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Национальный исследовательский университет

«Высшая школа экономики»

Санкт-Петербург, Россия

ПОТРЕБЛЕНИЕ ОДЕЖДЫ С ВТОРИЧНОГО РЫНКА: МОТИВАЦИЯ И ПРАКТИКИ РОССИЙСКОЙ МОЛОДЕЖИ

Аннотация. За последние годы мода на одежду с вторичного рынка стала мировым трендом, обусловленным экологическими соображениями, экономическим давлением и стремлением к индивидуальности. Несмотря на то что мотивации и практики потребителей вторичного рынка одежды активно исследуются в западном академическом поле, в современном российском контексте они остаются слабо изученными. Данное исследование посвящено анализу мотиваций и практик потребления одежды с вторичного рынка среди российской молодежи в возрасте от 18 до 35 лет. На основе 31 полуструктурированных интервью и полевых наблюдений, проведенных в основном в Санкт-Петербурге, с применением элементов рефлексивного тематического анализа (по Braun, Clarke 2006, 2019, 2021), были определены ключевые мотивационные силы: экономические и гедонистические, в соответствии с типологией Ferraro и др. (2016) и Machado и др. (2019). Результаты показывают, что главными факторами выступают экономическая доступность, удовольствие от поиска и стремление к уникальности, тогда как экологическая и этическая мотивация проявляется реже и в качестве второстепенной мотивации. Особое внимание уделяется влиянию социального окружения и культурной памяти на потребительские практики, а также амбивалентному отношению российской молодежи к быстрой моде и трендам. Работа встраивает российский контекст в глобальные дискуссии о моде, идентичности и потребительском сопротивлении, раскрывая, как местные социально-экономические и исторические условия формируют ценности потребления.

Ключевые слова: вторичный рынок одежды, мотивация, практики, российская молодежь, мода

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Introduction

In recent decades, issues related to conscious consumption have increasingly appeared in the media, becoming some of the most pressing topics on a global scale. Statistical data (Statista 2023) shows that between 2020 and 2023, the proportion of second-hand consumption in the global market rose from 4.8% to 6.1%, in the Russian market, it increased from 2.6% to 3.9%. Contemporary social processes occurring globally, such as shifts in consumer culture — encompassing behaviors and habits, the pursuit of uniqueness and individualism, awareness of the environmental impact of mass production, and concerns about ethical issues related to garment factory workers — directly shape people's practices and motivations in the context of clothing consumption. These dynamics are giving rise to new trends, which, thanks to social media, are spreading not only within individual countries but across the globe, for example, the LOVOS (Voluntary Simplicity) and LOHAS (Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability) movements encourage people to voluntarily reduce their consumption or income levels. Some of these movements even promote voluntary poverty, while also investing in better living, improved quality of life (including health aspects like organic food and eco-products), and self-sufficient households (Niinimäki 2017). One such trend is the growing popularity of secondary market clothing consumption, which has gained particular traction among the youth demographic, particularly individuals aged 18 to 35, in various parts of the world (Knežević et al. 2016; Sepe et al. 2024; Machado et al. 2019). When we think of the secondary market, the first thing that comes to mind is often flea markets. However, in reality, the secondary clothing market now covers a much wider range of forms of consumption and sales — from traditional stores to fully developed online platforms, social media accounts and various garage sales.

The reasons behind the popularity of second-hand goods are diverse and linked to various phenomena currently unfolding in society. On the one hand, there are economic motives, such as the accessibility and low cost of clothing, which are becoming increasingly important to young people, especially in times of economic instability.

On the other hand, the secondary clothing market has become an important and convenient avenue for those who enjoy self-expression through fashion and wearing unique items that are “different from everyone else.” Many young people are drawn to authenticity and personal positioning through their clothing, often finding these qualities in vintage and second-hand pieces. And it is also important to note the growing interest in ecological issues and mindful consumption, which is reflected in a changing attitude toward clothing as a resource that can be reused rather than discarded. According to the United Nations (2019), the clothing industry accounts for 10 percent of global carbon emissions and results in £500 billion of lost value annually due to clothes not being recycled or underutilized (Corbett et al. 2020). Against this backdrop, trends such as clothing upcycling, various sewing techniques like patchwork, and the repurposing of old garments into new, modern styles are gaining popularity. Another possible reason for the rise in second-hand clothing is the trend of nostalgia for the past, with vintage pieces being directly associated with bygone eras due to their styles, materials, and appearance (Khair et al. 2022).

But the majority of the above motivations, practices, and research mentioned on this topic have been studied and are relevant to Westerners based on their historical context and agenda, so the purpose of this study is to study the motivation and consumer practices related to the secondary clothing market, specifically for Russian youth. Special attention will be paid to the study of how various social, economic, cultural and environmental factors in Russia influence the choice of young people nowadays, as well as how these practices contribute to the formation of their identity and consumer values. The study will not only consider the factors determining motivation to purchase clothes on the secondary market, but also analyze the specific practices and preferences of Russian youth in the context of global and local trends in clothing consumption — store selection, strategies for choosing clothes and stores, further actions with clothes (mending, custom, do nothing), frequency of shopping, etc. The focus will be on offline ways of consuming clothes in the secondary market, such as second-hand shops, vintage shops and garage sales. The aim of the project is to correspond to trends in Western culture or whether there will be differences.

Thus, the main research questions will be as follows:

1. What motivates Russian youth to purchase clothes from the secondary market?
2. What practices do Russian youth employ when consuming clothes from the secondary market?
3. How are the practices and motivations of Russia in secondary clothing consumption perceived as unique or similar to those of Western countries?

Literature Review

In recent decades, both professional observers and casual onlookers have noted emerging trends in the consumption of clothing and wardrobe items. Consumer behavior, as well as habits, are undergoing significant transformations. One of the most notable developments is the rise in popularity of secondary markets, including vintage stores, second-hand shops, consignment stores, garage sales, and swaps — in online and offline areas. The large international second-hand platform Thredup predicts based on the number of users on the platform and their time on the site, as well as purchases made that by 2027, sales of second-hand clothing will surpass those of new clothing by three times, reaching \$350 billion (Benissan 2023; Thredup 2019).

While many people may be uncomfortable with the label of the secondary market due to its negative associations with impoverished individuals selling their belongings out of financial necessity, this trend encompasses a wide range of social groups, including youth. The youth is increasingly focused on conscious consumption, social responsibility regarding environmental issues, and protecting nature from the emissions of the garment manufacturing industry. Concerns over ethical standards are also prominent, as many garment factories are located in underdeveloped countries, where exploitative labor conditions often prevail. Furthermore, the desire for self-expression and identity through external appearance, including clothing, footwear, and accessories, plays a significant role.

This literature review will provide research on the motivation and practices of secondary clothing consumption, the typology of consumers of the secondary clothing market, the role of mass media and other spheres in shaping attitudes towards secondary clothing will also be considered. But first of all, we need to separate some terms among ourselves in order to clearly understand the motives and practices associated with them. Since there is a practice where second-hand clothes in a broad sense mean any clothes from the secondary market, however, there is a smaller division into vintage, clothes from a second-hand store, a commercial store and clothes from a garage sale. That is, second-hand clothing acts as a broad term for any type of clothing to be worn again, as well as a narrower term for clothing. Thus, in this study, vintage clothing will refer to items of clothing and wardrobe (such as shoes and accessories) from past eras, produced using outdated technologies, styles, colors, materials, patterns, and so on, aged at least 25–30 years, but not older than 60–80 years, and characterized by pronounced fashionable trends of the past decades (Razmakhnina 2023;

Veenstra et al. 2013). Items from vintage stores have a high price, since the items presented are rare, possibly from the archives of famous brands and of good quality (for example, restored), the furnishings of the halls and showcases are tastefully selected and imbued with the atmosphere of “expensive and elite” antiquity (Razmakhnina 2023; Corbett et al. 2020; Veenstra et al. 2013). In this case, in a narrow sense, second-hand clothing will be understood as any clothing that previously belonged to the owner and is sold in second-hand stores, thrift stores or garage sales, since these clothes are no longer needed, but they are still in good and marketable condition. These are often ordinary, non-unique clothes, they are less than 10 years old, that is, they are quite modern, unlike vintage ones. The price of these clothes is low, lower than for those that are presented in regular stores. At garage sales or swaps, clothes may be new, with tags, and bought, for example, impulsively, which is why they were not worn and decided to resell them at the same price at which they were bought, or slightly lower (Niinimäki 2011; Corbett et al. 2020), but these are the same modern clothes, possibly from local brands.

Motivation for Consuming Secondary Market's Clothing

The contemporary fashion market is undergoing significant changes, driven by a growing interest in sustainable consumption and the purchase of secondary clothing. This trend not only reflects a desire for economic savings but also an inclination to embrace new social and environmental ideals, particularly among younger generations (Niinimäki 2017; Allwood et al. 2006; Fletcher 2012). But first, why is clothing important in general?

The Role of Clothing in the Social Construction of Identity

Clothing in general has always served as a powerful means of self-expression, protest, and affirmation of personal values. Both in their specific elements, such as color, fabric texture, silhouette and shape, and as a complete ensemble, clothing functions as a stage, which Goffman wrote about in his works (Goffman 1956), where people communicate their beliefs, status and identity (Aladjalova 2024). This is more than just an external coating, it becomes an extension of the owner's personality, often merging with his personality (Sampson 2018). Consciously or unconsciously, people use clothes as a means of self-expression in public, shaping their image and simultaneously assessing how others perceive it (Entwistle 2019).

This interplay between personal and public identity (Cheshmehzangi 2012) highlights the need to distinguish between the two types of statements made through clothing. On a personal level, clothing can serve as an act of

resistance to traditionally accepted norms, whether it's family expectations or past individual choices. In a broader sense, it can be a reaction to social events and cultural shifts, forming part of a collective statement. While personal protest through clothing can only be understood by a narrow circle of acquaintances, public protest relies on widely recognizable symbols and associations. A striking example is the widespread use of the symbol of peace or Pacific sign in fashion during periods of global conflict. In addition, as noted in the McRobbie study, which is referenced by Bennett's work (1999), women have historically used clothing, style, and fashion as a means of expressing resistance and social positioning more actively than men. These include the white robes of the suffragettes, the infusion of trousers into the women's wardrobe, and much more.

Using a wide range of historical and contemporary materials Crane (2000) also emphasizes that clothing, as the most prominent form of consumption, plays a key role in shaping a person's social identity. She compared the societies of the United States of America at the end of the 20th century, where lifestyle, gender, sexual orientation, age and ethnicity are more important to people when designing their wardrobe, with France in the 19th century, where social class was the most prominent aspect of social identity. In addition, she expanded her comparison by using the voices of college and middle-aged women who participated in focus groups to assess the impact of fashion on women. This is especially evident in youth culture, where the secondary clothing market serves as a tool for self-expression and creating a special personal style unlike anyone else's. Unlike the main fashion trends that help attract mass attention, buying clothes from the second-hand segment, which, as we discussed earlier, includes vintage, garage sales, and second-hand in a narrow sense, allows people to create a unique aesthetic that goes beyond modern fashion norms. In this sense, choosing to wear vintage or used clothing is not just a practical or economic decision; it is a conscious act of cultural and social self determination (Veenstra et al. 2013).

In addition to personal style, the consumption of secondary clothes promotes the development of social connections and a sense of belonging to certain cultural groups and subcultures. Many young people are attracted to vintage and second-hand fashion not only because of its individuality, but also because it means belonging to communities that value authenticity and identity (Vannini et al. 2008). Thus, second-hand fashion goes beyond economic expediency or the pursuit of unique items — it becomes an integral part of the formation of social identity and the definition of cultural affiliation in an ever-changing social landscape (Veenstra et al. 2013).

Economic motivation

The consumption of secondary clothing is a complex process driven by various interwoven motivations. According to research by Ferraro (et al. 2016) and Machado (et al. 2019), these motivations can be categorized into three main types: economic, critical, and hedonistic (recreational). Among these, economic motivation plays a particularly significant role, especially for young people with limited financial resources and in countries with unstable economies. The secondary market not only enables individuals to fulfill their basic clothing needs at a lower cost but also transforms the act of shopping into a source of enjoyment. The so-called “treasure hunting” phenomenon turns the search for high-quality clothing at an affordable price into a game-like experience, where the thrill of securing a good deal can be as gratifying as the purchase itself (Fletcher 2012; Cervellon et al. 2012).

However, economic benefits are not always the sole driving force for secondary market consumption. In the case of selective vintage stores that offer pre-owned yet branded garments or pieces from archival collections, the price of such items can be comparable to, or even exceed, that of new clothing. In these instances, consumers are motivated not only by financial considerations but also by the perceived investment value of rare pieces and their cultural and status significance within the fashion industry.

Critical motivation

Critical motivation is rooted in the conscious rejection of traditional retail chains, concerns about environmental sustainability, and opposition to exploitative labor practices in the garment industry (Ferraro et al. 2016; Machado et al. 2019). As awareness of the detrimental effects of fast fashion grows, ethically and environmentally conscious consumers increasingly turn to second-hand clothing as a means of resisting mass production and overconsumption. This resistance often extends beyond individual purchasing decisions to supporting charity shops that fund ecological and social initiatives, including the upcycling of discarded materials into new designs. A notable example is the repurposing of advertising banners into functional accessories such as tote bags, wallets, and keychains. In this context, second-hand shopping is not merely an economic choice but a deliberate statement on sustainability and labor ethics, contributing to waste reduction and responsible consumption (Cervellon et al. 2012).

Beyond its ethical implications, the secondary clothing market serves as a means of mitigating environmental impact. Research highlights that fashion consumption extends beyond the act of purchasing to include decisions

regarding disposal and recycling, which are now central to sustainable consumer behavior (Salomon et al. 2004). The fashion industry, however, thrives on a cycle of overproduction, fueling excessive consumption despite its environmental consequences, including textile waste and exploitative labor conditions. In response, a growing number of consumers — particularly in Western countries — are seeking sustainable alternatives, with the second-hand market emerging as a viable option: “This increase indicates the imbalance and unsustainability of the fashion system” (Allwood et al. 2006).

