Questioning the boundaries between fast- and slow fashion

A research discerning if current categorization within fashion is relevant or if fast- and slow fashion should merge into one undecidable.

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Abstract

Individual’s existential ambivalence has according to Jacques Derrida, one of the foremost proponents of post-structuralism, led to a continuous demand for structure (Cooper, 1989). Categories, used as structural tools, are however often hierarchically organized, where one category is more preferable than the other, also referred to as binary oppositions. Alternative categories and/or references will appear when adopting a deconstruction process, which is crucial in order to invoke change and development (Cooper, 1989; Markkula et al., 2011; Marion, 2006).

The aim of present research is trying to identify if Derrida’s theory of undecidable transfer of features (Agger, 1991; Cooper, 1989; Livingston, 2010; Bates, 2005) is applicable in fashion, more specifically fast- and slow fashion, and if the two categories are susceptible to a merge. Deconstructionism and Derrida’s theory of undecidable was furthermore applied as the theoretical framework throughout the study.

Present research has been executed with an interpretive methodological approach and through a poststructural epistemological outlook (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016). Data was derived through two focus group interviews, involving seven informants at a time, with Autodriving as a visual research tool (Heisley & Levy, 1991) and open-ended questions as a complementing instrument (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016). A thematic analysis was furthermore applied when revisiting the data and analysing its content. The findings finally suggest that a merge between fast- and slow fashion is executable, which furthermore also legitimises Derrida’s theory of undecidability. This study has however only begun the deconstruction process and does therefore encourage future researchers to continue investigating the theory of undecidability (Agger, 1991; Cooper, 1989; Livingston, 2010; Bates, 2005) not only in fashion, but also within other institutions.

**Keywords:** Fashion, Fast fashion, Slow fashion, Deconstructionism, Undecidable, Categorization, Poststructuralism, Postmodernism, Hegemonic market
Table of Content

Acknowledgment.........................................................................................................................2
Abstract.........................................................................................................................................3

1.0 Introduction............................................................................................................................6
1.1 Background ............................................................................................................................6
1.2 Problematisation ......................................................................................................................7
  1.2.1 The research gap ...............................................................................................................8
1.3 Aim ........................................................................................................................................9
1.4 Research questions ..................................................................................................................9
1.5 Research approach ..................................................................................................................9
1.6 Research outline .....................................................................................................................10

2.0 Literature Review ....................................................................................................................11
2.1 Fashion categories ..................................................................................................................11
  2.1.1 Fast fashion.......................................................................................................................11
  2.1.2 Slow fashion .....................................................................................................................12
2.2 Literature themes ....................................................................................................................13
  2.2.1 Fashion discourses ..........................................................................................................13
  2.2.2 The critical process ..........................................................................................................13
  2.2.3 Categorization ................................................................................................................14
  2.2.4 Market governance mechanism .......................................................................................15
  2.2.5 Theme summary .............................................................................................................15
2.3 Theoretical framework ..........................................................................................................16
  2.3.1 Modernism & Postmodernism .........................................................................................16
  2.3.1.1 Liberator Postmodernism ............................................................................................17
  2.3.2 Poststructuralism ...........................................................................................................17
  2.3.3 Deconstructionism ..........................................................................................................19
  2.3.4 Theoretical summary ......................................................................................................20

3.0 Research design .......................................................................................................................22
3.1 Research approach ..................................................................................................................22
3.2 Data collection method .........................................................................................................23
  3.2.1 Focus group interviews ...................................................................................................23
  3.2.2 Autodriving and open-ended questions .........................................................................24
  3.2.2.1 Conducting the focus group interviews ....................................................................25
3.3 Data analysis ..........................................................................................................................26
  3.3.1 Thematic analysis ............................................................................................................26
3.4 Source critical considerations ...............................................................................................27
3.5 Ethical reflection ......................................................................................................................29

4.0 Findings & Analysis ..................................................................................................................30
4.1 Thematic approach ..................................................................................................................30
4.2 The hegemonic market and evolution of fashion .................................................................31
  4.2.1 Ever-changing trends ......................................................................................................31
  4.2.2 Environmentally conscious ambivalence .........................................................................31
  4.2.3 Age determines demand ..................................................................................................33
  4.2.4 Technological development and social movement .........................................................33
  4.2.5 Subtheme summary .........................................................................................................34
4.3 Fashion categories ..................................................................................................................35
  4.3.1 Theme summary .............................................................................................................37
4.4 Fast- and slow fashion ............................................................................................................38
4.4.1 Theme summary ........................................................................................................41

5.0 Discussion & Critical Reflection .............................................................................43
  5.1 Introduction ..............................................................................................................43
  5.2 Theoretical contribution .........................................................................................44

6.0 Conclusion ................................................................................................................46
  6.1 Findings and conclusion ........................................................................................46
  6.2 Suggestions for further research ............................................................................48

7.0 Limitations of research ............................................................................................49

References .......................................................................................................................50

Appendices .......................................................................................................................55
  Appendix A. Focus group interview guide .................................................................55
  Appendix B. Company/ Brand criteria table .............................................................57
  Appendix C. Autodriving pictures ..............................................................................58
  Appendix D. Table of informant data .....................................................................60
    Focus group informants (1st group) ....................................................................60
    Focus group informants (2nd group) ....................................................................60
  Appendix E. Data analysis table ..............................................................................61
  Appendix F. An extract of transcribed data .............................................................63
1.0 Introduction

This chapter will guide the reader through the central subject of present research, which is fashion categorization. Both previous research and descriptions will be examined, considering the complexity of this topic. Fast- and slow fashion will thereafter be discussed, where deconstructionism and the theory of undecidable are more thoroughly introduced. Previous research regarding the topic is presented within the problematisation, where a gap also has been discerned. The final part of the chapter aspires to bring about knowledge through an aim and two research questions.

1.1 Background

Categories are according to one of the foremost proponents of post-structuralism; Jacques Derrida, used in order to establish structure within individual’s existential ambivalence (Cooper, 1989). There is however often internal hierarchy vivid within categories, which is not always apparent externally. Categories such as good or bad and man or woman are examples of binary oppositions, where one category is generally more preferable than the other (Ibid). The concept of man and woman has up until recently accounted for the only existing categories that describe individual’s gender identity. There is however a relatively new Swedish term referring to a third gender-neutral pronoun, which is “hen” (Gustafsson et al, 2015). The pronoun was first introduced in 2012 to the Swedish language, where it encountered mostly negative responses. However, as time passed and society evolved so did also the attitudes towards hen. Attitudes can, in other words, be normalized rather quickly (Markkula et al, 2011), which is also why hen became more accepted in time, due to a continuous usage of the term in everyday discourses (Gustafsson et al, 2015).

Fast fashion and slow fashion are two dichotomous categories within fashion, where pace, production- and sustainability processes are operated differently. Fast fashion is often described as a process more trend sensitive, meaning it adapts to new trends faster than other market operators (Chang & Jai, 2015; Watson & Yan, 2013; McNeill & Moore, 2015). The rapid pace and changeable trends has affected garments in terms of abbreviated their life cycle (Ibid). Slow fashion has, on the other hand, been described as a counter reaction to fast fashion and the textiles are known for their longer life cycle and classic pieces, i.e. wearable garments (and trendy) over time (Fletcher, 2007; Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013). Fast
fashion and slow fashion are two controversial concepts that the industry refers to more frequently. H&M, known as a fast fashion producer, uses advertisement to proclaim recycling and sustainability, characteristics that, on the contrary, are more applicable to a slow fashion production. Slow fashion characteristics are accordingly preferred in that context, yet fast fashion continues to exist.

Binary oppositions, such as fast- and slow fashion, should be subjected to a deconstruction process for further development to occur (Agger, 1991; Cooper, 1989; Livingston, 2010; Bates, 2005). Socially constructed conducts are in time internalized and normalized and in result classified as “right” (as opposed to wrong, i.e. acting abnormally) (Markkula et al, 2011), which is why recognition of their hierarchical structure has to be established, in order to continue deconstructing the divisions. A critical process can thereafter be performed to prevent previous categorization to recur (Agger, 1991; Cooper, 1989; Livingston, 2010; Bates, 2005). Derrida further argues how binary opposing categories, i.e. two similar concepts that are opposite in meaning, should merge into one, which he refers to as an undecidable, where they instead transfer features amongst each other, which is desirable because it eliminates a division and furthermore creates an undefined selection of multiple concepts, where alternatives are continuously invited (Ibid).

1.2 Problematisation

McCracken (1986) introduced the meaning transfer model in which he described how individuals choose to legitimize their consumption. Through associations put in a context together with products, individuals construct meaning that in turn drive them towards consumption. Both Thompson and Haytko (1997) and Murray (2002) acknowledge how there are various influential factors affecting us within symbolic consumption. “Sign experimentation” is one perspective that emphasises the more expressive movement where consumers collect meaning through consumption and in turn construct alternative statements. This movement is more associated with identity politics, where individuals collect opposing meanings within fashion discourses and furthermore construct their own symbolic statement and individual agency (Thompson & Haytko, 1997; Murray, 2002). By integrating and adapting countervailing standpoints, will consumers in turn construct fashion narratives that are applicable within their everyday lives (Thompson & Haytko, 1997). Previous argumentation is neglecting hegemonic social structures and their power, which is also why
Murray (2002) came to elaborate on that specific matter, i.e. if personalized fashion narratives can be constructed without any influential control from the market.

Another perspective within symbolic consumption is “sign domination”, which reveals hegemonic social structures that deprive autonomy among consumers (Thompson & Haytko, 1997; Murray, 2002). These structures will instead deceive consumers in to demanding what is impossible to reach, which in turn will create an endless demand solely beneficial for the market. A critical reflection regarding hegemonic social structures, vivid within all institutions in society, is furthermore crucial in order to provoke resistance against the dominant structures, otherwise will consent most likely occur (Murray, 2002).

Murray’s (2002) article describes how Thompson and Haytko’s (1997) article fails to put equal emphasis on the sign domination perspective as to the sign experimentation, and in turn overlooked the dominant social structures. The identity politics process, described within the sign experimentation perspective, is arguably also affected by social constructions that continuously are projected onto society through market institutions and other influential sectors. Murray (2002) therefore chooses to acknowledge both power and structure and furthermore elaborate on the tension between them.

1.2.1 The research gap

No research, investigating consumer perceptions regarding fashion categories have yet been found, which is why present research will begin examine the area. Categories are in many ways problematic as they assign individuals attributes that are either considered right or wrong and these are continuously reproduced if not questioned (Agger, 1991). Not addressing the issue, i.e. examine it through a critical point of view, will instead facilitate a normalization phase, which is not desirable when trying to develop and improve the fashion industry (Markkula et al, 2011; Marion, 2006). This study is therefore more specific in character as it recognizes the division within fashion and furthermore questions its relevance through a postmodern- and poststructural perspective. Both outlooks choose to oppose distinct definitions and categorizations and instead proclaim a deconstruction of the matter (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995; Agger, 1991; Cooper, 1989; Livingston, 2010; Bates, 2005; Belk, 2006, p. 51-52), which is also what this study will try and incorporate. A deconstruction can help distinguish underlying hierarchies within current categories, which is also crucial when trying to conduct a critical process (Cooper, 1989). This study is furthermore using previous
research conducted within the field of fashion and hegemonic social structures (McCracken, 1986; Thompson & Haytko, 1997; Murray, 2002) in order to continue to elaborate on the subtle power of the market and its effects and impact on consumer perceptions.

