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**Rubbish Ritual Performances in the Use and Disposition of Clothing of Rubbish
Value in Southwest Nigeria**

Abayomi Ibrahim Motajo

MSc (Marketing, Strath)

**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Management**

Adam Smith Business School

College of Social Science

University of Glasgow

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Abstract

Extant theorisation following the social lives of consumption objects has yet to answer the question at the durable-rubbish interface of Thompson's (1979; 2017) Rubbish theory. Similarly, extant theorisation on divestment rituals has yet to transcend McCracken's (1986) transfer and reconfiguration of the cultural meanings of consumption objects. This is despite the burgeoning works in both fields theorising the social lives of consumption objects that enter second-hand economies. Fashion objects remain consumption objects whose social life continues to attract significant attention since around the late 1960s (e.g. Winakor, 1969). The fashion industry is one of the world's largest industries with a significant impact on both the environment and society. Fashion contributes significantly to global pollution (Brenot, Chuffart, Coste-Maniere, et al., 2019; Chavero, 2017; Colnago, 2019). The industry's business model is one of "vertical disintegration and global dispersion of successive processes" (Niinimäki et al., 2020, 190). This model runs a linear system on a finite planet (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017). Fashion's unsustainability is further complicated by ultra-fast fashion and throwaway consumption culture (Castellani et al., 2015; Hanson, 1980; Payne & Binotto, 2017; Weber, Lynes, & Young, 2017; Chavero, 2017; Dwyer, 2010; WRAP, 2012, 2017, 2017b; House of Commons, 2019).

The contributions of fashion to the current global climate crisis are necessitating actions like the value redefinition from unwanted to second-hand (Garcia Martin, 2016; Zamani, Sandin, & Peters, 2017) and other efforts to 'fix fashion' in the UK (DEFRA, 2018; House of Commons, 2019). Some UK fashion consumers are responding to calls to adopt reuse. Encouraged and supported by governance institutions and infrastructure, these consumers are diverting used clothing items from landfill by donating them to charity organisations (Bianchi & Birtwistle, 2010; Ha-Brookshire & Hodges, 2009a; Joung & Park-Poaps, 2013; Lee et al., 2013; Prosic-Dvornic, 2022; Shim, 1995; Wai Yee et al., 2016). However, millions of tonnes of the UK's donated used clothing items are shipped to destinations outside the UK without traceability (House of Commons, 2021; WRAP, 2017b), where official trade records about the used clothing market are either missing or inaccurate (Brooks, 2019; Sumo et al., 2023). Moreover, as the epigraph at the beginning of this chapter illustrates, the future lives of used clothing donated to global second-hand economies have yet to receive significant research attention.

To address this disconnect, this study examines the fate of the UK's donated used clothing that is shipped to Nigeria. Theoretically, it answers the unaddressed question of transfer at the durable-rubbish interface of Thompson's (1979; 2017) Rubbish theory, i.e., where do objects in the durable category end up? It also uncovers the ritual dimensions that manifest through the use and disposal of the UK's donated used clothing, which is shipped to Nigeria.

Three rubbish ritual performances are uncovered by following clothing items of rubbish value to their final destinations. These are deodourising, sanctifying and burning. Deodourising expands extant divestment rituals during the reacquisition of used clothing items. Deodourising is enacted to remove public meaning - i.e., the peculiar odour of second-handedness - and add private meanings - i.e., the consumers' preferred fragrance. Deodourising helps them manage their identity and self-image and establish who they are. Sanctifying and burning are two novel divestment ritual dimensions used during the disposition of used clothing. Sanctifying represents a novel divestment ritual dimension enacted to ensure the safe transfer of meanings in used clothing without the detriment of reverse contagion. Sanctifying and burning reveals that previous users are gravely concerned about potential harm coming to them due to strangers accessing their essence that permeates their used possessions. The third novel divestment ritual that the study finds is burning. Although burning unwanted consumer objects is not new, burning used clothing to manage identity and prevent reverse contagion, as the current study finds, is a novel approach. Burning constitutes a divestment ritual with the intention of destroying rather than transferring meaning. Burning thus extends extant theorising on divestment rituals beyond its current theorisation as meaning reconfiguration and transfer. Burning as a ritual performance also answers the unanswered question about the transfer at the durable-rubbish interface of Thompson's rubbish theory. The findings in the current study evidence that the transfer at the durable-rubbish interface of the rubbish theory does occur. As a new permanent clothing disposition pathway, burning also extends extant taxonomy for clothing disposition.

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the places you all occupy and will always remain in my heart; the space therein is limitless and warm.

Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this thesis is the result of my work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Printed Name: Abayomi Ibrahim Motajo

Signature: _____

Chapter 1- Introduction

[T]he sourcing, handling, buying and selling of secondhand objects and materials rather than their subsequent use have drawn the most central attention by scholars. Most works, historical as well as contemporary, stop their analysis at the point of purchase. (Hansen & Le Zotte, 2019, 4 - 5).

1.1 Research Rationale

Extant theorisation following the social lives of consumption objects has yet to answer the question at the durable-rubbish interface of Thompson's (1979; 2017) rubbish theory. Similarly, extant theorisation on divestment rituals has yet to transcend McCracken's (1986) transfer and reconfiguration of the cultural meanings of consumption objects. This is despite the burgeoning works in both fields theorising the social lives of consumption objects that enter second-hand economies. Fashion objects remain consumption objects whose social life continues to attract significant attention, dating back to around the late 1960s (e.g., Winakor, 1969). The fashion industry is one of the world's largest industries with a significant impact on both the environment and society. Fashion contributes significantly to global pollution (Brenot, Chuffart, Coste-Maniere, et al., 2019; Chavero, 2017; Colnago, 2019). Fashion is an industry with both global reach and relevance (Anguelov, 2016). The industry's numerous players and their operations span multiple regions of the globe (cf. Chavero, 2017). One of the challenges of the fashion industry is that its business model involves "vertical disintegration and global dispersion of successive processes" (Niinimäki et al., 2020, p. 190). The problem with this model is that it runs a linear system on a finite planet (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017). This problem is further complicated by ultra-fast fashion and throwaway consumption culture (Castellani et al., 2015; Hanson, 1980; Payne & Binotto, 2017; Weber, Lynes, & Young, 2017; Chavero, 2017; Dwyer, 2010; WRAP, 2012, 2017, 2017b; House of Commons, 2019). According to industry records, over 300,000 tonnes of clothing items are landfilled or incinerated globally (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017; ACS Clothing, 2020). This is in addition to the challenges of extracting and depleting natural resources, which make fashion's current business models unsustainable. Overall, the contributions of fashion to the current global climate crisis necessitate actions such as the ongoing efforts to 'fix fashion' in the UK (DEFRA, 2018; House of Commons, 2019). Through

the redefinition of values from unwanted to second-hand (Garcia Martin, 2016; Zamani, Sandin, & Peters, 2017), some UK fashion consumers are responding to calls to adopt reuse. Encouraged and supported by governance institutions and infrastructure, these consumers are diverting used clothing items from landfill by donating them to charity organisations (Bianchi & Birtwistle, 2010; Ha-Brookshire & Hodges, 2009a; Joung & Park-Poaps, 2013; Lee et al., 2013; Prosic-Dvornic, 2022; Shim, 1995; Wai Yee et al., 2016). However, these donated used clothing items are shipped to destinations outside the UK without traceability (House of Commons, 2021; WRAP, 2017b). For one, official trade records about the used clothing market in most second-hand markets in Africa and elsewhere, where the majority of the UK's donated used clothing ends up, are either missing or inaccurate (Brooks, 2019; Sumo et al., 2023). Moreover, as the epigraph at the beginning of this chapter illustrates, the future lives of used clothing that enters the global second-hand economy have yet to receive significant research attention.

This study thus seeks to understand what happens to the UK's donated used clothing that is shipped to Nigeria. Theoretically, it aims to answer the unaddressed question of transfer at the durable-rubbish interface of Thompson's (1979; 2017) Rubbish theory, i.e., where do objects in the durable category end up? Given that clothing use and disposition are ritualised behaviour, the study also aims to uncover the ritual dimensions that manifest through the use and disposition of the UK's donated used clothing that is shipped to Nigeria.

1.2 Research Context

The fieldwork for the current study was carried out in Nigeria. Nigeria is considered an emerging economy (Enweremadu, 2013; Hawksworth & Chan, 2015; Ndubuisi, 2017). It is Africa's largest economy, with South Africa and Angola ranking second and third, respectively (World Bank, 2019). With an estimated population of over 200 million as of 2019, Nigeria is also one of the World's commodity-reliant Emerging Markets and Developing Economies (EMDEs) in sub-Saharan Africa (World Bank, 2019). The country is also one of the eight countries projected to account for more than half of the global population increase by 2050 (United Nations, 2022). From this standpoint on population and commodity reliance, it is not surprising that Nigeria is one of the preferred destinations for the UK's second-hand clothing (Kannan, 2017; Brooks, 2019). Although the importation of used

clothing is currently banned in Nigeria, the country remains the final destination for the majority of second-hand clothing imported to West Africa (Schatz, 1984; Abimbola, 2012; Brooks & Simon, 2012; Brooks, 2019). Rerouting through neighbouring countries and the lack of trade records (Brooks, 2019) make it even harder to estimate the volume of the UK's used clothing that ends up in Nigeria. More importantly, the knowledge about how these imported used clothing items are used and disposed of at the end of their second purposeful life is significantly missing in the extant literature (Hansen & Le Zotte, 2019).

1.2.1 Brief History of Second-hand Clothing in Nigeria

Studies over the last three decades have shown that trade in second-hand clothing in West Africa has undergone several phases. The first influx of second-hand clothing into Nigeria originally began around the 1940s through the Igbo (or Ibo speaking) ethnic group in the South-eastern part of the country (Abimbola, 2012; Areo & Areo, 2015). Abimbola (2012) narrated how the second-hand clothing trade in Nigeria began in the 1940s through the procurement of ex-military supplies from ships that berthed in Port Harcourt by Igbo traders. Later, used clothing, often referred to as "aid" from developed countries, began flooding Nigerian markets following independence in 1960 and the country's civil war between 1967 and 1970. Much of this came through Okrika, a coastal town and port in present-day Rivers State, southern Nigeria. This is why one of the popular local appellations for second-hand clothing is Okrika (see e.g. Abimbola 2012; Areo & Areo, 2015; Brooks, 2019). The trade later expanded. The expansion meant that these traders not only had to engage in the active importation of used clothing, but they also extended their market to neighbouring West African countries, such as Ghana, Benin, and Togo, around the late 1950s.

The Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970), however, changed all this, as most Igbo traders on expeditions to neighbouring West African countries, such as Benin and Togo, were unable to return home. These traders then decided to establish their trade in their host communities. This made the Igbo people of Nigeria the dominant figures in the second-hand clothing trade along the West African coastal region (Abimbola, 2012). Shortly after this, in the 1970s and 1980s, Nigeria enacted import prohibition laws (Schatz, 1984) banning the importation of used clothing into the country. About the same time, Nigeria's neighbours, namely the Benin Republic, adopted new trade and monetary policies that allowed for easy access

to foreign exchange (e.g., Abimbola, 2012). This move then made the Beninese port of Cotonou a significant hub for the importation of second-hand clothing items from Europe and elsewhere into West Africa. Abimbola (2012) and Brooks (2019) also noted that although most second-hand clothing imports to West Africa from the United Kingdom enter through the port of Cotonou in the Republic of Benin, the majority of these end up in Nigeria. Brooks & Simon (2012) and Brooks (2019) also confirmed that Nigeria is the final destination for a large volume of second-hand clothing imported into West Africa, as noted by Abimbola (2012) and Brooks (2019). These developments implied that second-hand clothing imported into Benin was then illegally re-imported into Nigeria.

The literature on clothing use and disposition in Nigeria is vast. A prominent clothing consumption culture in this literature is the *Aso-ebi* (Tade & Aiyabo, 2014; Ogbechie & Anetor, 2015; Olajire, 2023; Boge, 2023; Nwafor, 2012). *Aso-ebi* refers to a type of family cloth, popularly worn during events and ceremonies in Nigeria, as a fabric of uniform solidarity (Nwafor, 2012, 2013; Bartholomew & Mason, 2020). Being a ritual around dress and dressing, *aso-ebi* rituals combines the individual everyday rituals of grooming, dressing up and making up with collective institutional rituals like those enacted during any social events, national events and civic rites (e.g., Wallendorf & Arnould, 1991; Woods & Tsang, 2013; Rook, 1985; Bonsu & Belk, 2003). Apart from the *aso-ebi*, the literature on clothing in Nigeria also accounts for other dressing cultures and preferences, including a high demand for imported clothing, both used and new (e.g., Folorunso, 2013). This literature also addresses the disposal of used clothing. However, this is primarily treated under the umbrella of solid waste management, along with other household waste. Waste management in Nigeria faces the challenges of inefficient waste management services and infrastructure, exorbitant costs, poor public attitude towards waste management and other logistical constraints (Omole & Alakinde, 2013; Ogunleye & Uzoma, 2019; Sibanda et al., 2017; Ishaq et al., 2023; Ohwofasa & Biose, 2023). As a result, widespread clothing disposal practices involve treating them along with other household waste that ends up in landfills and waterways, with the majority being burned (Adejuwon et al., 2024; Jazat et al., 2022; Ononuju et al., 2021; Ishaq et al., 2023). This is not to discountenance clothing reuse efforts in these countries as available evidence of clothing reuse are found in Nigeria (Adejuwon et al., 2024), Ghana (Kuupole et al., 2024), Kenya

(Odero, 2023) and elsewhere in the Global South (Sonnenberg et al., 2022; Cruz-Cárdenas & del Val Núñez, 2016; Cruz-Cárdenas, González, & del Val Núñez, 2016; Diop & Shaw, 2018; Hernandez-Curry, 2018; Wai Yee, Hassan, & Ramayah, 2016; Weng et al., 2016; Bianchi & Birtwistle, 2012). Despite this vast account, there is yet an equally vast disconnect. As observed earlier, ultra-fast fashion and throwaway cultures in the UK are resulting in millions of bales of donated used clothing being shipped to marketplaces in the Global South without a trace. Despite this, a disconnect exists between what is known about the use and disposition of these consumption objects in the Global South, where they are shipped. Given that all objects depreciate, and considering the durable value of used clothing, there is a research imperative to track these items to their ultimate destination when further social processes recategorise them as unfit for purpose or any use at all. Again, being a highly ritualised behaviour, it is yet imperative to explore the ritual dimensions that manifest during the use and disposition of these clothing items at the end of their purposeful lives in their new destinations.

1.3 Research Aim, Research Questions and Methodological Approach

The study's main aim is to understand what happens to the millions of bales of the UK's donated used clothing that are shipped to Nigeria. In other words, to address the unaddressed transfer at the durable-rubbish interface of Thompson's (1979, 2017) Rubbish theory. The study's other aim is to uncover the ritual dimensions that manifest through the use and disposition of the UK's donated used clothing that is shipped to Nigeria, which are currently missing in extant theorising (Jacoby et al., 1977; Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005). The study is guided by two main research questions identified from omissions in extant theorising. The two main research questions emerging from the gaps identified in the two review chapters (2 and 3) are presented below.

Research question 1

RQ1. How do second-hand clothing consumers in Nigeria use and dispose of second-hand clothing that comes from the Global North?

Research Question 2

RQ2. What are the ritual dimensions that manifest through second-hand clothing use and disposal in Nigeria?

The methodology adopted in the current study follows a similar consumer researcher's deployment of Thompson's (1997) Hermeneutic framework to make sense of consumers' lived experiences (cf. Mimoun et al., 2022; Mardon et al., 2023; Sandikci, 2024). In line with the sense-making tradition in qualitative interpretive research (e.g. Dervin, 1983; Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Thompson, 1997; Woodside, 2001; Ogliastri & Zúñiga, 2016), this study is a phenomenological inquiry conducted through individual in-depth virtual synchronous and semi-structured interviews. A total of 32 phenomenological interviews were conducted with 26 Nigerian informants between April 2021 and December 2022. All interviews were conducted in the English language. In addition to these interviews, a total of 51 visual data on second-hand clothing were collected. These 52 images served both to elicit responses during the interviews and to replace participant observation, which was not possible due to travel restrictions at the time of the fieldwork. The interpretation and analysis of the data for the study were done using Thompson's (1997) hermeneutic framework with additional insight from Moustakas (1994). The contributions to theory resulting from this phenomenological enquiry are presented in the next section.

1.4 Summary of Findings and Theoretical Contributions

Three rubbish ritual performances are uncovered by following the things of rubbish value to their final destinations. Drawing on the lived experiences of consumers of imported second-hand clothing in Nigeria, this study reveals three new divestment ritual performances. These are deodourising, sanctifying and burning. Deodourising expands extant divestment rituals during the reacquisition of used clothing items. Deodourising is enacted to remove public meaning - i.e., the peculiar odour of second-handedness - and add private meanings - i.e., the consumers' preferred fragrance. Deodourising helps them manage their identity and self-image and establish who they are. The study also identifies sanctifying and burning as two novel dimensions of divestment ritual. Sanctifying represents a novel divestment ritual dimension enacted to ensure the safe transfer of meanings in used clothing without the detriment of reverse contagion. Sanctification addresses the question of whether - and to what extent - previous users are concerned about potential harm coming to them due to strangers accessing their essence that permeates their used possessions. Not only do we now know that they are concerned, but we also now know that it is a grave concern.

The third novel divestment ritual that the study finds is burning. Although burning unwanted consumer objects is not a new practice, burning used clothing to manage identity and prevent reverse contagion, as the current study finds, represents a novel approach. Burning constitutes a divestment ritual that destroys rather than transfers meaning. Burning thus extends extant theorising on divestment rituals beyond its current theorisation as meaning reconfiguration and transfer. Burning as a ritual performance also addresses the unanswered question about the transfers at the durable-rubbish interface in Thompson's rubbish theory (Chapter 6, Figure 6-1, Section 6.4.1). The current study finds that the rubbish category serves as both a transit point and a final destination for objects designated as rubbish, depending on the remaining value they hold. The findings in the current study evidence that the transfer at the durable-rubbish interface of the rubbish theory does occur. The value of used clothing is relevant only as long as the clothing item it defines continues to be used, e.g., in identity and self-management. Once the clothing item ceases to serve its originally intended purpose, its value begins to be reassigned. When used clothing items eventually deteriorate into nothingness, as seen in the current study with the burnt clothing, so too does the value ascribed to them. At this point, it ceases to be a durable object and returns to being rubbish. As a new permanent clothing disposition pathway, burning also extends extant taxonomy for clothing disposition.

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis has six chapters. This first chapter introduces the thesis. Following this first chapter are the two review chapters (chapters 2 and 3) in the thesis. Chapter 2 is an ontological review of consumption objects, including clothing. Chapter 2 reveals a disconnect between clothing disposition in the Global North and the use and disposal of these consumption objects in the Global South, where they ultimately end up. This creates the first research question (RQ1) in the current study. For emphasis, RQ1 inquires about how second-hand clothing consumers in Nigeria use and dispose of second-hand clothing originating from the Global North. By asking this question, RQ1 helps to understand what becomes of the millions of bales of the UK's donated used clothing that are shipped to Nigeria. It ultimately addresses the unanswered question of where objects in the durable category end up.

Chapter 3 reviews extant theorisation on consumption rituals. Between McCracken's (1986) theoretical lens of the structure and movement of the cultural meaning of consumption objects and Otnes et al.'s (2018) Chapter 3, which examines the functions of extraordinary beliefs in consumption rituals, finds that the nexus between belief, ritual, and action is under-theorised. Chapter 3 juxtaposes extant theorising on divestment rituals with Frazer's (1891) Law of Contagion and Law of Similarity. This raises questions surrounding reverse contagion, i.e., whether and to what extent previous owners or users worry about potential harm or detriment to themselves as a result of strangers accessing their used possessions. It also raises unanswered questions regarding divestment beyond mere reconfiguration and transfer. These omissions are captured in the second research question in the current study (RQ2). Again, for emphasis, RQ2 inquires about the ritual dimensions that manifest through the use and disposal of second-hand clothing in Nigeria. This question aims to explore how Nigeria's unique sociocultural experiences and extraordinary belief systems influence the divestment ritual behaviour of consumers of imported second-hand clothing.

Chapter 4 is the methodology chapter. It presents the methodological approach adopted by the current study to meet its research aim and address the study's research questions. The chapter justifies the ontological and epistemological assumptions underpinning the study. Chapter 4 also presents the sampling methods, data collection procedures, and analytical techniques. It also describes the ethical procedures undertaken during the fieldwork.

Chapter 5 reports the study's findings. It illustrates the specific ways in which the current study's findings address the two research questions through the informants' narratives of their lived experiences with the use and disposal of second-hand clothing in Nigeria.

Chapter 6 is the conclusion chapter. Chapter 6 presents the study's contributions to knowledge and theory as summarised in section 1.4 above. The chapter concludes with implications for research policy and practice. It highlights limitations and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2 - The Ontology of Consumption Objects

2.1 Introduction to Chapter 2

This chapter is the first of two review chapters in this thesis. It presents a critical review of the literature on the ontology of consumption objects, from their journey towards becoming rubbish to their subsequent transformation. This chapter begins by reviewing the existing literature on the global flow and commodification of consumption objects in both first-hand and second-hand economies. The review in this chapter then proceeds to examine rubbish from both its anthropological origins and the emerging interdisciplinary discourse on the value of discarded consumption objects. This chapter juxtaposes Thompson's (1979; 2017) Rubbish theory with used clothing entering global second-hand economies. It uncovers a disconnect between clothing disposition in the Global North and the use and disposition of these consumption objects in the Global South, where millions of tonnes of used clothing from the Global North are shipped. Consequently, the chapter uncovers unanswered questions at the durable-rubbish interface of the rubbish theory, specifically, where do objects in the durable category end?

2.2 Following the Social Lives of Consumption Objects

With a few exceptions, Gregson et al. (2010) observed that much of the work heeding Appadurai's (1986) call to 'follow the things' has focused more on the linear global flow of commodities from the Global South to the Global North. Much of this work is premised on the economic definitions of 'the thing' as a commodity with both use and exchange values that are produced, exist, exchanged, and circulated through economic and sociocultural systems (Kopytoff, 1986). Some earlier works in this commodification literature have focused significantly on first-hand economies, or the production and initial value creation typically associated with newly produced consumption objects. For example, Long & Villarreal (1998) followed maize husks from Western Mexico to the United States. Cook and colleagues' work examined the globalisation of food through the international trade in fresh papaya (Cook, 2004) and hot pepper sauce (Cook & Harrison, 2007) from Jamaica to London. Ramsay (2009) also examined tourists' enchantment with souvenirs produced in Swaziland, which were used to adorn living rooms in the UK. The story of following fashion items, which is at the heart of the current study, is discussed in the background to this study (Chapter One). Again, in its first-hand

economies, fashion's value chain is one in which manufacturing is outsourced from material-rich and low-labour-cost countries with the biggest brands, retailers and consumers in Europe and the USA (Niinimäki et al., 2020). For instance, Dwyer & Jackson's (2003) studies on the processes of commodification of fashion objects also capture this, as evidenced by fashion made in Delhi and sold in London and elsewhere in Britain (cf. Chavero, 2017; Henninger et al., 2016). For first-hand economies, the literature following the thing with the object commodification lens can be summarised as a flow of commodities from the rest to the West, i.e., from the Global South to the Global North. As Belk (2020) observes, commodification is not limited to traditional market exchanges and does not necessarily involve money. According to Belk, widely documented commodification experiences are known to include

the commodification of people (e.g., slavery, human trafficking, surrogate motherhood), love, sex, religion, body parts, cadavers, art, music, education, rides, childcare, elder-care, health care, the internet, police, soldiers, museums, parks, beaches, prisons, and many other formerly free, public, shared, or intimate interpersonal objects and services. This has important implications for the daily life of consumers. (Belk, 2020, 31)

Juxtaposing Belk (2020) with the foregoing shows that the processes that connect production, exchange and consumption narratives across cultures in the mainstream commodification literature also connect people and cultures across diverse geographical divides (see e.g., Cook, 2004; Cook & Harrison, 2007). Also evident is the fact that significant attention in this mainstream literature is dedicated to first-hand economies of newly produced consumption objects.

There is another emerging category within this mainstream commodification literature that focuses on second-hand economies. A significant distinction here, in comparison to first-hand economies, is that second-hand economies operate on the suspension of conventional marketplace forms of value definition, sourcing, pricing, and exchange (Crewe & Gregson, 1998). Again, and by way of comparison, second-hand economies also operate locally and globally. Local second-hand economies, such as car boot or garage sales, are socially and culturally embedded, focusing on makeshift marketplace encounters within national geographies (Crewe & Gregson, 1998; Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005). Unlike the case with first-hand economies, the focus in second-hand economies is on used and pre-owned

consumption objects. Most extant works on local second-hand economies describe encounters with the exchange of used and pre-owned objects sold by sellers from their car boots or home garages, as well as other makeshift market settings, to neighbours and strangers alike (Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005). These makeshift marketplaces provide opportunities for commodity circulation (e.g., Bianchi & Birtwistle, 2010; Shaw & Williams, 2018), including gifting (Herrmann, 1997; Price et al., 2000), which is orchestrated by the local social and cultural practices of participants (Crewe & Gregson, 1998). More contemporary alternatives in this literature include collaborative consumption (e.g., Ertz et al., 2017) or access-based consumption options, which are essentially adaptations of Jacoby et al.'s (1977) disposition taxonomy (see sections 2.6 and 2.7). Much like conventional market systems and makeshift marketplace encounters in local and national geographies, access-based consumption options are also market-mediated. However, a significant distinction exists in that access-based consumption options operate by different transaction codes, pricing and value regimes (Crewe & Gregson, 1998; Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Pugh, 2020). For example, exchanges in access-based consumption encounters do not result in the transfer of ownership. Rather than paying to own the items, participants in access-based consumption only pay to spend “consumption time” (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012, p. 881) with the items. In other words, access-based consumption only allows consumers access to items or networks that they would ordinarily not have been able to access, afford or possess. Nevertheless, these second-hand economy consumption and transaction encounters operate within local and national spaces; they do not transcend country and national borders.

The second subcategory in the literature on the object commodification in second-hand economies differs from the above, with the focus shifting from local and national spaces to global markets. Although, like in the first-hand economies, global second-hand economies also facilitate exchanges of consumption objects, albeit on a larger scale. Again, and to a certain degree - that we currently know of - these exchanges extend the use and consumption of these objects beyond conventional practices and ultimately divert them from landfills, (Lang & Joyner Armstrong, 2018; Martin, Lazarevic, & Gullström, 2019). However, the literature on object commodification in second-hand global economies describes far divergent dynamics from those within national geographical marketplaces.

First, extant works on global second-hand economies tend to challenge the linear global flow of commodities. It punctuates the ‘from rest to the West’ narratives that view commodities as primarily flowing from production sites in the Global South to consumption sites in the Global North. For example, Gregson et al. (2010) followed the ship *Al Nabila IV* - a 30-year-old vegetable oil tanker that used to operate between ports in the Global North. The 2010 study followed the decommissioning of *Al Nabila IV* until its dismemberment in Bangladesh. By so doing, the finding expands our understanding of the value of used objects. Other works documenting this contraflow (Abimbola, 2012; Brooks, 2019; Brooks, 2013; Bianchi & Birtwistle, 2010; Norris, 2012; Boeckholtz, 2020) chronicle how the commodified clothing from the Global North’s donations ultimately fuels the global trade in used clothing. For example, Bianchi & Birtwistle (2010) noted that over 80% of clothing donated to charity organisations in the UK is exported to Global South countries in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and the Middle East (cf. WRAP, 2018; House of Commons, 2021a, 2019, 2021b). Some (Bianchi & Birtwistle, 2010; Abimbola, 2012; Areo & Areo, 2015) argue that the shipping of the Global North’s used and unwanted clothing provides affordable, high-quality clothing to low-income consumers in these economies of the Global South. Others (e.g., Hansen, 2004; Wetengere, 2018) ask the helping or hindering question. Despite these debates, the future lives of these millions of tons of used clothing, as well as what becomes of them once their new owners no longer have any purposeful use for them, have yet to receive significant scholarly attention (Hansen & Le Zotte, 2019a, 2019b; WRAP, 2018; House of Commons, 2021a, 2019, 2021b).

Second, works on global second-hand economies lend credence to Appadurai’s (1986) concept of the social lives of consumption objects. For example, Gregson et al. (2010) argue that commodities do not remain the same throughout their extensive social and economic lives. Gregson et al.’s (2010) account of the *Al Nabila IV*’s journey to Sitakunda beach in Bangladesh showed how objects of rubbish value are recommodified. By disassembling, reworking, and repairing objects from the *Al Nabila IV*, they become transformed into furniture and reintegrated into the homes and lives of Bangladeshi middle-class consumers. Gregson et al.’s (2010) argument is equally valid for objects that seem to remain intact in their journeys in global second-hand economies. For example, the extant works on used clothing in second-hand economies cited earlier also show that the

meanings and value of consumption objects are constantly being (re)produced and (re)created as they move within and between consumption encounters (Cf. Appadurai, 1986; Kopytoff, 1986; Reno, 2009; Gregson & Crewe, 2003; Hansen & Le Zotte, 2019a, 2019b).

In summary, a burgeoning body of work exists on global second-hand economies, challenging the seeming neglect of the existing counterflow of objects from the 'West to the rest'. Another promising literature continues to inform and expand our understanding of the value of used and discarded objects. Overall, the literature documenting these works on discard holds significant promise, as it expands the research inquiry into the value of reuse. In a way, this offers both a reawakening and opportunities for reducing our environmental footprint - i.e., for those who dare. Again, recommodification of used objects also presents opportunities for meeting both local and global economic needs. Interestingly, extant works on global second-hand economies are emerging and promising. Despite these promises, however, the future lives and dispositions of used consumption objects that enter global second-hand economies are yet significantly under-theorised. This is mainly in the area of informing our understanding of the post-consumption realities of these consumption objects in their second and future lives (Hansen & Le Zotte, 2019a, 2019b). This current study is thus an attempt to address this gap in knowledge and theorising by following second-hand clothing donated to charity organisations in the UK, which end up in Nigeria.

The following sections lay the groundwork for the current study by reviewing existing works and theorisations on discard and rubbish.

2.3 Of Discards and Rubbish

It is instructive to note that much of the work theorising used consumption objects that enter global second-hand economies, both explicitly and implicitly, relies on Mary Douglas' (1966) *Purity and Danger*. Within broader anthropological discourse, Mary Douglas' (1966) conceptualisation of dirt as something that both challenges and reaffirms cultural realities remains pivotal (Reno, 2015). Although the resulting interdisciplinary fields of 'discard studies' continue to debate Douglas' (1966) *placedness* definition of dirt, i.e., dirt as something out of place. However, there is evident agreement that waste is more than a cultural category. Importantly, there is an agreement that what is broadly defined as waste is both

a product and an output of socially organised material value systems within broader globalised socioeconomic and political systems (cf. O'Brien, 1999; Jackson, 2013; Alexander & O'Hare, 2023). For example, O'Brien (1999) argued that objects are defined by the values that can be obtained from them and that these values change as the objects move through time and socioeconomic and political systems. According to O'Brien (1999), objects move in and out of value systems based on the usefulness they can generate outside their inherent material objectivity. O'Brien (1999, p. 280) argued that "dirt matters." His argument relies on the fact that though objects may pass in and out of specific utilisation, they never really leave economic systems. To O'Brien, "material objectivity is not the basis of economic activity" (278). If waste really leaves, why then do governments and other institutions invest heavily in waste management? In fact, according to O'Brien (1999), waste management is both a social and political justification for the fact that waste does not simply disappear (279).

O'Brien's (1999) argument is evident in Gregson et al.'s (2010) account of the Al Nabila IV's end-of-life journey. The story of the Al Nabila IV further supports Jackson's (2013) argument that an object's value continues to shift within our economic systems of production and consumption. Jackson (2013) observed that these systems operate by orchestrating, managing, and facilitating the extraction of material resources from the environment, their processing into products, and their return to the environment in the form of waste and emissions. At every stage of these systems, the value of objects continues to evolve, dissolve and re-evolve. In a way, these arguments by both O'Brien (1999) and Jackson (2013) lend credence to Appadurai's (1986) and Kopytoff's (1986) notions of the social lives of consumption objects. More importantly, and as O'Brien, (1999) succinctly sums it, waste is indeed a multidimensional consumption commodity of a rubbish society which we have become; never losing its consumption value, but instead defining economic policies and developing new sectors of waste management and recycling, operating at par with the insurance industry, well ahead of telecommunications and engineering and dwarfing the retail and steel sectors. In other words, what is deemed dirt, waste, or rubbish at one time soon becomes incorporated into economic systems at another. So, rather than confining dirt, waste or rubbish to the "ontological dustbin of social theory" (O'Brien, 1999, 271), Thompson's (1979; 2017) rubbish theory has shown the critical importance of

continued interrogation - from an economic-materialist perspective - the material and shifting values of dirt, waste and rubbish (cf. O'Brien, 1999; Alexander & O'Hare, 2023). The following section thus examines Thompson's (1979; 2017) rubbish theory to further our understanding of extant theorisation of waste.

2.4 Rubbish Theory

Thompson (1979; 2017) observed that objects are categorised based on their value and life span. Objects are more or less valued on a comparative scale, much like different objects have varying expected lifespans. Although "value is a mutable social relation" that plays a pivotal role in social categorisation of objects, "[value is] not an inherent characteristic of things themselves." (Reno in Thompson, 2017; vii). In other words, rather than being inherently fixed, value is ascribed to objects as part of social processes of object categorisation. For instance, the most valuable objects may not necessarily have the longest lifespan, just as the least valuable ones do not necessarily have the shortest lifespan. Instead, these two categorisations are functions of social processes. Again, like Appadurai (1986), Thompson (1979; 2017) also believes that the processes of human social life ascribe specific important social properties to physical objects. Essentially, these ascriptions define the values of these objects in the scheme of things and the purposes they serve in giving meaning and essence to human social life itself. As a matter of fact, according to Thompson (1979; 2017) The meaning and essence of human lives are intertwined with the values ascribed to the physical objects involved in living those lives.

Thompson's rubbish theory focused on three essential questions, viz (i) how second-hand objects become antique; (ii) how a rat-infested slum becomes part of a Glorious Heritage, and (iii) how a draft memo becomes a crucial component within a national archive? Answering these questions, Thompson identified two overt categories, which he referred to as transient and durable. Between these two overt categories is a covert category that Thompson referred to as rubbish. These categories are shown in Figure 2-1 below the Basic Rubbish Theory Hypothesis copied from Thompson (2017, 4).

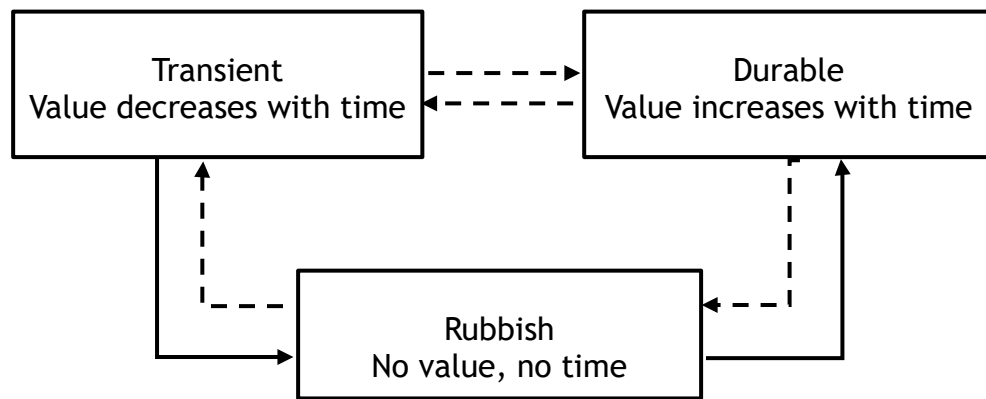


Figure 2-1: Thompson's Basic Rubbish Theory Hypothesis

According to Thompson (1979; 2017), newly obtained consumption objects form the transient category. These could include newly produced clothing items, new branded cars, or other first-hand consumption objects. As earlier observed, in navigating their social lives (Appadurai, 1986; Kopytoff's (1986), new consumption objects move from that state of initial good, new, or cherished, first-hand possessions, into a state where they are seen in a different light, almost antithetical to the previous perception of the very same object. With use and the passage of time, the values of consumption objects change despite their material objectivity (O'Brien, 1999) and based on their relative place within the socio-economic and political systems in which they exist (Jackson, 2013). As a result of these changing values, objects transition from those new, loved and all those useful (transient) categories, to a category that Thompson (1979; 2017) called rubbish. Importantly, although his Basic Rubbish Theory Hypothesis (Figure 2-1) indicated that objects in the rubbish category have no value and no time, Thompson did not fail to point out that objects falling into the rubbish category have not necessarily been reduced to nothingness. Juxtaposing this with extant theorising on discard and particularly clothing disposition points to these items as passing through a value regenerative interface (Reno, 2009; Hawkins, 2006) awaiting the right economic use (O'Brien, 1999; Crang et al., 2013; Jackson, 2013; Alexander & O'Hare, 2023; Winakor, 1969; Jacoby et al., 1977; Lee et al., 2013; Laitala, 2014; WRAP, 2017b).

Being Douglas' student, Douglas' (1966) *placedness* in her definition of dirt is heavily evident in Thompson's rubbish theory. In his categorisation of dirt, Thompson (1979; 2017) observed that where an object is placed is critical to our social categorisation of its value. Discarded objects that, due to their being unfit

for their original purpose, have been moved to designated places like basement closets, bins, and dumpsters rarely raise concern. Nor do they burden us. By our social processes and value categorisations, out of sight is where they belong. In these out-of-sight places, these objects do not intrude because they are out of mind. Thompson (1979; 2017) provided examples, including mucus in handkerchiefs. We know mucus is dirt discarded from our nostrils, yet we capture it in handkerchiefs and place it in our pockets. The mucus belongs to the individual who produced it, but by social placement, it does not belong in the place hanging down from the nose above the mouth. While everyone would be concerned and uncomfortable if mucus were hanging down from the nose, society seems a lot more comfortable with having the mucus removed by a handkerchief and placed in a pocket. This is because the mucus is no longer visible on the handkerchief in the pocket. It has been relocated to a suitable location, one where it does not intrude, and therefore it is less of a concern and far less discomfiting. The same applies to clothing that its current owner considers unfit for its original or current use and places in the wardrobe or eventually in a basement closet. By our social categorisation, we would be concerned if these clothing items in the wardrobe or basement closets were placed in the living room corner, much like if the handkerchief used to capture mucus were left on a dining table.

This applies to both used and unwanted clothing. Having categorised them as unfit for current use, where we place them within the house is of critical importance. Unwanted clothing can appear intrusive in a living room corner, but it is out of sight and not intrusive if placed in the wardrobe. However, given the presence or absence of certain other conditions, placing used and unwanted clothing items in the wardrobe may even be uncomfortable. One of such instances would be where the owner is constrained by limited storage space (Ha-Brookshire & Hodges, 2009a; Prosic-Dvornic, 2022) or in overcoming the feeling of guilt that comes with buying more items with a wardrobe full of unworn clothing items or items that were abandoned after only a few uses (Lang et al., 2013; Weber, Lynes, & Young, 2017). Notably, the placement of used or unwanted clothing items in living room corners - including, in some instances, wardrobes - would be a concern. This is because, through our social processes and categorisations, these objects are deemed to be in the wrong place or out of place. They are deemed wrongly placed because, according to Thompson (2017, 101), they are “emphatically visible and extremely

embarrassing.” Their visibility, according to Thompson’s (2017) theory, places them in a genuine cultural category of a special type—a category of rubbish. In other words, unwanted clothing lying around in the living room corner may bring as much discomfort, disapproval, and guilt as it would if it were hung up in wardrobes, preventing the acquisition and storage of new purchases.

So, first, discards do not become waste or rubbish until social processes and practices “conspire to remove them from circulation and consideration” (Reno in Thompson, 2017; *vii*). Second, even after such social categorisation, discarded objects are not necessarily useless or valueless; their value lies in their placement. As O’Brien (1999, 281) observed, what is mainly deemed as dirt, waste, or rubbish is a value-laden “product for which no economic use has been found”. This explains why many governments and agencies invest considerable resources in recycling and waste management (Crang et al., 2013; Jackson, 2013; Alexander & O’Hare, 2023). Further, commenting on Thompson’s (1979) Rubbish theory, Reno (2009) noted that what happens with discards is a form of value regenerative interface or limbo (see Hawkins, 2006) in which objects enter a state of indeterminacy to become invaluable.

However, becoming invaluable after a state of indeterminacy or moving from the rubbish category into the durable category, according to Thompson (1979; 2017), requires the existence of certain conditions or a string of events. In other words, objects’ becoming rubbish and later being cherished and loved are all part of social processes and (re) categorisations. An item hitherto deemed to be of rubbish value may become invaluable in the eyes of another individual or in a different system or situation, a twist to the same system or situation, state or place. A good example can be seen in a stained tablecloth on a dining table in a living room. A stain on a tablecloth may put the cloth in the rubbish category because the stain is in the wrong place and can create an extremely awkward and embarrassing situation. On the one hand, the embarrassment can be overcome by washing off the stain. On the other extreme, if this stain on the tablecloth creates a unique image in the eyes of a curator or creative artist, this stained cloth may become a framed piece of art to adorn the same dining room wall. Similar scenarios are found in two of Thompson’s examples of transition from the rubbish to the durable category. These include (1) the transformation in the value of Stevengraphs from unsalable objects in the 1950s (rubbish) to a selling value of around £75 in 1971

(durable) and (2) the innovative transformation of the rat-infested slums of inner London from the rubbish category into their durable categorisation as part of England's glorious heritage.

Like the framed stained tablecloth in the earlier example, rubbish objects can become durable due to deliberate restorative efforts, as seen in the case of the transformation of the inner London slums. However, the example of the Stevengraphs shows that an object in the rubbish category can also become durable due to the nostalgic sentiments that its rarity creates. In other words, a discarded object may become quintessential for being unique and having stood the test of time. Now, returning to the question of value and lifespan, the examples of the stained tablecloth, the slums of inner London, and the Stevengraphs all demonstrate that value is not necessarily strictly constrained by lifespan.

To sum up, as shown in Figure 2-1 earlier, it is first necessary to note that a new object, such as a new dress (in the transient category), will gradually become rubbish with use and age. Based on social categorisation, processes, and the nature of this dress, it may become obsolete after a few uses, especially if of poor quality. If, however, this dress is made to last, it may still retain some use value after many uses. Such may be kept out of sight to be used yet again. In this limbo, although it is not currently in active use, its value is not necessarily zero or negative. Second, providing certain conditions exist, out-of-sight objects, though of rubbish value, may become quintessential and durable. For instance, a new fashion trend, social process, or (re) categorisation may bring the dress out of sight and into the limelight. Third and consequent upon the above recategorisation, although objects may linger in these categories, membership is not rigid. This is because objects are "temporary configurations of material" (Gregson et al., 2010, 853). Rather than remaining confined to one category, they are continuously configured and reconfigured to fit the various social lives and processes that make them relevant. As shown in the earlier examples, a handkerchief or a stained tablecloth can be cleaned and cared for to look as good as new. We have seen the non-rigidity of membership in any category, such as discards that have stood the test of time - e.g., Stevengraphs - regain relevance due to scarcity. We have also seen slums regain their place in social landscapes. Fourth, Thompson argued that certain transfers do not occur as they contradict

the “value and/or time direction that define the various categories” (p. 4). Admittedly, as the broken lines at the transient-durable interface in Figure 2-1 indicate, neither can the transient directly become durable without first becoming rubbish, nor can durables revert to the transient category. In the case of the transient-durable, even when an object in the durable category is cherished as new, it is, in fact, not new. It has aged, and disintegration has set in. This is a valid conclusion to draw given the operation of our social processes and categorisation. However, a question left unanswered here is whether the transfer that Thompson claims does not occur, as the durable category becomes rubbish, as indicated by the broken arrow at the durable-rubbish interface on the right in Figure 2-1. Whereas Thompson admitted that objects do disintegrate, his argument leaves a lacuna as to what becomes of objects that enter the durable categories when they disintegrate. Where do they go and what do they become? Do they remain in the durable category in perpetuity? For instance, in the case of second-hand objects, such as clothing that is transformed from rubbish to a durable category, what becomes of these objects at the end of their second useful life? The question of where durable objects go is examined in the next section, with a focus on second-hand clothing.

2.5 Where Do Objects in the Durable Category Go?

In the specific case of clothing, consumer researchers have sought to address some of the questions mentioned above, particularly those related to unwanted clothing, since Winakor (1969) and Jacoby, Berning, and. Much of these works continues, in one form or another, to address the transient-to-rubbish and the rubbish-to-durable connections. A pertinent point of reference in the current study is the disposition literature. However, there are at least two critical omissions that make mainstream theorisation on disposition problematic. First, we already know that mainstream theorising is significantly Western-centric. We also know that mainstream researchers theorise predominantly from the perspective of their Global North cultural origins (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011; Guarín & Knorrinda, 2014; Varman, 2019). For instance, in understanding the motivations behind behaviour, De Mooij & Hofstede (2011) observed that although the motivators of behaviour vary across cultures, theorising at the interface of motives and behaviour is yet significantly rooted in the cultural perspectives of their authors (cf. De Mooij, 2019; Hofstede, 2001). In their work on the rising

middle class and responsible consumption, Guarín and Knorrinda (2014) also noted that extant theorising continues to rely heavily on theories that significantly mirror the cultural origins of Western designers. Importantly, Guarín & Knorrinda (2014) argued that extant theorising on responsible consumption “has been largely understood in the light of consumption in rich countries” (p.159). Guarín & Knorrinda (2014) thus question the overgeneralisation of extant Western-centric theories on the rest of the human populations. Their argument hinged on De Mooij & Hofstede (2011) who identified an abundance of diverse cultural motives regarding consumption. Furthermore, Varman (2019) attributed this westernisation and overgeneralisation to the quest for acceptance. According to Varman (2019), there is a tendency for extant theorisation to subscribe to sociology’s colonial origins to the extent that even concepts and

“signs originating from the Global South are often dependent on circuits of commercialisation and Westernization” (Varman, 2019, p. 11).

This tendency to subscribe to concepts of Western origin is also evident in the narratives surrounding clothing disposition. For example, the mediators of responsibility for sustainability in fashion in the UK, discussed in Chapter One, showed the existence of a robust system of mechanisms that initiate, support, and incentivise sustainable clothing donation behaviour in the Global North. The existence of these mechanisms in the Global North creates a sense of ontological security, which Thompson et al. (2018) summarise as a situation of

“relative socioeconomic stability, predictable routines, and taken-for-granted trust in the institutional infrastructure that supports their lifestyles and identity projects” (Thompson et al., 2018, 573).

Such mechanisms and incentives are yet to be documented in the Global South. For example, to the extent that the world is culturally diverse with diverse motivators of consumption, realities of socioeconomic stability will differ (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011). Equally diverse will be the predictability of routines, the existence or absence of institutions and infrastructure and the extent to which individuals can trust these systems to support their lifestyles and identity projects. Despite these inherent differences, the same theories that rely on such Global

North realities remain the benchmark for investigating behaviour in the Global South, lending credence to De Mooij & Hofstede (2011), Guarín & Knorringa (2014), and Varman (2019). To clarify, the first problem with extant theorisation within consumer research is that it continues to significantly rely on and draw overgeneralised conclusions about behaviour and consumption choices made under situations of relative ontological security. For one, we do not yet have significantly convincing evidence that similar mechanisms exist or mediate behaviour in the Global South. What we do know, however, is that the assumptions and realism about behaviour differ between the Global North and the Global South (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Guarín & Knorringa, 2014). In other words, without significant evidence from the Global South, there is a critical omission in extant theorisation on disposition. This is the first crucial omission in mainstream theorisation. At a minimum, this omission represents an imbalance in narratives that inform current theories on disposition. Although we recognise that consumption motivators vary across cultures, the mainstream clothing disposition literature tells us that, like most consumption objects, used clothing often has a second life. Not only are these second lives lived mainly outside the Global North, but there is also an evident lack of traceability for the thousands of bales of UK used clothing that are shipped to the Global South (House of Commons, 2021; WRAP, 2017b). Whereas we know, for instance, that the UK's donated clothing items continue to inform and impact behaviours and lives in these other places, mainstream theorisation on second-hand economies has yet to significantly traverse the purchase and 'use' stage (Hansen & Le Zotte, 2019). This critical omission, which significantly excludes the lived consumption and dispositional experiences that used clothing informs and impacts in extant theorisations, is in itself problematic.

Related to the above is the question of the transfers at the durable-rubbish interface. There are no ambiguities in Thompson's rubbish theory regarding transient objects that cannot be classified as durable without first being categorised as rubbish. In their prime, i.e., in the transient category, objects, e.g., clothing items, lose some of their lustre and value with use and time. Being of dwindling value, social processes then conspire to remove them from circulation (Reno in Thompson, 2017; *vii*), keeping them out of sight and on their way to becoming rubbish. Having lost their lustre, objects in the rubbish category cannot

return to the transient category. Neither can an object in the durable category go back to the transient category. The transition from the transient category is a one-way downward slope. This is notwithstanding that they may get to be re-loved and valued as durables. For example, the furniture from decommissioned ships that now adorns living rooms and bedrooms in Bangladesh (Gregson et al., 2010) cannot be recreated. The same applies to used clothing from the Global North that is sold for reuse in other parts of the Global South (e.g., Abimbola, 2012; Brooks, 2019; Brooks, 2013; Bianchi & Birtwistle, 2010; Norris, 2012; Boeckholtz, 2020). However, they may be deemed new and equally valued as objects obtained for the first time by their new users. In truth, however, their value has indeed decreased with use. It is only reintroduced into mainstream consumption systems through the recategorisation or redefinition of its value from unwanted to second-hand, as noted in the first chapter of this thesis (Garcia Martin, 2016; Zamani, Sandin, & Peters, 2017).

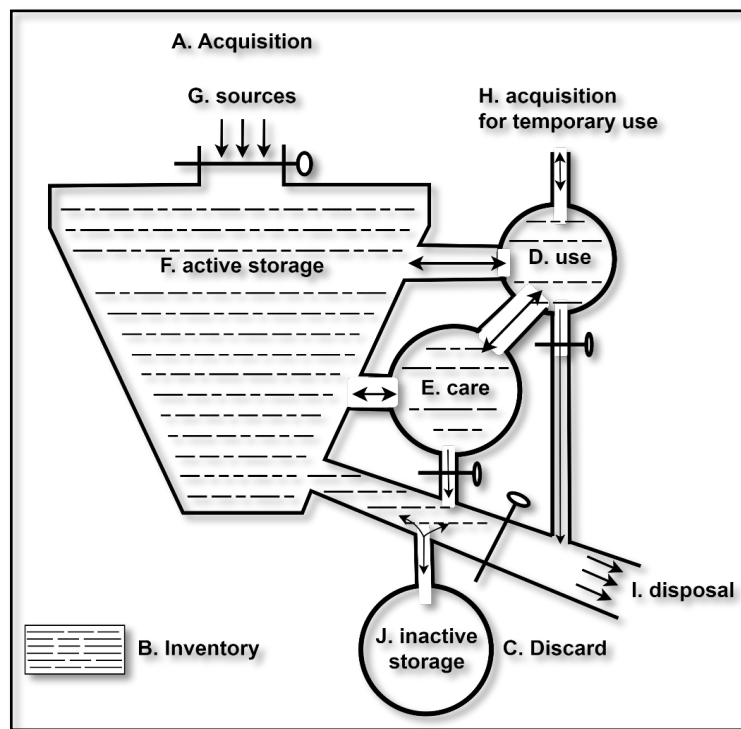
A pertinent example of value recategorisation or redefinition for used clothing is the commodification of the UK's used clothing entering global second-hand economies. One can question the justifications for the commodification of donations, especially in its becoming an integral part of global second-hand economies (Abimbola, 2012; Boeckholtz, 2020; Crang et al., 2013; Gregson & Crang, 2015; Hansen & Le Zotte, 2019a; b; Norris, 2012). We know that these re-categorised and commodified used clothing items get new lives and are reused. We also know that reuse suggests continued disintegration. Continued disintegration further confirms Thompson's (1979, 2017) assumption about transfers that do not occur at the durable-transient and rubbish transient interfaces - i.e., that clothing items entering the durable and rubbish categories cannot re-enter the transient category, regardless of how much they are cherished. What is yet insufficiently addressed in the rubbish theory is the transfer at the durable-rubbish interface. The question about the transfer from the durable to the rubbish category is especially critical because of the assumptions in the theory about the inevitability of disintegration for used objects and that membership in any category is not rigid. This crucial omission at the durable-rubbish interface is a critical question that this study addresses. By following the UK's used clothing to Nigeria, where it is further distributed, the study raises

questions about what happens to second-hand clothing at the end of its second life.

The following section in this chapter reviews extant theorising on clothing disposition. The primary objective is to understand how clothing items are categorised as transient, rubbish, or durable. The second is to chart a path for addressing the question of where objects in the durable category go.

2.6 Clothing Disposition

The question of *what to do with unwanted clothing* continues to attract consumer researchers' attention since Winakor (1969) - albeit predominantly in the Global North. Extant works theorising object disposition reference Jacoby, Berning, & Dietvorst's (1977) disposition taxonomy (e.g., Laitala, 2014; Shim, 1993; Wai Yee et al., 2016). However, academic interest in clothing disposition dates to Winakor's (1969) Clothing Consumption Process (cf. Bubna, 2016; Bubna & Norum, 2017). While Jacoby et al.'s (1977) disposition taxonomy covered items such as bicycles, phonograph records, refrigerators, stereo amplifiers, toothbrushes, and wristwatches, Winakor's study exclusively focused on clothing. In his clothing consumption process, Winakor (1969) observed that clothing items move between use, care, active and inactive storage and then disposal (Figure 2-2). It is instructive to emphasise at the beginning that a theoretical justification for the current study lies in the fact that extant theorising on disposition significantly focuses on Thompson's (1979; 2017) transient and rubbish categories. What becomes of objects at the durable-rubbish interface has yet to attract the attention of consumer researchers significantly.



Source: Winakor (1969)

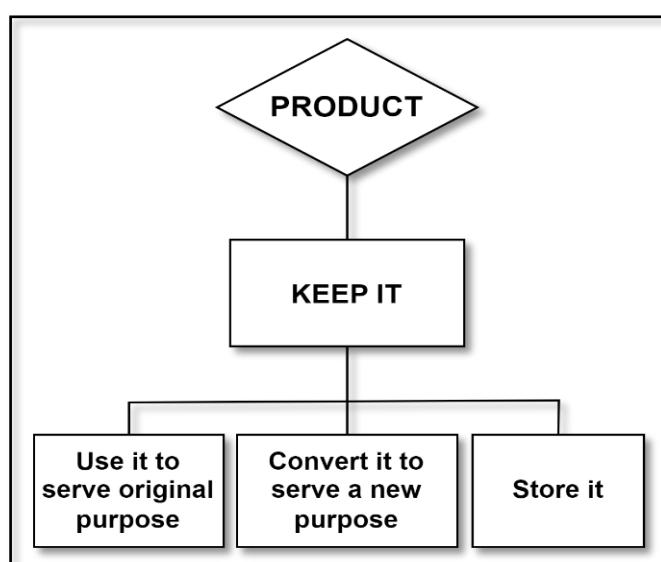
Figure 2-1: Clothing Consumption Process

According to Winakor (1969), clothing consumption encompasses acquisition, inventory and discard. Inventory represents the stock of clothing items owned by an individual at any given time. It is captured in the flow in (Figure 2-2) in the hatched areas labelled *D*, *E* and *F*. Clothing items in an individual's inventory are acquired for temporary or long-term use (cf. Bianchi & Birtwistle, 2010; Matthews & Hodges, 2016; Lang et al., 2013; Lang & Zhang, 2019; Blas Riesgo et al., 2023). In their prime, or their transient state (Thompson, 1979; 2017), clothing items are used, cared for, and kept in active storage to be worn again. Storage here may be seen as being out of sight. However, clothing items are consumed differently than Stevengraphs or houses. Clothing items' consumption are situational and quite less rigid than homes and home décor's.

As seen in figure 2-2, active storage is the default destination for clothing both as a point of entry into the consumer's life and home, before use and during both active use and care (Winakor, 1969). They are stored-up after acquisition - indicated by the inward flow labelled *A* in figure 2-2. In the instance that they are used right after acquisition, they are returned to active storage right afterwards or taken to be cleaned and cared for. After this, they are returned into active storage. Active storage is thus a *keeping it* place where clothing items are retained

awaiting use either for future original purposes or for future new purposes (cf. figure 2-3 below, Jacoby et al., 1977).

As can be seen in the forgoing, clothing items that are not in regular use are kept in inactive storage (Winakor, 1969). What Winakor (1969), depicted as *J* in Figure 2-2 (i.e., inactive storage) lies between Jacoby et al.'s (1977) repurposing and storage.



