

AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF

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Abstract approved:

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The primary objective of the present research, which investigated consumer behavior regarding the storage of clothing items no longer worn, was to develop a model that describes and explains the process of consumer clothing inventory management. Data were collected via in-depth interviews of twenty-two adult female and male informants. Guided by a moderately structured interview guide, informants displayed and discussed clothing items they wear and clothing items they no longer wear. For items they wear, informants explained how they feel while wearing them, as well as why they might stop wearing them and what they might do with the items. For items they no longer wear, but still have, informants explained how they felt while wearing the items, why they stopped wearing the items, why they still have the items, and how they would feel if the items disappeared. For items they no longer have, they explained how they felt while wearing the items, why they stopped wearing the items, how they disposed of the items, and how they felt about their disposal decisions.

Data show that consumers' clothing inventories can be categorized accordingly: active, permanent inactive, temporary inactive, invisible inactive, and transitional inactive. Within permanent inactive inventories were items that informants believed they would never dispose; such items often symbolized various connections and/or held hedonic value. Within temporary inactive inventories were items that informants believed they would eventually dispose; such items were often stored because informants were waiting to find future opportunities to use the items or the best disposal outlets. Occasionally, clothing items were invisible to informants, made so either unintentionally or intentionally. Clothing items within transitional inactive inventories were those items that informants had taken psychological and behavioral steps towards disposing of, yet still retained possession. Data collected were used to develop a Consumer Clothing Inventory Management Model. The model explains what causes consumers to store versus dispose of inactive clothing items and provides direction regarding the identification of ways to encourage consumers to pass inactive items on to others who can use them.

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Consumer Clothing Inventory Management

by
Brigitte Gaal Cluver

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I understand that my dissertation will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my dissertation to any reader upon request.

Brigitte Gaal Cluver, Author

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Title: Consumer Clothing Inventory Management

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

While watching an episode of “Clean House” on the Style Network, one might catch a glimpse of host Nicey Nash prying an out-of-style, yet never worn pair of shoes from the grips of her latest female subject, or lecturing a teary-eyed man about the importance of giving up a tattered t-shirt so he can regain control of his cluttered life. The media is quick to offer advice on how to take control over our lives and solve our clothing clutter problems. Home and Garden Television’s “Smart Solutions” aired an episode titled “Efficient Closet Cleanup” (episode SSL-1031) which provides advice to facilitate “purging” decision making. “Mission: Organization,” another Home and Garden Television show, took the concept to another level when they aired “Clearing Closet Clutter” (episode MSO-208) and not only purged, but built an elaborate organization system for the plethora of clothing items that remained to be stored after the purge. Similar advice is found in articles featured in popular periodicals, such as “Clear Away Clutter in 3 Simple Steps” (Richmond, 2007), “Throw Away Your Thin Clothes” (Geneen, 2004), and “Ten Tips to a Clean Closet” (New York Amsterdam News, 2000).

Such press may indeed prompt one to reevaluate his/her clothing inventories and engage in the act of cleaning out one’s closet. But why is it, that after doing what he termed “a thorough cleaning” of his closet, Ed, an informant in the present study, continues to store 29 items that he knows he will never wear again? He acknowledges that these items are taking up space in his closet and that he should find something to do with them. And why is it that Denise, another informant who

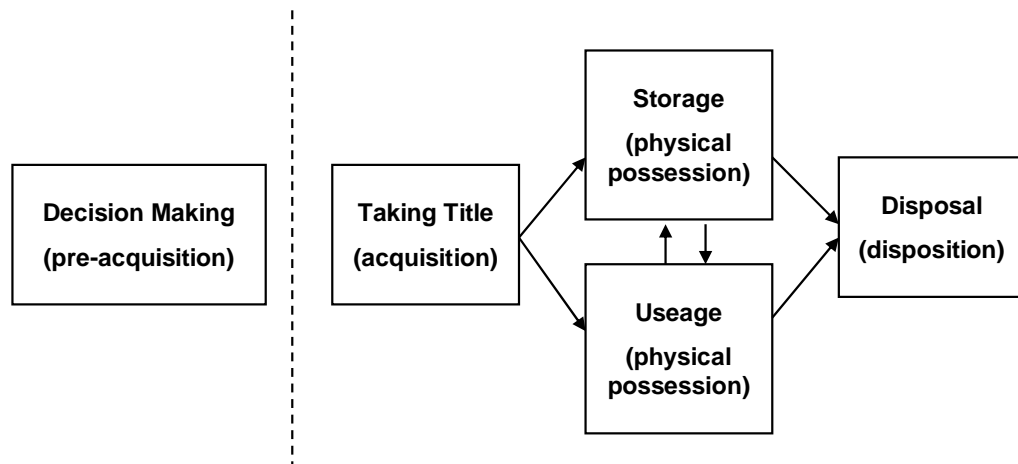
decided it was time to discard anything she “hadn’t worn in over a year,” still has a large box of jeans under her bed that she has not worn in at least two years, several shirts folded on the top shelf of her closet that she has rarely, if ever worn, and a couple of dresses which she has not worn in over three decades and is absolutely certain she will never wear again?

For an outsider, it may seem that these stored away items are useless and should be tossed. However, in some cases, such an assertion could not be further from the truth. The act of holding onto certain never or no longer used clothing items may indeed serve an important purpose. This perspective, though often overlooked by popular media, but has been addressed by two research teams, Banim and Guy (2001) and Bye and McKinney (2007). Both sets of researchers found that some clothing items are retained by consumers because of their symbolic nature, such as the items’ abilities to serve as tangible links to important memories, times, places, feelings, and people. They also found that many clothing items are retained because consumers believe they might wear the items in the future; for example, consumers might be holding onto the item in hope of future weight loss or a special occasion which would enable the wearing of the item. Finally, the researchers also found that it is difficult for consumers to part with items when they feel they have not used the items enough to justify their initial investments. Both Banim and Guy (2001) and Bye and McKinney (2007) acknowledge, however, that as time passes, consumers may become less apprehensive to part with items of which they were initially resistant to dispose.

The present research builds on Banim and Guy’s (2001) and Bye and McKinney’s (2007) findings. In the present research, in-depth interviews were

conducted to gain a holistic understanding as to why consumers store rather than dispose of inactive clothing items. Furthermore, a model was developed to describe and explain the process of clothing storage within the context of Boyd and McConocha's (1996) Consumer Household Logistics System Model (Figure 1). Boyd and McConocha's (1996) Consumer Household Logistics System Model addresses product storage, as well as related concepts such as product acquisition, use, and disposal.

Figure 1. Consumer Household Logistics System Model (Boyd & Mcconocha, 1996)



In the present research, McCracken's (1988) four-step method of inquiry, which focuses on data collection via "the long interview," was followed. The four "steps" outlined by McCracken (1988) include: Step 1, the review of literature; Step 2, the review of the researcher's personal experience with the topic; Step 3, the development of a questionnaire and data collection; and Step 4, the discovery of

analytic categories through data analysis. During data analysis, grounded theory data analysis techniques described by Creswell (2007) and Charmaz (2004) aided in the development of the proposed Consumer Inventory Management Model.

The newly developed Consumer Clothing Inventory Management Model helps us to better understand how and why consumers store clothing they do not wear and can be practically applied. While de-cluttering experts are quick to suggest disposal, maybe a more comprehensive understand regarding why consumers store and what prompts consumers to dispose of clothing they do not wear will help experts identify ways to help individual's de-clutter, whether it be through storage organization solutions or disposal. Furthermore, it may make others more empathetic towards those whose closets are a bit too cluttered.

Statement of the Problem

To date, only Banim and Guy (2001) and Bye and McKinney (2007) have investigated why consumers store clothing items they do not wear. Closet de-cluttering is a popular topic in the media, and this suggests that there is consumer interest in de-cluttering, as well. However, the decision making process regarding the storage or disposal of clothing is complex. A better understanding of why and how consumers store clothing they do not wear is needed to identify ways to help consumers either organize or dispose of their excess clothing.

Purpose

The purpose of the present research project was to gain a holistic understanding of consumer behavior regarding the storage of inactive clothing items.

Research Objectives

1. The first objective of the study was to develop a model that describes the process of clothing storage.
2. The second objective of the study was to develop a model that explains the process of clothing storage.

Research Questions

1. How do informants feel about three clothing items they currently wear and have in their possession? Furthermore, when and why do they anticipate no longer wearing those items, and at that point, what do they plan to do with the items? Furthermore, how would they feel if the items were to disappear at the time of the interview?
2. How do/did informants feel about three clothing items they no longer wear, but still have in their possession? Furthermore, why do they still have the items, what do they plan to do with the items in the future, and how would they feel if those items were to disappear at the time of the interview?
3. How do/did informants feel about three clothing items they stopped wearing and disposed of in the past? Furthermore, how did they dispose of the items and how did they feel about their disposition decisions regarding those items?

A Priori Expectations

Because research design, data collection, and data analysis are inevitably influenced by a researcher's assumptions surrounding the topic which he/she is studying, it is important that his/her assumptions are presented. In the present study, seven a priori assumptions were formed after a comprehensive review of literature pertaining to the topic.

- A priori 1 A consumer stores both active and inactive clothing items.
- A priori 2 A consumer stores some inactive clothing items temporarily and others permanently. His/her reasons for storing inactive items temporary will differ from his/her reasons for storing inactive items permanently.
- A priori 3 A consumer's perception of an inactive clothing item's economic value will influence his/her storage decisions.
- A priori 4 A consumer's perception of an inactive clothing item's utilitarian value will influence his/her storage decisions.
- A priori 5 A consumer's perception of an inactive clothing item's hedonic value will influence his/her storage decisions.
- A priori 6 The meaning a consumer associates with an inactive clothing item will influence his/her storage decisions.
- A priori 7 A consumer's attachment to an item will influence his/her storage decisions.

Definition of Terms

Terms Related to Inventory Management

Use

When in use, an individual is actively engaged with the item. For example, while a consumer is wearing a shirt, the shirt is in use.

Storage

Storage is “the placement of a household item during periods when it is not being used for its primary function” (Boyd & McConocha, 1996, p. 233). For example, when a consumer is not wearing a shirt, the shirt resides in storage.

Active Clothing Item

An active clothing item is an item that an individual perceives as one that he/she wears, or more specifically, one that the individual believes moves between use and storage over time.

Active Inventory

Active inventory is a composite of all active clothing items within an individual's possession.

Inactive Clothing Item

An inactive clothing item is an item that an individual perceives as one that that he/she does not wear, yet still has in his/her possession.

Inactive Inventory

Inactive inventory is a composite of all inactive clothing items in an individual's possession.

Permanent Inactive Inventory

Within an individual's permanent inactive inventory are items perceived by an individual as those items that he/she does not wear and of which he/she does not plan to dispose in the future; in cases where he/she anticipates physically passing an item on in the future, it is perceived not as disposal, but as sharing the item and its'

related meaning with someone who is perceived as an extension-of-self. The concept of passing an item on to another while perceiving that one still possesses the item is introduced in Price, Arnould, and Curasi's (2000) article regarding older consumers' special possessions.

Temporary Inactive Inventory

Within temporary inactive inventory are items perceived by an individual as those items that he/she does not wear, may or may not expect to wear in the future, and plans to dispose of in the future.

Invisible Inactive Inventory

Within invisible inactive inventory are items that an individual has, but is no longer aware of having, in his/her possession.

Transitional Inactive Inventory

Within transitional inactive inventory are items that an individual has decided to dispose of, has physically removed from his/her active, permanent inactive, temporary inactive, and invisible inactive inventories, and has placed in a designated place where the items await the final act of disposal.

Re-circulated Clothing Item

A re-circulated clothing item is one that is removed from an individual's inventory and then placed back into his/her inventory as an item that is used for a different purpose. An example of a re-circulated item is a pair of work pants that an individual has re-circulated back through his/her inventory as a pair of gardening pants.

Disposal

Disposal occurs when an individual transfers the ownership of a clothing item from him/her self to another person, group, business, organization, the waste stream, and etcetera.

Terms Related to Item Value

Economic Value

Perceived economic value is an individual's perceptions regarding the financial worth of the item. This may be influenced by the initial expense incurred when the item was acquired and/or the individual's perception of the item's current or future exchange value.

Utilitarian Value

Perceived utilitarian value is an individual's evaluation regarding the item's functional attributes, or more specifically, the item's potential to be useful.

Hedonic Value

Perceived hedonic value is an individual's evaluation regarding the amount of pleasure that can be derived from the item purely from the experiential affect associated with the item.

Aesthetic Value

Aesthetic value, often referred to as beauty, is a type of hedonic value, in which tactile and visual elements of a clothing item come together in a gestalt-like

form and create a “stimulating, rewarding, and pleasurable” experience for the individual who perceives the item (Fiore, Kimle, & Moreno, 1996, p. 31).

Terms Related to Consumer–Item Relationship

Meaning

The meaning an individual associates with a clothing item is derived from its representation of interpersonal ties and the individual’s identity (Richins, 1994), as well as its linkage to specific times, places, and experiences (Belk, Wallendorf, & Sherry, 1989).

Attachment

Attachment refers to “the degree of linkage” (Schultz, Kleine III, & Kernan, 1989, p. 360) an individual perceives between him/herself and a particular clothing item.

Extended Self

The extended self is defined as the “body, internal processes, ideas, and experiences, and those persons, places, and things to which one feels attached” (Belk, 1998, p. 141). A possession may serve as an extension of self when it symbolizes any of these aspects.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The primary objective of the present research, which investigated consumer behavior regarding the storage of clothing items no longer worn, was to develop a model that describes and explains the process of consumer clothing inventory management. Boyd and McConocha's (1996) Consumer Household Logistics System Model and Winakor's (1969) Clothing Consumption Process Model address product storage as well as related concepts such as product use and disposal, and provided a starting point for the present research. Thus, the review of literature first presents storage-related concepts within Boyd and McConocha's (1996) and Winakor's (1969) models. Second, the review of literature explains why consumers cease to wear certain clothing items, as well as why consumers may experience ambivalence when faced with disposal and storage decisions regarding such items. Third, the review of literature addresses why and how consumers dispose of certain possessions. Finally, the review of literature addresses why consumers store clothing items they no longer wear. A comprehensive review of the use/non-use, storage, and disposal triad provides a more holistic understanding as to why consumers store, rather than dispose of, clothing items they perceive as no longer in use.

Related Models

An overview of Boyd and McConocha's (1960) Consumer Household Logistics System Model is presented in Figure 1. Concepts within the model include consumer

decision making, taking title, usage, storage, and disposal. Decision making involves “problem recognition, search, evaluation of alternatives, preference formation, and intention” to purchase (p. 229). Taking title, or acquisition, is the point at which the individual assumes ownership of the item. Once an individual takes title of an item, the item is placed in one of two categories, usage or storage. Usage occurs when the product is actively “contributing to household well-being” (p. 232), whereas storage refers to an item’s placement “during periods when it is not being used for its primary function” (p. 233). The final concept within the model is disposal, “the process of getting rid of an item by intentionally or unintentionally moving it to the ownership of another person or entity” (p. 236).

When explaining their model, Boyd and McConocha (1996) discuss the interdependence among all concepts. For example, if an individual wants to purchase a dress for a formal dance and is in the decision making phase, her decision might be guided by how she plans to dispose of the item. If she plans to wear the dress once and subsequently donate it to a charitable organization, the quality and maintenance requirements of the garment may not be of importance to her. However, if she plans to wear the dress on additional occasions, the quality of the garment and the ease of maintenance may influence her purchase decision. On another note, her storage decisions might be influenced by the monetary expense incurred when she took title of the dress. If the dress was expensive, she might choose to protect the dress by storing it in a protective plastic sheath; furthermore, she may choose to store the dress for a long period of time in hopes of finding an additional occasion to wear the dress. On the other hand, if the dress was relatively inexpensive, she might not take measures to protect the dress while it is stored and

may be less inclined to store and more inclined to dispose of the dress if she does not have immediate plans to wear the dress again. Additionally, if the dress tears while she uses it, she may be more likely to dispose of rather than store the dress.

According to Boyd and McConocha's (1996) model, after acquisition, a clothing item within a consumer's inventory of clothing may flow freely between two concepts, storage and usage. The item is in the usage category when the individual is actively engaged with the item (i.e., wearing). After usage, if not disposed of, it returns to the storage category. The clothing item remains in the storage category until the item is used again or until the item is disposed of. While Boyd and McConocha's (1996) model shows storage as a single concept, Winakor's (1969) model shows two separate storage concepts, active storage and inactive storage. Stored clothing items perceived by an individual as those that he/she wears reside in active storage. Stored clothing items perceived by an individual as those that he/she no longer wears reside in inactive storage. Of primary interest in the present study is the concept of inactive storage, specifically why individuals choose to store rather than dispose of inactive clothing items. Several researchers have addressed why clothing becomes inactive and why and how consumers dispose of household items, such as clothing. However, only two research teams have studied how and why consumers continue to store inactive clothing (Banim & Guy, 2001; Bye & McKinney, 2007).

Inactive Clothing

In the present research, clothing items perceived by an individual as those that he/she does not wear, yet still has in his/her possession, are termed inactive.

Many researchers have addressed why consumers cease to wear certain clothing items, or more specifically, why certain items become inactive. However, only two research teams have studied have addressed the feelings consumers have towards their inactive clothing (Banim & Guy, 2001; Bye & McKinney, 2007). An understanding of consumer attachment to and perception of value associated with consumer products in general helps provide an understanding of ambivalent feelings a consumer may experience when deciding what to do with his/her inactive clothing items.

Movement of Clothing Items from Active to Inactive

Active clothing items are important elements within an individual's "identity kit," a concept introduced by Goffman (1965).

One set of the individual's possessions has a special relation to self. The individual ordinarily expects to exert some control over the guise in which he appears before others. For this he needs cosmetic and clothing supplies, tools for applying, arranging, and repairing them, and an accessible, secure place to store these supplies and tools – in short, the individual will need an "identity kit" for the management of his personal front (p. 246).

Over time, an individual must remove and update items within his/her "identity kit," or active inventory, to ensure that the clothing items stored within his/her active inventory are in line with the identity an individual wants to project to him/herself and others. Researchers have investigated the reasons as to why consumers are compelled to remove clothing items from their active inventories.

Fit Problems

Banim and Guy (2001) found changes in consumers' body shapes contributed to reasons for no longer wearing certain clothing items. An individual may cease

wearing certain clothing items because the items are physically uncomfortable to wear due to fit. On the other hand, consumers may cease wearing such clothing items because wearing clothing that fits poorly is not in line with the identity he/she wants to portray. When a consumer ceases to wear such clothing items, the items are no longer a part of his/her active inventory of clothing; rather they are disposed of, re-circulated into his/her inventory as a new item, or stored within his/her inactive inventory.

The Quest for New

Campbell (1994) notes that consumers may stop wearing certain clothing items when the items look worn or are not technologically up-to-date. He explains that consumers often prefer “fresh or newly created” clothing over clothing that looks worn. He also states that many consumers favor the latest technologically “new and improved” clothing items. For example, one may stop wearing a running shirt made of 100% cotton when he/she replaces it with a lighter-weight 100% polyester running shirt that was engineered to wick moisture. Furthermore, if the 100% polyester running shirt becomes worn-looking, he/she may stop wearing the shirt and replace it with a fresh-looking shirt. An individual may cease wearing certain clothing items because the items no longer function properly and/or are perceived as being contaminated due to signs of wear or because the items can be or have been replaced by items with better performance properties. On the other hand, consumers may cease wearing such clothing items because a worn out appearance or a technologically out-dated nature are not in line with the identity a consumer wants to portray to him/herself or others. When a consumer ceases to wear such clothing

items, the items are no longer a part of his/her active inventory of clothing; rather they are disposed of, re-circulated into his/her inventory as a new item, or stored within his/her inactive inventory.

Fashion Change

Clothing item's movement from active to inactive standing can also be explained by the phenomenon of fashion change. Consumers reject items in their active inventories in favor of "novel" or "unfamiliar" clothing items, as consumers innately desire to deviate from the norm and seek the novel (Campbell, 1995). Fashion change feeds such a desire, as noted by Saphir (1959) in his statement, "The slight changes from the established in dress or other forms of behavior seem for the moment to give the victory to the individual, while the fact that one's fellows revolt in the same direction gives one a feeling of adventurous safety" (p. 24). An important aspect of fashion change is the fact that "one's fellows revolt in the same direction" (Saphir, 1959, p. 25), and therefore facilitates the successful communication of one's identity to others through newly adopted, "novel" clothing items. Through this process of fashion change, there is a point when a clothing item no longer successfully communicates one's intended identity to others. In turn, an individual may decide to no longer wear the item. Otherwise known as fashion change, this process can be explained from the Symbolic Interaction Perspective (Nagasawa, Kaiser & Hutton, 1995).

Symbolic Interaction Perspective

An individual's identity consists of the social categories to which he/she claims membership, as well as the personalities, meanings, and experiences he/she

associates with these categories (Deaux, 1993). Clothing serves as a means to shape and express identity via the symbolism attached to combinations of colors, textures, and other expressive elements of the items (Davis, 1985; Sirgy, 1982). Through a calculated process of combining clothing items with specific expressive elements, consumers construct *appearance styles*. Consumers' appearance styles are continuously under construction, resulting in the temporary adoption and later discard of appearance styles and corresponding clothing items (Nagasawa et al., 1995).

Both interaction with others and interaction with the self influence an individual's choices regarding which clothing items to incorporate into or remove from his/her appearance style. Through objects with shared social meaning, such as various clothing items that an individual wears in combination to make up an appearance style, an individual strives to communicate his/her identity to others. Based on an individual's appearance style, others may or may not perceive what the individual wishes to communicate. In a sense, meaning construction is a process of perpetual acting and reacting during social interaction. The perceiver acts towards the perceived based upon the meanings he/she associates with the perceived individual's appearance style. In turn, such an action shapes how the perceived reacts towards the perceiver. It is through this interaction that meaning regarding the perceived individual's appearance style, is negotiated and sculpted. In reaction to this negotiation process, an individual may choose to modify his/her appearance style (Nagasawa et al., 1995).

Such a process can occur outside of social interaction. An individual can place him/herself in the role of other individuals and view him/herself and/or act towards him/her self from the position of the perceiver. Such a process, known as “the looking glass self,” allows an individual to predict how well his/her appearance style will communicate to others what he/she desires to communicate (Blumer, 1968). Sirgy (1982) states that individuals will engage in activities that protect and enhance their desired self-concept. Thus, individuals choose to consume products they believe will create a positive image. As a guide in making consumption decisions, a consumer relies on his/her opinions of the stereotypes associated with the product and those who typically consume the product. In fact, consumers often consider negative reference groups when deciding what clothing items they should not wear (Banister & Hogg, 2001). Again, such evaluation may prompt an individual to modify his/her appearance style, and consequently move new items in and other items out of his/her active inventory.

The meanings individuals associate with particular appearance styles are derived through social interaction, as well as interaction with the self. Based upon these derived meanings, individuals make choices regarding the clothing they consume. When applied specifically to clothing consumption, the basic premise of the Symbolic Interaction perspective is that two general factors contribute to changes in the appearance styles adopted by a group of individuals over time: (1) changes in individuals' identities and (2) changes in the shared meanings within a social context signified by particular appearance styles (Davis, 1985).

Changes in individual's identities. It is important to note that an individual's identity is dynamic, shifting over time; therefore, the props an individual uses to communicate his/her identity shift over time, as well. In fact, Wee and Ming (2003) found that participants in their study stopped wearing clothing items they perceived as no longer matching their personalities, even though the items were in good physical condition.

Individuals' identities are continuously under construction as they struggle with ambivalences (Davis, 1995; Nagasawa et al., 1995), such as young versus old, masculine versus feminine, conformity versus rebellion, and work versus play (Davis, 1985). Informants in Freitas, Kaiser, Chandler, Hall, Kim and Hammidie's (1997) study indicated they often struggle with ambivalence surrounding age, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity while managing their identities and corresponding appearance styles. Individuals' shifts along these dichotomous ambivalences are a result of continuously shifting social ideals and are relatively consistent among individuals within a social group (Sapir, 1959). Ambiguity is heightened within a postmodern society characterized by increasingly blurred social categories and intensified uncertainty regarding social appropriateness. Also prevalent is a capitalist marketplace offering a wide range of appearance-modifying products such as clothing that enables consumers to modify and explore a variety of appearance styles that reflect their shifting identities (Nagasawa et al, 1995).

At a given time, particular combinations of clothing create appearance styles that serve as symbols with a shared and understood meaning within a social group (Davis, 1985). For example, Feinberg, Mataro, and Burrough (1992) found inferences made by female university students about the personality of a wearer to be

similar to the actual personality traits claimed by the wearer. The meanings one associates with a particular appearance style are a function of the cultural socialization and the learned experiences of the perceiver (Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992). An individual chooses appearance styles based upon how he/she wishes to be perceived by others regarding aspects of his/her identity, such as social standing, socioeconomic status, life cycle stage (Back, 1985), gender (Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992), and personality (Belk, 1977). Struggling with identity ambivalence, the way an individual wishes to be perceived by the self and others is forever shifting. The individual adjusts his/her appearance style accordingly, adding new items into and removing items from his/her active inventory, or what Goffman (1964) would term his/her "identity kit."

Changes in the shared meanings. In addition to the changes in consumer identities, the meanings consumers associate with particular combinations of clothing styles change as the availability of materials and technology, moral standards, aesthetic standards, and societal standards evolve over time (Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992). Therefore, even if an individual chooses to communicate a consistent identity over time, he/she must alter his/her appearance style to do so. Such an action results in the addition and removal of clothing items from his/her active inventory.

Because humans possess a need to communicate their intended identities to themselves and others, humans are driven to manipulate their appearances accordingly. Knowing that appearance modifying symbols such as clothing serve as "props" to guide both behaviors of themselves and others during interaction,

consumers adopt appearance styles they believe will facilitate the social interaction they desire (Solomon, 1983). Finding an effective appearance style, however, is a complex process. Because there are a large number of appearance modifying symbols available for self expression, it is difficult for individuals within a group to find shared meaning in the symbols. Furthermore, as individuals mix different symbols in a variety of ways while experimenting with appearance styles, the meanings associated with these symbols become increasingly ambiguous. Although such eclecticism can be rich in meaning, deciphering the meaning is challenging for the wearer and the perceiver (Nagasawa et al, 1995).