1.3 Aim
Derrida’s theory of deconstructionism and undecidable transfer of features, where binary oppositions are merged into one (Agger, 1991; Cooper, 1989; Livingston, 2010; Bates, 2005), will be the theoretical foundation for present research. This approach, has up until now, not been examined with fashion as its area of interest.

The aim of this research is thus examining whether Derrida’s theory of undecidability is relevant and applicable within fast- and slow fashion and furthermore if the two categories are susceptible to a merge.

1.4 Research questions
Consumer perceptions will be investigated in order to further examine if there are any internal hierarchy between the two binary opposing categories, which is necessary according do Derrida (Cooper, 1989; Livingston, 2010; Bates, 2005) before overturning a given structure. This will moreover be the foundation for understanding if a merge between fast- and slow fashion could ever occur.

(1) How do consumers perceive fashion categorizations, more particularly fast- and slow fashion?

(2) Why are there solely two categories and what alternatives could- and perhaps should emerge?

1.5 Research approach
Present research was conducted in accordance with an interpretivistic qualitative research and did therefore not strive towards finding one general truth; instead knowledge was based on previous research and observations (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016; Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). Constructionism was applied as the ontological approach, which is acknowledging how results are affected by social constructions and can therefore not be generalized (Eriksson &
Kovalainen, 2016). Poststructuralism was furthermore chosen as the epistemological foundation, where positivistic research is rejected and deconstruction is used in order to produce alternative outcomes (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016; Cooper, 1989; Livingston, 2010; Bates, 2005).

1.6 Research outline

Present research is divided into seven sections in chronological order so that the reader easily can comprehend the overall purpose. First there is an introduction to fashion categorization and its relation to deconstructionism, where a gap within previous research has been discerned followed by an aim and two research questions.

Next, a literature review will follow where previous research and its contribution to the topic is examined. The theoretical framework, where theories such as poststructuralism and deconstructionism are presented, will thereafter be formulated. Then there is a description of the chosen qualitative research design and how data was collected through focus group interviews. The data was furthermore analysed and discussed through a thematic structured report and was finally placed in relation to previous research and theories in order to discern whether or not a merge between fast- and slow fashion is empirically justified.

A discussion and critical reflection is included in the fifth chapter followed by concluding thoughts in chapter six where the aim and research questions are revisited and suggestions for further research are formulated. Limitations of the research are examined in the seventh and final chapter.
2.0 Literature Review

This chapter will begin with an introduction where fast fashion and slow fashion are more thoroughly examined, followed by a summary of central findings translated into themes. An explanation as to why these particular themes are relevant to present study will thereafter follow. Finally, will an introduction to the theoretical framework be presented, where theories applicable for the analysis will be separately explained and justification given as to how and why these theories could be applied within present study.

2.1 Fashion categories

Fast fashion and slow fashion are two opposite categories used within fashion, addressing not only different paces (as being understood by their names) but also different values and aims (Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013; Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2010; Bruce & Daly, 2006; Aktiespararna.se, 2013; Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010; Chang & Jai, 2015; Fletcher, 2008; Fletcher, 2010; Clark, 2008). Fashion discourses have not yet incorporated a debate regarding the categorization, perhaps due to their complexity and subtle character, which is why a critical reflection also has been overlooked. A fashion discourse can evoke displacement and development when allowing people to share thoughts and ideas (Thompson and Haytko, 1997; Murray, 2002). The literature review has distinguished four themes that are useful when analysing the response from the informants regarding the categorization within fashion: (1) Fashion discourses, (2) The critical process, (3) Categorization and finally (4) Market governance mechanism.

2.1.1 Fast fashion

Fast fashion is a result and a further development of QI (quick response), which was a phenomenon first introduced in the 1980s. Back then the focal interest was to facilitate a more efficient production line and as a result be more time efficient. While QI has the product in focus, fast fashion is more interested in the market and its demands and this took its turn in the early 2000s (Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013; Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2010; Bruce & Daly, 2006; Aktiespararna.se, 2013). Fast fashion garments are not suppose to be worn more than ten times due to their poor quality, which most certainly is a strategic decision designed by the market so that they in turn can attract (or force) consumers to return and consume...
more. This strategy furthermore explains why this phenomenon was previously referred to as “throwaway market” (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010; McNeill & Moore, 2015).

Another industry to use a similar system is the food industry, for example McDonald’s and the so-called McDonaldization (Ritzer, 2008; Fletcher 2010). Fast food and fast fashion do contain similar attributes regarding their processes, i.e. how products should be produced in the least amount of time possible and not cost a fortune. However, fast fashion is more likely determined to produce and provide the latest trends, which is not always the case for fast food (Chang & Jai, 2015; Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013; Barnes & Lea- Greenwood, 2010; Byun & Sternquist, 2008; Cachon & Swinney, 2011; Sull & Turconi, 2008).

Fast fashion has to constantly discern new trends. It is therefore necessary to keep up with magazine’s fashion spreads and also to monitor catwalk looks during fashion weeks (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010; Chang & Jai, 2015). Replicating everything would perhaps be inefficient, it is however more important to react after hearing consumer’s preferences (Ibid).

### 2.1.2 Slow fashion

Slow fashion does also have its origin in the slow food movement, which was furthermore a counter reaction to fast food. People began demanding more quality, not only taking taste into consideration but also environmental factors such as having a pleasantly calm time when enjoying a home cooked meal (Fletcher, 2007; Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013). Holt (2009) considers slow fashion to be the exact opposite to fast fashion (in Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013), whereas Fletcher (2010), known as the leading scholar within the slow fashion research, argues differently. Letting the name (slow) define the notion (slow fashion) is perhaps the most convenient thing to do, though that is not all there is to it (Ibid). She continues to describe how slow fashion, and/or slow culture as she expresses, could be looked upon as a democratization of fashion, not because it is more accessible to a wider range of people, but because it is offering them more control over- and greater insight into technologies and institutions active in today’s society (Fletcher, 2010).

Slow fashion is not solely about slowing down the pace within fashion; instead it is focusing on trying to construct a more sustainable sphere throughout the process, i.e. from design to purchase (Fletcher, 2008; Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013; Fletcher, 2010). It is, more specifically, about; (1) Valuing local resources and economies, (2) Always being transparent
throughout the production and (3) designing garments that are meant to last for a longer period of time (Clark, 2008; Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013).

### 2.2 Literature themes

#### 2.2.1 Fashion discourses

Thompson and Haytko (1997) describe how consumers construct various meanings through contradicting interpretations when analysing fashion. Consumers are, with that said, using fashion discourses to continuously displace the fashion phenomenon with changing interpretations. Fashion discourses allow individuals to debate fashion within both a broader perspective such as a consumer culture context, as well as arguing amongst each other on an individual level according to Murray (2002). This has furthermore allowed consumers a greater part within the meaning making transfer as they are according to Thompson and Haytko (1997) and Murray (2002) not only receivers trying to make sense out of what has been presented to them, they are instead also responding to the signs and therefore constructing a dialogue. The meaning transfer model, constructed by McCracken (1986), is described as a one way meaning movement, where individuals create meaning when discerning associations to products that in turn leads to consumption. Consumers are, through the model, portrayed as rather passive beings solely interpreting what is being given to them. Instead, both Thompson and Haytko (1997) and Murray (2002) describe how consumers actively seek alternative interpretations through multiple discourses.

Power structures are, however, important to acknowledge within this discussion, as there are reasons to believe that they are controlling the free choice of interpretation. Even though people are in fact actively seeking alternative outcomes, they are still only presented with options that have been chosen by dominant institutions within society, i.e. they are steered in a certain direction (Agger, 1991). It is consequently difficult (or even impossible) to deviate from structural norms, due to everything being a result of constructions, which is why it is important to understand and acknowledge these hegemonic structures when analysing informant’s thoughts and perceptions (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016).

#### 2.2.2 The critical process

A critical process will according to Marion (2006) benefit from renewal, i.e. always seeking to find innovative critical arguments to question the current situation. He furthermore argues
that criticism regarding marketing ideology is either being overlooked or heard and co-opted. It is perceived as difficult to criticize traditional marketing, which relies on socially accepted economic theories that are referred to when judging market economies. These theories have been tested over time and are accepted until proved otherwise, thus creating an uncertain environment for marketing practitioners to operate within even though they perhaps are unaware of their own capability for critical innovation (Marion, 2006).

Heath & Heath (2008) describes how marketers are according to many consumers an extension of the company, i.e. they are there to serve- and to help the industries make money. Marketing practitioners are accordingly there to manipulate consumers into believing there is a need for consumption, when there is in fact none. Heath & Heath’s (2008) study found that most consumers (within their study) solely perceived marketing as something negative even though marketing usually claimed to be customer centered. However, without criticism there would be no displacement according to Marion (2006) and no change would therefore occur. Instead, he describes how criticism allows consumers to have a voice and express their thoughts about the fashion industry and marketing ideology so that these instances in turn can evolve accordingly.

2.2.3 Categorization
Fashion facilitates by many means a possibility to perform outside given identity according to Murray (2002). Social constructions are, with that said, easier to forgo as individuals are free to choose their own, unique visual appearance, which also mediates something externally (Ibid). Markkula et al. (2011) are describing this emancipation as self-government where individuals are able to take charge and create themselves out of their individual preferences. These preferences are of dynamic character, which therefore enables a transformation where individuals are free to perform various characters at all time and thus ignore social constructions in that sense. Consumption is a way of constructing an idea of identity and it is defined and redefined based on perceived contrasts to others according to Thompson & Haytko (1997).

Even though fashion does enable individuals to act outside societal norms, they rarely do, as it is close to impossible to forgo social constructions (Markkula et al., 2011). Trends are not only guidelines, they are also informing people what- or what not to wear and therefore create right and wrongs (Ibid). A normalization of this kind excludes alternative approaches and is
instead constructing two dichotomous options for people to choose from as described by both Markkula et al. (2011) and Cooper (1989). These aggregated representations are constantly reproduced through recurring reconstructions and constructions that in turn legitimize a norm (normalization). Marion (2006) describes how everything appear to have meaning solely because society is constructing it accordingly, which is also forcing other individuals to act according to these structures.

2.2.4 Market governance mechanism

The market has an influential role regarding consumer choice and preferences. There is an ongoing attempt to shape and frame consumers into certain consumption behaviours according to Moisander, Markkula & Eräranta (2010), which is also known as “sign domination” (Thompson & Haytko, 1997; Murray, 2002). Foucault (1983 in Moisander, Markkula & Eräranta, 2010) and Markkula et al. (2011) describes how marketing is a technique where the market will try and guide and shape consumers, also referred to as a ‘practice of government’. Government is within this scenario referred to as influential auctions, including mobilizing through segmentation, which can gear consumers in desired direction, that in turn will generate economic growth (Foucault, 1983 & Miller & Rose, 1997 in Moisander, Markkula & Eräranta, 2010). The governmental process does not involve pressuring consumers into acting in a certain way and/or demanding specific attributes, it is more about creating active consumers that in turn will govern themselves, i.e. self government as described within Moisander, Markkula & Eräranta’s (2010) and Markkula et al’s (2011) articles. Fast fashion is one example where marketing strategies are subtly forcing consumers to return and continuously consume due to poor qualities (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010; McNeill & Moore, 2015).

Marketing government is as previously mentioned a powerful authority, that is continuously trying to convey a particular truth for consumers to desire. It is consequently difficult to legitimate the free choices of consumers as described in “sign experimentation” (Thompson & Haytko, 1997; Murray, 2002) because they are constantly constructed into acting according to market preferences (Moisander, Markkula & Eräranta, 2010).

