



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND LAW

Master Degree Project in Marketing and Consumption

Good Old Things

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The Swedish market for home furnishing has expanded during the last 20 years. There is an increase of second hand consumption and around half of Sweden's population buys furniture and interior from others, making it one of the largest product groups. This thesis aims at describing consumption of second hand interior decoration based on the activities that can be found within this particular form of consumption and the concept of "doing" and the activities that can be found both before and after the moment of purchase are in focus. The study is inspired by practice theory and takes on an ethnographical approach based on interviews and observations in order to grasp the everyday sayings and doings of the respondents. The study reveals six themes that portray how different types of material, meaning and competence nourish and foster practices of consuming second hand interior decoration. The study further suggests that the magnitude of each of the three components shape the practice and becomes the foundation for fostering further practices. Further, the structure of the components within the individual practice has a direct impact on the perceived type of consumption that is carried out. The study reveals that consumption of second hand interior decoration is more linked to anti-consumption and a counteraction against consumption ideologies.

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Introduction

This thesis aims at describing consumption of second hand interior decoration based on the activities that can be found within this particular form of consumption. Home furnishing has been described as a commercial arena and the Swedish market for home furnishing has expanded during the last 20 years (Fuentes, 2011). Statistics show that together with household products and maintenance, consumption of furniture in Sweden during 2012 constituted of 5,1 percent of households' total expenses and the amount households spend on furniture and interior design has in fixed prices increased with 60% from 2002 to 2012 (Roos, 2013). A strong connection can be seen between the increase in furniture purchase and home interior and the individual interest for home furnishing. An increased coverage of home furnishing is also seen within printed media and interior magazines such as *Retro*, *Allt i hemmet*, *Sköna Hem*, *Plaza Interiör*, *Elle Interiör* and *Lantliv* among others, not to mention a vast amount of international interior magazines. Often, an interior style mix of new, second hand and antique furniture is promoted. Daily newspapers are also increasing their focus on home furnishing through either regularly reports and "hemma hos" stories, or through sections only dedicated to home furnishing and interior. A local example of this is in the weekly Göteborgs Posten real estate special where interviewees very often enjoys shopping second hand and incorporates this as an element in their interior style. Influential role models can also be seen with a number of blogs. Clara Lidström who has the blog *Underbara Clara* was awarded with Erikshjälpen's "Sweden's second hand profile 2012" with the motivation that she has helped bringing second hand

into the fine rooms, radio and TV. The influence of blogs can further be seen by Arsel and Bean (2012) where they look at how the website Apartment Therapy acts as a taste regime that shapes preferences for objects and promotes the meanings associated with objects.

Within broadcasted media, the diffusion of trends and home furnishing is spread through various different programs focused on different aspects of home furnishing, either creating a home from scratch, renovating or adding a personal touch to something ordinary. *Husdrömmar*, *Äntligen Hemma*, *Room Service*, *Bygglov* and *Sommar med Ernst* are only a few examples of programmes that on a weekly basis target people and contribute to the expansion of the market for home furnishing and interior decoration. In recent years, the programmes have also increasingly focused on implementing second hand interior into everyday homes thanks to *Antikrundan* where people show a never ending interest for old interior and furniture, its history and monetary value. The program, *Antikmagasinet* shows a more in depth and narrow focus on design classics and is described as a "show for nerds". Also, Parker and Weber (2013) claim that the demand of second hand objects have spread from demographics with lower incomes into a mainstream activity with increasing incomes and education levels.

The increase of second hand consumption and the expansion of the second hand market place are not only based on the increased coverage in media. Around 40% of Sweden's population purchase second hand items online and the category of furniture and interior decoration constitute the largest product group within this

market (SOM, 2012)¹. Consumption of second hand furniture is not a new phenomenon but has kept auction houses busy since a long time as people have been using inherited furniture through time. However, the development of second hand furniture consumption implies that there has been a shift. Second hand furniture is now seen more and more as an obligatory part of interior decoration. It sometimes even seems that second hand items are ascribed a larger meaning than newer items bought in traditional shops. The popularity of second hand furniture today is an important area to study in order to understand if and how it shapes consumer activities and as well as to understand it as a phenomena. Further, it is also an interesting area to study in order to understand if people potentially find a deeper meaning in second hand items compared to new items.

Previous research shows that consumption of home interior decoration reflects a desire for self-presentation and identity construction (Belk, 1988), symbols for status (McCracken, 1988) and value through possession (Warde, 2005). This will be discussed further in the next section. Although this research describes why the consumption is performed and the underlying meaning of it, it fails to describe the actual “doing” of the consumption. In order to understand the doings we suggest a practice theory perspective. This perspective adds a more nuanced understanding of the second hand concept and describes the complexity of the three components of

material, meaning and competence (Shove, Pantzar & Watson, 2012) within the practice. The practice perspective and its applicability on consumption of second interior decoration will be described in detail in the theoretical framework.

Problem discussion

On a daily basis we are bombarded with tips on how to improve our homes through various consumption practices. To a large extent we are told to re-use and find new life in old items that express patina and we are encouraged to find our personal narratives through our home interior. One example is the trend of shabby chic that has been seen during the last couple of years. Fredriksson (2013) points out that the western culture of consumption is a complex phenomenon between vision and daily life where a network of actors develop. In Fredrikssons study of “Shabby chic och slitenhetens estetik” (2013) she studies which practices are developed and looks into how cultural practices are organized and how value and meaning are expressed. However, although aspects of identity constructions through value and meaning is found within consumption of shabby chic, the different activities found within the consumption often connect to the purpose of giving the items an impression of being old. These activities describe alternative dimensions to the consumption practice and should not be neglected.

A current trend that moves in the same direction is the practice of consuming and decoration with used furniture and interior, bought as second hand items or as antiques. Studies on the subject argue that the (re)circulation and exchange of used commodities have been a part of the urban landscape for a long time (Parker & Weber, 2013).

¹ The question asked was "How often have you done following online: bought or sold goods through private ad? The response options were on a 7-point scale ranging from *Never* to *Daily*. Source: Den nationella SOM-undersökningen 2012.

Consuming second hand items based on the ethical consideration in relation to consumption and how it affects consumer choices shows that it often leads to simplifying consumption behaviour (Shaw & Newholm, 2002). The ethical standards often relate to taking a stand towards consumption or showing considering towards issues such as sustainability. The research depicts several cases where second hand furniture and clothing are bought and later changed to become fashionable objects, and several examples of homes furnished with second hand items and furniture are described. The research described within the field of second hand consumption related to the home focus on the moral consideration towards the practice. Further, studies on home interior and design in general focus to a large extent on the social and symbolic aspects of consumption, relation to expression of identity and reflection of status and class. Woodward (2003) takes on another approach when studying the concept of consuming things and looks at the concept from the viewpoint of the actors. This study aims at finding consumer strategies and revealing narratives that work as the foundation for the consumption act. Although the strong trend of commodifying the home is addressed, the author reveals different desires and motives behind the act and categorises two groups. The aesthetic decorators, described having a desire to create a beautiful home, almost like a fantasy, with beautiful objects, and the unaesthetic comfort-seekers, focused on comfort, relaxation and practicality. The hedonic desires focused on identity do not completely describe the motives behind consumption of home related products and instead, the author emphasize the counter-discourse focused on the etiquette of good taste and the desire to

live in a comfortable and relaxed lifestyle.

In addition to Woodward (2003) the multiple dimensions of consumption has also shown to touch upon the concept of “craft”, described as a consumption activity in which the consumer makes and designs the product with the help of skills, knowledge and passion in the desire for self-expression (Campbell, 2005). The model moves away from the perception of the consumer being a target for external forces and does not assume that the consumer is highly concerned about lifestyle, identity or image. Instead, individuals consume in order to participate and engage in creative activities of self-expression. As a result, the concept does not assume that the consumer tries to create or maintain a specific identity; instead, the consumer is already considered having a clear identity (Campbell, 2005). Both Woodward (2003) and Campbell (2005) emphasize the need to not only consider consumption from an identity perspective and instead, the authors highlight the different activities that surrounds the actual consumption practice. The work of Woodward and Campbell also suggest that interior design and decoration should be understood as a practical undertaking, relating to the concept of practice theory. In this study, we have chosen the framework of practice by Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012) who illustrate a practice as based on the components materials, meanings and competences. This will be discussed in the theoretical framework.

As a result, considering consumption of second hand interior decoration related to the home as a practice is believed to further contribute to the research field and give a better

understanding of how second hand interior decorations are portrayed within consumption practices. As a result, this thesis aims at describing consumption of second hand interior decoration from a practice perspective where the concept of doing and the activities that can be found both before and after the moment of purchase are in focus.

In order to describe the practice of consuming second hand interior decoration, the following research questions will be answered.