Through interaction, individuals negotiate meanings associated with the appearance styles with which they are experimenting. Individuals adopt those appearance styles that best communicate appropriate meanings and facilitate desired interaction with other individuals with whom they come into contact. However, appearance styles can neither resolve the ambivalences continuously experienced by the individuals nor completely communicate true intended meaning. Therefore, appearance styles undergo modification over time as individuals are continuously experimenting with identities and searching for better combinations of appearance-modifying symbols to express intended meanings. Through a process of negotiation, a consumer incorporates particular clothing articles into his/her appearance that are perceived to best reflect and communicate identity. At the same time, a consumer removes clothing articles from his/her appearance style that do not adequately reflect and communicate identity (Nagasawa et al, 1995).

Potential Ambivalences Surrounding Inactive Clothing Items

When an individual encounters a clothing item he/she no longer wears because it no longer fits, is too worn, has been replaced with a better performing item, is out of fashion, and/or fails to communicate the identity he/she wishes to project to him/herself and others, uncertainly regarding what to do with the item may follow. Storage and disposal decision making regarding inactive clothing items may generate ambivalent feelings, as an individual may perceive these items as holding economic, utilitarian, or hedonic value. Furthermore, the individual may feel a sense of attachment to the item due to the meanings he/she associates with the item.

Consumer Perceptions of Item's Value

Although a clothing item may no longer reside within an individual's active inventory, the item may be perceived by the individual as holding economic and/or utilitarian value, as well as hedonic value. In fact, Ciarrochi and Forgas (2000) note that consumers have a tendency to overestimate a possession's value simply because they share a personal history with the item. Perceived economic value influenced the behavior of informants within Bye and McKinney's (2007) study. The researchers found that informants stored items that no longer fit because of the items' investment value, the cost associated with the initial purchase of an item. Perceived economic value may not only be influenced by the initial expense incurred when an item is acquired, but also the consumer's perception of the item's current or future exchange value. Informants in Bye and McKinney's (2007) and Banim and Guy's (2001) studies were also influenced by their perceptions of inactive clothing items' potential to provide utilitarian value. Informants stored inactive clothing items

because they believed that the items could potentially be useful in the future, should they lose weight or should the right occasion arise.

Consumers may also choose to store inactive items because of their hedonic value. In fact, hedonic value may be of greater importance to consumers, as Khan, Dhar, and Wertenbroch (2005) state that consumers are more likely to forfeit utilitarian goods over hedonic goods. Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) state that items which hold hedonic value have the potential to prompt positive emotional arousal through multisensory experiences, such as “tastes, sounds, scents, tactile impressions, and visual images” (p. 146) coupled with historic and/or fantasy imagery. The authors note that clothing consumption is often motivated by a consumers want for emotional arousal. In fact, Hirschman and LaBarbera (1990) found that their informants deemed important those objects that provided hedonic, aesthetic, and escapist experiences. One type of hedonic value associated with clothing is beauty. It has been suggested that value resides in an object that can provide a consumer with a desired aesthetic experience (McDowell, 1983). The tactile and visual elements of a clothing item, such as “line, space, shape, form, light, color, texture, and patterns,” may come together in a gestalt-like form (Wagner, 1999, p. 138) and create a “stimulating, rewarding, and pleasurable” experience for the individual perceiving the item (Fiore et al., 1996). Even after a clothing item is no longer a part of an individual’s active inventory, an individual’s inability to let go of an item which holds such hedonic value may manifest in the individual’s attachment to the item.

Consumer Attachment to Clothing Items

An object may also be valued for its private meanings (Richins, 1994). Originally, an individual may perceive a clothing item as an “object of use and value” (Friese, 2001, p. 68) that possesses social meaning of importance to him/her. Upon acquisition, the cultural meaning associated with an object is transferred from the object to the consumer. However, as an individual interacts with the object over time, a deeper meaning may be transferred from the consumer to the object (McCracken, 1986). Findings from Friese’s (2001) research support this notion. She found that a wedding dress begins as an “object of use and value” (p. 68) to which cultural meaning is attached. At this stage, an individual adopts the dress to help her assume the identity of a bride. Not until she further engages with the dress, does the dress begin to transition into a “sacred good” (p. 68) that ultimately, after it is worn, “becomes a reminder of the marriage commitment” (p. 68). In essence, one’s possessions can tangibilize and, ultimately symbolize, intangible aspects of an individual’s life that he/she considers sacred, such as other people, experiences, places, and times (Belk, 1990; Belk, Wallendorf, & Sherry, 1989; Grayson & Shulman, 2000). Although the initial social meaning associated with a clothing item may no longer be relevant to an individual, the private meaning(s) an individual has transferred to and now associates with the item may remain important.

Strong attachments to possessions. An individual may form emotional attachments to possessions that serve as vessels of meanings. Attachment refers to “the degree of linkage perceived by an individual between him/her self and a particular object” (Schultz et al., 1989, p. 360). Kleine, Kleine III, and Allen (1995)

found that consumers formed strong attachments to objects that symbolized others who are significant in their lives and /or objects that symbolized aspects of themselves. Consumers' attachments to objects associated with significant others is also noted in Belk et al.'s (1989) research conclusions. Informants in their study indicated that objects received as inheritance or gifts attained sacred status if they served as tangible symbols of relationships with loved ones. Furthermore, Schultz et.al. (1989) found that individuals formed strong attachments to possessions that brought out both a sense of individuation and integration, provided a sense of continuity by linking one's past, present and future, and were associated with positive emotions. Similarly, Hirschman and LaBarbera (1990) found a wide array of reasons why certain possessions were important to their informants, including objects that symbolized accomplishment, represented individuals' pasts and personal memories, linked individuals to love ones, and/or were religious objects were considered important. Along similar lines, Indian American immigrants interviewed in Mehta and Belk's (1991) study indicated they treasured most those possessions that symbolized their past, family, and heritage.

Weak attachments to possessions. It is important to note, however, that consumers do not form strong attachments to all of their possessions. Klein et al. (1995) also found that consumers' have weak, mixed, and non-attachments to possessions. Subjects in their study indicated they had only weak attachments to objects that were no longer in style and were no longer representative of their selves. In support of these findings, Freitas et al. (1997) found individuals favored least their clothing that did not reflect the identities they wanted to express. Kleine et al. (1995)

also found that mixed attachments were associated with objects that were linked to the self, yet were associated with negative feelings and memories, and that non-attachments were associated with products that individuals perceived as only serving a utilitarian function.

Variations in attachments to possessions. Researchers have found that consumer attachments to possessions differ according to the consumer's gender. Whereas males tend to value possessions with a self-centered focus, females tend to value possessions with an interpersonal focus. Male informants in Kaiser, Freeman, and Chandler's (1993) study had emotional attachments to clothing that symbolized positive past experiences and social contexts, as well as clothing that symbolize their abilities, individuality, or fashionability. Researchers have also found males to be attached to objects that symbolize mastery and/or enable them to perform an activity (Belk, 1992; Ditmar, 1989; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988). Kaiser et al. (1993) found that females, however, favored particular articles of clothing they perceived as making them look attractive to others and facilitated positive interaction and relationships with others. Additional researchers have found that females are attached to objects that symbolize interpersonal relationships (Belk, 1992; Ditmar, 1989; Richins, 1994; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988), represent identity and self expression (Richins, 1994), and provide a sense of continuity between one's past, present, and future by storing memories (Belk, 1990).

Attachments differ according to life stage, as well. Meyers (1985) suggests that special possessions reflect the changing role, aspirations, and life priorities of individuals throughout their life times. Findings from his study are supported by

Wallendorf and Arnould's (1988) findings that younger individuals favor possessions that are functional and express identity, whereas older individuals favor possessions that represent family and ideals. Informants in Meyers' (1995) study claimed that as young children they were attached to possessions that provided comfort and security, and as elementary school-aged children they were attached to possessions linked with fantasy and cooperative play. Furthermore, informants claimed that as adolescents they were attached to possessions that provided confidence in abilities and reflected autonomy as well as relationships, and as young adults they were attached to possessions that reflected closeness and intimacy. Finally, as adults, informants claimed they were attached to possessions that reflected productivity, creativity, and building something of worth to pass on. In periods of life stage transitions, individuals value objects that symbolize relationships, as they provide a sense of comfort, security, and connection to the past. Regardless of gender or life stage, however, consumers integrate possessions into their sense of self.

Possessions and the Extended Self

An individual integrates many physical objects into his/her sense of self. Such a phenomenon has been termed the "extended self" and is defined as the "body, internal process, ideas, and experiences, and those persons, places, and things to which one feels attached" (Belk, 1988, p.141). Possessions can reflect aspects of the extended self, extending an individual both physically and symbolically. The physically closer a possession is to an individual's body, as well as the more control and individual has over a possession, the more it is perceived to be part of the self (Belk, 1988; Prelinger, 1959). Furthermore, an individual associates his/her self with

those possessions he/she creates or modifies are closely connected to the self (Wiggins, 1974). An individual incorporates clothing into the extended self through both the acquisition and consumption of clothing. Control is exerted over clothing through its purchase, creation, alteration, and incorporation into an individual's appearance style. It is further integrated into the self via the close proximity to the body and the symbolic representation of an individual's identity. Clothing is an integral part of the extended self, not only because there is an intimate connection between clothing items and the body on which they are adorned (Boulton & Jerrard, 2000), but also because over time clothing items have the potential to serve as a tangible symbolic link to an individual's past experiences and memories (Belk, 1990).

A consumer may perceive a clothing item as holding little or no value, or as holding a substantial amount of value. Furthermore, a consumer may or may not associate much private meaning with a clothing item, and his/her attachment towards the item may be either strong or non-existent. It may be assumed that a consumer's disposal and storage decisions regarding an inactive clothing item is dependent upon the consumer's perception of the item's value, its associated meanings, and his/her attachment to the item.

The Disposal of Possessions

The final concept within Boyd and McConocha's (1996) Consumer Household Logistics System Model is "disposal" (see Figure 1). According to their model, disposal occurs when an individual transfers the ownership of a clothing item from him/her self to another person or entity. Disposal is one option individuals may

choose when they encounter inactive items within their clothing inventories that they no longer wish to store. When consumers engage decision making regarding the disposal of items within their inventories, they are engaging in the disposition decision process.

The complexity of this process is evident in Young and Wallendorf's (1989) definition of the dispositional experience, "the process by which a person comes to feel emotionally and physically detached from a possession that reflects the extended self" (p. 35). This process can be relatively painless when it entails the disposition of items to which one is no longer or has never been attached, such as items that were "never me" or were an "extension of a past-undesired self." However, a consumer may find it difficult to dispose of possessions closely associated with the extended self, as the disposition of such a possession may symbolize the disposition of a part of the self (LaBranche, 1973). Furthermore, a consumer may fear that a possession once closely associated with the self will be contaminated if disposed of and later used by other individuals; in effect, the contamination of the possession symbolizes the contamination of one's extended self (Belk, 1988).

The Disposition Decision Process

From Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell's purchase decision process model, Hanson (1980) derived a disposition decision process model. Within the model, four steps of the disposition decision process are presented: a) the recognition of a need for product disposition, b) the search and evaluation of disposition-related information, c) the disposition decision, and d) the post-disposition outcomes.

Need Recognition for Product Disposition

According to Hanson's (1980) model, the disposition process begins when a consumer first recognizes a future or current need to dispose of a product. Boyd and McConocha (1996) note that such a recognition can arise during the pre-acquisition, acquisition, usage, and storage stages within their Consumer Household Logistics System Model (see Figure 1).

Search and Evaluation of Disposition-Related Information

Following disposition need recognition, a consumer searches for and evaluates information related to the disposition of a specific product within a specific context. It is through this process that the consumer arrives at a disposition decision he/she perceives as creating the least amount of cognitive dissonance. To identify the most appropriate disposition option, a consumer may reference information via family and friends, commercial sources, public sources, and/or prior personal experiences (Hanson, 1980). Furthermore, he/she may reference societal norms to determine the most appropriate disposal option (Young & Wallendorf, 1989).

A set of societal norms associated with the disposal of household items are evidenced qualitative data collected by Gregson, Metcalfe, and Crewe's (2007). Although they differed demographically, informants in their study ascribed to a similar set of norms and engaged in disposition behaviors they perceived as being in line with such norms. They believed that items not suitable to pass on to anyone should be thrown away, that passing items on to another is a way to signify a social bond, and that it is important to identify the most appropriate organization to which unwanted items should be donated. It is important to note, however, that although

their behaviors were influenced by a common set of norms, informants' perceptions of the appropriate behaviors associated with such norms varied.

A very product-specific norm surrounds the disposition of maternity clothing (Gregson and Beale, 2004). Researchers discovered that after a woman is no longer pregnant, she is expected to pass all of the maternity clothing she acquired throughout her pregnancy on to another pregnant woman. Such a practice results in the gift-like circulation of maternity clothing. Another product-specific norm surrounds the disposition of unwanted gifts. Respondents in Sherry, McGrath, and Levy's (1992) study indicated that when faced with the disposition of an unwanted gift, they felt a strong pressure to "do the right thing" and searched for the most acceptable disposal option. In some cases, no appropriate disposal method may exist.

The identification of an appropriate disposal method may be more complicated than simply relying on societal norms for guidance. During the search and evaluation stage of the disposition process, a consumer may encounter difficulties in the identification of a suitable recipient for his/her possession. For example, older consumers, who have begun contemplating the disposition of their special possessions, may experience a heightened sense of ambivalence as they try to identify the best suited recipients. They want to extend the lives of their special possession beyond their own mortality, or the meanings held within, by passing the items on to significant others. Yet they worry that the items might not be appreciated, taken care of, or hold the same meaning for their recipients (Price et al., 2000). Similar ambivalence has been observed in garage sale settings in cases where the seller feels attached to an item. As a coping mechanism, the seller may attempt to transfer the private meaning of the item by relating the significance of the item to the

buyer. Or, to maintain the significance of the item, the seller may actively seek out buyers whom he/she perceives as similar to him/her self (Herrmann, 1997; Lastovicka & Fernandez, 2005).

The Disposition Decision

Consumers have a variety of disposal options to choose from. Ultimately, disposal choice is influenced by consumer traits, product traits, and the context in which the decision is made.

Disposition options. A variety of disposal options are available to consumers. Jacoby, Berning, and Dievorst (1977) developed and tested a taxonomy of product disposal options. The researchers administered questionnaires to a sample of consumers regarding the disposition of household durable products and concluded that consumers contemplate retaining, permanently disposing of, or temporarily disposing of products. Retaining the product entails using the product for its original purpose, converting and using the product for a different purpose, or storing the product. Permanently disposing of the product entails throwing away or abandoning, giving away, selling, or trading the product. Temporarily disposing of the product entails either loaning or renting the product to another individual. Young and Wallendorf (1989) interviewed students regarding past disposition experiences and modified Jacoby et al.'s (1977) disposition choice taxonomy first, by removing instances of retaining the product and second, by adding instances in which involuntary disposition occurs. Whereas voluntary disposition occurs when a consumer gives away, trades, recycles, sells, uses up, throws away, abandons, and

destroys possessions, involuntary disposition occurs when a possession is used up, legally or illegally transferred, lost, or destroyed.

Researchers have also investigated consumers' disposition behaviors regarding unwanted gifts. Findings supplement the taxonomies developed by Jacoby et al. (1977) and Young and Wallendorf (1989). Researchers found that unwanted gifts were commonly disposed of through the following channels: lateral cycling of the gift, return of the gift to the retailer (Rucker, Balch, Higham, & Schenter, 1992; Sherry et al., 1992), return of the gift to the giver, storage of the gift (Rucker et al., 1992), or destruction of the gift (Sherry et al., 1992).

With regards to clothing disposal, Francis and Butler (1994) surveyed adult female consumers and found that approximately three-fourths of subject usually dispose of used clothing via donation to a charitable organization and approximately one-fourth of the subjects usually dispose of used clothing by giving to friends. In addition, a small amount of subjects usually opted to either sell their used clothing at garage sales, save the clothing for potential future use, or use the clothing as rags. Chun (1987) found that subjects in her study disposed of clothing in similar ways to those subjects in Francis and Butler's (1994) study. Koch and Domina (1999) conducted a similar study. However, respondents did not indicate which method they used most often. Rather, they indicated which disposal options they used at least once within the past year. Of the 369 respondents, 88% used unwanted textile items as rags, 87% donated textile items to the Salvation Army or Goodwill, 87% passed textile items onto family or friends, 44% sold textile items in a garage sale, 42% donated textile items to a religious organization, 35% modified and reused the textile items, and 29% sold textile items through consignment.

The most recently developed model is Paden and Stell's (2005) Consumer Product Redistribution Model. The model shows that consumers have two general disposal options, either throw away or redistribute an item to another household. If the consumer chooses to redistribute the item and does not seek remuneration, then he/she can choose direct channels such as giving to an individual or indirect channels such as giving to a charity. If the consumer chooses to redistribute the item and does seek remuneration, then he/she can choose direct channels such as garage/yard/tag sales and classified ads or indirect channels such as second hand retailers, auctions, consignment shops, pawn shops, and specialty enterprises.

Reasons consumers choose specific options. Researchers have moved beyond identifying disposal options used by consumers and have investigated consumers' motivations for disposing via different options. For example, through focus groups, Shim (1995) identified eight different types of disposal patterns: economically motivated resale, environmentally motivated resale, charity-motivated donation, environmentally motivated donation, economically motivated reuse, environmentally motivated reuse, convenience-oriented discarding, and unawareness-based discarding. Domina and Koch (2002) also identified a segment of the population who parallel the convenience-oriented and unawareness-based discarders identified by Shim (1995). They identified a group of consumers who often throw away damaged or worn out textile items that could truly be recycled. The researchers suggest that by providing convenient curbside textile recycling programs and by educating consumers regarding textile recycling options for damaged and

worn out textiles, such consumers would be more prone to recycle, rather than throw away, unwanted textiles.

Koch and Domina (1999) also investigated the reasons why consumers choose specific disposal options. Respondents' reasons for disposing of textile products through specific options are summarized in Table 1. Reasons are listed in the order of frequency mentioned, with the first being most frequently mentioned. Note that the most common reasons for disposing of items, regardless of disposal method, included "did not fit" and "not wasted."

Table 1
Reasons for Disposing of Textile Items Through Various Disposal Options (Koch and Domina, 1999)

Option	Reason for Disposal (in order of frequency mentioned)
Use as rags	worn out or damaged, not wasted, convenience, did not fit, out of style
Donation to Salvation Army or Goodwill	helps needy, not wasted, did not fit, convenience, out of style
Donate to Religious Organization	helps needy, not wasted, did not fit, valuable, and out of style
Pass onto family and friends	not fit, valuable, not wasted, convenience, tired/bored
Sell via garage sale	did not fit, not wasted, valuable, convenience, tired/bored
Sell via consignment	valuable, did not fit, not wasted, out of style, and convenience
Modify and reuse	not wasted, did not fit, damaged, out of style, and valuable

Herrmann (1997) focused specifically on disposal of possessions through garage sales, and found that sellers held garage sales for a variety of reasons. Some sellers chose to dispose of items via garage sale for economic reasons. However, others chose a garage sale format because it provided a convenient method of ridding oneself of unwanted items, as well a way to find suitable recipients for important possessions. If the focus is more on finding appropriate home for one's possessions, often, the transactions between the sellers and the buyers are governed more by the social interactions that transpire and less by "rationalized economic exchange" (Herrmann, 1997, p. 913; Clarke, 2000).

The Post-Disposition Outcomes

After disposition, a consumer experiences post-disposition outcomes, such as satisfaction or dissatisfaction with his/her disposition choice. Consumers' perceptions of the outcomes they experience influence future disposition behaviors (Boyd & McConocha, 1996; Hanson, 1980). Francis and Butler (1994) found that eighty-nine percent of their subjects were completely or somewhat satisfied with the way they usually dispose of clothing. Belk (1988) notes, however, that a sense of grief may follow "the disposal of worn out clothing and similar items that have been associated with pleasant memories of one's past (p.143).

Involuntarily disposition of possessions, especially when the possession is meaningful to the consumer, can be extremely traumatic. In such a case, a consumer may experience a lessening of him/her self and mourn the loss of his/her possession (Wallendorf, Belk, Heisley, 1988). Researchers have noted the grief individuals experience when forced to move to a new residence and dispose of meaningful

possessions they associate with past experiences, friends/family, and their own identities (Belk, 1988, 1992; McCollum, 1990). Young's (1990) research also supports that emotional reactions are highly related to dispositional experiences. Subjects in her study indicated they experienced heightened emotions, such as love, joy, anger, sadness, and fear after disposing of a possession highly central to their selves. Subjects also indicated that when they perceived little control over the disposition of a possession, emotions such as anger, sadness, and fear often resulted.

Consumers use of the Disposition Process as a Tool

Researchers have found that the disposition process can serve as a tool for consumers to achieve stabilization during role transitions or to communicate a message to oneself and others.

Disposition to Achieve Stabilization

Young (1991) found that several informants initiated disposal of possessions to cleanse themselves of unwanted symbolic or literal meanings associated with the possessions. Gregson and Beale (2004) also found that the disposal of maternity clothes after one's pregnancy serves as a "symbolic recovery ritual" (p. 697) in which one reclaims her "remembered body" (p. 697) and again consumes ordinary, non-maternity clothing.

During periods of role transition, one's possessions may no longer reflect his/her emerging or new identity. A consumer may wish to distance him/her self from possessions that symbolize a prior identity. Data from Young and Wallendorf's (1989) interviews suggest consumers use "disposition to achieve stabilization" (p. 36)

in the new roles associated with their emerging identities. In fact, almost half of the disposition experiences discussed by informants represented role transitions. By ridding the self of possessions inappropriate for a new role, a consumer symbolically disposes of an old role and consequently facilitates movement into a new role (Young, 1991). McAlexander (1991) and McAlexander, Schouten, and Roberts (1993) investigated disposition behaviors of individuals who experienced role transition resulting from divorce. Several participants in the study indicated they surrendered a generous portion of marital possessions to break symbolic ties and facilitate a clean break from the marriage. Schouten (1991) explains that feelings of ambiguity accompany the separation from a role relationship or other key aspect of the extended self. The disposition of possessions associated with a prior role serves as a rite of passage to symbolically rid the self of a prior identity and establishes a new or revised identity. Belk (1992) encountered a phenomenon similar to rite of passage when he investigated the role of possessions in the Mormon migration. The forced disposition of treasured possessions was perceived by the Mormon population as a sacrificial and purifying act that brought about a spiritual readiness for change.

Disposition as Communication

Consumers may dispose of meaningful objects to communicate messages to oneself and/or others. For example, an informant in Young and Wallendorf 's (1989) study engaged in "disposition as communication" (p. 37) when she destroyed photographs that represented her dissolved marriage. She chose such an action to communicate to herself that her relationship was finished and to communicate to her ex-spouse that he no longer had control over her. On a similar note, when disposing

of a gift, a consumer may communicate a message to the gift giver. Before disposing of the gift, informants in Rucker et al.'s (1992) study claimed to assess their relationship with the giver, noting that disposition may communicate disrespect to the giver. In fact, Sherry et al. (1992) found that subjects were less likely to dispose of gifts when the gifts were from immediate kin, someone important, someone whose feeling might be hurt as a result of disposition, or when the gifts were especially thoughtful. Not only can gift disposition communicate a negative message to the giver, but it can also communicate negative aspects of the self, such as being selfish, unkind, thoughtless, or unappreciative (Sherry et al., 1992). A gift represents the relationship an individual has with the gift-giver, and therefore the disposal of a gift may also represent and communicate the individual's feelings about the relationship. In fact, informants in Sherry et al.'s (1992) study fantasized about destroying unwanted gifts as a means of revenge on the gift giver. By profaning the gift, they profane the relationship.

Disposition to Preserve a Relationship

Disposition behavior may serve as a tool to preserve a relationship. For example, when McAlexander (1991) studied disposition behavior within the context of divorce he found that in cases where informants did not wish to dissolve their marital relationships, they made disposal decisions that would maintain, rather than sever, their relationships with their ex-spouses. An individual may hold onto possessions that he/she believes the ex-spouse will need in the future, in hopes that the ex-spouse's need for the item will bring future interaction. Or, an individual may willingly pass items on to an ex-spouse in hopes of maintaining a pleasant relationship.

The Storage of Clothing Items

The present research provided a better understanding of consumer behaviors related to the storage of inactive clothing. Thus, the present research focuses on the “storage” concept within Boyd and McConocha’s (1996) Consumer Household Logistics System Model. Storage is closely related to use and disposal, and therefore, the present review of literature addressed all three concepts.

Consumer behavior related to clothing storage is somewhat of a mystery. “For most of their useful lives, clothes are stored away, unseen, even forgotten; in short, clothes ‘spend’ most of their time at rest. They are left in particular places, either readily available, at hand, or lost in the deep recess of the wardrobe” (Cwerner, 2001, p. 79). Cwerner (2001) calls for research that investigates wardrobe practices to provide a more holistic perspective of clothing consumption. Two research teams have addressed the storage of inactive clothing. While Banim and Guy (2001) investigated female consumers’ storage of “no-longer-worn-clothing,” Bye & McKinney (2007) focused on female consumers’ storage of “clothes that do not fit.”

No-Longer-Worn-Clothing

Based upon qualitative data collected via reflective essays, clothing diaries, and interviews from fifteen adult female informants, Banim and Guy (2001) identified three themes regarding informants’ reasons for storing, rather than discarding, their no-longer-worn-clothing. Clothing described by informants were categorized as follows: *continuing identities*, *discontinued identities*, and *transitional identities*.

Continuing Identities

Clothing within the continuing identities category served as a “memory jogger.” Informants retained the items because they served as a means to recall memories of specific times or places and/or they served as a means to revisit past feelings experienced while wearing the items. In addition, within this category were items that served as tangible links between the informants and other significant persons, especially when the items were gifts and/or handmade. Informants held onto these relationship markers, regardless of whether they had worn the items in the past or whether they actually liked the items, because the items represented important relationships.

Discontinued Identities

Clothing within the discontinued identities category served as a reminder to informants of who not to be or what not to do. Some of these items were tied to past identities to which informants no longer wanted to be associated. Other items were simply purchase “mistakes” that informants decided were never in line with their identities. Therefore, such an item was retained only because the informant felt a need to find a justification for the cost associated with its purchase.

Transitional Identities

Clothing within the transitional identities category was perceived as clothing that one might wear in the future. For example, informants believed that they would wear these items if they lost enough weight, if the appropriate occasion arose, and/or if they could find a new purpose for the items. At this point, informants have not yet made a decision as to the fate of such items.