Source: Jacoby et al. (1977)

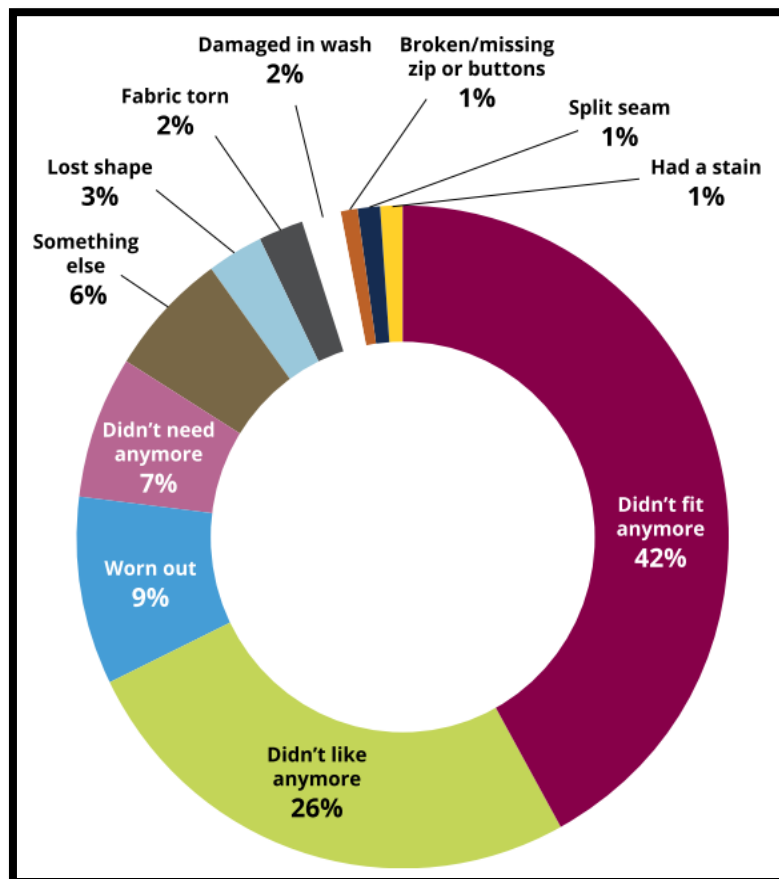
**Figure 2-2: Product retention
(a section of Jacoby et al.'s Disposition Taxonomy)**

Although inactive storage represents the beginning of a clothing item's descent into Thompson's rubbish category. However, until social categorisation takes them out of circulation and consideration, clothing items kept in inactive storage do move back into active storage where they may go through the cycle of use and care. As such, keeping clothing out of sight does not necessarily constrict them to the rubbish category. The actual tendency for clothing to move toward the rubbish category is indicated in Winakor's (1969) outward flow *C* labelled "Discard" - especially beyond inactive storage. This is where clothing items that do not move back into active storage then follow the downward sloppy channel *I* towards disposal. In the end, whether retained for original use or repurposed, items of clothing eventually cross the transient category into the rubbish category at disposal. This is usually the case where the clothing items no longer fit their original intended useful purposes or when their current use value is less than the current costs of keeping them (e.g. VeVerka, 1974). This value judgement through which consumers consider an item of clothing to be unfit for its original intended

purpose determines their placement in the home. The same value judgement is critical in determining the disposition pathways they will take should they be deemed for disposal. Both of these decision encounters - i.e., to keep or not to keep - are influenced by a variety of factors and situations. This is discussed in the next section.

2.6.1 Factors Influencing Clothing Disposition

Four decades ago, cost used to be a key consideration in determining whether to keep or discard clothing items (VeVerka, 1974). VeVerka (1974) observed that the value of an item made consumers reluctant to throw them away just yet. Putting it more broadly, Jacoby et al. (1977) found that consumers' disposition choices are influenced by psychological factors, the product's characteristics and situational factors extrinsic to the product (cf. Laitala, 2014; Laitala, Boks, & Klepp, 2015). Jacoby et al. (1977) found that consumers' decision to dispose of possession may be influenced by the psychology of who the consumers are, how they value their possessions and what they can make out of the possession in case they no longer consider them fit for original purposeful use. For example, a consumer may be emotionally attached to a wedding dress or a possession that is an heirloom. Depending on their creativity or otherwise, a consumer may be more motivated to repurpose this possession e.g., converting a wedding dress for other occasional wears or simply maintaining and caring for them to be passed on to future generations (see Price, Arnould, et al., 2000; Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005; Prosic-Dvornic, 2022). However, beyond such limits of retention, disposition is always inevitable with consumers coming to these conclusions for reason not related to the state of the clothing item. As a 2016 (UK) SCAP Sustainable Textile Tracker Survey shows (see Figure 2-4 below), 42% of UK clothing consumers would dispose of clothing when they no longer fit them (WRAP, 2017b).



Source: WRAP (2017b)

Figure 2-3: UK consumers' reasons for garment disposal

The same SCAP report (WRAP, 2017b) also identified another 26% who would dispose of clothing that they have fallen out of love with. These are judgements of psychological fit that the possession's current owner makes independent of the state of the item. Clothing disposal due to issues of psychological fit may mean that the consumer's fashion taste has changed, the length of time they have had it or since the last wearing, including seasonal downsizing, among others (J. Y. Lee et al., 2013). In many ways, the influence of psychological factors on disposition connects with the other two factors identified by Jacoby et al. (1977) - i.e., product's characteristics and situational factors extrinsic to the product (see also De Ferran et al., 2020).

A similar study to the UK SCAP Sustainable Textile Tracker Survey was conducted by Laitala, Boks, & Klepp (2015) in Norway. Although the figures for the motivators vary between the UK and Norway, two facts stand out. One, issues of psychological fit remain a critical to clothing disposition. Two, the complications of culture driving clothing disposition is further stressed in both surveys. In the Norwegian survey especially, Laitala, Boks, & Klepp (2015) found that cultural nuances like social norms and values are extrinsic to the clothing items yet they exert great

influence on when and how items of clothing are disposed. These two surveys further lends credence to the connection between contemporary clothing disposition and the ultra-fast and throwaway consumption culture (see also Castellani et al., 2015; Hanson, 1980; Payne & Binotto, 2017; Weber, Lynes, & Young, 2017; Chavero, 2017; Dwyer, 2010; WRAP, 2012, 2017, 2017b; House of Commons, 2019). What is more, in their review of four decades of research into disposition, Cruz-Cárdenas & Arévalo-Chávez (2018) also found culture as a macroenvironmental factor that is yet extrinsic to the clothing but that influence disposition behaviour. Yet another reason for discarding clothing in their prime is the good old housekeeping practice of out with the old and in with the new (e.g., Gregson & Crewe, 2003). Again, this has little to nothing to do with the items of clothing yet it is the reason for which many consumers would dispose of clothing items in their prime (Ha-Brookshire & Hodges, 2009a; Prosic-Dvornic, 2022). Besides creating closet space, it is also a way through which consumers overcome the feeling of guilt that comes with buying more items with a wardrobe full of unworn or abandoned after only a few uses (Lee et al., 2013; Lang et al., 2013; Weber, Lynes, & Young, 2017).

Similar studies - largely quantitative in nature - are reported in other climes outside the Global North. Although disposition realities in these other places share similar nuances with those reported above, there are some variations to what obtains in the mainstream Global North literature. For instance, social and personal norms are prominent among the eight factors motivating clothing disposing among female consumers in South Africa (Sonnenberg et al., 2022). Again, according to Adejuwon et al., (2024), culture, tradition and socioeconomic factors like income and education play critical role in clothing disposition behaviour in Nigeria. In addition to factors like temperature and adherence to long standing traditions, the authors found that consumers' clothing disposition behaviour are equally significantly influenced by income and age with strong connections existing between level of education and income. As observed in chapter 1, the older and higher earning consumers tend to be more motivated by their preference for tradition and disposable income. They buy clothing for special occasions e.g., the *aso-ebi* (Tade & Aiyabo, 2014; Ogbechie & Anetor, 2015; Olajire, 2023; Boge, 2023; Nwafor, 2012; 2013; Fagbola, 2019). As such, they buy more clothing made from natural fibre and are more likely to keep clothing for

longer. In other words, the quality of the fibre makes them keep the clothing items for longer. In addition to disposable income, Jazat et al. (2022) also found size and configuration of the household and religious beliefs as having significant influence on disposition behaviour in two cities in Southwest Nigeria (see also Omole & Alakinde, 2013). Similar to those in the Global North mainstream literature discussed earlier, clothing disposition is influenced by factors both intrinsic and extrinsic to the items of clothing including other situations in the consumer's immediate to remote environment.

Overall, issues of torn and damaged fabric or indelible stain or some other evidence of wear and tear and patina of age can constrict a clothing item to the rubbish category. However, far more clothing items in their prime are moved into the rubbish category due to issues of psychological fit - including changes in individual dressing style preferences and falling out of love with items of clothing for other reason. Further to these consumer personality and attitude related issues is the fact of consumers becoming less attached to clothing items under the presumptions of high disposability. More importantly, this presumption of high disposability is further reinforced by a blending of sociocultural norms and high craving for *of-the-moment* fashion items. Consequently, more than half of the time, the value judgements to dispose of items of clothing are based more on the owner/user rather than the situation of the item of clothing itself. This is hardly surprising given the complications of ultra-fast fashion and throwaway consumption culture identified in chapter 1 of this thesis. Thus, do clothing items in their prime become unwanted or constricted to the rubbish category. For reasons scarcely connected to the clothing items, over 73% (around 300,000 tonnes) of clothing items are constricted to rubbish, landfilled or incinerated (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017; ACS Clothing, 2020).

To conclude, objects linger in the transient category based on use, value and life span. However, only a small percentage of clothing items linger for long in the transient category. In their transient state, this small percentage of clothing may be kept out of sight without necessarily moving into the rubbish category. Majority of clothing in the Global North become rubbish after a few uses and leave the transient category into the rubbish category. Their becoming rubbish is scarcely due to depletion in value but rather due largely to consumers' presumption of high disposability and unprecedented craving for fashionable clothing encouraged by

economic and sociocultural systems (Kopytoff, 1986). What is more, the current realities of the global trade in used clothing makes it the more instructive, therefore, to contend that rubbish value for used clothing is in fact equal to second-hand value.

In line with its aim of understanding consumer second-hand clothing use and disposition behaviour in the Global South, this section has established how used and unwanted clothing becomes second-hand in the Global North. This is important to create the premise for making sense of second-hand clothing use and disposition behaviour in the Global South. The next section will now attempt to establish - from the extant literature - how Global North's used and unwanted clothing items enter the global second-hand economies starting with unwanted clothing disposition pathways.

2.7 Unwanted Clothing Disposition Pathways

As earlier pointed out in this chapter (section 2.2), consumption objects have social lives (Appadurai, 1986; Kopytoff, 1986). They exist within systems of extraction, processing and wasting (cf. Jackson, 2013). They continue to evolve, dissolve and re-evolve and their place across these systems is defined by the value they can generate outside their inherent material objectivity (e.g., O'Brien, 1999; Alexander & O'Hare, 2023). The case for clothing is not exempt. As such, like other consumption objects, used clothing traditionally go through a discard process. In this process, used clothing items can follow either the temporary and permanent pathways depending on their value and life span.

Extant works on disposition since Winakor (1969) and Jacoby et al. (1977) show that the journey towards becoming rubbish begins once clothing items become unfit for purposeful use. Becoming unfit for purposeful use puts them in many subcategories. However, once they are designated as unwanted and not retained for future original or new use and not repurposed, they are disposed of temporarily or permanently (Bubna & Norum, 2017; Cherrier & Türe, 2020; Cruz-Cárdenas & Arévalo-Chávez, 2018; Hanson, 1980; Laitala, 2014; Norum, 2017). This is shown in Jacoby et al.'s (1977) disposition taxonomy below.

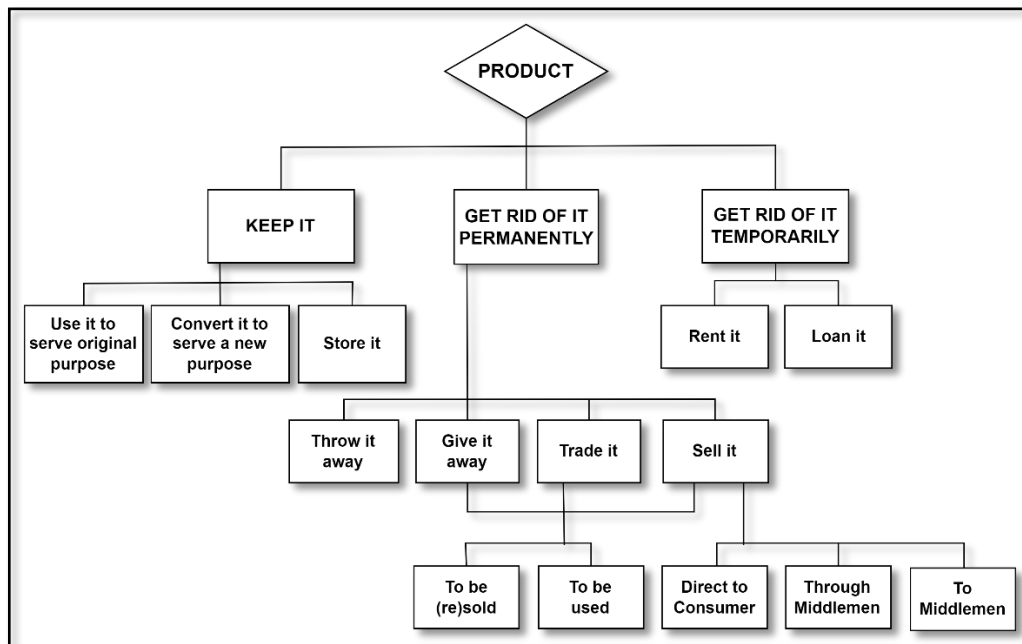


Figure 2-5: Jacoby et al.'s (1977) Disposition Taxonomy

2.7.1 Temporary Clothing Disposition

This journey towards the rubbish category begins once a clothing item goes down the downward slope in Winakor (1969) i.e., not going back into active storage. For Jacoby et al. (1977), this is everything apart from *keeping*. This is the point when an object effectively crosses into the rubbish category. For example, in juxtaposition with Thompson, we know that objects that are not kept to be used *as is* or repurposed may have become rubbish and unwanted. However, the array of destinations in Jacoby et al's (1977) taxonomy is evident that though tending towards zero, their value can indeed increase giving certain social categorisation. Zero or negative value can only apply to those that may have become unwanted due to extensive use and wear and tear that gets *thrown away*. Majority of those that are still in their prime go to a number of destinations that divert them from the bin and landfills. It is instructive to point out here that an implication of these clothing items being in their prime and found useful in these new destinations is an attestation that rubbish value may not necessarily be equal to zero value as Thompson (1979; 2017) opined. Not wanting them for their originally intended purposes may have constricted them to a state of indeterminacy but not binning them sets them on the path to becoming invaluable i.e., moving from the rubbish category into the durable category. This is the same as the transformation of Stevengraphs and the innovative transformation of the rat-infested slums of inner London. According to Thompson (1979; 2017) this movement requires the

existence of certain conditions or social processes and based on the objects' current value and life span. These social processes that aid the transformation of rubbish to durable objects are well documented in extant literature as will be explicated subsequently in this thesis starting with Jacoby et al.'s (1977) Disposition Taxonomy as shown in figure 2-5.

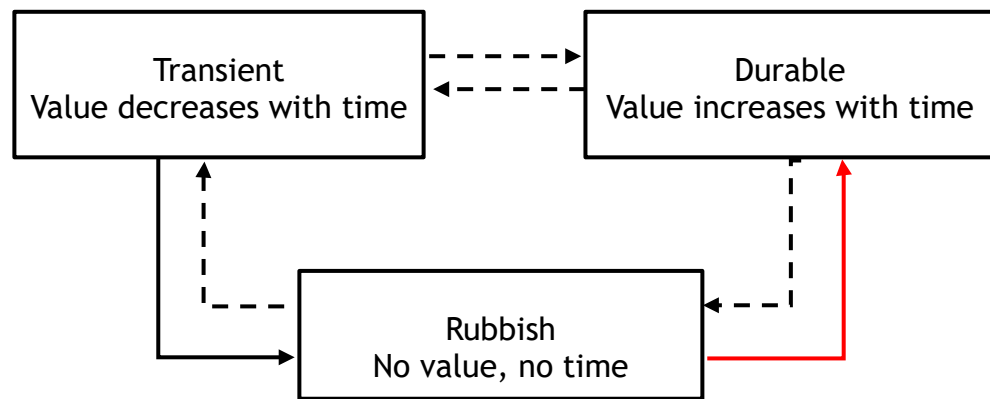
According to Jacoby et al. (1977), temporary pathways include renting or loaning. Jacoby et al.'s (1977) renting and loaning have been adapted in later works to include renting, lending or swapping (Amiriara, 2018; Armstrong, Niinimäki, Kujala, Karell, & Lang, 2015; Chou, Chen, & Conley, 2015; Iran, 2018; Martin, Lazarevic, & Gullström, 2019; Zamani, Sandin, & Peters, 2017). Renting, lending and swapping are temporary disposition pathways categorised as collaborative consumption or access-based consumption (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Ertz et al., 2017; Niinimäki et al., 2020). Access-based consumption describes market-mediated transactions that do not result in the transfer of ownership but that afford the consumers access to items for which they are willing to make rental/access-based payments (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012).

Although there is a growing literature on used clothing in the Global South, much of these are within waste management as in solid waste management. Some of these works have predominantly focused on the end of life management of consumption objects. For instance, Adejuwon et al.'s (2024) quantitative work looked at how socio-economy influence the clothing consumption and disposal behaviours people in a tertiary institution in Southwest Nigeria. They essentially found clothing waste treated as part of household solid waste and disposed of accordingly (cf. Jazat et al., 2022). Similar focus and outcomes were recorded in Southeast Nigeria (Ononuju et al., 2021) and in the Northwest (Ishaq et al., 2023). See also Omole & Alakinde (2013), Ogunleye & Uzoma (2019) Sibanda et al. (2017) and Ohwofasa & Biose (2023). Waste in this literature constricts objects as *no longer unwanted* hence permanently gotten rid of. From personal experience living in Africa, this makes a lot of sense especially for used clothing whether or not they are imported. Clothing disposition in Nigeria generally follows Türe's (2014) converting, brutal use, and gradual garbaging. Clothing that are not wanted for their original intended use are generally converted to rag for cleaning around the house. In this way, there is gradually dissipated until they are no longer useful; they have become trash and ultimately trashed as waste. This is not to say that

used clothing items are not disposed of temporarily in the Global South or Nigeria for that matter. For instance, the researcher recollects clothing items that has been outgrown going from older to younger siblings. There is also a practice close to swapping which was popular in Nigeria around the 1980s and 1990s. This phenomenon was popular in Lagos, Southwest Nigeria and it was called *paaro* literally meaning exchange. In this practice, vendors go round communities to collect people's old but still wearable clothing. Most of the time, these are clothing items that their current owners no longer wants for reasons of fit or other situations both intrinsic and extrinsic to the clothing (Laitala, 2014; Laitala, Boks, & Klepp, 2015; De Ferran et al., 2020). The vendors would assess the clothing items that a prospect has to offer and give them a commensurate item usually plastic containers or other household product. In what seem like the only documented academic work on this practice, Bello (2019) explored *paaro* among women in Ilorin, also in Southwest Nigeria. This 2019 work found the practice of *paaro* in Ilorin to be very well intertwined with the peoples' religious belief systems. There are many platforms¹ adopting this exchange model especially on the internet. This *paaro* practice has evidently not yet attracted significant research attention or perhaps not yet published in popular academic journals or have not received significant citations. *For clarity*, *paaro* fits within temporary options that keep clothing for longer in circulation.

A thorough examination of major temporary disposition pathways show that these are much reversible pathways with the possibilities of the previous owners reusing or even re-owning a previously temporarily disposed clothing item. Importantly, two things are worthy of note from the forgoing. One, temporary disposition options keep clothing for longer in circulation and reduces the environmental impact of ultra-fast fashion and throwaway consumption cultures (Castellani et al., 2015; Garcia Martin, 2016; Laitala, 2014; Zamani, Sandin, & Peters, 2017). The second point worthy of note is that temporary disposition here draws a distinction between the *new*, *used* and the *unwanted*. Importantly, temporary clothing disposition evinces one of Thompson's (1979; 2017) transfers that *do happen* in figure 2-1 (reproduced below and emphasised in the red).

¹ <https://www.instagram.com/paaroonline/?hl=en-gb>, <https://www.f6s.com/company/paaro>



Temporary disposition evidences the possible transfers between the rubbish and the durable categories and not between the durable and the transient categories. As earlier observed in this chapter, durables do not go back to the transient category irrespective of how much value is now placed on them. This is because they have become used and no longer new. Although their being unwanted may constrict them to rubbish. However, the fact that they could still be put out for rent or on loan confirms the categorisation of their value as being above or not equal to zero.

This is not entirely the same for Winakor's (1969) items kept in active or inactive storage especially before they cross the line into the discard phase. Items moving between active and inactive storage are simply out of sight objects. They are yet in the transient category with their value decreasing with time and use. By this token, location may be less of an issue with keeping clothing out of sight. What matters is whether or not they get used again by their original owner. For instance, consumers may not necessarily *not want* items of clothing but may be constrained e.g., by limited closet space and thus opt to rent or loan those items to others. Again, there may be an interim change in taste for the particular consumer or going through a life stage and simply wanting to be excused from certain objects in their lives in the interim. What is more, these objects - put through collaborative consumption systems - may more than likely get back to their original owners but not as much as they can be taken out of inactive storage. As such, the questions of *not wanting* clothing items or items becoming unwanted does not arise until issues of fit, want and falling out of love with clothing makes consumers allow them to cross into the discard phase and permanently disposed of.

2.7.2 Permanent Clothing Disposition

Crossing from the inactive storage into the discard phase (Winakor, 1969) is the point in which used clothing becomes unwanted and follows alternative pathways. According to Jacoby et al. (1977), such unwanted objects are permanently disposed of by throwing them away, giving them away, trading or selling them. These permanent disposition pathways have also been adapted in later works. According to Jacoby et al. (1977) *throwing away* means binning, trashing or discarding like other household waste. Before the heightening debates on fashion's contribution to the current climate crisis, binning appears to be the default disposition pathway for clothing that consumers in the Global North (e.g., the UK) no longer want (Siegle, 2017; Weber, Lynes, & Young, 2017; Chavero, 2017; Payne & Binotto, 2017; WRAP, 2012, 2017; World Bank, 2019). In spite of the call to mitigate the contributions of ultra-fast fashion and throwaway consumption to the climate crisis, a 2019 World Bank report has it that around 87% of clothing items incinerated or landfilled annually (World Bank, 2019a). The figures from across the developed world put it at over 500,000 tonnes of usable fashion items landfilled annually in Australia (Payne & Binotto, 2017); over 85% in the US; over 75% in Europe (Chavero, 2017) and over 60% of usable clothing items discarded annually in the UK (Dwyer, 2010; House of Commons, 2019; WRAP, 2012, 2017, 2017b; Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017; ACS Clothing, 2020). Although similar figures of permanent clothing disposition are not available for the Global South, owing largely to missing or inaccurate official used clothing market trade records (Brooks, 2019; Sumo et al., 2023). Nevertheless, similar social processes and categorisation also determine which pathway unwanted clothing follow to permanent disposition.

Available evidence show that a significantly large volume of unwanted clothing is permanently disposed of along with other household solid waste in the Global South destinations that UK's unwanted clothing go. For instance, Adejuwon et al. (2024) found that although attempts to recycle used clothing do exist, these are quite insignificant compared to the volume that ends up in open landfills (cf. Jazat et al., 2022, Southwest Nigeria; Ononuju et al., 2021, Southeast Nigera; Ishaq et al., 2023, Northwest Nigeria). An equally significant proportion of used clothing in Nigeria end up in water bodies while others get burnt (Adejuwon et al., 2024). Similarly, Kuupole et al. (2024) found that although some Ghanaian consumers

would convert used clothing into bags and other household uses, majority would landfill or burn their unwanted clothing. There are equally other reports that aggregates around over 300,000 tonnes of clothing items landfilled or incinerated globally (WRAP, 2018; World Bank, 2019; Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017; ACS Clothing, 2020).

We may not know the exact figures that go through individual pathways. However we know that in the Global South, the permanent disposition pathway an unwanted clothing item will follow is influenced by factors such as complete absence of or inefficient waste management services and infrastructure, exorbitant costs, poor public attitude towards waste management and other logistical constraints (Omole & Alakinde, 2013; Ogunleye & Uzoma, 2019; Sibanda et al., 2017; Ishaq et al., 2023; Ohwofasa & Biose, 2023). Evidently, used and unwanted clothing items do move straight into and remain in the rubbish category. As seen above, used clothing items that social processes and practices have conspired to remove from circulation and consideration do end up in bins, landfills, water bodies and incinerators.

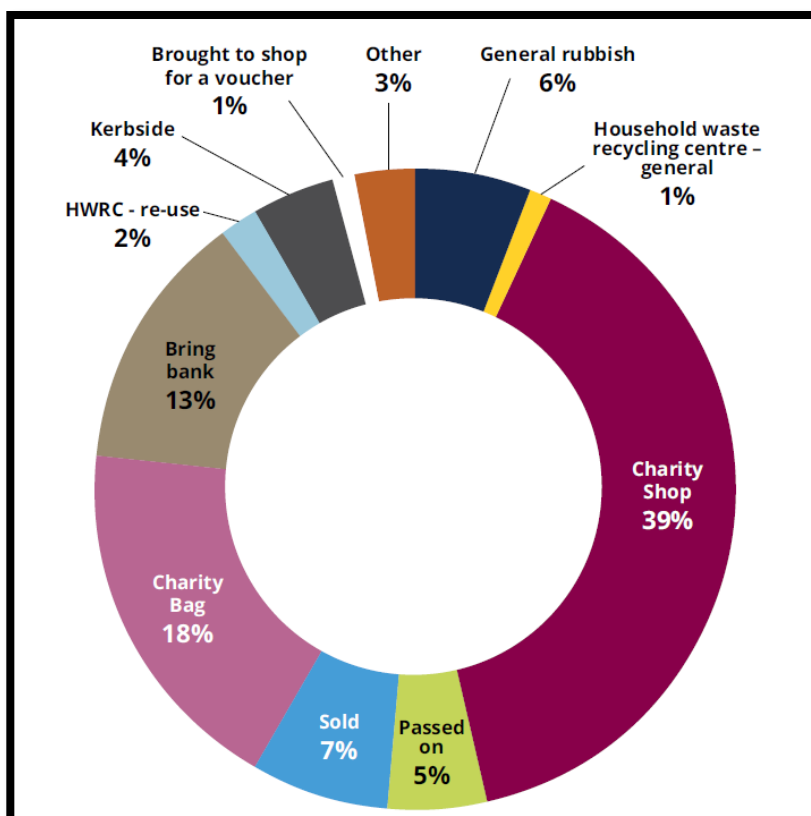
This notwithstanding, not all used and unwanted clothing items end up thrown away. As earlier observed in this chapter, one of the transfers that do happen in the rubbish theory is that of rubbish becoming durable. Such transformation is connected to a redefinition of value at the Thompson's (1979; 2017) rubbish-durable interface. Again, value redefinition is possible given that such clothing items - though used and unwanted - are neither necessarily useless nor have their value depleted to zero.

2.7.3 Value Redefinition

Value redefinition is a way of harnessing the power that resides in rubbish (Reno, 2009). In a way, it is part of our attempt at forging ethical relations with waste or discards (Hawkins, 2006). In other words, and as seen in Thompson's rubbish theory, unwanted objects are not entirely valueless. This is especially true for used clothing that enters second-hand economies. Used clothing in second-hand economies represent objects on a journey of value. On this journey, they enter a value regenerative interface or limbo (Reno, 2009; Hawkins, 2006) where they await the right economic use (O'Brien, 1999; Crang et al., 2013; Jackson, 2013; Alexander & O'Hare, 2023).

Value redefinition happens for both temporarily and permanently disposed of used and unwanted objects. The examples of value redefinition for temporarily disposed of used clothing have been seen earlier with renting and loaning. For one, renting and loaning allow consumers to share their clothing consumption experiences with others. Again, temporary disposition through renting and loaning also keeps clothing for longer in circulation diverting them from the bin.

Value redefinition for permanently disposed of clothing items is captured - in part - within Jacoby et al.'s (1977) trading and selling where consumers can exchange their unwanted objects for value. Examples of trading and selling include those done in makeshift arrangements like traditional car boots and garage sales (e.g., Herrmann, 1997; Bianchi & Birtwistle, 2010; Shaw & Williams, 2018). However, the distinction that Jacoby et al. (1977) make between trading and selling is blurred by the proliferation of many intermediate agents, systems and resources mediating collaborative consumption in fashion consumption (cf. Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Chou, Chen, & Conley, 2015; Ertz et al., 2017; Lang & Joyner Armstrong, 2018). Selling constitute about 7% of permanent used clothing disposition in the UK (see WRAP, 2017a; figure 2-6).



Source: WRAP (2017a)

Figure 2-4: Disposal Routes for Garments in the UK

Selling traditionally involves the exchange of items for money or other agreed considerations. Selling of used clothing takes place through makeshift marketplace encounters like traditional car boots sales (Bianchi & Birtwistle, 2010; Shaw & Williams, 2018). Selling of unwanted clothing items also takes place online through 'small ads' on dedicated apps, web resources and social media platforms (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Chou, Chen, & Conley, 2015; Lang & Joyner Armstrong, 2018). What is more, online selling, renting, swapping, redesigning and repairing of used clothing all represent adaptation of Jacoby et al.'s (1977) trading and selling. These recent adaptations - especially those that allow consumers to share their clothing consumption experiences with others - are part of consumers response to calls to divert used and unwanted clothing from landfills (Lang & Joyner Armstrong, 2018; Martin, Lazarevic, & Gullström, 2019).

Another permanent disposition pathway in Jacoby et al. (1977) that has been reframed is what Jacoby et al. (1977) termed giving away. *Giving it away* could either be by *gifting* or *donating* (Bubna & Norum, 2017; Laitala, 2014; Norum, 2017; Wai Yee et al., 2016; WRAP, 2017a, 2018). Gifting is handing used clothing items down to family, friends, and other familiar beneficiaries. Used clothing items that follow this pathway constitute about 5% of permanent used clothing disposition in the UK (see WRAP, 2017a; figure 2-6). Some would also share with friends with whom they share similar tastes in clothing and fashion (see Bianchi & Birtwistle, 2010; Hernandez-Curry, 2018). Gifting is significantly altruistic and one of the permanent disposition options that redefine value of used clothing from unwanted or waste to second-hand (Garcia Martin, 2016; Zamani, Sandin, & Peters, 2017). Although they also become second-hand, the used clothing items that are altruistically gifted are distinct from those that follow the trading and selling pathways in that the former are *given* rather than commodified or marketised (e.g., Belk, 2020). Nevertheless, their value is also redefined such that rather than going straight into the bin they get a second life of use. Also situated between altruism and commodification is the other adaptation of Jacoby et al.'s (1977) giving away - i.e., clothing donation.

2.8 Clothing Donation

Clothing donation is another value redefining permanent disposition pathway in which clothing owners donate - largely altruistically - unwanted clothing to strangers through charity organisations. With between 57% and 89% of unwanted

clothing channelled through charity organisations, clothing donation is the UK's most preferred pathway for permanently getting rid of used and unwanted clothing (House of Commons, 2019a; WRAP, 2017a; Bianchi & Birtwistle, 2010; Payne & Binotto, 2017; Williams & Shaw, 2017; Diop & Shaw, 2018; Shaw & Williams, 2018). See Figure 2-6 above.

As shown in figure 2-6, clothing consumers in the UK are not without other disposition options. Regrettably, about 6% of used but still usable clothing still ends up in bins along with general household rubbish. Happily, a good percentage still go through pathways that keep them longer in circulation or in other words transforming them from the rubbish into the durable category. These include around 7% and 5% percent that are sold and given away respectively; about 3% that get re-used or recycled; the 4% that go through kerbside collections, and another 4% taken back to store or to other destinations. Then there are charity collections which are by far the largest at around 57% or around 650,000 tonnes of used clothing collected annually (WRAP, 2017b). The House of Commons (2019a) also found that in addition to those dropped off at charity shops, donated used clothing is also collected from donors' residences, used clothing banks at car parks, schools and in collaboration with high street retailers. It is also instructive to note that with 13% going through bring bank arrangements in local areas and knowing that charity organisations also collect through such arrangements, the figure for charity organisations can indeed be higher. Evidently, donation is the UK's most preferred permanent disposition pathway for used and unwanted clothing (see also De Ferran et al., 2020). Although the mode and motive may differ, donating used clothing is also a very well preferred clothing disposition method in Global South markets. As the findings of Adejuwon et al.'s (2024) study suggest, Nigerian younger clothing consumers prefer recycling options including donation given their consciousness of the need for textile reuse. Instructively, strong resistance to donate was recorded by older consumers with higher disposable income in Adejuwon et al.'s (2024) study among staff of the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. This resistance, according to Adejuwon et al. (2024), results from their preference for clothing made from natural fibre, costlier, of better quality and longer lasting compared to imported used clothing. Nevertheless, Odero (2023) and Kuupole et al. (2024) also observed that a significant proportion of clothing reuse in Kenya and Ghana respectively is through

clothing donation to orphanages and churches. Again, whereas donating used clothing is highly preferred in South Africa, these goes largely to local needy individuals is (Sonnenberg et al., 2022). This is similar in many ways to what Saunders (2010) found in an earlier work in South Africa where the church - and not charity organisations - served as a conduit for passing gifted used clothing to new users. Similar accounts of used clothing going directly to the needy are available about other places in the Global South. For example, Cruz-Cárdenas & del Val Núñez (2016) and Cruz-Cárdenas, González, & del Val Núñez (2016) found gifting to family, friends, and acquaintances as a most preferred disposition pathway for used clothing in Ecuador. This, according to them, is a consistent reality in collectivist culture and contrary to those in the individualistic cultures predominantly captured in mainstream theorising. Part of their findings is also that gifting used clothing in this way constitutes veritable means of truly helping others and strengthening relationships among close relatives and neighbours. Similarly, comparing the findings in their UK and Senegal study, Diop & Shaw (2018) observed that, gifting is a significant part of material culture in collective societies. Although they found about 30% of used clothing going through charity organisations in Senegal, the remaining goes directly to friends and family and the homeless with only about 1% binned. What Cruz-Cárdenas & del Val Núñez (2016) and Cruz-Cárdenas, González, & del Val Núñez (2016) found in Ecuador is significantly supported by Diop & Shaw's (2018) finding in Senegal, that gifting results in directly tangible and visible outcomes like building stronger ties between givers and receivers. Hernandez-Curry (2018) also reported similar predominant direct gifting rather than through charity organisations in her New Zealand and Papua New Guinea study. Other similar works include Wai Yee, Hassan, & Ramayah (2016) and Weng et al. (2016) in Malaysia and Bianchi & Birtwistle (2012) in Australia and Chile.

Irrespective of the channel however, donation constitutes a veritable permanent clothing disposition pathway, part of the social categorisation process and practice that redefine the value in rubbish and transforms them into durable objects. The question then is what motivates clothing donors?

2.8.1 Motivation for Clothing Donation

In extant theorising, two main themes emerge as the motivation for donating unwanted clothing in the Global North. These main themes are concern for the environment and concern for the society. In the first theme, donating used clothing falls within the broader definition of environmental responsibility. This is especially with the heightening interest occasioned by the existential challenges posed by ultra-fast fashion and throwaway consumption cultures. In doing their bits to address fashion industry's impact on the environment, unwanted clothing donation is one of the ways in which some Global North fashion consumers are heeding the call to divert unwanted clothing from landfills (Bianchi & Birtwistle, 2010; Payne & Binotto, 2017; Williams & Shaw, 2017; WRAP, 2017a; Diop & Shaw, 2018; Shaw & Williams, 2018) See chapter 1 of this thesis. This aligns unwanted clothing donation with consciously making rational and responsible consumption choices that can potentially positively impact humanity and humanity's living environment. Since Shim (1995) and Fisk (1973), consumers' attitude towards the environment remains a stronger motivator for their unwanted clothing donation (see Agrawal & Gupta, 2018; Gupta & Agrawal, 2018; Khare, 2014; Stern, 2000; Straughan & Roberts, 1999). It is important to note that it is not every clothing donor in the Global North that buys into donating to save the environment. For instance, Bianchi & Birtwistle (2010) found clothing donors in Australia who donate for hedonic reasons, e.g. gaining additional closet space for new items (Gregson & Crewe, 2003; Ha-Brookshire & Hodges, 2009a; Prosic-Dvornic, 2022). Nonetheless, donating rather than binning unwanted clothing keeps clothing items longer in circulation thus reducing the pressure of extraction of raw material for new production (Castellani et al., 2015; Garcia Martin, 2016; Laitala, 2014; Zamani, Sandin, & Peters, 2017).

The second theme of social responsibility is captured as philanthropism (e.g., Gregson & Crewe, 2003; Joung & Park-Poaps, 2013) or donating due to concern for others. This aligns with socially responsible behaviour theorised in extant literature as consciously making socially responsible consumption choices resulting in minimum harm and long-term maximum benefit to society (Caruana & Chatzidakis, 2014; Devinney et al., 2006; Ha-Brookshire & Hodges, 2009; López Davis et al., 2017; Mohr et al., 2001; Webster Jr, 1975; Yan & She, 2011). Again, one can debate the low patronage for donated clothing in the Global North due to

the availability of cheap and new alternatives (Brooks & Simon, 2012; Norris, 2015; Payne & Binotto, 2017). It can also be argued that encouraging donation may be tantamount to licensing an unending shopping spree (Blanken et al., 2015; Khan & Dhar, 2006; Kristofferson, White & Peloza, 2014). However, clothing donation in the UK is documented to create affordable clothing for some low-income consumers in the Global North. Besides, UK's donated clothing is reportedly helping others through the provision of affordable clothing for low-income consumers in the Global South (Hansen, 2004; Abimbola, 2012; Brooks & Simon, 2012; Norris, 2015; Wetengere, 2018; Sumo et al., 2023). Again, available records also show that the funds raised through the sales of these donated clothing are used to fund the charity organisations' many humanitarian projects (Brooks et al., 2021; Guo & Xu, 2021; Horne, 2000).

Overall, donating - rather than binning - unwanted clothing aligns with the broader goals of sustainability in ensuring that current choices and behaviour are consistent with maintaining the prosperity of our planet and the people over time and space (Rex, 2008). Donating rather than binning unwanted clothing connects quite many elements that humanity finds important including our collective prosperity and longevity and sustainability of continued life on this planet. According to Gregson & Crewe (2003) for instance, the good old housekeeping practice of creating closet space for new buys simultaneously serves consumers' philanthropic aspirations as well as the economic motives of exchange used objects for cash. At a minimum, donating also contribute to a redefinition of our societal and ecological relationships through our consumption choices (Black et al., 2016). It has however been equally established in this chapter that clothing donation is a main route through which UK's used and unwanted clothing enter second-hand economies.

Despite these connections, there is an evident disconnect between what we know about Global North consumers' clothing donation and the eventual use and disposition of these clothing in the Global South where they end up. We know that new clothing items do become rubbish because their value decreases with use and age. We also know that the value of these used clothing items whose previous owners no longer want becomes redefined at donate to charity organisations and thus transformed into the durable category. We equally know that they do get to live second lives in other destinations - especially in the Global South. Whereas

we know that disintegration continues to happen with objects even in the durable category irrespective of how much they are now valued. Our knowledge - and the theorising that they informs - is yet to capture the future lives of these donated clothing items in their future destinations (Hansen & Le Zotte, 2019a, 2019b; Brooks, 2019; House of Commons, 2021a; Sumo et al., 2023). This disconnect is explored in the next section of this thesis.

2.8.2 Future Destinations and Concern for UK's Donated Used Clothing

We have seen so far in this chapter that significantly large volume of used and unwanted clothing items that would have been constricted to the rubbish category in the UK and thrown away do get transformed into the durable objects with a significant percentage going through UK charity organisations. However, giving the abundance of cheaper, ultra-fast fashion alternatives, there is evidently low patronage of these donated clothing items in donors' local markets (Brooks & Simon, 2012; Norris, 2015; Payne & Binotto, 2017).. For example, Brooks & Simon (2012, 1274) noted that used clothing collectors sell donated clothing obtained from affluent countries like the UK to poor consumers in Haiti or the Philippines and especially in Africa because these donated items are "locally undesirable". In other words, UK used clothing consumers buy only about 30% of the used clothing that UK clothing donors donate (Brooks, 2013; Norris, 2015). Payne & Binotto (2017) also observed that externalising reuse by shipping them abroad is how Australian charity organisations also deal with their high volume of donated used clothing - those of poor quality (cf. House of Commons, 2019). Giving the charity organisations business models, it is hardly surprising then that the UN puts the volume of donated clothing sold to destinations outside the UK at an estimated £3bn (Gittleson, 2018). Evidently, clothing reuse in the UK is significantly externalised with over two-third of donated clothing shipped to markets in the Global South. Two related questions beg addressing from this reality about the commodification of donated clothing and the externalisation of UK's clothing reuse - i.e., the question of convenience, power and control and the question of traceability.

2.8.2.1 The Question of Convenience, Power and Control

What if the externalisation of UK's clothing reuse is a matter of convenience? Is it not easier to simply ship unwanted clothing abroad than to have to deal with such challenges as posed by ultra-fast fashion and throwaway? Again, is it mere coincidence that most global second-hand clothing trade arrangements are usually between parties with prior colonial experiences? Attempts to answer these questions have been made in diverse case in the literature but mostly only raising further questions unanswered. Take the example of how used commodities enter Global South markets. As Crang et al. (2013, 22) noted, used commodities do not enter second-hand economies at the behest and specification of Global South consumers. The question of behest and specification and the lack of sellers' interest in the future destinations of these bales shipped to other markets raise further questions. A veritable example here would be that of polyester ending up in tropical climates like sub-Saharan Africa. As Baker (2019) observed the

Twitter hashtag #SWEDOW (stuff we don't want) is evidence of a trail of second-hand commodities, from underwear to shoes, and baby slings, that do not necessarily have a utility in the places they are sent to (Baker, 2019, 3).

This here is a pointer to the strength in the argument that shipping unwanted stuff to other locations is more of a matter of convenience. Another relevant question here is that of the sorting process for what is retained for home consumption and what is shipped abroad. Abimbola (2012), Brooks (2012) and Arenas et al. (2015) all document how sorting at every stage in the Global North retains only better qualities in the Global North. Current sorting processes are configured in such a way that only those considered unacceptable in Global North markets are pushed further down the line with the majority ending up in sub-Saharan African markets. Even where Global South merchants endeavour to participate in the sorting in the Global North (e.g., Abimbola, 2012), outcomes are far insignificant thus leaving choice out of the equation for most Global South used clothing consumers. Without meaningful participation in the sorting process/system, choice is only but a matter of what is available.

The question of control is equally yet an ongoing debate. For instance, available evidence has it that UK's second-hand clothing is predominantly shipped to former colonies in West Africa e.g., Ghana and Nigeria (Schatz, 1984; Abimbola, 2012; Amanor, 2018; Areo & Areo, 2015; Sumo et al., 2023). Similarly, Oxfam's *Frip*

Ethique can also be linked to the British's periods of occupation of Senegal (Forster, 1997; Makales, 2022; Webb, 1997). In the same vein, Le Relais' *Roba Amiga* is also a French social enterprise operating second-hand clothing trade with local traders in Senegal - a former French colony (Arenas, Hai, & Siclari, 2015). See also Areo & Areo (2015), Brooks & Simon (2012), Hansen (2004), and Manieson & Ferrero-Regis (2022). Evidently, the narratives of used clothing trade in West Africa support the convenience, power and control thesis especially with its configuration along colonial connexions (Abimbola, 2012; Brooks, 2019; Amanor, 2018; Areo & Areo, 2015; Forster, 1997; Makales, 2022; Webb, 1997; Arenas, Hai, & Siclari, 2015). This is supported by arguments further afield about global consumer culture being the new drivers of global capitalism (Ger, Karababa, Kuruoglu, Ture, & Yenicioglu, 2018). What is more, these market-mediated relationships - especially between the Global North and the Global South - are defined along the neo-colonial discourses of *making a difference*, *helplessness*, *sentimentality*, and *power asymmetry* (Kadomskaia et al., 2020). The sentiment around helping and making a difference have already been seen in the ways UK's used clothing is argued as helping the poor in these Global South Markets. Part of the helping thesis also has it that funds raised go to fund humanitarian projects in the UK. The question here is who is helping whom? Who benefits more from shipping unwanted and unsellable used clothing to consumers in former colonies? While this is not to discountenance the fact that UK's used clothing is favourably received in these former colonies. It is not new that Nigerian clothing consumers have high taste for imported clothing - used and new alike. For example 60% of the consumers in Folorunso's (2013) study preferred imported products to locally made alternatives. Many blame this taste for imported products for the declining trends in the country's textile industry. Strong connections have been made to global capitalism or globalisation (e.g. Jacob et al., 2021). One of such connections, according to Sassen (2014) is in the repositioning Global South markets not only as sites of extraction but also to create market opportunities for Global North merchants to escape competition at home. It is thus not surprising that such market-mediated relations as the global trade in used clothing have been documented as effectively diverting waste from local to other landfills (e.g., Bick et al., 2018; Coventry, 2019; DeVoy et al., 2021; Whyte, 2020). This is not ignoring that fact of having no say in what is shipped down and non-participation in the sorting process are all evidence of power asymmetry (Abimbola, 2012;

Varman, 2019). In spite of this, extant sustainability narratives continue to valorise the Global North at the expense of the Global South (Anantharaman, 2018; Coventry, 2019; Varman, 2019). For instance, despite the commodification of donation and consequent externalisation of UK's clothing reuse, used clothing donation in the UK is yet seen as a matter of doing good for the environment - i.e., by sustainably diverting clothing waste from UK bins, landfills and incinerators (Bianchi & Birtwistle, 2010; Ha-Brookshire & Hodges, 2009a; Joung & Park-Poaps, 2013; Lee et al., 2013; Prosic-Dvornic, 2022; Shim, 1995; Wai Yee et al., 2016). In other words, saving the environment at home while polluting other people's environments is deemed fashionable, sustainable and helpful. Beyond this - and yet closely connected to it - are the adverse effects of shipping of UK's used clothing on local textile industries in the Global South, (Amanor, 2018; Hill & Taylor, 2015) including health complications from wearing clothes previously worn by others (Wetengere, 2018) and consequently, the worsening of socioeconomic conditions in these countries (Kinabo, 2004; Norris, 2015; Kabanda, 2016; Wetengere, 2018; DeVoy et al., 2021; Manieson & Ferrero-Regis, 2022).

The diversion from local to other landfills is further substantiated by the evident lack of concern for what becomes of these used clothing items in their future destinations. This lack of concern is a major contention in this thesis. This is especially giving the gap in both knowledge and theorisation resulting from mainstream consumer researchers' theorisation predominantly from the perspective of their Global North cultural origins (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011; Guarín & Knorringa, 2014; Varman, 2019). For instance, the burgeoning discard literature as well as those theorising clothing disposition as *diversion from the bin* remains significantly Western-centric. Despite the shipping of tonnes of UK's donated used clothing through charity organisations to other markets in the Global South, the future use and disposition of these used clothing items is significantly missing in extant theorisation (Hansen & Le Zotte, 2019a, 2019b).

The above section clearly shows that in many ways, the global trade in used clothing - especially in its current configuration along colonial ties - is heavily contentious. However, it is important to not ignore the acceptability of these clothing items in the colonies to which they are shipped (Abimbola, 2012; Arenas et al., 2015; Areo & Areo, 2015). There are two critical point to note from the above section.

First, it is critical to note that these trade and exchange encounters subsist - and in fact are getting bigger still to an estimated £3bn (Gittleston, 2018). This is not surprising especially as ultra-fast fashion remains a staple of fashion consumption in the UK. Again, encouraged and supported by waste governance institutions and infrastructure, some UK clothing consumers are embracing donation rather than binning used and unwanted clothing. It can be argued that donors may not all be pursuing sustainable goals. For instance, we know that used clothing donors donate to free up closet space for new purchases. In other words, harnessing used clothing donation's "powerful redemptive capacity" (Norris, 2015, 183). In this way, donating becomes as a kind of good deed and a way of overcoming the guilt of buying more while having a wardrobe full of unworn clothing items (Ha-Brookshire & Hodges, 2009a; Prosic-Dvornic, 2022). The danger in this is then that this good old housekeeping practice of creating closet space for new buys - combined with high affordability - create a vicious cycle for which there is no apparent end to the global trade in used clothing anytime soon (Blanken et al., 2015; Khan & Dhar, 2006; Kristofferson, White & Peloza, 2014). We can also argue that donation helps others. However, the markedly huge disparity between the volume being donated and local patronage for used clothing in the UK will also always mean that there will always be a need to externalise UK clothing reuse. In part, externalisation fits the mitigating climate crisis argument of creating opportunities for clothing reuse by diverting them from the bin. Commodification and externalisation will also continue to support the UK charity organisations' fund raising for their many humanitarian projects (Brooks et al., 2021; Guo & Xu, 2021; Horne, 2000). Both of these align with the helping argument - i.e., saving the environment and helping others.

A second critical point of note here is the fact that some of these trade and exchange relationships predate contemporary sustainability and climate crisis narratives. For instance, Abimbola (2012) observed how the trade in used clothing between UK and Nigeria began around the 1940s with the Port Harcourt Igbo traders buying UK ex-military supplies (see also Areo & Areo, 2015). Further, despite Nigeria's ban on the importation of used clothing (Schatz, 1984), Nigeria remains the final destination for a large percentage of second-hand clothing imported into West Africa (Abimbola, 2012; Brooks & Simon, 2012; Brooks, 2019). Evidently, while ultra-fast fashion continues to create huge supply of used clothing

in the UK, there is a seemingly insatiable demand for imported products in the Global South. It thus appears a matter of convenience for UK finding markets for its used clothing surpluses just as it equally appears convenient for markets in the Global South to absorb these surpluses. However, despite these realities of convenience and enduring trade and exchange relationships, there are yet the questions of traceability.

2.8.2.2 The Question of Traceability

Admittedly, emerging works are beginning to pay attention to global second-hand economies, (e.g., Brooks, 2019; Brooks, 2013; Norris, 2012; Crang et al., 2013; Gregson & Crang, 2015). However, most of these works have yet to traverse the purchase and 'use' level. According to (Hansen & Le Zotte, 2019).

[T]he sourcing, handling, buying, and selling of second-hand objects and materials rather than their subsequent use have drawn the most central attention by scholars. Most works, historical as well as contemporary, stop their analysis at the point of purchase. (Hansen & Le Zotte, 2019, 4 - 5).

Not yet traversing the point of purchase by Hansen & Le Zotte (2019) above is instructive of the lack of knowledge of the future lives, use and disposition of used items that are traded in global second-hand economies. In her evidence given to the Environmental Audit Committee (House of Commons, 2021a), Maud Hardy observed that

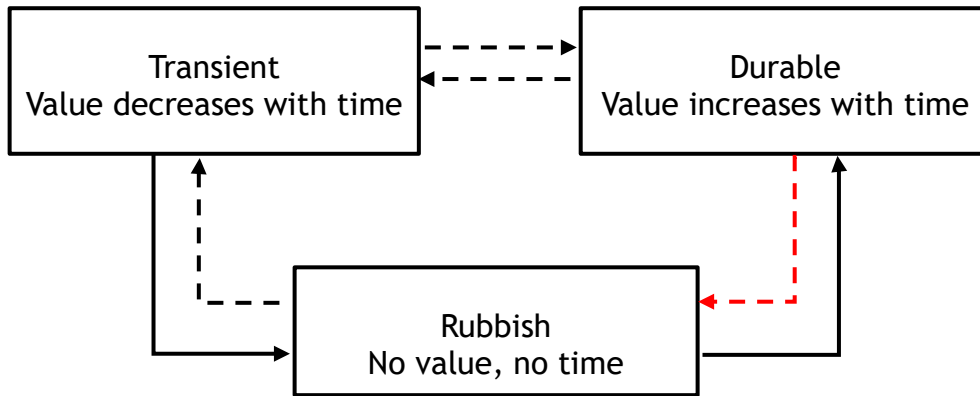
The traceability we have ends - I would say - once the sorter is declaring whom they are selling their material - reuse or recycle - to a customer. Then we lose the traceability. [...] Once you have exported your wastes outside, I would say, the regional area, the regional European area, you lose traceability (Maud Hardy, Circular Economy Director, Refashion - House of Commons, 2021a).

UK fashion industry reports also confirm that:

Clothing distributed outside the UK, either directly by the charity or following transfer to another organisation, remains an area where there is not enough information. (WRAP, 2018, 19)

Hardy's reference to lack of traceability is also corroborated by WRAP (2018) above and confirms Hansen & Le Zotte's (2019a) and Crang et al.'s (2013) lack of interest in the future lives and destinations of UK's donated used clothing. Importantly, outside the European trade region, especially in Sub-Saharan African markets, official trade records about the used clothing market are either missing or inaccurate (Brooks, 2019; Sumo et al., 2023). Absent or inaccurate trade data means we do even know the exact volume that is traded let alone having any idea of what becomes of them. Further, this lack of traceability and interest in the future lives of these donated clothing that is shipped abroad strengthens the argument raised earlier about diversion from local to other landfills. For example, is the problem a lack of traceability or trackability? Is it that UK exporters of used clothing are unable to trace shipments, or do they lack the resources to track the journeys and future destinations and lives of their shipments? Or could it be that shipping without tracing or tracking is a matter of convenience?

Instructively therefore, lack of traceability appears more like a matter of convenience and lack of interest in the future destinations and lives of UK's used clothing shipped abroad. By implication, matter of convenience lends credence to the diversion to other landfills argument. It also supports the valorisation of the Global North at the expense of the Global South (cf. Anantharaman, 2018; Varman, 2019). In these arguments, the matter of convenience is further validated in that while the Global North takes credit for sustainable clothing disposition, the actual burden for the end-of-life management of these unwanted used clothing is pushed to others, especially in the Global South. More importantly, little to nothing is known about what becomes of these clothing in their new locations. The critical theoretical question remains about the transfers that Thompson claims do not happen at the durable-rubbish interface (see figure 2-1 reproduced below and emphasised in the red).



Giving that disintegration is a continuous reality for even objects in the durable category, it is imperative to ask: where do durable objects go when social processes and practices categorise them as no longer fit for purposeful use?

To sum up, unwanted clothing in the Global North is kept for original use or repurposed. Others are trashed, sold, gifted, or donated for reuse. A substantial volume of the clothing following the donation pathway also goes on to other destinations with neither traceability nor concern for what becomes of these clothing items in their new destinations. This lack of traceability and concern about the future destination, use and disposal of UK's donated clothing is problematic. As the evidence made available to the Environmental Audit Committee of the House of Commons shows, the volume of clothing donated by UK consumers and the volume that is shipped abroad are raising huge concerns (Brooks & Simon, 2012; Hansen, 2004; House of Commons, 2019a, 2019b, 2021 Norris, 2015; Payne & Binotto, 2017). This problem can be seen in at least four ways. One, the availability of cheaper, ultra-fast fashion and clothing alternatives means low patronage of used clothing in donors' local markets (Brooks & Simon, 2012; Norris, 2015; Payne & Binotto, 2017). Two, donation licenses new buys and is also encouraged as environmentally sustainable and socially responsible behaviour. Encouraging donation without effectively dealing with ultra-fast fashion may be tantamount to licensing an unending shopping spree (Blanken et al., 2015; Khan & Dhar, 2006; Kristofferson, White & Pelaza, 2014). Three, encouraging donations while donors seem to be on a shopping spree thus leading charity organisations to externalise UK's clothing reuse seems more like a scheme for diverting clothing waste from local to other landfills. Four and most

importantly, extant theorisation remains largely from the Global North's perspective. By this token, the future destinations, use and disposition of commodified UK's donated used clothing that is shipped to the Global South is significantly under theorised thus representing a dearth in what we currently know about what becomes of rubbish at the end of their lives in the durable category (Thompson, 1979, 2017).

2.9 Conclusion

This concluding section summarises the review in this chapter to establish the evident dearth of research into second-hand clothing disposition in the Global South. It establishes the disconnect between extant theorising on clothing disposition in the Global North and similar realities in the Global South. Around five decades ago, Winakor (1969) and Jacoby et al. (1977) commenced the enquiry into disposition. Today, their enquiry continues to receive research attention. In this age of climate crisis and debate about the non-sustainability of the fashion industry, one of the key areas of investigation is sustainable disposition of used and unwanted clothing (Cruz-Cárdenas & Arévalo-Chávez, 2018). Millions of tonnes of used clothing that would have gone to landfills or incinerated in the Global North now feed the global trade in used clothing. A greater percentage of these clothing are shipped to destinations in the Global South. Yet only little research attention has been dedicated to used clothing usage and disposition in the Global South (Sumo et al., 2023). What is more, even the few examples are already showing that the current theorisation that over-generalises Global North's consumption narratives needs rethinking and reworking. First, there is a significant dearth of research connecting used clothing to the eventual disposition in their new destinations. This is not to say that there is no research attempt at understanding clothing disposition in the Global South. Quite the contrary as can be seen in chapter 1 of this thesis. However, these works have predominantly focussed on new first-hand clothing. Second, even the available works on clothing consumption and disposition behaviour in the Global South follow a different narrative than those in the mainstream theorising. This has been shown in this chapter to be the result of differences in cultural, socioeconomic realities motivating behaviour in different places (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011; Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Guarín & Knorringa, 2014). Consequently, disposition realities in the Global South also differ (e.g., Adejuwon et al., 2024; Kuupole et al., 2024).

In spite of these disparities, there is a tendency in mainstream research investigating second-hand economies to ignore the future lives, use and disposition of second-hand objects in their future destinations (Hansen & Le Zotte, 2019; Crang et al., 2013). The focus of extant consumer research is almost exclusively on Western consumption (Guarín & Knorrinda, 2014) and theories largely reflecting their authors' (Western) culture of origin (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011; Varman, 2019). This Western-centrism means that mainstream theorising in consumer research continues to ignore available evidence that consumption and disposition behaviour differ across geographies. For example, they ignore differences in the state of ontological security in each location (e.g., Thompson et al. 2018; Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Guarín & Knorrinda, 2014). They equally ignore the differences in the state of policies that support and incentivise sustainable and responsible behaviour including tax exemptions (Paras, Pal, & Ekwall, 2018) like Gift Aid (Williams, Darwish, Schneider, & Michael, 2020; cf. Wallace, 2009; Morley, Bartlett, & McGill, 2009) as well as institutions, infrastructure and other frameworks for participatory democracy like the ones aimed at fixing fashion and reducing waste in the UK (House of Commons, 2019; DEFRA, 2018; The Scottish Government, 2016; 2019).