- What **materials** are included in the consumption of second hand interior decoration?
- What **meanings** are given to the consumption of second hand interior decoration?
- What **competences** are found within the consumption of second hand interior decoration?

The concept of second hand interior decoration incorporates the different items that are used when decorating a home, such as furniture and ornaments. Other items bought second hand, such as clothes and cars, but are not used for decoration or interior design are not taken into consideration in this study. Since the study focuses on the practice of consumption and not only the act of buying second hand, items that are inherited or given as gifts are also taken into account. This study will contribute to the academic field and the practice perspective through an increased understanding of how people consume second hand interior decoration through the lens of the components of material, meaning and competence. A better understanding of the different practices and the actual doing are further considered adding value to the

business field and especially to actors active within second hand retailing. The broad range of respondents, which the empirical material is based on, is further considered adding strength to this study and supporting its applicability.

In the next section previous research within home decoration is described followed by a description of the theoretical framework that is applied within the study. The section begins with describing practice theory from a cultural perspective, followed by a more detailed description of it being a social process and its' relation to consumption. The relation to the concepts of material, meaning and competence is thereafter addressed and research on the subject considered having important implications for this study is described. The choice of theoretical framework has an important impact on the methodology applied within the study and this impact is discussed in the methodology section. The section gives a thorough description of the ethnographical approach that is applied and describes in detail how the respondents were gathered, how the interview proceeded and how the material was analysed. The empirical material is thereafter analysed in relation to previous studies on home, interior decoration and the theoretical framework, and thereafter presented through six different themes in the analysis section. The analysis is followed by a discussion based on the polarization within the practice of buying second hand furniture that can be seen in the material and how the consumers reflect upon it compared to buying new items. In the conclusion section, the practice of consuming second hand furniture is discussed based on what materials, meanings and competences that are included in the practice. The study ends with

limitations, suggestions for future research and what implications the study has for the academic field and business.

Identity constructions through interior decoration

Current research within marketing and consumption describes consumption of furniture and interior decoration from a number of different themes and several authors connect to several of these themes. The research area of furniture and home decoration has to a large extent been studied from the perspective of *individual identity constructions*. Studies related to the home discuss both consumption and individual choices of the actual home (McCracken 1989; Gram-Hanssen & Bech-Danielsen 2004; Burnsed & Hodges 2014) as well as consumption and possession of products related to the inside of the home (Belk 1988, McCracken 1989). The concrete possession of goods related to the home contributes to the creation of the extended self (Belk, 1988). This relationship involves an incorporation of objects into the extended self and in which concern and maintenance of the object is important. Home decoration in specific is also associated with the concept of family building and is regarded as a symbol of love between the individuals in the family (Gram-Hanssen & Beck-Danielsen, 2004). Besides individual identity construction, interior decoration has been described as linked to social class. The importance of having a self-expressive home has been studied and has shown to differ depending on the social class of the individual.

In addition to the individual expression of identity of home (Gram-Hanssen & Beck-Danielsen, 2004) and material

possession (Belk 1988; Warde 2005), consumption of home furniture and interior decoration has also been studied in relation to the *production of family* (Epp & Price, 2008). Possession of goods related to the home does not only work as an individual expression, the material becomes family possessions that define the identity of the family to the members (Belk, 1988). A family is based on several unique bundles of identities each constituting specific rituals, interactions and stories, and which in turn are challenged and altered when interacting with other family members. As a result, there is a constant interplay between the family bundles, consisting of individual, relational collective constellations, the resources on the marketplace and different communication forms (Epp & Price, 2008). Reimer and Leslie (2004) further highlight that the area of home consumption and identity in relation to dynamics of households has not been studied enough. An overemphasis on individual lifestyle and identity choices are described and the authors aim at adding dimension to this description. Focused on the purchasing, acquisition and display of furniture other goods the authors find a range of ways home consumption and construction of identity are connected. Home projects and practices related to individual as well as collective identity constructions can be seen among different types of family constellations over time, including lone households, single household, couples as well as dissolute households. Individual identity is described as important for a single household after moving from the parental home or after a divorce. In terms of shared households, home-making projects may at first be conducted collectively but after a time this changes and only one member is conducting the project. This

exemplifies the diverse constellations of relations that home-projects go through inside the home.

The attribute of *homeyness* is discussed in relation to *social class* and the attribute is considered more important to lower social classes, whereas the status attribute is more important for higher classes (McCracken, 1987). Hence, interior decoration and home can be seen as a symbol for social structures as well as for individual identity creation (Gram-Hanssen & Bech-Danielsen, 2004). Whereas external social structures are important factors for the specific area in which the home is located in, few signs of fixed class structure and fixed individual identity is found. Instead, the inside of the home becomes an area where home decoration, maintenance and making function as means for individual identity expression, especially for women (Gram-Hanssen & Beck-Danielsen, 2004).

Key principles of poststructuralist lifestyles have been used in order to get a more nuanced image of people's consumption in relation to *lifestyle* (Holt, 1997). Holt describes how different consumers buy the same kinds of objects, second hand furniture and interior but due to different lifestyles and values their consumption differs. When consuming second hand and antiques some consumers look for a bargain, others want to learn everything about the history and meaning and others want to express their aesthetic sense and personal style (Holt 1997).

Arsel and Bean (2012) further demonstrate how aesthetics are linked to practical knowledge and present a *taste regime* that shapes preferences for objects, the doings performed with objects and the meanings that are

associated with objects. As a spider in a web of factors, doings and meanings of items are understood in relation to each other and thus constitute taste (Arsel & Bean 2012). Furniture and home interior have also shown to have a *status* relation to people (Ulver-Sneistrup, 2008). The author uncovers various techniques, strategies and narratives of how people express status aspirations in various consumption areas such as interior decoration. The use of second hand furniture is one example. Ulver-Sneistrup (2008) describes how consumers can achieve status through quality second-hand furniture because this consumption demands a lot of knowledge, and is therefore a way to express status. However, people having experienced drastic climbs or falls of status often use more complex ways of ideals and taste.

Home furnishing and interior decoration have also been studied in relation to *media* coverage and printed advertisement, portraying home decorating magazines as a source for generating feelings of longing and consumption practices related to the home in which craft and aesthetic directions are included (Lackey, 2005). A dual function of magazines is described, implying both giving direct instructions on interior design as well as promoting implicit values related to the home. Mass-produced objects with given practical functions are being differentiated through the external visual appearance or style, which in turn creates associations with personal characteristics, lifestyle or nostalgia. Lackey (2005) makes an example with buying an additional toaster only due to the visual appearance such as modern, urban or having a colour that matches the kitchen curtains. Printed media that nourish readers with images and texts on design and products

portray both good taste, high status and achievement of success, which in turns work as a persuasive aid that nourish consumers desire to consume is highlighted by (Leonard, Perkins & Thorns, 2004). The authors study the role of printed media from the perspective of New Zeelander's sense of home and describe the construction as a dialectic between the household members, collaboration on meaning, usage and creation of a home with the normative ideas and ideals of a home created by media. The activity of home making is described as a continuing activity which incorporates both local and global influences but which is mediated in relation to the experiences and lives of the homemakers.

As can be seen, previous studies put a lot of emphasize on construction of identity and the symbolic values the home possesses. Less focus is put on the actual doings related to consuming items for the home, and especially second hand interior decorations. This calls for the need to look at the consumption as a practice where the concept of doing and the activities that can be found both before and after the moment of purchase are in focus. The practice perspective will be described more thoroughly in the next section.

Practice as framework

In order to understand the consumption and usage of second hand furniture, theories on practice will be used. The perspective can be considered highly applicable and useful as it describes the activity of "doing" and focus on the relation between the components of material, meaning and competence. It emphasizes how the elements are crucial to and integrated within the practices, thereby framing the doings. All of which are assumed to be present

for second hand furniture and how they are implemented in the home.

Practice theories found within cultural theories explain actions and social order through symbolic and cognitive structures (Reckwitz, 2002) and focus on how these structures influence the social constructions of reality. Resources of symbolic structures of meaning are used to understand and to explain actions. Reckwitz (2002) distinguishes between "practice" and "practices" by referring to the German translation *Praxis* and *Praktiken*. Practice (Praxis) describes the whole human action whereas practices (Praktiken) refer to the way in which bodies are moved, subjects are regarded, things are described and world is understood (Reckwitz, 2002). Further, Reckwitz (2002 p. 249) describes a practice (Praktik) as "*a routinized type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one another: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, 'things' and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge.*"

Simply put, a practice can be described as a shared way of thinking and acting. A practice can be exemplified as a way of working, consuming or speaking that in turn depends on and is dependently interconnected to the different components quoted by Reckwitz (2002). Further, a practice consists of a pattern of several different and unique actions, which in turn add up to the whole practice. The person performing the practice, referred to as the carrier, is therefore participating in a practice that contains several elements such as know-how, understanding and desire. The attached elements are considered belonging to the practice itself and not to the

individual person performing the practice. The social aspect of practices is prominent in that sense that practices include different behaviours, situations, carriers and bodies (Reckwitz, 2002).

