheletti, 2016). Low wages and unsanitary working conditions, which lead to poor quality of life for workers, also influence the increase in production and consumption in fast fashion (Jung & Jin, 2016).

This continued growth in the clothing industry places the segment as a relevant contributor to the ecological crisis (Armstrong & Lehw, 2011; Fletcher & Grose, 2012). The large disposal of clothes, for example, has filled up landfills every year (Diddi et al., 2019), due to the increasing underutilization of the same: the average number of times that a garment is worn has decreased by 36% compared to 15 years ago (Niinimäki, 2013). These indexes show why the clothing industry has been called upon to redesign its consumption and production practices (Erketing & Atik, 2015; Clark, 2008). The importance of changing consumption patterns, such as reducing the frequency of purchases, extending the product's life through repairs, reuse, or sharing, has been gaining strength in the debate on the SDG 12 (Lang & Armstrong, 2018; Diddi et al., 2019). There is an understanding in the scientific and political communities that the current level of resource consumption and current practices are unsustainable, hence the effort to understand how changes can be made in order to promote more sustainable consumption (Lim, 2017; Sahakian & Whilite, 2013).

“Sustainable consumption is not consuming less, it is consuming differently and efficiently”, it is a reflexive consumption (Jackson & Michaelis, 2003, p. 14). Whereas the emphasis on the consumer is clear (Bengtsson et al., 2018; Jackson & Michaelis, 2003), policymakers started to try to understand how it is possible to intervene in consumption patterns and influence lifestyles in favor of sustainable development, through sustainable consumption (Jackson, 2014). In addition to being a reflection of individual preferences, consumption can also be understood as the result of involvement in everyday life practices (Süßbauer & Schäfer, 2019), lifestyles, in turn, are directly related to consumption patterns (Bauman & May, 2010; Spaargaren & Oosterveer, 2010; Schäfer et al., 2021).

To meet the demand for more conscious and sustainable consumption, as well as for greater responsible production, slow fashion emerges in fashion (Jung & Jin, 2016). The term slow fashion was first used in 2007, by Kate Fletcher from the Center for Sustainable Fashion, in the United Kingdom (Erketing & Atik, 2015; Jung & Jin, 2014). It was inspired by the slow food movement, founded by Carlos Petrini, in Italy, in 1986, as a reaction to the growing lifestyle promoted by fast food (Fletcher, 2010; Clark, 2008). Initially classified as a movement, as well as its predecessor, slow fashion is no longer considered as such, given that its concept has not developed with the same cohesion as slow food (Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013; Fletcher, 2010).

Slow fashion does not literally address the slowdown in the textile and clothing supply chain, it aims at a holistic view on creating more sustainable fashion production and consumption processes (Legere & Kang, 2020; Fletcher, 2010; Clark, 2008). The idea is to stimulate greater awareness among producers about what is being produced. In consumers, the intention is to spread the understanding that the purchase of the product should be based less on quantity and more on quality (Jung & Jin, 2016). From the perspective of producers, the principles of slow fashion are quality, authenticity, durability, comfort, zero waste and the use of natural materials linked to the place (Trejo et al., 2019; Fletcher, 2010). Regarding consumers, they include equity, localism, authenticity, exclusivity, and functionality (Legere & Kang, 2020; Trejo et al., 2019; Jung & Jin, 2014). The need for exclusivity and the awareness of sustainability, which, in slow fashion, is very much guided by the appreciation of the place (Fletcher, 2017), are identified, by consumers, as internal and external motivators for adherence to slow fashion (Liu et al, 2018; Erketing & Atik, 2015).

This research then is aligned to the importance of shifting the root of the sustainability problem from the producer to the user (Fletcher, 2017), which is defined as a creative and active practitioner

under the practice theories (Shove & Pantzar, 2005), responds to statistics that show that 60% of the environmental impact produced by products comes from the consumption stage, such as in the cleaning process and in the replacement of products (Iran & Schrader, 2017). Therefore, the relevance in researching the practices born through the use of clothes as part of everyday life, because they have an expanded view of the reality of the practice in the field, this makes them have a better potential for transformation towards sustainability (Fletcher, 2017).

Sharing is one of the practices that highlights the shift to sustainable fashion from the user, as a way to promote changes in consumption and disposal patterns (Fletcher, 2017). Clothing sharing, analyzed in the current research, is one of the alternatives to maintain the use of resources used in the manufacture of garments (Fletcher & Grose, 2012), in addition to presenting the possibility of reducing the excessive consumption of material in the fashion industry (Iran & Schrader, 2017).

3. COLLABORATIVE CONSUMPTION AND PRACTICE THEORIES

Collaborative consumption is an “emerging socioeconomic model” (Piscicelli et al., 2015), defined as the rapid explosion of traditional sharing, exchange, loan, trade, rent, gifts, and exchange redefined by technology and peer communities (Bostman & Rogers, 2011). Although the act of sharing is a phenomenon as old as humanity, collaborative consumption and the shared economy are phenomena born in the internet age (Sutherland & Jarrahi, 2018; Belk, 2014). Encouraged by sharing, collaborative consumption has the potential to prevent or delay the disposal of goods. Therefore, it is a way of accommodating needs and desires in a more sustainable way and with lower costs for the individual (Bostman & Rogers, 2011).