Whereas it can be seen so far in this chapter and earlier in chapter 1 of this thesis that shipping of UK's used and unwanted clothing to Nigeria is convenient for both parties, empirical data about the use and disposal of these donated clothing items is still significantly missing in mainstream theorisation (cf. Agrawal & Gupta, 2018; Anantharaman, 2018; Hammad, Muster, El-Bassiouny, & Schaefer, 2019; Malier, 2019). This unavailable critical data resulting from the current lack of significant interest in the future use and disposition of these used clothing items in their new destinations still makes things seem more like diverting waste from local to other landfills. In other words, pushing the responsibility for the end-of-life management of UK's used clothing down the line i.e., from Global North consumers to the charity organisations who then pass the burden through recyclers, exporters, importers, wholesalers, and retailers onto the consumers in the Global South (Arenas et al., 2015; Norum, 2015; Wetengere, 2018). Whilst we do not yet know what becomes of these used clothing, there is a significantly prosperous over-generalisation of Global North narratives on the rest of the world. Importantly, by theorising from their relative cultural, socioeconomic and

demographic realities, mainstream consumer researchers have yet to sufficiently address Jacoby et al.'s (1977) questions about whether or not different consumers from different socio-economic segments may take different pathways to disposition (cf. Norum, 2015).

There is thus a research imperative to follow the millions of tonnes of used clothing that are shipped from the Global North to their new destinations in the Global South. This is critical to fill the evident gap in knowledge regarding used objects that enter second-hand economies (Hansen & Le Zotte, 2019a, 2019b; House of Commons, 2021a, 2021b; WRAP, 2017b). It is equally imperative to address this critical omission in mainstream theorisation by uncovering other forms of divestments that are yet missing in mainstream used clothing consumption and disposition literature (Lastovicka & Fernandez (2005). Equally imperative is the need to offer evidential data to answer the yet unanswered questions as to the transfer that Thompson (1979, 2017) claims do not happen especially with objects in the durable category not becoming rubbish. Two basic assumptions in Thompson's (1979, 2017) rubbish theory are premised on objects disintegrating and that irrespective of how long objects linger in any category, membership is not rigid (section 2.4).

As Thompson claims, the rubbish theory sufficiently rescues us from what he terms the “blinkered self-delusion of orthodox economic reasoning” (p.5). In other words, the rubbish category is essential to the re-valuing of things and critical to the transfers that occur - or not - during market and social exchanges. On the one hand, caring for possessions, attempting to retain their lustre and light and value is a way of keeping them longer in the transient category thus preventing or delaying their becoming rubbish. On the other hand, when they eventually become rubbish, enacting interventions to re-categorise them is a way to re-emphasise the value left in them or the value that they are yet able to command albeit the patina of age. Such interventions are such that eventually facilitate their transfer from the rubbish into the durable category. What then happens to objects at the end of their lingering in the durable category?

To clarify, and with regards to clothing disposition, the rubbish theory is clear about transfers at the transient-rubbish interface. Clothing items depreciate and disintegrate with use and time. Due to factors and situation both intrinsic and extrinsic to the clothing items including such constraints as creating closet space

for new buys, such used clothing items become unwanted and enters the rubbish category. They get placed out of sight and possibly later donated to charity organisations thus entering the durable category. The theory is also clear about transfers at the rubbish-durable interface where used clothing items that are donated to charity organisations do get second lives of use and value. Again, we know that irrespective of how much used clothing items in the durable category are cared for and cherished, transfers at the durable-transient interface do not happen. In other words, used clothing items carry the patina of age and hardly go back to their prime days. What is not clearly addressed - a question yet unanswered in the rubbish theory - is regarding what becomes of objects in the durable category i.e., where do objects in the durable category end up? In other words, what about the transfer at the durable-rubbish interface? A pertinent question - at the durable-rubbish interface - which the current study asks is regarding the future lives of and onward destinations for second-hand clothing items at the end of their second purposeful lives in the Global South. By way of interrogating Thompson's rubbish theory, it is imperative to ask: do used clothing items shipped to the Global South remain in the durable category in perpetuity? Thompson's rubbish theory thus provide a veritable lens to review extant disposition taxonomy as to the future use and disposition pathways for UK used clothing that are shipped to marketplaces and consumers in the Global South hence the first research question in this thesis.

Research question 1

RQ1. How do second-hand clothing consumers in Nigeria use and dispose of second-hand clothing that comes from the Global North?

This first research question addresses the current study's first objective in two ways. One, it addresses the disconnect between clothing disposition in the Global North and similar behaviour in the Global South where millions of tonnes of used clothing from the Global North are shipped. Two, it addresses the unanswered question at the durable-rubbish interface of the rubbish theory i.e., where do objects in the durable category end up?

Chapter 3 - Rituals

“Both the foundational literature in anthropology and recent work in consumer behaviour affirm the assumption that rituals—structured, repeated, symbolic, and expressive activities—might be one context where extraordinary beliefs shape consumer experiences.” (Otnes et al., 2018)

3.1 Introduction to Chapter 3

Chapter 3 is the second review chapter in this thesis. Chapter 3 reviews extant consumption ritual literature with focus on clothing disposition. In the previous chapter (section 2.4), the value judgements informing clothing disposition have been seen as part of broader social processes of object categorisation (e.g., Appadurai, 1986; Kopytoff, 1986; Reno, 2009; Gregson & Crewe, 2003; Thompson, 1979; 2017). Importantly, both Winakor's (1969) process of clothing consumption and Jacoby et al.'s (1977) disposition taxonomy are products of consumers ascribing social properties to physical consumption objects or value (re)categorisation. It is this value (re)categorisation that determines whether unwanted used clothing is kept in inactive storage, gifted to family, friends and neighbours, donated to charity organisations or thrown-away. Being the outcome of social processes, the episodic nature of the behaviour exhibited by consumers in disengaging with their possessions is theorised in consumer research as part of a broader set of ritualised behaviours (cf. Bell, 1992; Rook, 1985; McCracken, 1986; Epp & Price, 2010; Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005). A burgeoning work continues to explore divestment rituals. All these enquiries however terminate at that point when possessions move to the next owner/user. There is a dearth of research exploring divestment ritual beyond current Western centric purviews - particularly beyond reversible exchanges and transfers. The question of ritual behaviours that manifest when possessions are not transferred to other owners/users but intentionally destroyed remains significantly under theorised in consumer research (cf. Jacoby et al., 1977; Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005). Specifically, Lastovicka & Fernandez (2005) challenged consumer researchers to explore modalities of voluntary disposition such as intentional destruction in attempt to uncover more divestment rituals other than those currently theorised.

This chapter reviews extant theorising at the intersection of consumption ritual and consumers' belief systems. Following this introductory section, the chapter interrogates extant conceptualisation of consumption ritual. It reviews extant definitions of ritual from its anthropological root to their current conceptualisation within consumer research in connecting belief and actions. It then looks at ritual's functioning as a socialising engagement that allows consumers to inculcate and re-enforce social values and norms through meaning manipulation and transfer. Meaning manipulation and transfer are explored through McCracken's (1986) ritual dimensions of possession, exchange, grooming and divestment. Meaning manipulation and transfer is found to revolve essentially around object contamination - i.e., managing what the objects' previous users imbue used objects with. The literature on object contamination is reviewed using Frazer's (1891) law of contagion and law of similarity. The chapter goes on to look at the realities of global second-hand economies and the divergence in beliefs, values, cultures, and ritual behaviours in different global contexts to re-emphasise the critical need for the current study. A further section connects the state of research on values and belief systems to McCracken's (1986) dimensions to better understand why new users may desire or not desire contact with contaminants in used possessions. The chapter - much as the previous chapter - thus set the ground for the field work in the current study to explore the questions of disposition beyond reversible transfers and intentional destruction. In justifying the critical research imperative for consumer research to heed Jacoby et al. (1977) and Lastovicka & Fernandez (2005), the chapter concludes with a pertinent question to investigate divestment rituals beyond their current mainstream theorisation.

3.2 Conceptualising Consumption Ritual

In their search for the origin of religion, anthropologists - e.g., William Robertson Smith (1846-1894) and James George Frazer (1854-1941) - find rituals to be integral to religion (Fagbola, 2019; Segal & Roubekas, 2021). Anthropologists draw this connection from the Latin root of the word rituals i.e., *ritus* representing the very orderly and prescriptive nature of the ceremonies in liturgical services (e.g. Bell & Kreinath, 2021). Bell (1992) conceptualised ritual as a mechanism that structures and integrates the connections between belief and the acts that emanate from those beliefs. In other words, rituals, according to Bell (1992) bring belief to life as exhibited through actions and behaviour. Greenberg (2021) also

argued that rituals are at the intersection between belief and behaviour. Applying Bourdieu's notion of the "habituated body" to religion and rituals, Greenberg (2021, 177) noted that although human dispositions and expressions in everyday consumption behaviour occur in social contexts, these expressions share similar sacredness and repetitiveness as are obtainable in traditional religious rites (cf. Mercia Eliade in Rook, 1985; Geertz, 1968; Bell, 1992; Segal & Roubekas, 2021). Like Bell (1992), Greenberg's (2021) submission connects belief and action through behaviour - especially about the use of the body in all these behaviours. Bell's (1992) conceptualisation is further evident in consumer researchers' interpretations of consumption rituals. In these interpretations, consumer researchers - since about the nineteenth century - continue to distinguish between religion and rituals from a behavioural perspective. Arguably, ritual narratives within consumer research are not underpinned by the same myths and rites as those in traditional religious practices. However, there are yet the elements of very orderly, scripted, and highly prescriptive patterns in everyday consumption behaviour that nevertheless bear significant semblance to the belief-ritual-actions in traditional religious rites and practices. Besides, as Otnes et al. (2018) sum it up in the epigraph at the beginning of this chapter, consumption rituals remain veritable link connecting beliefs and consumer actions in the marketplace. Instructively, despite acknowledging the pivotal place of religion, belief and social systems, and despite evidence of differences in religion, belief and social systems across cultures, (e.g., Thompson et al. 2018; Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Guarín & Knorringa, 2014), there is yet evidently narrow - almost skewed - focus in mainstream theorising on religions, beliefs and social systems held by consumers in the proximate societies as those of the theorists (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011; Varman, 2019). This is problematic in that the critical underlining assumptions in extant theorising rely significantly on the cultural perspectives of the anthropologists. For example, Greenberg (2021) drew attention to the nexus of performance theory and religion (Hollywood, 2002b; Hollywood, 2002a). Greenberg (2021) used examples like communion (Catholicism), circumcision (Judaism) and cremation and reincarnation in Hinduism and Buddhism. This problem of skewedness notwithstanding, strong belief-ritual-actions connections have been established especially in consumers' identity management projects.

3.2.1 Rituals, Habitus, and Identity Management

Perhaps more telling evidence of the belief-ritual-actions connection in consumer research can be found in research building on Belk's (1988) seminal article, *Possessions and the Extended Self*. Belk (1988, 160) submitted in this seminal work that “we are what we have” and “what we no longer have” (Roster, 2014, 323). This assertion connecting the *self* to consumption was later modified to accommodate possessions that do not require outright ownership. The fact remains true however that having access to these objects make them part of our identity - albeit being just for a while (Belk, 2014). These submissions align with Bourdieu's Habitus and Hexis conceptualisation of how the societies in which we live shape our behaviour. These can be seen in how individuals express themselves through their definitions, use, and adornment of their bodies. Consumers become who they are by deploying marketplace resources and interacting with others in society through episodic, scripted, and highly prescriptive patterns of behaviour. For example, Johansson et al. (2020) observed that fashion consumers can be categorised along four identity constructs based on how they deploy fashion items to create their identities. The 2020 phenomenological study identified two categories each for fast and slow fashion consumers. According to Johansson et al. (2020), impulsive consumers (of fast fashion) pursue instant gratification through their consumption of new fashion items. The social consumers (of fast fashion) are greatly influenced by social norms and approvals. In other words, the social consumers' dress sense is fashioned along respective social contexts, and they dress to gain social acceptance. On the contrary, neither the circular consumer nor the critical consumer categories patronise new fashion items at all. Whereas the circular consumer buys from and sells to second-hand markets, the critical consumers would consume only sustainable fashion items or resist buying altogether. Evidencing Belk and Bourdieu, Johansson et al. (2020) shows the highly predictive differences in how these consumers pursue their identity projects. The categorisation in this case - as is in many others - is possible because of identifiable patterns of behaviour exhibited by different consumer categories. In other words, consumers' deployment of market resources to create meanings, express values and embrace or resist social norms are not in abstraction. Rather, they are highly predictive because they tend to be highly routinised and a product of the social norms and institutions within the contexts in which they exist. What is more, as results are measured according to established benchmarks so is identity measured

against established social norms. In another recent study about liminal consumer identity, Fagbola et al. (2023) also showed that not only is identity created in conjunction with others, but that identity creation is heavily influenced by social norms and institutions.

These are not isolated cases. Earlier, Schouten (1991) also observed that consumers use their consumption experiences in their identity (re)construction and management. Schouten (1991) showed that consumers want to lead relatively stable lives that are consistent with their roles in the society. Where this is not the case, they would continue on the path of becoming better - including making possible and necessary adjustments to their bodies and lives. In doing this, they engage in consumption rituals in which they deploy consumption objects and services including clothing and dressing, homes and its decorations, automobiles and even knowledge acquisition and deployment in developing and maintaining the desired stable and harmonious self-concept. Similarly, Bhattacharjee et al. (2014) also showed the critical relevance of consumer's perceived agency in meaningfully expressions of their identities. Further Gregson et al. (2007) showed how family relationships and dynamics shape consumers' identity construction. Arnould & Thompson (2005) also explicated the deployment of marketplace objects in consumers' pursuit of both personally edifying goals and fulfilling societal expectations. More importantly, Arnould & Thompson (2005) showed that consumption behaviour is essentially consumers managing their identities through the enactment of cultural scripts and the deployment of marketplace resources. In all these examples, we see consumers deploying marketplace resources - including objects, services, and information - based on their perception and expectations of their roles within social systems in the creation and maintenance of their identities. In other words, the values that society ascribes to marketplace resources and social belief systems dictate the specific patterns of actions that consumers take in their identity management projects. This lends credence to Tuan (1980) who pointed out that

"[o]ur fragile sense of self needs support, and this we get by having and possessing things because, to a large degree, we are what we have and possess" (Tuan, 1980, 472).

'Having and possessing things' in Tuan's (1980) submission above to support our 'sense of self' is quite important in identity management. Like Schouten (1991) and Bhattacharjee et al. (2014), Tuan (1980) also further credence Belk and Bourdieu that both the understanding of social norms and belief systems and the carrying out of actions towards identity construction are recognisable because they follow known patterns, importantly patterns defined by society. Possessing things to support self-construction projects again lends credence to Bell's (1992) conceptualisation of rituals as a bridge between beliefs and actions. More importantly, being an extension of the self, possessions deployed to support the 'sense of self' remains part of that self and even when they are not in active deployment for the same self or identity management, they remain part of the self's desired past desired past (e.g., Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005). It is instructive to emphasise here that as with most mainstream works in this fields, data are obtained from proximate sites and with cultural realities that are the same or similar to those of the researchers. Yet, outcomes are significantly (over)generalised.

Nevertheless, juxtaposing the above submissions by Tuan (1980) and Bell (1992) with Bourdieu's notion of Habitus and Hexis helps us better understand why there is much reliance in consumer research on Rook's (1985) definition of rituals. According to Rook (1985),

The term ritual refers to a type of expressive, symbolic activity constructed of multiple behaviours that occur in a fixed, episodic sequence, and that tend to be repeated over time. Ritual behaviour is dramatically scripted and acted out and is performed with formality, seriousness, and inner intensity (Rook, 1985, 252).

The above definition is from Rook's (1985) seminal work in which he introduced the ritual construct as a veritable vehicle for the interpretation of behaviour. This work was the result of two exploratory studies that investigated the personal grooming rituals of young adults in the United States of America.

Rook's (1985) definition encapsulates ritual experiences as episodic, occurring in strings of events that are linked in exact fixed sequences. This definition is a vital starting point for consumer researchers exploring the constructs of ritual's

manifestation in consumer behaviour. For example, the scripting, fixing, repeating and acting in Rook's (1985) definition have their basis both within and outside people's cosmological belief systems (see also Otnes et al., 2018). Rook (1985) further observed that "rituals are often serious and normative" (254) and that consumers conform in their strive to attain "social status, maturity and sexual identity" (262). In other words, whether consumers are devoted to certain ritualised events or appear to be merely passing through - or whether they abstain - their (non)participation contributes eventually to their identity construction and (re)definition projects (cf. Johansson et al., 2020). This is further emphasised in McCracken's (1986) widely referenced definition of ritual in consumer research. McCracken' (1986) definition describes rituals in terms of their role in the manipulation and the (re)assignment of cultural meaning. Regardless of whether the behaviour is sacred or profane (Belk et al., 1989; Bell & Kreinath, 2021) or that of engagement or abstinence (Greenberg, 2021), ritual manifests in what people do, how they do them, where and when they do them and with what or whom they manifest these behaviours. From the extant theorisation connecting belief and actions through value (re)assignment, meaning manipulation and identity (re)construction, consumer researchers have widely conceptualised ritual along three lines.

3.2.1.1 Rituals as Behavioural Traits

First is the conceptualisation of ritual according to traits that are found to be concomitant with routinised behaviour. This is as captured in Rook's (1985) conceptualisation of ritual as veritable vehicle for interpreting everyday behaviour. Rituals can be distinguished from habitual behaviour in terms of the former's heavy scripting, sequencing, and repetitiveness. There may also be distinctions along such lines as rituals being sacred and habits being profane (e.g., Marshall, 2005). At the same time, rituals and habitual behaviour can overlap in certain situations and at many times. For example, while not a habit, a wedding ritual involves many habitual behaviours including dressing-up, decoration and feasting. For instance, Fagbola's (2019) research into white (western) wedding rituals within Nigerian cultural context revealed how Nigerian brides and their families negotiate and maintain multiple identities by combining the highly scripted and ordered white wedding rituals with Nigerian traditional wedding rituals. Importantly, both western white and Nigerian traditional wedding rituals share common traits in terms of the artefacts likes dressing and sites decoration,

the ordering of the rituals and the emotions and sentiments that weddings herald. Again, Fagbola (2019) also found that although the Nigerian bridal identity is strongly influenced by ethno-religious and family guidelines, there is yet room for consumer agency including those of resistance and to allow for some habitual behaviours and preferences to be accommodated. For example, there are instances of selective omission of some rites like in the acceptance of the bride price as a replacement for traditional wedding rites. There is also the occasional skipping of the wedding reception and providing alternative arrangement for food usually when dealing with time constraints (cf. Nwafor, 2012; 2013). Similarly, in their study of Scottish couples Marshall (2005) also observed that food and eating may be seen as routines and habitual behaviour. Yet having regular evening meals together as family tend to become more of a ritual. At the same time, such meals tend to allow for blending of the traditional with individual preferences. As such, we may distinguish between habitual behaviour and ritualised behaviour in terms of how they are more or less relatively scripted, involving, affective and ordered. Overall, although habits share certain commonalities with rituals, the latter has certain traits that clearly set it apart such as ritual artefacts, heavy scripting, assigned roles for participants and ritual audiences (see also Tetreault & Kleine, 1990; Assima et al., 2023) Neale et al., 2008; Neale, 2009; Ratcli et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2022).

3.2.1.2 Rituals as Sacred Experience

Second is the conceptualisation of ritual as the sacred elements of consumption experiences. This can be seen in Belk & Wallendorf's (1990) sacred meanings of money and other works exploring the dichotomy between the sacred and the profane in consumption behaviour. Instructively, Falola's (2003) *"The Power of African Cultures"* shows that identity management in Africa is a struggle dealing with many imposing externalities including religion, colonisation, westernisation, industrialisation, and modernisation. More importantly, Falola (2003) noted that the African identity project is a continuous struggle between the sacred and the profane - albeit more of the former than the latter. Falola (2003) noted strong emphasis on ritual as veritable means of attaining common morality, evident accountability, and spirituality. Like Falola (2003), Obinna (2012) and Adebani (2005) also noted that the ritual construct in African traditional cultures heavily resonates with liturgical beliefs. For example, according to Adebani (2005)

“[r]itual constitutes a powerful weapon in the construction and deconstruction of the social order. The dynamic character of Yoruba ritual [...] is recognised by the practitioners of Yoruba religion” (Adebanwi, 2005, 353)

Similar to Falola (2003), Adebanwi's (2005) submission above shows clearly the sacredness of rituals along religious lines. These submissions show that beyond individual identity management, ritual in Africa is a critical ingredient for establishing and maintaining order in the society. In the ethos of the ethno-cultural group (the Oodua Peoples' Congress, OPC) in Adebanwi's (2005) study, harnessing all religious resources - including prayers and magic - is critical to their attainment of self-determination and cultural emancipation (Adesoji, 2017).

Whereas the above examples tend to have a rather religious undertone to sacredness, there are others like Bonsu & Belk (2003) establishing a middle ground between the sacred and the profane of consumption rituals. In their work on death-ritual consumption in Ghana, Bonsu & Belk (2003) found that identity management does not cease upon death. Rather, bereaved consumers enact rites combining beliefs in gods and the power of ancestors with secular belief systems to establish and maintain continuous and reciprocal relationships between themselves and their dead. Yet, there are other works that follow Belk et al.'s (1989) conceptualisation derived from extensive field research projects. In this conceptualisation, the sacred is not necessarily religious. Rather, sacred objects are essentially everyday consumption objects that consumers deem precious, important, and special. Usually, these are secular objects that become essentialised because of how they fit in and the vital roles these objects play in consumers' consumption rituals and identity (re)construction projects. Within the consumption narratives captured in their “Consumer Behaviour Odyssey”, Belk et al. (1989) found transcendental common values with which consumers are able to singularise and sacralise ordinary consumption objects or experience. In other words, consumption rituals - particularly, possessions rituals - are situations in which consumers are able to infuse a commodity or commercial experience with so much significance that it becomes a sacralised transcendental vehicle (cf. Tetlock, 2003; Cherrier, 2009; Sheikh et al., 2012; Goodnow & Bloom, 2017; Barnes, 2019; Schindler & Minton, 2022). (See section 3.3.1 for more discussion on

possession rituals). In this way, as far as rituals are concerned, there appears less of a need for distinction along the sacredness or profanity of consumption objects. The sacred is thus not essentially religious especially with consumption fast becoming the new religion (Ger & Belk, 1996; Gentina et al., 2012). Rather, the sacredness of any objects is by far a function of its role and the relevance it has in the performance of consumer's consumption experiences.

3.2.1.3 Rituals as Symbolic-Expressive Behaviour

The third conceptualisation is that of the symbolic-expressions that manifest during routinised behaviour. This can be seen in works exploring how - through participation in everyday rituals - consumers use and take cues from the society's and market's use of conventional symbols to define their interactions with marketplace objects and with others in the society. For example, Bartholomew & Mason (2020) found that social networking sites are venues for both the consumption and production of Facebook users' daily social behaviours. Similarly, the wedding dress and other ceremonial outlooks during weddings rituals in Nigeria are greatly influenced by encounters at previous similar weddings attended by the bride or their event planners (Fagbola, 2019). Again, both the failure in rituals that make some possessions dormant and the reinvestment rituals intended to extend the useful lives of possessions are all learnt, unlearnt and relearnt through everyday consumption behaviours and encounters (Assima et al., 2023). A good example would be the adorning of the aso-ebi during social engagements in Nigeria. Similar to Bartholomew & Mason (2020), the ethos of uniformed solidarity and the moral economy that the aso-ebi represents amongst friends and families during special events in Nigeria are equally simultaneously consumed and produced through social interactions (Nwafor, 2012; 2013). See also McCracken (1986), Otnes & Scott (1996), Bradford & Sherry (2013), Osiebe (2021) and Kapoor et al. (2022). Not only do consumers - through these expressions - imbibe established rituals, but they are also creating new rituals and broadening the scope of existing rituals at the same time.

All of these conceptualisations - i.e., the one examining behavioural traits associated with routinised behaviour, the one that sees ritual as symbolic-expressions and the one that sees ritual as the sacred elements of consumption experiences - show consumption rituals as social engagements significantly done in groups or in conjunction with others who share a common belief. The above conceptualisations also show that participation in consumption rituals also aid

consumers in their identity management projects. They also show that consumption rituals also allow consumers to (re)define their belief systems and exchange meanings and value with others in society. Essentially, consumption rituals serve a socialising function.

3.2.2 The Social Functions of Consumption Rituals

Rituals are enacted for simple routines of habitual like personal grooming (Rook, 1985). There are also collective rituals enacted along lifestyle with some tending to be strongly sentimental like those of the Harley-Davidson motorcycle owners (e.g., Schouten et al., 1995). There are also other group rituals with ethnic, religious or political underpinning like institutional rituals (Onuoha's 2013, neo-Biafran movement; Adebani's 2005 OPC). There are equally rituals enacted around social events like weddings (Fagbola, 2019; Fagbola et al., 2023) or burials (Bonsu & Belk, 2003) as well as those around nationalism/national events (Wallendorf & Arnould, 1991; Woods & Tsang, 2013) and civic rites (Rook, 1985) to mention a few. The patterns of behaviour during these rituals, their sites of enactment, the nature of objects around or with which they are enacted and the outcomes sought all lend credence to the social function of rituals proposed by Émile Durkheim [15 April 1858 - 15 November 1917] (see also McCracken, 1986). Durkheim proposed that rituals are the rubrics of human behaviour. As a forerunner of a functional approach to social phenomena, Durkheim's proposals are derived from his understanding of ritual's function to maintain society (Durkheim & Swain, 2016). For Durkheim, rituals are vehicles through which people internalise the connections that exist between themselves, their gods, and their society. This is evident in his definition of religion as a collective of beliefs and practices that serves to unify people into a single moral community. Corroborating Durkheim, Falola (2003) noted that

“to be human is to belong to the community, and to do so involves participating in the beliefs, ceremonies, rituals and festivals of that community.” (Falola, 2003, 55).

According to Falola (2003) in the about comment, membership and acceptance within a group consists in conforming to their beliefs and participating in their rituals. Belonging and participating in group rituals are also identified in Adebani's (2005) and Obinna's (2012) works on identity management in Africa.

These works also show that in their identity management, people use consumption objects to engage in rituals and other culturally assigned rites to distinguish who they are from who they are not as well as to establish their affiliation with others in the society. It surfaces then to say that, giving the level of ritualised behaviour that an average individual participates in in his daily individual consumption and collective routines, consumption behaviour is indeed the essential ritual of socialising in modern life (Wright & Snow, 1980; Rook, 1985). What is more, in our contemporary consumption culture, consumption is significantly seen as the new religion. As a result, the line between traditional religious rituals and those in everyday consumption behaviour becomes thinner (Ger & Belk, 1996; Gentina et al., 2012). For example, Fagbola (2019) noted that a wedding ritual may include substantial religious rites and consummated in a religious institution. It may go ahead to have a socialite public reception to host guests with every participant showing off the result of hours of personal grooming rituals e.g. facial makeups. Further evidence of consumption behaviour being the essential ritual of modern life is seen in ritual's many socialising functions. This is especially with respect to the encounters that each behaviour is related to, what behavioural patterns are displayed and what outcomes are sought within specific social systems. The examples given at the beginning of this subsection fits into Bell's (1997, 94) six open-ended ritual categories viz: calendrical rites, rites of passage, rites of exchange and communion, rites of affliction, feasting and fasting, and political rites. Again, Bell's (1997) six open-ended categories can also be categorised along Durkheim's negative and positive rites (see e.g., Bell & Kreinath, 2021). In both of Durkheim's and Bell's categorisations, ritual encounters continue to manifest as avenues through which consumers essentially socialise around consumption objects/artefacts, ritual sites, or experiences (see also Johansson et al. 2020; Fagbola et al., 2023). Some of the key social functions of ritual in extant theorising are examined in the following sections.

3.2.2.1 The Social Functions of Ritual: Legitimation

Take the example of Schouten et al.'s (1995) seminal ethnographic study of Subcultures of consumption. In this work, we see how members of the Harley-Davidson motorcycle owners club achieve legitimisation by socialising with other members of the group and around consumption objects and artefacts. Another example includes O'Guinn & Belk's (1989) exploration of the nexus of the sacred and the profane in consumption. O'Guinn & Belk's (1989) study showed how

identities are built and legitimised including the sacralisation of the site of the consumption ritual. Other recent works including Ozanne & Ozanne (2016) and Ran & Wan (2023) are also good examples of how rituals allow consumers to socialise around consumption objects, ritual sites and experiences. Importantly, Higgins & Hamilton (2018) and Hill et al., (2022) also showed that ritual sites allow the sacred and the profane to be combined by participants to create safer spaces for the expression of certain strongly held emotions and sentiments that may be difficult or impossible outside identified social settings or ritual sites (cf. Dion & Borraz, 2015; Podoshen et al., 2018; Hill et al., 2022). Example of strongly held emotions and sentiments can be found among ethnic groups and other groups formed with the intent for the attainment of political power or self-determination. For instance, as seen in Adebani (2005) and Onuoha (2013), people participate in group rituals as a way of returning to their cultural roots for their identity management and self-determination. This *return to culture* creed both guides and encapsulates their cognitive, affective and behavioural commitment to the group and their rituals (cf. Stein et al., 2021). It is instructive to note that this *return to culture* is heavily foregrounded in sacred rituals including much reliance on protective magic. In this way, Onuoha (2013) noted that ethnic groups initiate their own rituals to create their ethno-political identities. On one hand, they derive these rituals from repertoires of myths from their common origin, history, and artefacts - especially for MASSOB, from memories of violence from their previous attempt to secede from Nigeria (1967 - 1970). On the other they create new rituals from their own on-going experiences which then allow them to delineate in-group and out-group boundaries (cf. Falola, 2003). This lends credence to Onuoha (2013) who noted that people do not only follow routines. Rather, they are important participants in the (re)creation of the material and immaterial cultural repertoires that help create group boundaries especially among close groups like those along ethnicity and political power. In all, enacting and engaging in collective rituals allow participants to create and legitimise their identities. It also allows them to sacralise their commitments to certain social norms and values to which they subscribe. In certain cases of ethno-political identity, a trade-off involving these rituals and values are considered outrageous or a taboo.

3.2.2.2 The Social Functions of Ritual: Inculcating Norms and Values

Further, ritual also manifests in encounters in which consumers learn and reinforce social and cultural values. For example, in their exploration of Harley Davidson Subculture of consumption, Schouten et al., (1995) observed how members of the group built their identity by belonging to and participating in the group's rituals (cf. Bonsu & Belk, 2003; Rodner & Preece, 2019; Karanika & Hogg, 2020). Peñaloza (2000) also showed how ritual spectacles (e.g., animal domestication at stock shows, rodeo and in selling stalls) help achieve the socialisation of young consumers and the impartation of cultural meanings and values. Like Schouten et al., (1995) where participation in rituals creates a safe space for socialisation and legitimisation, Sherry et al. (2004) and Sobh et al. (2013) also show the role of ritual in re-enforcing culturally entrenched norms. Veritable examples of ritual in Africa that inculcate social norms and values could be found in rites of passage Falola (2003) and burial (Bonsu & Belk, 2003). In these instances, consumers are united in ritual performances and other forms of highly scripted behaviours that connect them to others in the society. Overall, rituals serves as a mirror with which all participants and audiences can reflect, understand and make sense of the dynamics of their group or society (Fagbola, 2019).

From the foregoing, three elements are crucial to ritual fulfilling its socialising function. There is the ritual behaviour i.e., the social actions enacted either in groups or on individual basis. There is also the ritual site where these behaviours are enacted and lastly there are the consumption objects i.e., the material and immaterial artefacts with which rituals are performed. The focus of the current study being clothing consumption and disposition, clothing is the important material ritual artefact of interest here. Much behaviour around clothing have been explored in chapter 2. However, a phenomenal social consumption narrative that captures many socialising functions of ritual is seen in the Nigerian dress and dressing consumption culture known as the *aso-ebi*. This is the focus of the next subsection.

3.2.3 The Ritual Artefact: Aso-ebi

Aso-ebi literally means *family cloth* (i.e., *aso* meaning cloth and *ebi* derived from *molebi* meaning household and so *ebi* literally meaning family). *Aso-ebi* has its origin as a tradition during family burial rites and ceremonies in Southwestern

Nigeria where a select type of dress or uniform is worn by members of the bereaved family to distinguish them from others at the event (Tade & Aiyebo, 2014). However, the ritual of aso-ebi consumption has now pervaded nearly all social events in Nigeria from burial (Ogbechie & Anetor, 2015; Olajire, 2023; Boge, 2023) to wedding (Nwafor, 2012; Fagbola, 2019) and everything in between including during the inauguration of the Nigeria's current President Bola Ahmed Tinubu (GCFR) on 29th May 2023. Aso-ebi is yet another evidence of the belief-ritual-action nexus. This is because the concept and the wearing of Aso-ebi is "strongly articulated in the Yoruba concept of cloth and people" (Nwafor, 2013, p.12). Aso-ebi can be considered as *social skins*, with which wearers create their identities and negotiate and navigate the realities of their roles and participation in societies (see Turner 1993 in Nwafor, 2013). This is a belief system surrounding the aso-ebi which makes it suitable as a fabric of solidarity (Tade & Aiyebo, 2014), and of friendship (Nwafor, 2013) and thus an integral part of social construction of friendship and solidarity amongst people. From its origin as part of burial tradition, adorning the aso-ebi is believed to symbolise empathy towards and solidarity with the bereaved. Beyond empathy - and especially in its wider applications, adorning the same dress to an event gives a feeling of enthusiastic devotion or the adoption of *esprit de corps* with other members of a group to which the wearer belongs or subscribes (Nwafor, 2013). Being a ritual around dress and dressing, aso-ebi rituals combines the individual everyday rituals of grooming, dressing up and making up with collective institutional rituals like those enacted during any social events, national events and civic rites (e.g., Wallendorf & Arnould, 1991; Woods & Tsang, 2013; Rook, 1985; Bonsu & Belk, 2003). Essentially, aso-ebi represents a ritual artefact deployed during a range of highly scripted social events with assigned roles for individuals who are both participants in the ritual and, at the same time, the ritual audiences (Fagbola, 2019; Nwafor, 2013, p.12). Aso-ebi rituals also allow for profane objects - i.e., clothing items - to become sacralised transcendental vehicles (cf. Tetlock, 2003; Cherrier, 2009; Sheikh et al., 2012; Goodnow & Bloom, 2017; Barnes, 2019; Schindler & Minton, 2022).

Further, aso-ebi rituals allow for the simultaneous production and consumption of the ethos of uniformed solidarity and the moral economy through social interactions (Nwafor, 2012; 2013; Bartholomew & Mason, 2020). Importantly, consumers who adorn aso-ebi take cues from previous social encounters to select,

style and showcase present and future aso-ebi rituals (see also Fagbola, 2019). In addition to the above, aso-ebi rituals sites constitute safe spaces for socialisation and legitimisation as with other rituals identified earlier in this section. For example, the images described in Nwafor (2012; 2013) depict the adorning of colourful aso-ebi attires similar to those ritual spectacles (e.g., animal domestication at stock shows, rodeo and in selling stalls) in Peñaloza (2000). In addition to socialising, Nwafor's (2012) and Peñaloza's (2000) examples showed how rituals support the appreciation of cultural meanings and values as well as re-enforcing culturally entrenched norms (see also Sherry et al., 2004 and Sobh et al., 2013). What is more, among the Yoruba people of Nigeria - as with other peoples who have internalised this ritual of friendship and solidarity - aso-ebi has come to represent more of religious and political ritual. Politically, Ajani (2012) and Nwafor (2013) noted that aso-ebi rituals command a unique form of friendship as well as socially constructed rules and order that cannot be broken without severe social and/or ritual consequences. For example, Nwafor (2013) observed that even where adorning aso-ebi may not be a voluntary personal choice, the fear of social exclusion or seen as the 'other' is strong enough to make people participate in the ritual. Still on the political, Nwafor (2013) further illustrated how aso-ebi remains an important ingredient in defining social and political relations between the affluent and the lower to middle class members of Nigerian society. In such a highly classed society as Nigeria, aso-ebi is widely deployed by the affluent members of society as an extension of themselves and their influence and to show their social status by the number of people in uniform solidarity with them at any social event. So not only do people engage with aso-ebi to create and establish their identities, but they also deploy aso-ebi to flaunt their wealth and maintain public visibility.

It can be argued that the friendship and solidarity that the aso-ebi rituals create is short-lived. For instance, Nwafor (2013, p. 15) noted that aso-ebi could be a mere "fabric of friendship that is robed in superficial, rather than deep, human relationships". This argument relies on the temporary nature of the events and the fact that some of the participants may neither know nor be known by the celebrant. There is also the question of post-event behaviour when the dress is no longer worn on the bodies of the attendees. Nevertheless, aso-ebi consumption rituals are consistent with consumption rituals of identity creation. Again,

consistent with extant theorising, aso-ebi consumption rituals allow consumers to express emotions including grief (e.g., during burial) and joy (e.g., during weddings), collective use of artefacts (i.e., the aso-ebi) on the ritual sites (i.e., event venues) with others (cf. Higgins & Hamilton, 2018; Hill et al., 2022; Ozanne & Ozanne, 2016; Ran & Wan, 2023; Sreekumar et al., 2023). Aso-ebi consumption therefore represents a highly ritualised behaviour defined by identified socially constructed rules and order towards the socialising of individuals and groups. Further, according to Blumer (1953 in Nwafor, 2013), aso-ebi helps to delineate in-group and out-group boundaries, it creates avenues for the expression of empathy and a sense of belonging to something socially considered as important. Ajani (2012) also observed that aso-ebi represents a veritable point of reference and attachment to communal ethos, a form of fraternising. Above all, in spite of the individualistic habitual behaviours in the background, aso-ebi consumption evidences the social function of rituals underpinned by the participants' traditional and communal belief systems enforced and reinforced through practice over time. In many ways, consumption rituals allow consumers to reinforce their belief systems, manage their identities, socialise and reinforce cultural values and social norms. Although distinctions can be made between the literature debating the sacred and the profane within and outside the purviews of religion, Goodnow & Bloom (2017) noted that only little has changed since Emile Durkheim's 1912 and Mircea Eliade 1959 seminal writings. As such, whether rituals are foregrounded in liturgical, traditional or cultural beliefs or not, consumption rituals are intimately connected to our everyday living experiences (Schindler & Minton, 2022). Participation in rituals - be it individually or in groups - allows for the reaffirmation of commitment to beliefs and social values (Barnes, 2019) as much as they enable the critical human need for socialisation as well as enabling the creation and management of identity.

In summary, rituals represent the bridge between consumers' beliefs and their marketplace actions. Ritual behaviours are also highly contextual. They occur in critically defined spaces, and in some case - e.g., the Harley-Davidson motorcycle owners club and those around ethnicity and self-determination - membership is exclusively reserved. Trade-offs are also rare or heavily negotiated. So, not only does each group have their set of rituals, but the ritual behaviours in each group are also defined and reinforced by jointly held values and belief systems as well

as the ends sought e.g., towards identity projects withing the larger society or respective groups. In other words, rituals enable socialisation. The socialising function of rituals essentially revolves around society's definition and determination of the value. The socialising function of rituals also revolves around the social meanings of consumption objects, the manipulation of these meanings as well as with whom these meanings are shared which is discussed next.

3.3 Rituals, Value and Meaning Transfer

As explicated so far in this chapter, understanding consumers' interaction with their possessions is at the heart of theorisation on ritual within consumer research (cf. Assima et al. 2023). In some of the examples discussed in section 3.2 above, rituals are seen as veritable vehicles for values and meanings sharing and transfer within groups and societies. Contemporary theorisation on consumption ritual as vehicles for transfer of value and meanings relies significantly on McCracken's (1986) ritual dimensions. According to McCracken (1986), ritual constitutes a kind of social action dedicated to manipulating cultural meanings. In this way, ritual allows consumers to sustain, induce, allocate, or review socially established symbols and the meanings of cultural values. McCracken (1986) developed a framework for typifying consumption rituals (see Table 3-1 below). McCracken's (1986) ritual dimensions - i.e., possession, exchange, grooming and divestment - are discussed below.

3.3.1 Possession Rituals

Possession rituals are consumption rituals enacted to claim or establish ownership of marketplace objects. Possession rituals are intricately linked to the consumer identity project management discussed earlier in this chapter (section 3.2.1). Possession rituals represent the starting point for Tuan' (1980) consumers becoming what they possess and making their possessions truly theirs. Possession rituals also represent consumer's first expression of their agency (Bhattacharjee et al., 2014; Schouten, 1991) in creating and managing their identities (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). This is the same whether they are Global North consumers belonging to any of Johansson et al.'s (2020) four categories of fast fashion consumers or those creating and navigating bridal identities in Africa (Fagbola et al., 2023). When consumers acquire a marketplace object, they go through several rituals through which they completely remove the object from the public sphere of commodity into a private sphere of possession. This is known as decommodification, especially

for new objects produced and bought for the first use (Kopytoff, 1986; Corbett & Denegri-Knott, 2020). Decommodification usually punctuates the marketing exchange process for a given consumption item - except where it goes back into circulation as a commodity. According to Kopytoff (1986), decommodification during possession rituals allows the object to become deactivated, singularised, sacralised, or redefined by the new owner. It is the point in the encounter with consumption objects in which the new owner is able to transform the object into sacralised transcendental vehicle, in other words, to possess the possession (section 3.2.1.2). Decommodification during possession rituals can manifest in several forms. Some very traditional instances are identified in Belk (1988) to include licking a new possession or taking the name of a conquered enemy. Other contemporary possessions rituals may manifest during product unboxing (e.g. Berden, 2020; Lee et al., 2022) by showing off with the possession, taking pictures of and with the possession and sharing these images with others. This is not exclusive to outrightly owned objects. In a sharing economy, Belk, (2014; 2018) showed that objects temporarily possessed also become part and extension of the accessor's self. For example, home and car renters including hotel loggers would clean and adorn these temporary possessions with some of their possessed possessions (see also Assima et al. 2023; Curasi et al., 2004). Overall, possession rituals essentially replace the socially ascribed cultural and meaningful properties in marketplace objects with personal meanings.

Table 3-1 McCracken's (1986) Ritual Dimensions				
Ritual Dimension	Description	Purpose	Example	
			Ritual events	Actual behaviour
Possession	Consumption rituals enacted to claim or express ownership of marketplace objects	To decommodify and singularise - i.e., to replace cultural meanings with personal meanings; to create a personal world of goods that reflects the consumer's own experience and self-concept	Housewarming	Cleaning, discussing, comparing, reflecting, showing off, photographing
Exchange	Consumption rituals enacted to direct goods from one individual or group to another	To move meaningful properties in marketplace objects between individual consumers or group; to exert interpersonal influence on the receiver	Christmas and birthday gift-giving	Selecting/matching, purchasing, removing price tags, wrapping, timing, presenting
Grooming	Consumption rituals enacted to cultivate the perishable yet meaningful properties that exist in marketplace objects and make them resident in an individual	To deploy marketplace objects to enhance one's self-concept or to enhance, enchant or 'supercharge' a marketplace object. To use enhanced, enchanted, or 'supercharged' properties in marketplace objects to improve the user/owner.	'Going out,' personal hygiene, object enhancement	Cleaning and polishing shoes to preserve and cultivate all the meanings that can be obtained from them
Divestment	Consumption rituals enacted to both erase old and add new meanings to marketplace objects	During disposition: to erase meaning and personal properties that have been invested in the consumption object by an existing user; re Commodification.	Selling a previously owned/used possession	Washing used clothing, ironing, folding, and pinning similar items together to remove old meaning
		During (re-)acquisition: to avoid contamination with meanings and personal properties that the object may possess due to the object's previous use; de Commodification and singularisation.	Buying a previously owned/used possession	Washing and ironing newly acquired used clothing to add new private meaning

3.3.2 Exchange Rituals

Exchange rituals are consumption rituals enacted to (re)assign and (re)direct values and meanings in marketplace objects. The purpose of exchange rituals is usually to move socially defined or assigned values and meaningful properties in marketplace objects from a giving consumer to a receiving consumer. Along with this movement is also the exertion of interpersonal influence by the giver to the receiver (e.g. Price et al., 2000). Popular examples of exchange rituals would be those that occur during holidays e.g., Christmas, birthdays and other live events during which gifts are given and received (McCracken, 1986; Assima et al. 2023). During exchange rituals, an individual chooses an object (new or preowned) and transfers this to another consumer. Belk (2010) submits that a lot goes into gift giving including the sacrifice by the giver to please the receiver; the selection of a uniquely appropriate object to give the receiver a treat; removing price tags, gift wrapping and the selection of a befitting moment to present the gift. In all these rituals - towards creating the perfect gift (Belk, 1996) - the gift giver is guided by his/her understanding of the socially assigned values and meanings of the objects and attempts to match these with the receiver (Assima et al. 2023). It is also possible that the gift giver intends to - according to McCracken (1986, 76) - “insinuate certain symbolic properties into the lives of a gift recipient”. Insinuation here shows that exchange rituals are power laden and potentially establish relationships in which the gift giver is able to exert influence on the gift recipient. This is usually to make the receiver inculcate certain behaviours or uphold certain values that s/he would perhaps not consider (McCracken, 1986). Take the example of affluent members of the society using the *aso-ebi* both as an extension of themselves and to flaunt their social influence and maintain public visibility (Nwafor, 2013). As seen earlier in section 3.2.3, *aso-ebi* is believed to be like *social skins* adorned as part of self-identity and for negotiate and navigating roles and participating in societies. We however also saw that adorning the *aso-ebi* may not be a freely made choice, but a decision heavily influenced by the relationship with or expectations from the member(s) of society or group of interest. These notions of transferring, sacrificing, treating, influencing, and presenting in exchange rituals are all parts of the power dynamics that characterise exchange relationships. Further, in their study of the dynamic of gift exchange between British mothers and their adult daughters, Liu et al. (2024) also

observed that gift givers do use gifts to sustain (confirm) ongoing relations. Givers also use gifts to prompt (connote), commend (endorse) or strongly suggest (command) certain behavioural expectation. These, according to Liu et al. (2024), are parts of the *gift politics* in which givers attempt to carefully match their perceptions of value with those of the recipients to determine an appropriate *gift value* in an attempt to subjectively manage the power struggle in exchange relationships.

Another relevant example of exchange rituals can be seen with the gifting of a wedding dress to a daughter or the exchange of objects as part a family's heirloom. Heirlooms usually remain in the family and pivotal - in many cases - to the family's identity, stability and continued relationship with their ancestors (e.g., Türe & Ger, 2016; Abdelrahman et al., 2020). For instance, Abdelrahman et al. (2020) showed how such gifts install in the recipient the curatorial roles of guardianship and how this requires rituals such as preserving and caring for them including passing them - along with their stories and meanings - to new and worthy guardians (see also Curasi et al., 2004). In sum, consumers engage in exchange rituals to move meaningful properties in marketplace objects between individual consumers or group. Along with the meaningful properties, exchange rituals also afford gift givers to exert interpersonal influence on the receiver including the reinforcement of desired social values.

3.3.3 Grooming Rituals

Grooming rituals are series of activities that consumers engage in to preserve and cultivate the socially assigned meaningful properties that exist in marketplace objects. McCracken (1986) submitted that grooming can be for both the consumer and the object. For example, in personal hygiene rituals, consumers use marketplace objects to clean and enhance their bodies, their odour and colour. This also works the other way around. In other rituals like 'going out' (McCracken, 1986, 79) consumers groom their clothes and shoes, in attempts to capture and imbue themselves with "the particularly glamorous, exalted, meaningful properties that exist in their 'best' consumer goods". In these object grooming examples, consumers enhance, enchant or 'supercharge' a marketplace object so that these enhanced, enchanted or 'supercharged' properties in the object may be transferred to them to enhance their value and recognition in society. McCracken (1986) cited the example of fortification that consumers carry out on

what Myers (1985) described as their special possessions. Whether consumers carry out grooming rituals directly to enhance their appearance, body size, or shape or they do this through enchanting marketplace objects, the goal is ultimately to acquire and retain the perishable properties in these marketplace objects as part of their identity project (Assima et al., 2023). Although consumer researchers distinguish between rituals and general habitual behaviours (see section 3.2.1.1), they do not deny the fact that grooming rituals usually overlap with habits (Rook, 1985). For instance, wedding is not a habit yet dressing-up for a wedding involves many grooming rituals including those that an individual would do regularly at a habitual level. The same goes for decoration of wedding sites and feasting at weddings. People decorate their living spaces regularly. Some even have a year round roster on a monthly, weekly, or daily basis. However, dressing up for a wedding and decorating a wedding site involves some of these habits and a lot more. At a minimum, weddings invoke some elements of scripting, role playing and a ritual audience. Similarly, although eating may be seen as routines and habitual behaviour, having regular family evening meals would constitute a ritual with simple to elaborate scripts and assigned roles. Besides, while such meals may follow certain family traditions, there may be much clout for accommodating individual preferences (cf. Marshall, 2005). Overall, dressing-up and site decoration for a wedding as well as feasting either at weddings or with family constitute grooming rituals in which consumers enhance objects and themselves. All these remain veritable means through which consumers attempt to cultivate and transfer to themselves the meaningful properties that society and marketing ascribe to marketplace objects.

3.3.4 Divestment Rituals

Within consumer research, divestment rituals relate to behaviours manifesting through consumers' interactions with their possessions. Divestment rituals are consumption rituals enacted to reconfigure the values and meanings in consumption objects. This meaning reconfiguration occurs primarily during object disposition i.e., during physical and emotional separation from possessions (e.g., Roster, 2014). Object disposition usually occurs when the possessions are considered “no longer me” because they no longer fit their self-image (Kleine et al., 1995, 334). When they are no longer wanted for their original intended purposes by their current owner/user or when their current use value is less than the

current costs of keeping them (e.g. VeVerka, 1974). From McCracken (1986) to Assima et al. (2023), divestment ritual is theorised as a process of meaning reassignment i.e. erasing the current owner/user's meaning at disposition and erasing the previous owner/user's meaning at used object re-acquisition. This is because divestment is essentially redistribution of surplus and excess possessions. It is a means of enacting social order and a process of reproducing social narratives around consumption objects (Nicky Gregson et al., 2007b). Similarly, Roster (2014) also observed that divestment embodies object appropriations, disappropriations, and meaning transfers. In other words, when consumers voluntarily dispossess themselves of their possessions and transfer same to others - e.g., by simple selling (Bianchi & Birtwistle, 2010; Shaw & Williams, 2018; Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005; Ekerdt & Addington, 2015) or by donating private collections to become part of valued cultural artifacts (e.g., Roster, 2014) - they are literally and physically moving objects from places of abundance to places of scarcity. However, there is a second set of divestment rituals that occur during the re-acquisition of divested consumption objects usually enacted by the new acquirer of used and divested objects of consumption. This transferring of objects to others thus re-enacts the process of re-acquisition of previously possessed possessions. As such, meaning reconfiguration also occurs during object re-acquisition hence the second set of divestment rituals. Both of these will be discussed in the following sub-sections.

3.3.4.1 Divestment Rituals During Used Object Disposition

Divestment describes both physical and emotional disengagement from an object and re-investing the meanings and qualities of the object in another (C. A. Roster, 2014). In other words, during divestment, a possession is both being dispossessed and repossessed almost simultaneously hence disposition. This is not to be confused with gifting and other similar exchanges discussed in section 3.3.2. This is because, although possessions also get dispossessed and repossessed during gift exchange, gifted objects are passed on to familiar beneficiaries. For example, the emotional attachment to a wedding dress or a possession that is an heirloom makes the current owner/user/keeper some form guardian or curator. This role and accompanying responsibilities may compel a current user to pass it on to future generations of guardians (see Price, Arnould, et al., 2000; Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005; Prosic-Dvornic, 2022). This is not the same during disposition when objects are usually exchanged with strangers (e.g., Lastovicka & Fernandez,

2005). Exchanges with strangers usually occur when the possessions become unwanted. Objects become unwanted when they are considered no longer fit for their original intended purpose, when life events suggest separation or when consumers fall out of love with consumption objects for other reasons (Jacoby et al., 1977; Laitala, 2014; Laitala, Boks, & Klepp, 2015; chapter 2, section 2.6.1). Instructively, different rituals are enacted when previously owned objects go to strangers (McCracken, 1986; Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005; Roster, 2014).

According to McCracken (1986), the kind of rituals at this stage are enacted

“... to erase the meaning that has been invested in the good by association.” (McCracken, 1986, 80)

The enactment of rituals by an object's previous user/owner to erase old meaning makes divestment rituals at disposition a means of object recommodifying or meaning reconfiguration (Epp & Price, 2010; Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005). For clarity, the meaning in question refers to vital essence (Meigs, 1978) or the personal properties or non-material qualities with which a previous user/owner imbues a possession (Rozin et al., 1986; Newman et al., 2011; Hingston et al., 2017). These are discussed in more detail later in this chapter (section 3.4).

In the example of used clothing, these meaning reconfiguration rituals usually include washing - and where necessary ironing, folding, and pinning similar items of clothing together (e.g., Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005; Roster, 2014). In this way, previously owned/used possessions get recommodified and transformed into marketplace commodity. The notion of transformation or meaning reconfiguration is an indication that divestment rituals do not always or only seek to completely remove meaning - at least by the object's previous owners. For example, Lastovicka & Fernandez's (2005) study shows that consumers who sell their possessions to strangers enact divestment rituals to transfer meaningful properties in the objects to new owners/users. Lastovicka & Fernandez's (2005) work postulated a five-meaning transfer framework. In this framework, they show that through storytelling at garage sales and by selling to buyers with whom the sellers share common identities, some desirable properties - including the object's legacy - are passed onto others. Lastovicka & Fernandez (2005) also theorised iconic transfer i.e., object-to-object transfer of meaning where memories are captured in photographs before sales. They also theorised temporary divestment through

“transition-place” rituals (p. 817) and cleaning rituals that ultimately remove private meanings while also preparing the object for re-entry into the public sphere. Overall, they inform our understanding that divestment at object disposition - especially to strangers - both remove and add meanings. Importantly, Lastovicka & Fernandez (2005) found that divestment rituals enacted before garage sales are with intent to reassemble public meaning towards recommodification. According to Lastovicka & Fernandez (2005), for instance

washing, ironing, folding, and pinning linens together in matching sets and then wrapping the sets with string and price tagging each recommodifies possessions to resemble those sold at retail. (Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005, 818)

Washing, ironing, and pinning used clothing prior to a garage sale is considered necessary to prepare the object for re-entry into the public sphere in other words, to make the clothing items market worthy.

As seen from the foregoing, the specifics rituals in disposition to strangers can be different from and more complex than exchange rituals between familiar entities. However, complications may also arise when transferring heirlooms or other emotionally held possessions to familiar beneficiaries or future curators or guardians. Such complications may arise where disposition is necessitated by unusual life events. Good examples here would include transfer of possessions during downsizing (e.g. Ekerdt et al., 2012) or during moments of grief (Guillard, 2017). Like in gifting, transfer in these instances may also occur between non-strangers. Yet the rituals of meaning transfer during downsizing or bereavement attract different set of rituals and impacted by a number of factors that may distinguish them from those during gifting. For example, Guillard (2017) argued that the relationship between the bereaved and the deceased would affect the management of their deceased's possessions. These effects include dealing with the void created by the deceased's absence, choosing between connecting and disconnecting with their possessions as well as dealing with possible negative emotions due to the volume of possessions left behind for them to deal with. Other similar examples of complications when transferring to non-strangers can be seen in changing life circumstances when older individuals seeking good homes for special objects bequeath possessions to others including family members (e.g. Price et al., 2000; Curasi et al., 2003; Corbett & Denegri-Knott, 2020). Such

circumstances differ from regular instances of gifting giving the different levels of emotion and judgement that are required in dealing with them.

Overall, whether used possessions go to strangers or non-strangers, divestment rituals enacted during used object disposition is essentially to reconfigure and transfer meaningful properties. It is instructive to note that rituals have received much scholarly attention given its critical importance as part of identity management. Indeed, divestment rituals are important in establishing who we are through what we have and no longer have (Belk, 1988; Tuan, 1980) or can(not) access (Belk, 2014). As seen in the current section, divestment rituals during used object disposition are equally important. This is because disconnecting oneself with objects that are no longer wanted is also a critical element of the self and identity management project (Roster, 2014; Belk, 2014). Essentially, removing all traces of the self from an unwanted used objects is tantamount to avoiding washing dirty linens in public.

3.3.4.2 Divestment Rituals During Used Object Re-acquisition

Divestment rituals are also deployed during the re-acquisition of previously owned/used objects. These rituals are enacted by the new acquirer of a previously owned/used possession

“to erase the meaning associated with the previous owner [...] to avoid contact with the meaningful properties of the previous owner and to free up the meaningful properties of the possession, claiming them for him/herself.” (McCracken, 1986, 80).

Two clarifications are important from the above submission. First, claiming a previously owned/used possession for oneself is similar to decommodification and singularisation of first-hand objects of consumption. In both instances, objects are removed from the sphere of commodity - i.e., public space - and brought into the sphere of possession - i.e., private space - (cf. Kopytoff, 1986; Corbett & Denegri-Knott, 2020). However, with previously owned/used object, the case is that of objects re-acquisition - hence the need to enact rituals to re-decommodify, re-singularise and re-possess previously possessed objects. Besides, claiming previously owned/used possession for oneself also shows that

“[d]ivestment rituals are theoretically and empirically intertwined with investment rituals, meaning that a divestment ritual has causes and can be considered as a process that can be stopped and possibly reversed.”
(Assima et al., 2023, 1224).