2.2.5 Theme summary

These articles are relevant as they acknowledge how categories do exist everywhere, i.e. not only within the fashion industry. Striving towards normalization, as mentioned in Markkula et al’s (2011) article, is vivid all over, urging society to construct dichotomous categories in
order to avoid chaos and uncertainty (Cooper, 1989). Normalization is used to construct right
and wrongs, thus enabling individuals to act according to norms (Markkula et al, 2011). Even
though the classification (i.e. right and wrong) is not always apparent, e.g. regarding fast- and
slow fashion (two categories), there are still characteristics within them that in many cases are
more preferable than others. Categories are with that said not always of obvious dichotomous
character, instead they appear more subtle and complex and that is when further examination
perhaps should be executed in order to reveal the reasons behind their existence (Marion,
2006).

Fashion discourses could be used as an investigation tool, allowing individuals to discuss the
categories and how they perceive them, both at a personal level and a macro-level, i.e. how it
facilitates a reproduction of constructed norms. Fashion discourses could also be understood
as what the fashion industry is trying to convey when sending out a certain message, which in
this case is dividing fashion into categories. There are most certainly reasons behind this
strategy, even though the reasons are quite subtle. Fashion discourses should be looked upon
as hegemonic, as they are in many ways controlling the debate climate within the industry,
without anyone questioning it. As mentioned in Marion’s article (2006), criticism is many
times difficult to perform when targeting traditional frameworks. Categories are traditional
according to Firat & Venkatesh (1995) and vivid within modern theory, which in turn makes
it difficult to forgo. However, critical processes, including criticising fashion categories and
the hegemonic market and its influence, should be encouraged if the industry wishes to
evolve.

2.3 Theoretical framework
All theories mentioned in this section will serve as foundation for deconstructionism and its
theory of undecidable, which will function as the central theory within this study. Prior
theories, such as postmodernism and poststructuralism are relevant due to their overall
perspectives, whereas deconstructionism represents specific parts within those, which will be
elaborated in this next section and furthermore be used within the analysis as the theoretical
framework.

2.3.1 Modernism & Postmodernism
Postmodernism is known as a philosophical- and cultural movement that was partly
established as a counter reaction against modernism (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995). Instabilities
and chaos are two of many foundational aspects involved within postmodernism, where culture, language and symbolic meanings also play a significant part. Modernism on the other hand is more focused on science and economics among other things, i.e. institutions that instead reproduces stability and distinct rules (Ibid).

Postmodern theory is founded on dynamic assumptions, which in turn makes it impossible to clearly define (Agger, 1991). Positivistic definitions, historical explanations and categorizations are not relevant according to postmodernists, as those “defined truths” are time-bound constructions designed by society (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995; Agger, 1991). Postmodernism opposes social sciences that choose to advocate general laws due to their marginalized view upon social constructions and context depended situations. Instead, they acknowledge how individuals are subjects acting differently in various situations due to many reasons and can therefore not form any general explanation to why their actions occur (Agger, 1991).

While modernists believe in a distinct line between right and wrong, thus constructing categories that are more or less desirable, postmodernists do instead acknowledge how multiple truths can exist (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995). These are generated from narratives and discourses where individuals are free to resonate around topics and furthermore create alternative outcomes that together can form a reasonable explanation, however not a single truth (Ibid).

2.3.1.1 Liberatory Postmodernism
Postmodernism was according to Firat and Venkatesh (1995) not to be viewed as a counter reaction to modernism, instead it should be known for its further radical development of modernism. Liberatory postmodernism however was used as a continuation of postmodernism theory where they saw the liberating potential within discourses and narratives. These potentials are however not completely possible to re-enact in this particular time, due to the influential hegemonic market, which is a modern institution incorporated with traditional modernistic values (Firat and Venkatesh, 1995).

2.3.2 Poststructuralism
Structuralism first established the importance of language and how it can be used as a system of meaning production (de Saussure, 1960 in Agger, 1991; Radford & Radford, 2005).
Assembling small pieces of words that alone have minor relevance, will furthermore create meaning as parts come together and form a structure of language. Structure has primary focus within structuralism as it draws attention to language as a scientific phenomenon (Ibid). Meaning is accordingly not derived through experiences, but rather from differences and patterns within our language. Words construct various meanings depending on what context they are vivid within and also in relation to other words (Radford & Radford, 2005).

Poststructuralism continues to elaborate on the thoughts of structuralism, however questioning the scientific belief (Radford & Radford, 2005). Instead, poststructuralists acknowledge the contextual affect and how it is all solely assumptions where the components are breakable and indeed open to subversion (Ibid).

Poststructuralism, as opposed to critical theory, which adopts a realism paradigm, does instead focus on linguistic relativism. There is accordingly no ‘actual world’; but rather multiple interpretations of the world that are constructed by society (Belk, 2006, p. 51-52). Reality is, with that said, socially constructed according to poststructuralists and affected by culture, economics, power relations, gender relations, class and so forth. Subsequently, no one has the authority to determine the nature of an experience (Thompson & Hirschman, 1995; Thompson, Stern & Arnold, 1998).

Trying to distinguish separate definitions between postmodernism and poststructuralism has proven to be impossible according to Agger (1991). Both concepts rely on dynamic characteristics and it is therefore relatively difficult to state a clear translation of either of them, which is also in line with what they are aiming for, i.e. a rejection of positivistic categories (Ibid). Agger (1991) however chooses to formulate an interpretation of each ism, though according to him it is not to say that these suggestions do overlap each other. The theory of poststructuralism is more concerned with knowledge and language, whereas postmodernism is a philosophy of culture, history and society (Ibid).

As individuals analyse texts differently they will accordingly also contribute to meaning along the process. This process will furthermore continue on forever because there is no general truth to be found. What has already been deconstructed will therefore be deconstructed repeatedly, because “…Science no more than fiction can attain absolute truth…” (Agger, 1991, p. 115).
2.3.3 Deconstructionism

Poststructuralists use deconstruction as a tool when reading and writing in order to keep analysing texts from multiple perspectives (Agger, 1991). Deconstructing a text is an ongoing process within poststructuralism, which was first founded by Jacques Derrida, one of the leading poststructural writers (Ibid). The process does not aim at establishing one final truth, as it is considered impossible to distinguish, however new innovative suggestions and understandings are going to appear when inviting critical contributions (Cooper, 1989; Livingston, 2010; Bates, 2005).

Humans are according to Derrida continuously seeking organized structure due to existential ambivalence, which is why categories are recurring and also proclaimed by structuralism (Cooper, 1989; Livingston, 2010; Bates, 2005). Categories such as good- bad and man- woman are both examples of binary oppositions that are used in texts when trying to construct a hierarchic structure (Cooper, 1989). The deconstruction process involves two phases, more specifically a double movement of overturning the hierarchy within the oppositions and furthermore a metaphorization where the deconstruction turns into a critical process in order to prevent the process from falling back into structure (Ibid). Derrida further argues that the individual term alone should introduce a process where the opposites instead merge into one, what he refers to as undecidable transfer of features. The undecidability process will in turn be the foundation within metaphorization, i.e. a transportation of mutual crossings and implications (Ibid). Language is according to Derrida constructed through undecidable components of marks and sounds, where meaning continuously is introduced within (Ibid).

Derrida does also describe how the undecidable is a precondition for the chance of responsibility (Cooper, 1989). If we were to only contribute to what is already decided by the system (in which we operate), there would be no responsibility in our decisions (Livingston, 2010). Our decisions and contribution would instead be programmed and predetermined by the social system and its rules if there was no undecidability (Bates, 2005).

Difference is based on the thought of binary structures, i.e. a categorization, which involves hierarchic oppositions, e.g. man- woman, gay-straight and so forth (Cooper, 1989). These terms are according to Derrida instead creating a whole where the division is both separating and interconnecting and furthermore describes an endless process of differentiation. The process of difference is not static according to Derrida, which is why he continued developing
the term and transformed its name into *differance* (Ibid). Derrida deconstructed the concept of difference and formulated a modification and chose to instead incorporate an “a” into the written word, i.e. *differance* (Ibid). The French language does not pronounce the letter “a” when speaking, only in writing, which in turn made this particular “a” the signifier for the absence of presence, i.e. what is beyond what we think we know both in time and in space. Differance is according to Derrida a constant movement and is therefore impossible to grasp and define, because “…*differance is neither a word nor a concept*” (Derrida, 1973 in Cooper, 1989, p. 489). Deconstruction is according to Derrida justice, because without it we would not be able to reveal the need for undecidability for all authentic decisions (Bates, 2005).

### 2.3.4 Theoretical summary

Postmodernism will be the philosophical framework permeated throughout this research. It will be referred to as the philosophy of culture, history and society, i.e. in line with Agger’s (1991) reasoning. The outcomes are thus to be analysed through a postmodern thinking, where the results are to be looked upon as time- and context dependent. The postmodern philosophy is furthermore relevant as it rejects categorization and its static characteristics, which is one of the focal interests within this study. Categorizing is according to postmodernism not a realistic reflection of reality, nor is science (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995; Agger, 1991). They exist due to continuous reproduction, though it is perhaps difficult to deviate from assigned categories because of their normative character and few people and/or institutions dare to be the whistle blowers, i.e. encourage change, as it is unfamiliar auctions.

What we know about everything is according to poststructuralism only constructions of knowledge through linguistics (Belk, 2006, p. 51-52; Agger, 1991). In order to understand it through a different angle, we need to deconstruct knowledge repeatedly and furthermore accept how it is all context- and time dependent (Agger, 1991). This is accordingly highly relevant within present research as it will investigate individual’s thoughts and assumptions about categorization through their choice of words. What people say does not always reflect their final opinion due to the influential power of others. The assumptions will most likely transform during the conversations, as alternative opinions appears that in turn will contribute to a deconstruction and reconstruction of knowledge (Cooper, 1989; Livingston, 2010; Bates, 2005).
Previously described philosophy and theory has in many aspects influenced the so-called deconstructionism. This theory will furthermore serve as the central theory within this research and function as the foundation when analysing data. A deconstruction of the matter, as mentioned by Derrida (Cooper, 1989; Livingston, 2010; Bates, 2005) and also within poststructuralism and deconstructionism (Agger, 1991), is a useful perspective when trying to convey alternative reasoning. Deconstructing is also important according to Agger (1991) when it comes to revealing censored issues that are suppressed by science, i.e. trying to uncover underlying explanations. Derrida furthermore describes how there is a double movement that has to happen within the process of deconstruction (Cooper, 1989). First, there is a need for overturning the hierarchy between the categories, which can only be realized within this study if we first begin to talk about the current fashion division, i.e. through a fashion discourse. Secondly, a critical process will be engaged in order for the informants to debate around the subject, where the goal is to not reproduce prior structure, and instead construct diffusion and undecidability. Through this an analysis of the two categories can be made, in order to find if they in fact are each others opposite, or if they could be merged into one undecidable transfer of features (Cooper, 1989).

Finally, this study is acknowledging the limitations of categories, as do postmodernism, poststructuralism and deconstructionism, which in turn create a valid reason to investigate the categories within fashion (fast- and slow fashion) further. The outcome will however not present any general truth, as it is an interpretivistic study, though it can be used when discovering faults and through those instead reconstruct new knowledge.
3.0 Research design

This chapter will guide the reader through the practical parts within present study. An interpretivistic approach has been chosen, which is thoroughly explained within the first section. A description of focus group interviews will thereafter be presented, followed by an introduction to Autodriving as a visual research tool. Thematic analysis will be used as the analytical tool when interpreting contributing thoughts from the focus group informants. Source critical considerations and ethical reflections will finally be examined in order to provide transparency throughout the study.