This socio-economic model based on the shared usage of some kind of commodities, provides access to products that remain owned by a company (e.g. bike and car sharing schemes, laundrettes) or making privately owned possessions available to other people within a community such as ridesharing, clothes swapping, and peer-to-peer accommodation (Piscicelli et al., 2015). Recently, the collaborative economy idea has also reached the fashion sector (Rohden et al., 2015; Choi & Shen, 2017; Shen et al., 2017). The term Collaborative Fashion Consumption (CFC) was coined to explain a consumption trend “in which consumers, instead of buying new fashion products, have access to already existing garments either through alternative opportunities to acquire individual ownership (gifting, swapping, or second hand) or through usage options for fashion” (Iran & Schrader, 2017, p. 472).

Although collaborative consumption is not yet an established proposal in the mainstream of the fashion industry, it is already possible to observe several initiatives based on the idea of sharing and community emerging in the segment, the online used clothing market is an example (Pedersen & Netter, 2015). As illustrated in Figure 2 at the end of this section, clothing sharing is one of several strategies presented by slow fashion to maintain resource use and delay clothing disposal (Fletcher & Grose, 2012). Consumer-oriented slow fashion strategies advocate that greater awareness of the product can drive more sustainable practices when consuming (Jung & Jin, 2016). People who sell second-hand items are motivated by the desire to dispose of goods that no longer interest them, in addition to the advantage in monetary gain. As for consumers, they are identified in the literature by four motivators: desire for exclusivity, possibility of acquiring high-value goods at more affordable prices, nostalgia provided by clothes from other times, and sustainability (Roux & Korchia, 2006). As sharing is still a recent practice, questions about its adoption and diffusion need further studies that explore its possible barriers and potential. One of the lines of research potentially capable of deepening such aspects is the perspective of

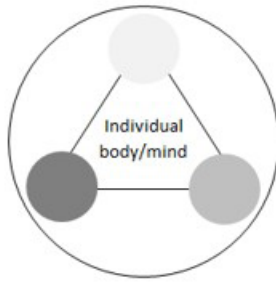
practice theories (Piscicelli et al., 2015), which according to Spurling et al. (2013), represents a new perspective to comprehend more assertively the sustainability policies.

In recent years, managerial and organizational studies have rediscovered the concept of practice and built a body of research under the acronym PBS – Practice-Based Studies (Gherardi, 2009). According to this perspective, daily practices are identified as responsible for the construction (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011; Schatzki, 2019) and transformation of society (Shove et al., 2012). From this perspective, it is possible to verify the importance of understanding how the practices carried out on a daily basis develop, establish themselves, and how they can become more sustainable (Gherardi, 2009; Hargreaves, 2011; Sahakian & Wilhite, 2013; Silva & Figueiredo, 2017; Spurling et al., 2013). Thus, the focus of research on consumption and sustainability, before given to individual behaviors and technological innovations, in the practice theories it becomes the understanding of everyday practices (Sahakian & Wilhite, 2013; Spurling et al., 2013).

Schatzki (2019) is one of the theorists who stands out in the discussion of practices as components of the social. Its approach is based on the assumption that all social phenomena are rooted in practical. A practice is defined as “an open and temporary set of actions and sayings, linked by practical understandings, rules, tele-affective structure and general understanding” (Schatzki, 2002, p. 8). The concept of material arrangements, which includes humans, artifacts, organisms and things of nature (Schatzki, 2005, 2012) is useful in recognizing a range of more extensive material relationships between which practices take place. Reckwitz (2002) provides more details, stating that a practice presupposes the interconnection of elements with each other: “forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, ‘things’ and their use, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge” (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 249). As the social is the field of practices, they are, inevitably, imbricated in material arrangements that they corroborate to create, in which they are realized and through which they (practices) exist (Schatzki, 2005). Practices and arrangements are thus always linked in one or more ways, forming an inseparable amalgam (Schatzki, 2002, 2012), a set of practices results in a constellation of practices (Schatzki, 2019).

Practices as entities are thus founded or made up of three elements: materials, competences, and meanings; such elements are dynamically interconnected by qualified practitioners, through regular and repetitive performance, thus constituting the practice (Shove & Pantzar, 2005; Hargreaves, 2011; Shove et al., 2012; Spurling et al., 2013). Inspired by the viewpoints of Schatzki (2002, 2012) and Reckwitz (2002), Shove et al. (2012) proposed a sociotechnical approach for understanding the essential elements of practice and how they relate to each other. In this perspective, both human agents, that is, individuals, made up of bodies and minds (Schatzki, 2001), as non-humans (objects/artifacts), are indispensable requirements for the practice (Reckwitz, 2002; Spaargaren & Oosterveer, 2010). The human body itself is considered a material element, and the mind a component of meaning (Shove et al., 2012; Süßbauer & Schäfer, 2019). Next, Figure 1 details the three elements that make up the practice.

When driving, walking, or cooking, people (practitioners) dynamically combine the three elements that make up their practices (Shove et al., 2012). When serving dinner, for example, material objects and tools are needed, such as food, drink, crockery, tables, and chairs, in addition to the kitchen, energy, and water supply infrastructures. Some competences such as cooking and knowledge of etiquette to serve are basic; a differential, or specialized knowledge in turn, such as harmonization with wine, is a competence based on conventions and cultural expectations (Spurling et al., 2013).