The concept has been applied in a context related to kitchen environment and studies show that purchasing kitchen-related equipment or even renovating the kitchen often are considered practices that are performed in order to foster desired habits such as spending more time on cooking. As a result, present practices are formed and depend on images of the future towards which the consumer consider between both having and doing (Shove, Watson, Hand & Ingram, 2007). The concept of practice is further applied on the act of consumption and instead of describing consumption as a practice; the authors describe consumption as a moment in almost all practices. The reason for this that a specific practice will often require the practitioner to consume vital goods and services in order to conduct the practice.

The concept of practice is often seen as an interdependent relationship between the components of material, meaning and competence (Shove, Pantzar & Watson, 2012) and the components are both considered independent as well as shaping each other. *Material* includes things, technologies and the components that objects consist of. *Meaning* denotes symbolic meanings, aspirations and ideas connected to the practice and *competence* refers to skills, techniques and know-how (Shove, Pantzar & Watson, 2012). Practices evolve through the constant changing relationship between material objects and the perception of meaning and competence. Products can therefore be considered having no value until it is integrated in practices and connected with different forms of competence

and meaning (Shove & Pantzar, 2005). Based on the three elements, new practices are created from new arrangements of already existing elements alone or in combination with new elements. What determines the development and innovation of a practice is therefore based on how the elements fit together and not the elements independently.

The framework on material, meaning and competence can be considered having implication when studying consumption as the consumer is not only considered as a user but also as an active and creative practitioner (Shove & Pantzar, 2005). The framework also implies that consumption has other dimensions than only symbolic aspects and that the competence possessed by the practitioner in combination with material aspects of the consumption play an important role of the consumption practices. Consequently, a practice perspective has several implications for studying second hand consumption of interior decoration. In other related studies addressing the interior of homes, the importance of competence and material has been underlined. Writings on the practice of do-it-yourself (DIY), Shove and Watson (2008) describe the consumer as often highly knowledgeable and whose acquisitions are an expression of their qualifications and ambitions (Shove & Watson, 2008). The engagement and experience of a practice that the consumer possesses play an important role and the distribution of this competence automatically leads to a creation of possibilities for practices and consumption. Further, writings on craft consumption and how knowledge, skills and judgement nourish this type of consumption (Campbell, 2005) have further shown to depict the desire for consumer to engage in creating

something that becomes more than the sum of its' components (Shove & Watson, 2008).

Ethnographic approach

In order to reach beyond the well-researched postmodern identity seeker we want to understand consumption of second hand interior decoration from a practice perspective. Since the focus is on the everyday sayings and doings of consumers as well as the materials involved in their consumption an ethnographic approach is appropriate. An ethnographic approach allows us to make interviews and observations and try to combine sayings and doings. Originating from anthropology and the exclusive studying of foreign cultures and the sense making of these, the area of ethnography has developed into a research method that can be applied in various contexts including familiar and everyday situations (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008; Kaijser & Öhlander 1999). The main aim is to observe how people interact with each other and with their environment in order to understand their culture (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008). Ethnography is rarely used for general explanation about a specific phenomenon but rather striving towards producing vast knowledge about certain occurrences and to get a better understanding of what makes a phenomenon unique (Kaijser and Öhlander 1999). Ethnography has over time developed and allows more complexity and flexibility that enable researchers to follow objects around rather than staying bound to one site as traditional ethnography typically does (Marcus 1995). Thus, this type of fieldwork is very well suited for researching the circulation of material objects (Marcus 1995). Market oriented ethnography is very useful for understanding a variety

of consumption and use situations as well as processes in the capitalist world system (Marcus 1995; Arnould and Wallendorf 1994). Therefore, in order to understand consumption of second hand interior decoration as a practice as well as accomplish the aim of describing consumption of second hand interior decoration through the doing, the activities that can be found both before and after the moment of purchase are in focus.

When collecting material using ethnographic methods, the material is captured or created in dialogue between the researcher, the objects and the surroundings. The idea that the researcher creates the material does not mean that the material in any way would be fiction or completely subjective. Instead, Kaijser and Öhlander (1999) suggest that the researcher after choosing an area of reality to study selects among a vast amount of information and information channels with the help of specific methods. Thus, the researcher "creates" the material through giving a reflection of reality through the interplay of knowledge, goals, theory and the specific circumstances that characterize the area of study. However, even if the aim is always to reach the most likely "truth" all research can be questioned (Kaijser & Öhlander, 1999). We are aware that ethnography does not necessarily provide the truth, however, we truly believe that through this method, including interviewing the respondent in their home environment, we will get closer to our respondents and thus get to know their practices when consuming second hand interior decoration. It is especially suitable for this study as we aim at getting a better understanding of how and why people consume second hand interior decoration. Conducting the interviews

with the respondents in their home environment can also be considered adding value to the study, as the respondents were able to touch and feel the items discussed. When discussing the practices surrounding the different items, it can be considered of great importance that the respondent is close to the items discussed.

Kaijser and Öhlander (1999) further point out that it is common to use a variety of techniques such as interviews, observations, media and photographs, also known as triangulation. Observations provide insights to participant's daily life where we as researchers can participate, watch, spend time and converse. Emotions, thoughts, experiences, and interpretations are hard to discover through interviews alone, which is why observations will function as a complement. Through interviews it is possible to establish a good relationship with the participant and through tentative listening, observation and intuition it is possible to gain a deeper understanding of the participant's stories. Eriksson and Kovalainen (2011) argue that this combination of techniques fulfils the main goal of ethnography, namely to gain an insider's perspective. Kaijser and Öhlander (1999) also bring up the relevance of material objects in ethnographic fieldwork and how they can create memories and associations with people. This is another reason why interviews were conducted in the home environment.

Eight interviews were conducted over a time span of two weeks and an overview of the respondents can be seen in Table 1. A selection of second hand shops offering interior decoration were contacted as they were considered being a good source for getting in touch with appropriate

respondents; someone with an interest in second hand interior decoration. A variation within engagement and interest for consuming second hand interior decoration could be seen among the respondents, as some only did it for fun whereas others had such a strong interest that it had become their profession. As the main purpose was to find respondents with varying levels of interest and engagement, factors such as age, profession or gender were not of primarily strategic concern when recruiting respondents. It is clear that an interest for this type of consumption could be found within different ages and social groups, but a demographical variation has not been a criterion for the selection.

All respondents were asked in person, over the phone or through email if they wanted to participate and anonymity was offered. Most of them did not see the need, while others wished to be anonymous. Each interview lasted between one to two hours and six interviews were carried out in the respondents' homes whereas two in the respondents' work place due to time constraints. Interviewing at the work-places turned out to be very fruitful in these cases since their professions were related to second hand interior decoration and thereby gave us a deeper understanding of their interest in this field of consumption. When interviewing in the home environment, the respondents mostly enthusiastically showed us around and many objects were shown and stories told passionately. The interviews could thereafter continue more in depth over a coffee. Our experience was that all interviews were conducted in a relaxed atmosphere and that the respondents felt very enthusiastic about the topic. Field notes were taken after each interview and approximately 30 photographs were taken that was later

used during the analysis for recalling the specific items that were brought up in the interviews. All interviews were recorded and thereafter transcribed verbatim incorporating both talk and expressions such as laughter, pauses and sighs. Additional comments reflecting the way the respondents talked were also added in order to ascertain potential irony and sarcasm. The comprehensive transcription made it possible for us to recall the interviews more accurately and different expressions and add on comments enabled us to see nuances in the material.

Respondent	Age	Profession	Housing
Lina	28	financial controller	rented apartment
Elisabeth	25	student	rented apartment
Anneli	55	dentist	house
Maria	39	comm. manager	owned apartment
Hans	37	works at museum	house
Peter	47	carpenter	house
Anna & Cassius	40/ 48	marketing / electrician	house
Tommy & Tina	50	owners of second hand store	owned apartment

Table 1: The respondents

Before starting the interviews a set of questions based on an interpretive framework of meaning, competence and material found within practice theory were prepared. After having transcribed and discussed the texts, the empirical data was read several times in order to get accustomed and familiar with the material, as suggested by Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008). The approach of open coding was applied

where paragraphs and sentences were read and coded (Strauss & Corbin 1998) in order to get a clearer picture on what keywords that were used by the respondents. The keywords that were drawn from each paragraph was written down on a post-it and was later reflected upon with the help of the practice framework focused on material, meaning and competence. As a result, reading the paragraph and reflecting upon it with the help of the theoretical framework enabled us to understand what practice component that created the link between the paragraph and the keyword. This was written down on the post-it. All keywords were thereafter arranged in six different themes with sub-themes.