Clothes That Do Not Fit

In Bye and McKinney's (2007) study, only fifteen percent of the 300 participants claimed that all of the clothing within their closets fit their bodies. The remaining eighty-five percent provided insight as to why consumers hold onto clothing items that do not fit. Responses were placed into four categories: a) *investment value*, b) *weight management*, or more specifically, the expectation that the item will fit again or the importance of the item as a tool to monitor and maintain one's weight, c) *sentimental value*, or more specifically an item's ability to signify an event, memory, or connection to another person, and d) *aesthetic object*, or more specifically an item that is perceived as an object of beauty.

The most frequently cited reasons for keeping clothing items that do not fit was the item's investment value, followed by the concept of weight management. Less frequently, sentimental value and aesthetic object were cited. When explaining why they kept particular clothing items that do not fit, most participants cited at least two of these reasons, and in most cases it was a combination of weight management and investment value.

Bye and McKinney (2007) noted, however, that over time, an individual will eventually realize that a clothing item does not fit and will not be worn in the future. Upon such a realization, investment value alone does not provide enough justification to hold onto the item. In the long run, they explain, only those items that hold sentimental value or are appreciated as aesthetic objects will remain in storage.

Transitional Storage for No-Longer-Worn-Clothing

Caught somewhere between the concept of storage and the concept of disposal is the concept of transition to disposition. Both Banim and Guy's (2001) and Bye and McKinney's (2007) findings suggest that a great length of time can fall between the point at which an individual stops wearing a clothing items and the point at which he/she actually disposes of the item. Findings from both studies suggest a transitional phase where an individual comes to term with the fact that he/she no longer needs a particular clothing item.

The concept of transition to disposition has been previously introduced in consumer research by Young and Wallendorf (1989), who found that informants in their study often allowed for a waiting period prior to disposal in order to become emotionally ready to voluntarily dispose of possessions that reflect the extended self. When Korosec-Serfaty (1984) investigated the nature of possessions stored in the attics and cellars of homes, she observed a similar phenomenon. Informants indicated they often stored useless possessions prior to disposal in order to allow themselves to grow indifferent to the possessions. During this transitional phase, consumers may engage in various activities prior to final disposal. Lastovicka and Fernandez (2005) found that in anticipation of selling possessions in a garage sale, informants engaged in various pre-dispositional activities, such as transition-place ritual, iconic transfer, and ritual cleaning. The transition-place ritual involves the placement of items one intends to dispose in a designated storage place within one's residence. Iconic transfer involves activities, such as taking a picture or cutting off and retaining a small piece of the item, that can capture and provide the individual with a tangible representation of the meaning held within the item after the item is no

longer in his/her possession. Lastly, ritual cleaning, such as laundering, is performed to remove one's extended self from an item, so no cross contamination occurs when ownership is transferred to another individual.

Where Do We Go From Here?

Cwerner (2001) calls for research that investigates wardrobe practices to provide a more holistic perspective of clothing consumption. The wardrobe is a combination of an individual's clothing inventories, as well as the places in which the inventories are stored. Cwerner (2001) explains that it is in the wardrobe where much of an individual's "identity kit" resides, and thus, the wardrobe is a site for imagination, a place where "the individual orchestrates the dressing of her/his body; but, because the meanings of clothes are both shifting and ambivalent, the wardrobe is the site of intense experimentation with body and dress" (p. 89). The activities that surround one's wardrobe, such as organizing, storing, choosing, and trying on clothes, have been overlooked by researchers, yet are significant aspects of clothing consumption. Therefore, a more comprehensive look at the movement of clothing into, within, and out of one's wardrobe is warranted.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCHER REVIEW OF EXPERIENCE WITH TOPIC

A review of my personal experiences related to the storage and disposal of unused clothing was performed to provide me with “a more detailed and systematic appreciation” of my “own personal experience with the topic” (McCracken, 1988, p. 32). Such a review serves two conflicting, yet complimentary, purposes, both of which have the potential to enhance research quality. The first purpose is to make me “more sensitive to contrasting patterns” expressed by informants (McCracken, 1988, p.33), as personal introspection can facilitate an awareness of relationships that are not documented in literature. The second purpose is to help me establish a necessary distance from the topic, as the review serves as a tool to better familiarize myself with my understandings, expectations, and assumptions surrounding the topic, all of which might bring about bias in data collection and data interpretation (McCracken, 1988). By both familiarizing and distancing myself from the research topic of interest, I am better prepared to engage in the later stages of the research project. These later stages, which are the primary focus of the research project, involve in-depth interviews of twenty-two informants and require the development of an interview guide, as well as the collection and analysis of data.

To perform the review, I engaged in subjective personal introspection regarding the storage and disposal of my clothing. Subjective personal introspection is a blend of both “metacognitive” and “narrative” introspection. Whereas metacognitive introspection involves “introspecting about one’s inner processes” and watching one’s self, narrative introspection involves “telling” about one’s experiences

(Gould, 2006, pp. 194). I engaged in the task of “going through my clothes” and decided what items I wanted to keep and what items I wanted to dispose of. More specifically, while taking inventory of my clothing, I examined at the metacognitive level and recorded at the narrative level my behaviors and related thought processes regarding unused clothing storage and disposal.

Subjective Personal Introspection Process

Although inspired by Gould’s (1991) introspective research regarding product consumption to manipulate personal vital energy states, the process employed in the present research further incorporates Wallendorf and Brucks’ (1993) three methodological recommendations for researcher introspection. The first recommendation addresses the “time period covered by introspection.” In the present research, to avoid the long-term memory’s propensity to reconstruct past experiences and distort sampling of past events, I engaged in contemporaneous reporting of events and experiences as they occurred. The second recommendation addresses the “specificity of data collected.” Wallendorf and Brucks (1993) state that “general conclusions about regularities in human phenomena are soundest when based on data about specific states or events” (pp. 345). Therefore, in the present research, introspective data were collected from a specific event in which I participated. The third recommendation addresses “data recording in introspection.” Wallendorf and Brucks (1993) stress the importance of using a systematic framework to record data, as without such a framework, systematic analysis and careful interpretation is not possible. Therefore, the present subjective personal introspective research project employed a systematic method for introspective data collection.

The introspective process was guided by two general research questions. First, why did I choose to keep particular inactive clothing items within my inventory? Second, why and how did I choose to dispose of particular active and inactive clothing items within my inventory? In the present researcher subjective introspection project, the term “inventory” is operationalized as “the stock of garments that an individual possesses at a given time” (Winakor, 1969, p. 631) and, to simplify the project, does not include undergarments (i.e., underwear, slippers, and hosiery) and pajamas. Furthermore, the concept “active clothing” is operationalized as clothing within the one’s inventory that have been worn within the past twelve months, whereas the concept of “inactive clothing” is operationalized as clothing within the one’s inventory that have not worn for at least twelve months. Furthermore, the concept “disposed of” is operationalized as transfer of ownership (i.e., donation to charity, passing on to another person, throwing away in trash).

The Event

I created a genuine event that entailed evaluating all clothing within my inventory and deciding which I items to retain and which items to dispose of. First, I sorted all clothing into four piles: (a) active clothing that will be kept, (b) active clothing that will be disposed of, (c) inactive clothing that will be kept, and (d) inactive clothing that will be disposed of. Second, I decided where I would store each item that I chose to keep, as well as how I planned to dispose of each item I chose to dispose of. Furthermore, I introspected on the reasons for such decision making.

Introspective Data Collection

On a spreadsheet formatted questionnaire, I recorded my behavioral intentions, as well as my introspective thoughts. For clothing in the category of “active clothing that will be disposed of,” information regarding each garment and related thoughts was recorded. For each garment, the following was recorded: the type of item (i.e., shirt, pants), the type of occasion for which it is/was appropriate (everyday wear, professional, semi-formal, formal), the last time I wore it (years), how long I have owned it (years), why I no longer wear it, why I still have it, how I plan to dispose of it (donation to charity, donation to work, pass on to other person, trash), how I feel about disposing of it at this time, and where the item was stored prior to the present research.

For inactive clothing that I chose to keep and store, information regarding each garment and related thoughts was recorded. For each garment, the following was recorded: the type of item (i.e., shirt, pants), the type of occasion for which it is/was appropriate (everyday wear, professional, semi-formal, formal), the last time I wore it (years), how long I have owned it (years), why I no longer wear it, why I still have it, how I would feel about disposing of it at this time, whether I plan to dispose of it in the future, and where the item was being stored prior to the present research project.

For active and inactive clothing that I planned to dispose of, information regarding each garment and related thoughts was recorded. More specifically, the following data were collected: the type of item (i.e., shirt, pants), the type of occasion for which it is/was appropriate (everyday wear, professional, semi-formal, formal), the last time I wore it (years), how long I have owned it (years), why I no longer wear it,

why I still have it, how I plan to dispose of it (i.e., Goodwill, donation to work, pass on to other person, trash), my reason for choosing the specific disposal method, how I feel about disposing of it at this time, and where the item was being stored prior to the present research project.

Introspective Data Analysis

During analysis, data were placed in categories based upon a code list that emerged during analysis.

Categorization

The analysis in the present introspective research was based upon the emergence of a theme regarding method of storage. It was noted that two general categories of clothing were stored: active inventory and inactive inventory. Active storage, a term introduced by Winakor (1969), is operationalized in the present study as the storage of clothing items that an individual believes he/she wears or plans to wear in the not-so-distant future. This contrasts with “inactive storage”, another term introduced by Winakor (1969), which entails the storage of clothing one does not expect to wear in the near future. Based on findings from the present subjective personal introspective review, it became apparent that in addition to active inventory, two types of inactive inventory were stored, temporary inactive inventory and permanent inactive inventory. During introspective data analysis, temporary inactive inventory was defined as those items that I had not worn within the last year and expected to dispose of in the future, whereas permanent inactive inventory was defined as items that I had not worn within the last year and did not expect to dispose of in the future. Thus, data analysis focused on the two types of inactive clothing

inventories, permanent inactive inventory and temporary inactive inventory.

Furthermore, data analysis focused on the disposal of both active and inactive clothing.

For items that I ultimately decided to place into permanent inactive inventory, data collection and analysis was guided by the following question: "Why do I still have this item?" During data collection, responses to the question were recorded. During data analysis, data were coded according to reasons for no longer wearing an item and themes were identified.

For items I decided to place into temporary inactive inventory, analysis was guided by the following questions: (a) "Why do I no longer wear this item?" and (b) "Why do I still have this item?" During data collection, responses to both questions were recorded. During data analysis, data were coded according to reasons for no longer wearing an item and themes were identified. Furthermore, data were coded according to why the items were stored prior to the present research project and themes were identified.

For items of which I decided to dispose, analysis was guided by the following questions: (a) "Why do I no longer wear this item?," (b) "Why do I still have this item?," (c) "How will I dispose of this item?," and (d) "Why did I choose this disposal method?" During data collection, responses to all four questions were recorded. During analysis, data were coded according to reasons for no longer wearing each item, reasons for still having each item, planned disposal for each item, and reason for choosing the disposal method for each item. Themes were identified.

Code Lists

To perform the analysis described above, four code lists were developed. The first list contains codes to categorize responses to the question, “Why do I no longer wear this item?” Responses were placed into one of the following categories: too small, difficult to coordinate, out of fashion, wrong color, physically uncomfortable, no occasion to use, psychologically uncomfortable, poor condition, and no longer “me”. In cases where a single response included more than one category, the individual components within the response were coded separately.

The second list contains codes to categorize responses to the question, “Why do I still have this item?” Responses were placed into one of the following categories: connection to stage in life, exemplifies how I dressed, connection to accomplishment, connection to event, like how I felt when I wore it, connection to others, beautiful garment, like the color, hopes of future weight loss, desirable style, high quality, coordinates with other items in inventory, like the fabric, might use it in the future, like how it looks on, good condition, and pretty. Again, in cases where a single response included more than one category, the individual components within the response were coded separately.

The third list contains codes to categorize responses to the question, “How do I plan to dispose of it?” Responses were placed into one of the following categories: Goodwill, donate to work, and trash. The fourth list contains codes to categorize responses to the question, “Why did I choose this disposal method?” Responses were placed into one of the following categories: good or suitable condition, can be used to fill another need, and faded/worn out/damaged. In cases where a single

response included more than one category, the individual components within the response were coded separately.

In summary, data within three distinct categories were analyzed: (a) permanent inactive inventory, (b) temporary inactive inventory, and (c) disposal of active and inactive clothing items. Through analysis, emergent themes were identified and are presented within the present chapter. Emergent themes based on the subjective personal introspection created a self-awareness that aided me while engaging in the later stages of the research project.

Results

To address the two research questions of interest, a genuine event was created in which I evaluated all clothing within my active and inactive inventories and decided which to keep and which to dispose of. Data were recorded regarding each piece of clothing that met one of the following two criteria: (a) within inactive inventory or (b) within active inventory, but decided to dispose of. As a result, data were collected for 159 clothing items. Using a spreadsheet formatted questionnaire, information about each item, as well as intention to store versus dispose of each item, were systematically recorded. Furthermore, introspective thoughts regarding each piece of clothing were recorded. Upon completion of data collection, data were coded, and further analysis resulted in the emergence of several themes.

Emergent Themes

Several themes emerged from the data set. First, it appears that the three different types of inventory were stored: active inventory, temporary inactive inventory, and permanent inactive inventory. Second, it appears that clothing within

temporary inactive inventory and clothing items within permanent inactive inventory were being stored for differing reasons. Third, the decision to continue to store and the decision to dispose of items within inactive inventory appears to be somewhat related to the reasons the items were no longer worn, as well as the reasons the items were still in my possession. Fourth, patterns emerged regarding the disposal method chosen and reasons for choosing each method.

Inventory Placement

The most general theme which emerged relates to the types of inventory stored. Clothing items not chosen for disposal could be classified as either active inventory, temporary inactive inventory, or permanent inactive inventory. There was one specific place delegated to active storage. All clothing within active inventory was hanging on a dowel in my bedroom closet. Furthermore, items were all hanging in a location of the closet that was visible and easy to access. Clothing within inactive inventory, on the other hand, was found in three distinct places: in three boxes in the hall closet, in one box on the floor of my bedroom closet, and hanging on a dowel in my bedroom closet. Originally, all eighty-four clothing items within temporary inactive inventory were located in my bedroom closet, either in the box on the floor or hanging on the dowel. It is interesting to note that many of the inactive items hanging in the closet were located in a less visible, less accessible location.

Originally, the three boxes in the hall closet held all fifty-four clothing items within my permanent inactive inventory. In fact, during the present study, none of the clothing items within the three boxes were chosen for disposal; furthermore, I do not anticipate disposing of the items in the future. In fact, after sorting through my

temporary inactive inventory, I found sixteen additional items that I never plan to dispose of and placed them into the inactive permanent storage boxes.

Storage Within Permanent Inactive Inventory versus Temporary Inactive Inventory.

Further data analysis shows that reasons for holding onto clothing items differed according to whether the items were placed in permanent inactive inventory or placed in temporary inactive inventory. After sorting through all items within my inactive inventory, data generated from the question, “Why do I still have this item?” were coded and analyzed. A total of seventy items were placed in inactive permanent storage, whereas a total of thirty-five items were placed in inactive temporary storage. On average, I indicated 1.3 reasons for “still having” an item which was placed in permanent inactive inventory and 2.4 reasons for “still having” an item placed in temporary inactive inventory. Table 2 summarizes my reasons for “still having” the items placed in permanent inactive inventory versus the items placed in temporary inactive inventory. Note that, except in two instances, the reasons for “still having” items within temporary inactive inventory were not the same as the reasons for “still having” items within permanent inactive inventory.

Table 2
Reasons for Currently Having Clothing Items in Inventory, Inactive Permanent Inventory versus Inactive Temporary Inventory

Reasons for having	Inactive inventory	
	Permanent % Items (n = 70)	Temporary % Items (n = 35)
Connection to stage in life	31.4	0
Exemplifies how I dressed	28.6	0
Connection to accomplishment	21.4	0
Connection to event	20.0	0

Like how I felt when I wore it	12.9	5.7
Connection to others	10.0	0
Beautiful garment	2.9	0
Like the color	0	65.7
Hopes of future weight loss	0	40.0
Desirable style	0	37.1
High quality	0	20.0
Coordinates with other items in inventory	0	17.1
Like the fabric	0	17.1
Might use it in the future	0	11.4
Like how it looks on	0	8.6
Good condition	0	5.7
Pretty	0	5.7
Received it as a gift and don't want to disrespect giver	0	2.9
Expensive	0	2.9
Hope to alter or fix the item	0	2.9

In summary, for items placed in permanent inactive inventory, the four most common reasons I still had each item were: the item connected me to a stage in my life (31.4% of the 70 items), exemplified how I dressed at a specific stage of my life (28.6%), connected me to an accomplishment (21.4%), and connected me to a specific event (20.0%). On the other hand, for items placed in temporary inactive inventory, the four most common reasons I still had each item were: I liked the color

(65.7% of the 35 items), was saving it with hopes of future weight loss (40.0%), thought it was a desirable style (37.1%), and thought it was of high quality (20.0%) (see Table 2).

Storage Within Temporary Inactive Inventory versus Disposal.

To make comparisons across items placed within temporary inactive inventory and items chosen for disposal, analysis was guided by the following questions: (a) “Why do I no longer wear this item?” and (b) “Why do I still have this item?” During data collection, the responses to both questions were recorded. For analysis, data were coded according to reasons for no longer wearing each item. Furthermore, data were coded according to why I still had each item.

My decision to continue to temporarily store inactive clothing items and decision to dispose of active and inactive clothing items appears to be somewhat related to the reasons for no longer wearing the items. For items that were placed in temporary inactive inventory and items that were chosen to be disposed of, data generated from the question, “Why do I no longer wear this item?” were coded and analyzed. A total of thirty-five items were placed in inactive temporary storage, whereas a total of fifty-one items were chosen for disposal. On average, I indicated 1.2 reasons for “no longer wearing” items for both the items placed in temporary inactive inventory and the items chosen for disposal.

Reasons for no longer wearing inactive clothing items. Table 3 summarizes my reasons for “no longer wearing” the items placed in temporary inactive inventory versus the items chosen for disposal. Note that items that made me feel

psychologically uncomfortable while wearing them, were in poor condition, and were “not me” were always disposed of rather than placed in inactive temporary storage.

Table 3
Reasons for No Longer Wearing Clothing Items in Inventory, Inactive Temporary Storage versus Disposal

Reason for no longer wearing	Temporary inventory % Items (n = 35)	Disposal % Items (n = 51)
Too small	71.4	47.1
Difficult to coordinate	20.0	5.9
Out of fashion	8.6	21.6
Wrong color	8.6	9.8
Physically uncomfortable	5.7	5.9
No occasion to use	2.9	0
Psychologically uncomfortable	0	15.7
Condition	0	9.8
No longer "me"	0	5.9

In summary, Table 3 shows that for items placed in temporary inactive inventory, the four most common reasons I no longer wore each item were: the item did not fit (71.4% of 35 items), was difficult to coordinate with other items in my inventory (20.0%), was out of fashion (8.6%), and was the wrong color (8.6%). On the other hand, for items that I chose to dispose of, the five most common reasons I no longer wore each item were: the item did not fit (47.1% of 51 items), was out of fashion (21.5%), made me feel psychologically uncomfortable while wearing the item (15.7%), was the wrong color (9.8%), and was in poor condition (9.8%) (see Table 3).

Reasons for having inactive clothing items. My decision to continue to temporarily store and decision to dispose of active and inactive clothing items appears to be somewhat related to the reasons for still having the items prior to the present research. For items that were placed in temporary inactive inventory and items that were chosen for disposal, data generated from the question, "Why do I still have this item?" were coded and analyzed. A total of thirty-five items were placed in temporary inactive inventory, whereas a total of fifty-one items were chosen for disposal. On average, I indicated 2.4 reasons for "still having" an item that was placed in temporary inactive inventory and 1.3 reasons for "still having" an item that was chosen for disposal.

Table 4 summarizes my reasons for "still having" the items placed in temporary inactive inventory versus the items chosen for disposal. Note that in the case of clothing placed in temporary inactive inventory, on average, I indicated more reasons for "still having" an item when compared to clothing items chosen for disposal. Furthermore, note that my reasons for still having 65.7% of the items were, at least in part, due to the fact that I liked the color. Furthermore, I still had items because I thought they were a desirable style (31.1% of items), coordinated with other items in my inventory (17.1%), and/or were made of fabric that I liked (17.1%). Neither color, style, coordination, nor fabric, however, were mentioned as reasons for "still having" items that were chosen for disposal. Furthermore, note that items that made me feel psychologically uncomfortable while wearing them, that were in poor condition, and that were "not me" were always disposed of rather than placed in temporary inactive inventory (see Table 4).

Table 4
Frequency of Reasons for Currently Having Clothing Items in Inventory, Inactive Temporary Storage versus Disposal

Reasons for having	Temporary inventory % Items (n = 35)	Disposal % Items (n = 51)
Liked the color	65.7	0
hopes of future weight loss	40.0	37.3
thought it was a desirable style	37.1	0
thought it was of high quality	20.0	2.0
thought coordinated with other items	17.1	0
liked the fabric	17.1	0
thought she might use it in the future	11.4	35.3
liked how it looked on	8.6	7.8
thought it was in good condition	5.7	17.6
thought it was pretty	5.7	3.9
liked how she felt when she wore it	5.7	0
had received it as a gift and didn't want to disrespect the giver	2.9	9.8
thought it was expensive	2.9	7.8
had hoped to alter or fix the item	2.9	3.9
don't know	0	2.0

In summary, for those items placed in temporary inactive inventory, the four most common reasons I still had the items were: I liked the color (65.7% of items), was saving it with hopes of future weight loss (40.0%), thought it was a desirable style (37.1%), and thought it was of high quality (20.0%). For items that were chosen for disposal, the four most common reasons I still had the items were: I was saving it

with hopes of future weight loss (37.2% of items), thought I might use the item in the future (35.3%), thought it was in good condition (17.6%), had received it as a gift and didn't want to disrespect the giver (9.8%) (see Table 4).

Disposal Decisions

To understand why I chose different disposal methods for different clothing items, analysis was guided by the following questions: (a) "How will I dispose of this item?" and (b) "Why did I choose this disposal method?" During data collection, responses to both questions were recorded. Data were coded according to disposal method and reasons for choosing the disposal method.

Of the clothing items evaluated, 51 were chosen for disposal. Of those items, 74.5% were to be donated to Goodwill Industries, 17.6% were to be donated to my employer, and 7.8% were to be discarded in the trash. In all instances, items to be donated to Goodwill Industries were in good or acceptable condition and would provide a benefit in the form of a tax deduction, items to be donated to my employer could be recycled into a new use and would be of use to me in my workplace, and items to be discarded in the trash were in poor condition (i.e., faded, worn out, or damaged) and I believed that nobody would want them. Through introspection, I noted that when choosing among disposal options, my first preference was to find a new use for the item, my second preference was to donate the item to Goodwill Industries, and my last preference was to discard the item in the trash.

Introspective Summary of Findings

After reviewing and analyzing the data collected through the introspective process, I developed a statement to summarize my personal experiences and

assumptions surrounding the topic of clothing storage and disposal. This exercise helped me to better understand the assumptions I brought to the research project.

My statement follows below.

The majority of my personal inventory of clothing is made up of clothing that I do not wear. I have several reasons for holding onto these items. What first comes to mind are the items that I know I will never wear, but to which I am deeply attached. These include items that connect me to a stage in my life, such as my sorority t-shirts that remind me of my sorority days, or a pair of GUESS? jeans that remind me of my first job after graduating from college. Other items remind me of styles of clothing I wore in my past, such as my outrageous "Wanna-be Madonna" wardrobe that personifies how I dressed in the mid-eighties and my overly decorated bodysuits that personify how I dressed in the early nineties. Other items remind me of past accomplishments, such as the six bridesmaids' dresses that I think of as trophies that signify how important I was to six different people or the first piece of clothing I made back in eighth grade. Other items connect me to a specific event, such as a bathing suit I wore on my Senior trip to Mexico or my wedding dress, which not only reminds me of my wedding day, but also signifies my connection with my husband. There are even two skirts, which provide me with none other than aesthetic pleasure, as they are made of gorgeous fabrics and are beautifully constructed. I would be saddened if any of these items disappeared. By simply seeing and touching these items, I can vicariously experience significant memories, connections, and feelings.

Not all of my inactive clothing carries such strong meanings. I have a number of clothes that I am saving, just in case I can wear them in the future. I keep many of them because I hope to lose weight and one day fit into them. However, the fact that I hope to lose weight and fit into something is not enough to drive me to retain such items. Rather, my decision to keep an item is guided by my preference to retain items that are specific colors, are not out of fashion, are of high quality, that coordinate with other items in my active inventory, and that didn't make me psychologically uncomfortable when I wore them in the past. Basically, the more reasons I have to keep an item, the more likely I will hold onto it. However, no matter how many reasons I may have to keep an item, I will dispose of it if it is damaged or in poor condition.

I typically throw items into the trash if they are damaged or are in poor condition. Trashing items is my least desired disposal method, as I realize that it is not the environmentally correct thing to do; however, I don't feel comfortable donating dilapidated clothing and can not always find an alternate use for such items. My first preference is to find a

new use for any items I choose to dispose of, such as donating the fabric to my work for textile related projects or turning an old t-shirt into a rag. My second preference is to donate unwanted items to a charitable organization; this method is appealing because it is easy to do and comes with a tax deduction.

CHAPTER 4

METHOD

The purpose of the present research project was to gain a holistic understanding of consumer behavior regarding the storage of inactive clothing items. The primary objective is to develop a model that describes and explains the process of clothing storage. Because the research is exploratory in nature and the objective was to develop a model using data collected during the present research project, a grounded theory qualitative research approach was adopted. Such an approach aims to generate “a general explanation of a process” (Creswell, 2006, pp. 63) and aided in the development of a model that explains the process of clothing storage, or more specifically, the process of consumer clothing inventory management.

The grounded theory approach calls for in-depth interviewing of at least twenty informants (Creswell, 2006). McCracken’s (1988) four-step method of inquiry, which focuses on data collection via “the long interview,” guided the research process. The four “steps” outlined by McCracken (1988) include: Step 1, the review of literature, which was addressed in a previous chapter; Step 2, the review of the researcher’s personal experience with the topic, which was addressed in a previous chapter; Step 3, the development of a questionnaire and data collection; and Step 4, the discovery of analytic categories through data analysis. Grounded theory data analysis techniques, as described by Creswell (2006) and Charmaz (2004), were used throughout data analysis. In the present chapter, the processes followed during interview guide development, informant selection, data collection, data analysis, and an evaluation of the study’s trustworthiness (Creswell, 2007) are presented.