Ethical considerations have thus become a significant factor in second-hand clothing consumption. Ethical fashion choices are often framed as “making more environmentally-conscious decisions when purchasing, using, or disposing of garments” (Bennett 1999). However, despite increasing awareness, a gap remains between ethical intentions and actual purchasing behavior, as economic constraints and social influences — particularly those reinforced by social media — continue to shape consumer choices (Bennett 1999).

A crucial yet often overlooked aspect of critical motivation is the role of personal norms in shaping sustainable consumption habits. Moral considerations significantly influence attitudes toward environmentally responsible fashion, particularly among younger generations who are becoming increasingly conscious of the long-term consequences of mass clothing production. A sense of obligation to minimize environmental harm frequently serves as a key motivator for purchasing second-hand clothing. As one study notes, “Moral obligation related to reducing harm to nature is often an important motivator for purchasing second-hand clothing, and awareness of the consequences of fast fashion encourages a shift toward more sustainable forms of consumption” (Knežević et al. 2016). These internalized ethical values play a decisive role in consumer behavior, driving individuals to align their purchasing decisions with sustainability principles and actively contribute to reducing their ecological footprint.

But still, despite the growing awareness, only a small part of young consumers are ready to completely, rather than partially, change their buying habits in favor of ethical consumption, as well as, even purchasing brand — new clothes, to think about their future and reduce the process of singularisation — wearing clothes (Corbett et al. 2020; Kopytoff 1986) in favor of so that she can serve longer and have a clean biography. For example, according to an online survey in 2019, consumers were five times more likely to buy something with the future of clothing in mind than in 2014 (Thredup 2019).

However, to claim that consuming secondary clothing is the ideal solution to combat fast fashion and the depletion of the planet's resources would be a mistake. This is because, in any case, there remains a large number of unsold items, and sooner or later, the employees and owners of vintage stores and second-hand shops will face the question, "What should be done with the leftovers?" Accordingly, even though the resources used in their production were expended long ago, additional resources will still be required for their disposal and/or recycling.

Hedonistic or recreational motivation

Fashion consumption in general extends beyond mere functionality, often serving as a source of emotional gratification, self-expression, and cultural engagement. Among young consumers, hedonistic or recreational motivation plays a particularly prominent role, as it is driven by the sensory and aesthetic pleasure derived from clothing. This motivation is closely linked to the thrill of discovery — the experience of seeking out unique, rare, or historically significant pieces within the secondary market as it was mentioned shortly before (Kirgiz 2014). Unlike mainstream retail, which offers mass-produced trends, the secondary market allows for a highly personalized shopping experience, enabling individuals to curate a wardrobe that reflects their distinct identity and creativity.

Closely related to hedonistic motivation is the role of fashion as a medium for self-expression. Clothing choices often serve as a form of visual communication, signaling personal values, cultural awareness, and aesthetic preferences. This is especially evident in the appeal of branded vintage items, which retain their value even when showing signs of wear. For example, a 1954 Chanel jacket remains a coveted collector's piece due to its association with refined taste and high-quality craftsmanship (Broun 2022). The symbolic power of such items allows wearers to project sophistication and an appreciation for fashion heritage. For young consumers, acquiring secondary clothing is not merely a practical decision but a culturally meaningful act — a way to define their style, showcase their knowledge of fashion history, and participate in a broader aesthetic discourse. Studies show that vintage clothing buyers often have higher levels of education and income (Broun 2022; Veenstra et al. 2013), indicating a more conscious approach to clothing selection. For such consumers, not only economic factors matter, but also the uniqueness of items, as well as their historical or cultural significance, setting their motivation apart from the more utilitarian approaches of conventional fashion consumption.

Another key factor determining the secondary consumption of fashionable clothes is the growing trend towards nostalgia. Vintage clothing provides a tangible connection to the past, allowing people to recreate the aesthetics of past decades. Social media has played a key role in reinforcing this phenomenon, thanks to recurring trends inspired by the 2000s (Y2K), grunge of the 90s, and even earlier fashion trends, such as the 1920s and 1950s, which are seen as symbols of stability and harmony in Western society (Corbett et al. 2020). Nostalgic purchases allow consumers to immerse themselves in the atmosphere of past eras again and at the same time stand out against the background of major fashion trends, as well as due to social instability and the disintegration of traditional structures, young people seek to compensate for the feeling of “alienation” by turning to idealized eras, which is clearly reflected in consumer preferences (Cervellon et al. 2012; Veenstra et al. 2013; Ferraro et al. 2016).

The emotional dimension of second-hand shopping is further reinforced by the concept of “treasure hunting”, where the act of searching for and acquiring distinctive pieces becomes an exhilarating experience in itself (Fletcher 2012; Cervellon et al. 2012). This pursuit often evokes a mix of emotions — excitement, curiosity, and sentimentality — particularly when the clothing carries a sense of history. However, research also highlights that emotions tied to second-hand fashion can be both positive and negative, as some consumers may feel discomfort regarding the previous ownership of garments, which can influence their future purchasing behaviors (Hopkinson et al. 1999).

Ultimately, second-hand fashion consumption is a multidimensional practice shaped by hedonistic motivation, self-expression, and nostalgia. It offers a unique alternative to conventional shopping by blending aesthetic pleasure, cultural engagement, and the pursuit of individuality. Whether motivated by the joy of discovering rare fashion artifacts, the desire to craft a distinctive personal style, or a longing to reconnect with past eras, young consumers continue to embrace the secondary market as a space that transcends mere material acquisition, transforming fashion into a deeply personal and emotionally enriching experience.

Consumers of secondary market's clothing

Fashion consumption has been examined through various theoretical lenses. However, it has not developed into a cohesive field of study, as researchers investigating this subject come from diverse disciplinary backgrounds (Crane et al. 2006).

In the article “Vintage as a Form of Boundary Setting, Resistance, and Protest” (Aladjalova 2024), the wearing of secondary clothing (whether as individual items or complete outfits) and vintage is framed not only as a reaction against fast fashion, viral trends fueled by social media, and the movement toward conscious consumption, but also as a means of personal resistance to various contemporary phenomena. These motivations for choosing second-hand fashion go beyond the desire for sustainability or rejecting mass-produced trends; they reflect deeper, more personal forms of protest. For the wearer, such choices become a way to challenge societal norms, rebel against familial expectations and traditions, and assert one’s stance within the ongoing socio-cultural discourse. The act of consuming second-hand fashion thus transcends mere style, becoming a statement of individuality, identity, and resistance to broader cultural pressures. Based on cases from the blogosphere representing representatives from Western European countries, the autoethnographic nature and experience of the Moscow and Saint-Petersburg secondary scene, as well as cases of unintentional transgression (Aladjalova 2024), which in this case is interpreted as a tool for violating social rules (Guryanova 2023), it was possible to more or less assemble a typology of consumers of clothing and vintage aftermarket goods, who represent a diverse group driven by various motives that can be divided into several groups, including:

- Vintage enthusiasts;
- “Heirs,” who preserve the memory of deceased relatives through a few of their household items and clothing (Woodworth 2022);
- Fans of alternative fashion and bold costumes, advocating for individuality, or simply “Alternative consumers” (Gurova 2011);
- Professional collectors (referred to in the article as a profile of vintage enthusiasts, but not considered as actual users of clothing, and therefore will not be included in the study);
- Collector-users, who are characterized by a deep affection for a specific historical period of lifestyle and costume, collecting garments and items from that particular time or several periods and incorporating them into their daily lives (DeLong et al. 2005; Bishop 2019).

It is precisely the latter group — collector-users — who are the most deeply immersed in the topic of vintage clothing, its historical significance, and the true meaning often hidden from the general public and other categories of second-hand clothing enthusiasts mentioned above. Collector-users are better equipped than others to understand the historical and other meanings that can be uncovered by those around them in the selected garments. In comparison, the so-called “Heir” group may have no understanding of the historical

or symbolic significance of a coat inherited from their late grandmother, seeing it only as a sentimental connection to a loved one, a significant part of childhood memories, or a key element of family history or internal family conversations. Therefore, wearing this garment will carry an entirely different meaning within the same context of protest.

Regarding fans of alternative fashion and bold costumes, who champion individuality, referred to as “alternative consumers” by Gurova in her work (2011), they are characterized by the following traits:

“They derive particular pleasure from purchasing and wearing unique items, whether second-hand or vintage, or even modern pieces, as long as they are one-of-a-kind or nearly so, and ‘not like everyone else’s.’ In this case, their protest is directed against mainstream fashion and viral trends that garner massive views and likes on social media, yet also change rapidly.”

Alternative consumers can also often be associated with various eco-activists, animal rights defenders, and people who actively oppose the harsh working conditions in garment factories. They prefer second-hand clothing to draw public attention to the issues of overproduction, resource depletion, excess waste, and the damage associated with fast fashion.

This can be related to the theory of the “Tiger Leap,” formulated by Walter Benjamin (2006), according to which fashion, by its very nature, seeks out and brings to the surface the most pressing issues from the past to make them visible in the present. In other words, fashion has an instinctive ability to identify what is considered relevant and what will remain pertinent in the present (Benjamin 2006). For instance, in the article (Aladjalova 2024), the peace sign is discussed as it gained renewed interest in items bearing its image during the turbulent events of 2022 in the Russian fashion community. Various publications revisited the history of the symbol’s creation and examined its presence in new collections by designers as a form of call for peace, becoming loud public statements on both local and global stages through clothing. Of course, consumer interest in this symbol, due to the lack of direct contact and clarification of motivation, cannot be interpreted as a straightforward public protest through clothing. In this case, we move on to another important point: namely, the distinction between conscious and unconscious protest. A protest through clothing can be perceived as either conscious or unconscious, yet it remains a form of protest.

When discussing vintage clothing as a symbol of resistance within a personal circle, it is important to emphasize that it can serve as a tool for asserting one’s interests and boundaries, both among family members and for more abstract concepts, such as protest against death. This is manifested

in wearing items that once belonged to deceased individuals, such as close relatives or friends — a mother's dress, a friend's jacket, a grandfather's tie, and so on. This phenomenon can be linked to the experience of the physicality of clothing, where it retains all the creases, wear, and stains that reflect the life and activities of its previous owner, thus carrying not just the meaning of a garment, but an entire life story, a personal journey.

Such individuals can still be classified as alternative consumers — for them, it is not the prominent brand name or the novelty of an item that matters, but its history, as mentioned earlier. This category of people may purchase second-hand clothing and later customize it, re-tailoring it and thus giving new life to old garments. Ethics, sustainability, and individuality will be their priorities. However, there are exceptions, namely those who purchase vintage clothing in line with trending movements on social media and accumulate it, thereby becoming alternative consumers. These individuals, much like fast fashion buyers, search for and find justifications for continuous new purchases.

The Role of Media and Social Environment in Secondary Clothing Consumption

As mentioned earlier, the media and the social environment play a crucial role in shaping the consumer habits of young people. A study by Salomon and Rabolt (2004) shows that more than 60% of respondents recognize the role of the media in shaping their consumer preferences, while social circles also have a significant impact. In particular, “mass media (Internet and television) have the greatest influence on teenagers' purchasing decisions”, while “49% of respondents claim that friends influence their purchasing decisions, and family influences 43% of respondents” (Salomon et al. 2004). This demonstrates the complex interplay between digital media, peer influence, and familial traditions in the formation of youth consumer habits, including secondhand clothing consumption. In his research on attitudes towards environmentally friendly food production and ethical issues, Niinimäki confirmed that adolescents and young adults actively rely on the opinions of family and friends when choosing clothes, as well as drawing inspiration from digital and traditional media sources such as social networks and television (Niinimäki 2017). To do this, he used data collected in Finland in 2010 using the “snowball” method, where 70% were women, the respondents were highly educated (50% had a master's degree), and 50% had incomes above 2,500 euros. These media platforms significantly influence purchasing decisions within this demographic, emphasizing their role in shaping motivations for secondhand clothing consumption. For

Russian youth, the influence of the older generation can form a negative opinion and prejudice about the secondary market, based on the harsh 90s, shortages in many areas, including good clothes.

However, this reliance on mainstream media for fashion trends seems to contradict the growing cultural movement against fast fashion, as well as the desire for uniqueness and authenticity. On the one hand, the rejection of mass production in favor of sustainable, second-hand fashion corresponds to protest culture and ethical consumerism. On the other hand, social networks and digital platforms, while promoting the ideas of sustainable development, also contribute to the spread of trends that can lead to homogenization. This paradox is often resolved by rethinking the main trends within the framework of individual self-expression and self-reflection. Young consumers overcome this contradiction by selectively responding to trends, adding used or vintage items to their wardrobe and at the same time participating in broader fashion movements. Thus, instead of a direct confrontation between mass media-oriented consumption and the rejection of fast fashion, the consumer behavior of modern youth reflects a dynamic dialogue between cultural resistance, personal style and the pervasive influence of digital media.

Practicing with clothes

The conversation about the practices related to buying clothes in this work is not limited only to the frequency of purchases, store selection, strategies for choosing and searching for clothes, as mentioned earlier, but also includes further actions with clothes — changing them, customization, classic and creative mending. The practice of clothing mending in general plays an important role in the principles of sustainable consumption, affecting the treatment of clothing from the secondary market. For young people who have recently been actively involved in the purchase of second-hand and vintage items, mending can be not only a utilitarian necessity, for example, to sew a thing or hem it in length, but also a significant cultural and value practice. First of all, this practice allows you to extend the life cycle of clothes, adapt things to individual needs, but at the same time expresses the broader idea of responsible attitude to things and rejection of the culture of overconsumption and fast fashion (Gill et al. 2016). But, traditional and outdated perceptions associate mended clothing with low socioeconomic status in the same way as secondary clothing consumption (McLaren et al. 2015).

Looking at it in more detail, clothing mending performs a pragmatic function. Young consumers, especially those on a tight budget, see it as a way to save money and avoid the additional costs associated with purchasing new clothes in the mass market. On the other hand, renovation acquires

symbolic and ethical significance which is associated with care, attention to material objects, as well as criticism of mass production and fast fashion, which is gaining momentum every year. Thus, an opinion is being formed about repairs as an element of sustainable and meaningful consumption, but still very costly in additional resources — the most frequently mentioned obstacles to repair are financial costs, as well as a lack of time and skills (McLaren et al. 2015). For example, 254 people in the US participated in one study, of which 55% of US participants never or rarely repaired their clothes (Diddi et al. 2019).