An important issue within research is to what extent the result of a study can be used referred to in other research. This study is based on a small number of qualitative interviews and observations. Therefore, and as for many other qualitative studies, this research does not live up to the standards of being statistically representative. A concept such as generalizability is therefore not applicable to evaluate or discuss this study. A more appropriate and useful term that has been used within marketing research is transferability (Moisander & Valtonen 2006). The question of transferability, whether the results of the study can be transferred or applied to other contexts is relevant in qualitative research (Moisander & Valtonen 2006). Transferability invites the readers of the study to make connections between the results and connect to a wider context, and to this also judge whether it is transferable or not. In order to improve our findings and conclusions we have tried to provide a detailed description of our research material and methods as suggested by Geertz (1973, see

Moisander & Valtonen 2006). Thus, the reader can make informed judgments and see the phenomena through their own experience and consequently have an understanding of to what degree the research is transferable. Although the analysis is of great importance for judging the findings, this section can also be considered having a high factor of recognition for the reader due to the multiple themes and examples described. In this study, the discussion can be considered the section where the reader takes the final decision whether the study is transferable or not due to the more direct discussion about the relation between the practices of consuming second hand interior decoration and the connection to different types of anti-consumption. Although the section is supported with previous research on different types of anti-consumption and resistance which supports its' academic transferability, the transferability of the results to other consumers buying second hand can not be guaranteed.

Consuming second hand interior decoration

In this section the findings from the interviews and observations will be presented and analysed with the help from previous studies on consumption of interior design and the theoretical framework on practice theory. The analysis will be presented through six different themes that are prominent in the material and that describe specificities of consumption of second hand interior decoration.

Doing family and friends

Second hand furniture can be considered a mean through which different types of relations are both

anchored and strengthened in various ways. The analysis of the material revealed relations on three levels; between partners, within families and between friends. Sharing the same interest and working on a project together were found giving the practice meaning. The possession, exchange and extension of competence within the different relationships were further considered a pre-condition for carrying out the practices but also something that strengthened the relationships.

Several respondents expressed how the second hand objects and the different projects that came along is something they share between themselves and their partner. The magnitude of shared interest and participation from each partner varied between the respondents. Many respondents expressed the importance of agreeing and including the other in the project without compromising on the individual freedom to choose. The importance of working together as a couple and to let both participate in the projects was also expressed and some considered it as a requirement in order to carry out the projects. The equal participation and interest from both partners varied and some respondents described themselves as the one that leads the projects, with a more or less trusting partner. The relationship could also affect the degree of second hand furniture at home and how far the respondents were able to go:

“From our perspective it is more my boyfriend...he is more like “now it is enough” but it feels like the more you start buying second hand the more you end up with...it becomes a part of your lifestyle, yourself” (Lina)

Signs of building and strengthening the relationship were even more evident when discussing the actual projects and

how they were carried out. One respondent described that although she does not have as much knowledge and skills as her partner, she still feels that it is important to participate in the projects and explained the need to think in terms of “we” in the projects was explained as “well, it is our home!” Similar emphasis on sharing a home was expressed by Elisabeth who described how she experienced their joint renovation of a table as romantic and a glimpse of the future in their future dream home:

“We have put down so much work on this table...and love...it was so romantic to renovate it...he and I together” (Elisabeth)

She further described how important these projects are for their relation:

“Maybe it is imagination but it feels a bit like we get closer to each other, and I do not want to be the only one that leads the projects...it should be the both of us” (Elisabeth)

Teamwork could also be seen as important since the respondent described she needs her partner’s set of competences. Thus, in terms of a partner relationship it is important with both partners involvement for several reasons. As Epp & Price (2008) point out there are a constant interplay between families and relations, resources on the marketplace and different communication forms. The research material suggests that a healthy degree of compromises and trust is a key element when doing projects together. However, the support (or lack of) of one partner seemed to influence the extent the other partner engaged in the consumption and renovation practices. It seemed as though the more enthusiastic both partners were the

more ambitious practices and projects were taken on. This could further be interpreted as if both partners get access to each other’s sets of competences that concern the material and the consumption practices. In addition, the understanding of what the other partner sees meaning in is further supports the practice. This in turn allows them to move further into projects and as a result also become closer to each other and strengthen their relationship. Furthermore, home consumption, identity in relations and dynamics in households do not have sufficient studies (Reimer & Leslie 2004) and this research could make a contribution through the observation around the exchange and extensions of competences between partners.

Second hand furniture can also be seen as a mean for strengthening the bond between individuals within a family. This was in particular seen in the relationship between the respondents Anneli (mother) and Elisabeth (daughter). Several of the furniture that Elisabeth had at home had a connection to her mother or other relatives, either as inherited or second hand furniture. The daughter described how the mother acted as role model when buying items of her own, “my mother has an exactly identical one at home and when I was little we stood in the garage, removing all the colour with sandpaper...” She further described that her mother often being the first person she calls after a second hand furniture purchase:

“My mother is the first one I call and she even calls me back and asks “by the way, how big was the table? Was it in oak or veneer? Or is it pinewood that they have stained in oak stain?” (Elisabeth)

Inspiration and knowledge were described to come from Anneli, but it was mostly related to different types of techniques that can be used and the potential of the item. The mother Anneli also pointed out how projects are shared within the family and she guessed that she has influenced her children a lot:

“I think that it is so nice that they have an interest for this and that they often come to me with questions...you never get tired of the old things” (Anneli)

Different behaviour can be seen in the practices and reveal different dynamics of the relationships; daughter turns to mother for advice, knowledge, guidance and how to take care and alter the items. The mother generously shares her knowledge and experience with her daughter. This could be a reflection of their entire relationship but it could also be seen as a channel through which they both find each other's mutual interest and practices and use it as common ground to bond through and make the practice meaningful. This is in line with Gram-Hanssen & Beck-Danielsen (2004) who argue that home decoration is associated with the concept of family building and a symbol of love between family members.

A strong interest for second hand furniture was also found to have an impact on the relationship between friends. Several respondents expressed the importance of sharing the practices of consuming second hand items. The stories evolved around gifts and shared experiences. One gift that was mentioned by Tommy was a street sign with the respondents name on that his friend Peter (another respondent) came across on a second hand market in Lysekil. It was given as a birthday gift and evidently meant a lot to the

respondent. There are several examples on how talking to a friend about their common interest in second hand consumption and its practices were shared and thus gave meaning to both parts:

“We are four girls on the street and they are just sitting and laughing at me and Karin, because we are like ‘Ooo what a shape! What a design! Look what I got!’” (Anna)

This illustrates how the practices seem to evolve around a rewarding exchange of competences and shared practices and experiences. Possibly also, having a mutual interest is an extra incentive for the specific practice of giving gifts. When knowing your friend shares the same passion it may be easier to give things away as gifts and thus a specific meaning is added to the material.

Doing personal and cultural history

Practices evolving around second hand furniture have shown to enable the individual to make reference and to frame the personal and cultural history. Looking at the results found within the research material, a strong relationship within material, meaning and competence could be distinguished. The material possesses specific characteristics referring to both individual and shared historical and cultural aspects. However, competence about these references and in regards to how the market for furniture has developed in Sweden were also needed to make the material component of any value and make the practice of second hand interior decoration consumption meaningful.

The respondents' stories indicate that they through their own life stories and consumption of second hand items can

find ways of connecting to history, which in turn brings meaning to the practice. Several of the respondents expressed an early interest for historical items and thought this had a lot to do with their upbringing, one mention growing up in older vicarages around the countryside and others had parents or relatives who were involved in antique furniture consumption. This background is also reflected in the respondent's university studies and career paths. The historical reference becomes a characteristic of the material that plays an important part for the practice, but which needs competence from the individual to become of any value.

Within the theme of the respondents' personal history, memories and heritage could be seen as important elements. Several of the respondents expressed their enthusiasm for old Swedish made coffee cups. Anna talked about *Rörstrands Ribb* cup that was part of a dear summerhouse trip memory. The use of older utensils in the summerhouse was a rule set by the owners who belonged to an older generation. During the interview the cups were showed and she particularly pointed out how charming it was that you could see the hand painted print and that there were flaws due to the cups being hand painted and not machine made. The respondent thought it was not just a cup, "*its such feeling over it*".

Hans, a respondent who has a long experience with second hand markets and works within the museum area described how people are willing to pay considerable amounts to connect to their history. However, another respondent expressed that it did not matter to her if the traditional Swedish cups she had was new or old. This may indicate a greater interest within

aesthetics than of the historical connection, which shows different consumption meanings supported by Holt (1997). A possible reason why people keep buying the old coffee cups instead of new produced for the same price could be the symbolic value and that people want to connect to the nostalgia, their grandparents or others that has lived before them and are willing to pay for this experience. The history behind the item itself but also through the way it has been produced, often hand made, can be considered aspects that increases the competence related to the item and enables the consumer to put the item in a meaningful context. It could further be considered an action for taking an individual standpoint towards the globalized society where mass production and mass consumption are spread.