Interview Guide Development

A moderately structured interview guide was developed to ensure that all areas of interest were covered during each interview, and to facilitate comparisons across all informants' interviews during analysis. Questions were designed to elicit information regarding the informants' life-worlds, as well as information regarding the a priori topics formulated after an extensive review of literature. A priori topics surround consumers' temporary storage, permanent storage, and disposal decisions as they relate to consumers' perceptions of utilitarian value, hedonic value, associated meanings, and attachment to inactive clothing items.

Initially, a rough draft of the interview guide was pre-tested on an individual who did not serve as an informant in the present study. Based on the pre-test, initial questions were altered to better meet the research goals. Appendix 1 displays the interview guide after such changes were made. Questions evolved over time, as slight changes in wording were made on an as-needed basis throughout the interview process. The resulting interview guide consisted of grand-tour questions and planned-prompts which were organized into four sections.

Grand-tour Questions and Planned-Prompts

The interview guide consisted of grand-tour questions and planned prompts. During the interview, floating-prompts were also used to bring about further discussion. The "grand-tour," open ended questions allowed for unstructured responses. Over the course of each interview, informants were asked to respond to all grand-tour questions. Some grand-tour questions were used in conjunction with *auto-driving*. Auto-driving required informants to provide his/her own stimuli, either a

clothing item or picture of a clothing item, as well as a verbal account of the stimuli. For each grand-tour question, there was a series of *planned-prompts*. Such prompts were used only when the informant did not address the specific areas of interest while responding to a grand-tour question. In addition to the interview guide, *floating-prompts* were used to encourage the informant to expand on his/her discussion. Floating-prompts included the researcher's raising of an eyebrow or interrogative repeating of the informant's remark (McCracken, 1988).

Sections Within Interview Guide

The interview guide was divided into four sections. The first section contained questions and prompts that addressed the informant's life-world. The second section contained questions and prompts that addressed the informant's relationship to clothing items within his/her active inventory, or more specifically the clothing items perceived by the informant as those items that he/she currently wore. The third section addressed the informant's relationship with clothing items that he/she perceived as items that he/she no longer wore. Finally, the fourth section addressed the informant's relationship to clothing that he/she wore in the past and of which he/she had disposed.

Section One

The goal of the first section of the interview guide was to capture an understanding of the informant's life-world, and thus, provide a context in which the informant experiences the phenomenon of interest, clothing storage. This section began with a grand tour question, "With respect to your everyday life, in what types of things are you involved?" A series of planned-prompts followed: "Tell me about your

social life.”; “Tell me about your family.”; “Tell me about your work.”; and “Tell me about the things you like to do.” An additional grand-tour question asked, “What aspects of your life are important to you?” A series of planned-prompts followed: “How do you prioritize these things that are important to you?”; “How are your current priorities different than those from your past?”; and “How do you think the importance you place on things will change in the next few years?”

Section Two

The auto-driving technique was employed in the second section of the interview guide. Auto-driving required the informant to display at least three clothing items that he/she perceived as items that he/she currently wore. For each clothing item, a single grand-tour question was posed, “Tell me about this item?” Planned prompts which followed included: “When do you wear this?”; “How do you feel when you wear this?”; “How do other people think of you when you wear this?”; “How did you get this?”; and “How would you feel if this disappeared from your closet right now?”

Section Three

The auto-driving technique was also employed in third section of the interview guide. The informant displayed at least three clothing items that he/she currently owned, but perceived as items that he/she no longer wore. For each clothing item, a single grand-tour question was posed, “Tell me about this item?” Planned prompts which followed included: “When did you wear this?”; “How did you feel when you wore this?”; “How did other people think of you when you wore this?”; “How did you

get this?"; "Why did you stop wearing this?"; "Why do you still have this?" and "How would you feel if this disappeared from your closet right now?"

Section Four

As in sections two and three, the auto-driving technique was employed in the fourth section. However, rather than display actual clothing items, informants displayed at least three pictures of themselves in clothing that he/she no longer had in his/her possession. For each clothing item, a single grand-tour question was posed, "Tell me about this item?" Planned prompts which followed include: "When did you wear this?"; "How did you feel when you wore this?"; "How did other people think of you when you wore this?"; "How did you get this?"; "Why did you stop wearing this?"; "What did you do with this?" and "How did you feel about getting rid of this?"

Informant Selection

The present research focused on consumers within the baby boomer cohort, "Americans born between 1946 and 1964" (Engel, Blackwell, & Miniard, 1995, p. G-2). Convenience sampling was used in that potential informants were identified through personal referrals. All informants were born between 1946 and 1964. A total of twenty-two potential informants, eight male and fourteen female, were contacted by the researcher and asked to take part in the study; all agreed to participate. No incentive to participate was offered.

Data collection

Data collection occurred in two phases. In the first phase, qualitative data were collected through in-depth interviews in 2001. The interviews were structured based upon the interview guide displayed in Appendix 1. Prior to the interviews, informants received a letter that instructed them to prepare clothing for auto-driving. The pre-interview letter, shown in Appendix 2, requested they select three clothing items they wear, three clothing items they no longer wear, and three pictures of themselves wearing clothing items they no longer have. All interviews were video taped, were conducted at the informants' homes, and ranged from one to two hours in length. At the beginning of each interview, informants read and signed a letter of informed consent that briefly explained both their rights as participants and the subject matter under investigation (see Appendix 3).

In the second phase, follow-up interviews with five of the original 22 informants were conducted in 2008. The purpose of the follow-up interviews was to clarify information that was unclear to the researcher. Of those five original informants, two key informants, Denise and Ed, were selected and interviewed over the phone at greater length. The grounded theory approach calls for researcher follow-up with participants throughout the data analysis process (Creswell, 2007). The selection of the two informants, one female and one male, was based on their willingness and ability to communicate their experiences during initial interviews, as well as their willingness to devote time to the follow-up phase. Informants provided more insight regarding their clothing storage and disposal behaviors. Furthermore, they evaluated data interpretation by serving as a resource for "member checking"

(Creswell, 2006). Detailed notes were taken on key informants responses during follow-up interviews, and in some cases, responses were transcribed verbatim.

Data Analysis

All video recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim. Transcription and partial data analysis occurred in two stages, a) the transcription and open coding of female informant interviews and b) the transcription and open coding of male informant interviews. Open coding was performed on data from female interviews first and males second as a strategy to identify gender differences in behavioral patterns. After open coding was performed, female and male data were analyzed collectively.

First interviews with female informants were transcribed and data from the transcriptions were coded. The grounded theory approach requires that codes are not preconceived; rather, they are created as the researcher studies the data (Charmaz, 2004). Therefore, after transcription, each interview transcript was compared against the others and emerging ideas were recorded using a memoing technique. Through this process, general patterns were identified and a list of broad categories, or codes, was constructed. Examples of initial codes include “active storage,” “temporary inactive storage,” “permanent inactive storage,” and “disposal.” Data were sorted into the broad categories, and as new themes emerged, new categories, such as “invisible inactive storage” and “transitional inactive storage” were added. This follows the grounded theory process of “open coding” where “the researcher forms categories of information about the phenomenon being studied by segmenting information” (Creswell, 2007, p. 67). After using the open coding

technique to categorize data collected from female informants, all interviews with male informants were transcribed. The researcher then sorted the transcribed data using the same open coding technique.

After data from both female and male transcripts were segmented into broad categories through open coding, further analysis of each broad category was performed. An important element in the grounded theory approach is the further examination of “processes, assumptions, and actions” within each of the broad categories. Such an analysis aided in understanding the intricacies within each category, as well as how the different broad categories were interrelated in the overall process of clothing inventory management (Charmaz, 2004, p. 511). For example, within the broad category of “permanent inactive storage,” deeper analysis enabled the researcher to identify reasons for the storage of permanent inactive inventory. Therefore, data that were initially coded into the permanent inactive storage category were further coded as either a connection to an event, connection to a person, connection to an accomplishment, connection to a stage in life, connection to oneself, prompt for past feelings, prompt of an aesthetic response, symbol of history to share with others, symbol of connection to share with others, and experience to share with others. These specific codes were condensed through further analysis. For example, data coded as either a connection to an event, connection to a person, connection to an accomplishment, connection to a stage in life, or connection to oneself were placed within a sub-category labeled “connections.” Through such an analysis, it became apparent as to how clothing items within the informants’ permanent inactive inventories differed from clothing items within the informants’ temporary, invisible, transitional and active inventories. It also provided an

understating as to why the items within permanent inactive inventory might or might not move to another storage category, such as temporary inactive inventory, or why it might or might not move to the disposal category.

Evaluation of Research Quality

Techniques were employed to enhance the quality of the research. Creswell (2007) describes eight “validation strategies” (p. 207) for qualitative research and suggests that researchers employ at least two of the strategies in any given research project. Three of the strategies were employed in the present study: a) clarifying the potential for researcher bias, b) member checking, and c) providing a thick description of informants. In addition, Creswell (2007) states that measures should be taken to ensure consistency throughout the data collection and data analysis process.

Clarifying the Potential for Researcher Bias

As suggested by McCracken (1988), I engaged in subjective personal introspection and developed a summary statement in which I explained my personal understanding and experiences surrounding the topic of clothing storage and disposal. This allowed me to identify and communicate to myself and the readers any biases or assumptions that might impact data collection, data analysis, and the interpretive process.

Member Checking

Throughout the data analysis and interpretation process, the strategy of “member checking” was employed. Such a strategy involves soliciting informants’ views regarding a researcher’s interpretations of collected data (Creswell, 2006). In

the present study, two key informants, one female and one male, provided member checks. The key informants read and commented on my findings and interpretations. In cases where discrepancies arose, I reevaluated the data from which interpretations had been drawn and made changes when appropriate.

Providing a Thick Description of Informants

During the interviews, information regarding the informants' life-worlds was collected. From this information, autobiographical sketches were constructed for each informant (see Appendix 4). Such information enables others to judge the transferability of the present research finding to other people and contexts.

Consistent Data Collection and Analysis

Steps were taken to ensure consistency throughout the data collection and analysis process. A moderately structured interview guide was used during data collection to ensure that the interviews were structured in a way that would be similar across informants. Interviews were video taped and transcribed verbatim to ensure that the data used for analysis was accurate. Furthermore, because the same researcher coded and analyzed all data, coding inconsistencies were not an issue.

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CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

Model Development

The present research expands on the concept of *storage*, “the placement of a household item during periods when it is not being used for its primary function” (p. 233), within Boyd and McConocha’s (1996) Consumer Household Logistics System Model (see Figure 1). For example, a clothing item within a consumer’s inventory of clothing may flow between two concepts, *storage* and *use*. The item is in the use category when the individual is actively engaged with the item (i.e., wearing). After use, if not disposed of, it returns to the storage category. The purpose of the present research was to explore consumer behaviors regarding clothing storage. Themes which emerged throughout data collection and analysis were used to develop a model which describes and explains the process of clothing storage, or more specifically, the process of clothing inventory management.

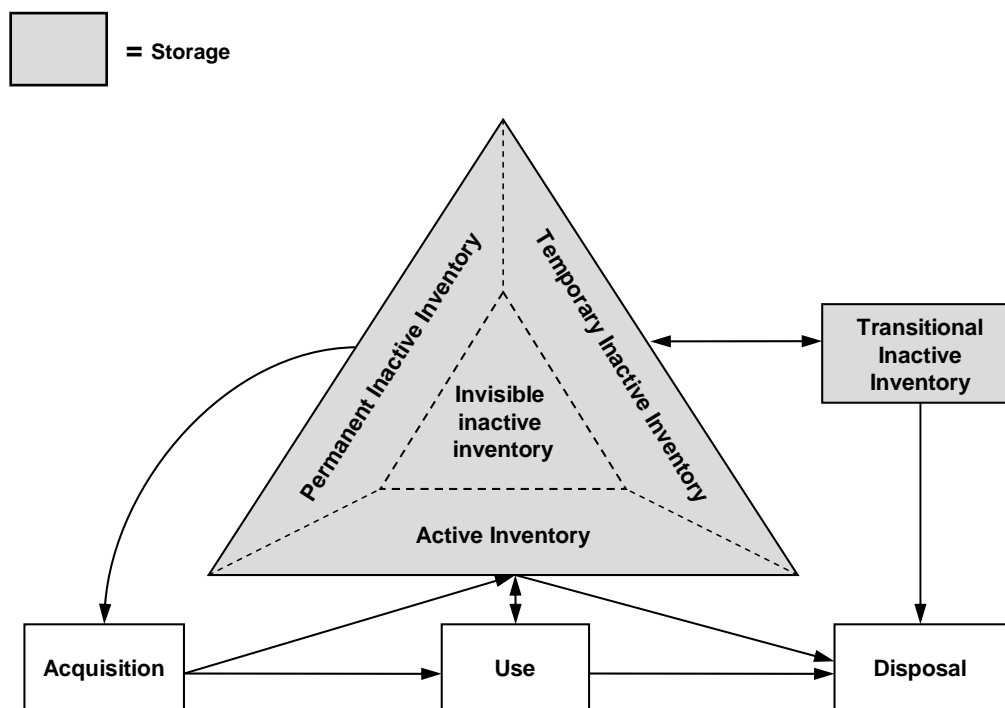
Stored clothing can be categorized as either active or inactive inventory (Winakor, 1969). Clothing items perceived by an individual as those items that he/she will definitely wear comprise his/her *active inventory*. On the other hand, clothing items perceived by an individual as items that he/she does not wear comprise his/her *inactive inventory*. Data from the present study suggest that individuals hold items within their inactive inventory for a variety of reasons. Four distinct categories of inactive inventory were identified: permanent inactive inventory, temporary inactive inventory, invisible inactive inventory, and transitional inactive inventory. These categories are incorporated into a newly developed model. Figure

2 displays the proposed Consumer Clothing Inventory Management Model.

Categorized data from the in-depth interviews are shown in Appendix 5.

The rationale for the Consumer Clothing Inventory Management Model is based on data collected via in-depth interviews. Findings from the present research project will be presented in the following order: a) sample description, b) definitions of storage-related concepts within the model, c) discussion regarding the dynamic nature of the model, or more specifically the movement of clothing items from one category to another, d) explanation of behaviors within individual concepts and e) definition of disposal and discussion of its relationship to storage decisions.

Figure 2. Clothing inventory management model.



Sample Description

A total of twenty-two informants, fourteen female and eight male, participated in the study. Males ranged from thirty-nine to fifty-four years in age, were married, owned their homes, and were employed at the time of the initial interview. Females ranged from thirty-seven to fifty-four years in age; all but two were married, all but one owned their homes, and all but one were employed at the time of the initial interview. Summaries of each informant's biographical information is included in Appendix 4.

Concept Definitions

The following concepts are included in the Clothing Inventory Management Model: use, active inventory, permanent inactive inventory, temporary inactive inventory, invisible inactive inventory, transitional inactive inventory, and disposal.

Use

A clothing item in the use category is defined as an item that an individual is actively engaged with, such as the act of wearing a shirt.

Active Inventory

Clothing items perceived by an individual as those items that he/she wears, or more specifically those items that flow between the "use" and "storage" categories, comprise his/her active inventory.

Permanent Inactive Inventory

Within an individual's permanent inactive inventory are items perceived by an individual as those items that he/she does not wear and of which he/she does not plan to dispose in the future; in cases where he/she anticipates physically passing an

item on in the future, it is perceived not as disposal, but as sharing the item and its' related meaning with someone who is perceived as an extension-of-self.

Temporary Inactive Inventory

Within temporary inactive inventory are items perceived by an individual as those items that he/she does not wear, may or may not expect to wear in the future, and plans to dispose of in the future.

Invisible Inactive Inventory

Within invisible inactive inventory are items that an individual is no longer aware of having.

Transitional Inactive Inventory

Within transitional inactive inventory are items which an individual has decided to dispose of, has physically removed from his/her active, permanent, temporary, and inactive inventories, and has put in a designated place where the items await the final act of disposal.

Disposal

Disposal occurs when an individual physically and legally transfers the ownership of a clothing item from him/her self to another person, group, business, organization, the waste stream, and etcetera.

Inventory Movement Between Concepts

Data show the dynamic nature of the model. Between the time initial and follow-up interviews were conducted, the migration of specific items within informants'

clothing inventories occurred. Within the model there is an inventory triangle that consists of active, permanent inactive, temporary inactive, and invisible inactive inventories. Items can move from one inventory category to another within the inventory triangle. Such items can also move to categories outside of the inventory triangle. They can move outward and become transitional inactive inventory or disposed of items. Furthermore, transitional items may move back into the inventory triangle and recycled items will circulate out of the inventory triangle as one item and return to the inventory triangle as a “new” item.

Item Movement Among Categories Within the Inventory Triangle

Within the model, dashed rather than solid lines separate active, permanent inactive, temporary inactive, and invisible inactive inventories. The dashed lines represent the potential for items in one category to migrate into another category over time. Migration of clothing items among active, permanent inactive, temporary inactive, and invisible inactive was observed during data collection and analysis; examples follow.

Permanent to temporary migration. When initially interviewed, Sherrie indicated she never planned to get rid of a specific dress because it was beautiful and, if she were to have a daughter, she wanted to share it with her daughter. However, when the researcher followed up with her seven years later, the informant said that she had a son and didn't plan to have anymore children; furthermore, the dress' fabric had deteriorated dramatically within the past seven years. Therefore, what she once thought was permanent she now believes she will dispose of in the future. Additionally, during a follow-up interview, both Sherrie and Amy claimed that

they now realize they need to dispose of many things they thought they might keep permanently. In a follow-up interview, Amy stated,

Because I have come to a point in my life where I know several people in their 80s and 90s who are moving into assisted care facilities, and they are happy there, but they have limited space. And it's like I see them getting rid of everything because their space is so limited.

Both informants Sherrie and Amy expressed that they now perceive as temporary many of the clothing they perceived as permanent when interviewed seven years prior.

Permanent to active. Nancy had a dress that she was keeping as a memento from her 1976 prom. Although she hadn't planned to wear it again, she did, in fact, wear it again in 1980 when another special occasion arose. As another example, Ed had a work uniform from a previous job that he had not worn in twenty-five years. However, there was a one year period in which he wore it on two occasions, career day at the school where he taught and Halloween. Nancy and Ed stored items which moved from permanent inventory to active inventory, and then ultimately returned to permanent inventory where the items currently reside.

Temporary to active migration. When initially interviewed, Amy indicated that she was thinking about donating a particular dress that she hadn't worn in several years because she didn't think it fit very well. However, when the researcher followed up with her seven years later, the informant said that she had lost weight and had recently worn the dress. The dress is an example of a clothing item that moved from temporary inventory to active inventory.

Invisible Inactive to Active. Ed had a drawer full of Bermuda style shorts he had avoided sorting through in years. When he finally looked at the contents of the drawer, he discovered a pair of forgotten shorts and has worn them several times since. This pair of shorts is an example of a clothing item that moved from invisible inactive inventory to active inventory.

Item Movement Out and Into the inventory triangle

Clothing items can move outward, beyond the limits of the inventory triangle. When an individual decides to dispose of an item, they may immediately dispose of the item or place it into transitional inactive inventory. Furthermore, transitional items may move back into the inventory triangle and recycled items will circulate out of the inventory triangle as one item and return to the inventory triangle as a “new” item.

Movement to and from transitional inactive inventory. Outward movement from Katie’s inactive inventory to transitional inventory occurred when she discovered a pair of unwanted leggings and immediately placed them in a bag that she planned to take to the Goodwill. Similarly, outward movement occurred when Denise suddenly decided that she would never lose enough weight to fit into many pants within her temporary inactive inventory; her decision prompted her to place many pairs of pants into bags destined for the Goodwill. On the flip side, inward movement from transitional inactive inventory to active inventory occurred when Denise retrieved, and subsequently wore, two shirts from a box of items she had planned to sell at a garage sale.

Movement to disposal. Outward movement from active inventory to disposal occurred when Ruth discovered a hole in a shirt while sorting laundry and immediately threw the shirt into the trash. Outward movement from temporary inactive storage to transitional inactive storage occurred when Raymond placed a few unwanted items into a bag that would eventually be passed to a friend. In addition, outward movement from transitional inactive inventory to disposal occurred when Raymond finally gave the bag of clothes to his friend.

Recirculation from inventory to acquisition to inventory. A re-circulated clothing item is one that is removed from an individual's inventory and then placed back into the his/her inventory as an item with a new purpose. When informants recycled items into items with a different purpose, the original item is essentially withdrawn from inventory, acquired as an item with a new purpose, and then placed back into the individual's inventory. For example, Lucas said that because his t-shirt was looking too worn to wear out in public, he would turn it into a work shirt and wear it while doing home projects.

Concept Explanation

Through data analysis, categories of which a model of Clothing Inventory Management is comprised were identified. Data not only supports the development of individual concepts, or inventory categories, within the model, but also explain why consumers store clothing that are not part of their active inventories. The following discussion presents data which guided the development of concepts within the Clothing Inventory Management model.

Permanent Inactive Inventory

Those clothing items to which informants expressed strong attachments were often found in permanent inactive inventories. Primarily, these items symbolized a type of connection and/or held hedonic value. Although they did not always expect to personally use certain clothing items in the future, informants had no plans to dispose of these items. Many informants stored and often preserved such items because of associated connections and/or hedonic value they hoped to access in the future via the items, whether it be specifically for themselves and/or for others with whom they wanted to share it with.

Attachment to stored items

Attachments to those items informants felt they would never dispose of took many forms. Many informants valued items because the items served as tangible connections to specific events, people, accomplishments, and stages in their lives, or they served as reminders of feelings they experienced while wearing the clothing. Items were also valued because they were perceived as being an integral part of one's extended self. In a few cases, items were valued simply for their aesthetic properties. Often, an informant's attachment toward a single object was due to a compilation of several of these factors.

Connection to event. Through certain items, informants were able to recall details from specific events. The majority of these items were wedding and formal attire. For example, Denise's hoop skirt provided her with a memory of two special days in her life.

The hoop skirt is like part of my childhood. I was the queen for the Holy Ghost Festival for the Catholic religion, and it was a very special day for me, and I was sort of like the main attraction type thing. I had a white dress and a big white cape. . . . That day, I was this big queen. . . I could still see it as clear as day. . . . I never got rid of the hoop because I figured it would always come in handy, and it did, I wore it to my wedding. . . . I have never thought about getting rid of it. . . . When I open up the closet, it reminds me of when I wore it. I don't even know how to clean it. It still has drag marks from the last time I wore it [her wedding]. . . . I can see myself walking down the aisle and I remember a kid who was standing outside on the steps who yelled "sucker!"

Less formal clothing items also served as tangible reminders of events. Duke recalled meaningful activities he engaged in on the day he bought a special t-shirt.

"This is a sprint car shirt, Steve Canton, which is our favorite sprint car driver. . . We played horse shoes with him and different things in Chico, and that's when we got the shirt." Similarly, when describing a suit tailor made for her in Thailand, Sherrie recalled activities surrounding the acquisition of the suit, "But I just remember getting measured, picking out, and looking through books. Like in the Bangkok tailor district, I just remember seeing a picture of it and then seeing this fabric and thinking it would go perfectly."

Connection to specific person or people. Informants indicated that some items symbolized a relationship between themselves and another person. For example, Gale tells a story of a hand knitted sweater that symbolizes its' maker. She wrapped herself in the sweater and said, that it "was made by a special lady. . . who made it for her husband who didn't want it. . . . So somehow it arrived at my house. . . . I am not getting rid of it." She elaborated, "It's the family that it came from that means something to me, my friend's mother. " Gifts from family and friends also

provide a sense of connection. Marleen spoke fondly of a dress that was given to her by her father.

This is one of those ones that I don't wear but I can't part with it because I just love it. . . . This was something we got in Jamaica, and we went with my father that passed away when I was 19, but I got it with him. . . . It reminds me of my dad. And I just have a sense of peace in having him as part of this dress.

Ceremonial clothing can also symbolize a connection to another. A few informants noted that their wedding dresses symbolized their connection to their husbands. For example, when she spoke of her wedding dress, Carey stated the following:

It's not particularly fancy. . . . But I wouldn't be able to get rid of it. . . . It's an emotional thing, especially, like I'm still married to him and I will be for the rest of my life. It would be like discounting our whole relationship. I know it wouldn't bother him, but it would bother me. It's just too weird to get rid of it. Maybe if I were really old and he were dead, because our time together would be over.

Connection to accomplishment. Clothing served as a tool to remind informants of their accomplishments. The connection may be very straight forward, such as in the case of Ed's t-shirt which displayed a race logo. The informant stated, "It's the only time I've ever competitively run and it was probably the most rigorous run I'd ever done, so I got this shirt. But I don't plan to wear it because the message attached to it, it's sort of conceited."

Kathleen's wedding dress served as a tool to evaluate the maintenance of her figure. Boasting of her accomplishment, she states, "I still fit in it and try it on, it's a vanity thing." On a deeper level, Gilbert's hockey jacket symbolized success that resulted from hard work.

Um, when I was in high school, I was a very poor student. . . . My senior year was the year I was able to get involved in an organized sport. That was ice hockey. So the summer before my senior year, I ice skated seven times a week probably between two and six hours a day. So in that summer I learned to skate well enough to be able to try out in that team and was able to play well enough to become a regular participant. So this really kind of symbolizes my awareness that if I commit myself to a goal and a task, that even if it's difficult, you can accomplish it. . . . This is probably an event in my personal life where there was a significant cross road and a constructive bridge had been built. I think when I started my senior year, I had a GPA of 1.6, and then I graduated with a 2.1. So I went from being a D/F student to being an A/B student.

In another case, a clothing item signified a sense of accomplishment associated with how an informant impacted the life of another. This is evidenced by Denise's statement,

I saved the shirt that my daughter gave me from the Cape. She got it for me as a gift on her honeymoon. It makes me feel important, that I made a difference in her life. Whenever I went somewhere when they were kids, I always brought them back something, and now she's doing that and I feel I am part of the reason.