3.1 Research approach

Present research will be conducted with a contextual awareness, not aiming at locating any general attitudes, because opinions tend to change over time, which is why similar results wont be achieved repeatedly (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016). An interpretative approach is therefore adopted where a debate will be initiated around the topic in order to analyse multiple thoughts regarding categorization within fashion. This will in turn facilitate the analysing phase where multiple thoughts have the ability to generate more categories or even to eliminate them all (Ibid).

Interpretive research opposes explanations that rely on natural science, which is why this outlook will be apparent throughout present research, due to its social construction awareness and how this shape among other things peoples attitudes (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). The outcome of this research will not be generalizable, nor is that the aim, but will instead be of relevant matter for other researchers when trying to conduct similar and/or further research (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016). Perceptions and thoughts will vary and change over time, which is why present research is aware of that no single truth will ever be established. The outcome is instead understood as context dependent (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). This study will furthermore be conducted with qualitative techniques in order to grasp the participant’s perspective without involving prior assumptions (Ibid). The deduction process acknowledges how theory is the primary source of knowledge, which is not applicable reasoning within present study. Instead, observations, and in this case focus group interviews, will be held in order to produce new information regarding the topic, more known as an inductive process (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016).
The research will be conducted with constructionism as its ontological foundation, i.e. throughout be aware that no results are generalizable due to socially constructed norms through language and discourses (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016). Poststructuralism will serve as the epistemological approach, which is a more extreme version of postmodernism in terms of rejecting positivistic studies and their exclusion of multiple interpretations (Ibid). Poststructuralism uses deconstructions in order to find alternative outcomes through deviation in familiar behaviour (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016; Cooper, 1989; Livingston, 2010; Bates, 2005), which is accordingly what this research is trying to achieve, i.e. deviations in order to distinguish alternative results.

3.2 Data collection method

3.2.1 Focus group interviews

This study is interested in investigating perceptions and attitudes amongst consumers, which is a rather dynamic and unpredictable position. As mentioned previously, change and development will not occur unless a topic is brought up for discussion, therefore were focus group discussions selected as the data collection method for present research (Puchta & Potter, 2004 in Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016). Ones perceptions have the potential to change when hearing alternative reasoning that is perhaps more appealing in the specific context and opinions can thereafter begin to deviate from previous thoughts. A discussion will in other words facilitate a new construction of knowledge and furthermore acknowledge how everything is in fact socially constructed and reproduced continuously (Ibid).

Focus group interviews, also known as focus group discussions, are used when involving a group of people into a discussion regarding a specific topic. It is usually conducted when trying to examine consumer attitudes, perceptions, preferences, needs, choices and behaviour overall, as it allows people to argue for their belief and also portrays how others can influence their opinions (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2014 in Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016). An open discussion can set off alternative reasoning to prior beliefs, and furthermore overturn the gap between actions and words (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016). It is however important to not solely bring attention to what is being said about the topic, but also to acknowledge the participant’s body language, their emotions, tensions and perhaps if any conflicts occur (Ibid). Another factor to bear in mind is how individuals understand things differently, which is also
why they tend to construct and reproduce differential narratives around the subject (Puchta & Potter, 2004 in Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016). A focus group interview is more interested in distinguishing group dynamics rather than seeking individual opinions, and how they are able to construct new thoughts built on others’ contribution (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016).

A focus group interview should involve approximately two to ten people (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016), whereas this study managed to gather seven people for each session. The number of participants are sufficient due to three main reasons; (1) Seven people are enough to create a discussion, (2) the observer will still be able to keep up with the debate climate and finally (3) the discussion will most likely generate enough data for the analysis (Ibid). The informants were divided into two different groups and the interviews were conducted on two separate occasions.

3.2.2 Autodriving and open-ended questions

Heisley and Levy (1991) first established Autodriving because they saw the importance of encouraging diversified layers of feelings through stimulating introspection (Belk, 2006). Through visual research, using Autodriving as primary tool, the informants will be exposed to photographs and in turn interpret what is being exposed to them. Autodriving is allowing the participants to engage more actively in the discussion as they are challenged to express whatever comes to their mind when looking at the picture. In that sense, the informants will join the observer in the interpretation phase, perhaps making them feel much more involved in the overall process (Heisley & Levy, 1991). The Autodriving method is also useful as it allows the participants not only to react on what is being presented to them, but also to reflect on their everyday realities in relation to the photography. In other words, the photograph will facilitate a deeper reflection amongst the participants and perhaps also a more dynamic discussion and interpretation (Ibid).

Open-ended questions were chosen as a complement to Autodriving in order to minimize further reproduction of categorizations and also to generate more contributing thoughts (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016). By not giving the informants a selection of words and/ or scenarios to rate and grade, a predetermined hierarchical order between different categories were to be avoided, or at least minimized. Instead, informants were given a free range of word selections to choose from when explaining their thoughts about the various questions. Starting sentences that they were supposed to end and/ or giving them a few words to sort could have
limited their ability to elaborate on the topic. The researcher was accordingly not meant to reproduce categories, it was instead meant for the informants to acknowledge these by themselves or at least see if they were at all apparent to them (Ibid).

3.2.2.1 Conducting the focus group interviews

Participants were found through social media, primarily Facebook, which was useful as people began sharing the information, thus creating a snowball effect, which caused for a word of mouth and in turn a broader spread (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016). Informants were mainly chosen because of their fashion interest, as they were accordingly more likely to understand the implications of fast- and slow fashion (Appendix D; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016).

Twenty people were asked to participate, taken into consideration that a minimum of 6 people had to accept the request (i.e. 3 people in each group) in order to create a discussion (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016), which therefore allowed a seventy percent fall off. Fourteen informants, between the ages of 20-30, did furthermore agree to participate in the study (Appendix D). All informants were involved in scheduling a date, time and location most suitable for them in which the interviews were to occur. The interviews lasted between one to two hours depending on the commitment level. After that it slowly decreased and no further material of relevance was collected (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016). All participants were fluent in Swedish, which is why this was chosen as the interview language. This in turn enabled them to express themselves in an unforced way, as everyone was familiar to the terminology (Ibid). The interviewees were contacted and reminded via text messages one day before the interviews, in order to ensure their presence the next day (Ibid).

The open-ended questions were divided into four different themes, only noticeable to the researcher within the interview guide (Appendix A), in order to grasp the outcome more easily. The constructed themes were: (1) Fashion characteristics, (2) The hegemonic market, (3) Fashion categories and (4) Fast- and slow fashion. The questions and/ or pictures were then positioned within each of these themes (Appendix A and Appendix C).

The focus group interviews began with an introduction of the researcher and a brief summary of the research topic (Appendix A), without telling too much which instead could have
inhibited the forthcoming reasoning. All interviews were recorded via a computer, and the participants were notified about this before the interviews began. The researcher made sure everyone felt comfortable with being recorded, however also ensured that all transcription would be anonymous and that no real names would ever occur in the study. The informants were furthermore encouraged to introduce themselves to each other so that they in turn felt comfortable in the setting. The discussion did thereafter proceed more smoothly as they had already begun talking (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016). The Autodriving began with showing the informants pictures of various companies and brands, as shown in Appendix C and Appendix B. They were furthermore encouraged to talk about the pictures, so that thoughts and perceptions could be developed. Next were open-ended questions applied, followed by Autodriving once again in order to summarize the interview and also to see if different thoughts had appeared that perhaps had changed during the discussion (Heisley & Levy, 1991).

The researcher chose not to take any notes throughout the interviews in order to assure no neglecting of surrounding indicators, such as body language and the debate climate overall (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016). The recorded data were instead transcribed afterwards, and thereafter thematically structured in order to distinguish potential emerged themes (Ibid).

### 3.3 Data analysis

#### 3.3.1 Thematic analysis

A thematic structured report will summarize the focus group interviews, where the themes portray recurrent thoughts and ideas generated from the informants (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016). The data was analysed both during the interviews, however not involving any written notes until afterwards, and after the interviews in different stages. Critical reflections made by the informants during the interviews that were considered relevant for the study were written down as side notes right after the discussions. Taking notes during the interviews was avoided in order to not neglect any surrounding aspects throughout the discussions, such as body language and/or suppression techniques (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016).

Themes can be identified before, during and after the analysis according to Braun and Clarke (2006). This research identified four themes prior to the interviews, which were furthermore
also used within the analysis as they came to reflect the content of the discussions. Some modifications were however made, one being a removal of one of the pre-established themes. It is important to take into consideration that the pre-determined themes were solely constructed as a tool for the researcher during the interviews. Their future appearance in the analysis was not pre-determined, solely a result of the focus group discussions.

The analysis sought to distinguish any potential themes that were mentioned by multiple informants and furthermore recurred throughout the interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Notes gathered from the interviews together with the transcribed data was accordingly analysed in order to identify potential themes. The process began with a transcription of the recorded data, consisting of approximately four hours of audio material, which furthermore resulted in 77 pages of written transcription (Appendix F). These were then read through multiple times in order to get familiar with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thereafter began the interpretations, where three themes emerged; (1) The hegemonic market and evolution of fashion (including four subthemes; (1) Ever-changing trends, (2) Environmentally conscious ambivalence, (3) Age determines demand (4) Technological development and social movement), (2) Fashion categories and finally (3) Fast- and slow fashion (Appendix E).

### 3.4 Source critical considerations

Trustworthiness within a qualitative research is evaluated through four criteria that explain the importance of transferability, dependability, credibility and finally conformability (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Four aspects of trustworthiness</th>
<th>How to ensure trustworthiness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transferability</strong> – Provide a connection between prior research and current one, where similarities are declared and presented.</td>
<td>This study has taken prior research (McCracken, 1986; Thompson &amp; Haytko, 1997; Murray, 2002) into consideration and furthermore constructed a continuation of their reasoning. Murray’s (2002) interpretations regarding sign experimentation and sign domination is also referred to in the analysis within this research, putting extra emphasis on sign domination as it plays a central role throughout the study. The informants were assured to hold a fashion interest (as described in 3.2.2.1 conducting the focus group interviews) in order to contribute and discuss different fashion references that also occurred within prior research.</td>
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research. Limitations are however acknowledged since the research is solely examining fashion and is therefore neglecting other institutional organizations that are most likely affected by hegemonic structures.

**Dependability** – Refers to the researcher’s responsibility to be transparent throughout the research process so that the readers can follow each step.

All collected data and information has been recorded and transcribed (Appendix F) in order to provide transparency for both readers, participants and finally for future researchers that are interested in conducting a similar research. A reconstruction of the study can be performed, due to a detailed research design explanation where all procedures are thoroughly explained, which is also why dependability is established.

**Credibility** – Ensure relevant links between the collected data and discerned themes. Will the outcome of the interviews be adequate to the research?

The data is sufficient to a certain degree, as it is recognized that no empirical contribution will ever generate enough information to establish one general truth. Thus aiming at investigating the theory of *undecidable* constructed by Derrida (Cooper, 1989) and if it is applicable within a fashion discourse is limited due to social construction- and contextual awareness (Agger, 1991), i.e. similar studies will most likely vary as perceptions and thoughts tend to change over time (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). The analysis does however provide distinct links between data and discerned themes and therefore conforms the credibility of the study. Future research may detect similar themes, as they appeared relatively accessible throughout the discussions.

The small sample of fourteen participants will not produce any general truths, which is however not desired when conducting an interpretivistic research (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988).

**Conformability** – Ensured through distinct linkages between findings, interpretations and data that in turn easily can be comprehended by others.