In other words, a previously owned/used object may not go out to strangers and kept as heirlooms. Even when they go out to strangers, they may stop at any point down the line. Also, reversibility according to Assima et al. (2023) underscores the fact that marketplace objects are essentially on a commodity-singularity continuum thus explicating a fluidity that captures the socio-materiality of objects (see Appadurai 2006). Importantly, at every point in this commodity-singularity continuum, objects carry different values and meanings, and these values and meanings change given the prevailing practices that these objects are embedded in (see also Deutz & Frostick, 2009; Epp & Price, 2010; Hultman & Corvellec, 2012; Gollnhofer et al., 2019). For example, it has been repeatedly shown in this thesis that along cultural lines, the values and meanings ascribed to objects also shape practices and social norms - including in determining pathways to object disposition (Cruz-Cárdenas & Arévalo-Chávez, 2018; Laitala, Boks, & Klepp, 2015; Castellani et al., 2015; Hanson, 1980; Payne & Binotto, 2017; Weber, Lynes, & Young, 2017; Chavero, 2017; Dwyer, 2010; WRAP, 2012, 2017, 2017b; House of Commons, 2019). The problem however is that extant theorising ignores available evidence that contexts differ and that contexts matter. By focusing significantly on contexts within the Global North, extant theorising on divestment rituals appears to ignore value systems, meaning assignment and cultural perspectives influencing divestment rituals beyond first-hand objects becoming second-hand. The second clarification necessary from McCracken's (1986) divestment rituals enacted by new acquirers of previously owned/used possessions is regarding erasing meanings and avoiding contact with the object's previous owner/user. As earlier noted, the term disposition is often used when used objects go to strangers (McCracken, 1986; Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005; Roster, 2014). The involvement of strangers is usually a cause for concern. This is why previous owner/users enact divestment rituals to remove their personal properties from possessions before exchanging them with strangers. Besides, the washing, ironing, pinning and wrapping items together are all with intent to reassemble public meaning towards

recommodification (Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005). In other words, to make the used objects market worthy and desirable by new acquirers.

Expectedly, new buyers desire this market worthiness in used objects that they reacquire. As such, divestment rituals during used object disposition are not in vain. However, in spite of this, new acquirers have deeper concerns beyond used object re-decommodification, re-singularisation and re-possession. Unlike the case of possession rituals during first-hand objects acquisition, divestment rituals during used object's re-acquisition essentially seeks to cleanse the objects. Cleansing is of critical importance to avoid possible contamination with the negative or undesirable, non-material properties left behind in a used object (e.g., Roster, 2014; Rozin et al., 1993; Nemeroff & Rozin, 1994). For example, where a new owner cleans a used car or redecorates a previously owned house, such cleansing rituals are not the same as those done when disposing of the car or house (cf. McCracken, 1986). At a deeper level, new owner/users deliberately cleanse used objects to avoid coming in contact with the vital essence (Meigs, 1978) that a previous owner/user may have imbued the used car or previously occupied house with (cf. Rozin et al., 1986; Newman et al., 2011; Hingston et al., 2017). What is more, health complications from wearing clothes worn by others before washing them have been documented in the literature in the Global South. Wetengere (2018) noted how the treatment of imported second-hand clothing is highly recommended by health industry experts in the Global South (see also Amanor, 2018; Chipambwa, Sithole, & Chisosa, 2016).

Clearly, in spite of the mutual desire for exchange, there is the consciousness to disconnect or at least, reduce the extent of connection and exposure in disposing and reacquiring used objects. On one hand, previous owners/users do not want to literally wash their dirty linens in public by leaving physical stains (e.g., from body secretions and excretions) and other patina of age and use in their used possessions. They do these to re-commodify and re-singularise their used possessions for re-possession. On the other hand, new owners/users remove public and add private meanings to re-decommodify and re-singularise used objects. However, and more importantly, beyond re-decommodification, new users enact divestment rituals to avoid coming into contact with whatever negative valence that the previous owner/user may have left behind in used objects. Although they may enact similar set or divestment rituals as the disposer, the ultimate goal for

a re-acquirer of used possessions aligns more with avoiding contamination. Contamination also constitutes threat to consumers' ontological security concerns (Greenberg et al., 1997; Sheldon & Kasser, 2008; Thompson et al., 2018). Dealing with such threats as those posed by the fear of contamination also activates consumers to rework "new obdurate materiality that would support their routines and a return to feeling secure and safe" (Phipps & Ozanne, 2017, 373). Veritable examples of such reworkings are those of the divestment rituals enacted to avoid coming in contact with the negative valence that the previous owner/user may have left behind in their used objects. This is especially true if the previous owner/users are complete strangers (Hingston et al., 2017; Newman et al., 2011; Newman & Dhar, 2014). Beyond physical stains and other patina of age, the concern around contamination is underpinned in extant theorising by consumers' belief systems especially those relating to magic. This is examined in the following section.

3.4 Rituals, (Extraordinary) Belief and Magic

Reference to contamination within consumer research dates to the Scottish classicist/anthropologist James George Frazer (1854-1941; *The Golden Bough*, Frazer, 1891, 1919). In *The Golden Bough*, Frazer posited that scientific thought actually originated from magic through religious belief. He drew strong connections between animate and inanimate objects. With numerous illustrations from across multiple traditional and cultural narratives of the time, he showed that desired effects may be created between individuals and objects through physical contact or through some shared commonalities (cf. Karanika & Hogg, 2020). Frazer's works on sympathetic magic, dirt, hygiene, pollution, and contamination have since evolved into two related fields of study within consumer research viz the law of contagion and the law of similarity.

Frazer (1891) posited in his law of contagion that all individuals leave parts of themselves behind in every object that they come in contact with. In other words, all individuals contaminate possessions through bodily contact and use. As a result of this contamination, he posited that a magic sympathy exists between an individual (A) and any object that individual (A) owns, has used, or has been in contact with in one form or another. Similarly, Belk (1988) observed that in claiming possessions for themselves, object acquirer would touch or lick a new possession. In extreme cases, Belk (1988) noted that object acquirers would name

new possessions for a part of their body or shed their blood on them. These are evidently ways of establishing magic sympathy between them and these possessions. Frazer (1891) further posited that this magic sympathy that exists between individual (A) and their used possession would then be extended to another individual (B) if the latter comes into contact with the same object that the former has contaminated. In other words, certain parts of (A) with which the object has been contaminated would be transferred to (B). The same magic sympathy would exist - according to Frazer's law of similarity - between individual (A) and individual (B) if they both share some familiarity or similarity. For the same reason as in the earlier case, Frazer believed that (B) can be manipulated by (A) and these connections can be created by simply imitating them.

The law of contagion discussed above shows the existence of magic sympathy between an individual (A) and any object that individual (A) owns, has used, or has been in contact with. This connection resonates with Bourdieu's Habitus and Hexis discussed earlier (section 3.2.1) in this chapter and as explicated by Tuan (1980), Belk (1988) and Johansson et al., (2020). In managing their identity, consumers deploy marketplace resources to express who they are and who they are not in their interactions with others in the societies. The example by Belk (1988) above also attests to the existence of a relationship between possessions and those who own(ed) them, use or come in contact with them (e.g. Frazer, 1891; Meigs 1978; Rozin et al., 1986). Belk (1988) equally evidenced this connection broadly by looking at the roles that the possession of material objects plays in our lives; in consuming them and in using them to build our self-perception including how we react to their loss, among others. From a magic sympathy perspective, Rozin et al. (1986; 703) also used the statement "once in contact, always in contact" to show that through use and other forms of contact, possessions become a part of the owner/user who not only connects with the objects of possession but also contaminates the possession with personal properties and would become anxious in an instance of unintended disconnection with the object e.g., through theft or damage.

Subsequent works theorising magical thinking - from Meigs, 1978 and Rozin et al. (1986) to Hingston et al. (2017) and Carrington & Ozanne (2022) - all agree on at least two grounds. One, they agree that a possessor's personal properties and non-material qualities become permanently transferred to the possession through bodily contact with or usage of the possession (cf. Newman et al., 2011; Yan et

al., 2015). This is similar to the way that pathogenic and other chemicals can contaminate food through contact (e.g. Fallon et al., 1984). Two, they also agree that a possession's new owner/user can access some of the properties that the possession's previous owner/user leaves behind in the possession (cf. Rozin & Nemeroff, 2002; Fernandez & Lastovicka, 2011; James et al., 2011; Carrington & Ozanne, 2022). By extension, these extant researchers equally believe that a new owner/user of a possession can be imbued with the powers and attributes of the possession's previous owner/user. Studies relying on the law of contagion and magical thinking have also shown that vital essence or abilities, attributes and other personal properties of an individual can transfer to an object previously owned, used or touched (cf. Rozin & Nemeroff, 2002; Fernandez & Lastovicka, 2011; James et al., 2011; Carrington & Ozanne, 2022). Having had access to or used these objects in their identity management, these objects now constitute part of their desired past (Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005). Again, this is much like a pathogenic contaminant left on food or an object by a previous handler can be contracted by a new individual that comes in contact with it (e.g. Fallon et al., 1984). Similarly, magical thinking also suggests that the vital essence of an object's previous user can be accessed by its new user (e.g. Fernandez & Lastovicka, 2011). The question then is about essence which is addressed in the following section.

3.4.1 What About Vital Essence?

The personal properties or non-material qualities that a previous user leaves behind in a possession have been referred to as essence (cf. Meigs, 1978; Rozin et al., 1986; Newman et al., 2011; Hingston et al., 2017). Although sometimes hard to observe physically, the essence is nevertheless an essential part of an individual's inherent reality (Gelman, 2003). Essence or (vital)essence (Meigs, 1978) includes a wide category of substances including body fluid (e.g. McSwiney, 1934), body secretions and excretions (e.g. Lagerspetz, 2018), and several other substances emanating from the body of an individual. According to the subjects of Meigs' (1978) study - i.e. the Hua people of the Eastern Highlands District of Papua New Guinea - vital essence or the *Nu* has both direct and remote meanings. Directly, vital essence consists of substances secreted as a result of the natural functioning of the human body including "blood, urine, faeces, sweat, saliva, body oil, and sexual fluids" (p. 306). Such vital essence directly left in an object

remains with the object long after discontinued contact (Rozin & Nemeroff, 1990). Remotely, vital essence consists, for example, of a person's "hair, breath, fingernails, shadow, human flesh, a person's child, pig, the largest and best produce of his or her garden, and animals which he has shot" (p. 306). An individual's vital essence as seen in Meigs' (1978) study thus has strong connections to his source of life, vitality, sexuality and youth. An individual's essence is thus deeply rooted in - and is an extension of - an individual's being or soul (Belk, 1988; Gelman, 2003). It permeates a possession and is accessible to a possession's new user or anyone who comes in contact with the possession (Meigs, 1978; Rozin et al., 1986; Rozin & Nemeroff, 2002; Fernandez & Lastovicka, 2011; James et al., 2011; Hingston et al., 2017; Carrington & Ozanne, 2022). At this juncture, it is imperative to mention that at the nexus of Frazer's (1891) laws of contagion and similarity and Meigs' (1978) connection of the essence to source of life, vitality, sexuality and youth, being or soul (Belk, 1988; Gelman, 2003), lies the prospect that an individual with ulterior intention may be able to manipulate a possessions' previous owner/user by simply manipulating the vital essence left behind in the possession. The prospect of manipulation of vital essence in used possessions further connects Frazer's (1891) laws of contagion and similarity with those of rituals and belief - especially extraordinary belief systems.

3.4.2 Rituals and Extraordinary Belief Systems

The ritual-magic connection has been highlighted in the preceding sections in this chapter. Magic sympathy exists between consumers and their possessions. Again, the bits of themselves or contaminants left behind in possessions can be accessed to manipulate them. This section seeks to further establish these connections from extant consumer research about how extraordinary belief shape consumption experiences. The connection between rituals and belief is more evident in anthropological studies of rituals and consumer research building on works like those of Mauss (1950/1972). For instance, Otnes et al. (2018) conducted a systematic review of the consumer ritual literature to understand the roles of extraordinary beliefs in consumption rituals. Otnes et al.'s (2018) study revealed 15 salient extraordinary beliefs (EBs) that influence consumers' participation in consumption rituals (see Table 3-2). Major finding in their work is as captured by the epigraph at the beginning of this chapter. They found that these EBs function to allow consumers to connect, control, enchant and explain their participation

in consumption rituals not only during but also both before and after the ritual experiences.

According to Otnes et al. (2018) and as equally observed by Ozanne & Ozanne (2016) and Ran & Wan (2023), rituals serve a connection function. Otnes et al.'s (2018) work showed that consumers participate in consumption rituals because such participation allows them to gather around consumption objects and socialise on dedicated ritual sites with others and to share the same or similar experiences (i.e., connecting EBs). Connecting is critical to aso-ebi rituals (Nwafor, 2012; 2013; Fagbola et al. 2023) and to those enacted by the Harley-Davidson motorcycle owners (Schouten et al.. 1995). Wang et al. (2021) also confirmed this connecting or socialising function of participating in rituals. Wang et al.'s (2021) study sought to understand the relationships (if any) between participation in consumption rituals and loneliness. Their study found that engaging in consumption rituals can reduce the negative effects of loneliness in consumers. See also Higgins & Hamilton (2018) and Hill et al. (2022). As earlier observed in section 3.3.1, possession rituals can also serve this connecting function during e.g., product unboxing, storytelling and showing off possessions (e.g. Berden, 2020; Lee et al., 2022; Belk, 1988; 2014; 2018; Assima et al. 2023; Curasi et al., 2004). Discussing, comparing, and showing off one's possessions enables consumers to connect with other consumers with whom they share commonalities or similar interests (see Tables 3-1 and 3-2).

The second category of EBs uncovered by Otnes et al.'s (2018) study are those enabling controlling functions. Otnes et al. (2018) observed that controlling EBs primarily functions by allowing consumers to take advantage of their agency as well as those of others - with whom they share the ritual experience - to reduce uncertainties. According to them, consumers achieve this sometimes through believing in things they cannot prove (i.e., faith), unnatural or cannot be rationally explained (i.e., superstition). They also achieve control by holding strong beliefs that they can change or become (i.e., self-transformation); or in the extreme cases over-sacralising or over-secularising certain entities for human interaction (i.e., taboo). Further support for Otnes et al.'s (2018) finding that rituals play a controlling function can be found in Tian et al. (2018). Through a total of 6 field experiments with female American participants aiming to lose weight through healthy eating, Tian and colleagues (2018) found that engaging in consumption rituals improved consumers' sense of behavioural self-control. Again

like Otnes et al. (2018), Tian et al. (2018) observed that strong connections exist between the intended outcome i.e., behavioural self-control and the research participants' perceived self-efficacy or belief system. Exchange rituals also fall within the categories of rituals that serve both connection and control functions. During gift exchanges, both givers and receivers are connected by the gifts. Exchange rituals are also enacted to influence the receiver (see Tables 3-1 and 3-2). A veritable example of the control can also be seen in aso-ebi is used in defining social and political relations between the affluent giver or celebrant and those expressing uniform solidarity with them (Nwafor, 2013).

A third category of EBs that Otnes et al. (2018) found are those that perform the function of enchantment. Enchantment relates to the function of rituals as an enabler of consumers to “engage in powerful or magnetic processes seemingly explainable only by magic” (p. 572). These include believing that certain individuals possess exceptional qualities that make them worthy of their veneration or devotion (i.e., charisma); having “a quasi-religious stance toward nature” (i.e., nature worship, p. 572); temporarily suspending reality and freely dwelling in imaginary realms (i.e., make-believe/fantasy e.g., Seregina, 2014); sacralising objects or spaces (i.e., sacredness); believing that ritual experiences can lead to “unintended” discoveries (i.e., serendipity, p.573). Table 3-1 and the review in section 3.3 shows grooming rituals essentially functioning to enchant both the consumers and the consumption object (see also Table 3-2).

The fourth category of EBs according to Otnes et al. (2018) are those enabling consumers to make sense both of their real and imaginary worlds (i.e., explaining EBs). These include beliefs that supernatural forces can influence outcomes or realities in people's lives (i.e., fatalism); beliefs in supernatural interventions in natural events (i.e., miracles); and strongly shared foundational and cultural beliefs about heroes engaging extraordinary feats (i.e., myth). As shown in table 3-2, explaining EBs align with earlier discussions in this chapter connecting magic, rituals and belief systems.

Human history is full of anecdotes explicating Otnes et al.'s (2018) explaining EBs in which desired outcomes may be created between individuals and objects through physical contact or some shared commonalities (cf. Frazer, 1891). In Africa for instance, it is believed that success can be achieved through supernatural powers, magic and ritual practices (Moore & Sanders, 2003). Ritual practices stemming from these explaining EBs in magic and supernatural powers have

become more rampant recently in Nigeria. Some of these practices include money-making rituals involving the use of “used women’s underwear, used sanitary pads, and used toilet paper” foraged from refuse dump sites around universities in Nigeria (Nwaka, 2020, 71). All these items and rites are offered to specific spirits and deities in return for prosperity. There are evidently strong connections between the recent upsurge in cases of kidnapping (Onyegbula, 2018) and money-making ritual killings (Salihu et al., 2019) in the country. Stronger connections are further established between these and the more recent upgrade of the well-known internet fraud known as *yahoo-yahoo* - the upgrade being occultism (Nwaka, 2020). The belief surrounding the above ritual practices (Nwaka, 2020) aligns with Frazer’s (1891) works on dirt, hygiene, pollution, and contamination. This belief is also explicated in consumer research building on Frazer (cf. Belk, 1988; Gelman, 2003; Meigs, 1978). Otnes et al.’s (2018) extraordinary belief in fatalism, miracles and myths helps us understand divestment rituals and why neither the previous nor the new owner/user is willing to allow access to the personal properties that permeate a used possession. It also establishes the prospect and the critical need for theorising Lastovicka & Fernandez’s (2005) other ritual dimensions like those of intentional destruction where rather than reconfigure or transfer meanings, previous owner/users destroy the meaning in possessions to prevent future access. The additional EBs i.e., *Uber* EBs (Anthropomorphism and religion) are added because they support all four functions of controlling, connecting, enchanting, and explaining that the authors identified.

Table 3-2: Otnes et al.'s (2018) Typology of Extraordinary Beliefs (EBs)

Extraordinary Beliefs		Ritual Dimensions
Connecting EBs: primarily enabling consumers to forge or maintain linkages to people, places, or objects when engaging in rituals and that help consumers		Possession, Exchange
<i>Nostalgia</i>	Belief things were better in the past than in the present	
Controlling EBs: enabling consumers to reduce uncertainty - specifically, to help them leverage their own or others' agency to shape ritual outcomes		Exchange
<i>Faith</i>	Believing in something for which there is no proof	
<i>Self-transformation</i>	People's beliefs that they can change themselves	
<i>Superstition</i>	Beliefs contradicting known laws of nature or rational thought	
<i>Taboo</i>	Beliefs that some entities are too sacred or unclean for human interaction	
Enchanting EBs: enabling consumers to suspend disbelief in the rational world and engage in powerful or magnetic processes seemingly explainable only by magic		Grooming
<i>Charisma</i>	Belief some people possess exceptional qualities, imbuing them with an "aura" and inspiring others' devotion	
<i>Nature worship</i>	Reverence and a quasi-religious stance toward nature	
<i>Make-believe/fantasy</i>	Beliefs in the acceptability of disengaging from reality and freely engaging the imagination	
<i>Sacredness</i>	Belief some objects or places can acquire meaning above that of mundane or profane objects	
<i>Serendipity</i>	Belief experiences can lead to unintended discovery	

Explaining EBs: enabling consumers to make sense both of their immediate worlds and those they have yet to experience		Divestment
Fatalism	Belief a supernatural, impersonal force can determine outcomes in people's lives	
Miracles	Belief that extraordinary, unexpected events can happen	
Myths	Beliefs in foundational, culturally shared stories that often feature heroes engaging in feats that illuminate life lessons and moral codes	
Uber EBs: supporting all four functions of connecting, controlling, enchanting, and explaining		
Anthropomorphism	Attributing the human to nonhuman forms	
Religion	A belief system featuring a divine entity used to denote values, guiding everyday life	

The above discussion sheds some light on the roles that rituals play in consumers' identity projects including in defining and negotiating their interactions with others in society. Importantly, divestment rituals enacted during used object re-acquisition attest to - and in a way solves - the paradox of wanting a previous owner's possession but not wanting all the properties with which the possession has been imbued (section 3.4). The selective approach to used objects in sifting the desirable from the undesirable solves this paradox. It is also a logical explanation for the trade in used objects. We know that consumers contaminate objects that they have used or come in contact with. Contaminants could be material, or non-material, positive and desirable or negative and treated like pathogens in food. We know that consumers desire to come in contact with an object previously owned or used by an individual they revere or worship (cf. charisma, Otnes et al., 2018). It is believed that such objects are positively charged with the previous users' essence or positive energies and that through contagious magic, some of these positive energies in the object can be transferred to them. As a result, new users are willing to pay a premium for these experiences (cf. Hingston et al., 2017; Nemeroff & Rozin, 1994; Newman & Dhar, 2014; Newman et al., 2011; Otnes et al., 2018). In all these, rituals are enacted as a vehicle to fantasise with sacralised or positively charged objects or persons hoping that the experience leads them to favourable - albeit - serendipitous outcomes (Otnes et al., 2018).

We also learn that previous owners/users do not have concerns about their used possessions being passed on to strangers. Understandably, they clean used possessions to remove physical stains and other patina of age and use. We also learn that cleaning is necessary to make used possessions acceptable to strangers and others alike. This double coincidence of want is yet another logic behind trade in used objects. However, the focus of consumer researchers has been mainly on accessing the positive valence in used objects in anticipation of favourable outcomes for the new owner/user, with no detriment to the previous owner/user. Again, extant theorising of such exchanges has predominantly focused on exchanges within national boundaries (cf. Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005; Hingston et al., 2017; Nemeroff & Rozin, 1994; Newman & Dhar, 2014; Newman et al., 2011). They have significantly focused on rituals enacted during the transformation of first-hand objects into second-hand ones, i.e., on Thompson's (1979, 2017) rubbish-durable transfers, rather than on what transpires afterwards.

By focusing mainly on consumption cultures and ritual experiences in the Global North, extant theorising on divestment rituals has significantly focused on the ritual experiences of meaning transfer and meaning reconfiguration with respect to desirable positive valences in used objects. Not only has this remained significantly Western-centric, but only a few extant works have documented the avoidance of objects with negative valences (e.g., Rozin et al., 1993; Nemeroff & Rozin, 1994). Even these works have yet to heed Lastovicka & Fernandez's (2005) call to explore modalities of voluntary disposition such as intentional destruction. By relying significantly on Western consumption cultures and ritual experiences, what happens beyond meaning transfer and meaning reconfiguration remains unexplored in extant theorising. This western centrism means that whereas we know a lot about willingness to exchange, we do not know if - and to what extent do - previous owner/users worry about any potential harm or detriment to themselves as a result of strangers accessing the non-material properties i.e., the essence that they left behind in their used possessions. This Western centrism also means that extant theorising on divestment rituals has yet to solve the paradox of new users wanting a previous owner's possession but not wanting all the properties with which the possession has been imbued.

We know that new owners and users seek the positive energies left behind in used possessions for positive outcomes for themselves. Could the reverse be the case, albeit deliberately or inadvertently? Could new owners or users want access to the positive energies left behind in used possessions, potentially to the detriment of the previous owners or users? Are previous owners or users concerned about these possibilities? These questions regarding reverse contamination remain unexplored in existing theorising on divestment rituals.

There is thus a research imperative to explore these questions, especially with the current realities of UK's used clothing shipped to Global South marketplaces with different socioeconomic and consumption culture e.g., Thompson et al. 2018; Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Guarín & Knorrinda, 2014). These questions are consistent with the central aim of the current study - i.e., to explore what rituals dimensions we might find when we enquire into the future use and disposition of bales UK's used clothing that are shipped to marketplaces in the global South. Given the much we know about ritual dimensions that manifest in Global North consumption cultures, the next section reviews consumption rituals in Global second-hand economies.

3.5 Dearth of Research on Divestment Rituals in the Global South

Chapter 2 of this thesis reviews extant theorising on the logic behind global second-hand economies and value redefinition. It shows that by recommodifying singularised objects - i.e., making them available to new users - previous owners are willing to grant access. The current chapter also shows the enactment of divestment rituals for reconfiguring - i.e., renewing, reversing, obscuring, removing, losing, retaining, or transferring - meaningful possession's public and private meanings. From McCracken (1986) to Assima et al. (2023), extant theorisation on divestment rituals during the re-acquisition of a previously owned object leaves unanswered questions. One of such questions is regarding the paradox of wanting a previous owner's possession but not wanting all the properties with which the possession has been imbued. Another unanswered question is that relating to reverse contagion or contamination. That is, could new owner/users want access to the positive energies left behind in used possessions to the detriment of the previous owner/users? Again, are previous owner/users concerned about these possibilities?

Although McCracken's (1986) - and the extant works relying on his seminal work - refers to divestment to prevent contagion, the emphasis is predominantly on meaning reconfiguration - i.e., reassembling public meanings towards recommodification. As a result, all references terminate at the point where used possessions go on to new users. Neither has there been significant attention paid to the future realities of the Global North's used clothing that enter global second-hand markets (Hansen & Le Zotte, 2019a; b; WRAP, 2018; House of Commons 2019; 2021a; b). Nor do we know of the ritual dimensions that manifest during the future lives of these used clothing in their new destinations. For instance, although we know that used and divested objects live second lives in global second-hand economies, extant theorising on divestment rituals assume that these objects will be subjected to the same rituals as are obtainable in Global North consumption cultures and practices. By focusing significantly on the point of exchange and on Global North consumption cultures, consumer researchers theorising divestment rituals have yet to heed Lastovicka & Fernandez (2005). Lastovicka & Fernandez (2005) noted that there are other ritual diversities yet unexplored. Particularly, Lastovicka & Fernandez (2005) noted that the question of intentional destruction remains significantly unanswered in consumer research.

We do not yet know what divestment rituals manifest beyond cleansing - e.g., what happens when an object's previous owner decides not to transfer the meaning and properties in their used possessions to others? What about when previous owners/users divest to destroy meaning? What about when used possessions follow pathways other than those in existing theorising? For instance, what happens when the meaning in a meaningful possession is not transferred to another but instead destroyed to prevent further contact completely? Again, while extant theorising has significantly focussed on forward contagion - i.e., where the negative properties left behind in the used object may harm the new owner/user, questions about reverse contagion are yet unexplored - e.g., what about potential harm to the previous owner/user due to access to the properties they left behind in their used possessions?

3.6 Conclusion

Consumer researchers theorise divestment rituals as avenues for renewing, reversing, obscuring, removing, losing, retaining, or transferring meanings (Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005; Assima et al., 2023). Through these processes, marketplace objects are rid of any “affects, marks and meanings” before they are released to recirculate again and move on to the next owner who in turn engages in a series of rituals to imbue the objects with their own meanings and values (Assima et al., 2023, 1224). This is consistent with the diversion of unwanted clothing from landfills (Bianchi & Birtwistle, 2010; Payne & Binotto, 2017; Williams & Shaw, 2017; WRAP, 2017a; Diop & Shaw, 2018; Shaw & Williams, 2018). Such diversions or transfers allow consumers to share their clothing consumption experiences with others (Lang & Joyner Armstrong, 2018; Martin, Lazarevic, & Gullström, 2019). As the current chapter shows, many of these transfers and meaning manipulation, serving as a precursor to or for the sole purpose of transferring meaningful possessions to others, are influenced by social norms, values, and belief systems. While some of these transfers go to friends, family and familiar beneficiaries, others are transferred to strangers. Transfers to strangers usually invoke more complicated rituals to avoid washing dirty linens in public literally. Existing research theorising divestment rituals has yet to transcend divestment as a mode of meaning transfer and reconfiguration. More importantly for consumer researchers, the questions of intentional destruction (Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005) and reverse contagion and attending rituals dimensions that manifest during these encounters represent critical gaps in extant theorisation on

divestment rituals. Therefore, the current chapter proposes a second research question (RQ 2) to address the questions of ritual dimensions that manifest during the use and disposal of millions of tonnes of the UK's second-hand clothing, which is shipped to Nigeria.

Research Question 2

RQ2. What are the ritual dimensions that manifest through the use and disposal of second-hand clothing in Nigeria?

This is in addition to the research questions identified in chapter 2 - i.e., How do second-hand clothing consumers in Nigeria use and dispose of second-hand clothing that comes from the Global North. Like the first research question in this study, this second research question also addresses the current study's objective in two ways. One, it addresses the unexplored question of intentional destruction as against the current theorisation of divestment ritual as meaning transfer and meaning reconfiguration. Two, it addresses the unanswered question of reverse contagion - i.e., what happens when the meanings in possessions are not transferred but rather destroyed?

Chapter 4 - Methodology and Research Methods

Fluctuating geographies are difficult to map, especially as official trade statistics have many missing records or inaccuracies. The used-clothing system of provision is a shifting process, rather than a structure (Brooks, 2019, 146).

4.1 Introduction to Chapter 4

This study aims to understand the fate of the UK's donated used clothing that is shipped to Nigeria. It also seeks to explore the ritual dimensions that manifest during these consumption encounters. By exploring imported second-hand clothing use, disposition and attending rituals, it aims to answer the unaddressed question of transfer at the durable-rubbish interface of Thompson's (1979; 2017) rubbish theory. It aims to achieve this by utilising data from the lived experiences of consumers of imported second-hand clothing in Nigeria, where most of the Global North's donated used clothing ultimately ends up.

This chapter presents the research philosophy, techniques, and strategies adopted in the current study. It is essential to acknowledge from the outset that all techniques and strategies employed in the current study are informed by the exploratory nature of the research aim (e.g., Porter et al., 2023). Specifically, this methodology chapter seeks to achieve three main objectives. The first objective is to connect the research problems, aims, and questions with the research techniques and strategies, thereby justifying the adopted research design. To this end, this introduction is immediately followed by a statement of the research objectives and the questions to address the identified research problems. The chapter's second objective is to present the philosophical assumptions underlying the current study within the broader philosophical framework of business, management, and consumer research. The chapter discusses the philosophical assumption to which the researcher subscribes and how this guided the entire study. The chapter proceeds to justify the research design and sampling methods, as well as the recruitment of informants, accordingly. The third objective of this chapter is to present the key strategies and techniques for data collection and analysis in the current study. As such, the chapter discusses data collection along with the data analysis techniques and data storage modalities adopted in the study. Ethical considerations are also discussed. Ultimately, the limitations of the research methods in relation to the research context are discussed. The remaining part of this chapter is organised according to the above chapter objectives.

4.2 Research Aim

The current study's main aim is to understand what happens to the UK's donated used clothing that is shipped to Nigeria. In other words, to address the unaddressed transfer at the durable-rubbish interface of Thompson's (1979; 2017) Rubbish theory, i.e., where do objects in the durable category end up? The study's other aim is to uncover the ritual dimensions that manifest through the use and disposition of the UK's donated used clothing that is shipped to Nigeria, which are currently missing in extant theorising (Jacoby et al., 1977; Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005). In this direction, the study identified two main research questions from omissions in extant theorising on both second-hand economies and consumption ritual. The two main research questions emerging from the gaps identified in the two review chapters (2 and 3) are presented below.

4.2.1 Research Questions

In line with the gap identified in the literature, this study seeks to address the following two research questions:

RQ1. How do second-hand clothing consumers in Nigeria use and dispose of second-hand clothing that comes from the Global North?

RQ2. What are the ritual dimensions that manifest through second-hand clothing use and disposal in Nigeria?

4.3 Research Philosophy and Assumptions

Broadly speaking, research is a purposeful and systematic process of collecting and interpreting information to enhance our understanding. It is systematic because it is a form of disciplined enquiry carried out to gain insight into a given situation (Yvonna, Lincoln & Guba, 1986). Every research is an encounter with knowledge in which researchers are guided by a set of underlying assumptions about their ways of knowing, being, and doing (Absolon, 2008). These ways of knowing, being, and doing things are collectively referred to as a person's worldview. A worldview is a collection of mental imagery constructed in people's minds about the world they live in. For instance, it is the lens through which consumers measure and assess their consumption experiences (Kemppainen, 2020). A worldview also guides the researcher's choice of research questions, methodologies, methods, and analysis (Absolon, 2008). Everyone coming to the truth encounter comes from their worldview, their reality (Saunders et al., 2016;

2019). It is this reality that guides people's creation of, and their interactions with and their use of knowledge.

Guided by their world views, researchers in the social sciences approach research from multiple standpoints. Creswell (2007) synthesised these standpoints to include but not limited to ecological psychology, ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory, historical research, case studies, ethnoscience, hermeneutics, and action research from anthropological, psychological, sociological, educational and biological perspectives. McGregor & Murnane (2010) categorised these approaches into those through which consumer researchers seek "theory and pattern" and those through which they seek "meanings and interpretations". Whereas consumer researchers attempt to identify theories through naturalistic and interpretive inquiries, such as phenomenology, case studies, and grounded theory, they look for patterns through content, discourse, thematic, and document analysis. On the other hand, they generally look for meanings in behaviour by making inquiries into people's history, and value systems, and attempting to interpret data through narrative and discourse analysis (McGregor & Murnane, 2010). Creswell (2007) also identified five assumptions guiding these researchers in their enquiry (Table 4-1). These underlying assumptions, according to Creswell (2007) include ontology i.e., fundamental assumptions about the nature of reality or what we know to be true; epistemology i.e., how we know what we know about the nature of this reality; axiology i.e., our values and ethical beliefs about what we know about reality; methods i.e., the material to examine, the process and techniques adopted; and rhetoric i.e., the language used in the research (cf. Hansen, 2010; Creswell, 2007; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016, 2019; Lewis, Moura, & Runde, 2020).

Table 4-1: Study-specific Assumptions (adaptation of Creswell, 2007)

Philosophical Assumptions	Question	Study-specific adaptation
1. Ontology	What do we know about the acquisition, use, and disposal of second-hand clothing in Nigeria?	Social constructivism
2. Epistemology	What is the relationship between the researcher and the reality of second-hand clothing use and disposition in Nigeria?	Interpretivism
3. Methods	What to examine, how to examine it, and what processes and techniques to adopt?	Phenomenological: sense-making
4. Axiology	What values does the researcher bring into the research encounter, and how do these values affect the research?	Humanistic: Interpretive, inductive, value-laden, Ubuntu
5. Rhetoric	What language and writing style do researchers with similar philosophical assumptions and similar theoretical lenses use?	Chronological narratives with paragraphs, figures, and tables

4.3.1 Ontology

Ontology broadly describes assumptions about the nature of reality (Lewis, Moura, & Runde, 2020; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016, 2019). In business and management research, ontology primarily concerns the distinction between objectivism and constructivism (Bryman, 2016; Bryman & Bell, 2015) or between objectivism and subjectivism (Saunders et al., 2016, 2019). Although widely referred to by many names, objectivism and constructivism (or subjectivism) describe two divergent views on the nature of knowledge and truth. The philosophical assumptions of objectivism believe that the truth exists and is absolute; facts are facts, and knowledge is only that which represents and mirrors reality. On the other hand, the philosophical assumptions of constructivism (or subjectivism) hold that knowledge is acquired through active processes of

interpretation of socially constructed meanings (cf. Jonassen, 1991; Bryman, 2016; Bryman & Bell, 2015; Saunders et al., 2016, 2019).

This study is underpinned by the constructivist ontological assumption that reality is socially constructed (Saunders et al., 2019). This study is guided by the belief that knowledge and truth are continually created in a seemingly endless process, where new outcomes stimulate new learning and existing knowledge is further refined. Guided by the above belief that reality is a creation of social interactions between social actors and their environment, the current study follows the sense-making tradition (Dervin, 1983; Magolda, 2000; Tomkins & Eatough, 2019; Woodside, 2001).

4.3.2 Epistemology, Axiology and Rhetoric

Epistemology refers to assumptions that describe ways of understanding knowledge about the world. It is concerned with an enquiry into ways of knowing what we know about reality, including its sources and limits, i.e., how research can produce and present a convincing justification for what we claim to know about our world (Absolon, 2008; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). Epistemology, thus, describes a researcher's fundamental assumptions about what constitutes real, valid knowledge and how this knowledge is achieved, interrogated, and communicated (Saunders et al., 2019). Epistemology generally recognises two basic divides: positivism and interpretivism (Bryman, 2016; Bryman & Bell, 2015; Easterby-Smith et al., 2019; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). Following the objectivist ontology, positivists subscribe to the objective measurement of reality. Positivists base their assumptions on the existence of a single truth. Positivists affirm that in seeking to understand reality, the researcher must be utterly objective. His task is simply to explain causality with clearly defined concepts, hypotheses, and deductions. To the positivist, research outcomes can only be considered useful knowledge if the data that produces it is obtained from observed facts in the above manner (Easterby-Smith et al., 2019).

On the other hand, drawing from hermeneutics, phenomenology, and symbolic interactionism - dating back to Max Weber's (1864 - 1920) *Verstehen* - interpretivism is premised on the need for research that recognises human beings as contributors to the understanding of reality. It follows the constructivist ontology. It believes that people live in different cultures. Their histories occur at different times. They occupy diverse spaces and face other divergent

circumstances that contribute to their reality. Consequently, people make different meanings from their diverse individual and collective experiences, interactions, and realities (Absolon, 2008; Bryman & Bell, 2015; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016, 2019). All these differences inform how interpretive researchers perceive and value reality, as well as the process of obtaining or investigating that reality (cf. Dervin, 1983; Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Ogliastri & Zúñiga, 2016; Thompson, 1997; Woodside, 2001).

The above differences are also reflected in the researchers' axiological assumptions. Axiology is concerned with how the researcher's values and ethical judgements influence what research is conducted, how it is conducted, and how it is reported. A researcher's axiological assumptions inform how they strike a balance between their own values and those of their research subjects. Axiological assumptions are equally reflected in the choice of techniques for data collection and analysis (Saunders et al., 2019). Based on their values and belief systems, researchers are either detached or engaged (Easterby-Smith et al., 2019). The former describes objectivist assumptions that researchers need not interfere with the objects of enquiry, as this is deemed as bias. By contrast, the latter is based on the constructivist (ontological) and interpretivist (epistemological) assumptions that reality is socially constructed and is the outcome of people's interpretations of the interactions occurring among social systems, i.e., the researcher and the researched. This divide is also reflected in the research strategies and methods adopted (discussed later in Section 4.4).

Guided by the ontological assumption that reality is socially constructed, the current study adopts an interpretivist epistemology. Epistemologically, the current study is guided by the existence of multiple truths. Although this belief in the existence of multiple truths does not invalidate the objective-subjective dualism of true or false (Holzman, 2014), it nevertheless suggests that reality or acceptable knowledge is socially constructed. Axiologically, the researcher is engaged in the research as they are part of the social system being studied. The researcher views himself as a member of the social system of enquiry, i.e., as a second-hand clothing consumer who once lived and consumed second-hand clothing in Nigeria. Furthermore, as a researcher of African origin, the researcher is guided by the principles of Ubuntu (Etieyibo, 2017). Ubuntu is a value system built around the African communitarian ontology, which posits that all kinds of

beings belong to one community (Etieyibo, 2017). Desmond Tutu described Ubuntu as the philosophy that defines our being; we exist because others exist. It is by learning from others that we know, behave, and form ideas about our own being (Tutu, 2004). Ubuntu thus aligns with the ontological assumption of the existence of multiple truths (Robinson-morris, 2015). To make a meaningful contribution to knowledge, the deployment of Ubuntu in this study assumes that the researcher, the research informants, and those in their stories, with whom they share experiences of using and disposing of second-hand clothing, collectively contribute to our understanding of second-hand clothing consumption in Nigeria. Ubuntu thus requires considering all forms of knowledge or truth from all relevant individuals connected to the current research as critical, worthy of due consideration, and factored into the study's design. In deploying Ubuntu for the current study, the researcher will draw from the numerous sources and repositories of knowledge and truth available, relevant, and applicable to the study.

All the above is reflected in the language used in the research, specifically in the rhetoric. Creswell (2007) noted that the language of writing qualitative studies is predominantly critical narrative. Using examples from (Moustakas, 1994) and others, Creswell (2007) observed that qualitative researchers adopt a highly structured writing approach - a rhetorical structure - that chronologically presents the stories told by research informants and the findings derived from them. This is particularly true of phenomenological enquiries, where the researcher attempts to describe the essence of people's lived experiences in paragraphs (within structured chapters) and employs figures and tables to summarise the experience in a manner that is meaningful to outsiders. Although Moustakas (1994) recognised the need for the researcher to bracket himself out of the narrative, being guided by an engaged axiology means he needs to bring in his reflexivity to make sense of the meanings of the structure behind the experience. Throughout the writing of this thesis, an attempt is made to adopt a structured narrative writing approach, utilizing paragraphs, figures, and tables to create a report that aligns with the philosophical underpinnings of qualitative interpretive enquiry. This methodology and methods chapter has so far shown that social interactions evoke learning. Learning is value-based, and values are contextual. These standpoints inform the methods adopted in the current research inquiry, as discussed in the remainder of this chapter.

4.4 Research Methods

The measure of intellectual integrity and trustworthiness of consumer research lies in how well researchers understand the distinction between methodology and methods (McGregor & Murnane, 2010). Although consumer researchers admit that "methodologies shape the diversity of the entire body of knowledge", (McGregor & Murnane, 2010: 419), a clear understanding of the boundaries between methodology and methods can significantly impact how consumer researchers contribute meaningfully to knowledge. Methodology refers to the philosophical underpinnings discussed in the earlier part of this chapter. It provides the rationale for how researchers engage with knowledge in their pursuit of truth and how their value systems help them navigate the journey towards meaningfully contributing to knowledge. Although methods are informed by the methodology, the method is not the same as the methodology. Methods are the processes and techniques adopted in gathering, analysing, and evidencing the data with which the researcher contributes to the frontiers of knowledge (Creswell, 2007).

Social and consumer researchers choose research methods and strategies from a quantitative-qualitative continuum. The difference between these two strategies lies in the nature of data collection, data treatment, and how meanings are derived. As earlier mentioned, methods are informed by philosophical assumptions, i.e., methodology. As such, most researchers who follow objectivist worldviews tend to adopt quantitative methods, thereby collecting and utilising numeric data. On the other hand, those who follow social-constructivist worldviews tend to adopt qualitative methods. The emergence of many non-positivistic ways of knowing, especially since Karl Popper [1902 - 1994] and Thomas Kuhn [1922 - 1996], is increasing the popularity of qualitative methods among social and consumer researchers (Goulding, 1999; McGregor & Murnane, 2010; Zammito, 2004). Clear distinctions between quantitative and qualitative strategies are, however, blurred by the proliferation of research adopting mixed methods within management, social and consumer research (Armstrong et al., 2015; Cruz-Cárdenas et al., 2016; Haines, 2017; Saunders et al., 2016; Turner et al., 2017).

Building on previous works with similar aims, particularly those guided by social-constructivist interpretive philosophy, the researcher employed qualitative interpretivist methods (Hansen, 2010; Creswell, 2007; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016, 2019; Lewis, Moura, & Runde, 2020).

The second-hand clothing consumers in four Southwestern states in Nigeria constitute the research unit of analysis. They have been considered, given that their live experiences with second-hand clothing usage and disposition have yet to attract the attention of sustainable clothing researchers (Hansen & Le Zotte, 2019a, 2019b). The remaining sections in this chapter are dedicated to methods adopted in the current study.

4.5 Research Design

The design adopted in the current study follows the sense-making tradition to understand sustainable clothing usage and disposition behaviour with data from Nigeria. Sense-making has to do with creating and reconstructing meanings to understand a phenomenon from the lived experiences of the research informants (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Woodside, 2001; Ogliastri & Zúñiga, 2016). It involves capturing both cognitive and procedural behaviour, allowing individuals to construct and relate their experience through time and space (Dervin, 1983). Sense-making aligns with common methods in qualitative interpretive research (e.g. Thompson, 1997), where consumers' experiences and the meanings they ascribe to these experiences are presented as texts, stories, and narratives (see also Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Dervin, 1983; Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Ogliastri & Zúñiga, 2016; Saunders et al., 2019; Thompson, 1997; Woodside, 2001).

Consumption studies employ a diverse array of methods (Belk, Fischer, & Kozinets, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; 2018; Rokka, 2021). However, there is a tendency in consumer and social research to tilt more towards methods that work with small samples but with in-depth investigations and analysis. In other words, social and consumer researchers adopt methods that allow a deeper understanding of the meanings behind the behaviour. As noted earlier (section 4.3), consumer researchers attempt to understand behaviour along a quantitative-qualitative continuum with a tendency to match and mix in line with their worldviews and research aim. Some of these methods include ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory, historical research, case studies, and action research (Austin & Sutton, 2014; Creswell, 2007; McGregor & Murnane, 2010). Specifically, they use in-depth, semi-structured interviews (Carrington, Neville, & Canniford, 2015; Wilson-Nash et al., 2020), informant observation and semi-structured interviews (Shaw et al., 2016; Shaw, Cumbers, McMaster, & Crossan, 2018; Goode & Anderson, 2015), ethnography (Veloutsou & Black, 2020), netnography and in-depth interviews (V. Rodner et al., 2022), phenomenological interviews (Bocioaga, 2021;

Bukhari et al., 2020) including some like (Black et al., 2021) that explored meanings in existing data about behaviour as a route to gaining insight into behaviour. A few specific examples of existing studies into clothing consumption in the interpretive tradition include Norum (2017), who employed qualitative interpretive enquiry with 24 female participants in the US. Norum's (2017) study aimed to gather nuanced consumer narratives to understand the process of women's clothing disposition. Others include Wiederhold & Martinez (2018), who employed in-depth interviews with 13 participants to understand possible barriers to their ethical clothing consumption in Germany. These studies, which all used small samples of the population, employed in-depth investigations and analysis (Easterby-Smith et al., 2019; Saunders et al., 2019).

Laitala's (2014) and Cruz-Cárdenas & Arévalo-Chávez's (2018) review of existing works found that consumer research investigating clothing consumption also adopts other methods. Their reviews of 41 and 62 existing works, respectively, revealed other methods in use, including surveys, focus groups, experiments, and narratives such as essays and diaries. However, Cruz-Cárdenas & Arévalo-Chávez (2018) found an improvement in the adoption of qualitative methods compared to Laitala (2014). Clothing consumption is predominantly lived and experienced in the first person (Pugh, 2020) leading to intimate relationship developing between the cloth and the owner/wearer that makes the cloth part of their identity (Frazer, 1891; Belk, 1988; Rozin et al., 1986; Meigs, 1978; Gelman, 2003; Newman et al., 2011; Yan et al., 2015; Hingston et al., 2017; Lagerspetz, 2018; Carrington & Ozanne, 2022). Recently, Johansson et al. (2020) found that consumers' clothing choices are influenced by social relations in which clothing is seen as a status symbol. They also found that consumers seek novelty, self-expression, and social acceptance by regularly updating their wardrobes. Furthermore, they discovered that consumers also purchase clothing as part of their commitment to sustainability. This is especially true for consumers who shop for used clothing (cf. Guiot & Roux, 2010). Despite the fact that clothing consumption experiences are lived in the first person, most works investigating clothing have yet to reflect this in their methodological choices, except for a few (e.g., Saunders, 2010, in South Africa; Pugh, 2020,. There is thus a critical need for more research to explore clothing usage and disposition with methods that capture the first-person experiences of second-hand clothing consumers. To do this, the current study adopted phenomenological aspects of interpretivism to make sense the lived

experience of imported second-hand clothing consumers in Nigeria. The consumption of second-hand clothing in global second-hand economies of the Global South is relatively under-theorised within discard studies in consumer research. Phenomenology as an interpretive qualitative research method is discussed in the subsequent section.

4.5.1 Phenomenology

Phenomenology, as a term, is derived from the Greek word "phainein," meaning "to appear." The literature associates the term with many early to contemporary philosophers such as Immanuel Kant [1724 - 1804], Edmund Husserl [1859 - 1938], Martin Heidegger [1889 - 1976] and Alfred Schütz [1899 - 1959] (cf. Bocioaga, 2021; Pugh, 2020; Yüksel & Yıldırım, 2015). According to Cilesiz (2009, p. 240), a phenomenon refers to "the object of a conscious subject's experience as it presents itself". This submission by Cilesiz (2009) aligns with the social constructivist views about the subject constructing what it knows, and the subject knowing what it constructs (e.g. Cilesiz, 2009; Yüksel & Yıldırım, 2015). It also explains why phenomenology is seen both as a philosophy and as a research method. As a philosophy, phenomenology provides the basis for understanding people's reality as they perceive and narrate it through their lived experiences. This can be seen in earlier works like those of Merleau-Ponty (1962), Husserl (1962) and Heidegger (1962) who deployed phenomenology to describe and validate experiences. As a method, phenomenology can be deployed to understand the meanings behind people's everyday life experiences (Schütz 1970; Yüksel & Yıldırım, 2015). Like Schütz (1967) and others who followed this path (e.g. Bocioaga, 2021) phenomenology is deployed in the current study as a veritable method for making sense of the lived experiences of imported second-hand clothing consumers in Nigeria.

In the literature, the deployment of phenomenology as a method is captured in three different forms. These are the transcendental (Husserl, 1962), existential and hermeneutic phenomenology (Heidegger, 1962).

Existential phenomenology assumes an autobiographic or first-person perspective of lived experience (Belk, Fischer, & Kozinets, 2012; Cherrier, 2012; Cilesiz, 2009; Grace, 2021; Mceachern & Cheetham, 2013; Moustakas, 1994; Schwandt, 1997; Thompson et al., 1989; Thompson et al., 1990; Thompson, 1997; Yüksel & Yıldırım, 2015). Transcendental phenomenology takes a biographical, out-of-body, or

second-person perspective on the experience of a phenomenon (Husserl, 1962). On the other hand, hermeneutic phenomenology takes a third-person approach to phenomena by interpreting and drawing meaning from the narratives of lived experiences. The current study fits into all three forms described above. First, the research informants in the current study are consumers whose everyday realities revolve around clothing, of which second-hand clothing is a significant component. They get to narrate their lived experiences with second-hand clothing, as seen from their own life worlds and narrated in their own words (existential). Second, most of their consumption experiences are shared with others who either act as buyers, deciders, or gatekeepers in their second-hand clothing consumption decisions. As such, they also get to relate their experiences of second-hand clothing consumption to those of others (transcendental). Third, by sharing images of clothing items they have worn close to their bodies and discussing their usage and disposal experiences of these items with the researcher, the researcher was brought into the informants' worlds of consumption. This closure was vital in interpreting the meaning structures of the lived experiences shared by the research informants (hermeneutic). The remaining sections in this methodology chapter - i.e., informants' recruitment, data collection, analysis and interpretation - are guided by the above phenomenological framework.

4.6 Sampling and Informant Recruitment

According to Hycner (1999, as cited in Groenewald, 2004), research methods and study informants are best selected based on the phenomenon being studied. Importantly, there is a critical need for the methods to match the informants who will be the primary units of analysis. A key requirement for studies relying on a phenomenological framework is the homogeneity of all research informants (Cilesiz, 2009; Creswell, 2007; Yüksel & Yıldırım, 2015). For meaningful participation in a phenomenological study, informants must be individuals who have experienced the phenomenon being studied (Groenewald, 2004). To achieve homogeneity of informants in the current study, the researcher had to create inclusion and exclusion criteria. For the current study, three critical criteria for inclusion were that at the time of participating in the study (1) informants needed to be over 18 years of age, (2) they needed to be actively engaged with second-hand clothing consumption - either as a buyer or seller and (3) they must be living in Nigeria. The criterion of age is related to the capacity to give informed consent. Informants' ability to give informed consent was a critical consideration during

the study's recruitment stage (Rashad, Phipps, & Haith-Cooper, 2004; Smith, 2019). The other two criteria were also in line with the study's aim to understand what happens to the UK's donated used clothing that is shipped to Nigeria.

4.6.1 Non-Probability Sampling

All informants in the current study were primarily recruited through purposive sampling and snowball sampling (cf. Shaw et al., 2006; Bürklin, 2019; Naeem, 2021; Stanko, Dahm, Lahneman, & Richter, 2020). Purposive and snowballing are both non-probability sampling methods that allow the researcher to include only informants who meet specific criteria according to the study's purpose (Easterby-Smith et al., 2019). They are also both appropriate for meeting the criteria of homogeneity of informants in phenomenological enquiries (Cilesiz, 2009; Creswell, 2007; Yüksel & Yıldırım, 2015). In the initial stage, the researcher contacted his networks in Nigeria via regular phone calls and WhatsApp to inform them of the research and solicit their assistance in recruiting informants. Initially, the researcher contacted six individuals in his network (Choice, M.Ade, Lekan, Abiola, Esther, and Akinwunmi)² as recruiters. Except for Lekan, the other recruiters are known to the researcher, and they have all discussed second-hand clothing at some point in the past. Their roles were thus limited to assisting in recruitment and not participating in the research. Their exclusion was necessary to avoid biases and presuppositions, or prejudgement that could contaminate the data due to their familiarity with the researcher (Cilesiz, 2009; Moustakas, 1994; Yüksel & Yıldırım, 2015). Although not in the researcher's close network, Lekan is nevertheless known to the researcher as a second-hand clothing seller. Lekan has siblings living in the UK who send clothing items to him for resale in Nigeria. It turned out that Lekan was pursuing his PhD in Kenya at the time of the conversation. For this reason, he did not meet one of the inclusion criteria, i.e., living in Nigeria at the time of participating in the study. He was, however, helpful as a recruiter.

In this way, the initial contact produced six recruiters. Choice recruited Logan. M.Ade recruited Tobi who further recruited Kunle, Fiye, Jire and Kike. Lekan recruited two of his customers (Tunbo and Zee). Tunbo and Zee also assisted in recruiting seven and one other informant, respectively. Out of Tunbo's seven, two (Kobi and Kimo) did not eventually participate in the study. The researcher was

² All names are pseudonyms for anonymity.

then left with BJ, Tishe, Ade, Seyi and Sule. The informant introduced by Zee (Vick) is one of the sellers who participated in the study. Abiola is a friend whom the researcher met at his children's primary school in Glasgow, UK, in 2020. Abiola manages a student hostel facility in Lagos, Nigeria. She reached out to many of her previous and present lodgers, out of which four (Bunmi, Sola, Gift and Amen) eventually participated in the study. Esther and Akinwunmi recruited a seller informant each (Sade and Nike), respectively. As shown in Table 4-2, another recruiter (Bolaji) was identified during the piloting stage. Bolaji recruited Chucks and Paul. Paul, however, recruited two other buyer informants (Ray and Luke) and a seller informant (Yetunde). In sum, a total of seven recruiters assisted in recruiting the informants in the current study. The above discussion is summarised in Table 4-2 below.

Table 4-2: Sampling

Purposive			
Researcher's networks	Snowballing		
Recruiters	Informants		
	Recruiter/ Informants	Non-recruiter/Informants	
	Buyers		Sellers
Choice (male)		Logan	
M.Ade (female)	Tobi	Kunle Fiye Jire Kike	
Lekan (male)	Tunbo	BJ Tishe Ade Seyi Sule	
	Zee	Adam	Vick
Abiola (female)		Bunmi Sola Gift Amen	
Esther (female)			Sade
Akinwunmi (female)			Nike
Bolaji (male)		Chucks	Yetunde
	Paul	Ray Luke	

4.6.2 Contacting Informants

After the initial contact with all informants by their recruiters, the researcher reached out to them individually via WhatsApp to express appreciation for their willingness to help and to confirm that they met the three inclusion criteria for the study. Figures 4-1 to 4-4 are screenshots of initial communications with recruiters and informants. Figure 4-1 illustrates an example of initial communications with informants, while Figure 4-2 shows an example of recruitment through snowball sampling. As shown in Figure 4-2, a buyer informant contacted the researcher, suggesting that a second-hand clothing seller be included in the study. Further communication with the informants also ensured that they were aware of what they would be required to do and were happy to participate. Three documents approved by the University of Glasgow's Research

Ethics Committee, namely the Consent Form, Privacy Notice for Participation in Research Project, and Informant Information Sheet, were sent to each informant to obtain their consent (see Appendices A, B, and C). The consent form was used to record the informants' agreement to participate in the study. The plain language statement outlined what the informants will be asked to do in the study. The privacy notice explains what information is collected, the legal basis for its collection, how the data collected is used, and how long the data will be retained. It also explained the informant's rights in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)³ and how informants can channel any complaints. To ensure that the research followed due process, the privacy document provided informants with information on the stringent ethical review process in place at the university. These documents were sent to informants according to their preferred channels. Some requested to receive the documents by email, while others opted to receive them via WhatsApp. Screenshots of examples of communications with informants to obtain their consent are presented in figures 4-4 and (WhatsApp) and 4-5 (email). All informants at this stage were willing to participate and gave their consent. Verbal consent was also obtained from every informant during the interviews.

³ (GDPR) is a regulation on data protection and privacy in the European Union and in the European Economic Area (EEA).