Renovation also helps to rethink the relationship between a person and clothes. The process of repairing or mending clothes makes them unique, gives them a personal story, and turns them into a means of self-expression. This is especially true for representatives of the younger generation, who seek to personalize their appearance and distance themselves from mass fashion trends that are widely broadcast on social networks and media. In this context, repairs become part of a broader aesthetic strategy — a way to set a new visual code through the practices of customization, upsetting, and visible mending, emphasizing that the thing has already lived a life. In Western countries, such practices are widespread and institutionalized. For example, in Europe and North America, there are communities and initiatives aimed at developing a culture of repair through workshops, such as Repair Café, Fashion Revolution (McLaren et al. 2015), as well as numerous online platforms that teach self-repair skills. The practice of visible mending is especially popular, in which patches, decorative seams and other repair marks are not hidden, not zeroed out, but, on the contrary, become part of a fancy design. For Western youth, renovation is increasingly perceived as a form of creative activism, a way to assert their ecological and aesthetic position in choosing clothes.

Considering the motivations for applying to the practice of clothing mending, four main groups can be distinguished:

- Economic — the desire to reduce the cost of new, cheaper quality clothing.
- Ecological — the desire to reduce the negative impact on the environment and reduce the amount of textile waste.
- Emotional — the desire to preserve a thing associated with memories or personal value (it is interesting to observe that it is precisely such things with which there is a strong emotional connection that people most often work in the framework of clothing repair workshops (McLaren et al. 2015).
- Creative — an interest in creating a unique wardrobe and expressing an individual style through clothes that speak for themselves.

There is also a noticeable predominance of women and the older generation in this field, who had labor lessons in the school curriculum, where girls classically study sewing and boys carpentry. This was a survey of 1124 Norwegian people in 2011 and 1001 Norwegian people in 2017 (Laitala et al. 2018).

Thus, the practice of mending clothes is an integral part of the modern culture of repeated consumption. Now it combines elements of rationality, concern for the environment, aesthetic experiment and social criticism. In the context of studying the motivations and everyday practices of young Russian consumers of clothing from the secondary market, clothing mending can be studied as an ongoing practice — is there one in general? Do Russian youth have skills or interest in these practices?

The category of secondary market consumers also remains interesting, which, on the one hand, with increasing awareness of the environmental harm of fast fashion and concern about ethical issues, does not completely change its consumer behavior, but does it only partially. Why are they doing this? What explanation do they choose for themselves? Are they an actual consumer category for the Russian secondary clothing market? These questions have not yet been answered. And this is something that has yet to be explored in this topic.

Methodology

This research adopts a qualitative approach, chosen based on the belief that quantitative methods cannot fully capture the complex thoughts, opinions, and emotional experiences of the respondents, which are of primary importance for an in-depth analysis of the posed questions.

The subsequent sections will provide a detailed description of the research methodology, including sample selection and data collection processes, the data analysis approach, and the results obtained from the analysis. These components will provide a comprehensive understanding of the social dynamics related to secondary market clothing consumption.

Sample and Data

The primary criteria for respondent selection included age and recent engagement with the secondary clothing market — specifically, individuals who had made purchases and/or visited such markets within the last two years or earlier. Biological sex was considered a secondary, yet significant, selection criterion. In order to ensure a balanced representation of perspectives, I aimed to recruit an equal number of male and female

participants. Additional contextual variables, such as primary occupation (e.g., student, employed) and place of birth and current residence, were also taken into account. These factors provided insights into respondents' financial circumstances and potential geographical influences on their perceptions of the second-hand clothing market.

The final sample consisted of young adults aged 18 to 35, including both male and female participants. The majority were university students enrolled in various academic programs and years of study, complemented by several participants who were freelancers or early-career professionals across diverse fields. In total, 31 individuals participated in this study: 3 of them were employees (2 male, 1 female), and 30 were consumers (12 male, 18 female). Notably, 2 male respondents from the employee category also reported purchasing and wearing second-hand clothing. The average interview duration was approximately 44 minutes, with recordings ranging from 19 to 93 minutes. The total volume of audio material collected amounted to 1,351 minutes (approximately 22 hours and 30 minutes). Despite efforts to maintain gender balance, a slight disparity remained in the final sample. This limitation is discussed in detail in the relevant section.

To recruit participants, I employed the snowball sampling method. Initially, I contacted a small number of individuals who met the core selection criteria — specifically age — and demonstrated an interest in second-hand fashion and personal clothing choices. These initial participants were invited to take part in the study and were subsequently asked to share an informational message about the study [Appendix 3. Recruitment Message] with peers who might also be interested in participating. This referral process continued iteratively, allowing the sample to expand organically through participants' social networks.

Throughout the recruitment and data collection process, ethical considerations regarding confidentiality and anonymity were emphasized. Participants were provided with detailed information about the study and learned informed consent forms prior to participation [Appendix 2. Informed Consent]. They were assured that all personal data would remain confidential, and their responses would be anonymized and analyzed in aggregate form. All data were securely stored and permanently deleted upon completion of the analysis.

The use of snowball sampling facilitated access to a diverse range of respondents from various social and professional networks, thereby contributing to a more heterogeneous and representative sample [Table 1. Respondent Profiles].

Table 1

Respondent profiles

№	Age	Gender	Type of activity	Characteristics
1	22	female	4th year student of bachelor	Moved to St. Petersburg to study, combines her studies and part-time work, and dances; as a consumer is an attentive and discerning customer who appreciates quality and uniqueness in clothes. Prefers unusual things that set her apart from the crowd. Her purchases are rare but deliberate; carefully selecting each item to meet my high requirements. She's interested in trends, but adapts them to suit herself, creating an authentic style. Every purchase is special to her
2	23	female	2nd year student of master degree program	Studies and combines ux, design & texts with work, is a researcher at the laboratory, moved to St. Petersburg to study; as consumer is she can't call herself a hoarder, she tries to buy things depending on the need and sell them as well, she follows trends for general development, she subscribes to a bunch of tv channels dedicated to this, but she doesn't consider herself a big consumer of trends, there is filtering
3	22	female	5th year student of bachelor	Doesn't work, came to St. Petersburg from the region for study; as a consumer exhibits impulsive consumption behavior, often making spontaneous purchases driven by emotional states rather than deliberate planning. Shopping serves as a form of emotional relief and a temporary mood enhancer, frequently followed by feelings of guilt. This pattern suggests signs of dependency, as the individual continues to engage in repeated buying despite recognizing the excess and potential financial constraints

Table 1 (continued)

№	Age	Gender	Type of activity	Characteristics
4	28	female	works as a freelancer	Graduated from university, works as a freelancer, is a creative person, is in a relationship, was born in St. Petersburg, but left to live in another country, returned back not so long ago; as a consumer doesn't follow trends, but sometimes you are influenced by them. When choosing clothes, focus on inner response and practicality, preferring high-quality items that will last a long time and are not tied to fashion. Impulsive purchases are rare; before buying, one always weighs the need for things and doubts can stop even at a low price
5	31	male	works in a store	Came to St. Petersburg from the ural region, works in a store, is a creative person, in a relationship; as a consumer demonstrates a largely rational approach to consumption, characterized by deliberate and infrequent purchases. He shows a particular interest in the background of second-hand items, often inquiring about their origin, brand history, or previous ownership. For him, clothing holds not only functional or aesthetic value but also narrative significance, which contributes to his preference for unique, storied pieces over mass-market products
6	23	female	works a full time	Works full time, has completed her studies in university, and is originally from St. Petersburg; as a consumer is a conscious shopper who used to make impulsive purchases influenced by trends on social media and mass-market collections. Now more selective, they assess the necessity and future relevance of each item. She prefer versatile, long-lasting styles and avoid repetitive or short-lived fashion pieces

Table 1 (continued)

№	Age	Gender	Type of activity	Characteristics
7	23	female	works a full time	Moved to St. Petersburg from the Far Eastern region, works as a personal trainer and in a company, is married, graduated from her studies in university; as a consumer is a practical shopper with a capsule wardrobe, where items can be worn for 5 years or more. She values quality over fashion and chooses pieces that pair well with each other. She doesn't have a lot of identical items — everything is practical and functional. Impulsive purchases happen, but i always think about how she will use a new item in the future. She doesn't follow trends and prefer to avoid their influence, which allows me to stay true to my style
8	24	female	works a full time	Graduated, works, was born and lives in St. Petersburg, creative; as a consumer follows trends, but does not always succumb to them. Can buy an item, even if it's an anti-brand, if she likes it. She's mostly interested in both trending and unique items that set him apart from the crowd. Impulsive purchases are rare and more often involve inexpensive accessories or vintage items. She prefers to study the assortment before buying in order to find something special and untested, avoiding the mass market. It is important that things are of high quality and durable, so as not to be disappointed in the purchase after a year
9	21	male	1st year student of bachelor and works in a delivery company	Was born in St. Petersburg, works in delivery, is in a relationship, and lives abroad; as a consumer is a reserved and practical shopper who does not follow trends. Favoring simple yet stylish and vibrant designs. Comfortable and aesthetically pleasing clothing is essential, especially loose-fitting items due to their tall stature. He plans purchases in advance, particularly for shoes, as their size is non-standard. He usually buys clothes during trips to europe, primarily at uniqlo or second-hand stores. Price is not the main criterion; he is willing to pay more for high-quality items

Table 1 (continued)

№	Age	Gender	Type of activity	Characteristics
10	20	male	3rd year student of bachelor and full-time worker	Combines study and work, was born and lives in St. Petersburg; as a consumer he is who superficially follows trends and is focused on the practicality of items. He prefers to buy clothing that he will wear for at least three months a year and for at least two to three seasons. He always evaluates the price-quality ratio, so expensive items are not a priority for him. Purchases happen chaotically, based on mood, without prior planning; shopping often occurs with friends for advice and entertainment
11	30	female	housewife	Doesn't work, she's married, she moved to St. Petersburg from the north, and now most of the time live in Serbia; as a consumer is an informed and trend-sensitive buyer with an average income. She follows fashion trends through pinterest and influencers, and regularly analyzes her wardrobe for relevance. Prefers a combination of fashionable elements and basic items, gives priority to long-lasting purchases. She is not prone to compulsive consumption, but sometimes makes small impulsive purchases during a bad mood. It strives to stay on trend, but without completely imitating fast fashion
12	22	female	works full-time	Works full-time, has completed her studies in university, is originally from St. Petersburg, and is married; as consumer is when choosing things, he relies on the quality of materials, the condition of the thing and the possibilities for combining them with existing things — immediately thinks out in his head what can wear, can afford impulsive purchases if the price of the item does not exceed 350 rubles

Table 1 (continued)

№	Age	Gender	Type of activity	Characteristics
13	19	female	2nd year student of bachelor	Moved to St. Petersburg, doesn't work; as a consumer she takes a long time to choose her clothes to find the perfect option that fully matches her style. Often, such items are more expensive than she planned, and they are usually something unusual and impractical. When she is looking for something specific, she checks online stores and waits until she finds the ideal match. She avoids trends that quickly go out of fashion but is open to interesting details, such as accessories. Overall, she buys rarely and only if the item meets all her criteria: interest, compatibility with her wardrobe, price, and reflection of her style
14	19	female	2nd year student of bachelor	Was born in St. Petersburg, she is a student in the creative field, street photographer; as a consumer is a rational and experienced second-hand consumer. Having engaged in this practice for several years, she has developed a set of personal strategies and "life hacks" for navigating the secondary market efficiently — from identifying high-quality items to recognizing authentic vintage pieces. Her purchases are usually planned, guided by clear wardrobe needs, aesthetic preferences, and considerations of price and condition. This systematic approach reflects not only her familiarity with the market but also a conscious, informed attitude toward consumption

Table 1 (continued)

№	Age	Gender	Type of activity	Characteristics
15	26	female	2nd year student of master degree	Moved to St. Petersburg from Moscow, is studying for a master's degree, and works as an anthropologist in a research laboratory; despite the lack of active trend tracking, intuitively chooses things that correspond to modern fashion trends. The most important thing is the quality of the fabric and the durability of the clothes — prefers things that will not wear out quickly. Sometimes makes impulsive purchases, and in recent years rarely feels regret about purchases, especially in second-hand stores
16	21	male	4th year student of bachelor	In his final year of university, moved to St. Petersburg from the region, doesn't work; as a consumer doesn't follow trends, but notices them. Sometimes he feels the urge to buy something he has seen on social networks before it becomes popular in Russia. When choosing clothes, it focuses on practicality and cost per wear period. Impulsive purchases are rare, mostly in second-hand stores, where it is difficult to predict the result
17	21	male	4th year student of bachelor	Originally from Tyumen; as a consumer, tries to be rational, not to take too much and give in to the logic of the purchase, but if there is something that he really liked, then that's it
18	22	female	4th year student of bachelor	Was born in the Perm region and moved to St. Petersburg as a teenager. She combines her studies with work as a data analyst; as a consumer, she tries to be more practical than trend-oriented. But she's very greedy for all sorts of discounts, so it happens that she impulsively makes a purchase simply because it's cheap

Table 1 (continued)

№	Age	Gender	Type of activity	Characteristics
19	21	female	4th year student of bachelor	Originally from the Leningrad region, combining studies in university and work; as a consumer she buys clothing based on her mood and the season, sometimes impulsively, but has become more selective. Now she thinks about how a new item will fit with her wardrobe and how she will feel in it. She pays attention to the color palette, choosing suitable shades. She doesn't follow trends but is inspired by the style of others. She aims for quality and functional purchases to avoid unnecessary items
20	23	female	5th year student of bachelor	An activist in student organizations, combines work in a research laboratory and studies, moved to St. Petersburg from the region; as a consumer doesn't follow trends, but sometimes it is influenced by Instagram* and Pinterest. She buys clothes out of necessity and rarely makes impulsive purchases. She usually goes shopping with a specific purpose, although sometimes she leaves with several things that are also needed, but are not a priority. In general, she does not often shop for clothes due to lack of time
21	21	female	4th year student of bachelor	Combines part-time work in a research team and final year studies, originally from Moscow, but moved to St. Petersburg in early childhood, sometimes living in Istanbul; a pragmatic consumer, does not chase trends, prefers to purchase things as needed. If something is really needed and causes joy, then she will buy it. In the past, she often impulsively spent money on discounts and unnecessary items, but now she is trying to reduce consumption and get rid of excess, does not follow trends, as believes that many of them have no soul and are not suitable for everyone. However, it is interesting to observe popular trends on social network, can buy something trendy if really like it, but doesn't do it blindly

