



**FASHION AS A CONTESTED
PRACTICE – CIRCULAR
ECONOMY EMERGENCE IN
SWEDEN**

International symposium: Fashion
Aesthetics/Fashion Ethics
Herman Stål (in collaboration with Hervé
Corvellec, Lund university)



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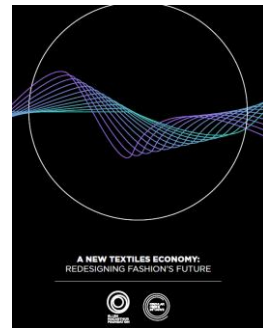
CONTESTATION OF PRACTICES

- Involve *problematizations*
- And *remedies*
- Triggers *defensive institutional work*
 - efforts at responding to demands

EMERGENCE OF CIRCULAR FASHION

- Increasingly struggles have come to focus on *linear fashion practices*
 - Take, make and dispose
 - Worsened by surging consumption levels
 - Capable institutional entrepreneurs
 - The Ellen MacArthur Foundation
 - Nordic Council of Ministries
 - Swedish Environmental Agency
 - Mistra Future Fashion


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IN ESSENCE

- Clothes have a *massive* environmental and social footprint
- And are used for a short time
- More than half of fashion is disposed within a year


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DEFENSIVE INSTITUTIONAL WORK OF SWEDISH FASHION FIRMS

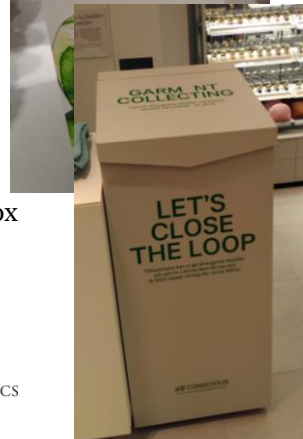
- Talk:
 - ”We know that linearity is wrong”.
- Actions (ex.):
 - Leasing models
 - Repair to prolong usage
 - **And take-back systems**
 - **In-store collection of used clothes**



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TAKE-BACK SYSTEMS

- Consumers return clothes
 - Either of the same brand
 - Or any brand
 - Receive discounts or charity
- Over the counter or in a designated box



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CORE-COMPARTMENT DECOUPLING

- But...
 - Take-back is either outsourced
 - Or internally separated
- *Core-compartment decoupling*
 - Do not change the linear business model
 - Design
 - Sourcing
 - Transports
 - Retailing
 - But in marketing




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EFFECTS OF TAKE-BACK?

- Yet another channel for collection
- Increase the supply of second-hand clothes in Eastern Europe, India and Africa.
- Does it replace production of new garments?


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SUMMARY: DEFENSIVE INSTITUTIONAL WORK IN SWEDISH APPAREL

- *Is proactive*
 - Swedish firms acted *ahead* of regulation
 - Comes to *shape* regulation
- Involves *change*
 - *Core-compartment decoupling*
- Not only protects but *increases* legitimacy



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AN EVOLUTION OF DEFENSIVE INSTITUTIONAL WORK

- Reject problematizations
- Accept problematizations but reject remedies
- Accept problematization and remedies
 - A paradox-approach – “both/and”
 - Core-compartment decoupling



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FINAL NOTE: ON CIRCULAR FASHION

- Will fashion become circular?
- Or will some new sustainability fad replace this focus?
- Will likely also depend on:
 - How e-retailing hits
 - Cotton prices
 - Nationalism and trade-barriers



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QUESTIONS

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