Interpretations were found within the fashion discourses where multiple reasoning’s were distinguished and invited without any contribution made by the researcher. These were furthermore analysed taking previous research and deconstructionism (Cooper, 1989; Livingston, 2010; Bates, 2005) into consideration, where similarities and/or differences were examined and explained in the analysis.

| Table 1: Assessing the trustworthiness of qualitative research through four criteria, based on Eriksson & Kovalainen (2016). |  |
3.5 Ethical reflection

Ethical issues are important to address, especially within qualitative research as individual’s private thoughts- and life are investigated. There is therefore a complexity revolved around the ethical issues that will be examined within this section (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005).

The informants were well informed far in advance about the intentions of the study and why it was conducted, this so that they had time to reflect upon their decisions to participate and felt comfortable with the topic of discussion (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005). All interviews were recorded, which was brought to their attention prior to the interviews as well (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016). However, it was clearly stated that all interviews and transcriptions were to be kept from public usage and solely be in the hands of the researcher, i.e. the ethical issue regarding anonymity was ensured (Ibid). Real names and/ or other characteristics when referring to their quotations were furthermore replaced with pseudonyms (Appendix D) within the analysis, as that could have affected the anonymity negatively (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016).

Even though focus group interviews are supposed to invite all opinions and furthermore create a welcoming atmosphere where all individuals feel as if their thoughts matter, there are still those who are marginalized in these situations. Minority groups and/ or people that are not comfortable within these structured environments are more likely to be supressed by those of opposite character, which is necessary to acknowledge within the data analysis, i.e. the debate climate overall (Carey & Asbury, 2012 in Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016). The researcher is therefore not solely supposed to analyse the actual transcribed data, but also the overall situation including body language, conflicts, emotions and so forth (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2014 in Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016).
4.0 Findings & Analysis

This chapter will examine and analyse the main findings from the empirical study, which has furthermore resulted in a theme- and subtheme acknowledgement. Three themes were kept from the interview guide: (1) The hegemonic market and evolution of fashion (including four subthemes), (2) Fashion categories and (3) Fast- and slow fashion. The findings have been analysed using the literature review, including both previous research and theoretical framework, as the foundational knowledge within the area.

4.1 Thematic approach

After having held two focus group interviews, a transcription of the audio recordings was conducted in order to once again go through the material and furthermore create written content that would serve as the foundational contribution for the analysis process. All transcribing was conducted in Swedish in order to avoid personal interpretations when translating in the initial phase. The analysis was accordingly done in Swedish initially and furthermore translated when the potential themes emerged. The transcribed data consisted of approximately four hours of audio recordings, which were thereafter transformed into 77 single-spaced A4 pages of written data (Appendix F).

The focus group interviews, or what could also be referred to as the fashion discourses (Thompson and Haytko, 1997; Murray, 2002), were able to distinguish three themes within the area of present research. An extract from the thematic structured report (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016) can be found in Appendix E, where the informant’s thoughts and perceptions were compared and thereafter analysed in order to distinguish potential themes. These were furthermore the same themes used as foundation for the interview format (Appendix A), excluding the fashion characteristic theme. That theme was solely constructed in order to overview how consumers use characteristics before they categorize, i.e. how the characteristics correlated with the categories and if there were any connections between their reasoning. It was not predetermined that the themes were to be used further on in the analysis, however after have done minor modifications, such as removing one theme and adding multiple subthemes, they all appeared relevant as part of the
Finally, no suppression techniques were ever practiced during the discussions; instead did all informants act respectfully towards each other.

4.2 The hegemonic market and evolution of fashion

4.2.1 Ever-changing trends

"Fashion is also fast, new trend every season" - Bella

"And there is something new everyday, previously was it a more distinct trend that you followed…" - Carl

“I believe it is much more throwaway nowadays" - Dan

Following trends was more historically applicable according to one respondent, where we bought clothes continuously and therefore also threw away a lot more garments, i.e. a throwaway system. Other informants however felt as if the daily replaceable garments was more applicable in our time. Following trends has been relevant for many years now, however what separates now from then is how we consume clothes. Before, did we consume less frequently, which has come to increase a lot within the last couple of years up until now, according to multiple informants. Historical trends were more long lasting, unlike today’s trends that can change over night. This is also due to many new brands entering marketing and mass production, which in turn diffuses the clear guidelines in between trends and therefore causes for consumers to consume more and more frequently.

4.2.2 Environmentally conscious ambivalence

"But that is how it is right now right? I mean, environmentally conscious is a niche for people who can afford it?" - Gill

Consumers are according to one informant beginning to engage more in environmental aspects when consuming fashion, which is a rather new phenomenon, but accordingly extremely important as it is our responsibility to protect our planet. It is therefore becoming more and more trendy to consume classic pieces that will last longer, and in turn cause for a decrease of consumption. Another informant however argued how this scenario is more applicable in the future. The sustainability concept is vivid and mentioned within most
fashion campaigns nowadays, though these alternatives are, according to the informants, not in fact sustainable and authentic throughout. There are solely environmentally conscious alternatives designed as side collections, next to the original commercial alternatives that instead are not sustainable choices. Even though companies are producing one conscious collection, they are still at the same time mass-producing garments, which is not sustainable according to the informants. “… The key to being sustainable is to not produce too much shit.”- Leo. The commercial alternatives, such as H&M and Zara, will according to one respondent still be active in the future, though there will be more sustainable options, not to say that these will be more expensive choices, but new sustainable materials will instead emerge, potentially and hopefully locally produced.

“…It is strange how we produce an enormous amount of garments and then half of it sells on sale for half the price…”- Leo. According to Leo this is about to change as new brands such as Vetements are emerging with an alternative production strategy. They only produce a limited quantity of each model and consumers are therefore only allowed to order a maximum of ten sweaters, which is rather innovative and conflicting with the minimum principle that is more frequently used by fashion brands today according to Leo.

Many informants described how environmental options are more reachable for the more wealthy part of the population, as sustainable choices are more expensive than other alternatives. It is trendy to shop consciously, which is perhaps not optimal for the future. Instead, the informants hoped that this would become a norm for the future, meaning that environmental awareness would permeate through all fashion brands and their organizations.

Shopping vintage and second hand fashion is however rather popular, according to the informants, and could perhaps become more desirable the more enlightened we become regarding environmental effects. Re-using garments will in turn decrease the demand for more new clothes, and furthermore decrease the demand and supply for throwaway garments. Other informants however argued how these choices are mostly based on trend factors and not on environmental awareness, which is why it is difficult to predict whether or not this is going to last in the long run. What was also brought up recently in the Swedish culture TV programme Kobra (2016) was how Vintage and Second hand consuming is in fact not as conscious as claimed. Instead, tones of garments from the West are shipped to developing countries where they selectively pick out garments that are requested from various fashion
companies. The companies have various demands to match their consumer’s taste, and the clothes that do not fit anyone’s description will instead be to dispose as garbage. This production is outsourced to developing countries due to their cheap labour costs, however the environment is accordingly affected not only because of the dumping of garments, but also because of the shipment back and forth between the countries, which is most certainly affecting the environment with exhaust emissions (Kobra, 2016).

4.2.3 Age determines demand

"But I think age also matters, if I think back at me and my friends from when we went to high school, then it was extremely important to wear designer clothes…” - Dan

Another respondent argued how age is a more relevant factor when discussing consumption patterns. When we are younger we demand more luxurious brands in order to fit into a group. When growing up we instead realize how brands are not that important, and we would never spend thousands of Swedish kronor on a pair of jeans, as we did in our teenage years, according to Dan. Consumers are accordingly, the older they get, less interested in fitting into a group by consuming fashionable clothes, perhaps due to an increased self-awareness.

4.2.4 Technological development and social movement

Fast pace within production and consumer demand will, according to one informant, perhaps force the technological development to engage consumers more. In the future consumers will more likely be able to buy a licence for printing garments and accessories themselves, at home, which in turn will eliminate all transport costs and resources according to Kris. The rapid pace will therefore become much more smooth and perhaps even faster.

Other informants did instead believe that the technological development would facilitate a production of more sustainable materials, which in turn would slow down the processes and construct a slow fashion movement. The hegemonic market is furthermore known for its influential power and its association with economic growth at any stake (Foucault, 1983 & Miller & Rose, 1997 in Moisander, Markkula & Eräranta, 2010). Therefore, it developed fast fashion, which is a complex fashion category supplying among other things trend sensitive garments, usually with a shorter life cycle (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010; McNeill & Moore,
By doing so they forced consumers to return and consume more frequently (Ibid). The industry learned to adapt, which in turn left consumers with more alternatives according to Ann. Consumption has according to the informants increased and perhaps reached its peak where consumers construct other ways of reasoning around consumption with one example being following argument:

“…A counter-movement against fast fashion has emerged the last couple of years and we are turning more towards slow fashion.”- Nour

As preferences begin to change, consumers are instead demanding sustainable fashion, or at least they think they are demanding it. How do we know that these preferences are based on consumer choice, i.e. sign experimentation and not on sign domination, i.e. a result of market dominance? (Thompson & Haytko, 1997; Murray, 2002)

Fast fashion was perhaps a strategic decision made by the market because it knew it would face a phase with decreased demand, which is why it in time developed slow fashion as a counter reaction and a response to societal change. Slow fashion is in other words, perhaps not a consumer choice movement, but instead constructed by the market in order for consumers to continue their consumption, albeit in another way, i.e. fewer garments for perhaps a larger amount of money. The consumption wheel can therefore proceed, but in an alternative way, more adjusted to the social movements of today. Consumers are in other words perhaps not only fooled into demanding alternative consumption patterns (Thompson & Haytko, 1997; Murray, 2002), but also into believing that they are the ones behind the slow fashion movement, when it is in fact the hegemonic market that controls the agenda.

4.2.5 Subtheme summary

What is interesting with all of these subthemes is how informants referred to these when trying to explain why consumers demand certain products. Trends, age, technological development and an environmental requirement are accordingly explained as tendencies that are disconnected from the influential market and its power. The informants did not act as if deprived of their autonomy; instead they subtly described being in a position to change unwanted structures, as also mentioned within sign-experimentation (Thompson & Haytko, 1997; Murray, 2002). This is perhaps a successful example of self-government, where the market has not practiced its power in order to pressure consumers into certain consumption
behaviours, instead they have constructed active consumers that control themselves; at least that is what consumers believe (Moisander, Markkula & Eräranta, 2010; Markkula et al., 2011). Self-government does however originate in the market and its demand for self-controlling consumers, though the reason for it is not evident. Has the market formed self-controlling consumers in order to escape constant surveillance? Is it a matter of time and cost, and by creating these consumers, the market in turn saves a lot of those two factors? Whatever the case, the market is still proclaiming consumption as the main priority, and it is difficult to comprehend how self-governed consumers are not in fact forced into these patterns as something constructed by the market as a response to consumer needs (Foucault, 1983 & Miller & Rose, 1997 in Moisander, Markkula & Eräranta, 2010). Perhaps sign domination is a more appropriate reflection of their reasoning, as consumers are neglecting the power of market institutions, and are furthermore fooled into demanding the things they believe are their own preferences (Thompson & Haytko, 1997; Murray, 2002).

Consumers are referring to slow fashion as a social movement that is constructed in order to change the consumption patterns into something sustainable over time. Slow fashion is accordingly preferable, and the only desirable option. It is a category that maintains a positive structure, in order to avoid existential ambivalence as mentioned by Jacques Derrida (Cooper, 1989; Livingston, 2010; Bates, 2005). If fast fashion is destroying our planet, then alternative categories that are of opposite character have to appear so that structure is upheld. At least that is how structuralists are reasoning (Ibid), which corresponds relatively well with the arguments made by informants within present research.