Table 1 (continued)

№	Age	Gender	Type of activity	Characteristics
22	21	male	4th year student of bachelor	Originally from a small village in the region, he moved to study in St. Petersburg, is finishing his 4th year, does not work, lives on a scholarship; he is quite rational as a consumer, pays every penny
23	23	female	4th year student of bachelor	Originally from St. Petersburg, is studying at the final year of his bachelor's degree, preparing for a master's degree, does not work; as a consumer demonstrates a mixed pattern of consumption. While she often approaches second-hand shopping with a reflective and rational mindset — considering factors such as necessity, price, and wardrobe compatibility — she also acknowledges a tendency toward impulsive purchases, especially when emotionally drawn to a unique item or caught up in the atmosphere of the shopping process. Her behavior reflects a dynamic balance between conscious decision-making and spontaneous desire, making her a versatile and emotionally engaged consumer
24	22	male	4th year student of bachelor	In final acting class, originally from St. Petersburg; as a consumer is impulsive in purchases, but before making a decision, study reviews and information about the product, often finding it on Tiktok or Telegram. Things usually stay in the basket for a few days before he makes a purchase decision. For expensive purchases (over 50,000 ₽), he approaches more consciously, studying reviews and analyzing his preferences. The consumer is guided by the rule that if he likes something, he will not forget about it, even if he finds alternatives. Although he follows trends, he often doesn't give in to them. Sometimes he buys popular things, but he may be disappointed

Table 1 (ending)

№	Age	Gender	Type of activity	Characteristics
25	24	female	4th year student of bachelor	Came to St. Petersburg to study, works for a marketing company; as a consumer is a visually driven and aesthetically engaged shopper who views fashion as a source of inspiration rather than pure consumption. Follows trends not out of purchasing intent, but due to long-standing interest and visual exposure. Makes considered purchases, with occasional spontaneity if an item aligns with their personal aesthetic. Often reinterprets older wardrobe pieces in light of current trends and online styling inspiration. Enjoys browsing brand websites and social media for ideas, but rarely makes immediate purchases — preferring to admire and reflect before deciding whether something is truly needed
26	22	male	4th year student of bachelor	Originally from a small town in Siberia, moved to Tyumen to study, does not work; as a consumer, generally irrational
27	28	male	full-time worker	Moved to St. Petersburg from Moscow, political researcher, hosts podcasts; as a consumer is a pragmatic yet flexible shopper. Doesn't actively follow trends but notices and occasionally adopts them. Aims to buy items that integrate well into his wardrobe, even when purchased spontaneously. Impulse buys often turn out to be long-term staples
28	18	male	10th grade schoolboy, doesn't work	Lives in Tyumen, moved from a small town to study; as a consumer, he is not picky about the quality of things, but rather about how he feels about them, the message of things

* The activities of Meta Platforms Inc. (social networks Facebook and Instagram) are prohibited in the territory of the Russian Federation, recognized as extremist, and included in the list of banned organizations.

In the same way, I contacted the employees and owners of second-hand and vintage stores, the data on which is presented in table [Table 2, employees' and owners' profiles]. In this case, there were no specific criteria, by type of age or gender, for this category of respondents, since their observations and opinions about young people and their purchases on the secondary market were the main value.

Table 2

Employees and owners profiles

№	Age	Gender	Type of activity	Characteristics
29	23	male	employee	Works in a vintage selective store, came from the region, made several attempts to move, and only recently succeeded; as a consumer does not follow trends and buys things according to liking, sometimes without taking into account the combination with the wardrobe. Recently, he have become more aware of purchases, identifying specific needs. Used to visit second-hand shops and shops without a purpose, but now looking for specific things. Nevertheless, if he comes across something interesting, he can buy it, even if it is not necessary. There is a desire to purchase expensive items, but the lack of necessity deters from buying
30	23	female	a 5th year student and employee	Works in an online store that sells vintage or second-hand luxury items as a buyer in the Chinese market; as a consumer is not impulsive in shopping, carefully considers where she will use clothes. Avoids things that can become “junk” and prefers a size range that matches her figure. She does not like unnecessary gifts and prefers money. Consider responsible consumption to resell or transfer things instead of throwing them away. She prefers high-quality products over brands, and has recently been interested in unusual designs to stand out from the crowd
31	31	male	owner of selective vintage shop	Owner of a selective vintage store with the largest number of denim items, 11 years in the consumption of second-hand clothing, collector of rare vintage items

During the field observations conducted in second-hand and vintage clothing stores, I systematically documented the spatial organization of retail environments through photography and took field notes to capture immediate impressions and relevant contextual information. In order to maintain the natural flow of customer behavior and avoid any potential discomfort or disruption, I refrained from initiating direct contact with customers during their shopping experience. Instead, I positioned myself as a passive observer, paying close attention to the processes involved in clothing selection and, where possible, discreetly listening to conversations related to second-hand consumption practices.

Although opportunities for in-the-moment interaction with store staff were limited — primarily due to the demands of their ongoing work and customer service responsibilities — I was able to conduct follow-up interviews with some sellers outside of working hours. These additional insights enriched the observational data and provided a more nuanced understanding of employee perspectives within secondary retail spaces. A selection of these observational records and reflections can be found in the field diary [Appendix 4. Field Diary].

Data Collection

For this study, data were primarily collected through semi-structured interviews and field observations. The interview process was based on pre-prepared question guides, which were created separately for two selected categories of respondents — buyers and sellers — and recorded in audio format. These questions aimed to explore the motivations, practices, and attitudes of respondents toward consuming second-hand clothing, to gather insights into their experiences and perceptions of the secondary market, and to obtain the viewpoint of a general observer — the store employee. Both sets of question guides were written and formulated entirely in Russian, as the respondents were native speakers of the language. The question guides are presented in their original form in Appendix 1, without translation into English, in order to preserve the authenticity of the data and take into account the linguistic nuances of the participants' responses.

During the interviews, particular attention was paid to minimizing the influence of the researcher's personality on the respondents' answers. Participants were encouraged to detach themselves from any preconceived notions about the interviewer and the study and to relax, which allowed for more candid and spontaneous responses. Respondents were also informed that they had the right to refuse to answer questions or discuss topics they considered uncomfortable or too personal, ensuring ethical conduct and

respect during data collection. It was also explained to them that any personal information obtained during the study would remain confidential and would be used only in an anonymized form, with no identifying details included in the final analysis.

In addition to semi-structured interviews, field observations were conducted as a supplementary data collection method. The observations were collected over the course of three months and affected 15 secondary market stores and 2 garage sales. The field observations provided a deeper understanding of the social and spatial dynamics associated with second-hand clothing consumption. Observations were made in second-hand clothing stores, where the researcher documented the store atmosphere, customer behavior, and the overall shopping process. This included photographing store layouts, product displays, and the general ambiance, which were then analyzed to understand how the physical environment influenced consumer perceptions and choices.

In addition to the photographs, brief field notes were made, recording observations of how customers interacted with the merchandise and any significant behaviors or trends. These notes helped provide context and enriched the interview data by adding visual and descriptive supplementary material to the verbal responses.

Together, the semi-structured interviews and field observations allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of second-hand clothing consumption, encompassing both the personal, subjective experiences of the respondents and the broader social and environmental dynamics that influence these practices.

Data Analysis

In this study, elements of reflexive thematic analysis were used as the primary method of analysis, based on the approach developed and described by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2019). This method enabled the identification of consistent thematic patterns in respondents' narratives regarding their motivations and everyday practices related to the consumption of second-hand clothing. The analysis was grounded in a qualitative approach and aimed for a deep interpretation of the data, considering not only the subjective experiences of the respondents but also the position of the researcher.

All data for this study were collected in the form of audio-recorded semi-structured interviews. Prior to analysis, the recordings were transcribed into text format with an effort to preserve the speech characteristics of the participants — unique expressions, emotionally charged phrases, and distinctive vocabulary reflecting their individual communication style. Both

free online transcription services and manual transcription were used, with manual transcription applied in cases where the audio quality was low. The transcribed interviews were compiled into a table, highlighting the main blocks of questions as well as additional columns to record information about spontaneous topics that arose during the conversation (e.g., participants' attitudes toward the second-hand market during adolescence, subjective assessments of the proportion of new versus second-hand clothing in their wardrobe, self-descriptions as consumers, and so on).

During the first stage of analysis, the interview texts were re-read to achieve a deep immersion in the material and develop an intuitive understanding of the content's key accents. Initial coding was then performed on meaningful units — phrases, descriptions, comparisons, and narrative structures that reflected participants' attitudes toward clothing in general and second-hand clothing in particular, as well as their views on fashion, aesthetics, rationality, and social norms. *Priori* codes were applied to some extent, particularly those derived from theoretical expectations about motivations, such as attitudes toward sustainability or social identity, based on existing literature. However, the study also incorporated *posteriori* codes, which emerged naturally from the data itself, reflecting unanticipated themes that became evident during the process of coding and analysis. This combination of pre-existing concepts and emergent data allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of the respondents' narratives. Coding was done manually, with attention paid to the context in which each statement was made.

In the next stage of analysis, the codes were grouped into potential themes. A decision was made to avoid rigid categorization, which allowed for analytical flexibility and the revisiting of themes as the material was further explored. Special attention was paid to how respondents construct their consumer identity — through language, emotions, references to visual culture, and technological practices (e.g., the use of social networks such as Pinterest and Instagram*).

The analysis process was accompanied by ongoing researcher reflexivity, evaluating how the chosen analytical framework, as well as the personal experience and position of the researcher, may have influenced the interpretation of the data. This approach aligns with the logic of reflexive thematic analysis, where a theme is understood not as something “discovered” in the data, but as analytically constructed through the interaction between the empirical material, the research objective, and the theoretical framework.

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In addition to the interview data, the study included an analysis of the research field and field notes, which played a role in providing context and enriching the understanding of the interview data. Field notes were collected during visits to second-hand clothing stores and contained brief observations of the store environment, customer behavior, and interactions. These notes also included photographs documenting the store interiors, product displays, and the overall ambiance.

The analysis of the research field involved reviewing these field notes and photographs to identify spatial and social dynamics within the second-hand shopping experience. The analysis focused on how the store atmosphere, product appearance, and visual presentation as a whole influenced customer perceptions and choices. The photographs served as a tool for visualizing these dynamics, providing a concrete representation of the environment in which participants engage with second-hand clothing. Observations of customer behavior — such as how they interacted with the merchandise, which items they paid more attention to, and how they navigated the store — were analyzed to identify patterns of consumer behavior and engagement with second-hand clothing.

Results

Motivations for consumption clothes from secondary market

Through reflexive engagement with the empirical material, it became evident that economic motivation was the most frequently cited driver among Russian youth — a priori code based on theoretical typologies (Ferraro et al. 2016; Machado et al. 2019). Participants emphasized the affordability of second-hand clothing, particularly when compared to the declining purchasing power and the rising costs of primary market garments — from mass-market chains to local fashion brands — due to the political and economic transformations of recent years in Russia (Forbes 2023). This motivation was especially relevant for students, early-career professionals, and young people with limited financial resources:

Respondent 9:

“First of all, the prices. That is, if it’s not a vintage store with some kind of super concept or its own brand, it’s usually very cheap. I prefer flea markets, that is, so that it’s, well, decent, but it doesn’t have to be some kind of vintage style and so on. There are often good things there, usually they are cheaper, plus more interesting.”

Respondent 26:

*“Well, first of all, obviously, **accessibility in terms of, as it were, not joking, not laughing, but things are much more affordable**, even if they are branded <...> but if you look at the secondhand, which is ordinary, well, like a MegaHand, then, of course, **affordability at prices.**”*

In addition, economic motivation is closely linked to the idea of a **fairer price-quality ratio and the belief that things used to be made much better** and last longer, despite someone's life already lived:

Respondent 2:

“The main reasons why I choose clothes from the secondary market are, firstly, because they are actually of higher quality than they are being sold objectively and at a normal price.”

Respondent 4:

*“And often the motivation is that **I can find high-quality things there**, and not in regular stores, well, or, probably, to clarify, then **in regular stores I need a lot more money to find something so cool and high-quality**. And as if, yes, I probably won't go to such stores right now.”*

Respondent 12:

“If the seams of the previous owner's things didn't come apart, then they won't come apart on me either.”

The second prominent motivation identified through the analysis was hedonistic or recreational in nature. Many participants described their engagement with second-hand clothing shopping as a form of “hobby,” “treasure hunting,” as noted by Fletcher and Cervellon et al. (2012), or “leisure activity,” which they willingly shared with others and often took pride in — particularly when they managed to find valuable items at a low cost. At the core of this experience was the pleasure derived from the serendipitous discovery of unique garments, whose presence in the store was entirely unpredictable. These practices were closely linked to creative exploration, stylistic experimentation, and a form of psychological relief. Moreover, such activities frequently took the shape of a collective shared experience — respondents described trips to second-hand stores with friends or peers as enjoyable social outings, filled with mutual inspiration, emotional exchange, and the co-creation of memories. In this way, recreational second-hand shopping functioned not merely as an individual practice, but as a social activity that fostered connection,

enabled identity expression, and contributed to the construction of shared symbolic meaning:

Respondent 4:

“That is, it’s like such a leisure part, such entertainment, search, there’s actually a lot here. On the one hand, sometimes it’s true. Well, like, like, yeah, mini leisure sometimes, yeah, well, I mean, I’m like, I understand that, well, sometimes, like, I go in, and there’s some kind of diamond in a pile of shit, but sometimes it just feels that way.”