Connection to stage in life. Clothing items helped informants feel connected to meaningful times in their lives, ranging from childhood through adulthood. A "Brownie uniform" provides Kathleen with "a visual representation of memories" from her childhood. Memories are tied up in the merit badges she earned, as well as a matching Brownie uniform, handmade by her mother, for her favorite childhood doll. While aspects of Kathleen's childhood was captured in a Brownie uniform, the early stages of Gilbert's adulthood were captured in his Air Force uniform.

And this is one of those symbols that reminds me of the consequence of when you make a decision. This was the first time when I was unable to get out of something that I didn't want to do after I did it. . . . And it didn't matter what I wanted to do, it didn't matter what I liked or disliked, cause these guys were calling the show. . . . Well, if I got rid of this, I would lose the connection to that reminiscing opportunity. This is irreplaceable. . . . This is a part of me, my history, this reminds

me of cause and effect, consequence for behavior, loss of autonomy and freedoms. There is a lot of symbolism built up in this one piece of clothing that points to that whole experience. But it also points to other points of being liberated because it got me out and about, it got me exposed to other people, it got me exposed to a lot of places. So there were positive sides to it.

While Gilbert's Air Force uniform prompted him to speak about a challenging, yet growth-promoting, time in his life, Ken's blazer prompted him to reminisce about a very pleasurable time in his life.

[Wife] and I used to go out and go to a lot of parties with this [jacket]. . . . Very confident, very sexual, it was a good time in my life. Not that this time in my life isn't good, but it was really wild at times. . . . And [wife] would dress really sexually and I would too, and we had these kind of clothes. . . . I wouldn't [get rid of it] I'd be sad because of all the memories I have had with it, a lot of memories I had with it.

Connection with oneself. In some cases, informants indicated that they planned to keep clothing items that symbolized themselves. For example, a significant part of Gale's identity was centered around her career as a lab technician. "I have been in this job/career, for over 20 years. I like my job, I am good at what I do, I like what I do. . . . It's been very good in my life and I'm good at it, I like it." During the interview, she indicated that she only had two things that she planned to keep forever, one of which was her first lab coat. "I know I'll save my lab jacket. . . . I will never wear this one again, but you know, I've had this lab jacket probably most of my career, probably 20 years. It has a little "A" [first initial of her name] on it."

Furthermore, because handmade items have a direct connection to the maker, informants who made their own clothing items felt a strong sense of connection to those items. Consequently, some informants, such as Marleen,

indicated that they tended to retain clothing items that they personally made for themselves.

Things that I haven't made by hand, I have less attachment to. . . .
And if they are things that I made, there is no way, it's part of me. . . .
This is a dress I made. This is one that I can't part with because I made it. I made this when I was in 8th grade. . . . But, it's one of those ones where it is fraying because it has been bent over a hanger, but I won't part with it. It's part of me.

Connection to past feelings. Informants indicated that by simply possessing clothing items, they could access feeling they experienced in the past when they used to wear the items. For example, Lisa explained how she felt when she tried on her wedding gown after many years of marriage. "My wedding dress, that's the most special, and it still fits. . . . [Husband] was out golfing and I was all cleaned up and had a shower, and I did, I put it on. And that same feeling, I can't explain, it was like on my wedding day." Furthermore, without trying on a prized pair of pants she wore during high school, the mere sight of the pants helped Ruth recall how she felt when she wore them. "Oh God, I felt so good when I wore them. Oh I thought I just looked the greatest. I didn't think there was anyone that looked better than me."

Aesthetic experience. At times, informants indicated that the beauty of certain clothing items justified keeping them permanently. Carey noted that she never planned to part with a wool coat from the 1940s, purchased second hand several years ago, because "it's a classic 40s piece, a beautiful piece, . . . just excellent quality and workmanship, old-fashioned, it's just something that you can't get anymore, fine work, fur. It's just so classic and beautiful that I wouldn't want to get rid of it." Sherrie also retained a dress because it was beautiful. When describing the

dress, she said “It is gorgeous. It reminds me of a Monet painting. It is pretty unique. But I keep it because . . . it’s beautiful and unique. . . . It is very pretty to look at. “

Although Dorothy plans to keep two suit jackets because they represent a specific stage in her life, her decision regarding which two suit jackets to keep was based on the aesthetics of the garments. She stated,

I have very few of my work clothes left. It’s now just a few that I really really liked. So this is one I plan to save. . . . This was one of my favorites. . . . But we were at the mall in Reno. I know I really really like something if I go “ha” when I first see it. When I saw it I just really right of the bat, really liked it. It is a really well-made, nice looking suit. . . . I love the fabric.

Sharing history, connections, and experiences

Based on finding presented thus far, it is evident that informants were attached to the objects within their permanent inactive inventories because the items provided informants personal access to connections and/or hedonic experiences. Informants also acknowledged that some items within their permanent inactive inventories were valued because they provided a means of sharing a sense of history, connection, and/or hedonic experience with others. In some cases, informants wanted to share clothing that was representative of the styles they once wore. For example, when describing a jacket she had not worn in several years, Katie commented,

It is fun to show your kids, “this is what I used to wear.” I would always save some things because it is fun. It’s just neat to have. We used to always go into my grandmother’s closet and look at her old-fashioned stuff. Well, this is going to be old-fashioned some day.

Ed also wanted to share his National Parks ranger uniform with future generation, including those within and outside of his own family. He said, “I think a

generation or two down the line there'll be a mystique associated with the idea of being a ranger. I guess it's a way to share a set of values that might not exist in the future, or what society looked on as important."

A few Informants expressed a wish that their own children or grandchildren would have the opportunity to wear, and consequently experience, certain clothing items, such as christening dresses, prom dresses, and wedding dresses. Denise spoke of her own disappointment when her daughter declined wearing her wedding dress.

If she wore it, I thought she would feel proud to wear it, just as I did. It would be like an heirloom that she could take care of and pass on down to her daughter if she should have a daughter. My friend's daughter, who is twenty-seven, wore her wedding dress and I thought it was really neat that they could share something like that.

Preserving connections and experiences

Informants often made attempts to physically preserve clothing items held within permanent inactive inventories. For example, Gilbert's Air Force jacket was stuck together with starch from when it was laundered twenty-five years prior. However, although he had stored the jacket for twenty-five years, he purposely did not "break" the starch.

This particular process in the military is what they would call "breaking starch" because the sleeves are all stuck together so whenever you woke up in the morning you had to force yourself through the clothing. So basically every morning when you go to school, you had to be getting into a uniform like this. So it had a little sentimental value to it and when I got out here I just chose never to wear this uniform.

By not "breaking starch" after he was discharged from the Air Force, he symbolically preserved part of the meaning associated with the jacket. Along similar lines, Duke would not wear a special t-shirt because he wanted it to look nice. This allowed him

to preserve the t-shirt as a souvenir that represented a connection to an important event. He stated, "Even if I wanted to wear it again, it's a souvenir from the race and that time." The same informant also meticulously maintained a Harley Davidson t-shirts collection, "nostalgia from back when," that he had not worn in ten years.

Ok, when I used to ride my Harley all the time, when we'd stop at Harley shops, you'd have to have a souvenir, and this one's from 1977, so it's been around a few years. I don't wear it anymore cause if you don't have a Harley, you don't wear a Harley shirt. . . . I sold the Harley. . . . And I probably have 15 or so of these shirts. And they hang in the closet and they are starting to get a little dust across the top, and we'll launder them and hang em back up again. But these are shirts I don't wear anymore.

Furthermore, by using special storage techniques, informants maintained the pristine conditions of special items, such as wedding dresses. Informants kept their dresses in plastic zip-up bags, in specially designated closets that would not compress the items, in hope chests, or in keepsake boxes. For example, Denise said her wedding dress was "in the same box my friend's dad put it in after the wedding. He wrapped it in black paper and sealed it in the box." For these carefully preserved items, time sits still. These items, in the same condition as they were long ago, can take individuals back to a specific time and/or place, they can remind individuals of accomplishments and/or those who are important to them, and they can evoke a variety of emotional responses. It is for these reasons that informants kept many clothing items within their permanent inactive inventories.

Temporary Inactive Inventory

Clothing within temporary inactive inventories was perceived by informants as items they do not wear and items they may or may not wear in the future, as well as items that they would eventually dispose of. Such items were stored because

informants were waiting for future opportunities to personally make use of or to find the right outlet to best dispose of the items. Although feelings informants expressed about temporarily held items were not as strong as those expressed about permanent inactive items, informants often indicated that items within their temporary inactive inventories were “in waiting” because they held a fair amount of value and/or were items to which they were attached.

Value and Attachment

Many clothing items within informants’ temporary inactive inventories held economic and/or hedonic value. Furthermore, informants expressed attachment to some items.

Economic value. Informants sometimes kept items that were expensive when acquired, as well as items they perceived as increasing in economic value over time. The initial economic value of certain items influenced Andrew’s storage decisions. He noted, “I probably hang onto suits and coats longer than I hang onto shirts. I probably would hang onto a pair of really good dress pants, not to wear them, but not to give away. I wouldn’t look at them as give-awayable stuff. They’re expensive.” On another note, Dorothy claimed, “I have a big box with [Levi] jeans in it that I will never be able to wear again. But, for some reason, I just keep thinking that they are going to be worth a lot of money.”

Hedonic value. Some items were kept because informants hoped to wear them in the future and again experience the positive feelings they experienced while wearing the items in the past. For example, Denise could no longer wear a dress due to fit issues. She hoped to wear the dress again, however, because of the way it

made her feel. "This makes me feel like I am sexy. . . . It makes me feel feminine, flighty. . . . I would put it on and I would feel special in it." Lisa expressed similar feelings about a blouse that she had not worn because she was not sure whether it was in fashion.

I have not donated and not gotten rid of it because I have always loved it. . . . Probably when you have colors that people tell you, like that my hair matches the gold and whatever, and you get all these compliments, and that's why. It feels good. It was soft, and silky, and it was nice.

She retained the blouse within her temporary inactive storage because it was aesthetically pleasing to her and it made her feel good about herself when she had worn it in the past.

Attachment. Informants felt a sense of attachment to items because the items were special to them or because the items were a gift from someone who was special to them. Although she believed she would not keep the dress forever, Marleen discussed her attachment to dress she no longer wore.

This is one of my first professional teaching dresses. . . . It's sentimental to me because it is something I chose out of my first pay checks from when I was officially employed. . . . Certainly a common dress, a very practical kind of dress. . . . When I do the seasonal thing, and I keep putting them back in the closet, the attachment gets stronger. . . . And, I am sure that a lot of it has to do with I still see a time where I could potentially wear it. . . . I am still teaching, and it is a practical and comfortable kind of dress.

The combination of her attachment to the dress and her perception that she would wear the dress in the future drove Marleen to hold the dress within her temporary inactive inventory. In contrast, Ken kept a t-shirt he didn't like, waiting to find a use for it, because it was a gift from his wife.

It was given to me, but I didn't want to throw it away or anything. . . . I just don't like it. But it was given to me as a gift, so I don't want to get rid of it. . . . I'd probably wear it to paint with maybe. I don't want to hurt her feelings, so I don't want to get rid of it.

In truth, it was the informant's attachment to his wife that led him to retain and try to find a use for the shirt.

Items in Waiting

In many cases, informants felt compelled to find future uses for items they were not able to wear because of the perceived value of and/or their attachment to the items. Essentially, these items were in waiting, while Informants waited for the opportunity to personally wear items, waited to make sure the items' value was not an essential part of their inventories, or waited to find the perfect opportunity to pass the items' value on to others.

Waiting to wear it again. The concept of "waiting to wear it again" can be summed up in the following statement made by Amy.

I might keep them, even if I have not worn them for years and years, there might be some occasion, even Halloween when you need a costume or something and I'll keep stuff around that is interesting, I'd like to be able to pull stuff out of the closet, but if I think there is a possible likelihood that I'll wear it I will leave it in there forever.

Most items in the "waiting to wear it again" category were not basics and were in excellent condition. Often they were for dressier occasions, were perceived as unique, and/or were perceived as having a higher level of economic value.

Furthermore, clothing in the category held hedonic value for some informants.

Informant had hopes of fitting into these items again, of the items coming back into

fashion, of having an occasion to wear the items, or of altering the items in ways that would make them wearable.

Informants kept items that they thought they would wear again if their bodies changed and could *fit into the items*. The items saved for this purpose were in good condition and were liked by the informants. For example, Ruth said, “I’m thinking some day, I’m gonna get back into them. I have a huge pile folded in my closet, they are all waiting for some day when I lose weight.” She chose only to save items that met specific criteria, however, as evidenced in her statement, “They are the ones that are all still in good shape, I just, when they all started not fitting, I just went through my drawers and took out everything that didn’t fit, and the stuff that’s good, that’s in good shape I put in that pile.” Kathleen had a skirt within her temporary inactive inventory that she hadn’t worn in five years. She said, “And I like it, but you know I used to wear it, but I kind of got middle aged hippy and I don’t fit in it too good. So, I’m holding out till the day I get skinny again. It looked really good when I had it on.” Note that she chose to keep a skirt that “really looked good” when she had it on.

Informants also kept items that they thought they would wear again if the items were to *come back into fashion*. For example, when she spoke of a collection of shirts she didn’t wear, Gale said,

I just can’t seem to get rid of them, but I don’t know why. Never wear them. Could come back in style. I know that I had a very difficult time when I got them because they were very expensive. I would wear them all, but I don’t know when or why. You know if they’d burn up in a fire it wouldn’t hurt my feelings at all, but am I going to take this to [charitable organization] tomorrow, no, it might come back in style.

Note the interaction between the informant’s perception of the shirts’ economic value and the fact that she thought they might be fashionable again.

Informants also kept items that they thought they would wear again if they had an *occasion to wear the items*. This notion is personified in Katie's statement, "They aren't the everyday things. They are the special things that you think, but I might wear that, because it is not something you wear all the time, and you think, you know, an occasion might come up." Along these lines, Sherrie stored a shirt she could wear if she were to become pregnant.

I don't wear it anymore, but when I did, I really liked it. . . . I love the color, the stitching, the buttons are unique, but it feels very big and loose and the style has changed and that's why I stopped wearing it. When I did wear it I kind of felt sexy and I would wear it with slender pants. And I held onto it because it is in really good shape and it is unique and it was made overseas and in India. And, every once and a while I definitely think that if I were pregnant I would wear it and it would be a stylish thing to wear while I was pregnant.

It appears that a combination of the shirt's hedonic value and good condition, as well as her perception that she might have a future opportunity to wear the shirt, provides rationalization for retaining the shirt within her inactive inventory. On a less serious note, some items were retained because they provided a "unique and maybe laughable heritage." Andrew retained a shirt for such a reason. When he displayed the shirt, he said "It's been a long times since the 70s. . . . It's pretty indicative of the mid to late 70s, clearly out of style, clearly not something I am going to wear except to a party with costumes." Several informants indicated that they held onto extremely stylized items for the purpose of serving as potential Halloween costumes.

A few informants also kept items that they thought they would wear again if the items were *altered or repaired*. Terri saw hedonic value in a dress, as the fabric was aesthetically pleasing to her. She had not worn the dress in four years because it was out of style, but felt that she could use it again if she would "chop this off and

make something else out of it.” The same informant was keeping a dress that she “hates” and hadn’t worn in two years, hoping to transform it into something she would wear. She said, “I kept thinking that I could do something with this, to fix it. . . . I keep thinking it is brand new, it was expensive, so I just feel guilty and it is in my closet. While hedonic reasons drove her to retain the first dress, economic reasons drove her to retain the second dress.

Waiting to be certain that it is not needed. Many clothing items were kept “just in case” they were needed in the future. Others were kept because they were integral parts of informants’ inventories and had not yet been replaced.

Informants expressed that a need for particular items might arise, and therefore, they retained the items “just in case.” Raymond explained why he kept a shirt that he didn’t like and hadn’t worn in one year. He said “It’s kind of just in case when I run out of other things to wear.” Amy expressed a similar rationale regarding a shirt that she did not particularly like.

And I might have worn it twice, I hated it both times, and then I kept leaving it in the closet thinking one day I am going to go into my closet and I’m going to really need a blouse to wear with something to class, that I might really be needing something, that I would be desperate for a blouse. I thought I’d need it as a safety net, but I could never really talk myself into wearing it.

These items were wearable in that they fit and were in good condition, yet they were never truly liked by the informants. However, the informants thought these items would make good back-ups if they encountered a situation where they were in dire need of something to wear.

The “back-up” items discussed previously were in good condition and never served as integral parts of the informants’ active inventories. Informants had back-up

clothing items of a different nature, as well. Such back-up items were worn-out, once served as integral parts of the informants' active inventories, and would be disposed of upon replacement. When items that once served as integral parts of informants' wardrobes became worn out, informants often stopped wearing them. However, even though they didn't wear the items anymore, they expressed a need to replace the items prior to disposal. Usually items within this category were basic, once versatile pieces within informants' inventories. For example, Terri said, "I would get rid of the pants, but I would first replace them. In fact, I just went to buy black khaki Gap pants, but they didn't have my size." Lisa, who also felt a need to replace her worn out tops before she disposed of them, said "I've got different tops . . . that go with shorts . . . that are all worn out. And now I have some my nice tops that I do wear, and then get rid of those that don't look so nice anymore, ones that I have not worn in a couple of years." Whether it be a pair of pants that an informant wore on a weekly basis, or tops that coordinated with other items within an informants wardrobe, both types of items were central to the informants' wardrobes. By disposing of the item prior to replacement, they risk the possibility of disposing of something that might suddenly be needed, even if they were in worn condition.

Waiting for disposal opportunity. When informants had items of exceptional quality or value that they didn't want to keep in their inventories, they often sought the perfect recipient for the items. Denise had a velvet skirt that she hadn't worn in twenty-five years. She had the skirt within her inactive inventory because she wanted to pass the aesthetic qualities of the fabric onto someone special. She noted that she could not bring herself to donate such a beautiful item to a charitable organization,

and said “I have not seen any velvet around like that anymore. It is gorgeous fabric. . . Maybe I can make a dress or skirt for my granddaughter.” For more practical reasons, Jerry had retained two dress shirts, both in good condition that he hadn’t worn in two years. When asked why he hadn’t disposed of the shirts, he replied, “Oh, I think because [son] might have been able to use them for Jazz band, he wears a dress shirt, and then, um, maybe someone who works with my wife might be able to use them.” Although Denise was motivated for aesthetic reasons and Jerry was motivated for more practical reasons, both planned to retain the clothing items until they could find the perfect recipients.

Waiting to engage in the process of disposal versus storage decision making.

Informants did have clothing items that they intended to dispose of during their “next run through.” For example, when asked why he still had a shirt he hadn’t worn in a year, Lucas stated, “I’ve been thinking about it, but I haven’t had time. I have been too lazy to get rid of it. . . . Soon, next run through.” Although he thought he would probably dispose of the item, he chose not to discard it from his inventory yet. Rather, he planned to make a disposal or storage decision regarding the shirt when he “had time” to go through all of his clothes and engage in such decision making.

Invisible Inactive Inventory

While preparing for their interviews, a few informants discovered stored clothing items they thought were no longer in their inventories. In other cases, informants noted that although they were cognizant of specific drawers, closets, or boxes which held clothing, they could not recall many of the specific items within. Hidden from the informants, these items comprise invisible inactive inventories. By

keeping inactive items invisible, one is spared the potential ambivalent feelings and time commitment which can accompany storage versus disposal decision making. Such ambivalence is demonstrated in Katie's statement, "It's traumatic. Some things, in fact, I have some clothes that my mother has given to me that I never liked that are in there because she gave them to me and I don't want to wear them." Regarding time commitment, Kathleen noted that prior to retirement, she could not commit any time to sorting through her clothing; consequently, she placed all of her inactive clothing in boxes and stored them in the garage for several years. During the interview, she said, "But it's like I really didn't know what all was in there. You know, too much to look at. . . . But I'm retired now. And I had time. So I could look at the boxes."

The transformation process that renders a clothing item invisible could be either unintentional or intentional. An item could accidentally fall behind a dresser and go undiscovered for years. Or, an item could become forgotten after it is haphazardly placed into a drawer that one rarely accesses. For example, in her dresser, Katie found a pair of leggings that she hadn't worn in two years and said, "I don't know why I still have it, because I didn't know I even had it." This could have been purely unintentional, or maybe it was intentional on a subconscious level.

The intentional act of making a clothing item invisible can be summed up by Lucas' statement, "[I] put it in the back of the closet so I wouldn't run across with it again." While preparing for the interview, Katie discovered a garment in the back of her closet that had remained invisible to her for years. She commented, "We went to the back of the closet tonight and I saw this. And I thought, 'Oh my God, I still have this?'" The back of the closet also serves as a hiding place for Amy, who said, "It's

like I put off. . . . There are things in my closet that I haven't worn in 20 years. . . . They are not anything special, they just get pushed to the back." She noted that the back of her closet is not easily accessible.

Ed recently went through a set of t-shirts that had been invisible to him for years. He stated,

It was the back corner of my lower closet rack, and on that rack I hung my t-shirts on hangers and it just got very densely packed. . . . I really wasn't too aware of them, it was sort of dark and dusty back there, so you know I didn't really think about them.

He shared his feelings as to why he put the t-shirts in such an obscure location and chose not to think about them.

I think, maybe since I bought them, I think I just couldn't face the idea where I am admitting I made a mistake. . . . Like on vacations, you would buy a memento and buy something that you wouldn't actually use and then you'd look back and see that you made a decision that you bought something that really wasn't valuable. It comes to a point of questioning your judgment.

Ed's experience is an example of ambivalent feelings associated with a clothing item he no longer wears. Essentially, he hid the individual t-shirts within a large group of shirts to avoid coming to term with the fact that he had purchased shirts that were not useful to him.

Transitional Inactive Inventory

Clothing items within transitional inactive inventories are those items that are marked for disposal. More specifically, an item becomes "transitional" when an individual a) makes a conscious decision to dispose of the item, b) physically removes the item he/she plans to dispose of from active, permanent inactive, and temporary inactive inventories, and c) places the item in a designated place within

his/her home, car, etc. At this point, the individual still retains possession of the item, but has taken a psychological and behavioral step towards transferring the title of the item to other persons, businesses, organizations, or the waste stream.

An in-depth analysis of consumer behavior as it relates to transitional inactive inventories was not performed in the present research. However, a brief description of transitional inactive inventory is presented in this section to help the reader better comprehend the scope of three categories of storage examined in the present study: permanent inactive inventory, temporary inactive inventory, and invisible inactive inventory.

During data collection and analysis in the present research, it was observed that clothing items marked for disposal were removed from the informants' inventories and placed on designated closet shelves, or in drawers, boxes, and bags. Furthermore, these boxes and bags were often stored in designated closets, garages, and in one case, an attic. Often, informants did not dispose of transitional items immediately. It appears that informants were waiting to add more items to their collection of transitional items prior to disposal, were waiting for an opportunity to take the items to the intended recipient, or were waiting for the intended recipient to pick up the items. Such conclusions were drawn based on comments from a few informants. When asked why he had not disposed of the clothing piled on what he termed his "transitional" shelf, Raymond said "Because we only have a couple of them [clothing items] now. We have to go through the whole thing to make it worth giving away. We like to give a bag of clothes, not just one thing to a person." In another case, Denise said, "I've got five bags of clothes in the garage to go to the [charitable organization]. I called them, but they don't pick up, so I have to find

someplace that will pick them up.” While waiting to be delivered to their next destination, these clothing items were a part of the informants’ transitional inactive inventories.

It is important to note that an individual may revisit the transitional clothing they placed in bags, boxes, and etcetera. In fact, Denise revisited a box of clothing items she had marked for a garage sale and removed two shirts that she decided she might wear. In fact, she claimed to have worn the shirts after she retrieved them from her the garage sale box. Therefore, transitional items may indeed return to an individual’s active inventory, as well as permanent, temporary, or invisible inventories. Because individuals have access to their transitional inactive inventories, such a storage method may serve as a way for individuals to distance themselves from transitional items before they fully commit to transferring title elsewhere.

Disposal

In the present research, disposal is defined as the physical and legal transfer of item ownership from oneself to another entity, whether it be a person, business, organization, or the waste stream. The primary focus of the present research is not to examine consumer behavior related to disposal. However, to better understand why individuals store inactive clothing, it is helpful to understand what motivates them to move clothing items out of their active and inactive inventories. Therefore, disposal-related findings from the present research are presented to provide a better understanding of those factors which prompt individuals to engage in storage versus disposal decision making, as well those factors that may increase the likelihood of disposal rather than storage.

Factors Which Prompt Disposal Versus Storage Decision Making

Data show that certain events prompted informants to engage in disposal versus storage decision making. Informant's reasons for engaging in such decision making are displayed below.

Call From Charitable Organization

In some cases, informants were prompted to engage in disposal versus storage decision making when contacted by a charitable organization which notified them that they would be picking up donation in the informant's neighborhood. This is demonstrated in Gilbert's statement, "Or it's initiated by a call from Goodwill that says 'We are going to be on your street next week. Do you have something for us?' We'll generally run around the house and gather things together."

Garment Specific Observation

At times, disposal versus storage decision making is prompted when an individual encounters a specific garment and decides whether it should be stored or disposed of. For example, Amy said, "But I kind of come across things, it's not a big production, so I might come across it and I think oh, I need to do it right now and just take care of it."

Season Change

Several informants indicated that a change in seasons prompted them to engage in disposal versus storage decision making. For example, Lisa stated, "Well, I'm going to be going through my closets and drawers real soon now. When spring comes around and summer, it gets me motivated to go through and throw out."

In Need of Storage Space

When informants realized that they they were in need of storage space, some were prompted to engage in disposal versus storage decision making. Simply stated, Duke said he went through his clothing due to “Lack of space, new purchases.”

Sudden Realization

At times, informants came to a point that they realized they had no use for certain clothing and decided that it was time to engage in disposal versus storage decision making. For example, Denise said,

“I knew there were things that I shouldn’t keep. I kept procrastinating, thinking that maybe after I got a kidney I could wear them again, but I have been on dialysis for three years, and there is no sense in keeping them. So I just had to face that I wasn’t going to wear them again.”

Similarly, Katie said, “I just realize I just have so much clothes, I don’t wear all this stuff, and it’s time to weed through.”

Life Change

Certain life changes prompted informants to dispose of inactive clothing. For example, Marleen explained her reasoning behind disposing of an outfit she wore in college.

It seems like it was an evolution that happened, where a lot of things no longer were me and I made some massive cleanings between what my college wardrobe and what was my grown up wardrobe and it was cast aside. . . . I was engaged to be married and so I was kind of consolidating things that were just no longer part of who I was.