Furthermore, inherited items from relatives or other connect to the personal history. Several respondents expressed a deeper respect for an item that was inherited and they were reluctant to alter it too much. Instead many showed a rich knowledge in how to restore them in order to keep the characteristics of the item. However, some showed very specific preferences of altering. Maria stated that it is not seen as ok to alter antiques as the value is in the state of the item. Her personal boundary being items older than 1880 "*then you shouldn't mixture with it too much*". Restoring an item was also shown to sometimes prove difficult as craftsmanship is decreasing due to fewer people mending furniture today. Many respondents expressed a frustration towards this development and one respondent exemplified with a broken seat of an antique cane chairs that would cost 2000 SEK to mend, which was more than the chair was worth. Thus, the respondent felt that it

did not make sense to alter and was instead looking for another one. The frustration that evolves when a practice cannot be performed and the consumer is forced to take on another practice that is unnatural for him/her clearly depicts how the meaning related to history and craftsmanship is being jeopardized and how a rational thinking towards the material component develops, for example through high costs for restoring. Another dilemma related to how the function of the item hinders consumers to proceed with their practices relates to technical changes of the item, exemplified with an old coffee maker that could not be used since the house only had an induction stove. This also indicates how characteristics of the material component fail to correspond to the meaning attached, which in turn causes problems of performing the practice. For the personal life story the material is an important component for meaning creation, both for the extended self (Belk 1988) and meaning for the conducted practices. When considering the general history and design around an item the competence becomes more important and shapes the meaning. This relationship also involves an incorporation of objects into the extended self and in which concern and maintenance of the object are two important aspects (Belk 1988).

It can be seen that different items that touch upon history create meaning for the individual and thereby nurtures the phenomena around second hand interior itself and the practice. The research material further shows that older items, antiques or inherited, has a deeper meaning for the consumers which is reflected in the respectful way the items are talked about and taken care of. The items are thus not only objects that express the respondents individual self but becomes a family

possession that defines the identity of the family to the individual, also supported by Belk (1988). Thus a deeper meaning in the item is added, in line with Warde (2005) who refers to cultural processes of value creation between things that have been bought, owned and used. The ability to make historical references that supports the extended self further connects to the concept of status discussed by Ulver-Sneistrup (2012).

History has shown to be an important part of second hand consumption, relating to both the personal history and the interest for cultural history. In some cases both elements coincide. Within the theme of cultural history the respondents focused on the interest to learn about the history but expressing prestige, based on knowledge, could be interpreted as having high importance. Respondents who were professionally involved with antiques and second hand items agreed that there has been an increased interest in older items especially among younger people over the past decade. All expressed enthusiasm that an increasing amount of people sees the benefits of buying or learning more about things that already exist. It was further expressed that the increased interest in this type of consumption may well increase the interest for culture history and influence more people to seek for their identity and background. However, one respondent considered that the change of second hand consumption over time is not only based on personal search for history but also through the increased image of prestige in second hand consumption, something that was not seen twenty years ago. This clearly depicts the numerous motives behind second hand consumption and as Holt (1997) points out there are both consumer who wants to learn about the

history and meaning of the object and consumers who want to express their personal style and aesthetics. The historical perspective of an item in relation to the individual life story clearly contributes to an attached meaning to the specific item and practice.

Having ongoing projects

Second hand furniture open up for projects as well as keeping projects ongoing and alive. The different types of projects associated with consuming and using second hand furniture inside the home can be considered a result of both the individual attention to details and the motivation of searching and preparing for future projects. The theme connects to the practice framework on multiple levels. The material in itself entails aspects that develop curiosity and willingness to explore whereas the ongoing projects, looking for inspiration and creating an individual style make the whole practice meaningful. Competence is however necessary in order to transform the potential project to a realistic project and perform the project.

The scope of a project can be considered a function of the level of detail orientation and precision of the person carrying out the project. Whereas some were just slightly refreshing the item, others carefully described how they changed the complete item to look in a specific way. Anna showed how one side of a bookshelf that was painted in white but had lost the white nuance, but was something that made her wanting to re-paint it. A willingness and curiosity to explore was another factor seen in the material and Anneli described the history behind a kitchen table as following:

“The table was in wood but with a brown veneer on the sides, frame and on the legs...I saw a big potential to see what was under. So I was a bit curious on what was under, so I started scratching.” (Anneli)

Further, several respondents described how second hand furniture were only bought due to the design or frame but were later changed. Having an eye for details and a willingness to be curious and explore can be considered characteristics of the material itself, as it allows the consumer to conduct the related practices. The practice of renovating and adjusting therefore stems from the material itself, which through specific competences of the consumer can be realized.

The concept of having an eye for details is also seen to contribute to seeing potential for future projects. Several respondents described their current projects related to both new furniture as well as second hand furniture and highlighted that they might change the items at a later time:

“I repainted it in the same turquoise as on the wallpaper but now afterwards I notice that I should have tweaked the nuance a bit so it becomes more similar. So I must paint it again” (Anna)

A connection to previous studies on how material foster further practices of habits and desires (Shove, Watson, Hand, Ingram, 2007) can be made but the material extends this area. The material shows that instead of only fostering practices related to the specific material, the practice itself foster other future practices, not only related to the same material but also to other material.

Finding inspiration can also be seen as a project in itself and the ways in which the respondents collect inspiration varies. Maria collected inspiration through her work at an auction house, through printed British interior magazines and the whole time period of seven years she lived in London. Anneli described how her interest in maintaining furniture with sensitive wood made her ask the store staff at Norrgavel for advice of maintenance of the wood. Anna saves clips from magazines, looks online and collects images to a mood board that she sometimes takes out and fiddles with for pleasure. One respondent collected unique art items and stated that inspiration is given from vast experience and by meeting other collectors since you can bond very easily and learn from each other. Studies on the influence from home decorating magazines on consumers describe how implicit values are created and how instructions on interior design are given (Lackey, 2005). Printed media has also often describes as portraying good taste, high status and success (Leonard, Perkins & Thorns, 2004). Whereas these studies clearly makes a parallel to the construction of identity and images, looking at inspiration from a practice perspective, the different material sources for inspiration play an important role also in the development and shaping of the practice itself of consuming second hand interior decoration. As a result, what shapes the inspiration and makes it meaningful is to a large extent based on the material that gives consumers the ability to get inspired and develop the inspiration into meaningful practices.

Personal creation of style and practical constraints related to lifestyle, home or family situation have been shown to

determine the scope of a project. Living conditions play an important role for both influencing as well as hindering projects. Lina expressed that moving to a new apartment made it possible for her and her partner to develop their own style with second hand furniture even more as the style did not fit in the old apartment. Constraints in terms of space were further expressed as an important factor that affects the level of projects that can be carried out. Knowledge related to projects, in terms of techniques, material and potential are also considered playing an important role in the development process. Whereas material plays an important role in the development of projects, competence and knowledge can be seen to play a more prominent role for the actual doing of the project as it can be considered turning the idea into a realistic project.

Looking and searching for second hand furniture can also be considered a project in itself and a willingness to postpone a project in order to keep on searching was expressed:

“The pure hunt is half of the thing. I would never go out and buy a new Windsor chair just because I need to have six of them...that is wrong! If you buy a new one, the value is taken away”
(Lina)

Another described the postponement of projects as following:

“This temporary desk will be removed but it is all about finding the right one...and it is better to wait. So the printer and all the payments will just have to lie on the floor in the mean time” (Anna)

Different feelings for the hunt were described, such as pure fun, stress and

a desire to see the final product immediately. More relaxed feeling towards the hunt were however found and the respondent Hans described that whereas some people consider it peaceful to go to stores like H&M, he described going to flea markets or auctions as more peaceful and thrilling as it is more unpredictable. Common for most of the respondent was the willingness to make a bargain and designer chairs, Danish lamps and unique items were exemplified. *“You want an item that is unique and represent the artist behind it. The reason why I do not have them yet often depends on the high price”* Elisabeth described that she up until now only had bought practical things at second hand but she was now searching for a designer chair just for the sake of having one. Personal value was evaluated compared to monetary value, which was referred to as *“Everything has its price!”* The monetary value was considered having an important impact how easily things were traded but the fact that you also can get tired of second hand items made them easy to sell as well. The unpredictability of the “hunting” of second hand interior items and the fact that the respondents do not really know what they are looking for before they see it can be considered generating meaning for the practice in itself, but also meaning of the practice in a larger perspective. This perspective reflects the reluctance to make a quick fix and a reluctance to belong to mass consumption. It also reflects the willingness to forgo functionality and practicality while searching.