Materials	Objects, tools, <u>infrastructure</u> and human body
Competences	Embedded knowledge and skills
Meanings	Cultural conventions, expectations, socially shared <u>meanings</u> and mind

Figure 1 Elements of practice

Source: Adapted from Shove et al. (2012, p. 23).

Practices are situated in contexts of lives that are always undergoing processes of change over time (history) and space (context) (Schatzki, 2019; Reckwitz, 2002; Sahakian & Wilhite, 2013). Practices are formed and reformed by historical factors, so that a practice will always have information from previous practices (Bourdieu, 1977; Sahakian & Wilhite, 2013). These data provide indications for understanding how practices can be changed (Sahakian & Wilhite, 2013). Armed with all this information, it is possible to explore the agents (practitioners/providers), mediated by the elements, in the emergence and development of a practice. It is worth noting that the focus of the study is not on individuals (Reckwitz, 2002), nor the objects, but the practices that they (individuals and objects) carry. Thus, it is essential to consider the dynamic and interdependent relationship between practitioners and providers, entangled with the elements (materials, competences, and meanings), in the evolution and diffusion of practices (Shove & Pantzar, 2005).

Figure 2 below illustrates the theoretical premises on which this study was developed. It shows collaborative consumption as part of a set of sustainable consumption models. Among these possibilities, slow fashion emerges as a non-limited set of strategies proposed in order to achieve a more sustainable consumption. Then, clothing sharing represents the intersection between slow fashion and collaborative consumption. This represents a possibility to counteract the fashion industry's negative impacts, as it seeks to move away from the 'take-make-use-dispose' economic system, towards a regenerative system that is based on closed-loops (Niinimäki, 2017; Henninger et al., 2020).

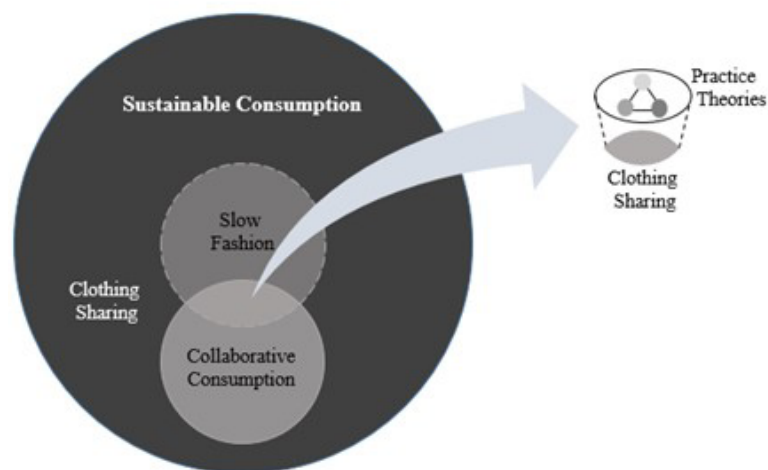


Figure 2 Theoretical Framework

Source: Developed by the authors.

With consumers becoming increasingly conscious of the environmental and social issues in the fashion sector, turning to ‘new’ collaborative business models may become an attractive option (Henninger et al., 2021). In this study, we argue that clothing sharing is better understood if explored under the lens of theories of practice (magnifying glass in Figure 2). According to the analysis that will be presented, it was possible to affirm that the sharing of clothes can be an effective strategy for sustainable consumption in the fashion industry.

Thus, the main point of research on consumption and sustainability, previously centered on individual behaviors and technological innovations, becomes to understand the daily practices that permeate sustainable consumption, under the lens of theories of practice (Sahakian & Wilhite, 2013; Spurling et al., 2013). This is because behaviors, called practices, such as performances, are considered only as the observable part in social phenomena, results of attitudes, beliefs and other motivational factors. However, as the new view of practice aims to understand how social change takes place, it is necessary to understand the behavior and performance of practices intricate to their material, social and cultural contexts. Therefore, changes in behavior will only be successful through intervention in the bases socially incorporated into the action, the practices as entities (Spurling et al., 2013; Piscicelli et al., 2015). In other words, materializing the social theories of practice is important because they occur before the action, as they guide the course of consumption (Warde, 2005).

4. RESEARCH METHOD

To identify the elements and dynamics of the practice of clothing sharing in Fortaleza, as well as their implications for sustainable consumption, this research is configured as a qualitative case study (Yin, 2014) that investigates the varied meanings associated with the practices, as well as the performances performed by the practitioners (Bellotti & Mora, 2016). Constructivist in nature (Nicolini, 2017), the smallest unit of analysis in this research is practice and its material arrangements (Spurling et al., 2013), because, for the social construction of reality, through symbolic and cognitive structures, the theories of practice place the “place of the social” in practices (Reckwitz, 2002). An exploratory stage of visits was carried out to understand the context of the field and to obtain information to elaborate the research protocol that, according to Yin (2014), depends on the scope of the case study. From then on, we listed field procedures and data collection.