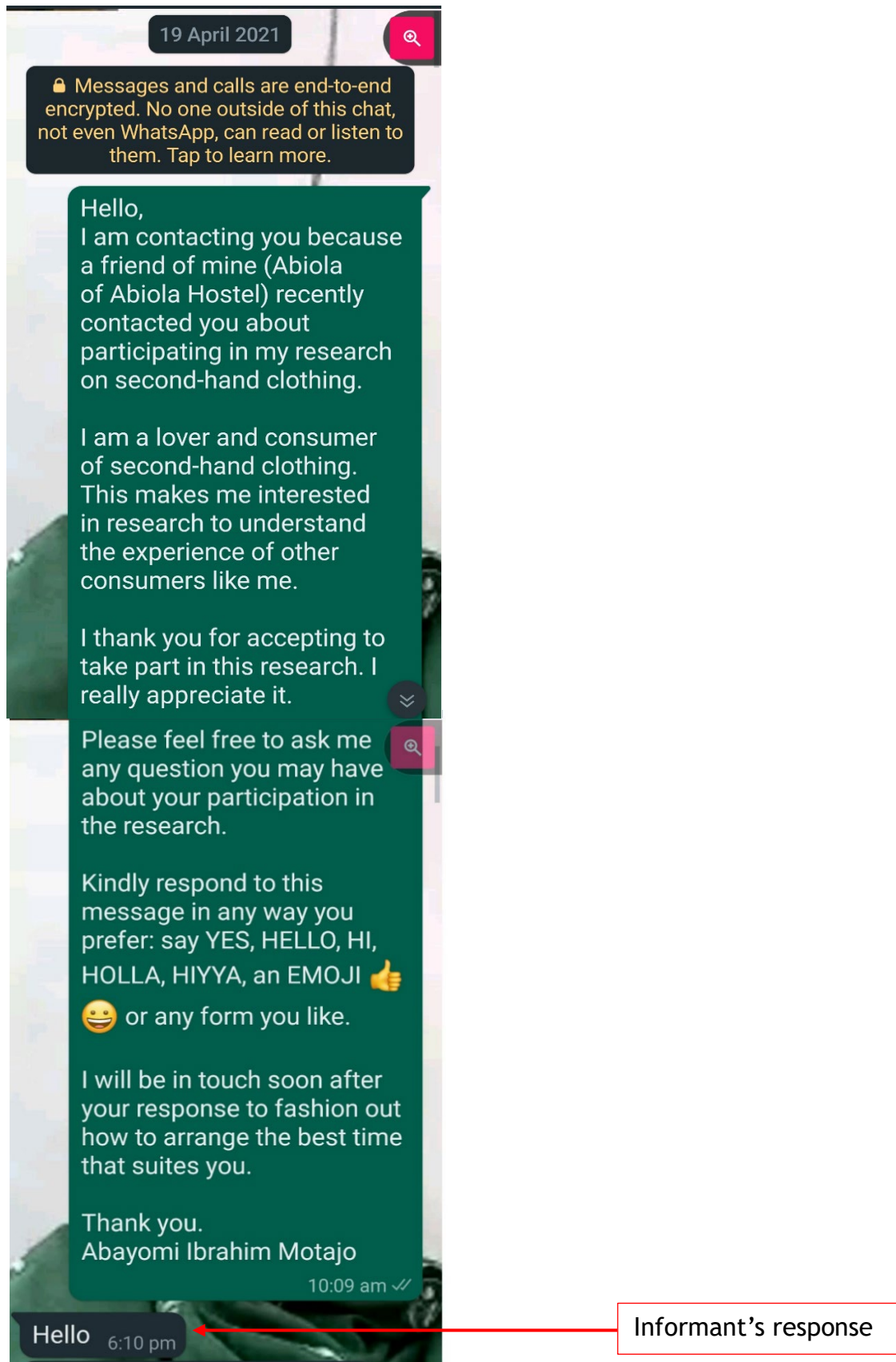


Figure 4-1: Screenshot of first WhatsApp communication with informants

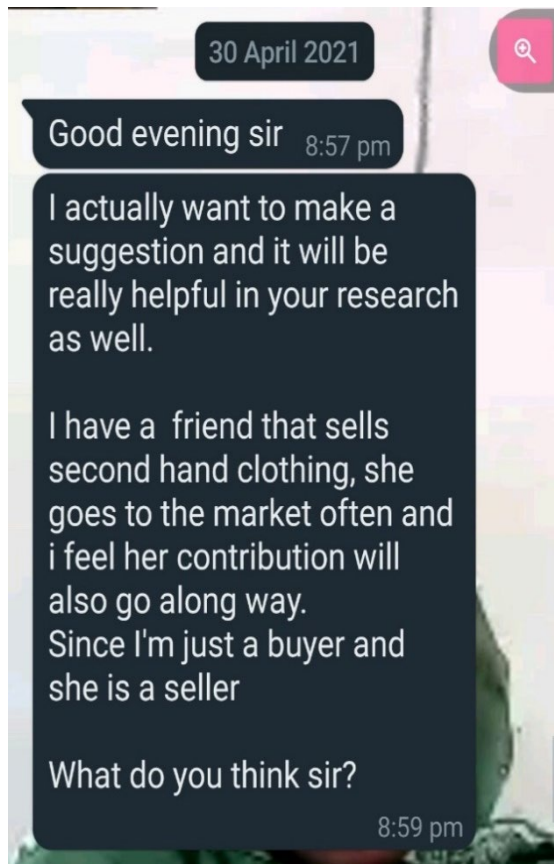


Figure 4-2: Screenshot of an example of recruitment through snowballing



Figure 4-3: Screenshot of WhatsApp communication with informants: obtaining consent

Consent and other Documents for your consideration.

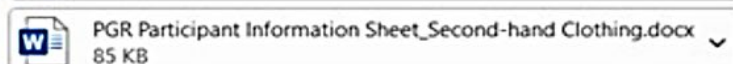
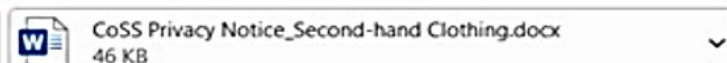


Abayomi Motajo (PGR)

To @federalpolyilaro.edu.ng

Reply Reply All Forward

Mon 05/07/2021 5:28 PM



Hello,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research. I really appreciate it.

I am attaching the consent documents as well as other documents that will help acquaint you with the research.

Kindly note that the interviews will be conducted over the Zoom app.

Please feel free to ask me any questions regarding your participation in the research.

Thank you.

Best wishes, always

Abayomi Motajo

PhD candidate (Sustainability, Clothing disposition and the Global South)

Adam Smith Business School

University of Glasgow

Figure 4-4: Screenshot of email communication with informants: obtaining consent.

4.6.3 Informants' Profile

A total of 26 individuals who were actively engaged with second-hand clothing participated in the study. This consisted of 22 buyers and 4 sellers. The full demographic profile of informants is presented in Table 4-3 below.

Table 4-3: Informants' profile

S/No.	Pseudonym	Gender and age range	Brief profile	Occupation/sector
BUYER INFORMANTS				
1	Logan	Female, mid-40s	Logan lives in Osogbo, Osun State. She shops for second-hand clothing in Osogbo, Osun State.	Trained secretary/ public sector Also, a caterer
2	Fiye	Female, late 30s	Fiye lives in Ilaro, Ogun State. Fiye shops for second-hand clothing from Ilaro, a border town with the Republic of Benin. She also buys from sellers in other parts of Ogun state, where she attends University for further education.	Teaching/higher education
3	Kunle	Male, late 30s	Kunle lives in Ede, Osun State. He shops for second-hand clothing from sellers in Ede and Lagos.	Teaching/higher education
4	Tobi	Male, early 40s	Tobi shops for second-hand clothing in Yaba, Lagos - one of Nigeria's largest second-hand clothing markets. He also buys from sellers in Ede and Osogbo.	University Dean/ Teaching/higher education
5	Chucks	Male, early 30s	Chucks lives in the Lagos Mainland. He shops for second-hand clothing in markets in Lagos State.	Voice-over artist and financial auditor/ private sector
6	Sola	Female, late 20s	Sola lives in the Lagos Mainland, Lagos. She shops for second-hand clothing in Lagos State.	Student/higher education
7	BJ	Male, early 30s	Lives and works in Lagos. BJ shops for second-hand clothing in both Ibadan, Oyo State and Lagos State.	Internet betting expert/ private sector
8	Zee	Male, late 30s	Zee shops for second-hand clothing from sellers in Ede and Osogbo in Osun State. He also buys from sellers in Lagos and has purchased second-hand clothing from markets in one of Nigeria's neighbouring countries, Cotonou, Benin Republic.	Teaching/higher education

9	Bunmi	Female, late 20s	Bunmi lives in Lagos Mainland, Lagos, and shops for second-hand clothing in Lagos State.	Student/higher education
10	Ray	Male, late 20s	Ray lives in Ibadan, Oyo State, and shops for second-hand clothing in the same state.	Biological Laboratory scientist/private sector
11	Adam	Male, late 30s	Adam lives in Ede and shops for second-hand clothing from sellers in Ede and Osogbo in Osun State.	Teaching/higher education
12	Sule	Male, late 30s	Sule lives in Ile-Ife, Osun State. Sule shops for second-hand clothing from sellers in Ile-Ife and Osogbo, both in Osun State.	Teaching/higher education
13	Luke	Male, late 20s	Used to shop for second-hand clothing in the northern part of the country, but now lives in Ibadan, Oyo State, and continues to patronise second-hand clothing sellers in Ibadan.	Unemployed graduate
14	Gift	Male, early 20s	Gift lives in Lagos Mainland, Lagos, and shops for second-hand clothing in Lagos State.	Student/higher education
15	Amen	Male, early 20s	Amen lives in Lagos Mainland, Lagos, and shops for second-hand clothing in Lagos State.	Student/higher education
16	Paul	Male, early 40s	Paul lives in Ibadan and shops for second-hand clothing in Ibadan, Oyo State.	Project Management and IT trainer/private sector
17	Tunbo	Male, late 30s	Tunbo lives and works in Ede in Osun State. Tunbo also sells used cars that he buys from importers in Lagos State. He has relatives in Ibadan and shops for second-hand clothing in Ede, Osogbo, and Ibadan. He also buys second-hand clothing from markets in Lagos State during his business trips.	Teaching/higher education/trader in used cars
18	Jire	Male, mid 50s	Jire lives in Osogbo. He shops for second-hand clothing from sellers in Osogbo	Confidential secretary/private sector

19	Tishe	Male, mid-60s	Tishe lives in Ede and buys second-hand clothing from local sellers. He has also travelled to Cotonou to buy second-hand clothing	Registered builder/ public sector
20	Seyi	Male, mid-60s	Seyi lives in Ede and buys second-hand clothing from sellers who contact him when they have new top-grade items.	Architect/ private sector
21	Ade	Male, mid-50s	Ade lives in Ibadan and buys second-hand clothing from sellers in Ibadan	Administrator/ public sector
22	Kike	Female, Early 40s	Kike lives in Ede and shops for second-hand clothing from buyers in Ede and Osogbo.	Trained Secretary/ private sector
SELLER INFORMANTS				
23	Sade	Female, late 30s	Sade is a trained Nurse. She comes from a family of second-hand clothing sellers. Her mother has been in the second-hand clothing trade for over 40 years. Sade buys from dealers in Lagos and sells to buyers in Osogbo, Osun State. She has no shop. She occasionally sells from her car boot. She also sells to buyers in their offices and to those who visit the hospital where she works. She also has another male sibling who sells second-hand clothing. Their mother also continues to sell second-hand clothing.	
24	Nike	Female, late 30s	Nike is a teacher in Ibadan, Oyo State. She buys second-hand clothing from Cotonou and other markets in Lagos. She has a shop where she sells to buyers in Ibadan. She also takes some to work to sell to colleagues on demand.	
25	Vick	Male, late 30s	Vick is a graduate of Human Anatomy. He sells second-hand clothing as a full-time job. He travels to Cotonou regularly to purchase second-hand clothing, which he then sells in Ede and to buyers from neighbouring Osogbo. He advertises on social media and gets orders from the South-eastern parts of the country through referrals from old friends and previous buyers.	
26	Yetunde	Female, early 40s	Yetunde worked in the public sector as a caterer. She began selling second-hand clothing during the COVID-19 pandemic. She lives Ibadan, Oyo State. She buys from wholesalers in	

			Lagos and Ibadan. She also buys through networks of sellers who advertise their consignments on social media. She sells second-hand clothing to buyers in Ibadan, Oyo.
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4.6.4 Representativeness

As can be seen in Table 4-3 above, the cohort of informants in the study is consistent with the requirement for homogeneity of informants in a phenomenological enquiry (Cilesiz, 2009; Creswell, 2007; Yüksel & Yıldırım, 2015). The buyers in the study fall within the middle to upper social class, making them fit the profile of consumers who shop second-hand (Gregson et al., 2010; Guiot & Roux, 2010; Waight, 2014). This category of consumers represents the fastest-growing consumer segment in emerging markets. They are well-educated and relatively young, they embrace urban lifestyles and are relatively better connected with global media and global consumption cultures (Anguelov, 2015; Cavusgil et al., 2018; McEwan et al., 2015; Myers & Kent, 2002; Page & Sunjo, 2018). Their occupational and socioeconomic profiles also align with available evidence that these categories of consumers have a high propensity to consume second-hand clothing, especially in an emerging economy like Nigeria (Areo & Areo, 2015; Baden & Barber, 2005; Brooks & Simon, 2012; Didymus, 2012).

While second-hand clothing consumers are relatively well identified, as indicated above, second-hand clothing sellers are not as clearly identifiable. As Brooks (2019) noted in the epigraph at the beginning of this chapter, this is due to the lack of structure and official trade statistics about the Global South's second-hand clothing market. Despite this, however, the four sellers included in the study provide a rich characterisation of the second-hand clothing trade in Nigeria. The only category that is not included in the study will be of sellers who import used clothing directly from the UK, like those in Abimbola (2012). The majority of sellers will find it difficult - if not impossible - to import directly from the UK, given that the majority of sellers operate with meagre funds raised through contributions from family members and sometimes from pawning family possessions (Amanor, 2018; Areo & Areo, 2015; Oteng-ababio et al., 2015). The stories told by the sellers in the current study corroborate this literature. For instance, Sade is a second-generation seller with nearly 40 years of sustained exposure to the trade. Sade has other family members who also trade in second-hand clothing, and they often need to pull their resources to gain economies of scale by buying in bulk. She actually started the trade with funds from her husband. Vick also learnt the trade from his brothers, who deal in second-hand clothing in neighbouring Benin Republic. Vick's first sales were

the items he got from his brothers as a parting gift after his long holiday with them. The bulk of his initial capital came from his savings from the National Youth Service year.⁴ Similarly, the first second-hand clothing items that Nike sold were sent to her by a family member in Cotonou, who advised her to sell the items to raise money for a project that the family member was funding back in Nigeria. With the exception of Yetunde, who began selling second-hand clothing in 2020 during the pandemic, all three other seller informants - i.e., Sade, Vick and Nike can be seen as extraordinary informants (Dörfler & Stierand, 2019). Despite this, however, all four seller informants in the current study constitute a fitting representation of second-hand clothing sellers in the country. Overall, all buyer and seller informants met the inclusive criteria set in the study to achieve homogeneity (Cilesiz, 2009; Creswell, 2007; Easterby-Smith et al., 2019; Groenewald, 2004; Yüksel & Yıldırım, 2015). They also met the critical requirement for meaningful participation in the study; most informants were individuals with extensive and sustained experience in second-hand clothing consumption and sale.

4.6.5 Informant Incentivisation

According to Zutlevics (2016), the reasons people volunteer to participate in research include financial benefits, personal satisfaction, and a desire for knowledge exchange. The buyer informants in the current study were attracted more by the desire for knowledge exchange. For example, buyers were curious that a PhD researcher could be examining Okrika (a local term for second-hand clothing). During their interviews, buyer informants shared a wealth of vital information and posed equally important questions. Buyers like Tobi, Fiye, Bunmi, and Adam were particularly curious about the peculiar smell that all second-hand clothing carries and wondered if this was deliberately added for appeal, branding, or hygienic reasons. All sellers were equally happy to participate for the same reason: a strong desire for knowledge exchange. For example, Sade was very excited to share her knowledge about the trade. She was full of good stories about her encounter with second-hand clothing sales. Like the buyer informants, all seller informants also wanted to share their wealth of experience with the researcher. However, unlike buyers, sellers were generally more enthusiastic about giving than they were to learn from the

⁴ a mandatory one year service by all Nigerian graduate for nation-building and development

researcher. Nevertheless, a token of three thousand naira (N3,000)- equivalent to between £3 and £5, depending on the pound-naira exchange rate at the time of payment - was given to all informants. It was emphasised in the communications with them, in accordance with the University of Glasgow's requirements for ethical research, that the incentive will not affect their right to opt out without providing a reason should they feel the need to do so. The next section discusses the data collection procedure and instruments.

4.7 Data Collection

This section discusses the procedure for data collection and the instruments deployed in the current study. The main data collection instrument in the current study was synchronous virtual, phenomenological interviews. In addition, the researcher obtained 51 pieces of visual data from the informants (discussed later in Section 4.8.2, Visual Data). The interviews were conducted with 22 consumers and 4 sellers of second-hand clothing in Nigeria between 20th April 2021 and 4th December 2022. An interview discussion guide was carefully developed and pre-tested through a pilot study, which is discussed below.

4.7.1 Piloting

A pilot study was conducted to pre-test the interview discussion guide before full-scale phenomenological interviews (Aziz & Khan, 2020; Janghorban et al., 2013; Thomas, 2021). The interview discussion guide was piloted with three Nigerian second-hand clothing consumers who were similar in characteristics to those who eventually participated in the actual study. The piloting helped in refining the recruitment process. For instance, the idea of using recruiters came from the piloting. The researcher observed during the pilot interviews that sharing their lived experiences about consuming other people's used clothing can make some people self-conscious. It was then considered that, in order to build familiarity and trust, the informants needed to be approached first by their own friends rather than by the researcher, who was a complete stranger at the time. Piloting also helped in assessing the validity of the three inclusion criteria set for participation in the study (Aziz & Khan, 2020; Janghorban et al., 2013; Saunders et al., 2019; Thomas, 2021). It also provided ample opportunity to test the interview's structure and the likely response rate to certain questions. This was helpful, given that conducting online interviews due to the pandemic and travel restrictions made it difficult to deeply immerse

oneself in the informants' lifeworld. Piloting also helped in reframing the question in the interview guide (Breakwell & Timotijevic, 2020). For instance, a question like

“how would you describe your experience with second-hand clothing?”

easily got a short response like “Good.” However, reframing this question as

“describe to me your experience with second-hand clothing?” or “describe to me a recent second-hand clothing purchase experience that you had”

allowed most informants to give a more detailed response. Most informants actually responded to this latter version by telling a story. Cues from their stories were then used in probing further.

Finally, the researcher also realised during the pilot interviews that it was more beneficial to have a copy of the interview guide in each informant's folder and add comments directly to the interview guide during the interviews. This proved very useful as the researcher learnt that trusting his memory and forgetting can potentially predispose one to contaminate the data. Such annotated interview guides eventually became part of the researcher's field notes and were very helpful in the analysis. The idea of using two monitors during the interviews also came from the piloting. A monitor was dedicated to the Zoom interview while navigating the interview guide on a second. This way, it was possible to prevent squinting on multiple tiny windows on a single monitor. After successfully pre-testing the researcher's skills and revising the interview guide, the research proceeded directly to the full-scale phenomenological interviews discussed in the next section.

4.7.2 Phenomenological Interviews

Following Thompson et al. (1997), Shaw et al. (2006), Pugh (2020) and Bocioaga (2021), the informants were asked to reflect on their lived experiences with buying and selling second-hand clothing (see also Belk, Fischer, & Kozinets, 2012; Cherrier, 2012; Grace, 2021; Meachern & Cheetham, 2013; Thompson et al., 1989; Thompson et al., 1990; Thompson, 1997). These studies demonstrated how phenomenological interviews enabled the description of

people's everyday lived experiences in their own words. For instance, Thompson et al.'s (1989) study demonstrated that existential phenomenology is an empirically and methodologically rigorous approach for understanding consumers' everyday experiences. McEachern & Cheetham (2013) also stated that phenomenological interviews are suitable for obtaining richer information from small samples, particularly through in-depth investigations and analysis. The small samples in these instances provide the researcher with an opportunity to elicit detailed information necessary to make sense of the research informants' everyday lived experiences with second-hand clothing consumption.

Consistent with phenomenological enquiries in the literature, all interviews in the current study were individual, in-depth, and semi-structured. Although the researcher prepared an interview guide, this was only to keep the discussions on topic (Thompson et al., 1989; Easterby-Smith et al., 2019). The choice of virtual synchronous interviews via Zoom conferencing⁵ was informed by the restrictions on travel and social interactions following the global pandemic in 2020. Sheth (2020) noted that virtual synchronous interviews provide the researcher the opportunity to continue with the research even amid global lockdowns and social distancing measures. Synchronous virtual interviews offer the same real-time, face-to-face conversation between the researcher and research informants (Easterby-Smith et al., 2019; Lobe & Morgan, 2020). They are also cost-effective and flexible, and can increase participation (Gruber, Szmigin, Reppel, & Voss, 2008; Janghorban, Roudsari, & Taghipour, 2014; Dos Santos Marques et al., 2020; Naeem, 2021). Conducting the interviews virtually enabled the researcher to interview 26 informants located over 3,286.3 miles away. This would not have been physically possible due to travel restrictions (cf. Smith, 2019; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019).

4.7.2.1. Data Accounting Log

Following the very initial contact, a Data Accounting Log was maintained by the researcher to manage communication with and information on every informant. A screenshot of the data accounting log is presented in Table 4-4 below. A Zoom link was created for every individual interview session. Informants were advised not to share the links with anyone. This is in line with

⁵ Zoom was approved by the college's research ethic committee

the requirements of confidentiality and to prevent anyone outside the research from having access to the interview sessions. For the same reason of maintaining confidentiality, none of the links was reused even in instances of cancellation of a scheduled interview.

Table 4-4: Data Accounting Log: Interview Scheduling and Data Collected

S/No.	Pseudonym	Date of interview	Duration (hh:mm:ss)	Number of Interviews	Number of Participants	Visual data collected	Date of visual data
1	Bunmi	25/04/2021	0:51:11	1	1	6	05/12/2022
2	Sola	28/04/2021	0:38:08	1	1	0	
3	Amen	23/06/2021	0:48:10	1	1	0	
4	Chucks	26/06/2021	1:46:28	1	1	3	17/12/2022
5	Tobi	20/04/2021	0:36:44	3	1	14	02/12/2022
		25/04/2021	0:19:36				
		19/06/2021	1:29:59				
6	Kunle	04/07/2021	2:18:45	1	1	0	
		04/08/2021	0:51:40				
7	Gift	21/06/2021	0:42:11	1	1	0	
8	Fiye	08/07/2021	1:14:41	1	1	0	
9	Paul	01/08/2021	1:05:44	1	1	0	
10	Ray	02/08/2021	1:25:15	1	1	0	
11	Luke	03/08/2021	0:57:01	1	1	0	
12	Adam	13/08/2021	1:31:53	1	1	0	
13	BJ	14/08/2021	1:12:23	1	1	0	
14	Sule	14/08/2021	1:02:36	1	1	0	
15	Logan	18/08/2021	1:04:55	1	1	0	
16	Tunbo	11/08/2021	1:18:54	3	1	4	20/12/2022
		25/08/2021	0:43:22				
		19/09/2021	0:38:52				
17	Zee	04/09/2021	1:12:23	2	1	0	
		25/09/2021	0:38:39				
18	Ade	03/12/2022	0:50:42	1	1	0	
19	Tishe	03/12/2022	0:43:09	1	1	7	05/12/2022
20	Kike	13/11/2022	0:35:58	1	1	0	
21	Jire	09/11/2022	0:29:47	1	1	4	05/12/2022
22	Seyi	04/12/2022	0:24:24	1	1	13	04/12/2022
	Total for buyers		27:33:30	27	22	51	
1	Yetunde	17/06/2021	1:10:22	1	1	0	
2	Vick	05/09/2021	1:12:15	1	1	0	
3	Nike	06/09/2021	0:28:45	1	1	0	
4	Sade	25/08/2021	0:57:40	2	1	0	
		18/09/2021	0:27:30			0	
	Total for sellers		4:16:32	5	4	0	
	Grand Total		31:50:02	32	26	51	

As shown in Table 4-4 above, a total of 32 phenomenological interviews were conducted with 26 informants between April 2021 and December 2022. All interviews were conducted in the English language. Given that the study was exploring the behaviour of a relatively homogeneous group of informants, the

study did not set an absolute maximum number of expected interviews (Stanko & Richter, 2012). The researcher, however, aimed to achieve a minimum of 12, as is the existing practice (Guest et al., 2006; Mapp, 2008; Thompson et al., 1989). There were neither predetermined limits to the number of times each informant could be interviewed, nor were there any limits set for the duration of each interview. Again, guided by existing practice, the researcher allowed the informants to determine the flow (Thompson, 1997). For example, in many instances, the images shared by the informants with the researcher were used to elicit deeper responses to the questions.

Initial rapport was obtained during the recruitment, which helped to build trust and familiarity, thus allowing the researcher and research informants to engage in discussions like two friends chatting (e.g. Belk et al., 1989). The average duration of the interviews was between 60 and 90 minutes (cf. Stanko & Richter, 2012). The longest single-stretch interview was with Kunle, lasting 2 hours, 18 minutes, and 45 seconds. Approximately half of the interviews lasted over an hour, with some extending nearly to 2 hours. The shortest interview lasted 24 minutes. This was with Seyi, who buys only for himself, leaving his wife to buy for the rest of the family. The short duration of Seyi's interview was due in part to the fact that it took place at a later date in the data collection process, as well as poor network reception at the informant's location. Although a rescheduled interview with Seyi did not take place, the researcher was able to obtain a total of 13 visual data from him, which further shed light on the verbal responses provided during the interview (Visual data G-9: appendix G).

There were instances like the one with Seyi above, where additional interviews became necessary with the same informant. For example, many interview sessions were rescheduled due to electrical power outages. Many a time, informants will reach out to reschedule because they were unable to charge their devices. Some interviews were abruptly stopped for the same reason of inability to charge their devices due to a power outage. In such instances, the researcher made points to revisit certain aspects of the responses given, and these were revisited during the interview sessions. Overall, the researcher attempted to strike a balance between the volume and quality of data and continued to recruit and interview informants until data saturation occurred

(Saunders et al., 2019). At the same time, the researcher continued to restrain from pouncing or leading the informants while using his imagination to probe areas where the informants may have left out (Cilesiz, 2009; Moustakas, 1994; Yüksel & Yıldırım, 2015).

4.8 Research Data

The main data for the current study comprises interview recordings (digital audio), transcripts (text) and visual data (images) collected from the informants, supplemented by the researcher's field notes. This is as shown in Table 4-6 below and discussed in Section 4.8.1.

Table 4-3: Summary of Research Data

Item	Remark
Digital audio	Appr. 32 hours
Transcripts	26 documents 280 pages A4 Appr. 204,000 words
Field notes (paper and digital)	30 pages (various sizes)
Visual data	51 photos (see Appendix G)

4.8.1 Interview Recordings, Transcripts, and Field Notes

All Zoom interview sessions were conducted using the guidance provided by the University of Glasgow Information Security team on collecting data using 'virtual' methods⁶. In this guidance, Zoom users are advised against using the mobile version of the Zoom App. This is because the App stores data directly in the Zoom Cloud. Using the PC/Mac version and signing in with a University of Glasgow email address and GUID is recommended to ensure confidentiality and data security. This is recommended best practice by the University of Glasgow, to which the researcher strictly complied. The 32 phenomenological interviews resulted in over 31 hours of digital audio recordings using the Zoom conferencing software. All Zoom sessions were recorded with enhanced features to allow for easy transcription. For example, a timestamp was added to all Zoom recordings for easy navigation through the audio and video files during transcription. (See Appendix F for a sample transcript). All digital recordings and other research data were stored and used on a University of

⁶ [Updated Guidance on virtual methods](#)

Glasgow-issued Windows laptop running the University Standard Staff Desktop environment (SSD) with full disk encryption enabled automatically as part of the SSD build process.

The transcribed digital audio recordings, along with the researcher's field notes, were compiled from both the interviews and the meanings drawn from the visual data, totalling approximately 204,000 words. The researcher avoided using paper documents whenever possible to prevent research data from being compromised. Where this was unavoidable, such documents were always kept in the safe custody of the researchers throughout the data collection process. From a phenomenological enquiry perspective, most informants' responses were largely existential. They, however, shared a few transcendental narratives of the consumption experiences of other family members. A good example here is Seyi, who shared stories about his own experiences, as well as those of his wife, who contracted an infection after wearing a second-hand clothing item without first disinfecting it, as she normally would.

4.8.2 Visual Data

Based on the critical importance of gaining more cogent and unique insight into behaviour, culture and society, social, cultural and behavioural researchers are increasingly adopting visual research methods in their enquiries (Pauwels, 2020). These visual approaches typically involve incorporating carefully observed and analysed visual dimensions of people's behaviour and aspects of their material culture into the other verbal and textual data obtained to theorise and further make sense of research informants' lived experiences. Accordingly, visual data is increasingly becoming an essential cue through which interpretivist qualitative researchers attempt to both make sense of and communicate more quality insights from research informants' lived experiences. According to (Pauwels, 2011; 2020), visual data can either be found existing before the research or produced by the researcher. In the former, the visual materials are pre-existing visual representations (Pink, 2014) through which the researcher attempts to elicit information about society, its cultures and behaviour (cf. Banks, 1995). In the latter, data is primarily generated for the research in question. Pauwels (2011; 2020) noted that these materials can be produced 'in situ' from the researcher's observations (as in an ethnographic study or field experiment) or in collaboration with others,

including the research informants (cf. Banks, 1995) in what is known as participatory visual methods (e.g., Chalfen, 2020).

One of the fields of social enquiry in which visual data is extensively employed is visual ethnography, with one of the contemporary key proponents being Sarah Pink, (2001, 2014, 2021). Pink (2021) described visual ethnography as a

dynamic, reflexive and situated field of practice, which involves researchers engaging with visual and digital methods and media in seeking to collaboratively create and share new ways of knowing and knowledge relating to specific research questions and agendas. (Pink, 2021, 39)

According to Pink (2021) visual methods usually involve collecting photos, videos, and other related items that the research informants consider critical to telling the stories of their lived experiences, and that the researcher considers crucial to making sense of the informants' lived experiences (cf. Bates, 2013; Riviera, 2010; Wilhoit, 2017). Pink (2021) further distinguishes visual ethnography from merely deploying ethnography as a method of data collection. Instead, working with visual data brings to the forefront the inherently strong connections between the visual elements of lived experiences and the resulting epistemologies. In other words, what we seek and how we eventually arrive at the knowledge need not exclude the objects that form part of the lived experiences through which we know what we know.

Visual data entered the data collection serendipitously through one buyer informant, Tunbo (male, buyer, Ede). This happened as the informants developed more confidence and trust as their relationship with the researcher grew during fieldwork (Pink, 2014). The entry of visual data into the current study aligns with the second of Banks' (1995) three broad visual research methods, i.e. studying informant-generated images for information about society.

During his second interview, Tunbo shared an image of a used second-hand garment converted into rags (Figure 4-5, A). Another informant, Bunmi, a female buyer from Lagos, acting on the initial advice to share content from her consumption experiences, also sent images to the researcher (Figures 4-5, B and C). Collecting visual data turned out to be a positive step in the study. The images shared by Tunbo during one of his interviews, as well as those sent by Bunmi, increased the researcher's understanding of their stories regarding second-hand clothing disposition pathways.



A: Tunbo_used second-hand clothing converted to rag

B: Bunmi_used second-hand clothing converted to rag

Figure 4-5: Initial images shared by Tunbo and Bunmi

Taking a cue from this, the researcher then took the initiative to request that other informants share images of their experiences with second-hand clothing, as planned before the pandemic disruption.

A total of 51 images of second-hand clothing were received from 7 buyer informants (appendix G). All visual data were received via WhatsApp and immediately retrieved and stored, along with all other research data, as described in Section 4.8.1. These 51 images elicited more nuanced responses, which helped the researcher gain a deeper understanding of the meanings in the informants' stories (cf. Dion et al. 2014). The researcher was able to probe further by asking the informants to shed more light on why they shared a particular item or how an item reflects a particular behaviour or consumption

choice. A good example is Tobi, who used images of himself in local, native cut-and-sewn clothing at work and casual, second-hand clothing at other events to shed light on what he described as his “Freestyle Fridays”. According to him, whereas most of his colleagues would dress in English clothing during the week and wear native clothing on Fridays, he would dress to work in native apparel during the week and wear second-hand English clothing on Fridays, as he is usually less engaged in official events on Fridays. These images also served as a substitute for participant observation, which was not possible due to travel restrictions at the time of the fieldwork. They also allowed the researcher to remain within the traditions of phenomenological enquiry, in which the informant determines the direction of the enquiry (Thompson, 1997). Again, the visual data were very useful in eliciting more nuanced responses from the informants.

4.8.3 Triangulation and Data Management

Denzin (1970, 1978 in Fusch et al., 2018) identified four types of triangulations. These include investigator triangulation - gathering and correlating data by multiple researchers in a single study; data triangulation - using data from different research informants across different time, and space; method triangulation - correlating data through various data collection methods and theory triangulation - deploying and correlating multiple theoretical strategies or perspectives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Fusch et al., 2018). In the current study, a combination of data and method triangulation was adopted. Owing to the challenges of conducting the research during a global pandemic mentioned in the preceding sections, combining 32 (buyers and sellers) phenomenological depth interviews with 51 visual data was the researcher’s approach to ensuring rigour in the current study (Bates, 2013; Sinha & Back, 2014), see section 4.10 for full discussion. Data triangulation was achieved in the current study by validating the narratives of the second-hand clothing buyer informants with those of the seller informants. These data were collected during separate individual interviews conducted at various times and locations during the data collection process. Juxtaposing these separate data allowed validation, especially in areas where the experiences shared by different informants are deemed complementary. For example, most buyer informants narrated that they prefer top-grade second-hand clothing. Sellers equally narrated that they sell top-grade second-hand clothing items. This is discussed in the findings

chapter under the theme quality. When juxtaposed with extant literature, their narratives confirm that within the sustainable clothing sector, due to fast fashion and throwaway culture, clothing consumers in the Global North often discard good clothes that are still in their prime after one or a few uses, and some never worn at all.

Coherence and transparency were achieved through maintaining regular discussions with supervisors throughout the fieldwork, data analysis, and interpretation of the research data. Supervisors' guidance was very pivotal in ensuring due diligence in the conscious and unconscious construction (Barr & Van Nieuwerburgh, 2015) and interpretation of the research data. Similarly, continuous discussions were maintained with the informants to confirm that the researcher's accounts and interpretations represent their experiences.

As earlier observed, phenomenology is a rigorous method for making sense of consumers' lived experiences (e.g. Thompson et al., 1989). In this way, each of the data collected from multiple informants using more than a single instrument allowed the researcher to obtain "different data of the same event" (Belk et al., 1989; Fusch et al., 2018; 22). In the end, in addition to the phenomenological interviews, the visual data that the buyer informants shared with the researcher supplemented their stories and helped the researcher make sense of the meanings behind their stories of use and dispose of second-hand clothing shipped to them from the Global North.

The University of Glasgow and the College of Social Sciences have robust practices in place for data safety and the management of personal and research data, which will be strictly adhered to. In line with the GDPR's principle of 'storage limitation', all personal data stored both physically and digitally will be permanently and securely destroyed immediately after the PhD is completed. All other research data will be retained for no more than ten years from the date of study completion. It is anticipated that these data may be needed to share the study's contributions to knowledge with academia and the general public. At the end of the ten years, all research data, both physically and digitally retained, will be destroyed in accordance with the University of Glasgow's policies and procedures.

4.9 Data Interpretation and Analysis

In line with the study's aim to make sense of the meanings in the informants' lived experiences (Thompson, 1997; Cherrier, 2012), all informant stories were first manually transcribed by the researcher. Manual transcription reduced the error of omitting vital data (Moore, 2015; Vermaak & de Klerk, 2017; Lobe & Morgan, 2020). Manual transcribing also allowed the researcher to be more conversant with the data, making room for meaningful analysis (Bolden, 2015). The manual transcription in the current study involved iteratively listening to the audio recordings of every interview several times. The researcher continued to update his field notes as the transcription progressed. In this way, initial patterns were first highlighted in the transcripts during transcription (Wicks, 2017). From the texts of individual informants' stories, the researcher was able to identify key patterns of meaning across their stories about the use and disposal of second-hand clothing, which allowed for making sense of their lived experiences. This is discussed in detail in the following section and shown later in Figure 4-6.

4.9.1 Interpretive Frameworks

The analysis of the data in the current study benefited from insight gained from two interpretive frameworks by Thompson (1997) and Moustakas (1994; 2011). In line with Thompson's (1997) hermeneutic framework, the process of interpreting textual data in the current study followed a similar iterative, hermeneutic approach (Mimoun et al., 2022). This occurred in multiple stages of iteration and comparing intra-textual and intertextual analysis with the review chapters 2 and 3, and the researcher's notes (Thompson, 1997; Mardon et al., 2023). A first reading of the transcripts by the researcher to familiarise himself with the narratives they contained. In this first reading, the researcher read through the contents of every transcript without any prejudgement - horizontalisation (Moustakas, 1994; 2011). The goal was to see what story each informant was telling. Several readings were conducted, often involving the examination of multiple portions of a set of transcripts to establish the narratives in the consumption stories told by the informants. These latter readings were usually slower and required time to extract the meanings from the stories in the texts. These readings were very rewarding due to the manual transcription methods adopted. This process continued with the researcher looking for more patterns in the texts (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Saldaña,

2017; Vespestad & Clancy, 2020). Common patterns were iteratively compared with the researcher's notes (cf. Seale, 1997; Bates, 2013).

In this way, the researcher was able to identify patterns across different transcripts.

After iteratively going through the transcripts, the researcher found the texts from the informants' interviews to be much like Thompson's (1997) consumption stories. Drawing out the unique qualities of every informant's lived experience and piecing these together into thematic clusters allowed the researcher to obtain clear textural descriptions of individual informants' experience for each of the aspects of their second-hand clothing consumption (Moustakas, 1994; 2011). These aspects were structured along individual plot lines but yet shared symbolic parallels and inter-textual relationships that produce existential themes (Thompson, 1997; Mardon et al., 2023). At this point, by phenomenologically reflecting on the conversations during the interviews and the added meanings provided by the visual data, the researcher began to identify groups of patterns in the text of each informant's consumption stories. These patterns show commonalities drawn from their cultural codes of shared meanings (Thompson, 1997). Figure 4-6 below shows how meanings emerged from the research informants' connected sociocultural & historical realities (Thompson, 1997). The researcher's knowledge gained during the course of the PhD and working as a Graduate Teaching Assistant on the Management Research Methods course, supporting other PhD and MRes students, proved very helpful indeed. It helped in bringing these consumption stories to life. It helped in identifying connections between individual consumption stories "and the rich texture of their self-identities and life-world contexts." (Thompson, 1997, 452; Mimoun et al., 2022) .

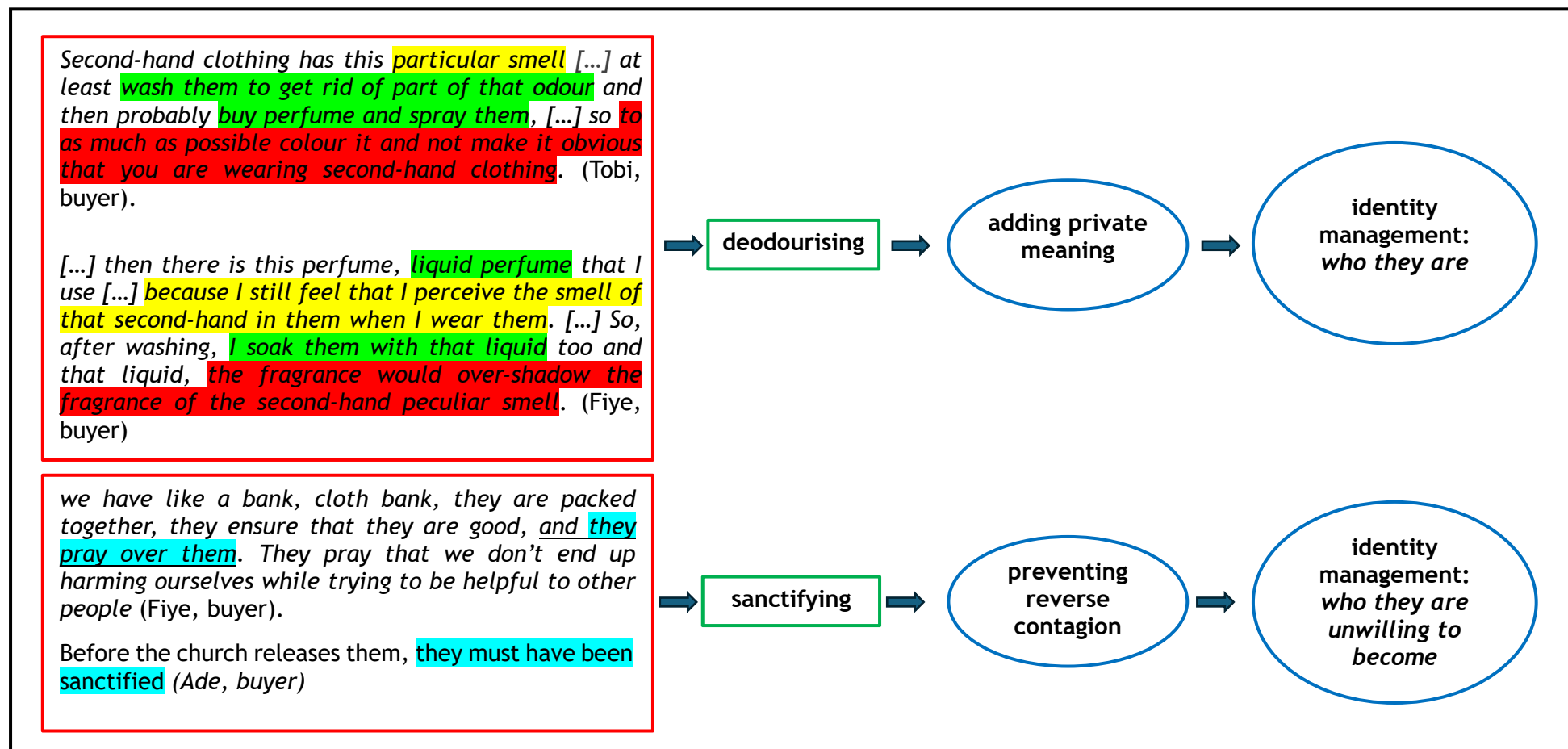


Figure 4-6: Composite Textual-structure synthesis

For example, the theme deodourising in Figure 4-6 emerged from common expressions from multiple consumption stories, e.g., what Tobi referred to as “particular smell” is what Fiye meant when she said, “because I still feel that I perceive the smell of that second-hand in them when I wear them”. They were both expressing the public meaning, i.e., the peculiar odour of second-handedness in imported second-hand clothing. Again, they deploy different methods and expressions to describe how they deodourise the clothing items. For example, Tobi would “wash them to get rid of part of that odour” and “buy perfume and spray them”. Fiye would rather “soak them” in “liquid perfume”. However, they were both describing how they deodourise the clothing to add private meanings that allow them to re-decommodify, re-singularise, re-sacralise and make the possessions truly theirs. The same applies to how Fiye and Ade talked about sanctification by the church to prevent reverse contagion.

Although the stories in the transcribed interviews were about personal experiences of second-hand clothing consumption, there were plot lines relating experiences lived in conjunction with others. Also found in the individually narrated stories are symbolic parallels (Thompson, 1997) like common motives for consuming or selling second-hand clothing. This is despite the fact that these stories are related to different individuals experiencing a phenomenon independently. Again, there are inter-textual relationships as in instances where “meanings invoked by consumers’ different consumption stories become integrated into their narratives of personal history” (Thompson, 1997: 442). For example, there were stories from informants’ childhood experiences that merged with their experiences as adults and parents. In many ways, these stories merged to form what the informants describe as their worldview of clothing consumption. All patterns in the texts of each informant’s stories were grouped to create what Moustakas (1994; 2011) termed a Composite Textural Description or existential themes (Thompson, 1997) i.e., the text highlighted in similar colours in figure 4-6. These were found across a wide range of experiences, including how informants, mostly buyers, negotiate their self-identity through the consumption of second-hand clothing.

These composite textural descriptions were then used to create a Composite Structural Description (Moustakas, 1994; 2011) or cultural codes of shared

meanings (Thompson, 1997), i.e., green boxes in Figure 4-6. These are collectively shared beliefs and fears, such as those regarding the risk of pathogenic infection and the potential for metaphysical harm associated with the disposal of second-hand clothing. In the end, the structures found in the text of their individual stories were synthesised into composite textural-structural descriptors of the meanings and essences of their collective experiences (c.f. Moustakas, 1994; 2011), i.e., blue circles in Figure 4-6. In other words, by iteratively moving between the transcripts and the recordings and drawing structures from the texts of their stories, the researcher was taken on a journey into the informants' lifeworld (Thompson, 1997: 443). This enabled the researcher to construct for each research informant "a textural-structural description of the meanings and essences of the experience" (Moustakas, 1994; 2011).

4.10 Rigour and Trustworthiness

Being a phenomenological enquiry, the pursuit of rigour and trustworthiness in the current study is guided by the interpretivist assumption of multiple realities that are continually created and interrogated (Easterby-Smith et al., 2019; Etieyibo, 2017; Saunders et al., 2019). What the current thesis describes as rigour and trustworthiness is what the positivists refer to as validity and reliability (Turner, 2019). To generate knowledge that other consumer researchers can trust McGregor & Murnane (2010) noted that "consumer scholarship warrants rigorous research that yields valid and/or trustworthy results" (p. 420). To conduct qualitative research whose outcomes will be trusted, Korstjens & Moser (2018) identified the need for such research to be credible, transferable, dependable, confirmable and reflexive. These criteria are discussed in the following sub-sections.

4.10.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to establishing the believability of the study's findings (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). It is equivalent to internal validity for positivists (Lincoln & Guba, 1982). Ensuring credibility in the current study began with the use of purposive sampling and informant recruitment through acquaintances rather than by the researcher himself (e.g. Anney, 2014). This allowed the researcher to reduce the possibilities of biases and data contamination due to familiarity. It increased the chances of obtaining their truth, as seen in their own eyes and reduced the chances of informants holding back sensitive information vital to the study

(Cilesiz, 2009; Moustakas, 1994; Yüksel & Yıldırım, 2015). However, the researcher was able to transform the informants from random second-hand clothing consumers into co-researchers (Moustakas, 1994) by building rapport, trust and familiarity. This transformation was such that near strangers began to engage in discussions about private consumption experiences, much like old friends having a chat (e.g. Belk et al., 1989). This is evident in the richness of the data obtained and the average duration of interviews, which often last over an hour. This prolonged engagement afforded the researcher the opportunity for self-immersion and in-depth, extended interactions, thus allowing for a deeper understanding of informants' worldviews (Anney, 2014; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). A good example is when a buyer, Seyi's trusted the researcher with the information about his wife's case of breast infection from wearing second-hand clothing before disinfecting it. This information was offered freely without prompting Seyi. Given that informants were asked to reflect on their everyday experiences with wearing clothing previously owned by complete strangers, the researcher was careful to avoid asking "why" questions that seem judgemental or seeking justification of behaviour (Thompson et al., 1989). Additionally, in line with credible research practices, the researcher clearly communicated the study's aim to the informants before conducting the phenomenological interviews. The informants were all informed in plain language of their roles and obligations, including the right to discontinue the study without giving a reason. This aligns with the best research practices at the University of Glasgow.

After each interview, the researcher maintained contact with the informants. This complemented the regular clarification during the interviews, where the researcher continually confirmed the research informants' responses to ensure that he got what they meant correctly. Staying in touch also created the opportunity to carry out member checks constantly (Anney, 2014; Belk et al., 1988). Staying in touch also proved very useful when the researcher needed to obtain clarification, conduct additional interviews and revisit the collection of visual data from the informants. (cf. Schram 2006 in Tuener, 2019).

Credibility also has to do with ensuring that the findings are drawn directly from the data and not from the researcher's imagination. To this end, and from the outset of data collection, the researcher ensured that all interviews were

recorded with enhanced features. For example, the Zoom recordings were time-stamped. Recordings also captured informants' visual presence (where the informants leave their cameras on). The timestamp was useful in navigating the recording during audit trailing, as the researcher repeatedly had to cross-check raw audio data with transcripts and field notes. Again, every recording captured transcripts of the conversations and was usually available shortly after each interview. Although transcription was eventually carried out manually, the Zoom transcript proved useful in a few instances where the researcher needed to triangulate the audio with his own manual transcript (Anney, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1982). According to Korstjens & Moser (2018), triangulation is another criterion for ensuring rigour and generating credible research outcomes. This topic was previously discussed in Section 4.8.3 (triangulation and data management).

4.10.2 Transferability, Dependability, and Confirmability

Transferability is another key consideration in research that adopts qualitative methods. Transferability refers to the extent to which the results of qualitative enquiries can remain true and verifiable across contexts, or what is known as external validity (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1982). In other words, a transferable research outcome is one that makes sense to an outsider. The current researcher ensures the transferability of the outcomes by including detailed descriptions of the background to the study and the context within which the behaviour and experience studied took place (see Chapters 1 and 4). Although this is a phenomenological study conducted in Nigeria - a Global South context- the outcomes are transferable to other contexts, given that second-hand clothing consumption is a global reality. The stories in the current study, told by the informants about their lived experience, follow a similar pattern of behaviour documented in consumer research. They also evidence the fact "that consumption is a historically shaped mode of sociocultural practice that emerges within the structures and ideological imperatives of dynamic marketplaces" (Arnould & Thompson, 2005: 875; Thompson, 1997). Again, the language of the thesis follows the highly structured writing approach of chronologically presenting the stories told by research informants, employing figures and tables to summarise the experience in a meaningful manner (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994).

Dependability and confirmability are two other factors employed to assess the quality of qualitative enquiry. Dependability concerns the adequacy and consistency of the methods with the philosophical assumptions the researcher claims to subscribe to and the accepted norms within the same or a similar field of enquiry (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1982). Confirmability has to do with the neutrality of the researcher in his interpretation of the data (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). It is the qualitative equivalence of external validity to a positivist enquirer (Lincoln & Guba, 1982). As discussed throughout this methodology and methods chapter, the current study is guided by the phenomenological method. The methods adopted in the design and conduct of the current research are consistent with interpretive phenomenological enquiry. It suffices to say that other interpretivist phenomenological researchers will find the findings in the current study both consistent and a viable resource for future phenomenological enquiries.

4.10.3 Reflexivity

Lastly, researchers' reflexivity is also a critical criterion for assessing qualitative research (Tanner & Osman, 2017). Reflexivity has to do with the researcher's self-awareness (e.g. Korstjens & Moser, 2018). As the enquirer, the researcher also constitutes a source of truth in the study. The philosophical assumptions to which he subscribes inform his research design, data collection, analysis, and interpretation of the data. Along with his values and beliefs, his reflexivity is critical to his interpretation of the lived experiences shared by the research informants (Yardley, 2000). At the same time, he also has a duty of care to avoid contaminating the data with his presuppositions or prejudgement (Cilesiz, 2009; Moustakas, 1994; Yüksel & Yıldırım, 2015). There is, however, a critical need to strike a balance between principles of epoché or bracketing, phenomenological reduction, and imaginative variation (Yüksel & Yıldırım, 2015).

In the current study, the researcher maintained a neutral point of view, systematically distancing himself from his own biases and presuppositions, and avoided prejudgement, given that he is not a stranger to the phenomenon under investigation. At the same time, he deployed his sense of imagination to pose the right questions and to gain a deeper understanding of what the informant was describing (Cilesiz, 2009; Moustakas, 1994; Yüksel & Yıldırım, 2015). This is

another lesson that the researcher learnt during the piloting. When the researcher misses an opportunity to write notes in real-time or relies on their memory, there is a risk that they can easily contaminate the data with biases arising from attempting to use their own experience as a consumer to make sense of what was said. The researcher was conscious of this possibility. To prevent data contamination, the researcher maintained a data accounting log (section 4.7.2), in which observations, notes, and other vital information were recorded in real-time. As part of his field notes, the researcher also recorded observations directly onto the interview guide as the interviews progressed (see section 4.7). In this way, the researcher was able to remain faithful to the “subjects’ voices” (Pugh, 2020: 172).

Interview log and transcript		
Interview log		
Participant's Profile:	[REDACTED] University Teacher/Lecturer	
Assigned ID:	Tobi	
Gender:	Male	
Date of interview:	20.04.2021	25.04.2021
Time:	5:22pm	3:08pm
Length:	00:36:44	00:19:36
First impression:	Educated and well informed. Has a long and continuing encounter with SHC.	
Other observations:	Aware of the environment but this is not as important as getting affordable, comfortable clothing. Would give unwanted clothing to others, <u>use as rag</u> but would burn unusable ones eventually. Burning because it is convenient and easier. Aware that others burn for reasons like <u>risk</u> of spiritual exposure, but this is not a concern. Burns also because laws are rarely followed or maintained.	

Figure 4-8: Screenshot of direct notes added in real-time to the interview guide

Figure 4-8 above illustrates how the researcher records their initial impressions and general observations as they emerge during and immediately after each interview. Together with the Data Accounting Log, notes like the one in the figure above helped the researcher stay with the informant’s true accounts rather than relying on their own instinct, which can potentially not reflect the informants’ true experiences. The researcher’s notes were very helpful in identifying possible points to probe further either during the interview or to ask the informant in a follow-up interview. These notes also helped to recall where a discussion needed to resume in instances where circumstances at the informants’ end made it

impossible to continue with the interviews. The above discussion outlines how the researcher ensured phenomenological rigour and trustworthiness in the current research. The other critical elements of rigour in the study are ethical considerations, anonymity, and confidentiality. These are discussed in the next section.

4.11 Ethical Considerations and Confidentiality

The current study employed phenomenological interviews to gain insight into consumers' lived experiences with the use and disposal of second-hand clothing shipped from abroad. A critical concern with phenomenological interviews is ethical considerations (Bryman, 2016; Thompson et al., 1989). Ethical considerations are necessary right from topic selection, through research design, gaining access, and during and after data collection (King, 2014; Saunders et al., 2019). This is why ethical review and approval precede any field work in social research. Abiding by strict ethical codes is essential because it ensures that research is conducted with limited to no harm to all stakeholders (e.g. Pugh, 2020). Paying attention to ethical issues enabled the researcher to identify and reflect on all risks and make efforts to mitigate them. It also helped to ensure that appropriate regulations are duly adhered to. For example, considerable emphasis is placed on ensuring informants' confidentiality to the greatest extent possible, thereby guaranteeing their trust in participating in social research.

In accordance with the University of Glasgow's research ethics requirements, the researcher underwent research ethics training (see Appendix E). An ethical application document was also diligently scrutinised by the researcher's supervisors and further submitted to the University's research ethics committee, and approval was secured before commencing fieldwork (see Appendix D). All stipulations in the ethical approval were strictly adhered to in the conduct of the research.

As discussed in section 4.6 (sampling and recruitment), only consenting individuals who consume second-hand clothing and who were above the age of 18 were included in the study (Rashad, Phipps, & Haith-Cooper, 2004; Smith, 2019). Every informant suggested by their recruiters was contacted personally by the researcher. During this initial discussion, the researcher explained the documents and outlined the roles and expectations of each informant. The researcher also

explained the research process and answered all questions, attending to every request for clarification.

All consenting informants were informed that, although the researcher may collect personal information about them, this information will only be used for analysis purposes. They will not be part of the study's report. They were assured that they would only be referred to by assigned pseudonyms to protect their identity. They were also informed of the plan to treat their information with strict confidentiality, keeping it securely stored and destroyed on completion of the PhD in line with the University's strict data confidentiality guidelines. The research process did not cause any distress or harm. Nevertheless, informants were informed of the process in place to diligently handle any possible incidence of wrongdoing or potential harm related to the conduct of the research.

All consenting informants were adequately informed of their rights and responsibilities. They were also reminded of their exclusive right to participate or not, including the freedom to withdraw from the study without giving any reason. Most informants' consent was digitally recorded and obtained via the researcher's university email address. However, whether or not informants signed the consent form, as some had issues signing the documents digitally, verbal consent was obtained from every informant before their individual interviews. This was achieved through a feature of Zoom conferencing software that both visually and audibly alerts the informants that "recording is in progress," and the informant is given the option to continue by clicking "Got it" or opt out. All informants chose the former. All 26 informants who progressed to the interview stage participated in the study. As an Internet-mediated study, interviews were recorded and encrypted in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the University's best practices, as explained earlier in Section 5.8.1.

4.12 Limitations to the Research Methods

The first major limitation is regarding the age range of the informants. With the exception of Jire (mid-50s), Tishe (mid-60s), Seyi (mid-60s) and Ade (mid-50s), the majority of the informants were between their late 30s and mid-40s. Given that second-hand clothing came into Nigeria around seven decades ago (e.g. Abimbola, 2012; Areo & Areo, 2015), most informants in the current study are, at best,

second-generation second-hand clothing consumers who developed an interest in second-hand clothing through their parents or other family members.

Again, as mentioned in Section 4.7 of this chapter, the initial plan for the fieldwork for this study was to conduct two rounds of phenomenological in-depth interviews, informant observation in second-hand markets, and informants' diaries. However, as discussed in Section 4.7, the fieldwork began during the total lockdown occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic, with restrictions on travel and strong advice for social distancing. Most interactions then transitioned online, with people communicating primarily on Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Cisco Webex, and other similar videoconferencing platforms (Bailenson, 2021; Riedl, 2022). Moving almost exclusively online made communication possible when social interactions were impossible. This is, however, not without some downsides. For one, virtual interviews meant a reduction in the number of interviews that the researcher could conduct. One direct reason for the reduction in the number of possible online interviews is "Zoom fatigue". Zoom fatigue is a

"somatic and cognitive exhaustion that is caused by the intensive and/or inappropriate use of videoconferencing tools, frequently accompanied by related symptoms such as tiredness, worry, anxiety, burnout, discomfort, and stress, as well as other bodily symptoms such as headaches." (Riedl, 2022: 157; cf. Bailenson, 2021; Nesher Shoshan & Wehrt, 2022; Peper et al., 2021).