Life changes such as marriage, retirement, or moving to a new home prompted informants to reevaluate their clothing and make disposal decisions.

Directions from Spouse

Another theme which emerged was the involvement of several male informants' spouses in disposal versus storage decision making. During the interviews, four male informants noted that their wives made disposal decision for them. For example, Lucas said, "Large t-shirt, . . . ,it was orange, and it was comfortable. [WIFE] did not like it. . . . [WIFE] threw it away." Along similar lines, Raymond stated, "Any time she doesn't want me to wear it. I can get rid of it now." Furthermore, during the interview, Raymond's wife expressed her involvement in his disposal decision making when she interrupted and said, "if something is not worn it does not stay in my house. During every season, we go out and buy new clothes and shirts. He has to look good for his job, being in the public eye." During Amy's interview, she also expressed her role in her husband's disposal decision making by stating, "I have a special drawer, for things to go to the Goodwill. And I put the kids put stuff in there. . . . My husband usually waits for me to put his stuff in there."

Identification of a suitable recipient

Disposing of clothing because "I don't wear it anymore" sounds like such a simple task. The present study examined three dimensions of inactive storage, permanent, temporary, and invisible, and provides an understanding as to why consumers are often apprehensive, or even unwilling, to rid themselves of clothing they no longer wear. However, informants did not express apprehension when they were able to help others by giving away their inactive clothing.

In cases where they wanted to dispose of clothing that was in good condition and perceived as holding economic value, informants desired to find the right

recipient for their item or items. For example, the higher quality clothing that Raymond had decided to dispose of was stored on a shelf while he looked for a perfect recipient. He said, "I ask my customers if they know somebody who needs clothes and we usually do that most of the time. I don't like to give them mostly to Goodwill because they sell them . . . so I prefer to know someone that knows someone to give it." Similarly, Gilbert passed a "well made" suit jacket onto a family member. He stated, "I physically grew out of it. I gave it to a nephew to be able to have a business suit to be able to go out and find employment. It was well made."

While informants Raymond and Gilbert found specific people to pass their clothing item to, other informants preferred to give their good quality clothing items to a middle-man whom they perceived as capable of finding the items the right home. For example, Gale spoke of a woman who distributed clothing to the needy and stated,

She knows where to give my stuff away. She knows I give her good things and she knows where to give it to who does not have good things. . . . And we don't give anything to [woman] that can not be used. And if there is any question of whether it can be used or not, it gets thrown. I just know I give it to Janine and she finds it a happy home.

Re-circulation

A re-circulated clothing item is one that is removed from an individual's inventory and then placed back into his/her inventory as an item that is used for a different purpose. For example, rather than dispose of her worn tennis shoes that were no longer appropriate for wearing while running errands, she chose to wear them for less formal occasions. Gale said, "Sneakers start out as my uniform shoes, when they are not good for uniform they become walking, and when they are not

good for walking they become yard and garden.” Along similar lines, Jerry typically recycled worn out jeans into project jeans. He stated,

The pants I used to wear, like these jeans I am wearing now, and then when they get holes in them or stains, I wear them for working in the yard or projects at school. . . . but I really like the pants because I don't have to worry about ruining better jeans out in the yard or sliding under a car.

Several informants indicated that casual clothing such as shorts, t-shirts, and jeans could be recycled into extremely casual clothing that could be worn while doing yard work, painting, household projects, camping, and hiking. It appears, however, that such recycling is less likely to occur for items that would not be appropriate for such activities. This is evidenced in Katie's statement, “[Jeans] get faded at the knees. They get grubby. So then you wear them camping. These [sweater] that get grubby get tossed, you can't wear them camping. The jeans I can wear ripped, for camping.”

Re-circulation might also entail using fabric or notions from clothing items to construct a new item. For example, Marleen used pieces of fabric from clothing items to construct a quilt. She stated,

I made a quilt from my prom dress from high school, and different things. The maternity dresses that I really loved. . . . The dress I wore home from the hospital when I had my son, the dress I wore home from the hospital when I had my daughter.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the research project was to explore consumer behavior regarding the storage of clothing items. The primary objective was to develop a model that describes and explains the process of clothing storage, more specifically the process of consumer clothing inventory management; therefore, a grounded theory qualitative research approach was adopted. Such an approach calls for in-depth interviewing to generate data from which a theory, or in this case, a model, can be derived. Therefore, McCracken's (1988) four-step method of inquiry was followed. The four-step method of inquiry entails a review of relevant literature, a review of the researcher's personal experience with the topic, interview guide development and data collection, and data analysis. During data analysis, analysis techniques described by Creswell (2006) and Charmaz (2004) were employed.

Model of Consumer Clothing Inventory Management

McCracken's (1988) four-step method of inquiry and Creswell's (2007) and Charmaz's (2004) data analysis techniques resulted in the development of the proposed Consumer Clothing Inventory Management Model shown in Figure 2. The model expands on the concept of storage, "the placement of a household item during periods when it is not being used for its primary function" (p. 233), in Boyd and McConocha's (1996) Consumer Household Logistics System Model (see Figure 1). In the present research, the composite of clothing items placed in storage are considered a consumer's clothing inventory.

Categories Within Clothing Inventory

Data show that consumers' clothing inventories are multi-faceted and can be categorized accordingly: active inventory, permanent inactive inventory, temporary inactive inventory, invisible inactive inventory, and transitional inactive inventory. Winakor (1969) introduced the concepts of active storage and inactive storage, which provide a broad framework for the categorization of clothing items within an individual's inventory. Clothing items perceived by an individual as those that he/she wears are categorized as active inventory, whereas clothing items perceived by individuals as those that he/she does not wear are categorized as inactive inventory. The present research expands on Winakor's (1969) definition of inactive storage. Data show that the process of storing inactive inventory is better explained when more detailed categories within inactive inventory are examined. Within permanent inactive inventory are items that an individual believes he/she will never dispose of. Within temporary inactive inventory are items that an individual believes he/she will eventually dispose of. Within invisible inactive inventory are items an individual has forgotten are in his/her possession. Finally, within transitional inactive inventory are items an individual has decided to dispose of, has physically removed from his/her active, permanent inactive, temporary inactive, and invisible inactive inventories, and has put in a designated place where the items await the final act of disposal. The present research addresses all categories within inactive inventory.

Permanent Inactive Inventory

Within permanent inactive inventory are clothing items of which an individual believes he/she will never dispose. Items within this category tended to be those to

which informants felt attached because the items symbolized various connections and/or held hedonic value. Items served as a tangible connection to an event, a person or group of people, a personal accomplishment, a stage in one's life, and a sense of one's self. Many of these items fall in the category of *sacred objects*, defined by Hirschman and LaBarbera (1990), which serve as a tangible reminders of individuals' histories and personal memories and/or serve as a link loved ones. Belk (1990) refers to such items as "objects of retrospective reflection." Furthermore, in the present study, items held hedonic value by serving as a medium to access and experience feelings experienced in the past, or by simply providing an aesthetic experience. In fact, Bye and McKinney (2007) also found that consumers hold onto clothing items because of the items' aesthetic value. By holding onto special items, informants in the present study not only retained access to connections and experiences, but also retained a tool they could use to share such connections and experiences with others. To ensure the longevity of these items, some informants took measures to preserve the items. This practice of preservation is in line with Schultz et al.'s (1989) findings that show consumers are more likely to specially care for objects to which they have strong attachments.

Temporary Inactive Inventory

Within temporary inactive inventory are items of which an individual believes he/she will eventually dispose. Clothing items within temporary inactive inventories were often stored because informants were waiting for future opportunities to personally make use of or find the right outlet to best dispose of the items. Informants often indicated that items within their temporary inactive inventories were

“in waiting” because the items held a fair amount of value, either economic or hedonic, and/or were items to which they were somewhat attached.

Value and attachment. Informants sometimes kept items that were initially expensive, as well as items they perceived as increasing in economic value over time. Both Banim and Guy (2001) and Bye and McKinney (2007) had similar findings. In addition, some items were kept because informants hoped to wear them in the future due to the positive feelings they previously experienced while wearing the items in the past. Informants also felt a sense of attachment to items because the items were special to them or because the items were a gift from someone who was special to them.

Items in waiting. Due to economic value, hedonic value, and attachment, informants often stored items in temporary inactive storage in anticipation of future opportunities to personally make use of or find the right outlet to best dispose of the items. Informants believed that they might wear the items in the future if their bodies changed and they were able to fit into the items, if the items came back into fashion, if the appropriate occasion arose, or if they were able to alter or repair the items. This is in line with Banim and Guy’s (2001) and Bye and McKinney’s (2007) findings that demonstrate consumers hold onto clothing items in hopes of wearing the items in the future. In the present study, such items were generally in excellent condition and were perceived as having a higher level of economic value. Furthermore, they typically were not basics; rather, the items were for dressier occasions and were perceived as unique.

In other cases, informants were simply holding onto items because they wanted to be certain the items were no longer needed. Informants stored items they were not particularly fond of, but thought they should keep “just in case” they needed them in the future. Furthermore, for items which were once an integral part of informants’ inventories, such as basic jeans and tops that had become worn or out of style, informants postponed disposal until they had been replaced.

Informants did have clothing in temporary inactive storage of which they wanted to dispose at the time of their initial interviews. However, informants continued to store items, especially those of exceptional quality or value, while they waited to find the perfect recipient for the items. Such a need is also evidenced in Lastovicka and Fernandez’s (2005) research where, in a garage sale format, informants sought out the perfect recipient for their merchandise. On another note, informants in the present study did not dispose of or transfer the unwanted items to transitional inactive inventory because they preferred to perform such a task on their entire inventory collectively rather than on a single item. Simply stated, they were putting off disposal or transfer to transitional inactive inventory of a single item until they went through all of their clothes.

Invisible Inactive Inventory

In some cases, clothing items were invisible to informants, even though the items were in informants’ inventories. The transformation process that renders clothing items invisible could be either unintentional or intentional. For example, if a shirt fell behind a dresser and became forgotten, the transformation was unintentional. However, if an individual placed a shirt in the back of his closet where

he rarely ventures because he found it too difficult to decide what to do with the item, and over time he forgets that he has the shirt, the shirt was intentionally made invisible. Coupland (2005) found that consumers often engage in practices to intentionally make food items within their kitchens invisible. In the case of the Ed from the present study, who hid several shirts in the back of his closet, by making an inactive item invisible, he was spared the potential ambivalent feelings and time commitment which can accompany storage versus disposal decision making.

Transitional Inactive Inventory

Clothing items within transitional inactive inventories are those items that are marked for disposal. More specifically, an item becomes “transitional” when an individual a) makes a conscious decision to dispose of the item, b) physically removes the item he/she plans to dispose of from active, permanent inactive, and temporary inactive inventories, and c) places the item in a designated place within his/her home, car, etc. At this point, the individual still retains possession of the item, but has taken a psychological and behavioral step towards transferring ownership of the item to another person or entity. Items remained in transition until informants were able to add more items to their collections of transitional items prior to disposal, were waiting for an opportunity to take items to the intended recipient, or were waiting for the intended recipient to pick up the items.

It is important to note that individuals may revisit their transitional inventories and retrieve items within. Such a storage method may serve as a way for individuals to distance themselves from transitional items before they fully commit to transferring ownership of the items elsewhere. The concept of “transition to disposition” was

introduced by Young (1989), who found that informants in her study hesitated to dispose of anything that was a reflection of their extended selves; this period of hesitation, however, served as a way for her informants to become psychologically prepared to dispose of such objects.

Categories Related to Clothing Inventory

As shown in Boyd and McConocha's (1996) Consumer Household Logistics System Model (Figure 1), several concepts are connected to storage. First, the concept of acquisition precedes the concept of storage. An item must first be acquired before it can exist in one's inventory. Second, the concept of use is the antithesis of storage, as items that are in use are not in storage, but can return to storage. Third, the concept of disposal is also the antithesis of storage, as items that are disposed of are not in and will not return to storage. Because disposal move inventory permanently out of an individual's inventory, the researcher chose to address disposal.

To better understand why individuals store inactive clothing, it is helpful to understand what motivated individuals to move clothing items out of their active and inactive inventories. A variety of factors prompted informants to engage in storage versus disposal decision making. Informants were prompted to engage in disposal versus storage decision making when contacted by a charitable organization which notified them that they would be picking up donations in the informant's neighborhood, when they encountered a specific garment and suddenly decided that it needed to be disposed of, when a season change motivated them to clean out their closets, when they were in need of storage space, when they suddenly realized that

they were no longer going to wear an item(s), or when male informant's wives decided it was time to dispose of an item(s). An additional factor appears to increase the likelihood of choosing disposal over storage. In several cases, informants sought opportunities to pass inactive items on to suitable recipients. The experienced positive feelings when they were able to help others by giving away their inactive clothing.

Item Movement Among Categories

The core component within the Consumer Clothing Inventory Management Model (see Figure 2) is the inventory triangle, which consists of active, permanent inactive, temporary inactive, and invisible inactive inventories. Items within one category have the potential to move into other categories over time. For example, an item in active inventory may move to temporary inactive inventory; or, an item in temporary inactive inventory may move to permanent inactive inventory. The case of Sherrie, who had a dress to which she was once very attached within her permanent inactive inventory, serves as another example; as her attachment faded over time, the dress moved to her temporary inactive inventory. Such movement can be explained by Meyers (1985) who found that the degree of attachment consumers have to specific items can change over time. Items within the inventory triangle can also move outward to "acquisition," "use," "transitional inactive inventory," and "disposal." In turn, newly acquired items, as well as items in "use" and "transitional inactive inventory" can move inward, back into the inventory triangle.

Model Summary

By understanding why individuals place items within the different inventory categories, we can also begin to understand a) why items move among categories within the inventory triangle, b) why items move outward from the inventory triangle as one type of item and then re-circulate back into the inventory triangle as a different type of item, c) why items move outward to, and sometimes inward from transitional inactive inventory, and c) why items move outward to disposal. Through a grounded theory qualitative approach, the present research resulted in the development of a model that describes and begins to explain the process of inventory clothing management.

Evaluation of Research Quality

Techniques were employed to enhance the quality of the research. Creswell (2007) describes eight validation strategies for qualitative research and suggests that researchers employ at least two of the strategies in any given research project. Furthermore, Creswell (2007) states that measures should be taken to ensure consistency throughout the data collection and data analysis process.

Use of Creswell's (2007) Validation Strategies

Approach

Three of the eight validation strategies recommended by Creswell (2007) were employed in the present research: a) clarification of the potential for research bias, b) member checking, and c) providing detailed biographical information about informants. Whereas the latter two are fairly straightforward and are addressed in the

Method section of the present report, a more detailed discussion regarding the former, clarification of potential for researcher bias, is warranted.

To alert readers of potential bias, Creswell (2007) states the importance of a researcher being upfront with readers regarding his/her assumptions surrounding a research topic. As suggested by McCracken (1988), to identify any biases or assumptions that might impact data collection, data analysis, and the interpretive process, I engaged in subjective personal introspection regarding my own clothing storage and disposal decision making. Through such a process, I identified five personal assumptions regarding the topic of interest. The first assumption is that the majority of clothing one has is clothing that one does not wear. The second assumption is that one is more likely to hold onto clothing items that he/she does not wear if he/she has strong attachments to the items, such as attachments to items that symbolize stages in one's life, accomplishments, special events, representative styles of an era, and objects of beauty. The third assumption is that one temporarily stores clothing items that he/she does not wear in hopes of the items fitting in the future. Furthermore, one does not store all items that do not fit; rather, one is discriminatory and chooses to store items that are desirable colors, are still in fashion, are of high quality, coordinate with other items in one's inventory, and did not make one psychologically uncomfortable while wearing it in the past. The fourth assumption is that one is less apprehensive about disposing of items that are in poor or damaged condition, or items that made one psychologically uncomfortable while wearing it in the past. The fifth assumption is that preferred disposal methods include finding a new use for the item and donating an item to a charitable organization, while the least preferred disposal method is throwing the item in the trash.

Limitations

Due to the qualitative approach employed in the present study, a level of researcher bias is inevitable. Within qualitative research, the researcher typically serves as the measurement and interpretive instrument during data collection and data analysis. Therefore, in the present research project, I made my own personal assumptions regarding the topic known to the readers. Furthermore, I enlisted the help of key informants who provided feedback regarding my interpretation of the data.

The transferability of the Consumer Clothing Inventory Management Model to all types of clothing items is not known. Informants did not discuss clothing items such as underwear, pajamas, swimwear, and accessories. Furthermore, they rarely discussed exercise wear and shoes. Therefore, the narrow scope of clothing items covered in the present research serve as a limitation.

The transferability of the Consumer Clothing Inventory Management Model to different populations is not known. Data used to develop the model were collected from a homogenous group of informants. All are members of the baby boomer cohort, and at the time the project was initiated, informants ranged from thirty-seven to fifty-four years in age. Furthermore, all but one were home owners, all but two were married, and all but one were employed. Biographical sketches of the informants are provided in the present report. This allows other researchers to better assess the contexts in which the Consumer Clothing Inventory Management Model might be applicable.

Consistent Data Collection and Analysis

Approach

Measures were taken to maintain a level of consistency throughout the data collection and analysis process by using a moderately structure questionnaire, video taping interviews, and transcribing data. Furthermore, all data were collected and coded by a single researcher, which eliminates concern regarding coding inconsistencies across researchers.

Limitation

Because data were collected via in-depth interviews, data collection across interviews was not identical, as the rapport between the researcher and informant and the use of planned prompts to generate discussion varied from one interview to the next. However, flexibility in the manner in which data were collected is an aspect of qualitative research and is an important element in obtaining rich data.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future research should focus on evaluating the transferability of the proposed Consumer Clothing Inventory Management Model. Furthermore, the model brings to light several areas surrounding clothing inventory management that are worthy of further exploration.

Transferability of Model

Transferability to Additional Product Categories

The present research resulted in the development of a Consumer Clothing Inventory Management Model. This model expands on the “storage” concept within Boyd and McConocha’s (1996) Consumer Household Logistics System Model. Whereas Boyd and McConocha’s (1996) model addresses the acquisition, use, storage, and disposal of all consumer products, the model developed in the present research applies only to consumer inventory management of clothing products. The present researcher would like to evaluate the transferability of the newly developed inventory management model to consumer products other than clothing, such as dishes, books, electronics, and tools. Verification that the model applies to other products would increase the versatility of the model.

Transferability to Additional Populations

Data used to derive the Consumer Clothing Inventory Management Model were obtained from a homogeneous population of Caucasian baby boomers. Before generalizing the model to a broader population, researchers need to evaluate the model’s transferability to diverse populations, such as consumers from different age cohorts and consumers with different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Francis et. al. (1997) conducted a cross-national study on “clothing disposition practices and attitudes” and found that “methods of disposition of used clothing in the United States differ from those of other countries” and that “motivations for clothing disposition depend on income/need” (p. 12). Therefore, cultural background and income may influence storage behavior, as well.

In addition to cultural background and income, age may indeed impact storage and disposal behavior, and is evidenced in findings from Price et al.'s (2000) research titled "Older Consumers' Disposition of Special Possessions." In fact, in the present research, two informants who participated in follow-up interviews seven years after their initial interviews noted that they had become more aware of the fact that future circumstances, such as space limitation if they were to live in a retirement home, might impact their storage and disposal decisions. Therefore, a comparison of storage and disposal behavior among informants ranging from teenagers to the elderly is warranted. For example, do teenagers exhibit different storage and disposal behaviors than young adults, and do young adults exhibit different storage and disposal behaviors than middle-aged adults?

Research Questions Generated From the Model

Theoretical: Testing the Model

Although findings from the present research suggest movement among categories within the proposed Consumer Clothing Inventory Management Model, testable hypotheses were not proposed. The development of hypotheses would require additional research. The reasons consumers hold items within the different storage categories could be better explained and validated using a mixed qualitative-quantitative approach.

A potential method might entail informants engaging in the process of making storage and disposal decisions of their current clothing inventories in the presence of the researcher. The informants could a) indicate which inactive items they plan to keep forever and explain why, b) indicate which inactive items they plan to keep

temporarily and explain why, c) indicate which inactive items they weren't aware of before they sorted through their inventories and explain why, d) indicate which inactive items they plan to place in transitional inactive inventory and explain why, and e) indicate which inactive items they plan to dispose of immediately and explain why. Statistical analysis could be performed on coded responses. Not only could this verify the different categories of storage as they are explained in the present model, but analysis could show interrelationships between variables such as economic value, aesthetic value, waiting for the item to fit, waiting for an occasion to wear, waiting for the item to come back in style, and attachment. More specifically, such an analysis could show such interrelationships impact consumers' storage and disposal decisions. For example, it might provide insight as to what clothing item properties prompt an individual to move an item into transitional inactive inventory or to dispose of the item.

Theoretical: Further Development of the Model

The proposed Clothing Inventory Management Model does not address the role of contextual and psychological variables. With regards to contextual variables, the model could be expanded to describe and explain how situational circumstances (e.g., moving to a larger or smaller home), life-stage, cultural background, and socio-economic background relate to storage and disposal behavior. With regards to behavioral variables, the model could be expanded to describe and explain how storage and disposal behaviors relate to various behavioral conditions, such as compulsive hoarding, compulsive cleaning, depression, and anxiety. By incorporating contextual and psychological variables, the model would provide a richer

understanding of consumer storage and disposal behavior. Therefore, future research should focus on the identification and investigation of such variables as they relate to the proposed Consumer Clothing Inventory Management Model.

Practical: Identifying Ways to Prompt Inventory Disposal

Within an individual's temporary inactive clothing inventory are often items to which he/she will never have an occasion to wear or items in which he/she may never fit. Although they know it is unlikely that they will wear these items in the future, consumers hold out hope because the items are still in style, in good condition and/or are perceived as having economic value. The question remains as to how consumers can be prompted to clear items out of their inventory and pass them on to others who can use them.

Data from the present study suggests that informants seek "suitable recipients", often persons they know, for inactive items they perceive as in fashion, in good condition, and as economically valuable. However, the fact that many of such items still sit in informants' closets suggests that suitable recipients are a rarity. Therefore, a researcher might investigate consumers' definitions of suitable recipients for inactive clothing items. How would a consumer feel about giving a fashionable, economically valuable item that is in good condition to a friend or family member? How would a consumer feel about giving the same item to a stranger they perceive similar to themselves or a stranger they perceive as in financial need? By understanding consumers ideas regarding "suitable recipients" for their clothing, disposal outlets and consumer education can be developed and/or enhanced to facilitate the flow from inactive inventories to those who can use the items.

One potential avenue that could link consumers with suitable recipients of their unwanted clothing items is the clothing swap event. An example of such an event is the Fashionista Swap held semi-annually in Portland, Oregon. Consumers pay a nominal fee to participate, relinquish their quality unwanted clothing upon entry to the event, and then spend the day browsing racks and tables of clothing that others have left for the taking. Field research could be conducted to better understand the phenomenon of clothes swapping and address not only the motivational factors that prompt individuals to engage in clothes swapping, but also consumers' apprehensions regarding the process. Ultimately, findings could facilitate the development and enhancement of clothes swapping formats which would move items out of consumers' inactive inventories and into the inventories of those who can use the items.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1
INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Section One

Grand tour question #1: With respect to your everyday life, in what types of things are you involved?

Planned Prompts:

- a. Tell me about your social life.
- b. Tell me about your family.
- c. Tell me about your work.
- d. Tell me about the things you like to do.

Grand tour question #2: What aspects of your life are important to you?

Planned Prompts:

- a. How do you prioritize these things that are important to you?
- b. How are your current priorities different than those from your past?
- c. How do you think the importance you place on things will change in the next few years?

Section 2

Auto-driving props: Show me three clothing items you wear.

Grand tour question: Tell me about this item.

Planned prompts:

- a. When do you wear this?
- b. How do you feel when you wear this?
- c. How do other people think of you when you wear this?
- d. How did you get this?
- e. How would you feel if this disappeared from your closet right now?

Section 3

Auto-driving props: Show me three clothing items you own but do not wear.

Grand tour question: Tell me about this item.

Planned prompts:

- a. When did you wear this?
- b. How did you feel when you wore this?
- c. How did other people think of you when you wore this?
- d. How did you get this?
- e. Why did you stop wearing this?
- f. Why do you still have this?
- g. How would you feel if this disappeared from your closet right now?

Section 4

Auto-driving props: Show me three pictures of you in clothing items you no longer have in your possession.

Grand tour question: Tell me about this item.

Planned prompts:

- a. When did you wear this?
- b. How did you feel when you wore this?
- c. How did other people think of you when you wore this?
- d. How did you get this?
- e. Why did you stop wearing this?
- f. What did you do with this?
- g. How did you feel about getting rid of this?

APPENDIX 2
PRE-INTERVIEW LETTER

[UNIVERSITY/DEPARTMENT LETTERHEAD]

[DATE]

Dear [INFORMANT'S NAME]:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research project. The purpose of the study is to investigate the meanings people attach to clothing. It is an interesting topic, and I hope that you enjoy participating.

The interview schedule is as follows:

Date of interview: [DATE]
Time of interview: [TIME]
Location of interview: Your home

During the interview, I will ask you a series of questions regarding how you feel about clothing you currently wear and clothing that you no longer wear. You will also be asked to show me pictures of yourself in clothing that you no longer have. Therefore, it would be helpful if you would gather the following items prior to the interview:

1. Three or four examples of outfits or clothing items that you wear during different occasions (i.e., work, dress-up, casual, etc.)
2. Three or four examples of clothing that you no longer wear, but still have.
3. Three or four pictures of yourself wearing clothing that you no longer have.

I expect that the interview will last up to two hours. If you have any questions, please contact me at [PHONE NUMBER] or [EMAIL ADDRESS]. I appreciate your help and look forward to the interview.

Sincerely,

Brigitte Gaal

APPENDIX 3
LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT

[UNIVERSITY/DEPARTMENT LETTERHEAD]

Information and Informed Consent

TITLE: The Meanings People Attach to Clothing

INVESTIGATORS: Leslie Davis Burns, Ph.D.
Apparel, Interiors, Housing, & Merchandising
Oregon State University

Brigitte Gaal, Doctoral Candidate
Apparel, Interiors, Housing, & Merchandising
Oregon State University

People attach very special meanings to the clothing they wear. In addition, clothing can communicate aspects of one's identity to others. Even after you no longer wear a particular clothing item, you may feel a sense of attachment to the clothing item. In this study, I will be interviewing you to discover the meanings you attach to clothing you currently wear and clothing you no longer wear.