Considering the definition of practice as a “temporally unfolding and spatially dispersed nexus of doings and sayings” (Schatzki, 2012, p. 14), data collection included observations, interviews, and a focal group. The research was carried out in a collaborative store, located in Fortaleza, Ceará, the fifth largest city in Brazil. The store was chosen for its local representation in terms of promoting more conscious consumption, and because it is located in a traditional retail sales corridor in the city: Avenida Monsenhor Tabosa. The process started with the observations, which occurred during visits to the store and at all events promoted by the store, from July to December 2019 (Table 1). An example of these events were the fairs in partnership, including with the city hall, carried out with the purpose of promoting sustainability. They brought together products from various consumer domains: second-hand and new clothes (made by local producers), food, accessories, beauty and personal care products, household items, and ecological diapers, among others.

Between September and December 2019, we also conducted individual and group interviews, in addition to a focus group (Table 2), accounting for a total of 17 participants between suppliers (entrepreneurs) and clothing-sharing practitioners (consumers; see interview script in Appendix).

The development of both interview scripts (individual and group) and the focus group was guided by the practice theories, more specifically by the sociotechnical perspective presented by Shove et al. (2012). Regarding data saturation, we followed the general premise of qualitative research, which says that qualitative data is saturated when the topics or themes that derived from the dataset are repeated (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Data is then saturated “when a dataset ceases to provide new information or themes, which relate to the research question” (Constantinou et al., 2017, p. 5), signaling the discontinuation of data gathering (Saunders et al., 2018), as occurred in this research. As for the focus group, there is no consensus in the literature about the exact number or about the ideal size, but most researchers advise groups composed of 4 to 12 people, although others indicate larger groups (Arthur et al., 2012).

Table 1
Data collection: observations

Source of data collection	Date	Duration
Chafurdin Fair: to promote a sustainable economy.	14.07.2019	5 hours
Mana a Mana Fair: creative fair, collective of women.	21.09.2019	5 hours
Chafurdin Fair: to promote a sustainable economy.	06.10.2019	5 hours
Ajuntamento Fair: Chafurdin, Mana to Mana and Solares.	14.12.2019	5 hours
Ajuntamento Fair: Chafurdin, Mana to Mana and Solares.	15.12.2019	5 hours

Source: Developed by the authors.

Table 2
Data collection: interviews

Interviews			
Source of data collection	Code	Date	Duration
Provider Interview	E01	21.10.2019	58'15"
Provider Interview	E02	21.10.2019	36'51"
Practitioner Interview	EA11	14.12.2019	13'27"
Practitioner Interview	EA12	15.12.2019	03'32"
Practitioner Interview	EA13	14.12.2019	12'09"
Practitioner Interview	EA14	15.12.2019	13'52"
Practitioner Interview	EA15	15.12.2019	05'52"
Practitioner Interview	EA16	14.12.2019	11'06"
Practitioner Interview	EA17	15.12.2019	04'40"
Group Interviews	EC	09.11.2019	31'32"
Focus Group	GF	09.11.2019	48'38"

Source: Developed by the authors.

The individual interviews were individually conducted with seven practitioners and two providers. The practitioners were interviewed during events that took place in stores. The group interview was carried out with 3 practitioners. And the focus group took place in the collaborative store, with 5 practitioners. The participants of the group interview and focus group were invited through the store’s social networks. According to Arthur et al. (2012), both group interviews and focus groups are organized group discussions with the aim of gathering various opinions about

a given topic. Nevertheless, in the group interview there is a more linear dynamic between the researcher and each interviewee, even in a group environment. On the focus group, on the other hand, there is greater interaction between the participants and the group's opinion may become as relevant as the individuals' opinion (Arthur et al., 2012).

All the research participants were assured of their anonymity and to identify them, we established the following pseudonyms: (EO) provider interview; (EA) practitioner interview; (GF) focus group; and, (EC) group interviews. The criterion for selecting respondents was that they were in the habit of sharing second-hand items in the collaborative store researched. All respondents were randomly female, aged between 22 and 39 years. According to the entrepreneurial partners, women are approximately 85% of the public that shares garments. To analyze the data, we use qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2003). In view of this, we list categories defined from the elements of practice (materials, meanings, and competences), listed by Shove et al. (2012). The process occurred, initially, by the transcription of the data collected (focus group, individual and group interviews) (Table 2). The data were read and revised so that the categories were presented according to the theory proposed by Shove et al. (2012). Additionally, the information apprehended and recorded in the observations also went through the same process (Table 1). Then, all data were listed in a table where it was possible to check the existence of the elements of each category. This process was conducted with the use of Excel.

During the analysis, the data were triangulated in order to allow the phenomenon, or research question, to be analyzed and understood from more than one data source. Information from different angles can be used to corroborate, elaborate, or illuminate the research problem, limiting personal and methodological biases (Decrop, 1999). The interviews, after being listened to and transcribed, were sent to the research participants to be validated. In this way, the internal and external variations of the data collected were considered. As for ethics, the researchers, when conducting the interviews, always introduced themselves and explained the focus of the research and how they would proceed with the analysis: the verification of the practice of sharing clothing and their implications for sustainable consumption. The data was coded to maintain the confidentiality of interviewees.