Respondent 26:

“Well, I also usually, I do not know, I call some friend of mine. I have a circle of people there who also go to just such places (secondary market stores) and buy mostly only things there. And so we can just go there, come in, see something. Well, it’s like having a nice time together and discussing, like, clothes and stuff, and there’s this kind of shopping.”

In addition, several *a posteriori* codes pointed to a distinct motivation centered on the pursuit of **uniqueness and self-expression**, as respondents articulated a desire to communicate their aesthetic preferences and assert their individuality through clothing choices. This motivation intersects with the hedonistic category and may be conceptualized as a specific sub-dimension within it, insofar as it reflects the emotional and symbolic value attributed to garments beyond their functional utility. The preference for non-mainstream, distinctive items served not only as a means of personal expression but also as a symbolic counter-narrative to the homogenization inherent in mass-market fashion. In the Russian context, this pursuit of stylistic distinctiveness acquires particular cultural significance, reflecting broader socio-cultural dynamics and resistance to normative consumption patterns:

Respondent 3:

“The main reasons are this uniqueness of things. And now to find something unique for a low price. And this can probably be attributed to a hobby, as if. Uh-huh. So. Well, it’s just like this, it’s like a game, whether you find this diamond or not, whether it suits you or not.”

Respondent 6:

“<...> I just want something cool and interesting, let’s say I know that it’s unlikely that there will be such a thing in the mass market, or it will be

something... Well, it's not that boring. Well, I just want something more interesting <...>"

Respondent 13:

"And, basically, when you go into a mass market and you see this amount of not very natural things and super identical, and that's just the amount that there are a lot of them, I personally feel, well, even physically sick and nauseous, because well, as if it's wrong."

Nostalgia-driven motivation, which can also be a sub-dimension to hedonistic motivation due to its connection with the emotional component, has also been widely observed and reflected in a posteriori codes such as "biography of a piece of clothing", "an object with a history" or "an object created at a certain time". Some respondents talked about imaginary dialogues with previous owners of clothing, fantasized about its past, felt emotionally involved in its development, or reminisced about the time in which this or that item was created and associated with it. This perception reinforced both the personal and symbolic capital of the purchased clothes:

Respondent 8:

"Well, I probably would only single out uniqueness, because, let's say, there are some things that were produced, well, in the 2000s and so on, that, let's say, cannot be repeated. It's old school. And if there are some brands now, let's say, if we're talking about some well-known ones that are also distributed in second-hand stores, then they're either trying to repeat them now, but they're not of that cool quality anymore, they're not stylizing them as coolly, they're not doing it as coolly as the past ones. That's probably why, for the most part, it's uniqueness and, well, nostalgia. I would like to feel exactly the time when, you know, in those years, let's say, I really wanted this thing. It really happens that I really wanted a T-shirt, but for some reason I didn't buy it, financially, not financially. Now you see it, you think, damn, it's that year, I wanted it so much, like, you know, how to close a gestalt of some kind."

Respondent 21:

"And it also makes some sense that she had some kind of history before you, and she has some kind of component, not just made there in China. And she's like, well, just like that, like an ordinary vase, and then she's some kind of Japanese vase from somewhere, and somehow she ended up in Istanbul or somewhere else. Someone, somewhere, used

it at all. And this will somehow make the thing more or less, as if it makes sense."

Respondent 5:

*"Well, besides the fact that **belonging to some social group** prompted me to start visiting the secondary market, it is also important to understand that this first purchase was made by me quite young. **I just wanted to be cool.**"*

Respondent 31:

*"Therefore, **the value of vintage jeans (and clothes in general) is in the context of the fact that you know that this is an old pair. Made in a certain era, in the way that it was customary to do in that era, so it went through some stages of its own, well, from that moment on, a certain number of washes, or stains, or some other cuts there, whatever. And none of us (the staff of the vintage store) wants to hide this context, we kind of emphasize it. Accordingly, yes, if the value of this whole product is in context, then why hide it, in short? Here, if we can keep it and emphasize it.**"*

In contrast to the aforementioned motivations, **critical motivation** associated with environmental, sustainable, or ethical considerations appeared significantly less frequently. While some participants acknowledged that second-hand consumption contributes to reducing environmental harm, this was typically framed as a secondary factor, often described as a "nice bonus" or "a plus for the karma." A posteriori code such as "survival over sustainability" pointed to the structural limitations of ethical consumption in the Russian context. Respondents frequently referred to the inability to meet basic needs — such as security, stability, and belonging — invoking Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Trivedi et al. 2019) to explain the limited prevalence of ecologically motivated behavior:

Respondent 9:

*"Well, **I know this trend**, sort of, that it's related to the green idea. **But no, I don't give a damn, it doesn't motivate me at all. Well, it's funny that it coincides somehow in general. Well, I guess I'm glad, but I have absolutely no problem buying something new. I mean, I don't feel guilty about it.**"*

Respondent 12:

"I think that I have, like, the first levels, so to speak, pyramids Maslow has not yet closed. When I have an apartment, when I eat whatever I want, when I have a car, I'm like, shouldn't I think about this agenda? That's it, that's it, then it will be."

Respondent 5:

*"I think that, in principle, the issue of ethics, tolerance, and environmental friendliness is much more developed in some countries, but this is normal, just considering, I would really say that everything here rests on the history of the state itself. And the nation itself, <...> Well, in short, **the older we get, the more often we will most likely instill these principles in ourselves. Well, like, the further we get from survival, I guess.**"*

Some respondents remarked that the limited prominence of environmental and ethical concerns in Russia is evident both at the individual and societal levels, extending beyond the sphere of clothing consumption to reflect a broader cultural and structural context. This general absence of a strong sustainability agenda was interpreted by participants as being closely tied to Russia's relatively recent modern development and the historically short timeframe available for the consolidation of such discourses within public consciousness and institutional frameworks:

Respondent 24:

*"The reason **why, again, this is not particularly common in Russia** (concerns about environmental friendliness and ethics in the labor issue) **in Europe, this has been going on for quite a long time, but it is enough with such very serious measures, such as we sort garbage, which means if you do not sort you will be fined. In Russia, if such a thing is introduced, Will it be? Nothing will happen. A fine of 500 P, which you will be given, God forbid, for 15 years after you do not sort the garbage, because in order for people to start sorting garbage, it needs to be monitored, special containers need to be installed, special people hired. And it also needs special sorting centers to process all this. You know, you need money for that. That's all. Like, yes, we have an insanely rich country. Well, it's just that in Europe they started moving towards this quite a long time ago and with such strong measures. It's cool, cool and cool, probably, to promote the agenda in Europe, secondary consumption is very cool. It really will do, and the people will, as they say.**"*

Respondent 19:

*"Well, it's just that **if you take the West there, in particular, they're like countries of the first world, super-developed, they sort of have all the basic values closed down there, so they can think about some other things there, for the benefit of the planet and people. Well, that is, as if it were just some kind of systemic problem, not even a problem, but a systemic outcome. Here (in Russia), these practices are simply less developed, because in general they are less promoted, it seems to me, in the media***

there, and by some other institutions and the state. So, as a plus, people there may have different, I do not know, financial situations, thinking about environmental friendliness, something else, it may be, like, less priority against the background of some other problems in the country, there, I do not know, with the standard of living and so on. It seems to me that there are some such factors here, such as socio-economic, they play a big role.”

Notably, ecological and ethical discourses were also largely absent from the promotional strategies of second hand stores. Instead, both consumer narratives and store marketing messages focused primarily on economic advantage, the uniqueness of items, and the thrill of discovery. Stores emphasized affordability often reinforced through discounts and sales as well as variety and individuality, rather than presenting themselves as a sustainable alternative to fast fashion. Consumers, in turn, rarely recognized or referred to the fact that some second hand stores, such as Spasibo!¹, pursue a social and charitable agenda [Photo 1, Advertising Spasibo! on social media].



Photo 1. Advertising Spasibo! on social media

¹ Second hand store “Спасибо!”/”Thanks!”.

Against the backdrop of discussions surrounding the relatively low prevalence of critical motivation in Russia, many respondents nevertheless emphasized the overall similarity in secondhand clothing consumption motivations among young people across contexts. The divergence in the prioritization of these motivations can be partly explained by differing positions within the hierarchy of needs: in Western societies, where a greater degree of material security is ensured, young people are more likely to prioritize values such as sustainability and conscious consumption. As a result, secondhand clothing becomes a symbol of ecological responsibility, aesthetic individuality, and civic engagement. This shift contributes to the destigmatization of secondhand fashion in Western contexts, where it has become a normalized part of mainstream consumer culture and is institutionalized through curated vintage stores and online resale platforms:

Respondent 11:

“It seems to me that everything is the same. There is a segment of people who go there because they don’t have enough financial resources, and they just dress there. And there are, well, the same hipster youth who go looking for some cheap highlights.”

Respondent 22:

“Well, the motivations here are probably similar in many ways. I don’t think they differ much from Western ones, for example. Ours, and in general, yes, it’s also more about benefits and interest, about style, about taste, and mostly just about some interesting out-of-the-ordinary, cool kind of clothing. Here. So I think the motivations are exactly the same, and they don’t differ in any way.”

At the same time, the financial dimension of secondhand consumption remains relevant both in Russia and abroad, along with hedonistic motivations such as the pursuit of self-expression, the desire for unique experiences, and fatigue with the anonymity of fast fashion. While interviewees highlighted the universality of these motivations, many also noted that in Russia, secondhand shopping is still frequently perceived as a marker of necessity. Particularly among older generations, it may evoke associations with poverty and forced consumption, rendering the practice less socially attractive and less acceptable compared to its normalized and in some cases, prestigious status in many European countries and the United States:

Respondent 10:

*“Well, it seems to me that **there is a difference**, and it seems to me that even here it should not be more about consumption, but about supply in this secondary market, because, it seems to me, **in our country, most people, when they have a thing, they grew out of it there, or somehow it visually outwardly it has deteriorated, they throw it away. Whereas in the West, it's much more popular to go and take Things to the same second-hand store and give them some kind of second life, or recycle them.**”*

Respondent 20:

*“Well, I don't know, but it's like it's there anyway, **in some advanced European countries it's still more destigmatized than in our country.** It's like it's even more developed and it's like it's a stronger trend than ours. We still have a large number, it seems to me, of young people there, the same ones who, well, conditionally disdain it, and seem to use mass markets mostly. And as **for the economic benefits, I think that we have a greater motivation than they do, because, well, again, I can only judge by some of my friends who have left, or by some bloggers there. Well, it's like they have it more for some kind of cool outfit, for some kind of styling, for some kind of image, and so on. Here, to some extent, too, but it seems to me that the economic component plays a big role, because, well, it really saves money.**”*

The phenomenon of St. Petersburg

One of the recurrent themes among respondents who were not originally from Saint Petersburg was the perception of the city as a unique and almost singular hub of second-hand clothing consumption in Russia. Participants described Saint Petersburg as possessing a distinctive cultural and symbolic atmosphere that fosters the acceptance of alternative consumption practices. The city was portrayed as culturally liberal, artistically rich, and historically layered — a context in which deviation from mass-market consumption norms is not only tolerated but actively encouraged. Many respondents noted that their attitudes toward second-hand clothing shifted significantly after relocating to Saint Petersburg, marking their entry into this distinct cultural and consumption practice:

Respondent 2:

*“**In fact, my first acquaintance with the concept of second-hand stores took place in St. Petersburg a long time ago. My friend bought something***

there. In short, we decided that we just want to see what kind of second-hand stores we have nearby and what is for sale there, because we have seen from all sorts of bloggers (from St. Petersburg whom we are watching) that they are buying some cool things in second-hand stores."

Respondent 3:

"Well, actually, I've always treated them like this (ambiguously). I'm actually from the Urals myself, well, anyway, I wasn't really into it, but then it was like I moved to the second-hand capital, and so I slowly kind of tasted this culture."

Respondent 12:

"That is, if it can be found everywhere in St. Petersburg, then in the same northern cities there are much less, and in Moscow, as if it were divided into castes, there are those who are from Patriarshiye Ponds who will never enter the second hand in their lives."

This atmosphere of acceptance and cultivation of alternative consumption practices, including engagement with the secondary clothing market, is frequently emphasized by respondents through contrast with Moscow. While the physical infrastructure for second-hand consumption may also be present in the capital, it is perceived to lack the corresponding cultural predisposition that characterizes Saint Petersburg:

Respondent 24:

"First, it seems to me, the style of the city itself. Again, this plays the role of St. Petersburg, which is more European, an older city. And, well, let's be honest. In the atmosphere of sleek Moscow, I don't really want to go to second-hand shops and vintage stores, <...> Plus, at some point in the tenth year, St. Petersburg began to gain momentum in social networks as a city for creative people, and creative people, they are always on the lookout and always love something exclusive. Therefore, again, where are we going for this? Second-hand shops and vintage shops. Well, like, I think that's why it happened that way."

Respondent 5:

"Well, in a good way, in my opinion, a non-selfish attitude, that is, which allows you to relax like that and, well, wear what you want, look the way you want. I think a couple of factors also played a role here. <...> The most important first factor is that somehow St. Petersburg is such a literary cradle, well, that is, it's still a reading city anyway, and this is important."

Reading a lot of books, especially when it's some kind of novels or even some kind of philosophy, is always an expansion of your horizons, which allows you to reduce your degree of condemnation, as it seems to me. That is, and this, well, the fact that there were a lot of such poor intellectuals in St. Petersburg, it seems to me, this is also, well, how it emphasizes. That is, when you have such poor intelligence, you no longer strive for new things, but just for something. Well, in short, that originally St. Petersburg, that's how it is, some kind of, well, yes, let it be low economic development allows you to normally treat an old thing on a person, which means nothing. And the second one is, of course, well, like, location. That is, it is a Port city. The fact that it's, well, close to the border, that's it. That is, that it's like, well, some values of neighboring Lands penetrate into it, well, they sort of flow through it. Well, the fact that it's a Port city is that it's like any Port city is always very mixed."