In addition to zoom fatigue, online interviews also resulted in a reduction in the richness of engagement and the loss of other cues, such as informants' body language, through which the researcher could gain a deeper understanding of the conversations. Two other factors that contributed to the reduction in the number of informants and interviews included the challenge of electrical power outages and those related to technology. As discussed in Section 4.7, many interviews either did not take place at all or had to be stopped abruptly due to an electrical power outage. There were also challenges related to the informants' technological know-how, including accessing the Internet or using inappropriate devices (Dos Santos Marques et al., 2020; Zaman et al., 2020). All of this meant that both the

researcher and the informants had to take on new responsibilities. For instance, some virtual interview informants had to acquire new skills and or download a new and unfamiliar App. They sometimes also needed to get appropriate devices that allow video conferencing. The researcher also took on additional responsibilities of setting up the interview in ways that were conducive for the informants. For instance, on many occasions, the researcher had to help informants set up and use Zoom. All these factors increased the risk that some prospective informants would be unable to participate eventually. Many of the challenges encountered during fieldwork are peculiar to the research context. The research context's peculiarity is discussed in the following sections.

4.13. Location of informants during the interviews

The Global South market studied is Nigeria, with data obtained from informants in four main Nigerian states - Lagos, Oyo, Ogun, and Osun. Situated in the Southwestern part of Nigeria, these four states are famous for having some of the largest second-hand clothing markets and thriving second-hand clothing consumption practices in the country (Didymus, 2012; Areo & Areo, 2015). The specific cities from which informants were drawn include Lagos Island and Lagos Mainland (in Lagos State), Ibadan (in Oyo State), Ilaro (in Ogun State), and Osogbo, Ede, and Ile-Ife (in Osun State). Lagos was Nigeria's administrative capital until 21st December 1991, when a Federal Capital Territory was created in Abuja. Lagos, however, remains the country's commercial capital city (Gatt & Owen, 2018; Agbibo, 2020). Lagos is also one of the United Nations' major cities in emerging economies (Ezeugwu & Isah, 2021; UNHABITAT, 2020). Out of the four states in the study, Lagos and Oyo states have the largest human population, estimated at 14,368,332 for Lagos and 3,551,961 for Ibadan alone (Okuonghae & Omame, 2020; World Population Review, 2017). Although the Nigerian second-hand clothing ecosystem has multiple stakeholders, including importers, wholesalers, resellers, and consumers, the focus of the current study is on resellers and consumers. Concentrating on the second-hand clothing resellers and buyers is informed by the research aim and research questions derived from the review of relevant literature. All studies cited in this thesis that sought to uncover the reasons behind behaviour through sense-making focus on consumers' lived experiences. Specific to the current study, consumers are a more suitable target for questions regarding

second-hand clothing acquisition, use, and disposal. Resellers are included to provide additional data with which to triangulate the data received from the consumers.



Figure 4-6: Map of Nigeria showing the four states covered in the current research.

4.14 Conclusion

This chapter justifies the methodological assumptions that guided the current study. It presents the research strategies and techniques adopted by the current study to address the gaps in theory and knowledge regarding the fate of the UK's donated used clothing shipped to Nigeria. The chapter connected the research problems with the research aim and the research questions to justify the use of qualitative phenomenological interpretive enquiry (sections 4.2 and 4.3). Sections 4.4 to 4.9 discussed the strategies and techniques that constituted the research methods, including data interpretation and the framework for data analysis. The chapter also discussed steps taken to ensure rigour and trustworthiness of the research outcomes (section 4.10). Section 4.11 of the chapter is dedicated to how the study addressed ethical considerations and ensured the confidentiality of

research informants, in line with the University of Glasgow's best practices. Before this concluding section, the chapter examined the limitations of the research methods (Section 4.12) specific to the research context. The discussion of the findings and their interpretation based on the above philosophical assumptions and method is presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 5 - Findings and Discussion

5.1 Introduction to Chapter 5

This findings and discussion chapter discusses the data obtained in the current study. This data pertains to the lived experiences of the study's informants. The discussion in this chapter thus addresses how the current study meets its main research aims. To reiterate, the study's main aim is to make sense of what becomes of the UK's donated used clothing that is shipped to Nigeria. In other words, to address the unaddressed transfer at the durable-rubbish interface of Thompson's (1979; 2017) Rubbish theory, i.e., where do objects in the durable category end up? The study's other aim is to uncover the ritual dimensions that manifest through the use and disposition of the UK's donated used clothing that is shipped to Nigeria, which are currently missing in extant theorising (Jacoby et al., 1977; Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005). In this direction, the study identified two main research questions from omissions in extant theorising on both second-hand economies and consumption ritual. The two main research questions emerging from the gaps identified in the two review chapters (2 and 3) are presented below.

RQ1. How do second-hand clothing consumers in Nigeria use and dispose of second-hand clothing that comes from the Global North?

To reiterate, this first research question addresses the current study's main research aim in two ways. One, it addresses the current unknowns about the use and disposition of millions of bales of the UK's donated used clothing that are shipped to Nigeria. It achieves this by providing insight into the lived experiences of second-hand clothing consumers in the Global South, which is currently overlooked in existing consumer research. Two, it addresses the unanswered question at the durable-rubbish interface of Thompson's (1979; 2017) Rubbish theory, i.e., where do objects in the durable category end up?

RQ2. What are the ritual dimensions that manifest through second-hand clothing use and disposal in Nigeria?

This second research question also addresses the current study's other research aim in two ways. One, it addresses the unexplored question of intentional destruction in contrast to the current theorisation of divestment ritual as meaning

transfer and meaning reconfiguration. It achieves this by providing insight into the divestment rituals practiced by second-hand clothing consumers in Nigeria when using and disposing of the second-hand clothing shipped to them from the UK. Two, it addresses the unanswered question of reverse contagion - i.e., what happens when the meanings in possessions are not transferred but rather destroyed?

Responses to RQ1 are analysed in two parts, i.e., use (Section 5.2) and disposal (Section 5.3). Section 5.4 addresses how informants deal with anxieties relating to strangers accessing their used clothing. Given that the use and disposition of imported second-hand clothing in Nigeria are ritualised behaviours, responses to RQ2, i.e., the consumption rituals that manifest during the use and disposition of imported second-hand clothing in Nigeria, also form part of the discussions in sections 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4. The question of where objects in the durable category of the rubbish theory are discussed in section 5.5 as part of the informants' narratives about burning their used and unwanted clothing to establish what they are unwilling to become.

This findings and discussion chapter concludes with a summary of how the lived experience of second-hand clothing consumers in Nigeria extends knowledge and theorisation on clothing disposition and the (divestment) rituals dimensions that manifest through the use and disposition of imported second-hand clothing in Nigeria. This introductory section is immediately followed by a profile of the informants based on their motives for consuming second-hand clothing. This provides the basis for analysis and helps make sense of the lived experiences shared with the researcher.

5.1.1 Identity Management through Re-acquisition: who they are

Profiling the buyer informants based on their motives for consuming second-hand clothing from the UK confirms extant theorising on Bourdieu's Habitus, Hexis, and identity management as explicated by Tuan (1980), Belk (1988; 2014), and Roster (2014) (Chapter 3, Section 3.2.1). From their lived experiences summarised in Table 5-1 below, most-buyer informants consume second-hand clothing to manage their identity. They use second-hand clothing - i.e., *what they have* - to express *who they are* and to navigate their roles and negotiate their place in society. Like those in Guiot & Roux's (2010) informants consume second-hand clothing because

it fits many of their life roles and statuses. They are highly frugal and seek uniqueness in their clothing choices (cf. Waight, 2014). Table 5-1 below is a profile of the buyer informants based on their motive for consuming imported second-hand clothing.

Table 5- 1: Identity Management: Dressing Well for Less (DWfL)				
Attraction		Description	Data Example	Some Theorisation Examples
Core	Actual			
Affordability	Access	Second-hand clothing is available and within reach.	<i>Affordability of it and, of course, accessibility as well to these things. It makes life easier for so many people who might not have been able to afford to have good clothing if they didn't have access to these second-hand materials (Tobi, buyer).</i>	Prahalad & Hart, 2002; Prahalad, 2006; Abimbola, 2012; Karnani, 2007; Wetengere, 2018; Niinimäki et al., 2020; Norris, 2015
	Lean wallet	Most buyers go for second-hand clothing to maximise the benefit from meagre resources	<i>greater number of people here in Nigeria and Africa are not that rich and due to this we always like to go for things that give a price advantage to us [...] Some of these qualities can also be gotten in new clothing but the price will deter such a person from getting them (Chucks, buyer)</i>	Areo & Areo, 2015; Bazzi, 2012; Laitala & Klepp, 2018; Ek Styvén & Mariani, 2020; Boeckholtz, 2020
Quality	Durability	Second-hand clothing items are better sewn, made to last from good material and can withstand multiple washing.	<i>Some were previously worn, some not worn at all, and I realise that they were durable, they were quite durable, very durable and that encouraged me to keep on buying them (Fiye, buyer)</i>	Areo & Areo, 2015; Bazzi, 2012; Oteng-Ababio et al., 2015
	Uniqueness	<u>Need to be different from others:</u> New clothing comes from material bought in the market and many	<i>compared to the ones that we have in Nigeria, obviously, you are buying from a particular material, and other people will also come and buy from that same material which makes the tendency of having so many people put on the</i>	Guiot & Roux, 2010; Yan et al., 2015; Brico & Jensen, 2016; Boeckholtz, 2020

		people can have that. Second-hand clothing allows buyers to have clothing items that others do not have.	<i>same fabric with you, which is not good for someone who values fashion and uniqueness. [...] For me, being unique means trying to put on something that makes you different. [...] You may not be comfortable wearing the same thing with the person. So, that may not make me unique (BJ, buyer)</i>	
		<u>Unique body attributes:</u> Buyers who have unique body attributes like those needing extra-large clothing rarely find their taste in their preferred sizes in regular new ready-made clothing stores.	<i>Because of my size, I need oversized or very big Jeans, a very big size, a cardigan, very big, a pullover (hoody jacket), very big. I needed to go to this market and find them, and I went there, and I got them [...] you cannot get new ones in Nigeria [...] but what you need; your size, the design, you cannot get it first, new ones here except the ones that are used elsewhere which is not our own way of dressing [...] for my Jeans, my waist, I need about 40 inches (Tishe, buyer)</i>	

As their occupational profile in Table 4-3 (Chapter 4, Section 4.6.3) shows, informants work across both public and private sectors. They perform a varied array of roles, with some combining two or more. For instance, an informant working in the public sector as a trained nurse also has a private catering business. Another informant who works as a registered nurse also sells second-hand clothing. Others who work in higher education have roles ranging from secretarial to teaching and training. One teacher in higher education also sells imported used cars, and another is, in fact, a Faculty Dean. There is also an accountant who works as a voice-over artist. There is an Internet betting expert, a Biological Laboratory scientist, a Project Management consultant and an IT trainer, a Registered builder, an Architect, as well as an Unemployed graduate.

Take Tobi, for example. Tobi is a university lecturer of African Literature and a faculty Dean. According to him

I teach African literature, so that's what informed my decision to do more of African clothing than English. (Tobi, buyer)



Figure 5-1: Tobi: At work, with other Deans.

Tobi explained that dressing style is not a strict requirement of the job. However, he prefers to wear African clothing on most days of the week. This is his personal

decision to reflect the African culture in his dress. Furthermore, in his role as a dean, he attends meetings with other university officials and hosts external guests during the week. As he mentioned, he prefers to reflect his African heritage in his attire. The image in Figure 5-1 above also shows Tobi with other colleagues and university visitors. However, Tobi also wears imported second-hand clothing because teaching and hosting guests is not all that he does on campus. According to Tobi,

I don't have classes on Fridays. I like to look sporty. So, most Fridays, I don't wear ... in fact, I do the reverse. Most people in this clime will wear Western clothing from Mondays to Thursdays, and on Fridays, they will go traditional. What I do is I do traditional from Monday to Thursday, and then on Friday, I have what I call my free-style day. So, I wear a T-shirt, I wear Jeans, I wear a sports shirt, you know, and of course it gives me a sporty outlook. [...] It makes me look sporty and it makes me look fit so to say.

The images in Figure 5-2 below illustrate what Tobi refers to as his “freestyle Fridays” and “sporty outlook.” The three on the left are his freestyle Friday wears while attending non-academic functions on campus. The three on the right are suitable for casual wear on weekends. All the clothing items in these six images are imported second-hand clothing.



Figure 5-2: Tobi: Freestyle Fridays and Sporty weekends, second-hand clothing for play.

Unlike Tobi, other informants, such as Chucks, a project management consultant, wears imported second-hand clothing every day of work. Chucks also wears second-hand clothing while hanging out with friends and playing.

there are varieties of second-hand clothing, and it doesn't just end in suit, it doesn't end in shirts, it doesn't end in plain trousers. I talked about Jean before, I also talked about underwear. I also talked about T-shirts and Polos. So aside workplace, I use second-hand clothing for my casual outings. So, if I'm going out for a sit-out with friends, at times, I do wear them.



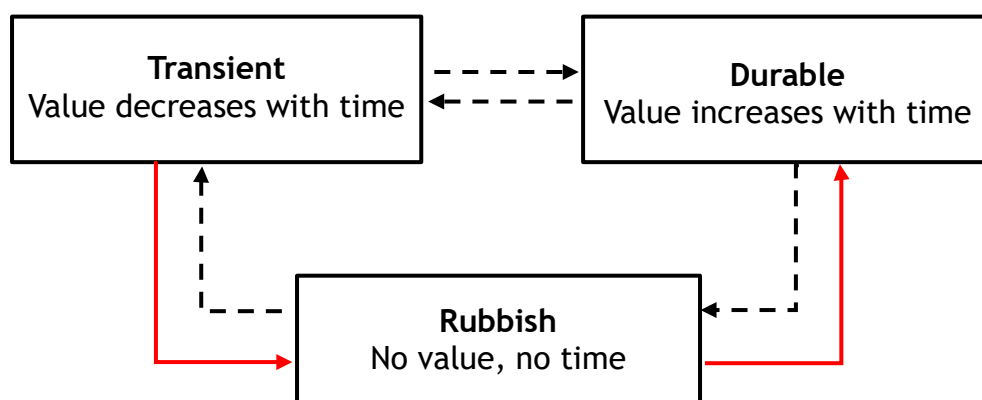
Figure 5-3: Chucks: second-hand clothing for work, hanging out with friends and play.

The image in Figure 5-3 above helps us understand Chucks' motives for consuming imported second-hand clothing. He wears the suit on the left to work, for example, with a plain pair of trousers. He wears the hooded jumper and shorts in the middle and the Jeans on the right for play and while hanging out with friends.

The above is how buyer informants describe their lived experiences with imported second-hand clothing. Imported second-hand clothing allows informants to manage their identity by allowing them to dress well for less (cf. Laitala & Klepp, 2018; Ek Styvén & Mariani, 2020). The theme of *dressing well for less* emerged from their stories as seen in the excerpts above. Additionally, as shown in Table 5-

1, dressing well for less is captured by most buyer informants in terms of the affordability and quality of imported second-hand clothing items. Affordability is further defined by the ease of access to second-hand clothing items and a lean wallet, i.e., poverty or economic constraints. Quality is further defined by the durability of second-hand clothing imported from the UK and how unique the items make the informants feel.

Importantly, imported second-hand clothing provides them with access to quality clothing that fits their budget and suits their various life roles and statuses, whether for work, play, or everything in between. Although these items come to them as previously used, they are durable to them. For most informants, these imported used clothing items compare favourably, if not better, with local new alternatives in terms of durability and uniqueness (see Table 5-1). This determination of quality by the informants confirms the material objectivity (O'Brien, 1999) of the value of consumption objects, despite use, age, and time (Chapter 2, Section 2.4). Having previously been passed onto the rubbish category, their being *imported* from the UK is how they move from the rubbish to the durable category (Thompson, 1979; 2017). It is in this new category, where new uses have now been found for them (O'Brien, 1999), that consumer informants determine imported second-hand clothing to be durable and unique. Here, the findings of the current study confirm the transfer at the rubbish-durable interface in the rubbish theory. This is represented in Thompson's Basic Rubbish Theory Hypothesis, reproduced below with the red arrows.



Reproduced Thompson's Basic Rubbish Theory

This understanding of imported second-hand clothing items as already in the durable category is the basis for the remaining analysis in this chapter. The next section begins by looking at informants' responses to RQ1. As reiterated in this thesis, the first research question, RQ1, addresses the use of second-hand clothing, discussed in Section 5-2, and its disposal, discussed in Section 5-3.

5.2 Second-Hand Clothing Use in Nigeria

This section discusses buyer informants' responses to questions on use. As seen in the preceding section, informants consume imported second-hand clothing as part of their identity management, especially in establishing who they are (Tuan, 1980; Belk, 1988; 2014; Roster, 2014). This is so because second-hand clothing fits many of their life roles and statuses (Guiot & Roux, 2010; Laitala & Klepp, 2018; Ek Styvén & Mariani, 2020). In deploying imported second-hand clothing to manage their identity, they also manage other important concerns. One of these is the fear and uncertainty surrounding the previous lives of imported second-hand clothing, and managing meanings in other people's used clothing. This is discussed in the following section.

5.2.1 Fears and Uncertainties

The first fear surrounding imported second-hand clothing, as revealed in the buyer informants' lived experiences, is uncertainty about how the clothing items became second-hand. This fear is further split into what is left behind in the clothing items, the condition of travel to the Global South and poor quality.

5.2.1.1 Fear of what is left behind in used clothing

The first point of concern for most buyer informants is avoiding possible contact with the negative or undesirable, non-material properties left behind in the items (cf. Frazer, 1891; Roster, 2014; Rozin et al., 1993; Nemeroff & Rozin, 1994; section 3.3.4.2). For the buyer informants, chief among such negative or undesirable properties is infection due to the clothing items' previous use or user. This fear is especially because these clothing items are from strangers (Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005; Roster, 2014; Hingston et al., 2017; Newman et al., 2011; Newman & Dhar, 2014; section 3.3.4.1). According to one buyer informant, Bunmi

Imagine during that pandemic last year, [...] So, when this pandemic was so bad, they said they have to dispose of

whatever clothes they have in their surroundings. I can imagine someone out there has the COVID-19 virus now disposing of his or her clothes that way, you can see the big danger, the big damage it will cause to people here because the COVID-19 virus can be contracted through different things, and it can even be contracted through the clothes that we put on. So now buying the second-hand clothing again will be very dangerous because their sweat would have been on those clothes, and COVID-19 is so bad, it's not like a stain that you can wash away (Bunmi, buyer)

Evident from Bunmi's comment above is the fact that users leave a bit of themselves behind in their used possessions. In this particular case, what is left behind is suspected to be the result of an infection. Bunmi's comments here are somewhat speculative regarding how and why the clothing items from the UK became second-hand. The speculation notwithstanding, her comments attest to the fact that the previous lives of imported second-hand clothing into Africa are shrouded in uncertainties (Brooks, 2012; 2019; Wetengere, 2018). Bunmi is the only buyer informant who explicitly mentioned the pandemic. However, her fear about how the clothing items became second-hand and what may have been left behind from their previous lives echoes the same fears of all other buyer informants. It is essential to note that the lack of reference to COVID-19 by most informants is a reflection of the prevailing public opinion in Nigeria regarding the pandemic.

Many Nigerians denied the existence of COVID-19 in spite of the global realities of the time (Udeobasi, 2021; Nwokeocha & Gates, 2023). Some of the reasons for denial and the resulting vaccine hesitancy are traceable to sociopolitical issues, including mistrust of governments and their institutions. Other reasons are related to people's biological risk perception (Iheanacho et al., 2022), safety and perceived vaccine effectiveness. There are also wide conspiracies about the vaccine worsening ongoing health conditions, as well as conspiracies around vaccine testing (Ojewale & Mukumbang, 2023). Some of these reasons above are amongst the 33 different conspiracy theories or misinformation about COVID-19 in

Nigeria found by Wonodi et al. (2022). Like Ojewale & Mukumbang (2023), Wonodi et al. (2022) also found mistrust of government and underlying religious beliefs as chief amongst the reasons for Nigerians' denial of the existence of the virus (cf. Chutiyami et al., 2022). For instance, there was a popular uneasiness around a scheme by some individuals and groups to reduce or control the global population, starting with exterminating Africans or making them infertile through vaccination (Omoera & Ogoke, 2021). Another widely shared opinion was the deployment of the 5G technology as a major reason for the health issues that prevailed during the period (Omoera & Ogoke, 2021). Although these conspiracy theories or misinformation remain largely unproven, they are the greatest reason for COVID-19 denial and hesitancy towards the COVID-19 vaccines in Nigeria (see also Lazarus et al., 2023). They are also the reason why the pandemic did not come up in most informants' narratives.

This general perception of COVID-19 in Nigeria may also contribute to why Bunmi's fears about infection appear speculative. However, there are some buyer informants with actual encounters with infection from wearing imported second-hand clothing before treating them (e.g., Wetengere, 2018; section 3.3.4.2). One such experience was shared by Seyi below.

Mistakenly, of recent, my wife bought some second-hand clothes. Unknowingly to her, she was testing it. You know when you buy clothes, before you wash them, sometimes you want to wear it and test it if it is ok or not. But unfortunately, after wearing it, after the second day, she started complaining of pain in her breast. I had to take her to the doctor. The doctor now said that she had an infection. We had to buy drugs. We even bought Augmentin⁷ so that you know how grave the pain was. We don't know the source of that pain. I said, when did you start noticing this pain? She said she doesn't know. Then I said, do you remember that when you bought that cloth,

⁷ Augmentin is a prescription antibiotic used to treat many different infections – including skin infections – caused by bacteria.

you did not wash it before you tested it? Maybe it may be the source. Sometimes, it may be the source. (Seyi, buyer)

This experience by Seyi is an actual encounter with an infection connected to imported second-hand clothing. Seyi's experience lends credence to the belief expressed by the other buyers about the risk of infection. The emphasis on the kind of antibiotic that they had to get for his wife shows that it was a serious infection. The only link they could draw was to the clothing she tried on before washing and disinfecting, as she would normally do before first use. The experience shared by Seyi above also confirms buyer informants' fears about imported second-hand clothing, which, beyond physical stains, also leaves a part of the previous user behind in their used clothing, including contagious infections.

Both Bunmi's speculative and the actual experience by Seyi's wife in the above examples attest to the risk of health complications documented in the Global South literature (Wetengere, 2018; Amanor, 2018; Chipambwa, Sithole, & Chisosa, 2016; Chapter 3, Section 3.3.4.2).

Additionally, Bunmi's comment about the possibility that previous users may have died has a basis in how imported second-hand clothing is perceived in Nigeria. Across Africa, imported second-hand clothing is referred to by names such as Kafa Ulaya, which literally translates as clothes from someone who died in Europe and mupedzanhamo, literally meaning where all problems end (Brooks 2012; 2019; Cobbing et al., 2022; Kinabo, 2004; Mangieri, 2006; Wetengere, 2018). Other names, such as Okrika, bend down boutique, and 'London clothes,' indicate that these items are not new and have most likely been worn by another person. Not being new is not a significant concern, if at all, as the concerns created by the fact that the previous users are complete strangers (Hingston et al., 2017; Newman et al., 2011; Newman & Dhar, 2014). This is further complicated by the evident information gap between the stakeholders in the global second-hand clothing trade (Abimbola, 2012). The implication of these uncertainties is seen in informants' perceptions around imported second-hand clothing as clothes from someone who died in Europe. More importantly, these uncertainties complicate their fears of what may have been left behind in these used clothing items.

As such, despite their desire for the quality that these items offer, buyer informants are mindful of the important need to manage their exposure to whatever the previous users may have left behind in the items. In a way, this is equally integral to managing their identity. Any incidence of infections or health complications from exposure in this way will be antithetical to how they would love to use and define their bodies, according to Bourdieu (Belk, 2014).

5.2.1.2 Condition of Travel to the Global South

Another concern that buyer informants have with imported second-hand clothing relates to the conditions of travel of imported used clothing items. One of the specific issues raised by all buyer informants about the condition of travel is the peculiar smell that all imported second-hand clothing items have. In one of the instances where informants showed interest in knowledge exchange (Chapter 4, Section 4.6.5; Zutlevics, 2016), Tobi expressed curiosity about why imported second-hand clothing has a certain smell, as seen in the comment below.

And like I also said, I really would like to know what makes those clothes smell the way they smell. Is it that they are spraying something to preserve them? I don't know, but I know they all have this peculiar kind of smell. (Tobi, buyer)

Unlike Tobi, Sola appears to have a theory about the smell. According to her

the reason for the odour is that they are probably imported from different countries, and you know all these importing processing can take a long time, shipping, and everything so they always have this smell [...] Because you don't know where it's been, you don't know anything, so you just have to be careful. You know, normal cloth, a newly made cloth, you definitely know that this one is newly made, you understand, [...] but this one that they have worn before and then you don't know the whole procedure, [...] you just have to be careful to wash

anything, anything off and then subsequently, you can wash it like normal cloth. (Sola, buyer)

The above comments by Sola show that even if informants cannot physically evidence the infection, they know that the odour is peculiar to imported used clothing. Sola connected this peculiar odour to the condition of extended travel through different destinations. Her comparison of second-hand clothing with newly made clothing confirms buyer informants' fears of significant risks associated with wearing second-hand clothing without first washing it. It also suggests that they do not share similar concerns when purchasing new clothing items. The above comments about odour and condition of transportation also further complicate the uncertainties surrounding the previous lives of imported second-hand clothing (Brooks, 2012; 2019; Wetengere, 2018).

One of such complications with this is that the odour is found by some to be irritating. For instance, while talking about his early encounters with second-hand clothing, Kunle mentioned that

at first, it was difficult to begin to negotiate with second-hand clothes, you know, I could feel irritated by the smell of whatever deodorant it is that permeates the clothes but then later on, we started growing accustomed to it. (Kunle, buyer)

Kunle's concern about irritation from odour, like that of Bunmi, Tobi, and Sola, further shows that buyer informants are worried about how second-hand clothing is shipped to them. Again, buyer informants do not specifically connect the odour to what the previous users may have left behind in the imported used clothing items, like they did with infections. Clearly, both the infection and the odour are part of the imported second-hand clothing's past. Furthermore, despite this lack of connection, Sola's earlier reference to importing used clothing from different countries has a basis in the literature. For example, second-hand clothing shipments designated for Zambia are reported to come in through Tanzania, South Africa, and Mozambique (Hansen, 2000). We also know that second-hand clothing items sold in Nigeria are routed through neighbouring West African countries

(Abimbola, 2012; Brooks, 2019; Brooks & Simon, 2012). However, this literature neither establishes a connection between these routes and infection nor the odour peculiar to imported second-hand clothing. Again, whereas Wetengere (2018) talked about infection resulting from second-hand clothing use, it is not clear from his submissions if these infections are connected to the conditions of travel of second-hand clothing to markets in the Global South. This lack of a significantly clear connection in the literature further substantiates informants' concerns and uncertainties (Brooks, 2012; 2019; Wetengere, 2018). Above all, the actual irritation and other unknowns further strengthen informants' fears that they may be exposed to whatever the imported second-hand clothing has encountered during its journey to the Global South.

5.2.1.3 Poor Quality

There is yet another factor that complicates the above fears and uncertainties. This involves shipping poor-quality used clothing as second-hand to the Global South. To make sense of this complication, it is essential to first establish how informants define the quality of second-hand clothing. A good definition is offered by Tobi when he said:

the materials that we get from second-hand clothing are usually very quality materials. [...] when you wash them, [...] they hardly change colour. As long as you don't bleach them, they hardly fade. They stay longer compared to the new ones we buy and sew. (Tobi, buyer)

From their live experiences, as summarized here by Tobi, buyer informants believe that a high-quality second-hand clothing item is well-sewn from durable fabric and retains its original colour even after multiple washes. These features are also corroborated by seller informants in their definition of quality. From the seller's informants' perspectives, there are approximately four grades of imported second-hand clothing that come to Nigeria. These grades are labelled A, B, C, and D, or 1, 2, 3, and 4, or first, second, third, and fourth. A, 1 or first being the top grade, and D, 4 or fourth being the lowest grade.

Still, on grading and quality, Sade commented:

A first grade is when you carry a bale and you can sell everything inside the bale without anyone being tattered like the Jeans last week, I only met one torn cloth inside. (Sade, seller)

Good-quality imported second-hand clothing is designated as grade A or first grade, as indicated by Sade in the above comment. It is instructive to note (as mentioned in Chapter 4) that Sade's family has been involved in second-hand clothing trading for over forty years. Her family enjoys and maintains good trade relationships with their suppliers and is thus able to negotiate good deals and good quality bales (e.g., Abimbola (2012)).

Having established the informants' definition of quality, it is essential to note that poor-quality second-hand clothing items also come with the bales shipped to Nigeria. An encounter with such low-quality items was recounted by Yetunde, a new seller, who shared a story of one of her earliest experiences below.

What [the new supplier] delivered was of the lowest quality at the same amount. I wasn't satisfied with it at all. In short, some are torn, I had to snap and send to her that they are torn, and how do I sell these to customers? She told me it's my work to amend [...] even the ones that my customer sent, some will still be torn in there, but will be few compared to what she sent, some are torn, some are old, but for that period of time, I could not sell those clothes. I could not take them to my customers, so they are a loss for me. (Yetunde, seller)

Although Yetunde was talking about an experience with a new supplier, she also hinted that she receives equally poor-quality items from her regular suppliers as well. The above comment confirms Abimbola (2012), Brooks (2012) and Arenas et al. (2015) regarding the current sorting processes in the UK, which are configured to retain high-quality items for Global North markets while pushing the rest to lower-tier markets, with the majority ultimately ending up in sub-Saharan African markets.

Yetunde's experience in the above comment also shows that the bales of second-hand clothing shipped to the Global South markets do contain poor-quality clothing items. As she mentioned, it was her loss, as the supplier was not willing to accept their return because their dealers also do not accept returns. The inability to accept returns confirms the fact that Nigerian dealers and suppliers also have no idea of the content of the bales before opening them (Abimbola, 2012). This, according to Abimbola (2012) is due to information asymmetry between UK second-hand clothing exporters and Global South importers. Yetunde's statement, "I could not sell those clothes," shows her frustration because, as the researcher also learnt, buyers in the current study would always opt for top-grade second-hand clothing. They avoid low-grade, second-hand clothing items for the same reason: poor quality and being unfit for purpose, as Yetunde described above. What happened to sellers like Yetunde may also happen to any uninformed buyer, as described by Chucks, a buyer, in the following comment.

When you go to the market, there are different grades. When a bale is opened, they will give you some number of clothes that you should select as first grade. The remaining ones, second grade and the ones that are remaining, third grade ... Prices are already there that the first thirty that will come out of this bale is going to be sold to you at maybe say seven hundred and fifty (£1.31) each. Now after you've selected your first thirty, the following ones, they will say maybe five hundred each (£0.87) ... Then the remaining ones now, after the second grade has been selected, they might say those ones can go for three hundred (£0.52), three-fifty (0.61) and all that.

In the grading system described by Chucks above, consumers who are the first to open a bale have the opportunity to select items based on their assessment of quality. Every subsequent consumer selects items of value to them, leaving those

of low value and quality behind. This is similar to the sorting system that occurs in the Global North (Abimbola, 2012; Brooks, 2012; Arenas et al., 2015).

In the end, only those items that nobody wants due to their poor quality or being unfit for purpose are left behind. Such items are usually torn, not well sewn, not made from durable fabric, or have lost their original colour due to washing. During the interviews, many buyers also expressed their frustration about why very poor-quality used clothing items are shipped to Nigeria as second-hand clothing. One such buyer is Tishe, who said,

They should not come and add to our problems in the name of helping us to cover our nakedness. When you are bringing clothes that you know are dangerous to our health, and with poor resources and human health, you are not helping us. You are compounding our problems.
(Tishe, buyer)

In his comment above, Tishe linked poor-quality imported used clothing items to a health risk. Tishe sums up why shipping such poor-quality used clothing items to Nigeria is seen by informants as exacerbating existing health and infrastructure challenges in the pretext of helping (e.g., Hansen, 2004). Tishe's argument about the presence of poor quality or low-grade used clothing in the bales that end up in Nigeria appears to support the dumping argument of diverting unwanted used clothing from landfills in the Global North to other landfills in the Global South (Bick et al., 2018; Coventry, 2019; Crang et al., 2013; DeVoy et al., 2021; Hansen & Le Zotte, 2019a; Kinabo, 2004; Kabanda, 2016; Wetengere, 2018; Whyte, 2020). Notably, two factors may exacerbate this situation, including the presence of poor-quality used clothing that ends up in Nigeria. First, none of the sellers in the current study purchase goods directly from the UK sellers (as mentioned in Section 4.7.1, Table 4-3). Not even Sade, whose family enjoy a good trade relationship with their suppliers. Second, the importation of second-hand clothing is currently banned in Nigeria. The implication of this ban is that used clothing items are routed through neighbouring countries, such as the Republic of Benin (Abimbola, 2012; Areo & Areo, 2015). Moreover, due to the sorting process explained earlier, it is highly likely that the higher-quality items will be retained in Cotonou for local

consumption in the Benin Republic, while the rest will be pushed further down the value chain. This multiple-stage sorting process explains the frustration expressed by some informants, such as Tishe, earlier, and the reason Yetunde ended up with torn and faded second-hand clothing items. Furthermore, the ban on used clothing importation in Nigeria results in a lack of institutions, infrastructure, or a framework for determining quality, as well as a lack of clear guidance on the quality that can be imported or how to engage with imported used clothing. Again, referring back to Tishe's earlier comment, shipping poor-quality used clothing to destinations without an adequate system of institutions, infrastructure, framework, or quality guidelines appears to make Hansen's (2004) question of helping or hindering more pertinent. More importantly, it further exacerbates the fears and concerns of buyer informants about the risks they face when purchasing imported second-hand clothing from the UK.

We learn from the above that second-hand clothing consumers in Nigeria fear that the previous users of second-hand clothing may have left behind pieces of themselves in the clothing items, including infections. This fear is exacerbated by their lack of knowledge about the social processes that transform used clothing from rubbish to the durable category in the UK. Neither are they certain of the journeys that the used clothing items take to the Global South, nor do they know what is responsible for the odour that accompanies imported second-hand clothing from the UK. This fear and uncertainty are further reinforced by the existence of very poor quality clothing amongst those shipped to them as second-hand. Despite these uncertainties and concerns, however, buyer informants mentioned that they are not discouraged from consuming these imported used clothing items. Rather, drawn in by the benefits of affordability and quality, they enact divestment rituals to manage the meaningful and undesirable properties in these clothing items. The next section discusses how they handle these imported used clothing items to address these fears and uncertainties.

5.2.2. Managing Meanings in Other People's Used Clothing

Extant theorising on divestment during the reacquisition of used objects suggests that the objects' previous users would manage the meanings they have imbued in the objects through their use. They would wash, iron, fold, and pin similar items of clothing together. They enact these divestment rituals to remove private

meanings and to add public meanings. They believe these rituals are critical to recommodify and transform the used objects into desirable marketplace commodities (Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005; Roster, 2014). New acquirers of used objects would also perform the exact same or similar rituals to do the opposite, i.e., to remove public meanings and add private meanings. The buyer informants in the current study engage in similar rituals when reacquiring imported second-hand clothing. Specifically, they wash, disinfect and deodourise these clothing items before the first use as will be discussed below.

5.2.2.1 Managing Meanings: Washing and Disinfecting

The first point of identity management through imported second-hand clothing is during re-acquisition. The lived experiences of *all* the buyer informants in the current study show that they wash imported second-hand clothing before the first use. As noted in Seyi's earlier experience with his wife, avoiding infections is one of the top concerns here. According to Seyi,

we usually wash it, sometimes we put disinfectant. (Seyi, buyer)

Seyi further explained during the interview that this was the only time his wife had worn an item of imported second-hand clothing before washing and disinfecting it. They always wash to remove the wrinkles that come with the clothing items, as they are often squeezed into a single bale. However, the incident served to reinforce their belief about the risk of exposure to infection from untreated, imported second-hand clothing. For all other buyer informants, such as Bunmi and Tobi from earlier, who have not encountered any infections, washing and disinfecting are critical to preventing such an incident. For example, when asked why she washes imported second-hand clothing before the first use, Fiye said

Naturally, I will go for clothing that still has tags on them, I still find some that have tags on them that have not been worn before. But the fact that they were all packed together with those that had been worn before is also a source of concern. (Fiye, buyer)

According to Fiye, even if she receives second-hand clothing items that have not been worn before, she believes that packing these seemingly new items with previously worn ones makes them contaminated. She feared that any contaminant in the used ones could easily transfer onto the seemingly new ones. As such, in addition to washing imported second-hand clothing, buyer informants in Nigeria also disinfect them before the first use. Fiye continues

I make sure I disinfect them, I make sure I spread them in hot scorching sun, believing that that will kill the germ [...] I try to soak them with my detergent and my disinfectant overnight and wash them, then rinse thoroughly, I rinse them thoroughly. (Fiye, buyer)

In the above comments, Fiye would wash and disinfect second-hand clothing before the first use. We know that washing recommodifies and resingularises the used clothing items. However, beyond recommodification, disinfecting and sunning by Fiye removes any chance of possible contamination that a previous user may have introduced to the clothing items. Disinfecting, as described in Fiye's comments, as well as in those of other buyer informants, thus represents an additional layer of protection from the risk of contamination that clothing items may have been exposed to due to previous use and during prolonged travel.

Washing imported second-hand clothing before first use is the buyer informants' first step at re-decommodifying, re-singularising and re-sacralising to re-possess these used clothing items (cf. Kopytoff, 1986; Corbett & Denegri-Knott, 2020) for their identity management. Washing begins the social process of making the used clothing items truly their own. At a minimum, washing to remove wrinkles from clothing items means they can disconnect the items from their marketplace conditions and bring them into their home space. Again, as noted earlier, the buyer informants have no idea of the social processes that transform used clothing from the rubbish to the durable category in the UK. In addition to washing to make the imported used clothing items truly their own, they also wash and disinfect during the re-acquisition of second-hand clothing to address all three critical concerns identified earlier. They wash and disinfect to overcome the fears and uncertainties regarding what is left behind in the clothing items. They wash and disinfect to

avoid any risk of infection from whatever the clothing items may have been exposed to, due to prolonged travel to the Global South and the fact that poor-quality clothing items are often shipped alongside good-quality items.

From the above, there is washing to remove old meanings and add new ones; to re-sacralise and make the used clothing truly theirs. Then there is thorough cleansing, i.e., washing and disinfecting, to overcome the risk of exposure to infection. Both represent additional social processes and practices that further categorise imported second-hand clothing as durable. However, and more importantly, beyond re-decommodification, new users enact divestment rituals to avoid coming into contact with any negative valence that the previous owner or user may have left behind in used objects. Although they may enact similar set or divestment rituals as the disposer, the ultimate goal for a re-acquirer of used possessions aligns more with avoiding contamination. This is because contamination also constitutes a threat to consumers' ontological security and thus a grave source of concern (Greenberg et al., 1997; Sheldon & Kasser, 2008; Thompson et al., 2018). Dealing with such threats as those posed by the fear of contamination also activates consumers to rework "new obdurate materiality that would support their routines and a return to feeling secure and safe" (Phipps & Ozanne, 2017, 373).

It is, however, important to note that these thorough cleansing rituals enacted by used clothing re-acquirers for their safety and to maintain known routines (e.g. Phipps & Ozanne, 2017; Thompson et al., 2018) would not have been necessary if they were buying new clothing. However, washing and disinfecting are only part of the divestment rituals that informants enact before their first use of imported second-hand clothing, as the next section shows.

5.2.2.2 Managing Meanings: Deodourising

As found in the previous section, one other concern that informants have is the odour of imported second-hand clothing. According to Tobi for instance,

[...] Second-hand clothing has this particular smell and if you do not wash them and disinfect (well, not necessarily disinfect) at least wash them to get rid of part of that odour and then probably buy perfume and spray them, [...]

so to as much as possible colour it and not make it obvious that you are wearing second-hand clothing. (Tobi, buyer).

Tobi's concern about odour is one that he and other informants cannot ignore. In the above comment, Tobi mentions the signature odour as a flier to announce to everyone around that you are wearing imported second-hand clothing. In another part of the interview with Tobi, he wonders whether the odour is from preservatives used during the transportation of second-hand clothing over a wide space and time. He has always deodourised imported second-hand clothing before its first use, dating back to his very early encounters with second-hand clothing when he went to live with his uncle as a child. Whereas Tobi would spray on the deodorant after wearing the clothes, other buyer informants like Fiye have a different approach. According to her,

[...] then there is this perfume, liquid perfume that I use [...] because I still feel that I perceive the smell of that second-hand in them when I wear them. [...] So, after washing, I soak them with that liquid too, and that liquid, the fragrance would overshadow the fragrance of the second-hand, peculiar smell. (Fiye, buyer)

The experience described by Fiye in the above comment is another method of deodourising. Unlike Tobi, Fiye would first wash with disinfectant to avoid contamination, then soak the clothing in liquid deodorant overnight to suppress the odour. This is also despite her admitting earlier that she usually goes for top-grade second-hand clothing that may not have been worn before. Although the items may not have been worn before, the fact that they were in the same bale as the poor-quality ones is of concern to her.

Buyer informants were asked whether the smell is found repugnant or off-putting. They were also asked to explain what it is about the odour that makes them concerned. Except for Kunle, who mentioned that he found the odour irritating and hard to handle in his very early encounters with imported second-hand clothing, the general opinion is that the odour is neither repugnant nor off-putting. However, like Tobi, buyer informants believe that the peculiarity of the

odour and the fact that it is unique to imported used clothing is like announcing the source of their clothing everywhere they wear it. For this reason of not wanting to unnecessarily announce the source of their clothing, buyer informants would introduce their own deodourant of choice to the items of clothing before wearing them for the first time. Using their own fragrance of choice on imported second-hand clothing also allows them to remove the second handedness from the items. It allows them to remove the old/public meanings and add new/private meanings (Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005) and claim them for themselves (McCracken, 1986).

Buyer informants also deodourise imported used clothing to transform the from re-commodified objects to re-sacralised possessions. In a way, this also represents additional practice to further ground the repossessed imported second-hand clothing in the durable category. This is in addition to washing and disinfecting. Although the concern about odour stems from the same uncertainties surrounding prolonged travel (as mentioned in the previous section), washing and disinfecting are not believed to be sufficient to address this third concern about odour. Rather, introducing their own preferred fragrance not only transforms the public to private meaning but it also allows them to establish who they are and who they are not (Belk, 1988; 2014; Tuan, 1980; Roster, 2014). The divestment rituals that informants enact when acquiring used clothing are summarised in Table 5-2 below.

Table 5-2: Identity Management: who they are: Divestment rituals at the acquisition of used clothing in Nigeria			
Ritual Dimension	Description	Study Example	
		Event	Actual behaviour
Divestment	Consumption rituals enacted to erase old meanings from marketplace objects	Buying imported second-hand clothing	- Washing - Disinfecting
	Consumption rituals enacted to add new meanings to marketplace objects		- Deodourising

To conclude, it is essential to clarify a few points here. First buyer informants wash imported second-hand clothing to deactivate, redefine and transform them into sacralised transcendental vehicles (cf. Kopytoff, 1986; Corbett & Denegri-Knott, 2020) for their identity management. Such transformation helps them claim the imported second-hand clothing for themselves and establish who they are, distinct from who they are not. This is critical to their identity as the practice of introducing the fragrance of choice to overshadow the second-hand odour.

Second, the washing done to address the uncertainties surrounding the previous lives of imported second-hand clothing in Nigeria is distinct from the normal washing that occurs during temporary divestment through “transition-place” rituals (Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005, p. 817). Neither is this the same as the washing done while clothing is kept out of sight, awaiting further original intended use (Winakor 1969; Jacoby et al., 1977). As many buyer informants mentioned, thorough cleansing, i.e., washing and disinfecting of imported second-hand clothing before the first use, represents a transcendental level of cleaning. After this initial cleansing, subsequent washing is done according to their normal washing routine for all clothing they own.

Overall, the divestment rituals that buyer informants describe in thoroughly washing, disinfecting and deodourising imported second-hand clothing before the first use (Table 5-2) align with divestment rituals at the re-acquisition of a previously owned/used consumption item from McCracken (1986) to Assima et al. (2023) (cf. Frazer, 1890/1935; Richins, 1994; Belk, 1988; Fernandez & Lastovicka, 2011; Campbell et al., 2020). Importantly, such practices of washing, disinfecting and deodourising are consistent with extant theorising of divestment rituals as enactments to reconfigure and transfer meaning in marketplace objects. Moreover, they extend the social processes and practices that further categorise imported second-hand clothing as durable, in line with the rubbish theory.

The discussion above relates to consumption behaviour at the beginning of their encounters with imported second-hand clothing. The next sections discuss the encounters at the end of the clothing’s purposeful lives.

5.3 Second-Hand Clothing Disposition in Nigeria

This section presents an analysis of the buyer informants' responses to the question of what makes imported second-hand clothing become unwanted and what they do with second-hand clothing when they consider it no longer suitable for their purposes. Their responses are presented in the following discussion, beginning with the reasons why buyer informants would dispose of imported second-hand clothing.

5.3.1 Reasons for disposing of imported second-hand clothing in Nigeria

When it comes to disposing of used clothing in Nigeria, the question of why an item is being disposed of determines where it goes or what becomes of it. For example, in her response to why she would dispose of her items of clothing, Sola said:

If I have worn it several times and then it is already getting faded, [...] It all depends on how bad it is. [...] And then, if I have worn it and it is really bad, I just trash it out or turn it to rag or something in the house to clean things (Sola, buyer).

Sola's comment about wear and tear is reflected in the literature as the disposal of clothing due to factors intrinsic to the item (Jacoby et al., 1977; Laitala, 2014; Laitala, Boks, & Klepp, 2015; WRAP, 2017b). This is common to other buyer informants. Another reason for disposing of used clothing is given by Bunmi, who said:

when I notice I've outgrown these clothes. Maybe I got bigger at some point, and I need to get some more.

Here, Bunmi will dispose of her clothing due to Jacoby et al.'s (1977) psychological reasons, i.e., her personality (see also Laitala, 2014). Buyer informants would dispose of their used clothing items due to changes in the item of clothing (e.g., Sola), changes in the user (e.g., Bunmi), or both (cf. Anguelov, 2015; Belk, 1988; Chavero, 2017; Dwyer, 2010; House of Commons, 2019; Kleine et al., 1995; Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005; Lee et al., 2013; Phillips & Sego, 2011; WRAP, 2012,

2017, 2017b). For example, Chucks, another buyer who shared stories similar to both Sola and Bunmi, would also dispose of used clothing for reasons extrinsic to the item. However, Chucks would rely on the judgement of friends when it comes to disposing of his unwanted clothing. According to him,

if I enquire from someone ‘Please can this cloth still be used by someone, or can’t it be used or something like that?’ Their opinion will determine whether I should trash it or I should give it out. If their opinion is that it is not good again to give to anybody, just trash it, I would do that [...] getting advice from people will always play a role [...] even if I just bought it new, I may decide to discard it [...] (Chucks, buyer).

As seen in his comment above, Chuck’s decision could be extrinsic to either himself or the items of clothing. Chucks is also the only buyer informant who expressed a disposition behaviour close to ultra-fast fashion and throwaway. As can be seen in his comments, such as “even if I just bought it new”, Chucks expressed throwaway behaviour as observed in Castellani et al. (2015), Chavero (2017), Payne & Binotto (2017) and Weber, Lynes, & Young (2017). He would dispose of recently acquired clothing based on advice from his friends. Like Chucks, there are also those like Kunle who leave second-hand clothing disposition decision to his wife. The above comment suggests that the decisions regarding the disposition of imported second-hand clothing items that have been worn on their bodies are made consciously and thoughtfully by buyer informants, and often with the involvement of other important people in their lives. More importantly, buyer informants use their disposition of imported second-hand clothing to manage their identity, especially in establishing who they are not (Tuan, 1980; Belk, 1988; 2014; Roster, 2014). Earlier in this chapter (Section 5.2.1.3), certain quality criteria were established for imported second-hand clothing. A good quality second-hand clothing item is durable, well-sewn and would retain its original colour even after multiple washes. It makes sense, thus, that in the above comments, buyer informants would dissociate themselves from any items that have begun to show deviations from the quality criteria. This is for a situation intrinsic to the clothing item. They

would equally dissociate themselves from items of imported second-hand clothing that no longer reflect or agree with how they choose to use or define their bodies (Belk, 2014).

It is worth reiterating here that, as observed in section 2.7, the clothing disposal literature in Nigeria is significantly focused on household solid waste management. However, the current study uncovers both temporary and permanent disposition behaviour for imported second-hand clothing in Nigeria. The question then is where do unwanted clothing items that are not in active use go, what do they do with them and what rituals are enacted at this state of their temporary disposition?

5.3.2 Identity Management through Temporary Disposition: who they are not

According to the lived experiences shared by buyer informants in the current study, items of clothing that are not in active use for their original purpose are stored in an out-of-sight location in the house or “transition-place” (Lastovicka & Fernandez (2005, 817). Some of these clothing items get to be used for their original purpose or other purposes (Jacoby et al., 1977; Laitala, 2014; Winakor, 1969). Buyer informants mostly convert such items into rags, as exemplified by these comments below from Tobi and Zee, respectively.

What we would do is have old clothes that we don't wear again to clean our floors or wash our cars (Tobi, buyer).

In Nigeria, we are categorical in doing things. Before you discard finally you first turn it into a rag, then that is more or less the end of its life cycle (Zee, buyer).

The experiences shared by Tobi and Zee in the above comments are consistent with keeping (Laitala, 2014) or Winakor's (1969) movement of unwanted clothing between active and inactive storage. Items kept in this way would be repurposed for cleaning around the house (Degenstein et al., 2021). It is important to observe here that the ragging experiences shared by the buyer informants in the study blur the line between keeping and temporary disposition (Jacoby et al., 1977; Laitala, 2014; Winakor, 1969). As seen in Winakor's (1969) Clothing Consumption Process (Figure 2-2), clothing items that the owner has no intention of using for their original purpose can be repurposed. What Tobi and Zee described above is consistent with repurposing or what Türe (2014) described as converting, brutal use and gradual garbaging (section 2.7.1). Both buyer informants would use unwanted clothing until it becomes rags as a way of gradually maximising value from it on its way down, becoming discarded. This practice of gradual garbaging or brutal use appears to be a rational explanation for the scarcity of literature on temporary clothing disposition in Nigeria.



Figure 5-4: Used imported second-hand clothing converted to rag.

Figure 5-4 shows two images of second-hand clothing converted to rags by two informants, Bunmi and Tunbo, respectively. Both images shed more light on what the informants mean by ragging second-hand clothing that is no longer wanted for wearing. As seen in the images, these clothing items have crossed the boundary of wearable clothing and are gradually heading towards the garbage. Such are the clothing items that consumers have designated as “no longer me” (Kleine et al., 1995, 334).

Converting unwanted clothing for cleaning in the above comments, thus also represents an initial boundary-crossing element of dispossession before eventual divestment (Roster, 2001; 2014). In her 2001 paper, Roster examined dispossession as a process going from physical to psychological and emotional severance. She found that three factors - i.e., distancing, critical events, and value assessments - precede actual disengagement of possessions. The decision by buyer informants to no longer wear an item of clothing is at the boundary between Roster's value assessment and the beginning of physical severance. At this point, such items of clothing have crossed the value assessment boundary (Roster, 2001; 2014). Once a clothing item crosses this boundary and begins the final journey towards eventual disengagement, every successive use - e.g., as rag - erases the meanings that they attach to the possessions, thus making it easier for them to emotionally disengage with the possession (see also Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005). Part of the disengagement is to put them in a transition-place and enact transition-place rituals (Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005). According to Lastovicka & Fernandez (2005), transition-place rituals are enacted to erode private meanings from a possession as it crosses the private-public boundary from "me" into becoming "not me" (817). Evident from the comments about ragging is a further demonstration of using imported second-hand clothing as a means of managing their identity in establishing who they are not. This begins with the value judgement that they make to no longer use the items of clothing on their bodies.

Overall, like the consumers in previous studies (e.g., Roster, 2001; 2014; Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005), buyer informants engage in transition place rituals beginning with the "symbolic behaviour signifying the detachment of the individual or group either from an earlier fixed point in the social structure, from a set of cultural conditions [...] or from both." (Turner, 1969, p. 94; Turner et al., 2017). This initial detachment is crucial in easing the process of complete disengagement from their possessions and in erasing the private meanings associated with them. They do this by temporarily storing them in inactive storage and dispensing them for less important, non-body-wearing applications, such as conversion into rag for cleaning and similar uses (see Table 5-3).

Table 5-3 Transition-place Rituals during Temporary Clothing Disposition in Nigeria			
Ritual Dimension	Description	Study Example	
		Event	Actual behaviour
Divestment/transition place rituals	Divestment rituals enacted to erode private meanings from a possession, as a private-public boundary crossing process, to ease the complete disengagement from possessions	Temporary disposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keeping in active and inactive storage - Dispensing as rag - Convert for other uses.

It is instructive to observe here that although the transition place rituals described above tend to resonate with temporary disposition in extant theorising, they are not entirely the same. Whereas clothing items involved in access-based consumption do get to be worn on bodies, the items in the examples above are no longer to be worn on the bodies of either their original owner or anyone else. The temporality they share with those in extant theorising is essentially as long as they have not been permanently disposed of. These rituals involve items that are converted into rags and those kept in inactive storage before being converted and eventually permanently disposed of, as discussed in the next sections.

5.3.3 Identity Management through Permanent Disposition: who they are not
This section advances ongoing findings about how buyer informants use their used clothing disposition to manage their identity, i.e., to establish who they are not. They shared experiences of permanent second-hand clothing disposition to family and familiar beneficiaries, as well as strangers. Whereas they are more comfortable with the former, they have grave concerns about dealing with the latter. These are discussed in detail in the subsequent section, beginning with gifting.

5.3.3.1 Gifting

In the lived experiences shared with the researcher, buyer informants would often gift second-hand clothing items that are still wearable but that they no longer want. Gifting takes two further pathways - i.e., handing down and handing out.

Buyer informants hand down used clothing directly to younger siblings, other family members (cf. Jacoby et al., 1977; Wai Yee et al., 2016; WRAP, 2018).

Typical examples of handing down are provided by Bunmi and Fiye, who give their used imported second-hand clothing to their younger siblings:

So, everybody will like his or her siblings more, so I make sure I give them the best. Mostly, I don't really give friends my clothes but, I give them more to my siblings, I give them the best. [...] most of these clothes have been of good quality that you can easily pass on to your younger ones. (Bunmi, buyer)

For me, if the clothing is mine, I have a lot of younger ones that I usually do a form of check. [...] There are a lot of people around me that need clothing.

Bunmi is one of the buyer informants in the current study whose preference is to hand down to her siblings. She keeps their used clothing within her family, and it usually goes to younger family members. Fiye would also pass on her used clothing to her younger ones. In another part of the interview, Fiye also described how her older children's used clothing items are passed on to her younger children. However, unlike Bunmi, Fiye also hands out used clothing to help neighbours and other familiar beneficiaries. According to Fiye,

In fact, my neighbours here where I live, I try to give the children. They are always scantily dressed so when I dispose of these clothes and I give them to the children, I end up seeing the clothes on their parents, their mother you know, for you to know how bad things are [...] Clothes that [my children] have outgrown, you know children are growing. We have some people in my parents' in-laws area that my children are always giving their clothes to. Whether sewn ones, whether new or second-hand clothes. When they have outgrown them, they package and they

give to the needy; shoes, bags, and items like that, we dispose of like that (Fiye, buyer)

In this comment, Fiye's family normally hand out clothing to neighbours far and near. She would give her family's used clothing to her neighbour's children based on her assessment that they needed help with their clothing needs. The fact that the clothing items end up on the parents shows that those families to whom she gives her family's used clothing are truly in need. Handing out in this way is direct to the needy, localised and meets real needs. Her example here resonates with those in (cf. Cruz-Cárdenas & del Val Núñez, 2016; Diop & Shaw, 2018; Diop & Shaw, 2018; Cruz-Cárdenas & Arévalo-Chávez, 2018; Hernandez-Curry, 2018). In these examples, in Ecuador and Papua New Guinea, used clothing handouts go directly to local people in need. Fiye's practice of handing out used clothing to neighbours far away is similar to Tobi, who said

Mostly, what I do when I think I have gotten tired of second-hand clothes, that are not torn yet is I also just pass them down to the less privileged in my society. [...] Most times it is done privately. [...] what I just do is I look for maybe my mechanics that I think are quite younger to me or my bricklayer or somebody I feel in the society, who will still appreciate those kinds of clothes, and I just give it to them (Tobi, buyer)

Again, Tobi's awareness that the beneficiaries will appreciate the used clothing is critical to his decision about who receives his second-hand clothing. Further, whereas Bunmi may be seen as reciprocating a good deed she probably may have benefitted from, Fiye and Tobi's handing out are out of their concern for others like those in Diop & Shaw (2018), Joung & Park-Poaps (2013), Lee et al. (2013) and Shim (1995) to mention a few.

From their narratives, buyer informants hand down used clothing directly to family members and familiar neighbours. In contrast, they hand out to beneficiaries outside those they categorise as neighbours and complete strangers. The beneficiaries of Tobi's handouts are usually artisans who work with him on

repairing his car and on his building construction projects. Localisation of clothing reuse is important because we know that externalisation of clothing reuse increases the items' carbon footprint, with a tendency of a similar impact as fashion's manufacturing value chain (e.g. Niinimäki et al., 2020). Handing down used clothing to family members or handing it out to local beneficiaries also alleviates the fears, anxieties, and uncertainties surrounding the previous lives of imported second-hand clothing in Nigeria. Importantly, although buyer informants tend to give altruistically, handing out to familiar beneficiaries may not be completely void of the gift politics that accompany gift giving (Nwafor, 2013; Liu et al., 2024; section 3.3.2). For example, handing out used clothing in this way can be seen as a means of reaffirming existing relationships between Fiye and her neighbours, as well as between Tobi and his gift recipients.