5. FINDINGS

The researched object (shared collaborative store similar to a thrift) shares new clothing (produced by local producers) and the consigned sharing of second-hand clothing. Consigned sharing proceeds as follows: customers take unwanted garments from their own wardrobes to be sold in the store. A percentage of the sale goes to the store, and the customer is paid in cash or credit to buy garments at the store. The rendering of accounts is monthly, and the clothing have a period of up to four months of exposure in the establishment.

Even if the focus of the research is the consumer, called a practitioner of the practice theories (Shove & Pantzar, 2005), the analysis of the practice has to submit to the context, involving the practices, the providers, and practitioners, and how the practices are carried out (Jarzabkowski et al., 2015). Through the context, it is possible to identify the three elements that make up the practice located (Shove et al., 2012): materials (objects, tools and infrastructure), competences (embedded knowledge and skills) and meanings (cultural conventions, expectations, and socially shared meanings) (Shove et al., 2012; Spurling et al., 2013).

The research found that practitioners and providers pointed out, to a large extent, identical elements in the three categories. The other elements (not identical), were observed as complementary to obtain one of the meaning elements listed in the research. For example, in the material elements category, practitioners cited decorative objects and providers mentioned music. These elements, added to the lighting (alluded to by practitioners and providers), make up a cozy environment that, in turn, is indicated as a meaningful element for sharing clothing. Another example of different but complementary elements, now in the category of meanings: the demystification of used clothing (providers), related to the elements of quality, exclusivity, and curatorship (practitioners), promotes the meaning of sustainable consumption. Another important aspect, reported by practitioners and providers, is sustainable consumption as elements of competences and meaning. As presented by Shove and Pantzar (2005), the interaction between providers and practitioners, both involved in the constitution and reproduction of a practice, enables the successful performance of a specific practice.

In order to identify the elements that constitute the practice of clothing sharing, it is necessary to list and explore the perceptions of participants (subsection 5.1) and providers (subsection 5.2) about them (elements), since these are the agents that establish the context and the dynamics of the practice (subsection 5.3). In the following pages, we will present the main verbalizations and quotations of practitioners and providers about their perceptions about the elements of the practice of clothing sharing and how these elements are dynamically linked to each other to support and establish this practice.

5.1. PERCEPTION OF PRACTITIONERS

The research findings showed that, for practitioners, materials such as used clothing, etiquette, and decorative objects (objects and tools), lighting and internet access (infrastructure), are important aspects in the practice of sharing. As for the competences, care for the pieces, conscious consumption, unattachment and body self-knowledge, illustrate how to “make and reproduce” (Shove & Pantzar, 2005) the practice of sharing. Finally, the meanings evidenced were exclusivity, demystification of clothing, saving, quality, warmth, and curatorship. Below, Table 3 presents the verbalizations that illustrate the elements, from the perspective of the practitioners.

It is possible to observe that the material elements (objects and tools and infrastructure), indicated in quotations in Table 3, allude to the collaborative store as a cozy place. Coziness (meaning) is associated with material elements, such as: decorative objects, plants, books and ‘Pieces with History’ sticker (which highlights a local aspect when reproducing Iracema Beach, a tourist spot in Fortaleza) and lighting. Additionally, the ‘Garments with History’ sticker also refers to the ideas of used clothing (material) and vintage, dynamically linking them with the exclusivity, quality, and demystification of used clothing (meanings), as much as with unattachment and care for the garments (competences).

The internet (material) is highlighted by practitioners, according to Table 3, as an important promoter of the practice of sharing clothing. Concerning the competence element, care for the garments, as well as unattachment and body self-awareness are related to another competence element, conscious consumption. Additionally, the conscious consumption competence, in turn, is directly linked to the element meaning conscious consumption, since, as shown in Table 3, conscious consumption is both a competence element and a meaningful element.

Table 3
Main practitioner results

Element	Cod.	Key quotations - Practitioners	Elements
Materials	EG6	“The person will think about conscious consumption in a place like this, in a beautiful, clean store, with organized pieces, washed with a label.”	Used clothing + label
	EC3	“It gives the feeling that everything is very personalized, that you see that this plant was not placed here just because I like the plant, but to create a space that cares for the natural.”	Decorative objects
	EG6	“You notice a plant, a hand (decorative objects) on top of the books [...] then you see ‘pieces with history’ (sticker), there’s the atmosphere of Iracema Beach.”	Decorative objects
	EC4	“It has the idea of coziness, the light is more cozy, it’s a weaker light, but at the same time it’s not dark, you can see everything.”	Lighting
	EA11	“I found out about the collaborative store on social networks and referrals from friends.”	Internet
	EG8	“Instagram made this a lot easier, Whatsapp groups made everything easier, the social network made it a lot easier.”	Internet
Competences	EC4	“[...]Not nowadays, I have the mentality so that when I buy a garment, which I will wear, and if I can, I will wash it by hand, I will take care of it as much as possible. Because then I can monetize it back to me, selling it to a friend, or I can give it to a friend who liked it [...] I can exchange it.”	Care with the garments
	EG9	“When I started to change my form of consumption, with second-hand pieces, I started to realize that sustainability was not just about clothes.”	Conscious consumption
	EA11	“Give away clothing! I receive and give away clothing. It is an unattachment, I was not so detached, I used to gather a lot. And then, with these new proposals, I became quite detached.”	Unattachment
	EG6	“By consuming in thrift stores, I found these unique pieces, then I started to know my body a lot more, because I look and I know which dress models fit me well [...].I also started to consume less, because I know my wardrobe more.”	Body self-awareness
Meanings	EA9	“[...] they are exclusive pieces, both in terms of design, aesthetics, as they are unique pieces, trousers from the 90s that are no longer produced with that quality of jeans.”	Exclusivity
	EA4	“You can never say like this: is there a size S? Have you got L?”	Exclusivity
	EA10	“Evolution so much in the sense of thrift stores, because we usually have the idea that thrift stores are dirty clothes, they smell like mold and everything. And this collaborative store deconstructs all of that.”	Demystifying used clothing