The majority of respondents who had moved to Saint Petersburg from other regions of Russia noted that second-hand clothing consumption was still met with skepticism or a mildly negative attitude within their families. At the same time, practices such as exchanging clothes among relatives or wearing garments "from one's grandmother" were generally accepted and did not provoke moral discomfort — unlike items acquired "from strangers." This distinction revealed a clear boundary between "intrafamilial transmission" and the "external second-hand market," with the former being deemed socially acceptable and the latter viewed with suspicion. In contrast, respondents born and raised in Saint Petersburg — particularly those from families with deep local roots — stood out as a group largely free from such prejudices, even when they themselves were not regular participants in the second-hand market:

Respondent 4:

"My mom worked in a second-hand store, and my older brothers helped her work there, and I, well, it's clear that this is not a fact of my own acquisition, but since then I've been such a second-hand, it's cool, because there seems to be something there. Of course, it's unlikely that I could just super consciously evaluate and compare what is in second hand, what is in regular stores, but somehow I got this feeling from my mother that you can find some kind of diamond there that you can't find in regular stores."

Respondent 3:

"Well, my mom keeps telling me: Don't you have any money? Are you wearing a bum jacket? Well, I was walking around in my huge jacket,

*which I just fell madly in love with, and She said: my God, do you want to buy a size-one jacket? I don't understand what the problem is. And so, you prove that I'm so self-fulfilling, and she just rolls her eyes and says: Lord, God be with you, do whatever you want. Here. Well, that is, **parents don't really buy this joke.**"*

Practices with clothes

Among the respondents — consumers and employees of the secondary clothing market, a variety of practices were identified although fragmented that are primarily aimed at extending the life of clothing. Simple mendings — sewing on buttons, mending holes, and minor changes were mentioned not only as a functional way to prolong the life of a garment, but also as a gesture with emotional meaning. These actions were usually carried out either independently or with the help of older female family members or professional seamstresses, and were almost always accompanied by references to a personal attachment to the item or finding value in a lived life as a thing:

Respondent 31:

*"But it's more like, you know, it looks like a renovation that they deliberately tried not to hide. I mean, it's kind of, you know, emphasizing imperfection. We do things like this (in vintage style). And, yes, even **if we fix some holes or spots, we do it on purpose so that it can be seen that it has been fixed. That is, we do not hide the traces of repairs, we do them, as it were, on the contrary. Not to say that we stick them out, but they seem to be made neatly, securely, but you can see that it has been repaired. That's what this thing is, well, it lived for an era, something happened to it.**"*

Respondent 28:

*"Well, mom taught me, of course, I always do, if, for example, a button flew off or I lost it, I can always choose a button to sew it on. Or if I also have a seam somewhere, of course, **I do it all because, well, the thing is valuable to me, I don't want to lose it just because of the button and the seam.**"*

The respondents' attitude towards clothes that have become unnecessary for one reason or another also reflected a tendency towards cyclical consumption: almost all participants noted that they try not to throw things away unless they are in a completely unusable condition. Instead, they preferred to give away their favorite clothes to their loved ones, donate the rest to charity or sell them on secondary markets:

Respondent 28:

“And I mostly give them to my loved ones, because I have younger brothers, younger sisters, if not relatives, then second cousins. Well, I’m the eldest, they’re all the youngest, and therefore, when a thing becomes Small to me, it suits my relatives wonderfully.”

Respondent 3:

“Well, first of all, my friends and I always arrange swap parties. <...> We arrange a dinner; and everyone brings things there. And these girls are swapping today, and we’re just swapping things there, oh, this is for me, and this is for me. This is the first way. I try to give away as much as possible to the people who are nearby, because suddenly they are interested in it. Then I handed over my things in Spasibo (thrift store). And I also have a younger sister, my favorite consumer, to whom everything can be pushed.”

Respondent 4:

“In short, it’s hard for me to throw things away, especially if I like them, I’m sure, well, that is, or I can try to sell something on Avito there. If I don’t have the strength and it’s just going to be too long and steamy, it’s not that bad, I’ll put it in a drawer, whatever kind of drawer it is, Spasibo (thrift store), well, in short, I’ll put different drawers in them, yes. In general, yes, of course, I’m worried. Either attach it to someone, give things to someone, yes, it’s also great.”

Customization and upcycling (such as dyeing, trimming, or visual redesign) appeared as rare but still present practices. Despite their marginal status at the sample level, specific cases demonstrated an interest in clothing as a space for self-expression — particularly within aesthetic frameworks that diverge from mass taste. Some respondents not only had experience with such modifications but also had specific skills. However, clothing from the secondary market was almost never mentioned as the starting point for such transformations. Customization and upcycling were more often practices aimed at prolonging the lifespan of garments within the wardrobe of a single owner. That’s why most of the respondents don’t resort to this practice, fearing to ruin the thing completely:

Respondent 5:

“Well, I usually do things when they’re too old, that is, you know, I have a white T-shirt, cool, but there are some strange spots, I just kind of filled it with paint, sealed it (tai-dai technique).”

Respondent 17:

“Honestly, no, I’m usually just afraid of messing up. And when I choose things, I’d rather choose something like what I’ll wear right away, without any customization later. Perhaps if I’ve had the item for a long time and, for example, I don’t wear it at all, I’ll try to give it some kind of second life. Well, the maximum is only if splattered with white and that’s it. But just to do some kind of deconstruction of clothes, just to sew, to reshape. This has never happened before.”

Respondent 21:

“Damn, I’m not that much, I’m very inspired by people who actually do it, who know that there are ideas, they see the concept in their head, they can do it later. I think I’m just not creative enough for that. I’m straight, I even have this kind of thing in my head, like, the thought rarely comes, like, to change it in length, in size, yes, some, like, basic things (sew a hole, sew a button, etc.) I can do, but this, well, can I trim it, there’s a little bit I just want it to be shorter. Well, this is my maximum really.”

A notable shift can be traced in the transformation of consumer trajectories: from hedonistic, impulsive accumulation — reinforced by the economic accessibility of low-cost items (“I buy everything”) to a more pragmatic and conscious approach (“I have everything I need, I only buy basics”). Respondents linked this transition to fatigue from overconsumption, critiques of fast fashion, and a desire to streamline their wardrobes — not only in relation to primary markets but also secondary ones. In this way, buying a specific item stops being a form of entertainment and becomes a ritualized act, often associated with rational attitudes. Still, the process of shopping retains elements of enjoyment and leisure:

Respondent 3:

“Well, it actually happens very spontaneously. That is, it may be that I, well, for a month, literally bought 3–4 things there every week. Sometimes it happens that I can’t shop there for a month, but it starts to break me down when I don’t buy anything for a month. I just start dodging like that, but usually it all happens very spontaneously.”

Respondent 21:

“Now, it seems to me, in principle, I rarely buy clothes. I had a period when, especially, I think, I discovered second-hand stores, and I bought a lot of things for myself. I mean, you know, the period when some new opportunity opens up to you, and you’re like, oh, secondhands, it’s

*secondhands on Instagram**, and it's some kind of pop-ups, and it's Avito, and you're just, you're just blown away by what's available, you can buy a bunch of everything, you buy it all later, as if you have a huge variety of clothes that you don't quite know what to do with. Then, as your tastes change, something else happens, and you're already like this, like it's kind of wrong and vice versa, I'm kind of trying to sort out my wardrobe right now, so I'm not buying anything at all, just some basic things."

Informal exchange formats such as "swaps" are part of everyday life for some respondents and are perceived as a form of social practice — less utilitarian and more symbolic and emotionally rewarding. In such exchanges, clothing becomes a pretext for spending time together, reinforcing horizontal ties (among friends and family), and serving as material for identity play:

Respondent 3:

"Well, first of all, my friends and I always arrange swap parties. <...> We arrange a dinner, and everyone brings things there. And these girls are swapping today, and we're just swapping things there, oh, this is for me, and this is for me."

Respondent 4:

"I had a friend who was into changing things, because I know that many people can't do it at all, and like, well, for someone, like, my thing is there, and that's it <...> I'm super changeable, if the thing doesn't suit me, I'm a star just wild delight. That is, if I understand that, well, like someone came to me or, in short, lent someone a vest or something else. And I see that she suited this person better, I'm like, damn, super, kind of take it in my direction too."

Respondent 7:

"Well, in our family as a whole, it's a tradition to pass things on to each other. We call it the natural exchange of things. Because I'm a mom and my sister, we're all the same size, height, and build. And I always drop my stuff in the chat first. I'm like, I don't like this, does anyone need this? There's a sister, for example: Well, give it to me, I'll bring it to her."

When analyzing behavioral strategies in second hand stores, a lack of a universal or rationalized approach to clothing selection was identified. Many respondents reported that they did not adhere to clear criteria when

* The activities of Meta Platforms Inc. (social networks Facebook and Instagram) are prohibited in the territory of the Russian Federation, recognized as extremist, and included in the list of banned organizations.

making purchases — an observation that was also confirmed during fieldwork. The search for clothing in second hand settings is often characterized by a spontaneous and chaotic nature, which may be aptly described as a form of “treasure hunting”:

Respondent 14:

*“Well, it’s **more on a hunch**, but it still works for me, which is a little bit different for me, probably my brain works, I’m a street photographer, and I’m just used to it, like, well, **you just notice out of the corner of your eye**, and I walk, well, **chaotically, just something that catches your eye.**”*

Respondent 2:

“I don’t have any strategy at all. Everything works out for me somehow in life, by accident.”

Respondent 3:

*“**There are no strategies, what caught the eye. It’s usually just that when you come with a list, it scares away all the cool stuff.** Well, it’s like it’s a statistic that when you go after something specific, you never find what you need. And when you, well, come in just like that, well, I’m not really looking for anything here at all. I’ve been looking for a skirt since 2015. That’s how it always happens. Well, **the main thing is that clothes don’t feel like you need them.**”*

Respondent 29:

*“Well, in general, very often people come into a store and want something, and they seem to understand what it is, but they still don’t know what it is, and there is no specific request, and they look at everything and try it on. Sometimes, very rarely, yes, there is a specific request for some pants of some color; or just some kind of T-shirt. **But more often, it’s probably just, yes, some kind of chaotic search. Just something fun and interesting. There is no such thing that they start with any particular category. Often people just come into our store and just look at everything, and they get something cool <...>.**”*

Field observations of customers revealed notable differences between individual and group shopping behaviors. When customers shopped alone or in pairs, their behavior tended to be more methodical: they would examine garments on one rack thoroughly before moving on to another. However, the choice of which rack to start with was typically arbitrary, with no discernible strategy guiding the process. In contrast, groups of friends — especially

younger ones — displayed more playful behavior. The emphasis in these cases shifted toward the discovery of absurd, humorous, or ridiculous garments, often accompanied by laughter, photographs, and the creation of a shared emotional atmosphere.

Some respondents also mentioned specific environmental factors such as cleanliness, absence of unpleasant odors, and friendliness of the staff as important conditions for making a purchase, though these appeared to be exceptions rather than norms. Interestingly, several participants expressed a preference for more inconspicuous, somewhat neglected, or “dusty” shops. For them, such an atmosphere did not repel but rather enhanced the experience, making the search for clothing more engaging and “authentic” — a process that felt, in their words, “like searching for treasure”:

Respondent 14:

“The same sellers. Well, because if a person doesn’t give a damn, well, it’s like everywhere else, it’s still the field of working with people, if a person doesn’t give a damn about his job, then you probably won’t want to come, no matter how cool his things are there. So, well, basement seconds are a wonderful thing. You look at it, you think, my God, I’m going to be dismembered there, and then you take something so cool out of there that you come back anyway <...> From such disadvantages, which is the joke in some seconds, well, they process things with different compounds and there is a certain smell. Well, a certain chemical that you will never remove, you will have clothes, and it will always stink. And if you go into a second-hand store and you kind of smell it, you realize that even if you buy an item, you’re going to wash it 10 times while you’re washing it, and you’ve already washed it to the holes. And here, too, are the chemicals used, because here is the only one that does not erase the smell in any way, and this is really the smell of just death and secondhand.”

Respondent 21:

“In a second-hand store, it seems to me that the best thing you can do for yourself in terms of choosing stores is not to have any expectations, because you never know at what point some really unrealistic item will turn up for you, maybe, it seems to me, in absolutely any store, so I globally, as a rule, I go into almost everything. That is, I try not to be biased and it’s better to come in and try.”

An important criterion influencing the choice between online and offline formats of secondhand clothing purchases, as identified by respondents, was the prioritization of physical retail spaces. Participants consistently

emphasized the significance of tactile engagement with garments — the ability to assess the fabric, texture, and overall material quality in person. This preference reflects a broader consumer logic not limited to the secondary market, but also characteristic of primary retail consumption, underscoring the enduring value of sensory experience in fashion-related decision-making:

Respondent 8:

“Listen, for the most part I like to walk and touch with my hands. <...> if I really want to go vintage, then I’d rather go touch and look, especially since, again, we repeat that it’s like an already used thing. You should check its quality.”

Respondent 12:

“I look at Avito from time to time, but I’m a little bit nervous. <...> I’m just scared to drive around the apartments. <...> I love physical stores, because, again, this is a pastime in person, outside the phone, you can touch, look, and immediately try it on, not on cardboard in some grandmother’s hallway, but in a normal fitting room.”

Discussion

Between necessity, aesthetics, and beliefs: how participants construct motivations for secondary clothing consumption

The findings of this study contribute to a deeper understanding of secondary market clothing consumption among Russian youth, demonstrating how broader cultural, economic, and symbolic factors intersect with individual motivations and practices.

Between necessity, aesthetics, and beliefs: how participants construct motivations for secondary clothing consumption

Among all the mentioned motivations, **economic motivation** was the most frequently cited by respondents. Participants emphasized the financial accessibility of secondary clothing, especially in the context of declining purchasing power and rising prices in the primary clothing market — a trend directly linked to recent political and economic shifts in Russia (Forbes 2023). In addition to affordability, there is another belief that complements this type of consumption — namely, the conviction that items produced in earlier periods are of significantly higher quality than those currently available on the primary market. Even when this is not the case, the low

price does not deter buyers; on the contrary, it makes secondhand goods more appealing.