This research will contribute to our understanding of the meanings associated with clothing and consumer behavior. You will be interviewed in your home. The duration of the interview will be approximately two hours. During the interview, I will ask you a series of questions to generate discussion about the important aspects of your life, as well as how you feel about the clothing you currently wear and clothing you no longer wear. In the future, I may request a follow-up interview if I have additional questions about your responses. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions, and therefore, your frank and candid responses will be appreciated. If you agree, the responses you provide will be videotaped by my assistant. If at any time during the study you do not wish to be videotaped, please instruct me to stop videotaping the interview. The videotapes will be used to facilitate the transcription of your responses and will only be available to the two investigators for analysis purposes. Your name will not be associated with your responses. Upon completion of the study the videotapes will be destroyed.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may either refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time.

If you have questions about the research study, you may contact the researchers involved in the study at the following address and phone numbers:

Leslie Burns
224 Milam Hall
Corvallis, OR 97331
(541) 737-0983

Brigitte Gaal
224 Milam Hall
Corvallis, OR 97331
(541) 737-3611

If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact the IRB Coordinator, OSU Research Office, (541) 737-3437.

Thank you for your help. We appreciate you cooperation.

My signature below indicates that I have read and that I understand the procedures described above and give my informed and voluntary consent to participate in the study. I understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form.

Signature of Subject

Name of Subject

Date Signed

Subject's Present Address

Subject's Phone Number

APPENDIX 4
AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF INFORMANTS

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF INFORMANTS

Dorothy (pseudonym)

Dorothy, a 39 year old female, is a stay-at-home mom. Her husband works for a title company as an escrow officer. She and her husband own their own home and live in a suburb of Sacramento, California. They have two children, a six year old daughter and a three year old son. Her focus in life is currently on raising her children, taking them to the park, swim lessons, piano lessons, play dates, and etcetera. She has a couple of close friends from her past. However, she spends more time with newly formed acquaintances who also have children of a similar age. When her husband is not at work, they spent time together as a family at home, doing household chores and projects. They attend church regularly on Sundays. Before children, Dorothy graduated from college, attended on year of law school and then worked as a paralegal. She enjoyed her previous career and noted that the transition from working to staying at home was difficult.

Terri (pseudonym)

Terri, a 45 year old female, is a secretary and nurse at an elementary school. Her husband is a self-employed artist. She and her husband own their own home and live in a Eugene, Oregon. They have two children, a fourteen year old daughter and a nine year old son. When she is not at work, her children are her focus. Activities together include piano practice, watching movies (PG and G-rated only), and household chores. On Sundays, the family attends church. She also enjoys gardening when time allows. She looks forward to a time when her children are more independent and she has more time to herself.

Donna (pseudonym)

Donna, a 48 year old female, is a secretary at an elementary school. Her husband owns his own auto body repair shop. She and her husband own their own home, which is on five acres of land, and live in a Eugene, Oregon. When not at work, much time is devoted to the maintenance, such as clearing vegetation, of their property. She has an active social life with friends from church and friends from work. Also, she and her husband enjoy shopping together, going to the movies, taking drives in the country, and taking walks. She has three children, and notes that they have always had a close-knit family. Her twenty-three year old daughter, a buyer for a department store, is married and pregnant and lives in Eugene. She has another daughter who lives away from home and attends a local university. Her son is in high school and participates in several extra curricular activities. Donna is very involved in her church, as well as community fundraising activities.

Gale (pseudonym)

Gale, a 44 year old female, is a medical lab technician. She has been a lab technician for over twenty years and is very satisfied with her career. Her husband is a sports journalist for a local newspaper. She and her husband own their own home and live in a Eugene, Oregon. They have two daughters, ages nine and fifteen. When not at work, much of her time is spent at home “puttering.” She loves to garden, walk her dog, and read. She spends a lot of time with her children, playing games, visiting, and helping with homework. Furthermore, she often does volunteer work for her children’s schools. She and her children travel during the summer, usually some type of road trip, while her husband stays home and works.

Kathleen (pseudonym)

Kathleen, a 54 year old female, is an elementary school teacher. Her husband, whom she married about ten years ago, is a train engineer. She and her husband own their own home and live in a suburb of Sacramento, California. They do not have children and spend most of their free time together, doing things such as gardening and hiking. Occasionally, they meet with other couples and do outdoor activities and go out to eat. They also own a rail car, and take weekend trips where they travel on the rail lines with a group of people who also have rail cars. They also travel to the San Francisco area to visit with her husband's extended family. She and her husband both plan to retire soon. Kathleen participated in a follow-up interview in 2007. At that time, she was 61. She and her husband are now retired and spend more time traveling.

Sherrie (pseudonym)

Sherrie, a 39 year old female, teaches English as a second language at a local university. Prior to getting married, she lived in Japan and worked as an English teacher. Furthermore, she traveled extensively to places such as Thailand and Guatemala. Now married, her husband is a mathematics instructor at the local community college. They own their own home and live in Eugene, Oregon. They are concerned about environmental issues and enjoy being outdoors, running, hiking, and gardening. They also enjoy attending to local plays, music, and cultural events. At this time, they are contemplating having children. Sherrie participated in a follow-up interview in 2007, as well. At that time, she was 46. She now has a four year old son and does not expect to have any more children.

Carey (pseudonym)

Carey, a 42 year old female, works part-time as a nurse and recently began an in-home business which provides legal counsel to those in the nursing field. Her husband, who works from home as a logistics manager, is employed by a high-tech company. Their jobs keep them extremely busy. She and her husband own their own home and live in a suburb of Sacramento, California. They have three children, a daughter who is seven, a son who is five, and a daughter who is three. During the day, the children are either in school or day care. Time spent with her children involves swimming, outdoor sports, and going to the park. Exercise is an important part of her life, specifically running and weight lifting at the gym. She and her husband make a point of spending time alone on a regular basis, such as going on a date to dinner and/or the movies.

Amy (pseudonym)

Amy, a 48 year old female, recently received her Master's degree in linguistics. She works on an as-needed basis as an instructor at a local university and also works as a freelance statistical analyst. Her husband works as an electronic technician for the city. She and her husband own their own home and live in a Eugene, Oregon. They have three children, a daughter and son who live at home and attend the local university, and a son who recently moved to Portland where he has a job. Much of her free time is spent visiting with her children's friends who hang around the house and helping her daughter with their school work. Amy participated in a follow-up interview in 2007, as well. At that time, she was 55. Her two children

who were in school at the time of the initial interview had graduate. In fact, her daughter was married and had a one-year old child.

Marleen (pseudonym)

Marleen, a 41 year old female, works as a sales representative for a publisher. Before she worked for the publisher, she was a school teacher and also spent five years at home with her children. Her husband works as a computer engineer for a high tech company. She and her husband own their own home and live in a suburb of Sacramento, California. They have two children, a seven year old daughter and a nine year old son. She volunteers regularly at her children's schools. A significant part of their lives is church, and she is a Sunday school teacher and attends bible school weekly. She was recently diagnosed with cancer, and has undergone thirty treatments; the experience has contributed to her "embracing of life" and she is now more mindful of taking care of her body.

Ruth (pseudonym)

Ruth, a 37 year old female, owns and operates her own house cleaning business. She perceives her job as a mean to an end. It provides her with money, as well as a flexible schedule. Her husband works off and on in construction. She and her husband rent a home in the foothills outside of Sacramento, California. They do not do many activities together. He prefers to stay home and watch television or work in the garage, and she prefers to go to barbeques and concerts with her friends. She has two children. Her son, who is in his early adolescence, lives with his grandparents; she sees him occasionally on weekends or for extended periods over his school breaks. She has a tumultuous relationship with her daughter and rarely

sees her. Her daughter has a one year old son and is currently living with her boyfriend.

Nancy (pseudonym)

Nancy, a 43 year old female, owns and operates her own twenty-four hour, in-home day care center. All activities in which she is involved involve her two children, as well as the children who are enrolled in her day care. She is very happy with the environment she has created in her home and loves her career. Her home was designed and built specifically for the purpose of the daycare. She has two sons, ages two and six. She is raising them without any assistance or involvement from their fathers. At one time she was married, but divorced because she wanted to have children, whereas her ex-spouse did not. Her brother lives in town; she and her sons see him weekly for dinner.

Katie (pseudonym)

Katie, a 42 year old female, works part time as a dental hygienist and full-time as the music director for the church she attends. She and her husband own their own home and live in a suburb of Sacramento, California. They have three sons, one in junior high school, one in high school, and one in college. She claims that faith is her first priority in life, as well as her children. The entire family is very involved in their church, specifically with regards to music. All boys play instruments in the church band. Their two youngest sons also play in the school band. She and her husband socialize mostly with people from their church; social activities include dinners, games, and/or visiting at people's homes.

Lisa (pseudonym)

Lisa, a 44 year old female, works part-time as an instructional aid at an elementary school. Her husband is a regional manager for a floor tile company. She and her husband own their own home and live in a suburb of Sacramento, California. She and her husband have an active social life which involves attending dinner parties, hosting dinner parties, golfing at the local club, and attending basket ball games. Furthermore, her extended family lives in close proximity and she sees many of them daily. She and her husband have two sons that no longer live at home, ages twenty-three and twenty-one. Their oldest son works for a bank and attends a local university. Their youngest attends a local community college and is a waiter. She feels like she has a very close relationship with her husband and her sons, and noted that she is a “nurturer. . . big time.” Her dog is also an important part of her life, and she takes him on errands, walks, and picnics whenever possible.

Denise (pseudonym)

Denise, a 54 year old female, works full-time as a teacher’s aid. She owns her own home and lives in a suburb of Sacramento, California. She is currently single, has been divorced for about twenty years, and has two grown children. Her son lives in Southern California and works as a regional manager for an insurance company. Her daughter is engaged to be married, lives in Arizona, and works as a researcher in a hospital. She loves crafting and actually has a “craft room” in her house. She has a small group of friends which she sees weekly for dinner and other activities. A major challenge in her life is health-related. She is in the beginning stages of kidney failure and is awaiting a kidney transplant.

In 2007, Denise served as a key informant in the present study. At that time she was 61. She recently retired for health reasons, and within the last year, Denise had a kidney transplant which was unsuccessful. She is now on dialysis and is awaiting another kidney transplant. In her spare time, she sews and does craft projects. Her daughter is now married and has a two year old daughter. Her daughter calls her a few times a week and often sends her pictures and videos of her granddaughter, which she relishes. A lot of her time is spent thinking about her granddaughter; her granddaughter is the highlight of her life.

Gilbert (pseudonym)

Gilbert, a 46 year old male, works for a telecommunication company and provides computer support. Recently, he went back to school to obtain a Bachelor's degree in psychology. After he receives his degree, he hopes to leave his current job and pursue a career in marriage and family counseling. His wife is employed, as well. Both he and his wife hope to retire in ten years, and therefore, they are trying to spend less and save more money in order to achieve such a goal. He and his wife have no children. They do have two dogs that are "basically a member of the family." They own their own home, which is on a couple of acres of land, and live in a suburb of Sacramento, California. On their property, they have two horses which he helps care for. However, he does not ride the horses; rather, his wife rides the horses with her friends. He regularly goes golfing with his friends after work and after church. He and his wife spend time together a couple of nights during the week and are involved in worship and social related activities affiliated with their church.

Andrew (pseudonym)

Andrew, a 43 year old male, works as a systems analyst for a wholesale distributor of headwear. His wife, Katie, is a part-time dental hygienist and a full-time music director for the church they attend. He and his wife own their own home and live in a suburb of Sacramento, California. They have three sons, one in junior high school, one in high school, and one in college. His church is a significant part of his life, as he has attended the same church for fifteen years and his wife is employed by the church. He sings in the choir and also plays an instrument in the church band. Furthermore, he and his wife regularly socialize with a large group of couples from the church. When not at church, or at church-related functions, much time is spent at band-related school functions in which his children are participating.

Duke (pseudonym)

Duke, a 50 year old male, is an auto mechanic. His wife works for a mortgage company. He and his wife own their own home and live in a suburb of Sacramento, California. He has four children from a previous marriage. All have graduated from high school. His youngest daughter has a baby, and his oldest son has two children, as well. He sees some of his children on a steady basis, maybe five times a month. When his children visit, they barbeque and go swimming in his pool. He and his wife have an active social life. They go out to dinner or breakfast, have barbeques, and visit with friends about twice a week. They like to go camping with friends and family and also like to take their ski boat out on the lake; boating entails drinking, listening to music, and swimming. When he is not at work or out playing, he usually works around the yard or relaxes and drinks beer.

Jerry (pseudonym)

Jerry, a 39 year old male, is an investigator for the District Attorney's office. His wife works full-time for her brother, who owns a recording studio equipment manufacturing company. He and his wife own their own home and live in a suburb of Sacramento, California. They have two children, a fourteen year old daughter and a fifteen year old son. Both are involved in their school band. Therefore, a big part of his social life is the "band boosters," a club which consists of parents who have children in the school band. They have monthly meetings and fund raisers, help with setup, and go to band-related functions. In his spare time, he likes to exercise in a gym he has set up in his garage. Also, he and his son go mountain biking every weekend. On the weekends, he enjoys washing cars, maintaining the yard, doing household repair projects, grocery shopping, and other errands.

Ken (pseudonym)

Ken, a 43 year old male, owns his own heating and refrigeration servicing business. He also engages in day-trading of stocks, and as a result, recently lost a significant amount of money. His wife helps him with business-related bookkeeping, but is primarily a stay-at-home mom. He and his wife own their own home and live in a suburb of Sacramento, California. They have one son, who is twelve years old. Together, he and his son play basketball, jog, wrestle, and watch television. An important part of his life is maintaining a strong and toned body to maintain his youth. He claims to be an extrovert, but notes that his wife is an introvert; therefore, they do not engage in social activities as much as he would like.

Raymond (pseudonym)

Raymond, a 42 year old male, is a hair dresser. His wife is a stay-at home mom. He and his wife own their own home and live in a suburb of Sacramento, California. They have two sons, ages seven and eight, and a daughter who is two. Most of his spare time is spent with his family. After work, he visits and has dinner with his children, as well as helps them with their homework and school projects. During baseball season, he and his sons are very involved in little league, as well. On Sundays, he and his family spend the entire day together; they have a special breakfast and do an activity such as go on a picnic, visit extended family, go to the mall, or play at the batting cages. One hobby he has is his family web page, to which he downloads and edits pictures.

Lucas (pseudonym)

Lucas, a 54 year old male, is a general branch manager for a refrigeration manufacturing installation service company. The distant location of his job requires that he lives in an apartment during the week and returns home on the weekends. His wife is an elementary school teacher. He and his wife own their own home and live in a suburb of Sacramento, California. They have two grown children. He sees his daughter and her two children maybe three times a year, as she lives in Mississippi. He sees his son, who lives in Sacramento, weekly. He claims to have a minimal social life. During the week, when he is at his apartment, he often watches television or plays video games after work. During the weekend, when he is home, he attends church on Sundays after which he and his wife usually visit with another couple at a coffee shop. Occasionally, they attend church functions, such as bible

study or dinners. Currently, he and his wife spend a lot of time looking in on and orchestrating the care of his elderly mother and mother-in-law. He and his wife also do a lot of shopping together, whether it be for clothing or home improvement and yard supplies.

Ed (pseudonym)

Ed, a 54 year old male, is a science teacher. He has been a science teacher for most of his adult life, with exception to the two years he served as a park ranger for the National Parks Service. His wife is a librarian at a local university. He and his wife own their own home and live in a suburb of San Francisco, California. They enjoy hiking, camping, boating, traveling to tropical locations, and traveling to visit their close friends and family. They have two children, both engaged to be married. Their daughter lives in a neighboring city and works as a chemist for a pharmaceutical company. Their son lives in Southern California and is a helicopter pilot in the military.

At the time Ed served as a key informant in the present study, he was 61. Both he and his wife are retired from their professions. After retirement, they have focused on a major remodel of their home and a major yard make-over. Both of their children have married. Their daughter and son-in-law live in a neighboring city. Their son, daughter-in-law, and two grandchildren now live on the East Coast, as the military required him to leave Southern California. Ed and his wife visit their son and his family a few times a year for extended periods of time.

APPENDIX 5

CATEGORIZED DATA FROM IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

CATEGORIZED DATA FROM IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

Permanent Inactive Inventory

*Attachment to Stored Items**Connection to Event*

Dorothy: My wedding dress, it represents my marriage. I keep it in my closet, on a hanger, in a bag. That would be the one that I would never get rid of.

Sherrie: Because it has sentimental value and I'll just always want to see that dress, because it has access to that memory. It helps remind me of that day and I want to remember, what I wore and how I looked and appreciate the beauty of it.

Sherrie: This is a shirt that I got in Northern Thailand. I was out on an elephant trek and there were these little boys playing hake-sack. And I had on some t-shirt and I don't even know what it said, it was an American shirt with American words letters on it. So they were playing and I said "I love your shirt, would you want to exchange it?" and he just took it off and I took mine off and we just exchanged. So it is a Thai shirt made by Thais for a Thai person. So that's why I hold onto this even though, I might wear this to some Thailand night or something, I might wear it, but in general I don't wear it. . . . Like a student night, some kind of intercultural night. There was a time when I would wear it with a white turtleneck and I would wear it to parties when I was a graduate student. I felt like I had something on that was one of a kind. I felt sort of ethnic-y and I was wearing something from a different culture. . . . I would feel mildly disappointed. Because it has a link with that day in Thailand.

Marleen: It's a lot of memories, things I have worn at certain times, so I think about the good times in my life and what I had worn. There was occasional types of things, and I had such a fondness for the occasion that the clothing had become part of the occasion. In fact one thing I brought, that I don't wear anymore, but I wore at a time of my life when was very important to me. This is what I wore to the rehearsal dinner the night before we got married. And so, I couldn't possible get rid of it. But, honestly, it is tight across the bust, the pleats do not look that pretty, but yet it is silk, and I just can't fathom getting rid of it. It's the occasion other than the dress.

Lisa: I am not wearing it anymore. I used to wear it a lot. I wore this to so many different functions. A wedding, a funeral, different business dinners, and different occasions, thanksgiving. It really was great. It's all flowery, and I have not gotten rid of it. I don't know why, I like it, but I don't know that I'll ever wear it again. I think it is smaller. It is a medium and I went to large. It might be a little tight. But I haven't gotten rid of it. . . . I don't know. I wore it for a good period of a few years. I wore it a lot for a lot of occasions. I even had several different colors of tops that I wore under

it. . . . It was, like it was great for the season, because it has all the flowers, fall things, like I told you Thanksgiving. . . . Not good. I don't know why. Maybe because of the things I attended. Just different things about it. I wore it to my Aunt's daughter's wedding. It was my aunt's daughter, and yet we lost my aunt, and that's probably why. This is just something I have to keep. Ya, I don't see myself ever getting rid of this.

Denise: My wedding dress. My kids can sell it on eBay or something when I die. I kept it for my daughter, but she is chestier, and she had her own ideas. Maybe it will be a play dress for my granddaughter. Even though I'm divorced, I don't know. When I got the dress, I couldn't afford that much, and the dress was on sale and I got it for \$100 and the shop is still there by Mercy Hospital. It's the same shop I got my hoop skirt at and my bridesmaid dress for my sisters wedding. I also got my shoes there for my daughter's wedding. . . . I don't know. It's part of my life that, I don't know, the wedding dress is there for somebody that wants to use it. It's not like my daughter's dress when she got married, it's just lace, the kind from the 60s, lace over satin. . . . It's on the floor in a box with a bunch of stuff piled on it. In the computer-craft room closet. It's in the same box my friend's dad put it in. He wrapped it in black paper and sealed it in the box. . . . It's only been out once. That would be when my niece got married. I think, maybe 23 or 24 years ago.

Katie: I have the blouse that was from my going away outfit for my wedding. I would never wear it, because I am not sure I looked good in it at the time, I don't know why I got it. It was nice, but I just don't think the color look so good on me. . . . No. Cause it is just a neat thing. It reminds me of that special day.

Nancy: And my other favorite thing was my senior ball, 1976, again. And my mom made this. And I held onto this because I always thought I might have a girl. . . . Yes. I wore it to a function like in the 80s, we went on a boat cruise in 1987. And I wore it when you sat at the captain's table kind of thing. I got lots of compliments on it. It's kind of pretty. It's like every ten, twenty years, things come back in style it seems. And these shoes, the girls say they would wear them if they weren't so small. . . . Beautiful, I did. I felt so beautiful. Like a princess, I had my hair all done up, just the whole part. . . . Well, it's a one time thing. Well, a two time thing now. But, I didn't wear it again for years because it was, you know, really sentimental. I don't know, maybe you keep it that sacred outfit for that sacred evening. It was a real special even for me, because of, you know, being crowned. I thought about wearing it to the function, the 20 year reunion, and some of those girls did and it was cool, you know. . . I'd be sad, real sad.

Denise: The hoop skirt is like part of my child hood. I was the queen for the holey ghost festival for the catholic religion. And it was a very special day for me and I was sort of like the main attraction type thing. I had a white dress and a big white cape. . . . I was 13. That day, I was this big queen and my sister was home sick. I could still see it as clear as day. After the parade, we had a parade, I had a dress and I wore a tiara. I never got rid of the hoop because I figured it would always come in handy, and it did, I wore it to my wedding. And then when I had [daughter], I thought that

maybe she would like to wear a hoop skirt. . . . No. I have never thought about getting rid of it. That was from the time I was the big queen and I wore it under my white gown. When I got married, I wore it under my gown. When I open up the closet, it reminds me of when I wore it. I don't even know how to clean it. It still has drag marks from the last time I wore it [wedding]. . . . I can see myself walking down the isle and I remember a kid who was standing outside on the steps who yelled "sucker!"

Kathleen: It's a symbol. A symbol of love and a special day. And the memories of buying it. All wrapped up in a memory of getting married.

Jerry: This shirt, I'm not sure where I purchased it, but I have outgrown it, but the reason why I kept it is because I was wearing it when [son] was born. So, I have gone through the closet and have come across this when I have thrown things out. But, this is one I won't get rid of.

Sherrie: I don't know if this classifies as something I don't wear anymore, because I might wear this one to a job interview. It is something that I often think, "why don't I wear that anymore." And I think it is because my style has changed, it's become a little more sleek and simple, I dress up a little less than I used to. This was tailor made for me in Thailand. This has a matching skirt. I had two actually, I got rid of one, it flipped open and I never felt comfortable in that skirt. But I just remember getting measured, picking out, and ya, and looking through books, like in the Bangkok tailor district I just remember seeing a picture of it and then seeing this fabric and thinking it would go perfectly. . . . I wore this to formal work situations, job interviews, conferences, I would say I wore it 50 to 75 times. Really, it has sort of tapered off over the years. . . . I felt good. I felt very dressed up and formal and professional and that I had something unique. It's one of the few tailor made suits that I have ever owned. . . . I would be loathed to get rid of it because it's the only one in the world I am quite sure, because they had bolts and bolts of fabrics and books and books of patterns, so for anyone to pick that fabric and that pattern is against statistical odds. So, I am not going to get rid of it.

Duke: This is a sprint car shirt, Steve Canton which is our favorite sprint car driver. And we bought it at a sprint car race quite a while back. I wore it a few time and I'm saving it as a souvenir. . . . Four years ago. . . . I like to save it. We played horse shoes with him and different things in Chico, and that's when we got the shirt. If we ever go back and watch him race again, then I'll wear this shirt and hopefully I'll have the chance to see him again and say hi. . . . One of the group, more or less, I would say. I could associate it with being there years ago and being at the present, you know, it's just tying it together over a period of time. Probably one out of 100 guys would recognize the shirt, and probably the one guy that would recognize it, we'd have something in common and we could relate. . . . No, I won't. Never. Even if I wanted to wear it again, it's a souvenir from the race and that time.

Connection to Specific Person or People

Gale: Because it was never meant to be mine and it ended up mine. And it was made by a special lady, a relative of a special guy, who made it for her husband who didn't want it so somehow it arrived at my house when I was in college. And the man is a huge man. This huge guy. So I remember getting it wet in my dorm and sticking it in the dryer and it took like all day to dry because it is so heavy and so thick and such a special wool and it finally shrunk up enough that I decided that it was small enough and I hung it to finish drying and it's never been washed since. So we're talking college which was 26 years ago. And I remember being in the dorms washing this so I had to be like 20 doing this. It's been in seclusion for years. I didn't wear it. It's got a history and I am very fond of the history. It's just got a history and it is a history that I am not getting rid of it. Hell will freeze over before. It's the family that it came from that means something to me, my friend's mother, but the was supposed to have it guy doesn't mean much to me. But, the history does and the family that it cam from.

Ed: It's funny how people give me clothes as gifts, and they think I'm way bigger than I am. I'm like a 31-32, but they always give me a 36-46 or an extra large, so shirts kind of act like a tent around my waist, and just hang. I have a shirt that my son gave me, and I know it's important to him because it is something he identifies with [military]. I'm proud to have it, but I can't wear it, I'd get lost in it and I might feel strange wearing something like this anyways.

Gilbert: Clothing that is special: I would say the clothing that I got from my dad. Because my parents are back in Indiana, and we don't get to spend a lot of time together. So it's kind of like a connection that's to them that's here. . . . I would be disappointed because that would be something that couldn't be replaced.

Marleen: This is one of those ones that I don't wear but I can't part with it because I just love it. It's a little girlish, but I can't get rid of it. This was something we got in Jamaica, and we went with my father that passed away when I was 19, but I got it with him. . . . It reminds me of my dad. And I just have a sense of peace in having him as part of this dress. Plus, when I wore it they'd say, "That's such a pretty dress on you, it looks like a wedding dress." . . . Probably not...because it was something that my dad gave to me and I have such a recollection of getting it and wearing it, we were in Montego Bay. And I remember all of that kind of sense in having the pleasure of having this gift from my dad. I feel so blessed because it is cotton and it has never gotten any moth holes or stains on it.

Lisa: It was a long time ago, about a year ago. It was last spring, when I really get into it. But, there's things that I know I should probably get rid of that I haven't, so I'm wanting to be more thorough and better. Like, a lot, my mother in law has given me things and I just can't seem to get rid of them. She has also made me things, she's a seamstress, and now she's not sewing that often, but she was really quite good in her time when she loved to do that and could, she still can, but I don't know if she's just

gotten away from it for whatever reason. And I have a lot of that. I won't part with those.