Table 3
Cont.

Element	Cod.	Key quotations - Practitioners	Elements
Meanings	EC4	“Driving the local economy [...] knowing who you’re buying from, in reuse, right! Like, it’s something that the person has already worn, someone else will wear it.”	Conscious consumption
	EA4	“I will not be a hypocrite! The first thing I think, is to buy cool things at a good price [...]clothes that we know will last, that are not disposable.”	Saving
	EA14	“When you arrive at the thrift store and see that the clothes have withstood another user’s stride, then this garment is good. Therefore, it ends up having a sustainability approach, because you are investing in something that has durability.	Quality
	EA6	“The thrift store is much more welcoming. The fast fashion department store, however cozy it may be, it is an extremely cold environment for me.”	Coziness
	EA16	“It brings something more affective, right! [...].There’s also the gold mining thing (curatorship), of them choosing the clothes and exhibiting them [...] and the main thing is the idea of sharing, reusing, the sustainable thing.”	Curatorship

Source: Developed by the authors.

Another meaning is the saving, which is related to the quality (meaning) of the part used (material), care for the garment and unattachment (competences). According to Table 3, quality is often associated with durability and, therefore, sustainability. Finally, curatorship, made possible by unattachment (competence), which in general is related to exclusivity and quality (meanings), and circumstantially, with the coziness (meaning) that is provided by various material elements.

5.2. PERCEPTION OF PROVIDERS

As material elements that make up the practice of sharing, providers have identified: used clothing, labels, computers, and software (objects and tools), music, lighting, and internet (infrastructure). The competences pointed out were care for the garments, organization, conscious consumption, and body self-awareness. As for the meanings, the highlights were for exclusivity, demystifying used clothing and conscious consumption. In Table 4, we present the verbalizations about the elements mentioned by the providers.

For providers, according to Table 4, in addition to the used clothing, directly related to conscious consumption (competence and meaning), and exclusivity (meaning) the necessary materials have: labels, computers, and software, all associated with the organization (competence) which, according to the providers, is very important for the business. The materials, lighting, and music, make up the welcoming environment (meaning). The sum of materials, music, and clothes in excellent condition (the result of the competence taken care of with the garments), and the ‘normal’ store (result of the element meaning demystifying used clothing), summarizes well the providers’ perspective on the business of sharing. The internet (material) is highlighted with a means of organization (competence), of publicizing the enterprise and a channel of communication with customers.

Table 4
Main Provider Results

Element	Cod.	Key quotations - Providers	Elements
Materials	EO1	“Used garments and garments from local producers.”	Used clothing
	EO2	[...] having a label with the necessary information, to present a product that is used, but that people are interested in.	Label
	EO1	“We use a stock system to organize everything: sales, partners and the people who do the consigning (sharing).”	Computer + software
	EO1	“I can’t imagine here without these resources, without details, yellow light.”	Lighting
	EO1	“And then, you have a thrift store that sells used clothes, but in great condition, they are cool, a cool environment, with music, it looks like a ‘normal’ store.”	Music
	EO1	“We are on the internet, we sell used clothes, and here on the avenue there is nothing used, only from factory production”.	Internet
Competences	EO1	“We are careful with each garment, exposing only quality pieces, trying to repair, trying to revitalize the garments so that they continue.”	Care for the garments
	EO2	“The main thing to open a collaborative store is the organization.”	Organization
	EO2	“[...] we thought about this all united concept: of being a slow fashion collaborative store, a store for conscious consumption.”	Conscious consumption
	EO1	“It’s really a process of being a stylist, a personal stylist, of getting to know the person, knowing how they dress. Trying to know the fit (of the garment on the client’s body). This is a process that I think is very different from a conventional store, precisely because of the lack of variety in size.”	Body self-awareness
Meaning	EO1	“The issue of the thrift store is different, because the garments are unique, it’s just that one, you know!”	Exclusivity
	EO2	“The most important thing is to bring the used clothes to an organized and clean environment, so people who are not in the habit of consuming used clothes, would be able to open to this way of consumption.”	Demystifying used clothing
	EO2	“When we talk about a store shared with local producers, it is a conscious consumption because you are strengthening producers, entrepreneurs here in Fortaleza.”	Conscious consumption

Source: Developed by the authors.

As for the competences listed by the providers, the following stand out: care for the garments, organization, conscious consumption, and body self-awareness. Body self-awareness is a skill associated with the elements meaning, exclusivity and demystification of used clothing, all in support of sustaining the business, in financial terms, and conscious consumption (meaning).