The second most frequently mentioned **motivation was hedonistic or recreational**. Many respondents described the process of shopping in secondhand and vintage stores as a form of entertainment, a game, or a “treasure hunt,” where the unexpected discovery of unique or outdated items brought a sense of joy. This process was often associated with creative self-expression and mental relaxation. It resonated with the ideas outlined in Fletcher and Cervellon et al. (2012), suggesting that the act of searching itself holds intrinsic value for the consumer.

Despite the sample including a sufficient number of both male and female participants, no clear correlation was found supporting the findings of Hopkinson et al. (1999), which suggest that women tend to exhibit more impulsive and irrational behavior when purchasing clothing compared to men. Among participants of both genders, a wide range of consumer strategies was observed, spanning from rational approaches — such as deferred purchases and preliminary searching for inspiration before visiting second hand stores — to spontaneous, impulsive acquisitions. In this context, such behavioral patterns cannot be conclusively attributed to gender.

In contrast to these dominant motivations, critical motivation — linked to conscious consumption, environmental concerns, and ethical considerations — was far less pronounced. Despite its theoretical centrality in global typologies, in the Russian context it emerged as secondary. Environmental benefits of secondary shopping are often recognized, yet these acknowledgments tend to be framed as a “pleasant bonus” or a “karma point” rather than the primary motivation driving this form of consumption.

Interestingly, ecological and ethical narratives appeared to be largely sidelined in the promotional strategies of secondhand stores by themselves. This absence invites reflection on how sustainability is communicated or, perhaps more significantly, omitted in everyday consumer environments. Rather than framing themselves as ethical or environmentally responsible alternatives to fast fashion, stores tended to foreground narratives of affordability, individuality, and the pleasure of discovery. Discount strategies, diverse assortments, and the promise of finding something “unique” took precedence. Likewise, participants rarely engaged with or even acknowledged the social missions of certain stores such as Spasibo! which actively promote charitable initiatives. This disconnect suggests a tension between institutional intentions and the ways in which consumers interpret and navigate secondhand spaces.

This dynamic is further intensified in contexts where daily economic concerns are acute: environmental care begins to be perceived less as an attainable priority and more as an unattainable luxury — a concern reserved for the “developed West.” The tension between the immediate need to meet basic necessities and the aspiration toward a sustainable future emerges not merely as a matter of individual choice, but as a reflection of deeper structural constraints within society. Ecological responsibility, while acknowledged on an abstract or even intuitive level, is frequently overshadowed by the more pressing imperative to secure material stability and a sense of everyday comfort. This perspective echoes Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, in which ethical consumption becomes relevant only after more fundamental needs have been satisfied (Trivedi et al. 2019).

Other significant themes included nostalgia and self-expression. Motivation rooted in nostalgia was reflected in phrases like “the biography of the item,” or “a thing made at a specific time.” Imagined dialogues with previous owners, fantasies about the item’s past, deep emotional investment in its trajectory, and a sense of nostalgia for the era in which the item was created often accompany the experience of secondary clothing consumption. These narratives heightened the symbolic and personal value attributed to secondhand garments.

Finally, a strong uniqueness of motivation emerged around the search for unique pieces and the desire to express one’s individuality through clothing. This theme frequently overlapped with hedonic motivations and underscored the affective dimension of dress, as well as its role in communicating personal style. Respondents described the secondhand market as a means of constructing a distinctive identity, resisting the homogenization characteristic of mass-market fashion, and performing individuality through curated visual choices.

Everyday practices: routines and habits of clothing consumption

Participants’ narratives revealed a diversity of isolated practices aimed at prolonging the life of garments. At first glance, actions such as sewing on buttons, mending small holes, or slight tailoring adjustments might seem purely utilitarian. However, within the framework of this analysis and the broader context of the research such practices take on a more complex and emotionally charged significance. Respondents described these acts not merely as a way to preserve an item, but as gestures of care, remembrance, and even resistance to the ideology of fast consumption. These repairs were

often carried out with the involvement of older women — grandmothers, mothers, local seamstresses — highlighting the embeddedness of such practices in intergenerational relations and traditionally feminized domestic labor. In this light, repair becomes not only an act of sustainability and thrift but also a conduit for transmitting values, skills, and emotions, echoing the findings of Laitala et al. (2018).

This affective dimension was also evident in the treatment of unwanted clothing. Although environmental or critical motivations were rarely cited as primary, many participants described strategies aligned with circular consumption models: passing items to friends and relatives, donating to charity shops, or reselling on secondary markets. Respondents appeared to resist the finality of disposal, expressing a strong reluctance to throw things away rooted in the belief that garments retain value beyond their immediate utility. This sensibility often extended to an interest in the “story” of a garment. Such practices, while unsystematic and loosely structured, reflect a form of intuitive, even ethical pragmatism rarely verbalized in explicit terms but deeply felt. This observation stands in contrast to findings reported by Thredup (2019), which indicate that Western consumers are increasingly inclined to consider a garment’s future use and longevity at the point of purchase.

Customization and upcycling appeared less frequently in participants’ accounts but carried notable analytical weight, offering insight into the aesthetic and emotional dimensions of clothing relations. Practices such as dyeing, full re-stitching, or visual alterations were more commonly framed as expressions of individuality, particularly among those with niche or non-mainstream tastes and subcultural affiliations. However, it is significant that secondhand garments were never explicitly described as “raw material” for radical transformation. Modifications were typically minimal, focused on comfort or extending wearability. The idea of radically altering a used garment simply did not register for most respondents. This suggests a selective engagement with customization and upcycling practices, where emotional and aesthetic alignment took precedence over ideological commitments to sustainability.

Of particular note is the observed shift in individual consumption trajectories within the secondhand clothing market from impulsive accumulation (“I used to buy everything I saw”) to more deliberate strategies (“I already have everything; now I only purchase essentials”). A similar observation was made by Aladjalova (2024). This transformation is frequently associated with fatigue from hyper-consumption, criticism of

fast fashion, and a desire for a more thoughtfully curated wardrobe. Despite the continued emotional engagement in the shopping process, purchasing behavior has become more intentional and purposeful.

At the same time, most respondents self-identified as rational and pragmatic consumers. Durability, quality, and the emotional resonance of a garment often emerged as key selection criteria. Yet, alignment with individual aesthetic preferences remained just as important even when these clashed with familial or social tastes. This partially challenges the findings of previous studies (Salomon & Rabolt 2004; Niinimäki 2017), which emphasized social conformity in fashion choices. Instead, the findings align more closely with Entwistle's conception of dress as embodied practice — a means of bridging the gap between outward appearance and inner self (Entwistle 2019).

The social character of clothing practices was also evident in informal clothing exchanges, particularly within close-knit or friendship-based networks. While the scale of such exchanges was modest, they were not perceived as utilitarian acts. Rather, they constituted symbolic and playful interactions imbued with emotional significance: opportunities to share stories, experiment with identity, and reinforce horizontal ties. These events were not framed as market transactions, but as platforms for self-exploration and social intimacy often entirely devoid of monetary exchange.

Observations of secondary store behavior revealed a duality in clothing selection strategies. Many respondents claimed to have “no specific criteria,” and this was confirmed both through direct observation and conversations with staff. The act of searching was often chaotic and improvised. Shopping was frequently described as a form of entertainment or “treasure hunting,” where spontaneity and the thrill of unexpected discovery played central roles echoing Fletcher's and Cervellon et al. (2012) concept.

An interesting pattern emerged in shopping dynamics: individuals or pairs tended to shop methodically, examining items on racks one by one, whereas groups of friends transformed the process into a form of leisure characterized by jokes, playful try-ons, selfies, and shared laughter. This performative and playful dimension highlights the role of friendship in shaping motivations and destigmatizing secondhand shopping, where the act becomes a collective means of identity construction (Vannini et al. 2008; Veenstra et al. 2013). This also corresponds with the recreational motivation for consuming secondhand clothing.

Sensory characteristics of secondhand stores also played an important role. While some emphasized the importance of cleanliness, neutral odors,

and friendly staff, others valued the very disorder and messiness of the secondhand space. Paradoxically, stores that were overly stylized or curated were sometimes seen as “artificial,” lacking the sense of authenticity and unpredictability that drew people to secondhand shopping in the first place. Many participants reported avoiding secondhand or vintage shops that clearly had significant investment in branding or interior design, as this drove up prices despite the secondhand nature of the goods.

St. Petersburg as a cultural interface

An interesting theme that emerged among respondents who were not native to Saint Petersburg was the perception of the city as a unique almost singular site of second-hand clothing consumption in Russia. Participants described the urban environment as possessing a distinct cultural and symbolic atmosphere conducive to the acceptance of alternative consumption practices (Gurova 2014). Saint Petersburg was imagined as a culturally liberal, artistically vibrant, and historically layered milieu in which deviation from mass-market and fashion industry norms was not only permissible but often positively valorized. In this context, second-hand clothing purchases were understood not merely as an element of conscious consumption but as a form of cultural belonging to a specific urban identity.

Many respondents reported that their attitudes toward the second-hand market shifted significantly following their move to Saint Petersburg. Exposure to the city’s developed infrastructure of vintage and second-hand stores ranging from aesthetically curated spaces to informal, unstructured outlets served as a catalyst for re-evaluating their own consumer beliefs and habits. Purchasing clothing with a past came to be viewed as a mode of urban socialization and cultural integration, where alternative consumption ceased to be marginal or socially stigmatized and instead emerged as an aesthetically and symbolically meaningful form of self-expression (Bartlett 2010).

The roots of this phenomenon lie partly in the socio-cultural makeup of the city. Historically, Saint Petersburg has been home to a financially constrained but symbolically enriched urban intelligentsia — scholars, artists, poets, and members of creative professions — who, despite limited financial resources, maintained strong aspirations toward self-expression, aesthetics, and cultural reflexivity. This class, often referred to as the “poor intelligentsia,” cultivated a persistent orientation toward uniqueness, meaning, and individuality even under economic constraints (Yurchak 2006). In this sense, the second-hand market evolved not only as an economic

alternative but as a site of cultural capital — a place to find garments with a “soul” or a “history,” to express individuality, and to participate in an urban culture rooted in distinctiveness and authenticity.

Moreover, one can speak of a symbolic alignment between the figure of the “poor but cultured” intellectual or creative individual and the aesthetic and ideological characteristics of second-hand retail spaces themselves. The perceived uniqueness and affordability of such items resonate with the values and aspirations of this social group (Zakharova 2011). This congruence enhances the cultural legitimacy of second-hand consumption specifically in Saint Petersburg — a resonance that is notably absent in Moscow or other Russian cities, where different urban narratives prevail and cultural capital is less often linked to economic modesty.

It is precisely this intersection of economic constraint and cultural aspiration that has created fertile ground for the normalization and in certain circles, the prestige of second-hand clothing consumption. What is particularly noteworthy is that these values continue to be transmitted both through broader urban culture and within intergenerational socialization practices.

A clear cultural contrast was observed between respondents from other regions and those who were born and raised in Saint Petersburg. Many participants who had relocated from different parts of Russia noted that second-hand clothing was still met with skepticism or mild disapproval within their families. The use of hand-me-downs from family members such as “auntie’s clothes” — was generally accepted and did not evoke moral discomfort. In contrast, garments from “outsiders,” even if more desirable in terms of quality or style, were often perceived as hygienically questionable. This distinction reveals a symbolic boundary between intra-family exchange and the external second-hand market, where the former was deemed acceptable and the latter suspect. After all, many respondents recalled wearing clothes passed down from older siblings in childhood.

Against this backdrop, respondents born and raised in Saint Petersburg especially those from multi-generational local families stood out. Among this group, there was virtually no evidence of prejudice toward second-hand clothing, even when they or their families were not active consumers of it. Thus, the “Saint Petersburg phenomenon” manifests not only in the city’s cultural atmosphere but also in historically embedded social structures and the intergenerational transmission of norms that validate alternative, symbolically charged modes of consumption.

***Russia and the West: perceived similarities and differences
in secondary consumption motivations and practices***

The majority of study participants observed a notable evolution in how Russian youth perceive the secondary clothing market over the past three to five years. What was once commonly linked to social disadvantage, marginality, or even shame where individuals often hesitated to disclose that their clothing came from thrift or second hand sources has increasingly become normalized and, in some cases, valorized as a marker of cultural capital.

Respondents connected this shift to a constellation of contributing factors, including:

- the rising cost of high-quality and distinctive items in both mass-market retail and local brands;
- the loss of access to familiar mass-market brands (in the context of international sanctions);
- the standardization and homogeneity of garments in new fashion collections;
- a growing desire for individuality.

In this context, secondary fashion has emerged as both a pragmatic response to economic and geopolitical circumstances and as a meaningful avenue for self-expression. It allows individuals to assert their stylistic preferences, distance themselves from the aesthetics of mass production, and cultivate a distinctive visual identity. Interpreted through the framework of Pierre Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital, engagement with secondary clothing can be seen as a form of distinction that relies less on economic expenditure and more on the strategic accumulation of stylistic, symbolic, and cultural resources — those that communicate refined taste, critical awareness, and aesthetic self-determination (Bourdieu 1984).

Based on these, it became evident that the majority of participants shared the view that there are no significant differences between the motivations and practices of Russian and Western youth regarding secondhand clothing consumption. Core values such as the pursuit of self-expression, fatigue with excessive and homogenized consumption, and dissatisfaction with the price-to-quality ratio in mass-market fashion were described as universal orientations characteristic of the younger generation on a global scale. These motivations were seen as part of a broader cultural shift away from fast fashion toward more conscious and individualized forms of consumption. This shift is mediated through social media, disseminated not only by highly

visible influencers and celebrities but also by ordinary users without media capital.

Nonetheless, some interviewees pointed to contextual differences, primarily related to the level of infrastructural support and cultural perceptions. In Western countries such as certain regions of Europe and the United States the second hand clothing market has long been institutionalized and integrated into everyday economic life. Charity shops, vintage boutiques, and resale platforms enjoy a high degree of social legitimacy, and purchasing used clothing is not accompanied by overt social stigma. In the Russian context, by contrast, although the secondhand market has grown rapidly in recent years, cultural associations with poverty and scarcity persist in some age groups and regions, influencing both the public representation and personal perception of these practices.