4.3 Fashion categories

“People are categorized through their choice of clothing, right?” - Gill

It is interesting to imagine a world without categories. Somehow it seems very distant and/or perhaps even impossible to grasp. Though if we are to assume that categories as socially constructed, it thereby also implies that once meaning has been constructed it can furthermore also be deconstructed (Cooper, 1989; Livingston, 2010; Bates, 2005), where we are also able to “…create our own” - Dan.

A few informants from the second group discussion argued how fashion categories are in fact
slowly disappearing, therefore allowing individuals that have chosen to forgo categories, to consume without having to be classified as abnormal (Markkula et al, 2011).

“Doesn’t it sometimes feel like fashion exists without categories?”- Jen
“Unisex collections feels quite modern”- Iris

Categories are complex and difficult to deviate from, which is communicated in previous arguments. A unisex collection is according to Iris not a result of categorization, though it appears to be part of a division. There is female, male and unisex, and they are all categories represented within fashion. This furthermore solidifies the complexity of categorization, where we believe that alternative categories are not part of the socially constructed divisions. Nour previously argued that slow fashion is a counter movement created by consumers against fast fashion, which is somehow similar to their reasoning around categorization. Unisex is looked upon as something acceptable, and not part of the categorization process, instead made up by the consumers in order to construct some kind of justice and representation of all individuals.

Fashion without categories “… would allow those that have chosen not to categorize themselves to consume more clothes” according to Esther. Avoiding categories would accordingly open up for the whole mass to consume fashion, though it could also inhibit others that are proclaiming categories. Derrida’s argument regarding consumer ambivalence is vivid within these next reasonings, i.e. consumers need categories in order to establish structure (Cooper, 1989).

“…Those who really need categories would perhaps not shop as much clothes.”- Gill
"You must be a creative person in order to put together outfits” without categories according to Bella.
"You save time with categories as you are able to screen out things”- Ann

There were also informants within the second group that had a hard time picturing society, including the fashion industry, without categories.
“This might be what we are wishfully aiming at, I however do not believe it is possible. I think fashion is all about us wanting to belong to a certain category, or perhaps, above all, not belonging to a category…” - Leo

Either way, there are still categories; those that we want to be included within and those that we do not want to be associated with. The question still remains; who has decided what categories we do want to- and do not want to belong to? Is it an individual choice or is it in fact a result of socially constructed norms?

“Fashion is the ultimate example of how badly we want to belong to a group or not belong to a group, and it is only based on different categories.” - Leo

4.3.1 Theme summary

The informants were accordingly relatively ambivalent regarding the existence of categories. The complexity of fashion categories is furthermore also apparent within their discussions. Even though a removal of categories is considered desirable, there are still those who believe that some people need categories, which in turn makes it impossible to wish for a removal out of compassion for others. Society should, in other words, either take individuals outside norms in to consideration, and thereby remove categories, or care for those who need structure and therefore keep the categories.

Unisex was perceived as a belonging outside the premises of categories, i.e. it was not perceived as something negative. Most likely because it is a category outside constructed norms and it is including rather than excluding. It is also something in between rather than a representation of a binary opposition as explained within the theory of deconstructionism (Cooper, 1989; Livingston, 2010; Bates, 2005), and could for that matter also be a result of a deconstruction process of the categories female and male. Unisex is perhaps a representation of something that was to become an undecidable transfer of features between the concepts of female and male, but instead became something decidable, i.e. with a stated explanation. It is accordingly not only difficult (or perhaps even impossible) to deviate from categorization, but also difficult trying to construct an undecidable (Cooper, 1989; Livingston, 2010; Bates, 2005), as we immediately apply features and a clear definition to new concepts, i.e. construct structure as argued by Derrida (Cooper, 1989).
### 4.4 Fast- and slow fashion

Both fast- and slow fashion triggered immediate reactions, where fast fashion was first subjected to negative associations such as:

“Bad quality and bad for the environment”— Carl  
“… It is not very nice clothes”— Bella  
“I feel a bit sick when hearing the word…”— Gill

Fast fashion was more related to the market and its rapid pace, both according to the informants and descriptions within previous literature (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010; McNeill & Moore, 2015). Slow fashion did instead trigger more descriptive reactions about production processes, such as:

“Everything that is basic, essential ‘ish’, that is slow fashion I believe”— Kris  
“You buy a garment and it is expensive, which makes you want to keep it throughout life. You become more careful when using it when it is an expensive garment…”— Hanna  
“…A garment that is supposed to last during a longer period of time.”— Gill

However, as the discussion evolved, other arguments were developed, where fast fashion was debated through an alternative perspective:

“Fast fashion. In contrary to our previous thoughts, if there is anything positive regarding it, and yes, people, including myself, who cannot afford expensive garments can still be trendy without it costing us a fortune…”— Bella

Fast fashion could be interpreted as a democratic alternative, according to prior quote, meaning most people have the opportunity to consume it. Fletcher (2010) did however describe how slow fashion is the only example of democratized fashion, where everyone is encouraged to engage within, and furthermore neglected the cost issues that apparently were relevant according to the informants.
The first group argued how slow fashion is mostly about consumer responsibility, i.e. how you treat your garments, where you keep them, how often you wash them and so forth. It is in contrary described as a sustainable process from design to purchase within previous research (Fletcher, 2008; Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013; Fletcher, 2010), however leaving out the consumer involvement and their responsibility when preserving their garments as mentioned by the informants. The design itself is accordingly enough to make the garments last over time according to the literature (Clark, 2008; Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013). Consumers did however refer to their own responsibility as the main criterion when describing slow fashion.

There is an overall noticeable hierarchy within fashion that is perceived as fast- or respectively slow. Fast fashion and slow fashion are, with that said, creating an example of binary oppositions as mentioned by Derrida (Cooper, 1989), where one category is looked upon as more desirable, even though the name and its content are perhaps not thoroughly known.

"But I have never heard of the term slow fashion, so I do not really know how to interpret it" - Hanna

Fast fashion was perceived more or less negatively by the informants, although fast fashion brands were not only associated with negative characteristics, take H&M for example:

"Conscious" - Esther
"…Strong brand and world known. I also think about how they actually fight for moral questions a lot and how they try to produce fair, or maybe not fair trade, but eco-friendly clothes if you could say that?" - Dan

Slow fashion was in contrast mostly perceived as something positive, though the brands considered to belong to that category did not always reflect previous argumentation, take Louis Vuitton for example:

“…A safe card for those who do not understand fashion” - Fred
“It does feel a bit like Chanel, out-dated, you are tired of them but they are still trying to do some sort of comeback with Alicia Vikander and other young people”- Hanna

“Excluding”- Jen

Fashion that is perceived more slow in production and sustainable is preferable, though there are no distinct barriers between the brands that took part in the Autodriving, which in turn could imply difficulties when choosing a so called slow fashion brand. The research indicated that H&M and Zara were two of the brands that were perceived fast (fashion). What separated the two was however how the informants had positive associations to H&M, regarding their conscious collections and it being perceived as a great place to work, whereas Zara was mostly associated with negative aspects. H&M and Zara are, with that said, two fast fashion companies according to the informants, however possessing very different characteristics.

Louis Vuitton and Chanel were instead two of the brands that were referred to as slow fashion brands, though Chanel was perceived much more positive, with characteristics such as ‘iconic’ and ‘luxurious’. Louis Vuitton, on the other hand, was more associated with negative aspects such as ‘boring’, ‘copies’, ‘fake’, ‘excluding’ and ‘out-dated’. Brands, such as COS and Rodebjer ended up somewhere in between H&M and Chanel with attributes gathered from both sides and other factors such as ‘Scandinavian’, ‘positivity’ and ‘strong identity’ also playing a huge part. It was with that said much more difficult for the informants to identify whether or not these “in the middle”- brands belonged to either fast- or slow fashion.

Even though the researcher more or less forced informants to place the brands within either fast- or slow fashion, it was never said that they were not allowed to elaborate outside these recommendations. Most informants acted accordingly, i.e. chose between only fast- and slow fashion. There was however one participant who raised the question regarding other alternatives:

“Is there not any moderate category?”- Hanna

After this was brought up as a suggestion, i.e. an alternative option outside fast- and slow fashion, the informants began to have difficulties legitimizing why two, rather different companies, producing completely different garments and with different target groups both
were considered e.g. fast fashion. This is where they began to compare brands, acknowledging how their reasoning was relative to other aspects.

"Pretty fast" - Kris
"Faster then Rodebjer" - Hanna
"I would however not say it is as fast as Zara" - Iris
"It is fast fashion for slow people" - Leo

By bringing up an alternative reasoning, the informants also began to deconstruct their previous reasoning. It became more difficult to place fashion companies within either fast- or slow fashion, which in turn caused for confusion. However, that could be looked upon as a reasonable reaction when tapping into new ground. There was however not a time where the informants acknowledged the hierarchic structure within fast- and slow fashion, which was one of the criteria’s according to Derrida (Cooper, 1989) in order to begin a critical process. The researcher saw how new arguments created confusion amongst the informants, but it did in turn also generate a foundation to new innovative contribution around the topic. Had the fashion discourse continued, perhaps elaborating on alternative questions, it could have facilitated a more thorough critical process.

### 4.4.1 Theme summary

Fast fashion was accordingly more associated with negative aspects and slow fashion the opposite. There is, with that said, a distinguished internal hierarchy within the two categories when analysing the informants contribution. Fast fashion and slow fashion are looked upon as two dichotomous categories, however difficult to clearly define by informants. Furthermore, fast fashion and slow fashion are rarely referred to when describing fashion brands; instead informants chose other characteristics such as mass production, sustainability, poor quality, expensive and so forth. There were however a few informants to mention fast fashion in the beginning of the focus group interviews as one of the characteristics. Those who had studied fashion and textile at University were the only ones aware of slow fashion and had heard about it before, but not even they chose to mention this category in the beginning of the discussion.

Fast fashion and slow fashion are not completely defined by the informants, as most of them had not heard of slow fashion in particular. No reflection and critical examination had
therefore yet occurred amongst them. The fashion discourses that took place within the focus group interviews instigated by many means a further reflection between them and encouraged them to be attentive to fast- and slow fashion, and perhaps categories overall. A critical process has perhaps begun, where a deconstruction process of the two binary categories has reached its initial phase, i.e. recognition (Cooper, 1989; Livingston, 2010; Bates, 2005).

Fast fashion and slow fashion could be referred to as difference, i.e. hierarchical binary structures (Cooper, 1989). If they were to be merge into a whole, they would represent fashion in total, where there would be an endless process of differentiation within, as mentioned by Derrida (Ibid). He furthermore explained how this is not a static process, and therefore deconstructed difference and announced the term *differance* that instead represents the absence of presence and what is beyond what we think we know. It is impossible to grasp the concept, which was also his intention (Ibid). There is, with that said, a lot beyond what consumers think they know about fast- and slow fashion, which is why a deconstruction process has been relevant.
5.0 Discussion & Critical Reflection

This chapter will critically reflect upon previous findings and analyses. It will furthermore also discuss how and if this research was able to bring about answers to both research questions and the aim. The potential theoretical contribution will be discussed within the final section of present chapter.