5.3. DYNAMICS OF THE ELEMENTS OF PRACTICE

In order to explore and describe in detail how the dynamics of the links formed between the elements identified above occur, some verbalizations taken from Tables 3 and 4 made up the elaboration of Table 5. For Gherardi (2009), the investigation of practices in the sociotechnical view is “from the inside out”, that is, from the practitioner’s point of view. As providers also practiced sharing, they were classified as practitioners. Table 5 presents some of the verbalizations that indicate the links between the three elements.

Table 5
Dynamics of the elements of practice

Cod.	Key quotations about the dynamics of the elements of practice	Elements
EG6	“The person will think about conscious consumption in a place like this, in a beautiful, clean store, with organized, clean and labeled garments (clothes).”	Material (clothing, label); Competence (care with the garments); Meaning (conscious consumption).
EC4	“[...]Not nowadays, I have the mentality when I buy a garment , which I will wear, if I can, I will wash it by hand, I will take care of it as much as possible . Because then I can monetize it back to me , selling it to a friend, or I can give it to a friend who liked it [...] I can exchange it.”	Material (clothing); Competence (care with the garments); Meaning (Saving).
EC3	“It gives the feeling that everything is very personalized , that you see that this plant was not placed here just because I like the plant, but to create a space that cares for the natural , also their other products such as cups, straws (disposing of single-use items) it remits to this issue of responsibility with the environment ”.	Material (plant); Competence (conscious consumption); Meaning (exclusivity, conscious consumption).
E01	“So, you have a thrift store that sells used clothes , but in great condition, they’re cool, a cool environment, with music, it looks like a ‘normal’ store. ”	Material (clothing, music); Competence (care with the garments); Meaning (demystifying used clothing).
EG8	“When you arrive at the thrift store and see that the clothes have withstood another user’s stride, then this garment is good . Therefore, it ends up having a sustainability approach , because you are investing in something that has greater durability , because there are a lot of disposable clothes, you can tell by the fabric.”	Material (clothing); Competence (quality, conscious consumption); Meaning (conscious consumption).

Source: Developed by the authors.

Table 5 illustrates that there is a connection between the three elements of practice by highlighting the simultaneous dynamics between them. For Shove et al. (2012), these connections indicate that the practice has been established and that there is the formation of a reproduction circuit that supports this practice. From the perspective of theories of practice, the objective is precisely to understand how, through new links, it is possible to change everyday practices making them more sustainable (Spurling et al., 2013; Sahakian & Whilite, 2013).

6. DISCUSSION

From the perspective of the socio-technical approach on the elements of practices and their connections, developed by Shove et al. (2012), this research contributes to the advance of the theoretical understanding of sustainable consumption by basing itself on the real experience of local everyday practices (Süßbauer & Schäfer, 2019). On the theoretical perspective, we offer three main contributions. The first one is related to the understanding of local practices to analyze sustainable consumption, responding to the demand by Silva and Figueiredo (2020). From our research, it was possible to identify the set of actions and material arrangements that constitute the clothing sharing practice (Boström & Micheletti, 2016; Fletcher & Grose, 2012). Our findings showed as main elements: (1) materials: used clothes, internet, lighting, decorative objects, music, computer, and software, (2) competences: care of the garments, organization, conscious consumption, unattachment, self-awareness and body self-awareness, and (3) meanings: exclusivity, demystification of used clothing, conscious consumption, saving, quality, warmth and curatorship.

The second contribution is allusive to the scarcity of empirical studies that contemplate a holistic view of the body of practices, meeting the request by Süßbauer and Schäfer (2019) and Jarzabkowski et al. (2015). The research located in Fortaleza, Ceará (Brazil) presented the context of the practice of clothing sharing as a practice of sustainable consumption. This observation occurred because conscious consumption is highlighted by practitioners and providers, as elements of meaning and competence, evidencing the reflexivity that involves the act of clothing sharing: it is not just 'saying' that one practices conscious consumption, it is 'doing', through built-in skills, factual conscious consumption (Nicolini, 2017). The implementation of the practice also requires material elements, and the internet network was highlighted as a means of disseminating and promoting shared consumption, besides being fundamental to the management of the sharing business (Pedersen & Netter, 2015).

Finally, the findings of this research contribute to the study of sustainable fashion as it is supported by practices, a different perspective from the analyzes carried out in the literature, that focus, until then, on the perspective of consumer behavior (Bellotti & Mora, 2016). It is also important to emphasize that clothing sharing has been a promoter of conscious consumption in other areas of consumption domains (food, accessories, beauty and personal care products, ecological diapers, among others), available at the store and at fairs; now it was initiated and promoted by one of these other domains of conscious consumption (Schäfer et al., 2021). This fact signals the relevance of shared meanings, analyzed in practice theories, to the detriment of the individual motivations investigated in consumer behavior (Shove et al., 2012). This is because the sharing of clothing has not only been configured as a practice of sustainable consumption, but also as a vector that led to the emergence of constellations of practices (Schatzki, 2019) that generated behavioral changes, through a collective and reflective awareness of consumption, promoting more sustainable lifestyles.