A further distinction arises from the observation that the concept of vintage in Russia carries a different meaning, largely because it does not exist in the classical sense. Russia lacks historical costume collections, archives of famous brands, and the like, which means there is practically no collector-user among Russian secondhand consumers. Most vintage items available are imported. Meanwhile, a completely different trend is observed in the West, where the historical presence and geographical proximity of iconic Fashion Houses contribute to a vibrant collector and vintage culture.

Despite these differences in institutional support, cultural context, and historical legacy, there is a notable convergence in the symbolic meanings attributed to secondary clothing. In both contexts, it is perceived not only as a way to save money or contribute to environmental sustainability, but also as a tool for genuine self-expression and the curation of a personal image. Respondents frequently described such garments as having a “story,” capable of emphasizing individuality and standing in opposition to the impersonality of mass fashion, which tends to reproduce the same silhouettes in different colors. In this way, secondhand clothing emerges as a space for cultural and aesthetic reflection, through which identity construction, the expression of authenticity, and the formation of a sense of social belonging become possible.

Limitations

One of the main limitations of this study is that, despite including respondents from various regions, the majority of participants reside in Saint Petersburg — a city with a more developed and accessible secondary

clothing market. This affects the comprehensiveness of understanding the practices and motivations of Russian youth more broadly. Recruitment of male respondents also proved to be a significant challenge. Many potential male participants either declined to take part in the study or initially agreed but later ceased communication before the interviews could be conducted, limiting the representativeness of the male sample.

Another important limitation was the ambiguity in respondents' understanding of key terms. Participants often conflated the concepts of "second-hand" and "vintage," using them interchangeably without clear distinction. Additionally, many did not classify clothing received from relatives or friends as secondary clothing, which led to an underestimation of such consumption practices.

Limited access to sellers and store owners also complicated data collection from these groups, as some were reluctant to share business information or declined participation in the study.

Conclusion

The analysis of motivations and practices related to the secondary clothing market among Russian youth reveals an ambivalent picture. The primary driving force behind engagement with the second-hand market is economic motivation, as evidenced by both interview data and field observations. This is complemented by a hedonistic motivation, associated with the pleasure derived from the process of searching for and purchasing unique items, the unpredictability of the assortment, and the emotional engagement in the "hunt" for distinctive goods. These aspects contribute to a meaningful consumption experience often perceived as a form of leisure or a hobby.

At the same time, critical motivation which is rooted in environmental and ethical concerns has not gained widespread public traction within the Russian context. Even second-hand stores with a social agenda seldom emphasize such values, opting instead to highlight economic accessibility, the enjoyment of shopping, and a sense of community. This stands in contrast to findings from international studies, where critical motivation is typically presented alongside economic and hedonistic motivations as a major driver.

Nonetheless, it would be inaccurate to claim that critical motivation is entirely absent among Russian consumers. Rather, its presence is often intuitive and implicit in individual practices. However, the conscious

articulation and implementation of these values appear to be constrained, likely due to the country's current stage of socio-economic development and a limited infrastructure for supporting environmental initiatives. This is further reflected in the near-total absence of practices such as upcycling, customization, or systematic wardrobe management among respondents. Consumption remains largely individualized and fragmented, lacking clear and deliberate strategies — a result of personal approaches rather than market constraints.

Thus, the second-hand market in Russia continues to serve primarily utilitarian and recreational functions. It remains a niche phenomenon, appealing mainly to enthusiasts and certain urban communities and requires further investigation.

Future research

In terms of directions for future research, it is particularly important for qualitative studies to first expand the age range of the sample in order to capture a broader spectrum of motivations and practices related to second-hand clothing consumption within Russian society, extending beyond the youth segment alone. Furthermore, it appears advisable to examine these practices and motivations among residents of various cities and regions across Russia, which would allow for the identification of regional specificities and behavioral variability. Special attention should also be given to the phenomenon of Saint Petersburg, which warrants deeper analysis through a cultural-historical lens to gain a comprehensive understanding of its origins, significance, and scale in the context of second-hand clothing consumption.

In addition, conducting quantitative analysis would be relevant to assess the prevalence of different forms of motivations and practices and to explore their interrelations among the Russian population. Such an approach would complement qualitative findings and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

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Appendix. Field Diary

1. Vintage store “And Friends” near Chernyshevskaya



Vintage store “And Friends”

A place with white walls, full-length mirrors, expensive hangers. Young people seem to come not for things, but for experience: here you can “try yourself on” as a character in the style of glam rock or disco, a lot of awkward things. Laughter, image discussions, and story shooting can be heard in the fitting rooms. You can find rare and expensive Chanel archives in a single copy.

2. Second-hand “Fatcatshop” near the Kazan Cathedral



Second-hand “Fatcatshop”

A semi-dark room with a heavy smell of mold and dust in the basement with small windows under the ceiling. Things are piled on top of each other, like in an abandoned theater, hanging on rails and hanging shelves. Some corners with sofas and armchairs resemble the apartment of an old director because of the magazines. The clothes are different, from weird dresses to classic sweaters and raincoats. A young woman (about 30 years old), in a long skirt and a beret, goes through different things for a long time, strokes the fabric, does not try on. She leaves without buying anything, but she looks inspired.

3. Garage sale of a primary market store “IRNBY”



Garage sale of a primary market store “IRNBY”

A large semi-empty space, several rails with clothes with a fixed value, among the things are both unsold archives and things with a small defect — a stain on the lining, a crooked seam, protruding threads. A lot of young people, mostly couples. Girls choose, guys wear things. The changing rooms are noisy.

4. Garage sale second-hand and vintage shops in SevkaBel

Port There is a huge space, which is not felt due to the same huge number of rented sectors. A lot of rails with things, tables on which they tried to pack things beautifully. There are no normal fitting rooms. There are mostly young people with unique and idiosyncratic styles among the buyers. Interestingly, classic clothes are presented by men, and girls have different upsets and customizations from old clothes. Customers touch things a lot, but I didn't notice that they were buying a lot. They move in a circle to get a better look at all the points, and things look chaotically inside the points.

I noticed two friends, about 25–30 years old, trying on old boots and hats, giggling, and taking a lot of pictures.



Garage sale second-hand and vintage shops in Sevkabel Port

5. *Vintage store “Мушка” near Chernyshevskaya*

The space resembles an apartment, even the room of a grandmother who loved to dress up in her youth. Things are arranged by category — outerwear, nightgowns, and so on. You can only get here by appointment. The owner, an elderly woman, is not always in place. Besides me, there was a woman in the “room” who was 45–50 years old, coquettishly choosing “new” things for herself, playfully twirling in front of the mirror. I made a big purchase, even haggled. The smell is senile, but not too much. It’s cozy enough, a lot of retro things, but quite classic.



Vintage store “Мушка” near Chernyshevskaya

6. Vintage store “Fleur” near Chernyshevskaya

A basement room with a pronounced theatricality — a lot of fans, sculptures, plants, sofas with a table and dishes in the center, as if we were visiting, and not in a store. They offered drinks, and immediately told us about the arrival of clothes from abroad. While we were getting acquainted with the rails, the saleswoman sat on the sofa with her legs and ate, thinking about her own. There are many things from carnival and colorful to classic, but with its own twist. While I was there, two young girls came in, they greeted each other in a friendly way and immediately went to the stand with vintage jackets and corsets. They were distracted by the phone, comparing reality with references. We moved confidently, first towards the things we had planned, then towards the rest. Two more girls came in after them. They lingered at the jewelry stand. They tried it on and giggled, obviously fooling around.



Vintage store “Fleur” near Chernyshevskaya

7. Vintage store “Желтая Вешалка”²



Vintage store “Желтая Вешалка”

² Vintage store “The yellow hanger”.

I would classify this store more as a second-hand store since the items are mostly no older than 20 years old. The rails are packed, it's hard to see anything without making an effort to pull the hangers apart. The space is modest, without details. There were no customers.

8. *Selective second-hand "Fjordcloth stock & vintage"*

A selective vintage store with a twist on the 90s. There are many students of arts and media. The space is compact, but visually saturated: posters, cassettes, books on the windowsills. People spend time here like in a club — listening to music, discussing purchases with sellers, knowing the history of these things. The main category of clothing is men's, there are many young men who are clearly following trends, well-groomed, the sellers are also guys, responsive, help with the selection, advise what is best suited.



Selective second-hand "Fjordcloth stock & vintage"

9. *"Planeta Second-hand" Thrift store*



"Planeta Second-hand" Thrift store

An ordinary space, without much decoration. Simple rails with lots of clothes from the last decade, baskets of things for 100 rubles. There are a lot of people of different age groups, they look about 50–65 years old. A young couple comes in, disperses. She goes to the women's department, he goes to outerwear. They cross paths at the ticket counter in 15 minutes. He's holding a man's jacket, she's holding a woman's sweater. They both buy and go.

10. Fashion vintage showroom “Second Kent”

A quiet, almost gallery-like space. Things are hung by colors and categories. It felt like I was in someone's dressing room. The clothes are simple, but there are also some branded items, especially among accessories — they are like in a showcase. There is a couple in the fitting room — the guy chooses pants, the girl advises, the seller also fusses around, helping with the choice. They talk informally, joking like old friends. Lots of raincoats and shirts.



Fashion vintage showroom “Second Kent”

11. DOBRO³ Thrift Store

A brightly decorated, socially oriented store. There are many visitors with a pronounced “hipster” style: loose silhouettes, vintage glasses, caps. People often take pictures of things against the background of graffiti in fitting rooms — the space is part of the aesthetic capital.



DOBRO Thrift Store

12. Second-hand Bonobo

A small space, several rails and a large selection of T-shirts and shirts from classic to “Hawaiian”. Two young men in glasses and loose jeans approach the rail with trench coats. One says, “It’s like Baudrillard in Cannes,” the other says, “Yes, but more like a professor.” They take turns trying it on, taking pictures of each other on film. The cultural space merges with the clothing space. Ironic posters “buy a planet, save clothes”, as well as a mannequin with the best position are greeted at the entrance.



Second-hand Bonobo

³ Thrift Store “Добро”/“Good”.

13. *“Ambar” Vintage Clothing Store*

The interior is a kind of museum: antique furniture, big mirror, a large selection of various clothes, mostly men’s. A 35 year-old customer has been communicating with the saleswoman for a long time — she asks about the history of the item, its composition and care. Buying seems to turn into an act of cultural consumption — it’s not the thing that matters, but its narrative.



“Ambar” Vintage Clothing Store

14. *“Chestore Vintage” Vintage Selective Clothing Store*



“Chestore Vintage” Vintage Selective Clothing Store

The aesthetics of the curated thrift. The prices are above average, and there are rare collectibles. The year of manufacture and the country of manufacture of the item are written on the price tags, emphasizing the history of the item. Things are being repaired, apparently, again emphasizing the

history of the thing from the words of the owner. Young clients look like fashion magazine editors: recognizable fashion accessories, confident body language. They buy a little, but they look at it for a long time, touch it, try it on, talk to sellers, and learn the story. There are also older buyers, mostly men, walking around like in a museum, looking at things from their youth.

15. *“Megahand” second-hand clothing and shoes from Europe*

A large room with a lot of different clothes. There are literally two cultures meeting here: elderly saleswomen and young “vintage seekers.” I noticed a “skirmish” — a young girl in a corset, a long skirt with gathers, massive jewelry and a light raincoat asks the saleswoman about a “skirt a la Dior of the 50s”, the saleswoman answers her in the spirit: “A. It’s a simple polka dot skirt, look there.” There are a lot of young fashionistas like that who are clearly in need of super cheap clothes.



“Megahand” second-hand

16. *“Spasibo!” charity clothing store*

Stuffy room, lots of clothes and light, but pleasant enough. There is antique furniture, good fitting rooms. A young man of about 25 tries on a plaid shirt and immediately takes a photo in the mirror. He refuses the seller’s help. He walks erratically around the store, stopping near things that seem to have caught his eye.



“Spasibo!” charity clothing store

17. Eversale vintage concept store



Eversale vintage concept store

It's light, but not too much, and the room is cramped due to the large number of things with the smell of old fabric. Things are hung side by side, the lighting is yellow. Various posters and vinyl on the walls, as well as a large retro sofa and red curtains in the fitting room add to the comfort and theatricality. A 20+ year-old young man in headphones is wordlessly sorting through sweaters, methodically checking the composition on the tag and the presence of severe wear. He doesn't look in the mirror, he's lost in thought. The seller sits at the checkout and does not participate in the process of getting to know the clothes, but he looks friendly.

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Сведения об авторе

Лямзина Катарина Вячеславовна, бакалавр,
Национальный исследовательский университет
«Высшая школа экономики»,
Санкт-Петербург, Россия.
kvlyamzina@edu.hse.ru

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KATARINA V. LIAMZINA*HSE University**St. Petersburg, Russian Federation*

SECONDARY MARKET CLOTHING CONSUMPTION: MOTIVATION AND PRACTICES OF RUSSIAN YOUTH

Abstract. In recent years, fashion involving second-hand clothing has emerged as a global trend driven by environmental concerns, economic pressures, and the pursuit of individuality. Although consumer motivations and practices in the second-hand clothing market have been extensively studied within Western academic discourse, they remain underexplored in the contemporary Russian context. This study focuses on analyzing the motivations and consumption practices of second-hand clothing among Russian youth aged 18 to 35. Based on 31 semi-structured interviews and field observations primarily conducted in Saint Petersburg, and employing elements of reflexive thematic analysis (Braun, Clarke 2006, 2019, 2021), key motivational forces were identified: economic and hedonic, aligned with the typologies of Ferraro et al. (2016) and Machado et al. (2019). The findings indicate that the primary factors are economic accessibility, the pleasure of the hunt, and the desire for uniqueness, whereas ecological and ethical motivations appear less frequently and as secondary drivers. Particular attention is given to the influence of social environment and cultural memory on consumer practices, as well as the ambivalent attitudes of Russian youth toward fast fashion and trends. This work situates the Russian context within global discussions of fashion, identity, and consumer resistance, revealing how local socio-economic and historical conditions shape consumption values.

Keywords: secondary clothing market, motivation, practices, Russian youth, fashion

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Information about the author

Liamzina Katarina V., bachelor,
HSE University,
St. Petersburg, Russian Federation.
kvlyamzina@edu.hse.ru

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