Mediating between Good & Evil

The research material revealed how the respondents mediate between buying new and old furniture as well as how they individually consider the items

from a moral and ethical perspective. The material possesses certain meanings that are negotiated with the individual perception of good and evil but also taste. It is further shown that the competence the consumer possesses related to the item in terms of for example political and historical connection or the fabric/material the item is made of further nourishes this mediation. The mediation becomes a prominent matter within the consumption practice.

A very common theme through the interviews was that old items were considered having good characteristics and that newly produced items were interpreted as more or less evil. Through the research process it became inevitable to look closer at the consumers relationship with IKEA as it was often brought up as a topic. Some expressed disgust against the *“evil furniture store”* whereas others had a more positive attitude. A very common theme was that the respondents dismissed an IKEA item as *“its just IKEA but...”* or *“it will have to do anyway”*. Further, IKEA furniture represented something less meaningful and temporary:

“That kind of furniture you had when you couldn’t afford anything else or didn’t care about interior” (Anna)

“IKEA has always been a bit like... “moving away from home”, IKEA-glasses, plates, bookshelves... damn, it’s just so boring! Feels insanely impersonal but are still of course really practical from other perspectives” (Lina)

Many respondents confirmed the idea that IKEA represented temporality and lack of soul and described how they strived towards moving away from IKEA furniture. The material further

shows that when having settled down and having a more stable living situation, less IKEA furniture and more second hand furniture were used as it was more associated with a real home and belonging.

A common defence was that IKEA is practical, but predictable and mass-produced. An image of that “*other homes*” only contains IKEA furniture was described, something that was referred to as negative and lack of personality and taste. For the respondents who had IKEA furniture, these possessions seemed to be very important to excuse and explain. Thus, when something was of pride to the respondent they clearly expressed that it “*actually is IKEA*”, as if it was a surprise. Furniture from IKEA was however not always dismissed, especially not when the furniture had potential for being changed and renovated in order to remove the IKEA vibe:

“Those bookshelves are from IKEA but they are in solid wood, then I know that I can remove the surface and do whatever I want with them”
(Elisabeth)

Many respondents used very strong language when talking about and showing their IKEA furniture, one respondent used a passionate “*ugly*” when talking about a bed, a drawer and a bookshelf in the kids’ room. Peter blamed IKEA for destroying everything about craftsmanship today. The respondent is a skilled craftsman himself and work on a homepage where he will clearly state that it would cost a considerably higher price if the consumer wanted an IKEA kitchen or bathroom fitted. Peter further expressed himself as “*feeling sick*” when visiting a typical IKEA home

and even struggles with his own sister’s home.

Among the respondents who worked professionally with second hand furniture and interior decoration the attitude towards IKEA seemed more positive and accepting and not as stigmatized. IKEA was seen as a source for inspiration and indication of what was hot, mainstream or dying out. Many did however point out, after expressing the admiration of IKEA that it did not fit so well with their style or housing but they pointed out some IKEA furniture in their homes without any hostility. One can argue that the respondents working with second hand possess a great deal of competence and experience within the area of second hand furniture which is supported by one respondent who described that she had got used to look at second hand items all the time. More competence and comfort in the personal style can therefore be assumed to lead to a bigger and more open perspective of second hand interior decoration and less hostility towards alternative furniture and trends.

To illustrate an example of how older items are expressed as “*good*”, Peter expressed that being surrounded by older items as:

“Pure happiness. Actually. And maybe not just that, happiness, but... well... peace and calm and harmony... It’s just this harmony in the items” (Peter)

Anneli highlighted the importance of the craftsmanship that she considered is lacking in new produced items and expressed that older items have a value and a soul. Maria expressed how she thinks she is “*addicted to the energies that already exist through age in an object or a house or whatever it may be*” and could thus not imagine herself

living in a new house. As opposed to newer shopping environments, second hand shopping was expressed by many as unpredictable environment and thus more appealing and joyful. However, there was also a measurement of pragmatism as seen at Peter when he expressed “*plastic crap*” over a pizza slicer but at the same time pointed out that there were no pizza slicers in the 40s so there must be a limit to how diligent you are.

Similarities with the craft consumers can be seen, described as how the consumer is longing for self-expression and a movement away from mass consumption (Shove et al, 2007). From the discussion of “Good & Evil” it is clear that the material of certain IKEA furniture is given a certain meaning, very often negative. The negative meaning is then put in contrast to second hand interior decoration, which receives a more positive meaning. The meanings and qualities embedded in the items clearly touch the respondent’s emotional life and affect the practices. The fact of raising prices on services related to IKEA and being prepared to give IKEA items away could be interpreted as a practice that is a consequence of their reluctance towards IKEA. The respondents go through large extents of hassle just to get a chance to be around older items and to keep them in their homes. Similarly, they go through same type of efforts just to avoid IKEA. Furthermore, the material show how aesthetics is linked to taste regimes that shape preferences for objects and the meanings associated with the object (Arsel & Bean 2012). Furniture and home interior have also shown to have a status relation to people (Ulver-Sneistrup, 2012). It is possible to interpret the negative attitude against IKEA is because many respondents think it is important to take a stand

against mass consumption, and as a result, the practice of consuming second hand interior decoration makes it possible for the consumer to actively express this view.

Various concerns with ethical and moral undertones were also expressed. Anna expressed concern over how, where and by whom the toys had been produced. This could be interpreted as reluctance towards cheaply mass-produced toys and a feeling of responsibility as a parent to guide her children into awareness of how things are produced as well as coaxing them towards quality. She also felt a responsibility of displaying all colours in her daughters’ room since she felt an importance to tell that “*everything does not have to be pink, all colors must be around*”. The division between good and evil do however change roles when it related to certain political motives such as ethnicity, items made of fur or other political topics. In terms of political motives, some respondents expressed a willingness to reflect the history through different items. Peter pointed out that he had no problem owning these types of items and displaying them at home. He further described that some people have opinions with moral undertones regarding certain items he had at home such as a valet stand by his bed in the shape of a black man with a tray or a unique old candy box with a motive of a coloured girl on the cover of a chocolate box that had the shape of a coffin. Two respondents working with second hand explained how they take ethical stand and do not sell fur or antique items with political motives such as slavery or slaves pictured in various situations. Maria brought up her preference for shopping in second hand shops that have a charity aim as important. She also enjoys shopping morally in terms of

buying items that are already produced and become reused. She also admitted that she loves to buy things and this way of shopping could be seen as a defence since her money goes to charity and does not contribute to negative impact on environment or unfair labour conditions. The material also shows examples of prerequisites of the material that lead the consumer to a moral and ethical stand where additional competences are needed in order to navigate in the consumption jungle. How these practices are carried out and which items become selected and incorporated in the home is object to yet another ethical stand taken by the consumer. Thus, ethical and moral stands are challenging the practice of consumption.

Creating a style

Second hand interior decoration has an important role for creating a style for the respondents. The practice of creating an individual style includes both combining new and old furniture, but also considering how the furniture can be incorporated into the individual style based on factors such as aesthetics, practicality and individual ethic and moral. The individuality in terms of uniqueness will be discussed in the following section. From a practice perspective, the components of material and competence were found most prominent within the practice of creation of style. The material itself possesses a wide range of factors that both shape and support the practice, but in order to apply these factors into the practice competence is required. As a result, the competence can be seen as both seeing potential in the material as well as applying this potential into the practice.

Having a home that symbolizes a personal style was by several of the

respondents described as important and several described the home itself as “*it means everything to me!*” Being surrounded by beautiful things that symbolize the person living there was considered bringing pure happiness and something that created peacefulness and harmony.

“It becomes more personal when you mix old and new things, it is not as predictable as a home only arranged with furniture from IKEA” (Anneli)

Another described that the beauty of the apartment they now lived in made it possible for incorporating the style they wanted. What can be seen is how the activities are performed in order to connect the interior design with the individual identity, relating to the concept of crafting (Campbell, 2005). The aesthetics each item possesses can further be considered foster further practices that relate to making and combining the items to make the overall home aesthetic. The aesthetics of the home itself, also relating to the material component within practice theory, can further be considered fostering further practices of enhancing the aesthetic even further.