5.1 Introduction

Categorizing is difficult to deviate from as it is consolidated within our society and furthermore continuously reproduced (Markkula et al, 2011), and even so within present research. Fast fashion and slow fashion are not relevant, due to their vague barriers, though there are alternative categories emerging through this study and therefore highlighting the importance of a revised segmentation. Consumers considered fast- and slow fashion to be different when being presented in two different scenarios, as explained in the analysis; however, alternative connotations appeared when placed in relation to e.g. brands and various characteristics. Consumers are, with that said, reasoning quite similar regarding categories on the surface, whereas other attributes appeared subtly. Sustainably produced fashion is perhaps more vivid within slow fashion as for now, though technological development could perhaps help facilitate similar productions within fast fashion for the future, which is why these categories need to be deconstructed. Consumers are accordingly not reasoning within the topic, bearing fast- and slow fashion in mind that is, they are instead using characteristics applicable within both categories in order to explain what they perceive, which is why a merge between the two categories might become relevant.

There are examples of other mergers that are relatively successful in a sense that they are actually being adopted and accepted by society, e.g. the Swedish word “hen” (Gustafsson et al, 2015). “Hen” is in a sense an undecidable transfer of features between the terms man and woman and an alternative that instead explains what is beyond normative gender structures and their assigned attributes. This term is not a description of something in between the dichotomous gender categories (i.e. man and woman); instead is it perhaps something Derrida would actually refer to as undecidable, as it represent those whose gender is either unknown
or irrelevant or those who choose to forgo the dichotomous gender categorization (Gustafsson et al, 2015).

The findings within present research are in a way beginning the deconstruction process of fast- and slow fashion, because the topic has been brought up for discussion and the internal hierarchy has been acknowledged (Agger, 1991; Cooper, 1989; Livingston, 2010; Bates, 2005). It is however difficult to provide a distinct answer to both research questions, which is why they are approached with a contextual awareness. The aim of this research was more approachable due to its vague character, which also reflects the overall topic and theoretical framework.

5.2 Theoretical contribution

A critical process regarding fashion categorization has begun as a result of present research. A contribution to theories within poststructuralism, more precisely deconstructionism and its theory of undecidable has therefore also been initiated. Present research has investigated how applicable the theory of undecidable is within fashion practices and if there are reasons to believe that the terms fast- and slow fashion furthermore could be merged into one undecidable transfer of features (Agger, 1991; Cooper, 1989; Livingston, 2010; Bates, 2005). In order to establish that, the overall awareness had to be investigated, meaning that fast- and slow fashion were to be discussed by consumers in order to measure its relevance today. The two terms are not as established as for example man and woman are (when referring to gender categories), they are however vivid and understood as two binary oppositions. As brought up by some informants, there are examples of brands that were impossible to position in either fast- or slow fashion. Some brands were associated with fast fashion production but with sustainable thinking behind it, which is why it was difficult to choose either side. Informants requested an “in the middle” alternative and/ or perhaps an alternative that represented characteristics and features both found in fast- and slow fashion.

Perhaps it should be referred to as "Midway fashion”? Or possibly “Fairish fashion” is a more relevant term, as it does not necessarily place the new alternative in the middle of fast- and slow fashion. A deconstruction process could furthermore lead to a reconstruction process where this could be relevant, which is accordingly what has happened within present study. However, “…The desire is not to arrive at a ‘final word’ but rather to keep discovering ways...
to enrich the conversation” (Thompson, Stern & Arnould, 1998, p. 143), that both postmodernism, poststructuralism and deconstructionism advocates. It is difficult to try and evoke a complete deletion of categories, as they are present all over society, though a disruption between the binary oppositions is perhaps one step in the right direction as it opens up for more dynamic categories to emerge; categories that in turn are more susceptible towards new ideas and in turn opposes exclusion.

Merging binary oppositions and categories is a complex thing to imagine. It would perhaps be difficult to merge two opposing political parties, as they represent different values and beliefs. They might however, to some extent, agree on certain issues; issues that are basic in order for social survival. The concept of man and woman, as mentioned before, was (and to some still is) considered as two opposing categories up until recently. Something in between and/or outside these socially constructed norms, as seen in the concept of “hen”, were historically unthinkable (Gustafsson et al, 2015). It is, with that said, difficult to imagine a merge between opposing categories, though there are examples that have broken the boundaries between what was considered right as opposed to wrong.

Derrida’s theory regarding the undecidable (Agger, 1991; Cooper, 1989; Livingston, 2010; Bates, 2005) is a rather complex theory to comprehend, which is perhaps also the foundational idea behind it, i.e. neither to be completely defined nor understood. It is however difficult to accept the thought of theories not being distinct in character, though that is also the purpose of this whole research, i.e. not trying to reproduce structures. Present thesis has furthermore begun to use a fashion discourse in order to critically examine fast- and slow fashion as two dichotomous categories within fashion.

Fashion is an institution that is constantly developing, which is why two categories describing fashion production and values are found rather limited. It is more legit to provoke change through art, as it is not supposed to be restricted by the overall political climate in society. Therefore could and should boundaries be tested and deconstructed, so that innovative alternatives can emerge that instead have the potential to force a disruption of structure and in turn create instability, or even undecidability.
6.0 Conclusion

The sixth chapter will provide concluding and summarizing aspects returning first to both research questions, and thereafter the overall aim of present research. The answers will reflect upon previous analysis and also the discussion section. “Suggestions for further research” will be the final section within this chapter, where contributing thoughts and ideas are shared in order to help develop the investigated area even more.

6.1 Findings and conclusion

Categories and the constant urge for structure are topics interesting to investigate further, as it is both proclaimed and questioned. Derrida’s theory of undecidable transfer of features was not initially part of the research, instead it was found after having read more about poststructuralism and deconstructionism. The theory made sense within a fast- and slow fashion categorization context and was therefore instantly chosen, after have been found, as the theoretical framework for this study. The overall theme for present research was preferential due to its relevance within a postmodern society. Categories are questioned, developed, improved and perhaps erased continuously, which is why Derrida’s theory of undecidability was adopted in order to examine whether or not fast- and slow fashion could potentially be susceptible to a merge, through two research questions: *How do consumers perceive fashion categorization, more particularly fast- and slow fashion?* and *Why are there solely two categories and what alternatives could- and perhaps should emerge?*

The findings showed that categorization is looked upon as both necessary and unnecessary. Necessary in the sense that it can facilitate people’s consumption choices and unnecessary as it is perceived as relatively out-dated. Society is moving into a consumption era where categorization is not desirable because all individuals have different and dynamic preferences, which means that there is a need for an equal amount of categories as there are humans. Even though categories are perceived as rather out-dated, it is still important, as understood by some of the informants, to divide fashion into fast- and slow fashion. This so that consumers can distinguish poor quality, not environmentally conscious and cheap fashion from sustainable fashion; at least that is what they expressed. However, when going beyond the surface and solely discussing around the terms, then other opinions evolved. The concept of
fast- and slow fashion is, with that said, fairly understood by consumers, but still evokes thoughts and opinions that are conflicting.

Contributing thoughts and perceptions within present research did not correlate with pre-determined definitions, as defined in previous research. Categories are in other words limitative, where hegemonic institutions have set the agenda and furthermore deceive individuals to live thereafter, without ever questioning these structures. This is perhaps why norms are difficult to deviate from because they are deeply internalized and referred to as normal, as opposed to abnormal (Markkula et al, 2011). Raising the question did provide alternative reasonings that furthermore may improve societal development. Not addressing the issues is somehow equal to suppress the existence of other explanations, which subsequently could hinder people from living their life as they prefer.

One category, in this case slow fashion, exists due to the existence of the other perceived opposite category (Cooper, 1989), which is fast fashion. Binary oppositions are not necessarily opposing categories, as they are solely a result of socially constructed norms that are both internalized and normalized (Markkula et al, 2011). Slow fashion has, with that said, been constructed by the market as a counter reaction to fast fashion in order to meet the demand from consumers. Two categories facilitate structure, as it does not provide multiple alternatives for consumers to choose from, which will furthermore also ease companies targeting process.

Alternative categories, deviating from constructed norms, have begun to emerge, though they are still categories and not a renunciation from them. Consumers demand options that are not either or and instead representative of alternatives in between and/ or outside each opposing side. Derrida’s theory of undecidability therefore becomes applicable in their reasonings, even though not mentioned by name.

Returning to the aim of present research, i.e. “…trying to examine whether Derrida’s theory of undecidability is relevant and applicable within fast- and slow fashion and furthermore if the two categories are susceptible to a merge”, it is accordingly categories receptive to both deconstruction and furthermore reconstruction, as are all categories, because they are not clearly defined and mutually understood by consumers. Merging them would instead facilitate a transfer of features, as described by Derrida (Agger, 1991; Cooper, 1989; Livingston, 2010;
Bates, 2005), where a fast fashion brand could perhaps use slow fashion features in order to improve its production. A merge between fast- and slow fashion is therefore possible if we choose to construct an undecidable transfer of features. This research will thus argue that Derrida’s theory of undecidability is relevant and applicable in most institutions, and therefore also within fashion.

Contribution has finally been made within the research field of deconstructionism and more specifically regarding the theory of undecidable by indicating that there is a demand for alternative categories, which is why a deconstruction of the already existing ones need to occur. Even though categories do establish structure, which is important to ambivalent humans according to Derrida (Cooper, 1989), there are relevant reasons to revise the terms fast- and slow fashion as they are both part of the dynamic fashion industry. The deconstruction process has not yet been conducted in its whole, as there is a lack of awareness regarding the hierarchical relationship between fast- and slow fashion amongst consumers. This can therefore not proceed until other researchers choose to continue examining what has been acknowledged within present study.

### 6.2 Suggestions for further research

Derrida’s theory of undecidable transfer of features can be examined within other social institutions, such as political sectors, public sectors, sport institutions and so forth. All institutions would benefit from deconstruction processes, as it allows improved alternatives to emerge.

Similar research could examine differences and/ or similarities between different generations. Perhaps do people within different age groups perceive categorizing differently, which is why it is continuously reproduced? Another suggestion for further research would be investigating what happens over time; will the perception of categories transform in the future? Will categories be more accepted in the future or will a removal of them slowly occur?

A final suggestion would be investigating similar questions however using companies as informants, and thereby invite them to discuss the importance of categories, both in fashion and in society as its whole.
7.0 Limitations of research

Limitations within this study will be covered in this chapter. Alternative strategies and/ or further examination had the potential of generating a different result, which is why this is addressed here, to bring awareness to these limitations.

This research was interested in hearing from people with a fashion interest, which is why age, ethnicity, culture and other background premises were not prioritised. Conducting the same research as a cross-relational study between ages, ethnicities and cultural, could perhaps affect the outcome.

In order to produce a more conformable result, more focus group interviews could have been held. This could also have resulted in a more complex understanding of categorization, which would have generated an alternative analysis.

In depth interviews with companies active in the fashion industry would also have made a valid contribution to this study in order to understand the market and for whom categories are actually beneficial. Giving fashion companies an opportunity to also express their opinions about the division could have further developed the analysis regarding the potential suppressive position against consumer demand and their more and more influential role as active contributors on the market.
References


Appendices

Appendix A. Focus group interview guide

1. Informants and researcher introduce themselves
    - Inform the informants that they are anonymous, i.e. no names will be included in the research
    - They will be recorded
    - There are no right or wrong answers, all contributing thoughts are welcomed

2. A brief introduction of the study and the topic
    - This part will be very brief, in order to prevent predetermine opinions and thoughts

3. Initiate a debate through pictures and open-ended questions

4. Close the debate by summarizing what has been said so that the informants can add and/or remove information that they perceive relevant.

Themes visible solely for the researcher in order to guide the discussions:
(1) Fashion characteristics
(2) The hegemonic market (fashion development)
(3) Fashion categories
(4) Fast- and slow fashion

Fashion characteristics
    Show pictures of H&M, Chanel, Zara, Rodebjer, COS, Acne, Louis Vuitton, Filippa K, Stella McCartney, Pressman, Gina Tricot, one by one (a mixture of Swedish- and international brands, both small and larger, commercial and couture).