From an individualistic perspective (Bellotti & Mora, 2016), the literature identifies the need for exclusivity (internal) and conscious consumption (external), as determinants of those who adhere to slow fashion (Liu et al., 2018; Erketing & Atik, 2015). Regarding the consumption of second-hand garments, four motivators are identified in hierarchical order: desire for exclusivity, possibility of high-value goods at more affordable prices; the sense of nostalgia that clothes from other times provide (vintage pieces), and sustainability (Roux & Korchia, 2006). It is worth noting that slow fashion proposes the use/sharing of second-hand pieces, in order to prolong their useful life and avoid disposal (Fletcher & Grose, 2012).

The findings in the current paper identify these four motivators as meanings, in addition to adding quality, warmth, and demystifying used clothing. The need for exclusivity is undoubtedly the most pointed meaning; followed by saving (cost-benefit ratio), which is directly associated with the quality of the piece; curatorship, related to (vintage) style; and, finally, sustainability. However, the research noted that the saving is directly linked to the price versus quality ratio, and quality is associated with the durability of the part. Therefore, the meanings of saving and quality are linked to issues of sustainability and conscious consumption, which, in turn, are encouraged by the demystification of clothes and the comfort provided by the store. That said, exclusivity and conscious and sustainable consumption are the internal and external meanings, respectively, most pointed out among those who adopt the sharing of used garments.

Therefore, it was possible to verify from the analysis of the context, composed of practitioners and providers and the set of actions and material arrangements that constitute the practice of sharing garments in Fortaleza, which the practice, based on the principles of slow fashion (Jung & Jin, 2016), mainly in the valorization of the place, it allows and promotes the most sustainable consumption of clothes.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The use of theories of practice to understand sustainable consumption emphasizes local practices performed by practitioners as promising ways to promote changes in consumption and disposal patterns. During this research, it was possible to identify the practice of sharing clothing through the combination of materials, active and qualified practitioners, and shared meanings, has the potential to bring fashion and sustainability closer together through more reflective consumption. Therefore, our results demonstrate the existence of an extension of the service life of the parts and a reduction in new acquisitions and quick disposals. By identifying the dynamic of clothing sharing elements, we conclude that, in addition to improving practitioners' experience with clothing and delaying or preventing the expansion of resource use, the use of a collaborative store promotes the development of a new fashion business, less focused on economic growth, and more congruent with the environmental, social and mental demands that the zeitgeist in the world requires, because environmental degradation has already reached alarming levels.

As for the practical implications, the research provides a comprehensive view on sharing actions as a practice that should be used as benchmark in other places to ensure slow fashion and, consequently, sustainable consumption. Our research provides efficient strategic guidelines for enterprises that offer this type of commercialization, not only in the clothing segment, but in general. Therefore, managers can improve their actions to ensure actions for clothing sharing in collaborative stores, understanding what have been presented here as materials, competences and meanings perceived by practitioners and providers. Of course, that the practice will be performed differently in other contexts, however similar dynamic of elements can guide managers to make decisions toward sustainable consumption.

Based on our results and in order to identify other empirical evidence that may reveal more information about the practice, new research may address other contexts and modalities of the practice of sharing clothing, as well as other activities, even mentioned in this study when they act intertwined with the practice of clothing sharing. Specifically in the field of fashion, it is also suggested to explore, under the lens of practices, other alternative activities, such as upcycling, also known as creative reuse, and the capsule cabinet. All these contributions can enable a better understanding of the SDG 12.

Regarding the limitations identified in the research, the first is the scarcity of studies in the area. There are still virtually no debates about clothing sharing, as a practice of sustainable consumption, from the perspective of practice theories, in the socio-technical view. Another limitation is due to the fact that some conscious consumption initiatives, such as the sharing of garments, being very recent to Brazil and, mainly, in Fortaleza, Ceará. Therefore, the field for analysis is still small. Another limiting factor occurs due to the variety of models that can systematize a garment sharing business, as there is no precise definition of the modality. As mentioned, everything in this field is still very recent and, in general, these inconsistencies hinder the research process.

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AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION

MC: Conceptualization (equal); Data Acuration (lead); Investigation (lead); Methodology (equal); Writing original draft (lead); Writing review and editing (equal); **MS:** Conceptualization (equal); Methodology (equal); Supervision (lead); Validation (lead); Visualization (lead); Writing review and editing (equal); **MD:** Supervision (supporting); Validation (supporting); Visualisation (supporting); Writing review and editing (equal).

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The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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Talles Vianna Brugni 

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Emerson Mainardes 

APPENDIX - SAMPLE OF INTERVIEW SCRIPT

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PERSONAL PROFILE

Can we start with a brief introduction about you? (including experience)

How long have you joined the collaborative store?

Could you please share your story with second hand pieces?

What does sustainable fashion mean for you?

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PRACTITIONERS

What does a collaborative store like this one, in Fortaleza, mean to you?

For you, is there any difference between a collaborative space (store) and a conventional/fast-fashion store? If yes, which one or which ones?

What did you learn from choosing to use shared/second-hand clothes?

PROVIDERS

What led you to invest in a collaborative store?

What is the difference between a collaborative store and a conventional/fast-fashion store?

To manage this collaborative store, did you need to learn anything in particular?