Within the creation of style, several taste regimes related to combining different types of material of the furniture could also be seen to connect to the concept of aesthetics. There were clear tastes of the combining of different types of wood. Anna clearly explained in detail how she handled a wooden teak-cupboard that had the wrong nuance. She had considered painting the handles black but her awareness of the potential decrease in value made her turn to experienced experts for reassurance of such action. Thus, the material possesses prerequisites that are contemplated from an aesthetic perspective but also

through the competence of the consumer. Lina expressed how undesirable the veneer was on her Windsor-style chairs and they were thus repainted. The chair that was in solid wood was kept in its original shape. Further, Elisabeth solves unwanted wood items by painting them white, apart from inherited items that she did not change. Several respondents also expressed a dislike towards certain brown colours, a tendency that also was supported by a respondent working with second hand who described that a Myran-stol in brown or green *“is very hard to sell but in black or white is sold for 1500-2000”*. Thus, the same chair but different colour can make a big difference. The material in itself appears to have qualities that either are in line with the personal style or are altered through renovation projects to make it more in line. Further, the material also entails characteristics of unpredictability, in contrast to mass-produced furniture, but that can only be expressed through the consumer's competence within aesthetics and style. Arsel and Bean (2012) also demonstrate how aesthetics is linked to practical knowledge and present a taste regime that shapes preferences for objects, the doings performed with objects and what meanings are associated with objects. Through a web of factors, doings and meanings of items are understood in relation to each other and thus constitute taste.

A relation between function and aesthetics was described by several respondents, which could be seen dialectic and dynamic. Some respondents described how function often was incorporated in aesthetics whereas others described it the other way around. Functionality was sometimes de-prioritized in favour for the beauty of the item. Anneli

described the functionality of her kitchen chairs as not being the most important factor when buying them. Whereas the functionality has a minor part in the creation of style for some, it is a necessity for others. On the other hand, Anna sees function as very important, particularly concerning her children. The practical aspect versus the aesthetic is something she struggles with since new produced or IKEA furniture offer function and what she seeks for the childrens' independence. The house offer charming storage options but they are just that; charming and unpractical *“The children must be able to reach their clothes so that they can become independent. Then the furniture must allow that”*. This clearly exemplifies the dialectic and dynamic relation between function and aesthetics and it can be assumed that the practical importance of the furniture might decrease when the children grows older or develops their own style. The home is evidently an area where aesthetics, function and maintenance are means for identity. The material does however show several aspects of how the role of the home develops practices that are mediating between characteristics of the material: aesthetics and practicality. Practices related to the home interior are born from the desire to have a beautiful home and to spend time at home. Within practice theory, material is often described as fostering future practices such as habits or desires (Shove, Watson, Hand & Ingram, 2007). The future practice that the consumer aims at can be seen as the desire to feel happy about the home. The current practices are formed by this aim and the aim is in focus when mediating between aesthetics and practicality.

Creating uniqueness

Whereas second hand interior decoration itself enables consumer to have a unique and individual style, the practices around the items in terms of the acquisition, searching and relating to trends further contribute to uniqueness. From a practice perspective, material and the individual way it is appropriated within the practice plays a determinant role for this uniqueness. Further, the level of uniqueness that is achieved is further affecting the level of meaning of the overall practice.

One way of expressing uniqueness is that of consumption stories. The respondents gave many capturing, detailed and vivid stories of how some of the best bargains came about. Cassius described how a refrigerator from the 40s was bought as a towel shelf for the bathroom. Elisabeth told dreamily how romantic and cosy times she and her boyfriend had whilst restoring items and how the items reminded her of those times as well as how they would have similar projects in their future house. Consumption stories related to friends or relatives are also common, often related to a situation where the friend *almost* made the biggest deal of his/her life but did not quite make it. One story was a woman who had found the ultimate designer chair finding of *Ägget* on Blocket and called immediately to make a deal then threw herself in her car. Upon arriving to the sellers, so many people had called that the chairs were no longer for sale as the seller realized how valuable they were. When looking at the home, possession of objects often relates to the creation of the extended self (Belk, 1988) and value is created when the objects are bought, owned and used (Warde, 2005). However, this theory only focuses on the object itself, and not on the

different activities surrounding the concrete ownership. The consumption stories clearly described how the material turns into narratives, and the way the item is bought and modified is sometimes more referred to and seems more important than the item itself. With the help of practice theory, a more nuanced image of how consumers actually relate to these items can be made which to a large extent describes meaning making activities that are separated from the object but that still gives meaning to the whole practice.

Searching and shopping second hand interior decoration was by some respondents described as a careful and precise practice, which included specific key words when searching. Peter described *Peter Pan*, *David Bowie*, *gramophone needles* and *Thåström* as being the standard ones but also temporary projects such as the spice jars *Arom* for which the respondent kept close track of the designer, products available and the price levels. Lina stated words such as *retro*, *pinnstol*, *vintage* and *stringhylla* as her key words. Unique ways of searching when not searching on the internet was also described in the material and Stockholm was considered offering more than Gothenburg since incomes are higher, more items are recycled and the fact that it is a bigger city on all levels effect the second hand markets positively. The respondent Hans thought that it was easier to find more attractive objects than in Gothenburg. Whereas different types of material in terms of magazines and stores enable the consumer to feel inspiration, the different venues where second hand furniture are found also generate an ability for personal and unique ways of performing the practice. The research material does also reveal that

competence is a highly important factor when searching and assessing specific objects and becomes a crucial factor not only for carrying out the practice but also to get a desirable result.

Another way of creating uniqueness is through distancing from trend. Peter expressed distancing from trend in his reluctance towards the magazine *Retro*. He did not like that his lifestyle and hobby of buying and selling second hand items has become mainstream and are commercialized in a magazine. However, at the same time as he condemned it as a hype that drives prices of second hand items, he embraced its' influence and steering of trends that also benefited him. Several examples were explained of items he had bought and sold off for a better price since he has the knowledge of what people want and of the price levels. Lina described that she was drawn to teak furniture because of the clean and simple design, as opposed to modern furniture. She expresses that she has an obsession with Windsor chairs but described that she had seen them everywhere and even newly produced and disliked this development "*It's not fun anymore*". Another respondent express distancing from trends as:

"I tell myself that I do not follow trends, because I do not want to. If I would pick out things on second hand only because they are trendy, that would be the same as buying a bookshelf on IKEA" (Elisabeth)

Creating a meaningful practice that differs from how other consumers buy second hand items seems to be an important aspect for the respondents. A balancing within the individual creation of style in relation to the trends could however be seen in how the respondents described how their

interest for specific items decreased when it became a part of a trend or even mainstream. The extent of the material attached to the practice, including trends, venues, media coverage and other public exposure, can therefore be considered effecting the level of meaning and when the material becomes too widespread, the meaning of specific items or specific practices decreases. The right level of public exposure and recognition is therefore important for keeping the practice alive for the consumer.

Discussion

In this section, the six themes illustrated in the previous section will be summarized through the practice perspective elements of material, meaning and competence. Thereafter the findings will be discussed based on what implications they have when relating to a broader consumption perspective.

The empirical material suggests that consumption of second hand interior decoration enables individuals to perform various different activities that are nourished by different combinations of material, meaning and competence. This study suggest that the practice of consuming second hand interior decoration can be described through following six themes: *doing family and friends, doing personal and cultural history, having ongoing projects, mediating between Good and Evil, creating a style, and creating uniqueness*. Throughout the analysis the six themes have been discussed from a practice perspective based on the components of material, meaning and competence (Shove, Pantzar & Watson, 2012). The themes become a set of measurements towards which the customers negotiate their practices

related to second hand interior decoration.

Doing family and friends suggests creation of relationships between partners, within families and between friends. Sharing the same interest and working on a project together make the practice meaningful and possession, exchange and extension of competence within the relationship are pre-conditions for carrying out the practices and making the relationship stronger. The composition of material (for example furniture), meaning (for example love and friendship) and competence (for example techniques and craftsmanship) thus acts as a mean for maintaining and strengthening relationships within families and between friends. *Doing personal and cultural history* reveals how the material (for example furniture and old coffee cups) possesses specific characteristics and meanings (for example memories or a particular style epoch) referring to both individual and shared historical and cultural aspects. Competence about these references is crucial to make the material component of any value and make the practice of second hand interior decoration consumption meaningful. *Having ongoing projects* is considered a result of both an individual attention to details and the motivation of searching for and preparing for future projects. The material of second hand interior decoration entails aspects that develop curiosity and willingness to explore whereas having ongoing projects, looking for inspiration and creating an individual style make the whole practice meaningful. Competence, such as ability to plan and carry out various tasks, the ability to find the “right” object or having the knowledge to implement the project, is however necessary in order to transform the potential project to a

realistic project and in the end carrying out the project. *Mediating between Good & Evil* suggests that the consumer mediate between buying new and old furniture and reflect upon the items from a moral and ethical perspective. Hence, the materiality of second hand interior decoration anchors specific meanings deemed good, for example sustainability or keeping craftsmanship alive. Consequently, the characteristics of the material and the competence related to these characteristics are negotiated with the individual perception of good, evil and taste. *Creating a style* possesses strong components of material and competence. The material itself possesses a wide range of factors that both shape and support the practice, such as the potential for renovating an item and how well it matches towards the individual taste regimes. In order to apply these factors into the practice, competence relating to seeing potential in, for example an old table or coffee cup and putting it into a practice is required. Meaning can however also be seen within the theme as there are conceptions that interior design should be assembled and where the individual should find their “own” style. *Creating uniqueness* is found among the practices that surround the consumption, in terms of the acquisition, searching and relating to trends. The material often relates to items that are no longer produced, that are difficult to find. Reference to the different marketplaces where items are bought is also made and these marketplaces differ both in structure and items offered compared to traditional retailing marketplaces. The material and the individual way the furniture and decoration items are appropriated within the practice play a determinant role for this uniqueness and the level of uniqueness that is achieved

is affecting the level of meaning of the overall practice.