There is also evidence of ritual manifestations in the first disposition pathways discussed above. As summarised in Table 5-4 below, the values and meaningful properties in the used clothing are passed on to the beneficiaries. Both Fiye and Tobi, who gave to beneficiaries outside their family, mentioned that these beneficiaries are in a lower socioeconomic class than themselves. An implication of this is that such handing out could be an extension of their self-identity as a benefactor and to exert certain interpersonal influence (Price et al., 2000) and symbolic properties (McCracken, 1986) on the receiver. The fact that these clothing items are used and unwanted by these buyer informants is in itself a statement about the socioeconomic disparity that places them above the receivers. Besides, Tobi could be seen as suggesting their dressing expectations from the recipients (cf. McCracken, 1986; Price et al., 2000). Although these are not new possessions, the rituals of selecting, matching, and presenting the gift to the recipient are evident. Also evident is the effort to determine appropriateness (Belk, 2010). In line with creating the perfect gift (Belk, 1996), Fiye was guided by her understanding of her neighbours' socioeconomic situation, much as Tobi was guided by those of his recipients (Assima et al. 2023). Furthermore, in selecting the specific used clothing that is given to whom, the timing and place of the giving, Tobi and Fiye will have been guided by socially assigned values and meanings. For instance, when selecting what to give to whom, Tobi would consider the level of use of the item and match it with certain attributes in the mechanic

to whom it is given. This evidently further underscores the significance of handing out used clothing as a critical ritual in identity management.

Table 5-4: Exchange rituals of handing down and handing out used clothing in Nigeria			
Ritual Dimension	Description	Example	
		Events	Actual behaviour
Exchange	Consumption rituals enacted to direct goods from one individual or group to another	Handing down used clothing to family/neighbours	- Selecting/Matching - Presenting
		Handing out used clothing to strangers	- Washing/disinfecting - Displaying/presenting

Apart from the examples above where used clothing is given to familiar beneficiaries, buyer informants also hand out used clothing permanently to strangers. According to Tobi, for instance,

there is also sometimes the option of using the religious platforms that we have. Maybe clothes that you think can still be worn by people, you can take it to a church, donate it to the welfare department of the church. They get them cleaned up and then display them for people who want them to come to pick them up. [...] most of the ones I know what they do is, sometimes, there are events they have. They can have, maybe a welfare program where they will display the clothes [...] Most of the time, they just give it out in gatherings like that or take them to orphanages, where they also just donate them and then give them away without any costs. (Tobi, buyer)

Tobi's comment is about how most churches and other organisations handle donated clothing. They would wash and iron these items, then display them during church events for members of the church and the general public to select as they chose. When asked about why they clean before handing out, Tobi's response is similar to Ade's:

They wash and disinfect because they don't know - you that is dropping too - they don't know your health status.

And they cannot, because you want to help somebody, add to his problem. (Ade, buyer)

We learn from the above that handing out is also done through the church. As Ade mentioned above, there is some apprehension that these clothing items may contain some contaminants from their previous owners (Belk, 1988; Newman et al., 2011; Pugh, 2020; Rachman, 2004; Rozin et al., 1986, 1999; Rozin & Fallon, 1987; Yan et al., 2015). For the same reason that informants wash and disinfect before first use to prevent contact with contaminants in imported used clothing, the church also cleanses the donated clothing items before distributing them to beneficiaries.

Similar rituals to those described above during direct handing out are also observed in cases of handing out through the church. However, the examples involving the church require additional rituals, including washing and disinfecting, as with the divestment rituals at re-acquisition, but without deodourising. Notably, the practice of handing out as described by buyer informants shares commonalities with clothing donation in the extant literature. Used clothing items are given altruistically by buyer informants, thus providing opportunities for clothing reuse. However, unlike clothing donation in the UK, buyer informants who use this pathway - such as Tobi, Fiye, Kunle (through his wife), and Ade - mentioned doing so through religious organisations, specifically churches. This is in further contrast to those in the Global North, where between 57% and 89% of clothing donations are channelled through charity organisations (WRAP, 2017a; Diop & Shaw, 2018). As such, handing out as described here fits more with gifting than with donation. Overall, buyer informants also utilise the above permanent clothing disposition pathways to establish their identity, as well as navigate and negotiate their roles and relationships with others in society.

5.3.4 Identity Management through Permanent Disposition: who they are not willing to become

We learn from the foregoing that the clothing disposition behaviour of the buyer informants in the current study is patterned along the lines of whether the items are still wearable or not, and the level of attachment and meanings that people

attach to them. This determines whether they are given to family members, familiar beneficiaries, or distributed through the church to strangers. We also learn that washing and disinfecting are important for the same reason they are done to manage meaning during the re-acquisition of used clothing by the informants. They cleanse to prevent new users from encountering what they may have left behind in these clothing items.

However, there appear to be other interesting angles to the washing and disinfecting of used clothing that goes to strangers through the church. According to buyer informants who go through the church, handing out used clothing to strangers comes with some risks. Buyer informants explained this risk as involving strangers having ulteriorly motivated access to their essence that permeates their used clothing. Their definition of strangers is summarised by Fiye (buyer) as seen in the phrases “people we may not know” and “areas that we don’t know”. Such definitions are sharply contrasting to how they describe family members to whom they hand down their used clothing.

Consider the following comments by Zee and Kunle, respectively.

You know once you wear a cloth, your sweat would have been accustomed to it and your scent and everything and due to the insecurity in the land, people want to get rich quickly and they can use anything for rituals. There was a time they were using female pants for rituals. (Zee, buyer)

Well, I grew up with a lot of mentalities when I was a young guy, you know. People using your clothes for all kinds of voodoo; all kinds of witchcraft, you know. I grew up with that mentality because we live in a very evil society, and we don’t really know who is who. (Kunle, buyer)

In the above comments, buyer informants express anxiety about strangers accessing their used clothing. By ‘people’s sweat and scent’ in their used clothing, Zee was referring to essence (Frazer, 1891; Meigs, 1978; Rozin et al., 1986;

Gelman, 2003; Newman et al., 2011; Yan et al., 2015; Hingston et al., 2017; Lagerspetz, 2018; Carrington & Ozanne, 2022). The mentality to which Kunle and indeed all of them referred is also documented in recent studies about money-making rituals and other similar fetish practices like those recorded in chapter 3, section 3.4.2. Zee and Kunle's fears in the above comments are grounded in the Otnes et al.'s (2018) explaining EBs. Their fears are based on explaining EBs that success can be achieved through supernatural powers, magic and ritual practices (Moore & Sanders, 2003). Some of the occultic practices stemming from these beliefs have recently surged, with many stories of money-making rituals. Particular, some of these ritualists have specifically sought used clothing worn close to the body, including female underwear and used sanitary wear. Most of these are obtained from refuse dump sites (Nwaka, 2020, 71). All these items and rites are offered to specific spirits and deities in return for prosperity. The fact that ritualists forage for used clothing in dumpsites for money-making rituals makes handing out used clothing to strangers as risky as throwing them in the bin. Zee and Kunle's belief surrounding the above ritual practices is also explicated in consumer research, building on Frazer that through magic sympathy, the essence in a used possession can be assessed to manipulate the previous user of the possession (Chapter 3, Section 3.4.2).

Zee and Kunle's fears are equally shared by other buyer informants, Chucks and Bunmi also said:

You know we are in Africa and many things are seen to be more spiritual than physical. I've seen people giving testimonies of how they saw people going to pick underwear from bins and all that and using it for some diabolic reasons, so that might be part of the reasons why I don't trash or give out underwear. (Chucks, buyer)

Again, Chucks' comment above lends credence to the rituals and occult practices in the extant literature (e.g., Nwaka, 2020; Onyegbula, 2018; Salihu et al., 2019). Corroborating Chucks, Bunmi also expressed the same fear of the risk of throwing used clothing, especially those worn closest to the body, in the bin. According to her

Here in Nigeria, we have a lot of bad people that involve themselves in ritualism [...] because they go about, these wicked people go about, they check the bins, they check whatever you have there. So, they now seeing your clothes there, they can keep it, give it to these herbalists in making their various wicked kinds of stuff. So, it won't be really nice to dispose of them like that. (Bunmi, buyer).

Like Zee and Kunle earlier, Chucks and Bunmi in the above comments share a common fear that their essence that permeates their used clothing can be assessed to cause them harm. The fact that these possessions have been worn close to their body further complicates their anxiety as expressed in the above comments. The image in Figure 5-5 below is an undergarment sent by Bunmi. According to her, if thrown in the bin, this is a potential item for scavengers to find.



Figure 5-5: Used second-hand clothing

To reiterate, the main concern for these informants is their fear that their essence or aura, which permeates their clothing items, may become accessible to complete strangers with ulterior motives. Their fears reveal that, although these used clothes may be unwanted due to age, wear, and tear, they are nevertheless meaningful and valuable. Such meanings and values are socially ascribed and may thus be considered similar to those that transform rubbish into durable objects. As with the transient object becoming rubbish and later transformed into durable

objects, so are these used second-hand clothing that have been a part of the user's desired past (Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005). As can be seen in their comments, all four buyer informants above attach significance to their used clothing because these items have been a part of their desired past and now carry their essence.

The meaning and value in these items are sacrosanct much like those for which new users would pay a premium for used items that are believed to have been owned, used, or touched by celebrities or other individuals that they revere (Hingston et al., 2017; Nemeroff & Rozin, 1994; Newman & Dhar, 2014; Newman et al., 2011). Like the ones in extant theorising, their used clothing items are believed to be positively charged with their essence. Much like the good properties or energies in used items can be transferred to the new user - despite "the signs of the patina of age and the marks of use" (Pugh, 2020, 44) - the second-hand clothing buyers informants in the current study believe that their essence that permeates their used clothing is positively charged and this positive energy can be assessed through magic. However, unlike in extant theorising, the fears they express in the above comment are new. We know that previous users are willing to let strangers have access to their used possessions. This is, in fact, the logic behind trade in used objects, including the global trade in used clothing. We also know that new users desire the meanings associated with these used objects and would be willing to pay a premium for this access. We also know that the premium they pay is for them to be imbued with the positive properties of these used objects. What we do not know - a theoretical and knowledge question that the current study answers - is about reverse contagion. We do not know if, and to what extent do previous owners/users worry about any potential harm or detriment to themselves as a result of strangers accessing the non-material properties, the essence that they left behind in their used possessions.

In answering this question, the lived experience of the buyer informants in the current study shows grave concern about metaphysical harm to them resulting from access to their used clothing by ulteriorly motivated strangers. This is both a surprising and an interesting outcome in the current study. It is surprising because anxiety about strangers having access to previously used clothing contrasts with the logic of global second-hand economies (Hansen & Le Zotte, 2019a) and the global trade in second-hand clothing. Again, for clarity, global

trading in used clothing is based on the logic that clothing consumers do not mind their used clothing ending up in the hands of strangers (e.g. Arsel, 2010). It is both surprising and interesting that people who buy previously used clothing from strangers are anxious about strangers having access to their own used clothing. It is more interesting in that there is a pattern to their behaviour and established rituals both before and after the last purposeful use, which helps them deal with these anxieties. Their behaviour during both the re-acquisition and disposal of second-hand clothing is consistent with their unwillingness to allow contact with the private meanings or non-material properties that items of clothing retain from their previous users. This is more of a concern, especially if the previous users and the prospective users are strangers. In other words, while they manage their identity through the pathways they choose for their used clothing, they are conscious of who they are not willing to become. Essentially, they are unwilling to become victims of metaphysical harm that may come to them if strangers with ulterior motives get access to their used clothing items.

We have also seen that buyer informants find handing out used clothing items to strangers as risky as throwing them in the bin. Their decision to go through the church is thus influenced by their desire to avoid becoming victims of metaphysical harm that may result from strangers having access to their used clothing. Handing out through the church thus constitutes a safe practice of dealing with strangers, gaining access to their used clothing. This is the focus of the following sections.

5.4 Dealing with Anxieties Relating to Strangers Accessing Used Clothing

This section relates to how buyer informants in the current study overcome the fear of strangers accessing their used clothing. It is instructive to emphasise that the discussion going forward is underpinned by extant theorising that different rituals are enacted when previously owned objects go to strangers (McCracken, 1986; Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005; Roster, 2014). The discussion that follows is in two parts. The first part describes buyer informants' experiences regarding divestment practices and rituals that enable them to overcome the resistance to giving strangers access to their used clothing. The second part describes their experience with divestment practices and rituals that enable them to safely manage the meanings associated with their used second-hand clothing by intentionally destroying these items.

5.4.1 Divestment Rituals for Overcoming Metaphysical Harm

As can be seen in the preceding discussions, the anxieties that buyer informants described are metaphysical and transcendental in nature. Going through the church is how most buyer informants in the current study overcome their anxieties of ulteriorly motivated access to their used clothing and the resistance to helping strangers. According to Fiye

[...] oftentimes, the church will tell you don't worry. They pack them all together. You know, we have like a bank, cloth bank, they are packed together, they ensure that they are good, and they pray over them. They pray that we don't end up harming ourselves while trying to be helpful to other people (Fiye, buyer).

The assurance of protection that the church offers in Fiye's comment here is how she overcomes the resistance to handing out her used clothing to strangers. Given that the church receives these items of clothing free, it is in the church's interest that no harm comes to these do-gooders as a result of their good deed. As such, the church establishes routines to shield them from any possible metaphysical manipulations that may result from their good deed. They do this by praying over the items before releasing them to beneficiaries.

Whereas Tobi and Fiye's churches give out to random strangers, Ade's church donates used clothing to prison inmates. The church conducts prison evangelism every September and asks members to donate clothing items in wearable condition to be given to the prisons. When asked if he has no concerns about the strangers/prisoners having access to his clothing, he said:

The question you asked now is like when we were taking Holy Communion during COVID. You know we normally use one cup for Holy Communion. During covid era, people started agitating, no, we can't be taking Holy Communion with one single cup again. Let each person have his own cup. The Reverend was then saying 'Are you saying the God that has been protecting you all this while is no longer

there? Are you saying we have not been having diseases all this while that we have been using a single cup? So, now that we have this disease, that doesn't mean God is dead or is no longer listening to you'. So, it is the same thing as the cloth. You gave the cloth to the church; the clothes are given to the church [emphasis by Ade]. Before the church releases them, they must have been sanctified and because in your mind, you are giving it out with the plain mind, I believe nothing bad can come back to you. (Ade, buyer)

This more detailed story of sanctification before donation, shared by Ade in this comment, is similar to the one earlier by Fiye. Both of their comments capture the belief of informants who hand out their used clothing through the church. The fact that they consider strangers accessing their used clothing as very risky and that they then go ahead to donate to strangers through the church shows how strongly they believe in the sanctification process by the church. According to Ade, sanctifying the donated items aligns with the church's belief system and the good intention with which the items are handed out.

The comment "they ensure that they are good" by Fiye amplifies an earlier one by Tobi. In another comment, Tobi explained that the church where he donates his used second-hand clothing would clean them up before giving them out to new users. Again, like Tobi, Ade's church will also engage the services of commercial dry cleaners to wash and repackage them to make them attractive. This is similar to what divesting consumers in the extant literature engage in before selling or donating their used clothing (e.g. Douglas, 1966). This cleansing by the church before releasing donated clothing to beneficiaries serves a dual purpose. As noted earlier, with the church protecting the buyer informants from metaphysical harm, it is also in the interest of the church that no harm comes to the beneficiaries. This is because, according to Tobi and Fiye, the church utilises these donations to assist its beneficiaries in society. Again, as Ade pointed out in explaining his earlier comment about evangelism, the church also used the donations as a means of endearing the hearts of the inmates to their messages. It is thus in the church's

interest to protect both benefactors and beneficiaries from any form of harm, whether pathogenic or metaphysical.

Washing and dry cleaning to prevent person-to-person contamination, to which Tobi, Fiye and Ade refer - before handing out through the church - only serves to prevent pathogenic contamination (McCracken, 1986; Nemeroff & Rozin, 1994). It only removes physical traces and private meanings invested by the previous user while adding new public meanings to the used clothing items. This type of cleaning is done “to avoid figuratively washing one’s dirty linen in public.” However, as evident from the experience of buyer informants who hand out through the church, they have graver concerns than the embarrassment of washing their dirty linens in public. They believe that normal cleaning does not remove the essence that they have left behind in their used clothing. Hence, the sanctification through prayers in the church. It is important to note that although the religiosity of the buyer informants is not of critical interest to the researcher, their comments show a strong belief in the church and the efficacy of prayers.

As seen in the comments above and supported by extant theorising on magic sympathy (Hingston et al., 2017; Nemeroff & Rozin, 1994; Newman & Dhar, 2014; Newman et al., 2011), buyer informants in the current study believe that a transcendental bond is formed permanently between them and their used clothing. Again, based on their sociocultural and historical realities, they believe that this bond can be exploited to cause them harm. These sociocultural and contemporary experiences relating to Otnes et al.’s (2018) Explaining EBs of fatalism and miracles enable them to make sense of both their immediate worlds and those they have yet to experience. Their awareness of the possibilities of harm through ulteriorly motivated access reinforces their belief that certain forces can determine outcomes in their lives (fatalism) and that extraordinary, unexpected events can happen to them should their used clothing be accessed by ulteriorly motivated individuals (miracles). So, they believe that sanctification through prayer is more potent than even physical thorough cleansing in protecting them from metaphysical harm - hence their going through the church.

Sanctification thus lends credence to Otnes et al.’s (2018) theorisation that by enacting certain rituals, consumers leverage their agency to reduce uncertainty.

Although they may not be able to evidence the connection, they engage in sanctification because they have faith that through the church's prayers, they can control whatever outcome ulteriorly motivated access may portend. By the same token, they hold the church sacred, believing it to be a holy space (Enchanting EB, i.e., sacredness, Otnes et al., 2018). Like the liquid deodorant used to mask the odour that comes with imported second-hand clothing before its first use, prayer is believed to ward off any future metaphysical harm. These prayers are believed to cast a protective shield over the altruistically donated clothing items before they are released to strangers. They believe that sanctification in this way is sufficient in protecting them from any possible harm or manipulation. Thus, in managing their identity, establishing who they are not willing to become, sanctification allows them to overcome their fears and anxieties and thus allows them to help others through the donation of their used clothing.

Table 5-5: Divestment rituals: <i>sanctification</i> for Overcoming Metaphysical Harm			
Ritual Dimension	Description	Example	
		Events	Actual behaviour
Divestment	Consumption rituals enacted to erase pathogenic contaminants and avoid the risk of exposure to harm from ulteriorly motivated access to used clothing worn close to the body.	Handing out used clothing to strangers through the church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Washing/Cleaning - Disinfecting - Sanctifying through prayer at the church

We learn from the discussion above (summarised in Table 5-5) that handing out used clothing through the church necessitates divestment rituals of washing, cleaning, disinfecting, and sanctifying these items before releasing them to strangers. Sanctification through prayers is believed to shield used clothing donors from metaphysical harm from ulteriorly motivated strangers. It is, however, important to note that not all informants believe in the efficacy of sanctification by the church as a strong enough shield against metaphysical harm from ulteriorly motivated access to their used clothing. Some informants engage in an alternative

divestment ritual to manage the meanings in their used clothing. This is the focus of the next section.

5.4.2 Divestment Rituals of Intentional Destruction

So far in this chapter, the analysis has focused on the temporary disposition of used clothing through its conversion into rags. It has also covered permanent clothing disposition through handing down to family members, handing out to familiar beneficiaries, as well as handing out to strangers, including those going through the church. This section discusses the lived experiences of informants who do not give away their used clothing to strangers. Although they experience the same anxiety and discomfort as those who hand out and sanctify through the church, they do not share the same belief in the efficacy of sanctification. As a result, they are unwilling to take the risk. When asked about how they overcome the anxiety of their used clothing getting into the hands of strangers, Tishe, Bunmi, and Zee responded with the comments below, respectively.

A cloth that has received your sweat, any cloth that has received your DNA, even burying is not 100% safe as they can still be exhumed. (Tishe, buyer)

It is better you burn them [...] It is kind of risky putting your clothes outside here in Nigeria just like that. [burning's] like the safest means of disposing of them. (Bunmi, buyer)

because of the situation in Nigeria, people tend to burn more. Because they feel somebody can pick it up and use it for rituals, they burn it rather than take it to a dust bin for waste disposal.[...] So, people tend to be careful that if they burn, nobody can use their burnt clothing to do ritual but if they pack to the waste bin, they can still go to the refuse dump site, and still pick it from there and use. You don't know if the intention is to use it for rituals. (Zee, buyer)

What Tishe refers to here as *DNA* in the above comment, he referred to as *aisiki* in another part of the interview. *Aisiki* is a Yoruba word that translates to the source of prosperity. Tishe's reference to *aisiki* and *DNA* correlates with Meigs' (1978) vital essence, indicating a strong connection to his source of life and prosperity. Not only does Tishe believe that his *aisiki* is deeply rooted, but that it is an extension of his being and soul (Belk, 1988; Gelman, 2003). He also believes that his *aisiki* permeates his possession and can be accessed to cause him harm. This is a belief equally strongly held by Bunmi and Zee, as expressed in their comments above. This is why in dealing with the risk of exposure, these three buyer informants lay more emphasis on the burning than the binning part. Like other informants, they choose burning over other permanent disposition pathways for the same fear of ulteriorly motivated access to their used clothing by strangers to cause them metaphysical harm.

Whereas wear and tear mentioned by informants earlier are similar to those in Saunders (2010), these latter concerns about metaphysical harm draw very broad lines of distinction. Informants in the current study believe that there is a significant risk associated with allowing used clothing to circulate in any physical form. Even those that get repurposed into rags eventually get burned when they are no longer fit for even cleaning purposes. In response to the fate of used second-hand clothing converted into rags, Tunbo shared an image (part of Figure 5-4, Section 5.3.2, reproduced here for emphasis). According to him, "It ends up in the bin or gets burnt."



From the above image, this converted clothing item has experienced brutal use (Türe, 2014) and already thinning into extinction, yet Tunbo is unwilling to bin it. His fear that even this rag may still contain his essence, and would thus be risky in the wrong hands, aligns with those of Tishe and Zee. To all three of them, apart from burning, all other disposition modes - including binning - are potentially risky.

As summarised in Table 5-6 below, binning is not even an option for Zee and Bunmi. Their fear echoes the earlier discussion about money-making rituals in which we learnt that dumpsites are potential grounds for obtaining items for occult get-rich-quick practices. Ultimately, to completely eliminate the risk of exposure, they would burn their used second-hand clothing items. As Zee noted in his comment above, burning leaves nothing for anyone with the ulterior motive to work with.

Table 5-6: Divestment Rituals: Intentional Destruction of Possession			
Ritual Dimension	Description	Example	
		Events	Actual behaviour
Divestment	Consumption rituals enacted to completely remove the risk of exposure to harm from ulteriorly motivated access to used clothing worn close to the body.	Handing out used clothing to strangers	- Burning

For buyer informants who do not hand out their used clothing to strangers, burning is the only failsafe permanent second-hand clothing disposition pathway. Normal cleaning is done, much like we have in the literature, to reconfigure the meaning in used objects (Douglas, 1966; McCracken, 1986; Nemeroff & Rozin, 1994; Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005). In addition to this, the current study finds sanctifying to prevent metaphysical harm from ulteriorly motivated access. Beyond this, however, burning serves the function of destroying the private meanings or essence in used clothing items.

Given that clothing disposition is often treated alongside solid waste disposal in the Global South literature, burning or incinerating unwanted clothing is not a new practice. As observed in Chapter 2, Section 2.7.2, waste management is a huge challenge in countries like Nigeria and Ghana (Omole & Alakinde, 2013; Ogunleye

& Uzoma, 2019; Ohwofasa & Biose, 2023). Such realities make consumers dispose of their unwanted clothing in landfills, waterways, with the majority getting burnt (Adejuwon et al., 2024; Kuupole et al., 2024). What is new, as the current study finds, is their rationale for burning beyond waste management, as is currently theorised in extant literature.

Burning serves to remove any chance of ulteriorly motivated access completely. The critical need to destroy meaning by burning is also fuelled by their sociocultural and contemporary experiences, as captured in Otnes et al. (2018), that the actions of an ulteriorly motivated individual can result in extraordinarily fatal outcomes for them. A summary of Otnes et al.'s (2018) Extraordinary Beliefs (EBs) in rituals of second-hand clothing divestment in Nigeria is presented in Table 5-7 below for emphasis.

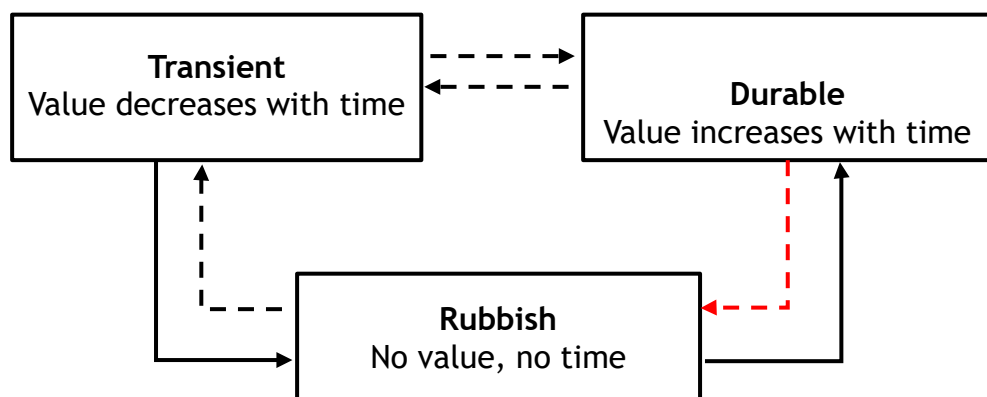
Table 5-7: Otnes et al.'s (2018) Extraordinary Beliefs (EBs) in rituals of second-hand clothing divestment in Nigeria	
Extraordinary Beliefs	Ritual Behaviour
Controlling EBs: reducing uncertainty; leveraging agency to shape ritual outcomes	
<i>Faith</i> The metaphysical harm they fear may not be provable due to a lack of personal experiences, but events in their contemporary environment point to these as more than mere conjectures.	- Sanctifying through prayer at the church
Enchanting EBs: suspending disbelief in the rational world; tending towards magic	
<i>Sacredness</i> Given their belief in the efficacy of prayer by the church, they hold the church sacred, a holy space, a sanctuary	- Challenging used clothing through the church
Explaining EBs: making sense of immediate worlds and worlds yet to be experienced	
<i>Fatalism and Miracles</i> <i>They believe</i> that the actions of an ulteriorly motivated individual can result in extraordinarily fatal and unexpected outcomes for them.	- Burning used clothing worn close to the body

5.5 Where Do Objects in the Durable Category End Up?

The above question, which has yet to be answered in extant theorising, is answered in the informants' narratives about burning their used and unwanted clothing to establish what they are unwilling to become. In the rubbish theory,

Thompson (1979; 2017) postulates that because the value in transient objects decreases over time, they cannot be classified as durable without first passing through the rubbish category. New clothing items lose some of their lustre and value with use and time. Being of dwindling value, social processes then conspire to remove them from circulation, keeping them out of sight, on their way to becoming rubbish. Similarly, having lost their lustre, neither can objects in the rubbish category be returned to the transient category, nor can objects in the durable category be reassigned to the transient category.

The transition from the transient category is a one-way downward slope, except where social processes and practice recategorise them as valuable and durable. This recategorisation is evidenced in the current study with the UK's used clothing shipped to Nigeria, where informants describe them as being of good quality, durable and unique. Furthermore, even in their used state, such definitions attest to their value increasing over time. In fact, the social process and recategorisation in the informants' narratives, e.g., handing down, handing out, and sanctification, further increase their value with time. Again, going by the *placedness* in Thompson's (1979; 2017) theory, it can be argued that even used clothing items that end up in landfills fill lacunas in city landscapes. They are out of place and may not necessarily intrude as they would be if they were stacked up in a living room corner or on the street. Though a counterargument may be proposed that filling lacunas is not their original intended purpose, and this may be deemed unsustainable. It cannot be discountenanced that they are being put to some purposeful end. To this point, the postulations in the rubbish theory are not in contention. This is how nature and social processes of object categorisation work.



Refined Thompson's Basic Rubbish Theory Hypothesis

The contention in the current study is based on Thompson's (1979, 2017) postulation that the transfer from durable to rubbish category does not occur. The transfer that he claims does not occur is indicated by the broken, inverted red arrow in the above reproduction of his hypothesis. This is contrary to what the current study finds from the lived experiences of imported second-hand clothing consumers in Nigeria. To clarify, the majority of informants in the current study address the fear of metaphysical harm by burning their used clothing. The burning of used clothing to eliminate any possible access by ulteriorly motivated strangers does not align with Thompson's (1979; 2017) postulation that transfers do not occur at the durable-rubbish interface. As shown in the reproduced figure above, objects in the rubbish category have no value and no time. As the analysis in this chapter shows, Thompson's (1979; 2017) postulation about objects falling into the rubbish category do not necessarily thin into nothingness is true. This is especially so for out-of-sight used clothing items, and those converted for other uses still have a place. However, it is evident from the lived experiences of the informants who burn their used clothing that once burnt, such objects have neither value nor time and thus return to rubbish or some even lower category than rubbish.

5.6 Conclusion to the Findings and Discussion Chapter

This findings and discussion chapter shows how the analysis of the data obtained in the current study addresses the study's aims. The study's main aim is to make sense of what becomes of the UK's donated used clothing that is shipped to Nigeria. In other words, to address the unaddressed transfer at the durable-rubbish interface of Thompson's (1979, 2017) rubbish theory. The study's other aim is to uncover the ritual dimensions that manifest through the use and disposition of the UK's donated used clothing that is shipped to Nigeria, which are currently missing in extant theorising (Jacoby et al., 1977; Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005). A profile of buyer informants based on their motives for buying imported second-hand clothing sets the basis for the goal that this findings and discussion chapter seeks to achieve.

The analysis of responses to the questions on second-hand clothing use reveals that used clothing consumers in Nigeria are happy to consume second-hand clothing items imported from the UK. However, they are anxious about encountering any of the personal properties and non-material qualities (Newman

et al., 2011; Yan et al., 2015) that the previous users - who they do not know - may have left behind in the used clothing (Frazer, 1891; Carrington & Ozanne, 2022; Hingston et al., 2017; Meigs, 1978; Rachman, 2004; Rozin et al., 1986; 1999; Rozin & Fallon, 1987). Their anxiety is complicated by the uncertainties shrouding the previous lives of imported second-hand clothing that enters global second-hand economies (Brooks, 2012; 2019; Wetengere, 2018). A further complication is that poor-quality used clothing items are found in the bales shipped to them from the UK as second-hand. As a way of dealing with these existential fears and anxieties (Greenberg et al., 1997; Sheldon & Kasser, 2008), they engage in divestment rituals at the re-acquisition of used objects (McCracken, 1986; Assima et al., 2023) to prevent infection or pathogenic contamination. They wash thoroughly, disinfect and deodourise imported second-hand clothing before the first use. It is essential to emphasize that the divestment rituals they perform at the re-acquisition of imported second-hand clothing items are not necessary when acquiring new, locally made clothing items.

The analysis of responses to the questions on second-hand clothing disposition reveals that used clothing items are kept out of active use as originally intended but are repurposed. Other used and unwanted clothing items that are still wearable are either handed down to family members or handed out to familiar beneficiaries and strangers. As is the case during acquisition, informants equally experience anxiety during disposition for the same reason of not wanting strangers to gain access to what they, too, may have left behind in their used clothing. Here, they worry more that their essence that permeates their used clothing can be metaphysically accessed by an ulteriorly motivated stranger to harm them through magic (cf. Rozin & Nemeroff, 2002; Fernandez & Lastovicka, 2011; James et al., 2011; Otnes et al., 2018; Carrington & Ozanne, 2022). Their fear and anxiety are complicated by events in their sociocultural environment, historical and contemporary narratives of ritually motivated killings and occult practices involving clothing items previously worn close to the body. Although these used clothing may have become worn and torn, converted, brutally used and gradually become trash (Türe, 2014), they are still meaningful because they are considered a part of their desired past (Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005). Their anxieties relating to metaphysical harm from ulteriorly motivated access to their essence

are transcendental. These are much unlike the earlier fear and anxiety about physical and socioeconomic well-being and safety.

Informants' narratives of how they deal with this fear of metaphysical harm are divided along their risk perception and the degree of trust they have in available alternatives. While some believe in the efficacy of prayer to sanctify their used clothing and then hand them out to strangers, others are not willing to take this risk. For this category of risk-averse informants, burning is the only failsafe divestment ritual they trust to completely remove any chance of ulteriorly motivated access to their essence that may be present in their used clothing. These informants would thus intentionally burn their used clothing.

The next chapter concludes this thesis by further demonstrating how the study addresses the research aims.

Chapter 6 - Conclusion to the Thesis

6.1 Introduction

This study aims to understand what becomes of the UK's donated used clothing that is shipped to Nigeria. Theoretically, it aims to answer the unaddressed question of transfer at the durable-rubbish interface of Thompson's (1979; 2017) Rubbish theory, i.e., where do objects in the durable category end up? Given that clothing use and disposition are ritualised behaviour, the study also aims to uncover the ritual dimensions that manifest through the use and disposition of the UK's donated used clothing that is shipped to Nigeria. The study is guided by two main research questions identified from omissions in extant theorising on used objects entering global second-hand economies and consumption ritual. The two main research questions that emerge from the gaps identified in the two review chapters (2 and 3) are presented in Section 6.2.

This concluding chapter summarises how the study meets its research aims and proffers answers to the research questions identified in the two review chapters (2 and 3). This concluding chapter also presents the study's theoretical contributions. It shows how the lived experience of second-hand clothing consumers in Nigeria advances what we currently know about where objects in the durable category in the Thompson's (1979; 2017) Rubbish theory ends up. The chapter also informs our theoretical understanding of divestment rituals beyond its extant theorisation of meaning (re)configuration and transfer.

As mentioned above, this thesis has two review chapters (Chapters 2 and 3). Chapter 2 reviews extant theorisation following the social lives of consumption objects that enter global second-hand economies. This first review chapter employs Thompson's (1979; 2017) rubbish theory as the theoretical lens to understand what becomes of the millions of tonnes of the UK's donated used clothing that are shipped to marketplaces in the Global South without a trace. This first review chapter reveals a disconnect between clothing disposition in the Global North and the use and disposal of these consumption objects in the Global South, where they ultimately end up. An implication of this disconnect is that extant theorising has yet to address an unanswered question at the durable-rubbish interface of the rubbish theory as to where objects in the durable category

end up. This creates the first research question (RQ1) in the current study. For emphasis, RQ1 asks how second-hand clothing consumers in Nigeria use and dispose of second-hand clothing that comes from the Global North. The choice of Nigeria as the Global South marketplace of research attention is informed by the volume of the UK's donated used clothing that ends up in this former British colony. By asking this question, RQ1 helps understand what becomes of the millions of bales of the UK's donated used clothing that are shipped to Nigeria and ultimately addresses the unanswered question of where objects in the durable category end up.

The second review chapter in the current study (Chapter 3) reviews extant theorisation on consumption rituals. Between McCracken's (1986) structure and movement of the cultural meanings of consumption objects and Otnes et al.'s (2018) functions of extraordinary beliefs in consumption rituals, Chapter 3 reveals that the belief-ritual-action nexus is currently under-theorised. Chapter 3 juxtaposes extant theorising on divestment rituals with Frazer's (1891) law of contagion and law of similarity. This raises questions about reverse contagion, i.e., whether and to what extent previous owners or users worry about potential harm or detriment to themselves as a result of strangers accessing their used possessions. It also raises unanswered questions regarding divestment beyond its current theorisation as meaning reconfiguration and transfer. These omissions are captured in the second research question in the current study (RQ2). Again, for emphasis, RQ2 asks about the ritual dimensions that manifest through second-hand clothing use and disposal in Nigeria. This question aims to explore how Nigeria's unique sociocultural experiences and extraordinary belief systems influence the divestment ritual behaviour of consumers of imported second-hand clothing.

The fifth chapter of this thesis presents the analysis and discussion of the findings from the current study. Chapter 5 demonstrates that Nigerian consumers of second-hand clothing share commonalities with their UK counterparts in their use and disposal of clothing. They also extensively deploy their clothing use and disposition behaviour in their identity management projects. They equally enact similar rituals as those in extant theorisation to establish who they are and who they are not. These notwithstanding, the peculiar sociocultural experiences and

the extraordinary belief systems in Nigeria make additional used clothing disposition pathways and divestment rituals essential to establish who they are not willing to become. The summaries of conclusions regarding how the current study achieves its research aims are presented in the remainder of this chapter. This concluding chapter also presents the implications and limitations of the current study as well as recommendations for future research. The remaining part of this concluding chapter is organised as follows. Section 6.2 presents the conclusion as to how answering the research questions helps meet the aims of the current research. Section 6.3 present research conclusions on where objects in the durable category end up. Section 6.4 presents the research contributions. Section 6.5 presents the research limitations, implications, and recommendations, while Section 6.6, the final section, provides recommendations for future research.

6.2 Conclusions to Research Questions RQ1 and RQ2

RQ1. How do second-hand clothing consumers in Nigeria use and dispose of second-hand clothing that comes from the Global North?

RQ2. What are the ritual dimensions that manifest through second-hand clothing use and disposal in Nigeria?

The remaining part of this conclusion chapter shows how the current study answers the research questions restated above.

6.2.1 Identity Management through re-acquisition: who they are

The lived experience of second-hand clothing consumers in the current study shows that like those in extant theorising, imported second-hand clothing consumers in Nigeria also use their imported second-hand clothing consumption to manage their identity (Tuan, 1980; Belk, 1988; 2014; Roster, 2014; chapter 3, section 3.2.1 and chapter 5, section 5.1.1). Like those in e.g., Guiot & Roux's (2010), they consume imported second-hand clothing to Dress Well for Less (DWfL). Like everyone re-acquiring used objects, they are afraid and anxious about the risk of exposure to what is left behind in the clothing items (Frazer, 1891; Carrington & Ozanne, 2022; Hingston et al., 2017; Meigs, 1978; Rachman, 2004; Rozin et al., 1986; 1999; Rozin & Fallon, 1987). They are equally concerned about contamination due to what the clothing may have been exposed to during

their journeys to Nigeria. Complications arise from the issues of poor-quality used clothing shipped to them as second-hand. Although the connection between the condition of travel and infection from imported second-hand clothing remains insufficiently established in the literature, evidence suggests that these items travel through multiple locations during their journey to the Global South (Abimbola, 2012; Brooks, 2019; Brooks & Simon, 2012; Hansen, 2000). Further, they are anxious about the odour that accompanies imported second-hand clothing. Although they do not consider this odour as off-putting, they are conscious of the public meanings of second handedness that the odour imbues. The odour is to them more like evidence of risk that they can relate to in lieu of the risk of infection that they cannot easily evidence. Effectively managing their identity in the face of these fears makes them enact certain divestment rituals. These divestment rituals at the re-acquisition of used objects allow them to distinguish who they are from who they are not (e.g., Belk, 1988; 2014; Roster, 2014). Like those in extant theorising, they thoroughly cleanse these items before the first use. This thorough cleansing, involving washing and disinfecting, represents their first attempt to remove the old public meanings from the used clothing. It is also a means for them to re-singularise, re-decommodify and re-sacralise the clothing items to make them truly their own (cf. Kopytoff, 1986; Corbett & Denegri-Knott, 2020).

More importantly, a novel finding in the current study is the additional divestment ritual of deodourising re-acquired imported used clothing. Deodourising in the current study symbolises the actual introduction of new private meanings to their possessions. For one, deodourising removes the second-handedness from the used clothing items. This is important in that every consumer in the study who deodorises introduces their deodourant of choice to reflect their personality, who they are, as opposed to the peculiar odour of second-handedness, which is who they are not. In a way, these rituals also form part of the social processes of recategorisation that further locate the used clothing in the durable category of Thompson's (1979; 2017) rubbish theory. The divestment ritual performances during the re-acquisition of used objects are summarised in Table 6-1 below.

Table 6-1: Divestment ritual performances during used objects re-acquisition	
Removing public meaning	Washing
Avoiding contagion	Disinfecting
Adding new private meaning	Deodorising

6.2.2 Identity Management through Temporary Disposition: who they are not

Both the reason for disposing of used clothing and the pathways through which this is done are consistent with the process of disconnecting clothing items from the body. As with similar behaviour in extant theorising, the process of disconnection takes many forms, including putting them in transition places (Roster, 2001; 2014; Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005). They also repurpose or convert and gradually extract value from the used clothing till they thin into near nothingness (Türe, 2014; Jacoby et al. 1977; Winakor, 1969). Other pathways for managing identity with objects that are considered “no longer me” (Kleine et al., 1995, 334) include divesting to family members or to familiar beneficiaries (cf. Jacoby et al. 1977; Wai Yee et al., 2016; WRAP, 2018). This is consistent with the divestment rituals for used clothing in other collectivist cultures, like those in Hernandez-Curry (2018). It also corroborates extant theorisation on gifting, especially in navigating the interpersonal relationships between benefactors and beneficiaries (cf. McCracken, 1986; Price et al., 2000; Belk, 1996; 2010; Assima et al. 2023). The divestment of used clothing items, which begins with keeping them in a transition place and ends with handing them out to familiar beneficiaries, is a way in which used clothing consumers in Nigeria establish who they are not.

6.2.3 Identity Management through Permanent Disposition: who they are not willing to become

Nigerian clothing consumers also often permanently dispose of used clothing to strangers. Divesting used clothing items that have once adorned their bodies and defined their identities to strangers always involves different rituals (McCracken, 1986; Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005; Roster, 2014). However, whereas thorough cleansing is often sufficient before divesting to strangers in extant theorising, Nigerian used clothing consumers require additional rituals to protect them from

metaphysical harm due to ulteriorly motivated access to their used clothing. Their concern is similar in that they do not want to come into contact with the negative properties left behind in the imported second-hand clothing. However, this concern is exacerbated by the belief that certain forces can determine outcomes in their lives (fatalism) and that extraordinary, unexpected events can happen to them should their used clothing be accessed by individuals with ulterior motives (miracles) (cf. Otnes et al., 2018; Explaining EBs). Therefore, to avoid becoming victims of metaphysical harm, they perform an additional divestment ritual, i.e., sanctification. Sanctification is achieved by donating through the church, which will pray over the clothing items before handing them out to strangers. This prayer by the church is believed to cast a protective shield over their altruistically donated used clothing items. Such protection is further believed to serve as a barrier between them and any harm due to ulteriorly motivated access.

The above belief systems necessitating sanctification are found in the current study as reverse contagion. Reverse contagion is derived from the fear that new users may desire access to the positive energies left behind in used possessions to the detriment of the possession's previous users. This reality addresses one of the questions raised in Chapter 3 (Section 3.5) regarding whether the previous owners of possessions are concerned about detrimental outcomes from access to their used possessions.

The fear of reverse contagion or fear of metaphysical harm is equally the reason why other used clothing consumers in Nigeria burn their used clothing. Much like sanctification, they elect to burn their used clothing as a way of managing their identity, but in this case, to establish who they are unwilling to become. However, as observed in Chapter 2, Section 2.7.2, and Chapter 5, Section 5.4.2, burning unwanted clothing is not a novel pathway for disposing of unwanted clothing. In these places, unwanted clothing is disposed of along with other household solid waste (Adejuwon et al., 2024; Kuupole et al., 2024). What is new, which the current study finds, is that beyond dealing with waste, burning is indeed a divestment ritual enacted to prevent reverse contagion from ulteriorly motivated access to their used clothing. Burning as a divestment ritual to manage identity is enacted by clothing consumers who do not believe that sanctification is sufficient intervention to prevent reverse contagion or metaphysical harm arising from

ulteriorly motivated access to their essence left behind in their used clothing. Burning thus constitutes a novel permanent disposition pathway for used clothing items. Refer to Table 6-2 below for a summary of the divestment ritual performances associated with the disposition of used objects.

Table 6-2: Divestment ritual performances during used objects disposition	
Removing private meaning	Washing
Avoiding reverse contagion	Sanctifying
Intentional destruction	Burning

6.3 Where Objects in the Durable Category End Up

All these divestment rituals of reconfiguring - and in some cases, transferring - the cultural meanings in these used clothing items are enacted by consumers to manage their identity, establishing who they are, who they are not, and who they are unwilling to become. With the exception of burning, the other divestment rituals also constitute part of the social processes of categorisation that both maintain and increase their value with time in the durable category. For instance, once thoroughly cleansed and deodourised to remove the public meaning of second-handedness, the value of a used clothing item increases in spite of its inherent material objectivity. That is, although they are previously used and way past their prime, the value that can still be extracted from them continues to make them relevant, hence, durable. As shown in Chapter 2, Section 2.3, value is not an inherently fixed characteristic of objects, but one that is nevertheless pivotal to objects' social categorisation. The findings in the current study align with O'Brien's (1999) and Jackson's (2013) argument that value continues to shift within our economic systems of production and consumption. It also aligns with Gregson et al.'s (2010) account of the Al Nabila IV's end-of-life journey. Evidently, the value of consumption objects does not really go away. Rather, it is transformed based on its material objectivity and the social role in which it is deployed. This is more evident in clothing already used and unwanted in the UK, which is described as of good quality and unique in Nigeria, and is used again, yet considered transferable to others to be used as is. However, because objects have lifespans, they disintegrate over time and with use. This is evident in the current study, where clothing described as of good quality begins to fade and show other

signs of use and age. When previously good-quality items are deemed no longer suitable for the body, but are instead converted into rags, brutally used, and gradually discarded. This is evident that objects are in a continuous process of thinning into nothingness. In other words, reverting to having no value and no time span left, and evidently tantamount to becoming worthless, becoming rubbish once again, and ultimately being discarded and burned.

The additional divestment ritual of burning, which the current study finds, suggests that having no value and no time makes the rubbish category both a passing place and a final destination. In the first instance, it makes the rubbish category more of a state of undeterminable value and time. That is, a value regenerative interface (Reno, 2009; Hawkins, 2006) where used objects await the right economic use (O'Brien, 1999; Crang et al., 2013; Jackson, 2013; Alexander & O'Hare, 2023; Winakor, 1969; Jacoby et al., 1977; Lee et al., 2013; Laitala, 2014; WRAP, 2017b). This is because for some used clothing items, it is uncertain what they may become. A good example here would be the poor-quality imported second-hand clothing items that are deemed unsellable and therefore discarded without any chance of reuse. In the second instance are objects that are reused, converted into rags, brutally used, gradually discarded, and eventually burned. In this second—and, as it were, final—end of life, they evidently have no value and indeed no lifespan left, so no time. Through the same social processes and practices of categorisation, consumption objects pass through rubbish on their way to becoming durable as Thompson (1979; 2017) rightly postulates. However, the reverse, which he claims does not happen, is evidently possible.

As the lived experiences of used clothing consumers in Nigeria, explored in the current study, show, consumption objects are often relegated to the rubbish category when all their value has been extracted from them. In this case, when social processes and practices conspire not to place them in storage but to completely remove them from circulation and consideration (Reno in Thompson, 2017). As the current study finds, burning is thus a novel divestment ritual of intentionally destroying used clothing to completely eliminate any possibility of reverse contagion. Because we now know where objects in the durable category end up, the current study proposes a refinement of Thompson's Basic Rubbish Theory Hypothesis. The refinement being the broken inverted red arrow at the

durable-rubbish interface to be solid like other transfers that do happen. This is shown in the Refined Thompson's Basic Rubbish Theory Hypothesis below.

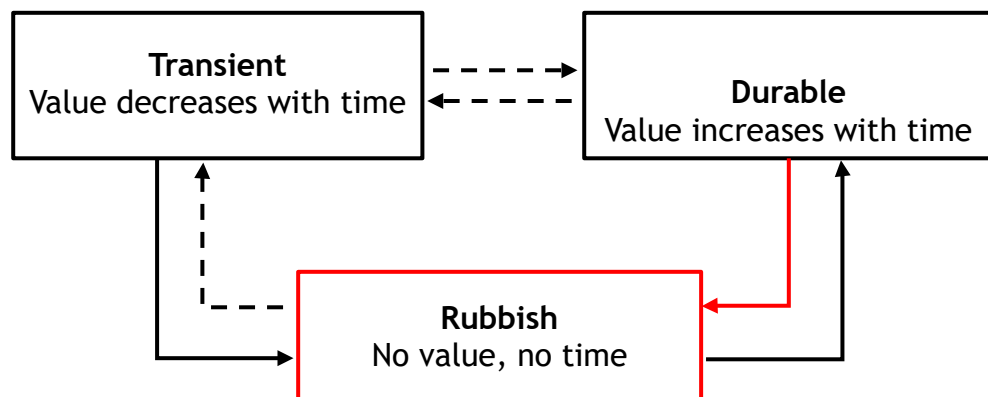


Figure 6-1: Refined Thompson's Basic Rubbish Theory

6.4 Research Contributions

This section presents the contributions of the current study. Based on the findings discussed in the preceding chapter and summarised in this concluding chapter, the current study makes three novel contributions to theory.

6.4.1 Contribution 1

The main contribution of the current study lies in the above refinement at the durable-rubbish interface of Thompson's Basic Rubbish Theory. As indicated in Figure 6-1 above and explained in Section 6.3, the rubbish category serves as both a transit point and a final destination for objects designated as rubbish, depending on the remaining value they possess. While used clothing items from the UK pass through the rubbish category on their way to becoming durable, they return to the rubbish category when they are converted into rags, brutally used, gradually discarded, and eventually intentionally destroyed by burning. Importantly, burning is neither new nor is it unexpected. In fact, burning factory off-cuts and unwanted used clothing by both the fashion industry stakeholders and consumers is a global reality (WRAP, 2018; World Bank, 2019; Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017; ACS Clothing, 2020). However, burning to prevent reverse contagion is a novel contribution to theorisation on discard studies within consumer research. To clarify, the findings in the current study evidence the fact that the transfer at the durable-rubbish interface of the rubbish theory does happen as indicated in Figure

6-1 in this concluding chapter. An important implication of this is that value is not an inherently fixed characteristic of used clothing. Being pivotal to the social categorisation of clothing items, the value in used clothing is relevant only as long as the clothing item it defines continues to be used, e.g., in identity and self-management. Once the clothing item ceases to serve its originally intended purpose, its value begins to be reassigned. When the used clothing items eventually thin into nothingness, as in the case of the burnt clothing in the current study, so does the value ascribed to it. At this point, it ceases to be a durable object and returns to being rubbish again.

6.4.2 Contribution 2: Rubbish rituals in following (clo)things of rubbish value

The second main contribution in the current study is the new ritual dimensions found in following the UK's used clothing to their final destinations in Nigeria. As extensively discussed in the findings and discussion chapter and earlier in this chapter, three new divestment ritual performances are uncovered through the use and disposition of second-hand clothing items in Nigeria. These are deodourising, sanctifying and burning, and summarised in Table 6-3 below.

Table 6-3: Rubbish rituals in following (clo)things of rubbish value	
Adding new private meaning	Deodorising
Avoiding reverse contagion	Sanctifying
Intentional destruction	Burning

Deodourising aligns with, but expands, extant divestment rituals during the reacquisition of used clothing items. Deodourising, in the narratives of the imported used clothing consumers in Nigeria, is enacted to remove public meaning, i.e., the peculiar odour of second-handedness, and add private meanings, i.e., the consumers' preferred fragrance. By so doing, they retain their identity and image as against the misrepresentation that the public meaning may represent. Sanctifying and burning are two novel divestment ritual performances that the current study adds to extant theorising. Sanctifying fits with exchange rituals in that it re-categorises used clothing to maintain its durability, allowing its cultural meaning to be transferred to another. It, however, constitutes a new

dimension of divestment ritual in that it is enacted to ensure the safe transfer of meaning without the detriment of reverse contagion. Its novelty as a divestment ritual at the disposition of objects also lies in the fact that it addresses the question of whether and to what extent previous users are concerned about potential harm coming to them due to strangers accessing their essence that permeates their used possessions. Not only do we now know that they are concerned, but we also now know that it is a grave concern.

Unlike sanctifying, burning is a completely novel dimension of divestment ritual that the current study adds to extant theorising. Beyond its current theorisation as meaning reconfiguration and transfer, burning informs our theorising about divestment rituals with the intent to destroy rather than transfer meaning. On the one hand, this heeds Lastovicka & Fernandez (2005). On the other hand, it opens up new lines of enquiry to interrogate extant theorising of consumption rituals beyond its current Western centrism.

6.4.3 Contribution 3: Refined clothing disposition Taxonomy

Building on the contribution in section 6.4.2, this study also refines the existing clothing disposition taxonomy to include burning as a new pathway for consumer clothing disposition. As shown in part A of Figure 6-2, clothing items that are not kept for their original use or repurposed are either temporarily or permanently disposed of. Temporary pathways include access-based consumption options, while permanent pathways encompass donation, gifting, selling, and binning. All these are as found in both extant theorising and in the current study. Again, whereas burning as a pathway for used clothing is not entirely new, the reason for choosing this pathway is new to consumer research following the UK's donated used clothing items that enter global second-hand economies. This clarification is important because, as the review in the current study shows, used clothing donation in the UK is categorised as a sustainable clothing disposition pathway. As this current study confirms, in addition to the poor quality clothing deemed unwearable or unsellable, most of the UK's used clothing shipped to Nigeria is burned at the end of its purposeful life.

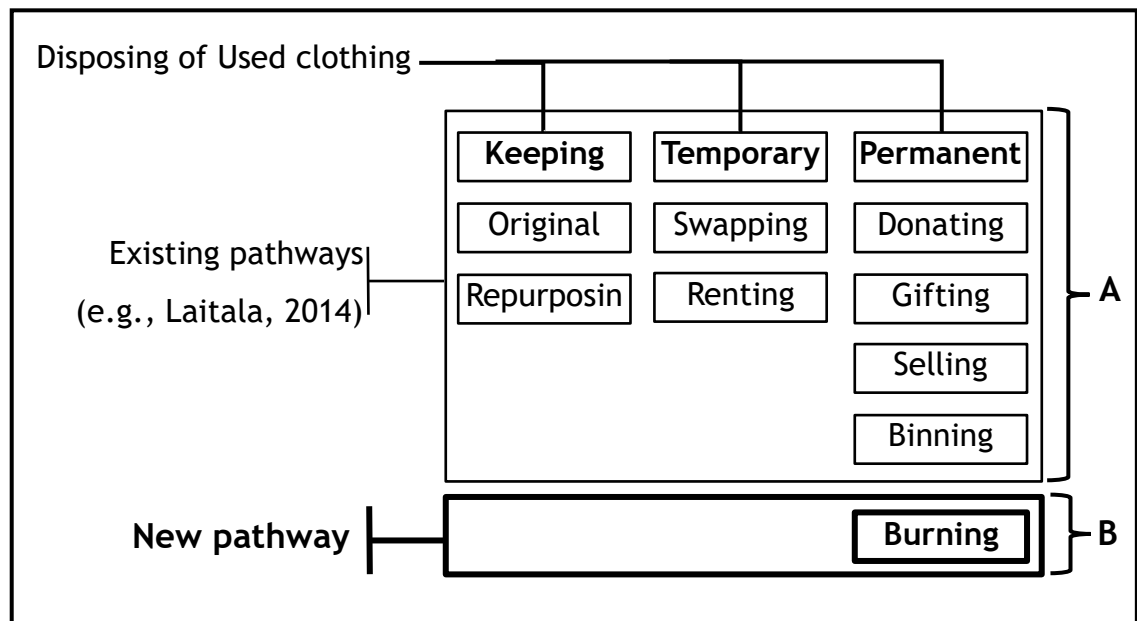


Figure 6-2: Refined Clothing Disposition Taxonomy

6.5 Research Limitations, Implications, and Recommendations

This section is about the implications of the current study for research, policy, practice, and behaviour. The section also addresses the limitations of the current study and concludes with recommendations for future research.

6.5.1 Limitations

This research has made unique contributions to the rubbish theory, divestment rituals and clothing disposition. Despite this, it is not without limitations. A key limitation in the current study is that the research informants are largely from the educated middle and upper socioeconomic demographics. The study could have further benefited from a more diverse group of informants. Although the methodology adopted has been informed by the exploratory nature of the research aims, the study could equally have benefited from a combination of methods. For example, combining qualitative sense-making with quantitative methods can potentially include a more diverse range of demographics in the sample. Increasing the diversity of informants to capture a wider range of consumer demographics than those in the current study could have afforded the researcher greater insight into consumers' clothing use and disposition in Nigeria. It could also have contributed to the robustness of the methodology and richer research outcomes. Nonetheless, the inclusion of educated middle- and upper-class

informants in the study comes with the advantage of increased engagement and richer discussions about the topic of the enquiry (Chapter 5, Section 5.7.3). Apart from being the fastest-growing consumer segment in emerging markets, the middle-class consumers have a large concentration in urban areas. They are young, globally connected and a well-educated talent pool with pent-up demand for a wider array of products and services (Anguelov, 2015; Cavusgil et al., 2018).

Another limitation is that the study was conducted during a global pandemic, which imposed restrictions on travel. This meant that data collection could not be done physically in face-to-face interviews as initially planned. It also meant an inability to conduct informant observations in their homes and at second-hand clothing markets, as well as a lack of physical interaction with the items. However, the lack of interaction with the items was reasonably overcome through the collection and analysis of visual data submitted by the informants. This analysis of visual data has added much depth to the sense-making that this study aims for.