    - Explain what comes to your mind when you see this picture.
    *This is where the researcher perhaps will be able to distinguish an overall idea of what these brand’s main characteristics are according to consumers.*

The hegemonic market
    - How would you say that fashion has developed throughout the years?
    - What have fashion consumers demanded in the past and why?
    - What do fashion consumers demand today? Why?
    - What will fashion consumers demand in the future do you believe? Why so?

Fashion categories
    - What fashion categories are vivid within fashion according to you? Mention as many as you can come up with.
    - Do you perceive that they exist? If so, how?
    - Is it important to have these categories according to you? How do you reason regarding their existence?
- What would the alternative be? What is fashion without categories?

**Fast- and slow fashion**

- What is fast fashion according to you?
- What is slow fashion according to you?

If no one can elaborate, explain briefly about the categories and thereafter engage a discussion around the new information.

*After have shown all pictures, the researcher will start over and show all pictures again, one by one asking:*

- Where would you say, e.g. H&M would be most appropriate within; fast- or slow fashion? Explain why!
Appendix B. Company/ Brand criteria table

Following brands were chosen due to their mixture of both Swedish and International origin. They also represent a diversity of commerciality, couture and something in between, which was relevant when comparing to consumer’s thoughts about fast- and slow fashion. In between explains those companies that are neither commercial nor couture. Some companies appeared difficult to define, i.e. commercial and/ or “in between”, however this ambivalence was important and interesting when further investigating consumer perceptions and their ability to define the belonging of the brands.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company/ Brand</th>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>Commercial, Couture or in between</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H&amp;M</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Commercial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chanel</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Couture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zara</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Commercial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rodebjer</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>In between</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COS</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Commercial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acne</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>In between</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louis Vuitton</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Couture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filippa K</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>In between</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stella McCartney</td>
<td>U.K</td>
<td>In between</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dressmann</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>Commercial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gina Tricot</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Commercial</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C. Autodriving pictures

Following pictures were used as Autodriving content, where they were shown one at a time to the informants with a follow-up question. They are referred to their brand names within the transcripts so that the readers can understand what picture is shown at what time. The researcher did however not mention any brand names when conducting the focus group interviews (See Appendix F).
Appendix D. Table of informant data

Focus group informants (1st group)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informant (Pseudonym)</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Interests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ann</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Swede</td>
<td>PR consultant</td>
<td>Fashion, food, writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bella</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Swede</td>
<td>Singer</td>
<td>Fashion, music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carl</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Swede/American</td>
<td>Broadcasting coordinator</td>
<td>Fashion, food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Swede/Greek</td>
<td>Marketing executive</td>
<td>Fashion, friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esther</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Swede</td>
<td>Artist</td>
<td>Fashion, art, music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Swede</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Fashion, party, culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gill</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Swede</td>
<td>Showroom consultant</td>
<td>Fashion, interior, architecture, travelling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Focus group informants (2nd group)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Interests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hanna</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Swede</td>
<td>Visual merchandiser/Interior decorator</td>
<td>Fashion, photography, interior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iris</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Swede/Thai</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Fashion, party, friends, food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jen</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Swede</td>
<td>Project coordinator</td>
<td>Fashion, music, friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kris</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Swede</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Fashion, music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leo</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Swede</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Fashion, art, music, festivals, travelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Swede</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Fashion, friends, flowers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nour</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Swede</td>
<td>Visual merchandiser</td>
<td>Fashion, travelling, interior</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E. Data analysis table

Following table presents an extract of the overall analysis, where the informant’s thoughts and perceptions were compared. The themes did thereafter emerge, when finding similarities and/or differences between their reasoning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informants</th>
<th>The hegemonic market and evolution of fashion</th>
<th>Fashion categories</th>
<th>Fast- and slow fashion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1(^{st}) Focus group interview</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ann</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;You save time with categories as you are able to screen out things&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bella</td>
<td>&quot;Fashion is also fast, new trend every season&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;You must be a creative person in order to put together things&quot; without categories.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carl</td>
<td>&quot;And everyday there is something new, before it was more a distinct trend and you followed it…”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan</td>
<td>“I believe it is much more throwaway now”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esther</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Conscious”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fred</td>
<td></td>
<td>“…A safe card for those who does not understand fashion”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gill</td>
<td></td>
<td>“…Those who really need categories would perhaps not shop as much clothes.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2(^{nd}) Focus group interview</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanna</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;You buy a garment and it is expensive, which causes you to keep it during a lifetime, and you might also use it, you become more careful</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Comment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iris</td>
<td>“Unisex collections do feel quite modern”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jen</td>
<td>“Doesn’t it sometimes feel like fashion exists without categories?”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kris</td>
<td>“Everything that is basic, essential ‘ish’, that is slow fashion I believe”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leo</td>
<td>“Fashion is the ultimate example of how badly we want to belong to a group or not belong to a group, and it is only based on different categories.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nour</td>
<td>“…A counter-movement against fast fashion has emerged the last couple of years and we are turning more towards slow fashion.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F. An extract of transcribed data

Questions that are formulated by the researcher are presented in italics. Brands that are written within parentheses represent the pictures that were included in the Autodriving method (Appendix C). The informants are referred to as R1-R7, which are short for Respondents. These abbreviations were finally replaced with pseudonyms, as shown in Appendix D.

Jag kommer visa bilder för er nu. Vad associerar ni med denna bild?

(H&M)

R1: Jag tänker Asien

R2: Jag tänker massproduktion

R3: Hmm, billigt (skrattar)

Ni får gärna förklara varför Asien?


R2: Ja, också, och jag tänkte mer på såhär klädproduktionen

R1: Ja

R2: Alltså såhär fabriken är där, underbetalda

R1: Jaha

R3: Jag tänkte när du sa så att det är för att det är så tomt, alltså det är jättestort

R1: Jaha, ja

R3: Men det är inga där typ, det ser ju ändå ganska exklusivt ut

R4: Jag tänkte faktiskt bara varumärke, starkt varumärke och att det är världskänt och typ, tänker också på att de kämpar väldigt mycket med såhör moraliska frågor och det försöker ha fair, eller kanske inte fair trade, men kravmärkta kläder om man kan säga så.

På vilket sätt?

R4: Ähm, har de inte någon såhör ekologisk

R5: Conscious
R4: Ja, precis

R3: Men jag tänkte direkt greenwashing när jag hörde, inget så men hur miljömedvetna är de tänker jag? För vad jag har förstått så har mkt av de här kläderna som man lämnar in typ, de har ju insamling av kläder så får man presentkort på trehundra spänn så handlar man för sjuhundra spänn i alla fall, alltså det är ju inte ett hållbart system oavsett vad de försöker få det att framstå som.

R2: Ja alltså, ni vet M.I.A har ju gjort deras såhär, en låt nu som ska såhär, lite såhär PR-grej, den heter typ "Re-use", eller nånting, "Re-wear", och hennes egen quote, för hon är ju väldigt såhär politisk liksom, och insatt och såhär, och hennes egen quote, till såhär som en kommentar till såhär men varför gör du det här för ett företag som såhär ändå har, trots att de vill göra goda saker så har de såhär ganska mycket kritik riktad mot sig.

R5: Fast det är ju svårt som stort företag att kolla på allting

R2: Ja precis, men då sa hon det att såhär, hon bara även om, alltså oavsett om, det H&M gör genererar i såhär, att de får kritik för ngt som de håller på med i sin industri, eller att det är att dom vill vara goda så är det för en god sak

Det statetar något typ?

R2: Ja precis

R1: Mmm

R5: Alltså dom har ju haft mkt, liksom ögon på sig men det är ju för att dom är så pass stora, men jag har ju, min mamma jobbar ju på företaget och gör mkt sådana här spontana, alltså såhär resor till fabriker, där de inte announcar att de ska komma, och det är ju svårt eftersom att H&M inte äger några egna fabriker så är det inte de som kan sätta regler utan dom kan bara ge dom kraven, men att de följs upp, det är liksom svårt att...

Ha full koll?

R5: Ja precis

R1: Men för mig är ändå H&M väldigt positivt laddat, jag tänker positivitet när jag ser den

R4: Jag med

R5: Allt går ju så himla fort men det är ju jätligt genomtänkt alltihop

R4: Jag tänker för att vara ett så stort bolag som de är och i ett liksom, alltså konsumtion överlag är väl inte det mest miljövänliga per se, men att de, för att vara ett så stort bolag och håller på med det de gör så känns det som att de är en av de bättre oavsett vad anledningen är, även om det är rent PR-trick eller om det är så att man faktiskt bryr sig.
R3: Men känslan finns där?

R4: Precis

R2: De är ju ändå såhär bra, jämfört med många andra inom modeindustrin och retail, de försöker ju föra en bra personalpolitik också och är såhär väldigt sammankopplade till fackförbund

R4: Ja, skulle jag typ jämföra, och det här är helt och hållet, jag blajjar bara, men skulle jag typ jämföra med Gina Tricot, så känns ju Gina Tricot lite såhär smutsigare än vad H&M gör, sen vad det beror på oavsett, det kan vara så att de gör samma arbete, det vet jag inte, men H&M har väl också profilerat sig som ett... conscious

R3: De känns mer miljömedvetna

R4: Ja precis

R5: Det måste ju finnas en anledning till att så många drar sig dit och vill jobba där

R4: Ja, för om man tänker H&M för 15 år sen, alltså det var väl inte, man gick väl typ dit, eller jag tänker för mig själv, min mamma tog typ dit mig för att köpa typ tights och linnen, det var typ den associationen jag har med H&M då, dom känns som dom har gjort en helomvändning. Om det är relevant...

_Jag fortsätter att visa en annan bild_

_(Chanel)_

R5: Dyrt

R2: Lyxigt

R3: Trist

(Skratt)

R2: Lite såhär, alla är inte välkomna

R3: Ja

R4: (Skratt) verkligen

R3: Jag känner mig inte välkommen i den där butiken

R1: Man har inte samma relation till det riktigt
R5: Nej

R3: Känns inte lika varmt

R1: Nej

R5: Det känns ändå typ ok än H&M bara för att det är ett dyrt märke även fast de använder typ skinn från farmar som inte alls är bra, så känns det som att det är ok bara för att det är så dyrt.

R2: Ja alltså det känns ju också såhär klassiskt och såhär, alltså ur ett modeperspektiv, så känns det viktigt rent såhär kulturhistoriskt, om man inte tänker på allt annat att det är over priced och allt sånt där.

R4: Jag tänker på att det riktar sig till såhär sofistikerade gamla kvinnor, någon som går i sin Chanel

R2: Det är ikoniskt

R4: Ja, kavaj typ

R3: Jag tänker också på gamla gubbar som har unga tjejer, som inte jag känner mig riktigt så här, som går dit och köper en massa grejer, för att, ja jag...

R5: Gubbar? Jag vet inte om jag kan hålla med om, men ja, vita rika smala personer känner jag

*Varför?*

R5: Nej men, det har ju han typ själv sagt designern

*Karl Lagerfeldt?*

R5: Ja, att han gör liksom bara kläder för typ rika vita smala, och det är typ bara de som har råd med de kläderna

R4: Det låter ju faktiskt inte helt befängt heller, att en stor modeskapare har sagt någonting sådant.

R2: Ja det låter logiskt

R4: Ja, det låter som att det såhär, ja, det vore konstigt om det vore annorlunda

R1: De gräver ju ned plaggen, och så eldar de upp de