In sum, the *material* element of second hand interior decoration includes components such as the item itself, the different acquisition locations and sources of information. These aspects are evaluated in the actual doing of the practice and opens up for future practices. They also create a curiosity to explore the items through crafting techniques and to explore the different marketplaces even further. The *meaning* element of second hand interior decoration includes reflecting upon personal and cultural history as well preserving craftsmanship. It also reflects different levels of mediation and negotiation by the consumer, between ethic and moral and between functionality and aesthetics. The *competence* element includes both individual and shared competence relating to item value and history, crafting techniques, trends and seeing potential in the material. This shows that the competence factor enable practices to develop and be carried out, both individually and collectively.

When looking at the six themes described, a polarization within the practice of buying second hand interior decoration and how the consumers reflect upon it compared to buying new items can be seen. The tendency of *consumer resistance and anti-consumption* is highly visible in how the consumers oppose external forces, often relating to mass consumption and the “evil” IKEA. Zavestoski (2002) describes the practice of anti-consumption as resistance, distancing and an unwillingness to consume. Consumer resistance in specific is described as creating new subcultures of consumption (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995). However, further research implies that anti-consumption does not

only concerns rejecting all types of material possession. Instead, it opens up for a transformative anti-consumption where alternative material possessions become a counteraction fixed consumption norms. The counteraction often involves practices relating to holding on to old possessions and to take a stand against the throwaway culture (Cherrier, 2010). As a result, the themes discussed in the analysis can therefore be considered relating to different types of anti-consumption, both through rejecting consumption as well as through transformative anti-consumption practices.

The research material shows several ways in which the respondents express that they are not part of the mass consumption society, rather they express their consumption as an act of *creation and crafting*. Practices related to pre-determined ways of consuming causes hostile feelings and a movement away from what they consider legitimate in the general public. This results in reluctance towards trends and mainstream behaviours. However, changing consumption patterns completely within this practice is not without ambiguity. Since the consumer need materials such as paint and various tools in order to perform the practices and express their various competences through the items, they often need to take part in more common consumer practices. Another example is that of old items where the technical development has surpassed. For example how an old coffee maker cannot be used since the respondent has an induction stove or a chair that need mending but it is cheaper to buy a new one. This reveals a complexity in the consumption practices, as the consumers have to perform consumption practices that are not preferred. It is hard to imagine that

someone would forgo the convenience to a too large extent and instead accept the reality and fit it in second hand consumption practices as much as possible. This further leads to the discussion about ethics and moral foundation within several themes. The research material shows that the decision of which item that is selected by the consumer goes through several ethical and moral deliberations before purchase. The analysis of the research material further shows how the respondents distance themselves from other consumers who they consider being a part of the mass consumption society and culture. There are several examples of how the respondents take a stand against what they think is ordinary consumption, mostly represented by shopping at IKEA.

Further, the research material shows many signs of that the respondents belong to and co-create a *second hand culture*, relating to the subcultures of consumption discussed by Firat & Venkatesh (1995). This can be seen in the way relations are created and strengthened between partners, family members and friends. The most prominent finding in the research material is that, especially in partner relations where larger projects are carried out together such as renovations, it is clear that both partners receive access to the other partner's set of skills and competences. Thus, they can take on larger and more ambitious projects than if they were alone. Our findings on the role of relations within practices related to second hand furniture can be considered an important contribution to the field, both in terms of how relationships extent from practices and projects but also in how practices have direct implications for the relationship. It was also interesting to see how friendship grew stronger through the

bonding within second hand crafting. Many expressed that their interest of older items gave their friendship a special bond and thus shaped the relationship. As seen in the example of gift giving, the gifts were seen as more meaningful when coming from someone "*who really knows your style/preferences*" than if given a new item that was expressed to cause problems since it had to be fitted in. Others expressed explicitly that when meeting a new person with the same interest it was a lot easier to bond and also to gain new knowledge within the consumption practices. The material also show signs that the respondents put a lot of effort into expressing their uniqueness within the culture of second hand interior decoration. From a larger perspective the respondents' acts of uniqueness were not so unique since they all took part. The dissociation from any mass consumption related practices are evident. However, even though the consumer practices evolve around already existing items, buying these items (with the desire to be unique and have a consumption story) can ironically be seen as a type of mass consumption.

However, there is another side of the same coin and more cynical features related to the practices sometimes set the romantic image of positive relationships often found within the culture of second hand interior decoration aside. An example is the prestige of being a competent second hand consumer as well as showing the competence towards the specific practice in terms of finding, renovating, bargaining, as well as making historical references. It is interesting to think about how meaning is created from knowing a lot about the history of the item and using it as status, also discussed by Ulver-Sneistrup (2013).

Consumption or crafting is however not necessarily only done with the aim of fulfilling a deeper meaning for oneself but it is also important to show competence within the practice for others. This could be an area in second hand furniture consumption to explore even further and an interesting addition to previous studies on different types of consumers and their interest (Holt, 1997).

Conclusions

This study implies that several types of *materials* (e.g. items, marketplaces and inspiration), *meanings* (e.g. historical and cultural references) and *competences* (e.g. techniques and seeing potential) are used within the practice of consuming second hand interior decoration.

The *material*, including the item itself, the different acquisition locations, sources for information and crafting techniques, possesses both direct and indirect characteristics. Direct characteristics relate to the actual item, its' construction and functionality, such as the type of wood the item is build in or how well it fits into the home. These characteristics are evaluated in the actual doing of the practice and opens up for future practices. Indirect characteristics relate to potential and unpredictability, which relates to the fact of being unique items and not mass-produced. These aspects create a curiosity to explore the items through different types of crafting techniques as well as explore and consumer market for second hand interior decoration even more. The *meanings* that are given to the practices are highly connected to taking a stand towards traditional consumption practices, stressing the importance of preserving personal

history and heritage as well as creating uniqueness in how to consume. Mediation can be seen in when creating meaning, relating to ethic and moral stand, functionality and aesthetics, and between what the individual want to do and what the individual is actually able to do. *Competence* is portrayed as both individual and shared competence relating to the value and history of the specific items, techniques, trends, seeing potential and what channels to use when searching. Individual and shared competence enable practices to develop and continue and has in turn a strong impact on the relationship between the practitioners. One effect of the possessing competence is that it leads to the perception that there is a difference in consumption between consumers buying second hand items and consumers buying "ordinary" items.

Limitations & future research

This study is limited in the way that it focuses on a rather broad area, covering all items included in home interior decoration. Focusing on a narrower category could contribute to a deeper and more detailed understanding of how the practices related to the specific items within the category are carried out. Concentrating on one product category could also enable the respondent so stay more focused during the interview. Furthermore, the interviews focused on the acquisitions that already had been performed or would be performed in the future. Performing interviews and making observations during the moment of purchase could have contributed to more insights and an even thorough understanding of how the practices related to the acquisition are carried out. This is a suggestion for future research. Further, looking at

practices within different consumption locations and discover potential differences are another suggestion for future research.

Contribution to theory

This study contributes to new insights to the academic field as it applies the practice perspective to the specific consumption category of second hand interior decoration. The six themes described illustrate a myriad of aspects that are included in the practices, ranging from taking a moral and ethical stand to creating uniqueness. The material also reveals how the performance of the consumption practices often are dependent on a combination of individual and collective contribution, exemplified by sharing competence but also building relationships. This study adds value to earlier research on the creation of home and possession of material goods that to a large extent only has been studied from an identity construction perspective. Although a lot of the material implies different dimensions of identity constructions such as being unique, the material takes one step further when describing the actual creation of these dimensions e.g. how the ability to make historical references through items frame the individual historical identity and how an active distancing from trend adds uniqueness to the individual practices.

Further, this study shows that consumption practices of home interior decoration to a large degree is a form of anti-consumption and a counter-action against consumption ideologies which is seen in how the consumers take an active stand against mass-production and hold on to old items. This can be considered adding great value to the academic field and

contribute to important insights in how and why certain practices are fostered.

Implications for business

This study is further considered useful for businesses within second hand interior decoration as it describes the multiple aspects that consumers takes into account and mediate between both before and after the moment of purchase. Further, an understanding of what role materials, meanings and competences has within the different practices that consumers are involved in and how they relate to each other are valuable to better communicate and do more business with consumers interested in second hand interior decoration.

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