6.5.2 Implications

6.5.2.1 Implications for research

This study has several implications for consumer research on discard, particularly for those seeking to inform theorisation on consumption rituals. The findings in the current study provide new and unique insights into the social lives of consumption objects. By uncovering intentional destruction, it offers new opportunities to theorise divestment rituals beyond their current transfer and reconfiguration of cultural meaning. In this direction, the current study also challenges consumer researchers to commit to expanding their theorisation of consumption rituals beyond current Western-centric narratives (cf. De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011; Varman, 2019; Coskuner-Balli, 2020; De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011; McGregor, 2017; Veresiu & Giesler, 2018). Similarly, the current study also shows that extant research addressing the question of *what do I do with unwanted clothing*, which consumer research has tackled since Winakor (1969) and Jacoby et al. (1977) is missing a critical point, i.e., the lived experiences of consumers outside the Global North. The implication of this is that current theorising relies on skewed data and can be enriched and made more robust by theorising consumption choices made under different circumstances, including divergent belief systems outside the West.

6.5.2.2 Implications for Policy and Practice

This study also has implications for policy in both the UK and Nigeria. In the UK, the findings of the current study contribute to ongoing efforts at fixing fashion in the UK (DEFRA, 2018; House of Commons, 2019, 2021). One of the major challenges which the UK government is presently focusing on is the lack of traceability of donated clothing items once they leave the UK (House of Commons, 2021a). The findings in this study have shed more light on what becomes of these clothing items at the end of their lived in their new locations. As observed in Chapter 2, Section 2.8.2.2, the absence of accurate trade data in Sub-Saharan African markets (Brooks, 2019; Sumo et al., 2023) can no longer be an excuse. Given the current state of technology, it is difficult to say whether the challenge is truly an inability to trace or if shipping without tracing or tracking is simply a matter of convenience. Therefore, if the UK is serious about truly fixing fashion, collaborations with key stakeholders across the value chain are essential to monitor what becomes of their shipments. Otherwise, shipping without tracing would merely be nothing other than diverting unwanted clothing from local to other landfills. Diverting waste from local landfills to those in former colonies introduces further complications, such as the valorisation of the Global North at the expense of the Global South (cf. Anantharaman, 2018; Varman, 2019). There are also options for legislative interventions, many of which have proven successful in addressing similar problems in the UK. Some notable examples include the introduction of a single-use carrier bag charge (Frater, 2011), the implementation of extended producer responsibility for electronics waste (Mayers et al., 2005; Ramasubramanian et al., 2023) and the UK's Deposit Return Scheme for drinks containers (DEFRA, 2024; Dempster et al., 2021; Kükenenthal et al., 2023).

The current study has shown that, in line with the belief in helping others, the UK's donated used clothing, sold to the Global South as second-hand clothing, is helping people to dress well for less. However, we also know from this study that not only are these clothing items eventually burned at the end of their purposeful lives, but that some poor-quality items deemed unsellable are also burned or binned upon arrival. The insight from the current study can thus further help build interest in what becomes of these items in these future destinations (Hansen & Le Zotte, 2019). This interest can, in turn, result in more robust policies on clothing

recycling in the Global North. It can equally enrich and shape the direction of policy towards Europe's circular economy initiatives.

UK charity organisations can also benefit from the knowledge of what becomes of the donated clothing that they ship to the Global South, as the current study reveals. This knowledge can also be utilised in better collaborations with other stakeholders in the Global North towards a more circular economy. For example, retaining poor-quality used clothing in the UK can increase the volume of stock available for reuse in manufacturing and other domestic applications, including applications in insulation. This means that only high-quality, wearable used clothing items are shipped abroad. Removing poor-quality used clothing from the bales that are sent abroad will ultimately reduce the volume that ends up being burnt on arrival, as it is unfit for any useful purpose. Above all, Global North clothing retailers also have a huge responsibility in this direction. Importantly, retailers need to be more transparent in addressing the negative impacts of their business models.

Furthermore, governments and charitable organisations in the Global North can collaborate with their stakeholders in the Global South. A veritable collaboration would be with religious organisations in the Global South. As the current study shows, consumers have a strong belief in the religious organisations as safe conduits for the redistribution of used clothing. Such collaborations can include moving part of the Global North clothing sorting infrastructure to the Global South, improving on existing examples such as Oxfam's *Frip Ethique* and Emmaus' *Le Relais* (Arenas et al., 2015). A veritable improvement would be in the area of ensuring that low-quality items do not reach the Global South. Such collaboration arrangements may also include partnering with governments and stakeholders in the Global South to divert low-quality used clothing items into input for manufacturing (e.g. Nicky Gregson & Crang, 2015).

There are equally policy implications at the receiving end in Nigeria. A veritable move to address the missing and accurate trade data mentioned above will be for the government in Nigeria to review its national policies on the importation of used clothing. This policy review is long overdue, as evidenced by the thriving second-hand clothing trade in the country. The current lack of clear laws, policies,

and regulations in this area is manifesting in the importation of poor-quality used clothing into Nigeria. Importantly, the current situation also provides opportunities for corruption, as unscrupulous elements within and outside the country attempt to smuggle these items into the country from neighbouring countries, as the current study finds. Besides resulting in national income losses, poor quality will also continue to increase the country's carbon footprint, as the increasing volume of poor-quality imported used clothing ends up in landfills or is incinerated. As a signatory to the Paris agreement (UNFCCC, 2015), the Nigerian government can utilise the knowledge provided by the current study about the demand for imported used clothing in the country to map policy directions. They can also utilize the knowledge of concerns surrounding the quality of used clothing entering the country to regulate the importation of used clothing. This is crucial for providing second-hand clothing consumers in Nigeria with a sense of safety and trust, which is currently lacking. Addressing this challenge of trust will also have an adverse impact on any policy if it is not addressed. At the same time, regulating the quality of items entering the country will reduce burning on arrival and ultimately help Nigeria better advance its commitment to reducing its ecological footprint (Nigeria Federal Ministry of Environment, 2019).

One viable avenue for addressing current and future trust issues would be to build on the existing trust in the religious organisations as a safe conduit for channelling used clothing downstream. The critical importance of the church is strengthened by the fact that such trust is built on strongly held belief systems. Given the level of trust expressed by consumers who sanctify, collaborations with religious organisations could significantly support any policy direction towards a more regulated and sanitised used clothing importation scheme and trade. There are also identified challenges in waste management infrastructure, enforcement and loss of trust in government systems. Again, the existing trust in religious organisations can also be leveraged in implementing broader environmental sustainability initiatives around used clothing disposition, which may be more challenging in Nigeria than in the Global North. The existing system of donating used clothing through religious organisations presents ample opportunities for the government to explore introducing sustainable clothing practices of reuse and recycling.

6.5.2.3 Implications for Consumer Behaviour

The current study also has implications for behaviour both in the Global North and South. This study has shown that poor-quality used clothing items are either burned or binned upon arrival. Global North consumers can prevent this by increasing the quality of their donations and channelling poor quality items through existing alternative disposal routes, including those aiming to close the loop in the Global North. The current study reveals that poor-quality used clothing is often burned or discarded upon arrival, while good-quality items ultimately end up being burned at the end of their useful life in the Global South. Equipped with this knowledge, consumers in the Global North can be further prompted to reconsider their relationship with clothing use and disposal (Winge, 2014). For example, the Global North's externalisation of clothing reuse has been directly linked to low patronage of donated clothing in the Global North (Payne & Binotto, 2017; Hansen, 2004; Abimbola, 2012; Brooks & Simon, 2012; Norris, 2015; Wetengere, 2018). UK donors need to show more commitment to sustainability by increasing their patronage of second-hand clothing (see also Armstrong, Niinimäki, Kujala, Karell, & Lang, 2015; Chou, Chen, & Conley, 2015; Zamani, Sandin, & Peters, 2017; Iran, 2018; Martin, Lazarevic, & Gullström, 2019).

Similarly, consumers in the Global South can also benefit from the findings in the current study to rethink their relationship with clothing and the environment. Such a commitment to adjusting their behaviour towards a safer, better, and conducive environment is essential for now and for future generations. Taking a cue from the findings of the current study, consumers in the Global South can commit to reducing water and chemical use in washing and avoiding burning after use. This may be challenging given that burning is strongly grounded in the peculiar sociocultural experiences and their extraordinary belief systems. However, more interventions to keep clothing longer in use, like refashioning, renting and thrifting (Fahmi et al., 2023) can be introduced in school curricula in Nigeria

These efforts at all levels of society are necessary while large policy shifts are awaited from global governments and international agencies. Such micro- and meso-level efforts are needed because the climate emergency we face cannot simply wait for global interventions. Additionally, although climate change is a global challenge, climate emergencies occur at the micro and meso-social levels.

Again, behavioural change is pertinent, but changing consumer behaviour alone is not enough. Solving macro-level problems like the climate crisis requires more systemic and collective effort at the levels of consumption, practice, and policy (McDonagh et al., 2012).

6.6 Recommendations for Future Research

The current study has shown that mainstream theorising on in consumer research on discard studies and divestment rituals can produce more robust theories and knowledge by exploring contexts outside its current Western-centric framing (e.g., Coskuner-Balli, 2020; De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011; McGregor, 2017; Varman, 2019; Veresiu & Giesler, 2018). By committing to decentralising current theorising, consumer researchers can build on the current study to further interrogate the other transfers that do not happen in the rubbish theory. Further research attention can be directed at uncovering additional divestment rituals with the intent to destroy cultural meanings in consumption objects. Importantly, imported used clothing is not the only used item that consumers in the current study depend on in their everyday lives. They also patronise used cars, used furniture, and other used home appliances from the Global North. Consumer researchers can also explore other domains and other key concepts as to whether burning is used in other used product categories too.

As observed earlier in Section 7.6.1, one of the limitations of the current study relates to its methodology. Future research can therefore consider different methodologies with the potential for eliciting more than is currently known from extant theorising. A good example will be a longitudinal study, given that individual lived experiences are themselves contextualized within complex cultural meanings and social belief systems (cf. Thompson, 1997). In this direction, a longitudinal study with consumers like Tobi and Kunle, and sellers like Sade, who have generational experience with second-hand clothing, can potentially reveal more than is uncovered in the current study. For example, future studies can conduct a longitudinal enquiry with families with generational experiences. Such a study can explore the lived experience of current consumers whose second-hand clothing consumption was influenced by their parents and who now do the same for their own children. Such a longitudinal enquiry could also include the first generation of consumers in these families. The inclusion of the first generation of

second-hand clothing consumers is deemed instructive, given that the importation of second-hand clothing into Nigeria began around seven decades ago (e.g. Abimbola, 2012; Areo & Areo, 2015).

Finally, works heeding Appadurai's (1986) call to 'follow the things' have significantly focused more on the linear global flow of commodities from the Global South to the Global North (Long & Villarreal, 1998; Cook, 2004; Cook & Harrison, 2007; Ramsay, 2009). Happily, works are emerging that look into second-hand economies, but even these also operate by the *from-the-West-to-the-rest* logic. In this logic, second-hand items are deemed to only move from the Global North to the Global South. As a result, extant theorising has yet to pay attention to second-hand items re-entering the Global North markets. The current researcher is a migrant from Nigeria and a consumer of second-hand clothing. Many Nigerians have recently migrated to the UK who are also second-hand clothing consumers. Like the researcher, it is assumed that these consumers would have brought second-hand clothing that they bought in Nigeria to the UK. Given this premise, future research can explore second-hand clothing items re-entering the Global North in a manner akin to following the thing full circle. Such explorations will provide more robust documentation of the journeys of used clothing in second-hand markets. The knowledge gained from such an enquiry will further enrich our understanding of second-hand economies (Hansen & Le Zotte, 2019a, 2019b) and the global second-hand clothing trade. There is also a huge potential in such an enquiry to further enrich extant theorisation on discard, consumption rituals and clothing disposition.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Consent Form



College of Social
Sciences

Title of Project: Making sense of consumer subjectification through second-hand clothing consumption at the Base-of-the-Pyramid

Name of Researcher: Abayomi Ibrahim Motajo

Supervisors: Prof. Shaw D.

Dr Duffy K.

I confirm that I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

I acknowledge that I will not be referred to by name but by pseudonym.

I consent to interviews sessions being recorded for transcription.

I understand that the information obtained during this study will be used as part of a PhD thesis and possibly in future publications arising from the thesis.

I understand that no other researcher(s) will have access to (or use) the information obtained during this study without personal request from the main researcher.

Please tick only one box as appropriate

I agree to take part in this research study ☐

I do not agree to take part in this research study ☐

Enter text here

Name of Participant

Signature

Enter text here

Date

Enter text here

Name of Researcher

Signature

Enter text here

Date

Appendix B: Privacy Notice for participants in Research Project

Privacy Notice for Participation in Research Project titled: Making sense of consumer subjectification through second-hand clothing consumption at the Base-of-the-Pyramid.

Your Personal Data

The University of Glasgow will be what's known as the 'Data Controller' of your personal data processed in relation to your participation in the research project **Making sense of consumer subjectification through second-hand clothing consumption at the Base-of-the-Pyramid**. This privacy notice will explain how The University of Glasgow will process your personal data.

Why we need it

We are collecting basic personal data such as your name and contact details in order to conduct our research. We need your name and contact details to arrange interviews and potentially follow up on the data you have provided.

We only collect data that we need for the research project and all personal information you give will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be identified by your name during the study. You will instead be assigned a participant ID. All personal data will be securely stored and destroyed on completion of the study in line with the University's guidelines.

Legal basis for processing your data

We must have a legal basis for processing all personal data. As this processing is for Academic Research we will be relying upon **Task in the Public Interest** in order to process the basic personal data that you provide. For any special categories data collected we will be processing this on the basis that it is **necessary for archiving purposes, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes**

Alongside this, in order to fulfil our ethical obligations, we will ask for your **Consent** to take part in the study. Please see accompanying **Consent Form**.

What we do with it and who we share it with

All the personal data you submit is processed by the researcher. In addition, security measures are in place to ensure that your personal data remains safe. It will be stored on the researcher's personal computer and storage devices. None of your personal data will be stored on any cloud storage. Your personal data will not be shared with any third party. Please consult the **Consent form** and **Participant Information Sheet** which accompanies this notice.

The researcher's supervisors and examiners will have access to the research data. Other researchers may also find the research data collected to be useful in answering future research questions. Access by such individuals or group will only be possible with due authorisation.

We will be willing to provide you with a copy of the study findings and details of any subsequent publications or outputs on request.

What are your rights?*

GDPR provides that individuals have certain rights including: to request access to, copies of and rectification or erasure of personal data and to object to processing.

In addition, data subjects may also have the right to restrict the processing of the personal data and to data portability. You can request access to the information we process about you at any time.

If at any point you believe that the information we process relating to you is incorrect, you can request to see this information and may in some instances request to have it restricted, corrected, or erased. You may also have the right to object to the processing of data and the right to data portability.

Please note that as we are processing your personal data for research purposes, the ability to exercise these rights may vary as there are potentially applicable research exemptions under the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. For more information on these exemptions, please see [UofG Research with personal and special categories of data](#).

If you wish to exercise any of these rights, please submit your request via the [webform](#) or contact dp@gla.ac.uk

Complaints

If you wish to raise a complaint on how we have handled your personal data, you can contact the University Data Protection Officer who will investigate the matter.

Our Data Protection Officer can be contacted at dataprotectionofficer@glasgow.ac.uk

If you are not satisfied with our response or believe we are not processing your personal data in accordance with the law, you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) <https://ico.org.uk/>

Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This project has been ethically approved via the College of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee or relevant School Ethics Forum in the College.

How long do we keep it for?

Your personal data will be retained by the University only for as long as is necessary for processing and no longer than the period of ethical approval [30/09/2022](#). After this time, personal data will be securely deleted.

Your research data will be retained for a period of ten years in line with the University of Glasgow Guidelines. Specific details in relation to research data storage are provided on the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form which accompany this notice.

End of Privacy Notice _____

Appendix C: Participant Information Sheet



College of Social Sciences

Project Title: Making sense of consumer subjectification through second-hand clothing consumption at the Base-of-the-Pyramid

Abayomi Ibrahim Motajo

PhD Candidate in Management, Adam Smith Business School, College of Social Sciences, University of Glasgow.

Email:

a.motajo.1@research.gla.ac.uk

Supervisors:

Dr Katherine Duffy (katherine.duffy@glasgow.ac.uk)

Prof Deirdre Shaw (deirdre.shaw@glasgow.ac.uk)

You are invited to participate in a research study. Please find below some information about the research to help you decide whether you wish to participate. Any further information can be made available on request. Please read the information carefully and decide whether or not you would like to take part in the research.

Thank you for taking the time to read this statement.

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to understand clothing consumption and disposal through the views and experiences of second-hand clothing consumers in Nigeria. Second-hand clothes are clothes that were previously owned by one person but now being reused by another. In this study, these are clothes that are usually imported from abroad and popularly called Tokunbo.

Participation and Involvement

You are free to decide whether or not to take part. If you choose to participate, you will be asked a series of questions in at least two sets of individual interviews with the researcher.

Discussions in the first interview will be about your second-hand clothing use and disposal. It will be for about 60 minutes.

After the first interview, I would like you to keep records of your second-hand clothing consumption for the next two to four weeks. These records can be pictures, voice recordings or videos of your second-hand clothing consumption. You will be asked to share these records with the researcher. The content of these records will then be used to guide discussions in the subsequent

interview(s). These subsequent interviews are also estimated to be for around 60 minutes.

All interviews will be on Zoom. Zoom is a useful tool for conducting interviews in these days of the pandemic. It allows us to remain safe and reduce the cost of transportation. It also allows you to do the interview in a relaxed atmosphere of your choice.

All interviews/discussions will be recorded so that important information is not missed. The recordings will also be used for transcription and analysis.

Confidentiality

For the purpose of the study, the researcher may collect information about you including your name, phone number, location and any other basic facts that can help the researcher make sense of the discussions. This information will only be used for analysis. **They will not be part of the study's report.** Any reference to you in the report will be by assigned ID.

All personal information obtained during the research will be kept strictly confidential. They will be securely stored and destroyed on completion of the PhD in line with the University's strict data confidentiality guidelines.

The research process is not anticipated to cause any distress or harm. Please note, however, that where evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered, the University may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies/agencies.

Withdrawing

Remember that your participation is voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

Results

The findings gathered will be used as part of a PhD thesis and possibly in future publications arising from the thesis.

Ethical review

This study has been reviewed and approved by the College of Social Sciences' Research Ethics Committee.

Funding

This research is funded by the College of Social Sciences, University of Glasgow.

Further Information

Any further information can be requested through the researcher, Abayomi Ibrahim Motajo via email.

If you have concerns regarding the conduct of the research, these can be addressed through the College of Social Sciences Ethics Officer, Dr Muir Houston, email: Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk

Appendix D: Ethics Approval for Fieldwork

College of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
01 April 2021

Dear Abayomi Motajo

Project Title: Making sense of consumer subjectification through second-hand clothing consumption at the Base-of-the-Pyramid

Application No: 400200129

The College Research Ethics Committee has reviewed your application and has agreed that there is no objection on ethical grounds to the proposed study. It is happy therefore to approve the project, subject to the following conditions:

Start date of ethical approval: 01/04/2021

Project end date: 31/12/2022

Any outstanding permissions needed from third parties in order to recruit research participants or to access facilities or venues for research purposes must be obtained in writing and submitted to the CoSS Research Ethics Administrator before research commences. Permissions you must provide are shown in the *College Ethics Review Feedback* document that has been sent to you as the Collated Comments Document in the online system.

The data should be held securely for a period of ten years after the completion of the research project, or for longer if specified by the research funder or sponsor, in accordance with the University's Code of Good Practice in Research: (https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_490311_en.pdf)

The research should be carried out only on the sites, and/or with the groups and using the methods defined in the application.

Approval is granted for virtual methods outlined in the application however restrictions noted below should be followed for any face to face data collection methods.

Approval has been granted in principal: no data collection must be undertaken with the exception of methods highlighted above until the current research restrictions as a result of social distancing and self-isolation are lifted. You will be notified once this restriction is no longer in force.

Any proposed changes in the protocol should be submitted for reassessment as an amendment to the original application. The Request for Amendments to an Approved Application form should be used:

<https://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/students/ethics/forms/staffandpostgraduateresearchstudents/>

Yours sincerely,

Dr Muir Houston College Ethics Officer

Appendix E: Certificate of attendance: Ethics Training Information Session



College of Social
Sciences

College Research Ethics Committee

**Certificate of Attendance
Ethics Training Information Session**

8 November 2018

Name: Abayomi Motajo

Student Id (if applicable)

Date of Training Session 08/11/2018

This is to confirm that the above named attended an ethics training session provided by the College of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee. This session covered the following:

- Importance of research ethics and its place in research
- Important issues involved in the application of ethics in research
- Consideration of some contentious areas
- Information about the College ethics application process including the online application system

Attendance is deemed valid for the period of three years from the date of the session; after which attendance at a further session is recommended.

Dr Muir Houston
Chair of College Research Ethics Committee

Please retain this notification for future reference. If you have any enquiries, please email socsci-ethics@glasgow.ac.uk.

University of Glasgow
College of Social Sciences
Florentine House, 33 Hillhead Street, Glasgow G12 8QF
The University of Glasgow, charity number SC004401

E-mail: socsci-ethics@glasgow.ac.uk

Appendix F: Sample Transcript of buyer participant interview

Participant's Profile:	Buyer/Polytechnic Lecturer
Assigned ID:	Fiye
Gender:	Female
Interview count	1
Date of interview:	08/07/2021
Time:	9:07am
Length:	01:14:41
First impression:	Used to believe it is wrong to wear a stranger's used cloth. Needed smart dress for work and study
Other observations:	Does not burn; someone will always be willing to wear them and be grateful. Donates through the church The church prays on donation

Researcher	Fiye
Thank you. I am delighted to have you here. In the next 60 minutes, or so I will be asking you to tell me about your experience with second-hand clothing just second-hand clothing. All I'll like you to do is to be as descriptive as you can possibly do and for as far back as you can remember. So, if you don't mind me starting right now	Please go ahead
Thank you, how would you describe your general experience with second-hand clothing?	Generally, before now or before I started buying second-hand clothing, I had the notion that it's not meant for me. You know, it's not ideal, it's not good enough, not hygienic

	<p>wearing what someone else must have worn before but latter I got to know that not all second-hand clothing that are sold in the market were actually worn by someone before but that some might have been brought in as result of clearance sales and those are neat and have not been worn before.</p> <p>Now, I got into the buying of second-hand clothing when I started having children and needed them to be having play cloth. You know what we call play cloth; clothes that they can wear within the house to play, to crawl when they were crawling, clothes that you can afford to [...] you know, not the real expensive ones that you buy for ceremonial events. So that made me to start buying second-hand clothing and I saw that when I bought them, they were relatively new. Some were previously worn, some not worn at all and I realise that they were durable, they were quite durable, very durable and that encouraged me to keep on buying them so I just restrained myself to the buying of new clothes for say church wear, party wear and second-hand clothing for play, playing, staying at home, playing wear. So, my general observation is that they are durable.</p>
<p>Thank you very much for that very elaborate answer. I picked up a few things from your answer. You said something about the thought that they were not good</p>	<p>It's not really nice that a person that has worn the clothing must have sweat in the clothing and another person now having to buy it to wear, you know it is kind of unhygienic. Also, you know, the preservative, I don't know, that are added to these clothing before they are</p>

<p>enough because they were not hygienic, can you expatiate a bit on that please?</p>	<p>sent to Nigeria, I also feel that can this be hygienic? But those that were selling made me understand that you can actually soak with Jik (bleach), with disinfectant, if it is white that will not bleach off, you can soak with Jik (bleach) and kill any form of germs or bacteria that one might have perceived to be present in the clothes that have been worn by someone else before. So, that's what I mean by hygienic.</p>
<p>So, are you still worried about the hygiene issue now?</p>	<p>Right now, what I do is when I have to buy them, I make sure I look at them one after the other. There are some like shirt, when you are buying them, you see underneath the armpit you see sweat stains that have stuck so hard that you just say this is a no, you know. Naturally, I will go for clothing that still have tags on them, I still find some that have tags on them that have not been worn before. But the fact that they were all packed together with those that have been worn before is also a source of concern. So, I think I've gotten around it, I make sure I disinfect them, I make sure I spread them in hot scorching sun believing that that will kill the [germ] and I used to feel that if there are actually issues around them, I would have had skin irritations after wearing them. So, not having skin irritations is a pointer to me that I'm good.</p>
<p>You also mentioned that you began to seriously think about it when you started having children, what about your</p>	<p>Before family, no, no, no. Before family, I wasn't into it at all, I wasn't. And I also live in a town Ilaro. Ilaro is a border town, we are close to the border, so we have a lot of people</p>

<p>experience before that, what was your experience like before family set in?</p>	<p>coming in, bringing in imported items through the land border, the Cotonou border so we have a lot of people doing the business around. So, often time, even without you planning to get these clothes, you see them displayed. You know, I have like, one right beside my house. When I'm going out, I'll say ah, this shirt is nice, this short will be good for my child. You know, it just became a natural thing, you know, just like everywhere that you see it displayed everywhere and you feel the need and you'll say, let me go for it, it would be cheaper than buying the new one.</p>
<p>Thank you very much. You said one of the key motivators for buying is your children needing play clothes. Then ofcourse that they are cheap and durable. Besides these one, is there any other motivation that you have for going for second-hand clothing?</p>	<p>I think those are the basic reasons why I actually go for them. And need I add that I started wearing them myself too. I started wearing them and the motivation is this. There was a time I was running a postgraduate programme at the Covenant University. And you know, we're always corporately dressed on the campus. We have to be either decked in suit or corporate wear and I realised that I didn't have so much. I just put to bed; I just gave birth to my last baby. I had added weight, my clothes in the wardrobe weren't fitting so well and I just needed more comfortable wears that I would joggle. I was working and running the programme, so I was joggling Ilaro to Ota. So, I needed more comfortable clothing that would also pass for corporate, and I did not have the money to go for the new clothing because I was paying my fees and I did not have the luxury of buying clothes. So funnily, I</p>

	<p>realised right on the campus, they were selling second-hand clothing. No, did I say right on the campus? Right in the shopping complexes at the Covenant University, they were selling pant like trousers, they were selling shirts, that could pass for official, and they were, you know, cheap, as cheap as four hundred, five hundred (naira). And that brought comfort to me. That brought so much comfort to me, so I was just buying from there and you know, mixing them up till I finished my programme. So now, that calls to mind that even children of the rich, you know, buy from them. I really don't know why that is, but I don't know. I went for it because it was cheap</p>
Even children of the rich?	<p>Yes, yes. Children of the rich also buy. You know, and they package theirs. They package theirs; they hang them, you know the way you buy clothes at the stores. Hanged clothes and displayed, you just go through not like the one we buy in this town (Ilaro) that you all bend down to select, bend-down-select, you know. So, there is a form of packaging that goes with theirs. In fact, I think they even iron them out to make them look good, so affordability came in for me.</p> <p>11:42</p>
Can I quickly ask you to give me an idea of the sort of items you would normally buy	Skirts, trousers, shirt, t-shirts
Are these specific to any gender or were there all varieties?	Well, I must confess to you, we have more of female clothing, more of female clothing on display. But in this town (Ilaro), my vendor, the

	<p>woman that I buy from usually brings in men's clothing too but, you know, if she is bringing in, if she is opening let's say ten bales in a month, you're sure that eight will be for women, two will be for men. And for men, it will be basically Jeans, polo shirts, yeah, t-shirts too, then knickers, knickers for men.</p>
<p>So, there are more women clothing than men?</p>	<p>Yeah, more of women and children's clothing than men's clothing. and I think the reason for this is that I think, our husband really does not encourage us going to for this clothing, they are not favourably disposed towards the use of second-hand clothing, they are not really favourably disposed to it. And I got to know that they prefer to go buy from stores where they are made to believe that what they are buying are new when they have actually been washed, perfumed, and packaged. So, they end up buying the same item at an exorbitant rate, you know. Rather than just buying a polo shirt of one thousand (naira) go and wash it , iron it and its good but you end up going to the boutique, buy it for like say seven thousand (naira) and in your mind, you feel you are wearing a designer polo when it is actually, yes a designer polo but it is actually a used one.</p>
<p>You mentioned Ilaro being a border town and the fact that these items come in through the land border, and the Covenant University campus shopping complexes. Can I ask you how would you compare</p>	<p>I really don't know, I really can't say much but we have more variety in Ilaro, more variety in Ilaro, that's the truth. You know, I can buy office dresses in Ilaro but at Covenant University, you rarely see dresses, you see more of trousers, skirts, and suits. That's what they have there. I also mentioned that there is</p>

<p>the second-hand clothing market in Ilaro to the second-hand clothing market on the Covenant University campus?</p>	<p>a form of packaging that comes with that of Covenant University. I'm not saying that they wash them, but I think they kind of iron them, and hang them for display. You know how clothes are hung at stores when you want to buy dresses, clothes. But in Ilaro, they are not done that way. It is only a store in Ilaro that I know that the lady goes an extra mile to package are clothing and all she does, not that she washes them. She doesn't wash but she will pick the items one after the other, she will see if there is any form of amendment, like if it is a button that is off, she tries and fix it and fold properly, put in nylon and arrange. So, that's the only lady that I know but every other one would, in fact, they will even send out notice, they will send out notice like days ahead, like my dear customers, I will be opening, let me try and see if I can read one to you, the announcement for the opening of her bale. Ok, let me start from this one sent on the 4th of June.</p> <p>"Dear customer, I will be opening children's Jeans jackets, ages 1 -15 years tomorrow by 11am in the shop, thanks". Another one was sent,</p> <p>"Dear customer, I'll be opening men mix, first grade t-shirts, polo, v-neck bale in the shop tomorrow by 11am in the morning" like that. Another one,</p> <p>"Dear customer, I'll be opening ladies' office/outing gown bale tomorrow".</p>
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	So, I mean, you have an idea of it because she will be specific about what she will be opening
Yeah, are these from one seller or what?	No, no, no, just from one vendor. This particular vendor of mine will always send me messages.
So, does she deal in all these varieties?	Exactly, exactly, you know, there is another one, she will be opening ladies chiffon tops, office wears tomorrow, you know, like that. Ladies' blazers and Jacket tomorrow by so and so time. So, for children's wears, she'll tell you the age range, zero to nine years, children's wear. So, I mean, if I don't need children's wears, I won't have to go. And if my children do not fall within the age range, I still do not have to go. So, if it is purely Jeans trousers for male and female, she will tell you the time. So, it's that organised, the business is that organised for some people.
Is that in Ilaro?	Yes, that's in Ilaro.
Do you have the same experience with the Covenant University sellers?	No, no, no. For the Covenant university, you just walk into the [...] what do they call them now? I left there four years ago and I'm trying to remember what they call them you know, where they sell snacks, you know different vendors will be allocated to place. The arena is not like every normal area that we have on our campuses, I mean in our government schools, you know, it is a porch one, within the building. So, they are just allocated a limited space and they make the best of the space. They will even have dressing area that if you want to test it on, you can test it on

<p>Thank you.</p> <p>How would you compare the prices of the items you buy in Ilaro to the ones you buy on the Covenant University campus?</p>	<p>Well, the prices are ... but for the high exchange rate that we are now experiencing, I would have said Ilaro should be more favourable. Ilaro, the pricing can be compared to the ones that they buy at, what's the name of this place in Lagos gatankowa and Super, you know, those two places, Ilaro can be compared to those two places. But for covenant now, it can be a hundred naira or two hundred naira more.</p>
<p>Have you shopped in one of this Lagos markets before?</p>	<p>Lagos market, I'm not really a Lagos person. I go to Lagos but I'm not really a Lagos person. And I realise that even people in Lagos, I mean I have siblings in Lagos that would always want me to help them get these second-hand items, bags, I do bag a lot, second-hand bags and second-hand shoes. So, they prefer me getting it for them because in Lagos, they kind of get more expensive than here [in Ilaro] but for clothing, I think it is more preferable, it's cheaper here because this environment is not really a.., it's more of a low class, a small town not like a city, Lagos city</p>
<p>You mentioned durability a while back, what do you look for that makes you determine this is a good quality or this will be a durable item?</p>	<p>What do I look for? Of course, when I see an item that I'm interested in, I'll look for if it's faded, I'll try and determine the extent of use by the first user. And you know, you can get that for trousers, you can get that from the underneath of the trousers, I don't know what that is called but you know that place that is close to the feet, if you see that it is worn out, cut, torn, or faded. You know oh, this one must have been used so much by the first user. Also,</p>

	<p>for shirts, I've had instances when I return items to my vendor. You know, it could be after washing, I realise that there is a mark that shows that it will soon get torn, you know, I return. But often times, I rarely do that.</p> <p>You look at the cloth, when you buy new cloth, when you see a second-hand item, you can actually put them together and see oh, this is not badly used for the price, you know. So, I don't know how to justify my choice but [when I see them, I know] [for instance] when you buy children's shirt, when the neckline is still firm, you know, oh, this is good but if it is slack like it has been washed over and over again, you wouldn't want to buy that, that's it.</p>
<p>You also mentioned earlier that these clothing are obtained for house wear and you buy the alternative for church etc, how do you describe the other alternative?</p>	<p>Well, we try to inculcate in the children the wearing of their traditional attires, so we usually sew a lot of dansiki, kembe (loosely sewn upper wears and trousers) for them and they only wear them to church. I realised that my children really don't like wearing them, agbada () and the like so we make a point of oh, you must wear. And my mother-in-law also helps the matter, she is always sewing traditional wears for them. Other than that, I must not lie to you, it is very expensive buying new clothing for children. It is very expensive. I do it but thankfully I have relatives abroad that will always send in clothing to the children so by the time A, B, C, D send, we have enough to last us for a year or two. In fact, I have a nylon [bag] where I keep clothes that are yet to be worn. It could be because</p>

	<p>they are oversized for them at the moment but there was a time, I needed to buy new clothing for my children, I just felt I can't buy, they can't wear second-hand clothing for, this is quite recent, for December. My children, they were to have their Christmas party in school, and I felt I needed to deck them in Christmas colours; red, green. So, I went to a boutique where I was sure the lady wasn't packaging second-hand clothing and selling as new. I know she travels out of the country to buy her clothing and [exclaims] when I saw the prices, I just wondered how, I mean, if not for the idea of buying second-hand clothing, is this what I would have been buying from people bringing in clothes. I bought a t-shirt, just a t-shirt, a t-shirt that my son doesn't even know the difference between being new and a used one. I bought it for three thousand naira (£5.28). she was just telling me, oh, it's a Disney something, it is something, but shame could not make me to turn back and say I wasn't going to buy again, you know. So, I ended up buying, I bought a shirt for my son, that is in the boarding school, I bought a long sleeve shirt. I ended up spending like fifteen thousand naira, but I was not happy with what I bought, you know, I ended up leaving that store with a nylon [bag] that could pass for a bread nylon, like I just bought, you know, two loaves of bread. I wasn't happy but I was just determined to buy new clothing for them. But my children did not know the difference too,</p>
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	<p>you know. After wearing it for the Christmas party, subsequently, they started wearing like its second-hand clothing. There was no justification of any sort, that's the truth but that said, I would say if I'm better financially positioned, I wouldn't be going for second-hand clothing, I would not. I would not. But for now, I think it's giving me a form of sanity.</p>
<p>You said two things i.e., it is very expensive to buy at the moment and then that children don't know the difference in most cases, but you do know the difference.</p>	<p>I do. I do.</p>
<p>I believe that there will be one or two things that you can say yes, this is what makes this one good. Is it where you buy them from for example or the price?</p>	<p>See, what they call a good one, I actually get it as a good one in second-hand too. So, good one is not an issue but the cost. The price. You imagine buying a really good second-hand shirt for your child for three hundred naira, four hundred naira and having to buy for two thousand a new one for two thousand, for three thousand for same shirt. You know, that can buy as many as - how many - ten pieces of second-hand shirts.</p>
<p>How about the durability, how do they compare?</p>	<p>They are basically the same. That is if the shirt you are buying is not [...] You know we buy a lot of new items from different countries. Like the one I bought is from a lady that buys from the UK and I'm sure of it. And you know, the same quality that would be sent to the UK is not the same that will be sent to Nigeria. And the quality you bring in from Dubai is also different, China too. So, I think durability,</p>

	those second-hand clothing from UK, when I put them beside the new items from the UK, I see them as the same. I prefer buying a UK bale. In fact, people selling will tell you this is UK bale.
And, how do you determine if they are correct, I mean could that not be a marketing stunt?	I really can't say. Sincerely, I can't tell but I remember they tell you it is UK bale they are opening.
How do you take care of these second-hand clothing in terms of getting them ready to wear and going forward?	At the initial point of buying them, I make sure that I first sort them out based on their colours. If they are white, I can easily, comfortably apply my Jik (bleach), soak it but for others, I try to soak them with my detergent and my disinfectant overnight and wash then rinse thoroughly, I rinse them thoroughly. Then there is this perfume, liquid perfume that I use to buy when I started buying second-hand clothing because I still feel that I perceive the smell of that second-hand in them when I wear them. So, I usually buy this perfume. People that set baby things usually sell them. So, after washing, I soak them with that liquid too and that liquid, the fragrance would over-shadow the fragrance of the second-hand peculiar smell. So that will help out with the odour, the smell then I would spread [them] out in the hot scorching sun and when dry, you have no choice than to iron because it would always have that rumpled look if you don't iron them. So, that initial ironing goes a long way. I feel that it doesn't just take care of the rumpled look, it also, in a way, kills maybe the remaining bacteria or

	<p>whatever in them. But subsequently, you just add them to other clothing and life goes on. No special treatment for them subsequently.</p>
<p>Can I take you up on the question about smell? Why is it so important that the smell as to go away? Is the smell repugnant?</p>	<p>It's not repulsive, it is not that the smell is repulsive, but the truth is I don't like it. It is not an odour, but I just feel that the smell is peculiar to second-hand items, and I want to take the second-hand away from the item so that's my strategy.</p>
<p>How would you describe your water usage when you wash clothing? 36:40</p>	<p>You know here, we are in control, we are the local government chairman and chairperson of our homes. So, we drill our boreholes, so we use water the way we want it. For me, I use a lot of water, I use a lot of water, a lot (stressed for emphasis) in washing, in rinsing. If I have to use the washing machine, I might rinse like three times, I rinse like three times then the final rinsing will now be with that fragrance that I spoke about. After rinsing like two three time, I now add the fragrance and the fragrance will also do another form of rinsing for me. So, I use a lot of water. I don't mince water when washing second-hand clothing or any clothing at all.</p>
<p>I think I understand why you said you use a lot of water; my concern is that do you not worry that using a lot of water might have some environmental consequences?</p>	<p>Oh, my, my, my, my, you will agree with me, you are a Nigerian, [aren't you?]. Environmental consequences? I feel that having to drill my borehole by myself, has environmental consequences in itself, right? And so, I sincerely don't think of any environmental consequences. I feel ok, my</p>
<p>I dolt you, there are no right or wrong answers, I'm just trying to learn from your</p>	<p>soak away [pit] where the water is channelled goes underneath the ground so and my</p>

experiences, and you have been very wonderful, thank you.	borehole too, I mean my well also goes underneath so somehow, the water that I'm trashing out will end up joining the water that is coming back to me, I don't know, I really don't know. I don't care about the environmental consequences and that's sad, right?
Can I quickly go into the questions of how you dispose second-hand clothing?	Ok. For me, if the clothing is mine, I have a lot of younger ones that I usually do a form of check. It's either that I'm getting fatter or I'm slimming down and I felt that this cloth doesn't fit me any longer. Not because there is anything wrong with it, so I try to dispose of [it]. There are a lot of people around me that need clothing. In fact, my neighbours here where I live, I try to give the children. They are always scantily dressed so when I dispose of these clothes and I give it to the children, I end up seeing the clothes on their parents, their mother you know for you to know how bad things are. But, that said, you know we are all trying to be careful with our clothing, with our items now. A lot of fetish things are going on around, so we try to be careful. Often times, the church will tell you that there is going to be an outreach, bring good clothing so we try to package clothes that we feel ok, I don't want these again. Not because there is something wrong with it, you know. You just pack them together. My children too, I do the same for them. Clothes that they have outgrown, you know children are growing. We have some people in my parent's in-law's area
Let me start by asking, at what point do you determine that this has to go?	

	<p>that my children are always giving their clothes to. Whether sewn ones, whether new or second-hand clothes. When they've outgrown them, they package and they give to the; shoes, bags, and items like that, we dispose of like that. For me, I give people that are willing to wear them [that would say] I want this shirt, I love it. I could give to them, you know. But I don't burn them. There will always be [someone] even if it has become a third hand, not second-hand again, it has become third hand to them, but they will still be in good shape while its being passed down to them.</p>
<p>Two things I like to clarify. You mentioned being careful because of some fetish things, can you expatiate on that please?</p>	<p>You know around here, ok. I remember when we moved into this house, our house personal apartment. It wasn't fenced and our neighbours at the back told us the very day we came in that we should ensure that when we spread our clothes outside, we pack them in, we don't allow them to stay outside overnight because people steal clothing not because they want to wear them but because they want to use them for rituals, you know. So that's applicable around here, I know you know what I'm talking about. Your sweat [in] items that you've worn, you know, it is believed that some goodness of one's life can be gotten from one's clothing. so that makes us to be careful of who one gives his or her clothes to. So, I think that's a reason why we need to be careful when disposing of our items. So, we only give them out to people we are sure of.</p>

<p>What about the ones you said you give to the church because I assume the church will give them to people you may not know</p>	<p>Yes, people we may not know. No, for that, I must not lie to you, I can be very sceptical when packing clothes for church because they send them to arears that we don't know but often times, the church will tell you don't worry. They pack them all together, you know. We have like a bank, cloth bank, they are packed together, they ensure that they are good, and they pray over them. They pray that we don't end up harming ourselves while trying to be helpful to other people.</p>
<p>You said you don't burn them, why do you not burn clothes?</p>	<p>It's really sad, the level of poverty that is around us. That cloth that you feel is too bad, that clothe that you feel ah, its faded, I can't wear it again, you'll realise that there is someone that is willing to wear it and be so grateful for it. So, I feel that burning is not an option. If it is just to, I mean, these set of people I'm talking about are not interested in the fashion aspect of the clothes. They are more concerned about the shelter, um the protection of their bodies from different weather conditions so I feel that burning cloth is good; I'm not even thinking about the environmental factors that may be attached to burning of clothes. Of course, I burn things, I have my incinerator within the compound, I burn other items, but I don't burn clothes, I don't burn clothes, I don't. I'll rather give out than burn them.</p>
<p>You said you give them out but if a particular cloth becomes something you cannot wear</p>	<p>Do you mean other purposes like wearing them at home?</p>

<p>again, do you give all of them out or do you use some of them for other purposes?</p>	<p>What I do at home is basically giving out. I rarely say oh, this can't go to work again I need to start wearing them at home, no. I'd rather buy leisure shirts, leisure shorts, you know leisure wears. I don't convert that way. I'll rather oh, it's too tight for me, let me give it out or I don't like it again, let me give it out. In fact, I realise that I buy those clothes and I don't end up wearing all of them, I end up giving out. [I'd say] I just bought this; do you like it? I just bought it; would it size you? So, I don't convert to any other use; its either I wear them, or I give them out. I don't convert to any other thing.</p>
	<p>I see my mother-in-law at times turns hers into rags in the house. I mean she doesn't buy second-hand clothing but, you know, clothes that she doesn't wear again, and she doesn't have anybody to give them to. Could be because she feels that it is not worthy to be given out, she turns them to rags in the house to clean soiled floors and the likes, but I don't do it. I just stick to my mopping sticks, that's all.</p>
<p>You mentioned somethings earlier about where they come from, and I know you said some come from the UK. But do you have an idea of where the second-hand clothing that come to Nigeria are from?</p>	<p>I think they come from the US, they come from the UK. I know they also come from Asian countries too. I think they come in from like China, I think they come in from China because you inscriptions on them.</p>

<p>Fine but do you know how second-hand clothing become second-hand in the UK?</p>	<p>Yeah, I feel that first and foremost, when shops do clearance sales, they get clothes that they have displayed for a while on their racks or when the season changes, I mean when they need to bring in new items, for another season, then they may want to dispose of the ones that were previously there and I really don't know the middle people that choose to pack them and send them out and turn them to second-hand. I also learnt that people willingly pack their clothes, I mean, I have a friend who is in the US, who would tell me she packs her clothes and gives them to um, she dispose them of during that sales where people come [and] buy at cheaper prices so I want to believe that happens in the UK too, I am not sure but I feel that those are means by which people can dispose of these items that end up coming to us as second-hand clothing. Or that they even trash them, like they throw them away and people just sort them out and feel oh, this is still good, it can come to Africa. And I also have friends in the UK that tells me that they can buy things cheap, at cheaper rates at yard sales, you know, of course friends that are there to study. I'm actually aspiring to, I'll be resuming too for lectures this September at Huddersfield so you know, I belong to groups where people tell you ah, when you get this accommodation, you need not get this kind of accommodation, you can actually get this and equip it, furnish it with items that you buy from yard sales, um,</p>
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	<p>clothing, they don't mention clothing but I know, I feel that clothing too should be available via that means too.</p>
<p>You mentioned trashing that they may have been trashed. Can you shed more light on what you mean by that?</p>	<p>Um, I'm not talking with any form of certainty, I don't know but I feel that the same way people scavenge for items, feel that people can also scavenge for clothing, you know, when people trash them out. You know, I'm not wearing this again, and just throw it in the bin and people that are of course, I know, there will be a form of sorting that would go on, you know. They could just sort them out and say, this is still good and can still be worn by people, I'm not sure, I'm not sure, I am not sure but that is why I said I prefer going for clothes that still have tags that I'm sure they've not been worn before, I prefer going for those and we find them a lot and I believe those are from the stores that want to dispose of clothes that have stayed for a while on their cloth racks.</p>
<p>Thank you for those clarifications.</p> <p>I wonder if there is something about your second-hand clothing experience that I may have missed that you would like to talk about</p>	<p>You've not mentioned, well, you weren't specific about clothing. Can we categorise underwear as clothing?</p>
<p>If they are second-hand, yeah if they are second-hand.</p>	<p>Ok, that irritates me when I see people buying panties, second-hand panties and they just, just buy, they just buy them, [they'll say ah, they last longer and with of forms of sincerity, I tried buying brassieres, second-hand clothing</p>

	<p>brassieres once. And it was just due to frustration, you know, I usually go to buy my undies in Lagos, and they don't last. Within a month, there is this metal part that will just find its way out and we would try and won't mend and I'm like in spite of how much I bought this so [I said] ok, let me try these second-hand bras too and I bought three pieces of them. Ah, I hid them from my husband, I just felt this is just way too much, my husband must not see this, you know. I soaked them for like a week, I'll just change the water and wash, soak it again, change the water and wash and soak it you know, eventually, you know in my mind, I was disinfecting them but I realised, of a truth, they last longer, they last. I told you I bought three of them but I just told myself, I will not do this again. I mean, if it's going to cost me more buying the ones from the US I think, I mean, it's worth it. But a lot of people buy them, they buy them, they buy them a lot because they tell you oh, we're busy, we cannot find our sizes at the regular market and you know, we find this in second-hand bales, you know, and people even buy panties for children, and you find that a lot. When children bales are opened, you find children panties a lot. of course, they will be clean, and people will tell you, oh, this is better than the China made ones that are usually imported into the country, you know. So, um, the point I'm trying to make is that we do second-hand buying of underwear too and I</p>
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	feel that can be very dangerous, that can be very dangerous, I accept.
I must say I'm lost here because I don't quite understand, in the first instance why are undies in the market. Now, is this a regular thing or is this once in a while? How do you compare the availability of second-hand underwear to regular second-hand clothing?	Oh, I get you. There are some that actually major, there are specialists in the sales of undies. When you go to these markets, I mean the Lagos markets now, they have people that when you need Jeans, that's all that they sell. If you need chiffon tops, if you need Jerseys but there are some that if you need pants, undies, undies, you know when we talk about undies, we're talking about bras, we're talking about pants, we're talking about girdles, we're talking about those three majorly, yeah, that's what they major in, that's what they specialise in. So, um, I think they feel that the shirts, the wears markets are saturated so they kind of have their own unique items that they choose to sell.
And is this a regular thing?	Yes, and they carry them as bales.
I would think these are things you'll find in other bales/bunch maybe just packed accidentally	No, no, no, no. Whoever is packaging these clothing items for them overseas also sort these things out. That is why my customer (vendor0 will them me she is opening children's clothing, children of zero to nine years, meaning that somebody must have packaged them together and sort [and label in bales] the same way they package trousers, same way they package undies: bra and pants in different sizes.
I know you don't feel comfortable buying them. If it is this elaborate and people actually deal in them, why do	Because I feel that they are personal, they are actually personal, you know, um, we are most sensitive at our private areas, you know so I

you not feel comfortable buying them	feel that we should be more hygienic with our private areas.
Well, I wouldn't want to push this further because it's really a revelation that the second-hand underwear clothing market is huge? Would you say it compares well with the other clothing or it is just a niche?	Like I said, I'm not really into underwear, I'm not really into it but I see them, I see them a lot, I see them a lot on display, you know, and I just wonder wow, pants!
Thank you very much for that. You mentioned something about packaging when you said our men prefer to buy things differently. How would you describe what happens in that space, I mean used clothing packaged as new	It's a form of deceit. Its deceit. It is, it has no other name. And this usually done, no harm please, I'm not trying to be judgemental here, it is usually done by Ibos (people of Eastern Nigeria) you know. They are very business minded you know. They buy these clothe, they iron them, they perfume them, they dry-clean them, and possibly, they even attach tags to them and display them in their coloured boutiques. You know what I mean by coloured boutiques, you know where they have different lightings that will confuse you, you won't see well, you know. And they make you believe, oh, this is Givenchy, ah, its original, you know, in all sincerity, it may be Givenchy but it is not new Givenchy, you know.
Ok. So do they advertise them as new or what?	Yeah, they advertise them as new but the lady in my town that I know that does a lot of packaging, she doesn't tell you these are new. She just packages them, sort them out, fix them if they need to be fixed, you know, just to be different, you know, just to be different

	in her own um, I think it is just a marketing strategy for her
And so, this packaging of used for new, how big would you describe that market?	Um, I really cannot say how huge it is, but I know it exists, I know it exists.
And does it happen for all sort for children, for women, for men clothing?	Um, really don't know if it happens for children clothing but I know it happens for adults' clothing.
And so finally, when you say they trash them and push them to Africa, can you shed more light on what you think is happening in that arrangement?	Em, well, it is a known fact that Africa is more of a dumping ground for different types of items that I could say that are not good enough for the developed world. It's really sad. I mean, that's why we have Tokunbo [used, imported] cars, you know. Cars that you feel oh, they are not useful, they are not good enough again. They're sent down here and we go all the way to our cooperative [societies] to collect money to buy them and we say we bought 'new car', you know. I guess it burrows down to the economic situation in Nigeria where people cannot actually afford to buy brand new ones and need to um. Yeah, that said, it all burrows down to poverty, poverty, poverty. It is only poverty that will make you want to wear what somebody else must have worn. And yeah, when I say poverty, it doesn't have to be the serious one. I mean, I am not poor, you know but I am not rich too. I'm just in-between and, you know, if I am better placed - like I said - I would not be buying them. I would not so it burrows down to poverty.

<p>Yeah, I get that but what I don't quite understand is why do you think these things are defined as not fit for this market so they should have to come down, what makes them no longer fit for the UK market for example?</p>	<p>You know, abroad, I believe there is a circle, how do I put this now? It is believed that ok, if I wear this cloth for summer, I wouldn't have to wear them for the next season, you get. And rather than just pilling them at home, dispose them off and besides, it is believed that, let me use cars for example, I know your study is not about cars. It is believed that after using a car for three years, it is due for change because um, I don't know but back here, um, the Tokunbo [used, imported] car that I bought in 2011, I'm still driving it till now. Yeah, you can say it is rickety, but I still drive it. Not that I don't want to buy another one, but I just can't afford to buy another one, so I make do with what I have. So, I think that applied to every other items that we buy, you know, we rather patch them up.</p>
<p>My concern is that if people can do that in Africa, people can do that anywhere because there are poor people here as well. And I know about the African market but what is your opinion about why can they not keep them here and use them here [in the UK]?</p>	<p>Of course, there is a ready market for them here.</p> <p>They are manufactured there, right. I feel that they are manufactured over there, we are not manufacturing there here. So, I think's also part of it. Our manufacturing industries are in comatose, so that could be a factor. Anything that's been manufactured can be brought down whether used or new, whether substandard or standard. Bring it down, we have no choice because we are not manufacturing.</p>
<p>But can they not trash them here [in the UK]?</p>	<p>Remember you people recycle. You are environmentally friendly, you know, you talk about, you know, you care about the</p>

	<p>environment, who cares about the environment here? We don't here, we care about our survival here and we are forgetting that survival too is somehow linked to the environment but, you know, I don't know.</p>
<p>Yeah, you keep saying you don't know but you've really told me quite a lot of things that I really find interesting and helpful.</p> <p>Caring about the environment is something that is promoted here and all that.</p> <p>What can you tell me about recycling in Nigeria especially for second-hand clothing?</p>	<p>[Laughs], um, I don't know and for all I care, nobody is recycling clothes in Nigeria. As bad as the clothing will be, somebody will still wear them. Somebody can still wear them as bad as they are.</p>
<p>If somebody can still wear them, that's being recycled, isn't it?</p>	<p>Well, if that's your definition of recycling that means we are great recyclers then.</p>
<p>The fact that clothing can still be worn, is actually captured under something called reuse but that is part of the entire recycling system. So, if somebody can still reuse them, then it means some form of recycling is happening with clothing.</p> <p>The question I keep coming to is why do you think they do not keep them here rather than bringing them down to Nigeria?</p>	<p>May be recycling them over there like, the kind of recycling that they feel that they should do could be more expensive than producing new ones. It's just a thought.</p>

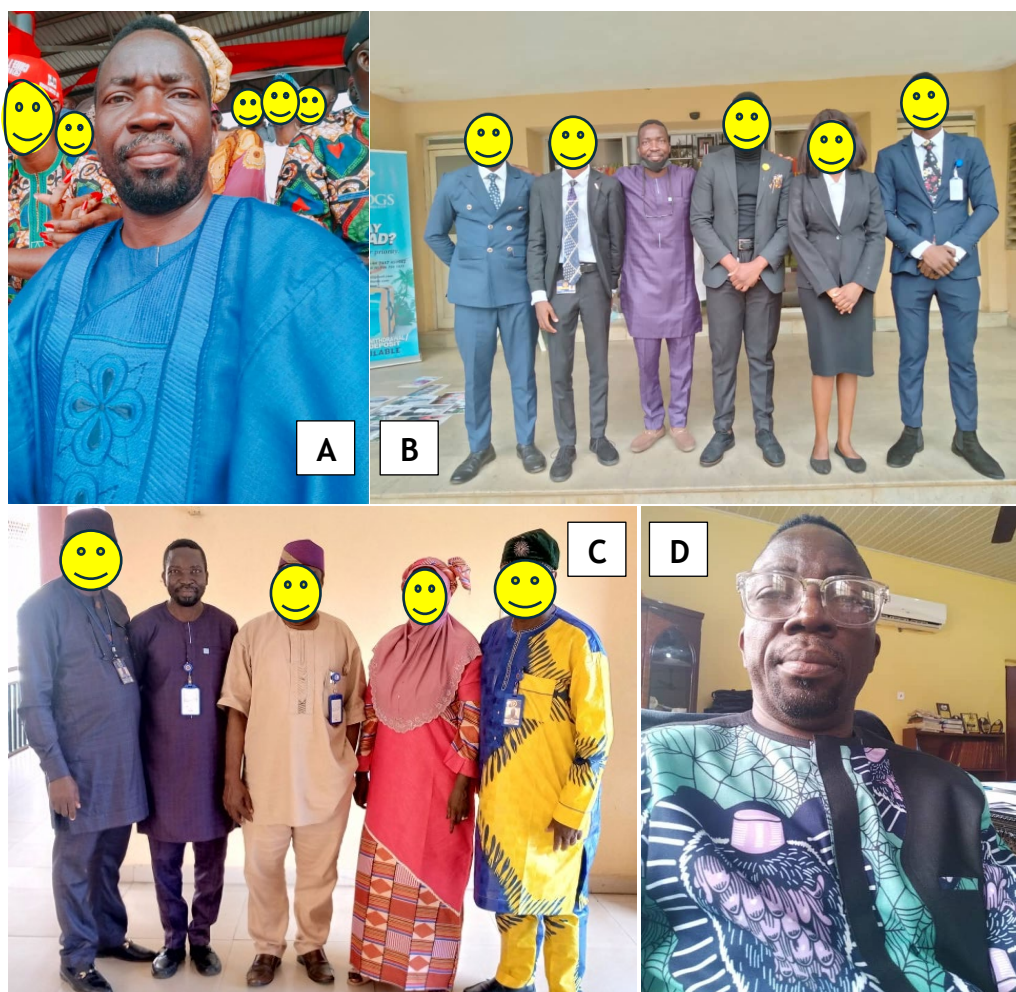
And who do you think is doing this, who is championing this pushing, you mentioned dumping earlier?	Ah, I don't know.	
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Appendix G: Visual Data

Visual data G-1: Chucks_second-hand clothing for work and play



Visual data G-2: Tobi_Office wears_Mondays to Thursdays



Visual data G-3: Tobi_Office wears_Mondays to Thursdays



Visual data G-4: Tobi_Office wears_Fridays only



Visual data G-5: Tobi_Sporty weekends



Visual data G-6: Tobi_Family Day-out



Visual data G-7: Tishe_Unique attributes_extra large



Visual data G-8: Tunbo_Unique attributes_fitting weather and budget



Visual data G-9: Seyi_Washed and Disinfected second-hand clothing