Carey: It's not particularly fancy. It made out of muslin and Clooney lace. But I wouldn't be able to get rid of it, maybe if my husband were dead and I was very very old, and if my daughter wouldn't take it and I had no room for it, like if I had to go to assisted living and didn't have any room. It's an emotional thing, especially, like I'm still married to him and I will be for the rest of my life. It would be like discounting our whole relationship. I know it wouldn't bother him, but it would bother me. It's just too weird to get rid of it. Maybe if I were really old and he were dead, because our time together would be over.

Kathleen: My christening gown, it's something my mother saved. When she gave it to me, I knew it was very special to her...it's more like it's one of those things I keep because it was special to my mother.

Marleen: Or things that people have given me. This, my mother gave me. It is in honor of her, I think of her when I wear it I think of her. So giving it away, not saying that I could never give it away, I could see myself giving it to someone I care about. But, because my mom gave it to me, it has, it just has a kind of charm.

Connection to Accomplishment

Gilbert: This has a couple of significant elements to it. One, is my mother sewed on the patch and the numbers, so there is a connection there. Um, when I was in high school, I was a very poor student. When I went back to Sac state, I had to call my high school and get my high school grades and I was in the 20th percentile, so I was a real bad student. My senior year was the year I was able to get involved in an organized sport, that was ice hockey. So the summer before my senior year, I ice skated 7 times a week probably between 2 and 6 hours a day. So in that summer I learned to skate well enough to be able to try out in that team and was able to play well enough to become a regular participant. So this really kind of symbolizes my awareness that if I commit myself to a goal and a task, that even if it's difficult you can accomplish it. I would hurt somebody if they took this. I would probably find rage in my heart. Both the Air force jacket and this are significant, but this is a real, this is probably an event in my personal life where there was a significant cross road and a constructive bridge had been built. I think when I started my senior year, I had a GPA of 1.6, and then I graduated with a 2.1. So I went from being a D/F student to being an A/B student.

Denise: I saved the shirt that my daughter gave me from the Cape. She got it for me as a gift on her honeymoon. It makes me feel important, that I made a difference in her life. Whenever I went somewhere when they were kids, I always brought them back something, and now she's doing that and I feel I am a part of the reason.

Kathleen: I still fit in it and try on, it's a vanity thing.

Ed: It's the only time I've ever competitively run it was probably the most rigorous run I'd ever done, so I got this shirt. But I don't plan to wear it because the message attached to it, it's sort of conceited.

Connection to Stage in Life

Gilbert: This is probably a 29 inch waist. When I went in the Air force I had a 28 inch waist. This particular process in the military is what they would call "breaking starch" because the sleeves are all stuck together so whenever you woke up in the morning you had to force yourself through the clothing. So basically every morning when you go to school, you had to be getting into a uniform like this. So it had a little sentimental value to it and when I got out here I just chose never to wear this uniform, and it's always been kind of like, when you are reminiscing and you are looking through what you have been through in life. And this is one of those symbols that reminds me of the consequence of when you make a decision. This was the first time when I was unable to get out of something that I didn't want to do after I did it. So if I went to a job and I didn't like it, I get another job and there was always that liberty to be irresponsibly. This was the first time that that was denied. And it didn't matter what I wanted to do, it didn't matter what I liked or disliked, cause these guys were calling the show. I probably had seven of these, this type of uniform, the fatigue. In my career field, this was uniform of the day. If there was a special program going on, I might have to wear the dress blues, that that was exceptionally rare. . . . Well, if I got rid of this, I would lose the connection to that reminiscing opportunity. This is irreplaceable. This would be a kin to my father's suits. This is a part of me, my history, this reminds me of cause and effect, consequence for behavior, loss of autonomy and freedoms. There is a lot of symbolism built up in this one piece of clothing that points to that whole experience. But it also points to other points of being liberated because it got me out and about, it got me exposed to other people, it got me exposed to a lot of places. So there were positive sides to it.

Gilbert: I know I could never get into that. I know that when I got it, it was just like humungously big on me. I actually inherited this from a friend in the Air force. And when he was taking off for Germany and when he left, he gave me his jacket. In the dorms you had roommates, so it was the roommate that I had when I first came on board. And from that vantage point, he introduced me to Sacramento, McClellan air force base, to my first social circle. One thing that I have noticed is that I tend to be real good friends with my active circle, and if for some that circle is interrupted, then other people come in and take that role. If they come back into town, they are welcome to visit and stay, but I'm not a real writer or call them on the phone and keep in touch with everybody, and so from that vantage point I don't have a lot of roots across the continent that I have to call every weekend.

Ken: This is, [wife] and I used to go out and go to a lot of parties with this. It was just different looking, because I like looking different. . . . Probably about two years ago. . . . [wife] gave it to me about ten years ago. . . . Probably once, twice a month. . . . Very confident, very sexual, it was a good time in my life. Not that this time in my life isn't

good, but it was really wild at times. . . . Well, you know when you're young. You'd just dress really sexually and [wife] would dress really sexually and I would to and we had these kind of clothes. . . . Uh, well, just waiting to pull it out again. It's hard for [wife] to go out. . . . I wouldn't, but I don't think I'll wear it again. . . . I'd be sad because of all the memories I have had with it, a lot of memories I had with it.

Kathleen: That more because of the memory of my childhood, all of my merit badges I earned are on it. I also have a favorite doll from my childhood and the doll's wardrobe, they have lots of sentiment, they are all hand sewed by my mother, and it gives me a visual representation of memories from my childhood. Back then you had to hand sew doll clothes. And the brownie outfit I saved, my mother made a matching brownie outfit for the doll. So, I think I keep my brownie outfit because it matches the doll.

Connection with Oneself

Gale: I know I'll save my lab jacket, that is really dumb. I will never wear this one again, but you know I have had this lab jacket probably most of my career, probably 20 years. It has a little "A" on it.

Marleen: Things that I haven't made by hand, I have less attachment to. And I know that, and when I go through my closet, if there are things that I have enjoyed for a period of time and I am no longer really in love with it, I don't have as much challenge if they are store bought. And if they are things that I made, there is no way, its part of me. . . . This is a dress I made. This is one that I can't part with because I made it. I made this when I was in 8th grade. I think I wore it for Thanksgiving maybe three or four years ago. But, it's one of those one where it is fraying because it has been bent over a hanger, but I won't part with it. It's part of me.

Sherrie: It's one of the few tailor made suits that I have ever owned. I would be loathed to get rid of it because it's the only one in the world I am quite sure, because they had bolts and bolts of fabrics and books and books of patterns, so for anyone to pick that fabric and that pattern is against statistical odds. So, I am not going to get rid of it.

Denise: Up in the closet, I do have all of the different shirts from the schools I worked at. There is one from the junior high, I like what's on the front, it says "in the dog house." I have the one from my daughter's high school, so that's special to me. They are just like a memento of all the different school I worked at, and since I'm retired now it reminds me of what I have done.

Connection with past feelings

Sherrie: This is a dress that I wore for my brother's wedding. It is gorgeous. It reminds me of a Monet painting. It is pretty unique, I got it in Boston, and I was there

for a trip and I tried it on and I liked it. It is pretty fragile, it is second hand and fragile. That is one of the reasons I don't wear it anymore, it's just separating between here and the lining, and at the wedding I stepped on the bottom and the bottom is getting frayed and it is ripped. But I keep it because I wore it to my brother's wedding and it's beautiful and unique. . . . I felt glamorous, sort of high society girl when I wore it. . . . I guess I'd feel disappointed, but on the other hand I was not sure if I had it here or not. I'd feel disappointed because I feel it is very pretty to look at. I think it is hand painted. . . . If we do have children, like with this it would be something I would want to keep for my daughter. So, I'd want to keep that and show my daughter.

Kathleen: You know, not sentiment about the prom. It was my first full length gown, and I thought I was "up-town." I felt like a princess.

Ruth: Oh god, I felt so good when I wore them. Oh I thought I just looked the greatest. I didn't think there was anyone that looked better than me.

Lisa: My wedding dress, that's the most special, and it still fits. . . . [Husband] was out golfing and I was all cleaned up and had a shower, and I did, I put it on. And that same feeling, I can't explain, it was just like on my wedding day.

Ed: When my mom died, I wore this Hawaiian shirt to her funeral. I went out looking for a shirt like this because I knew it was something she'd think was cool. . . . the color, the pattern. I'd never wear it again, it makes me feel down, sad, but that's how I felt then. So, I know it's strange, but it just is.

Aesthetic Experience

Carey: . . . it's a classic 40s piece, a beautiful piece, . . . just excellent quality and workmanship, old fashioned, it's just something that you can't get anymore, fine work, fur. It's just so classic and beautiful that I wouldn't want to get rid of it.

Sherrie: . . . it is gorgeous. It reminds me of a Monet painting. It is pretty unique. But I keep it because. . . it's beautiful and unique. . . . It is very pretty to look at.

Dorothy: I have very few of my work clothes left. It's now just a few that I really really liked. So this is one I plan to save. . . . This was one of my favorites. . . . But we were at the mall in Reno. I know I really really like something if I go "ha" when I first see it. When I saw it I just rally right off the bat, really liked it. It is a really well-made, nice looking suit. . . . I love the fabric.

Sherrie: This is, I bought this in Mexico, it was made in Guatemala. And so I wear this with a white blouse underneath it. I was just drawn to it the moment I saw it. It was hanging in a market and I was drawn to it, it's very beautiful, handmade. . . . It's irreplaceable. I can get a white blouse or these kinds of things, they aren't that special or unique. But this is pretty unique

Sharing History, Connections, and Experiences

Carey: I tend to hold onto some things and I put them away in a hope chest or in a box if there is sentimental. I have my wedding dress. I have my first communion dress and I'm keeping it for my own kids.

Denise: My wedding dress. My kids can sell it on eBay or something when I die. I kept it for my daughter, but she is chestier, and she had her own ideas. Maybe it will be a play dress for my granddaughter. Even though I'm divorced, I don't know. When I got the dress, I couldn't afford that much, and the dress was on sale and I got it for \$100 and the shop is still there by Mercy Hospital. It's the same shop I got my hoop skirt at and my bridesmaid dress for my sisters wedding. I also got my shoes there for my daughter's wedding. . . . I don't know. I can see myself walking down the isle and I remember a kid who was standing outside on the steps who yelled "sucker!" It's part of my life that, I don't know, the wedding dress is there for somebody that wants to use it. It's not like my daughter's dress when she got married, it's just lace, the kind from the 60s, lace over satin. . . . It's on the floor in a box with a bunch of stuff piled on it. In the computer-craft room closet. It's in the same box my friend's dad put it in. He wrapped it in black paper and sealed it in the box. . . . It's only been out once. That would be when my niece got married. I think, maybe 23 or 24 years ago.

Sherrie: If we do have children, like with this it would be something I would want to keep for my daughter. So, I'd want to keep that and show my daughter.

Nancy: It's emotional. My mom made it. Maybe it could be for my grandchildren. Chances are my boys wives won't want to wear it, but that would be a cool thing, maybe their dates would want to wear it.

Katie: This is another thing that [husband] said, "you can't get rid of that." I made this when we were first married. It really was fun, I could wear it with any color and anything. It was fun, and it is dated, an era thing. So that's why it's in there. I don't know why I can't get rid of it, cause I've never worn it in a long time. It is fun to show your kids, this is what I used to wear. I would always save some things because it is fun. It's just neat to have. We used to always go into my grandmother's closet and look at her old-fashioned stuff. Well, this is going to be old fashioned some day. . . . This was so fun because it went with any color. It was comfortable because it wasn't like a heavy coat and you could wear it inside. It was fun, the color was good, I liked it. . . . No, because when I see it I think, this is really neat.

Denise: If she wore it, I thought she would feel proud to wear, just as I did. It would be like an heirloom that she could take care of and pass on down to her daughter if she should have a daughter. My friend's daughter, whose 27, wore her wedding dress and I thought it was really neat that they could share something like that.

Sherrie: Only have one son, and so I guess if he doesn't want it, or maybe I'll have a daughter-in-law, but if she doesn't want it, then I guess as my time is drawing near,

I'll try to find someone to give it to that might want it, maybe my sister, or my maid of honor, of course they will be near the end of their time too. I don't know, maybe I'll try to find somewhere, some type of museum, a clothing museum, that would take it because it will be an antique by that time.

Ed: I think a generation or two down the line there'll be a mystique associated with the idea of being a ranger. I guess it's a way to share a set of values that might not exist in the future, or what society looked on as important.

Temporary Inactive Inventory

Value and Attachment

Economic Value

Terri: Did wash it because I thought it would look better if I washed it...Another reason why I have had it in my closet. I kept thinking that I could do something with this, to fix it. . . I keep thinking it is brand new, it was expensive, so I just feel guilty and it is in my closet.

Donna: And this is something that um I liked and it doesn't fit either, but it's a nice jacket so I have kept it. These were some of my favorite clothes. . . . Because I hardly ever wore it and it was expensive.

Gale: I just can't seem to get rid of them, but I don't know why. Never wear them. Could come back in style. I know that I had a very difficult time when I got them because blouses were changing styles and they were very expensive. I would wear them all, but I don't know when or why. You know if they'd burn up in a fire it wouldn't hurt my feelings at all, but am I going to take this to Janine tomorrow, no, it might come back in style.

Andrew: Yes. I probably hang onto suits and coats longer than I hang onto shirts. I probably would hang onto a pair of really good dress pants, not to wear them, but not to give away. I wouldn't look at them as give-awayable stuff. They're expensive.

Ed: I've got this shirt and it's supposed to protect you from the sun, I've got two of these, but the dark one absorbs too much heat, so it just sits in my closet. But it was a little pricey, so I need to figure out something to do with it. Maybe it'll be a painting shirt.

Dorothy: In our closet, I will confess, I have a big box with [Levi] jeans in it that I will never be able to wear again. But, for some reason, I just keep thinking that they are going to be worth a lot of money.

Terri : I keep thinking it is brand new, it was expensive, so I just feel guilty and it is in my closet.

Andrew: I'd probably hang onto the suits and coats longer than I hang onto shirts. I probably would hang onto a pair of really good dress pants, not to wear them, but not to give away. I wouldn't look at them as give-awayable stuff. They're expensive.

Hedonic Value

Denise : This makes me feel like I am sexy. I like to put this on after I get home from school. I got this at Macy's. It makes me feel feminine, flighty, I like the skirt, it's empire, so therefore it takes away from my stomach. It just kind of, the back of it has a normal waistline, which is kind of nice. It just makes me feel really kind of sexy and feminine. I would put it on and I would feel special in it. . . . Maybe not quite a year ago, because of the weight I have gained. I don't know that I can get into it. . . . I like the style of it, the fit of it and the colors, the little small flowers. When I wear it, it makes me feel small, but the roses, kind of feminine. I had a dress in my closet that I wore to one of my class reunions and it was right after my divorce, I had lost a lot of weight because of the turmoil, and I looked great in it.

Denise: I have a blue velvet skirt. I was going to get rid of it, but the material looked so good, so it's back in my closet. I started to throw it in the bag for the Veteran's, I folded it up and put it in, but I took it back out again. I put it back on its hanger and hung it back up in the same place. I have not seen any velvet around like that anymore. It is gorgeous fabric. Maybe I can made a dress or skirt for my granddaughter. I can't wear it anymore. I kept thinking that I might be able to wear it, that their might be somewhere I could wear it to, if I was the size that I was then. But I know that I will never be that size again. . . . It's just gorgeous material. I made her a dress and some shorts last summer.

Lisa: This is a top, it's just, it's one of these I have not donated and not gotten rid of is because I have always loved it. I guess because I wonder, is silk in that much anymore, I used to even wear this to work years ago. . . . Probably when you have colors that people tell you, like that my hair matches the gold and whatever, and you get all these compliments, and that's why. It feels good. It was soft, and silky, and it was nice. . . . I might do that. I think I might try it on and see how it fits and then make a decision.

Attachment

Marleen: This is one of my first professional teaching dresses. This is very much a mode of that type of style from when I was like 22. It's sentimental to me because it is something I chose out of my first pay checks from when I was officially employed. . . . It's the sentiments around the dress that I would miss. Certainly a common dress, a very practical kind of dress. . . . I don't know. When I do the seasonal thing, and I

keep putting them back in the closet, the attachment gets stronger. So I have an attachment to it. And, I am sure that a lot of it has to do with I still see a time where I could potentially wear it. . . . I am still teaching, and it is a practical and comfortable kind of dress.

Ken: It was given to me, but I didn't want to throw it away or anything. . . . I just don't like it. But it was given to me as a gift, so I don't want to get rid of it. . . . I'd probably wear it to paint with maybe. I don't want to hurt her feelings, so I don't want to get rid of it.

Amy: This is something I have not worn since I first went to grad school. The style is ok, I love the colors, but the v-neck is great, but these gathers here is not my favorite. I made it. I did a really nice job, more nicer than I usually do. I finished the seam on the facing and things like that. I just loved the color and the material was nice to work with. And so, I just wanted to do it so every stitch was perfect, and so I worked really slowly and then I thought, "Wow, I really liked the workmanship." But, then I put it on and the color is right, but somehow the style didn't turn out to be my favorite. I wore it quite a bit back before I got into school, and for some reason since I started school, for some reason it makes me feel really matronly, and I don't know why, it might be the gathers up there and it's just kind of a weird thing. So, I just haven't worn it on campus. It just doesn't fit to me, but I don't know why. Then again, I keep keeping it, I probably shouldn't keep keeping it. Because I think at this point it's probably getting a bit small, like in the arms, they might too small. I should just wash it, so it's not all dusty, and see what I think of it afterwards. I think I have some pants that I can wear with it.

Items in Waiting

Waiting to Wear it Again

Fit again.

Lisa: And I've got some really cute things, really cute little skort things that wrapped around me and stuff, so maybe I'm hoping I'm gonna get smaller, and that's the other reason that I haven't departed.

Nancy: This here was 1986, and I wore this to a wedding. See how skinny I was. I can't wear it now, because I can't. But I would wear it now if I could. I keep this to hold out that carrot. I have worn it several time since. I wore it to another wedding. I got a ton of compliments on this. . . . Too chubby. Gained too much weight. . . . I'd be sad. I'd be bummed. Because it was expensive, and it is something I could wear again, and it's pretty. . . . No. I might wear it again.

Lisa: This I wore, I bought to go to a wedding. It was kind of a hurried buy, I didn't have much time. It came in handy for a couple of weddings. Besides that, I wore it to church. I was thinking that it has gone out of style or that it got too small when I dry cleaned it. I haven't worn it in maybe three years. . . . It makes you look slender. So I think I looked tall and slender when I wore it. . . . it got too small and I was not sure about the style, if it was out of style. . . . I'm hoping to get back in it and see what I look like. I've got to try that first. Then, I can see how it looks and see if I should get rid of it.

Kathleen: This here I'm keeping because I don't quite fit into it anymore. And I like it, but you know I used to wear it, but I kind of got middle aged hippy and I don't fit in it too good. So, I'm holding out till the day I get skinny again. It looked really good when I had it on.

Ruth: Clothes that are too small, and I'm thinking some day, I'm gonna get back into them. I have a huge pile folded in my closet, they are all waiting for some day when I loose weight. They are the ones that are all still in good shape, I just, when they all started not fitting, I just went trough my drawers and took out everything that didn't fit, and the stuff that's good, that's in good shape I put in that pile. Or, my sisters, well see you know, I actually don't have to get rid of anything. I just invite my sister up for the weekend. So either them, I have two sisters, Goodwill, or if it's made out of a good material that would be good for sopping up stuff, I just put them in the rag bag from my husband.

Denise: I knew there were things that I shouldn't keep. I kept procrastinating, thinking that maybe after I got a kidney I could wear them again, but I have been on dialysis for three years, and there is no sense in keeping them. So I just had to face that I wasn't going to wear them again. So I tried all of my clothes on to see what fit. I've got five bags of clothes to go to the battered women, but they don't pick up, so I have to find someplace.

Denise: Depending on what it is, sometimes, I know there is a skirt in my closet that I have never worn it. And I keep hoping that I will be able to get into it. It's the right size, but lots of time, you buy a size and it's not the same. It did fit when I first bought it, but then by the time I bought a top that would go with it, it didn't fit anymore. That's another thing I do when I shop, I just like something I buy it, when I get home if I don't have something to go with it, it just goes in the back of the closet. I have a lot of skirts like that.

Back in fashion.

Gale: I just can't seem to get rid of them, but I don't know why. Never wear them. Could come back in style. I know that I had a very difficult time when I got them because blouses were changing styles and they were very expensive. I would wear them all, but I don't know when or why. You know if they'd burn up in a fire it wouldn't

hurt my feelings at all, but am I going to take this to Janine tomorrow, no, it might come back in style.

Kathleen: Now I have a whole bunch of stuff in the boxes. You know, but in the closet, I have these clothes that you know, were great in the day but I don't wear anymore. This one I don't wear. It has this in a matching jacket. But it kind of just doesn't look like it's in date anymore, but I don't see too many people walking around in corduroy suits so much. So I, you know, sometimes I'll try to wear it with just a skirt and blouse, but it's kind of a light color, and I don't like really like it Comfortable and trendy for the time. . . . I'd feel ok. This is the set that are probably going in the boxes next. When I take those in the boxes and put those at Goodwill. . . . I don't know. I just keep hoping that corduroy will come back in style. And maybe that color, the color at the time was the color, but it's like now you see more dark clothes.

Ken: That's tough. I could wear that whenever. I think this will die out and come back.

Katie: Part of the thing, things that you really like that you don't even begin to wear out. You think styles are cyclical, it could come back. And I have done that, and so I might pull it out and say this is what they are wearing, but it seems like there is always something just enough different that you wouldn't wear it.

Sherrie: I also think it is funny with clothes, there are things that you resurrect from time to time, I think that's what it's all about but the idea that ya that doesn't appeal to me but suddenly I put it on and you love it again and so I think for me that's why I hold onto things. And then it isn't until I really know in my heart that it will never be resurrected again because of the pattern or the style or a flaw or something, it does take a decisive moment I feel. To really decide that the design or something is not right about it.

Occasion to wear.

Amy I might keep them, even if I have not worn them for years and years, there might be some occasion, even Halloween when you need a costume or something and I'll keep stuff around that is interesting. I'd like to be able to pull stuff out of the closet, but if I think there is a possible likelihood that I'll wear it I will leave it in there forever.

Marleen This is one of my first professional teaching dresses. This is very much a mode of that type of style from when I was like 22. It's sentimental to me because it is something I chose out of my first pay checks from when I was officially employed. . . . It's the sentiments around the dress that I would miss. Certainly a common dress, a very practical kind of dress. . . . I don't know. When I do the seasonal thing, and I keep putting them back in the closet, the attachment gets stronger. So I have an attachment to it. And, I am sure that a lot of it has to do with I still see a time where I could potentially wear it. There is a strength of wanting it to

be a part of who I am. I am still teaching, and it is a practical and comfortable kind of dress.

Sherrie I don't wear it anymore, but when I did, I really liked it. I got it when I was in graduate school years ago and I love the color, the stitching, the buttons are unique, but it feels very big and loose and the style has changed and that's why I stopped wearing it. When I did wear it I kind of felt sexy and I would wear it with slender pants. And I held onto it because it is in really good shape and it is unique and it was made overseas and in India. And, every once and a while I definitely think that if I were pregnant I would wear it and it would be a stylish thing to wear while I was pregnant.

Katie: You know, in my closet, the things that are hanging in there that have been years since I have worn, they aren't the everyday things. They are the special things that you think, but I might wear that, because it is not something you wear all the time, and you think, you know, an occasion might come up.

Carey: This had been on the maybe list for a long time. I bought it probably ten years ago. Anyhow I bought it and I was wearing it with jeans, and it looked real cute. And then I kind of just got away from that look, and again, it's white and I don't wear white that often, it's got a couple of stains, on the sleeve that are not too noticeable. I don't know, I have honestly not worn this in three years. . . . Well, I was usually dressing up wearing jeans, high heels, and this and a belt. So, I don't know, I felt young probably. I wasn't married, I was dating or going out with the girlfriends dancing. It probably made me feel young. . . . I don't know, really again, the white is probably a big issue, and I don't go out often, but to me this is not a casual shirt, it's kind of a, you know, dressier shirt. But you know, I might just try it on and wear it. I don't know, it's not worn out to me, it's not ready to be given up. I think I go through my closet and I think oh, I'll probably wear this some day.

Ken : Probably, eventually, you know, I might still use them. I mean I have all of those from 1980, and that's 21 years ago. So eventually probably throw them away, but it would be like 20 years.

Jerry: This shirt, I uh, bought this shirt when I exchanged a shirt my mom gave me for Christmas for this. And I thought it was a popular color, what I was looking for was a shirt I could wear with the shirt hanging out in the summer. And then, uh, I got a couple of comments that it was kind of bright, and so I guess I stopped wearing it. I should have gotten a larger size too. But the color was one of those colors that goes out of style pretty quick. I keep think that maybe I'll wear it around here in the yard when I get too much sun.

Gale: I used to be a jogger, in my other lifetime I was a jogger, and these were my jogging pants with a sweatshirt and sneakers. And I really don't wear them, but I don't give them away because every now and then, you know you just might have to wear something like this...You just never know. [Daughter} may need them for

something she needs to look weird in. She's got a couple of my dresses that we're saving cause you just never know.

Lisa: And then I have those things that are like, I don't know, like if we went to different parties, and I took them like, maybe it was new years ever. Or if it was I bought some luau things, and I keep thinking another luau's gonna come.

Andrew: It's been a long times since the 70s, it's something I no longer wear. It's pretty indicative of the mid to late 70s, clearly out of style, clearly not something I am going to wear except to a party with costumes. . . . It is just something that I thought was unique and maybe laughable, heritage.

Andrew: Cause it's obviously out of style. I mean obvious to the point that it would make a good costume, or that you could look silly in it without looking too silly.

Nancy: Also wore it to a hippie concert. It was a real fun concert, and I was afraid that I was gonna ruin it, because it was day on the green kind of stuff and we didn't wear shoes. And I had a pretty white dress that was real fluffy. So, it was a fun time. We danced, and it felt fun when it was on, all swooshing. It has ties that go all the way around. And a headband. It was really fun. Bright, colorful, just me. I don't wear a whole lot of yellows unless they're bright yellows. . . . I'd probably be a little bit sad. I wouldn't miss it as much as the other dress because there is not a huge emotional thing to it. Yes, my mom made it, but that's the only emotional thing to it. So it's not a favorite piece. . . . Probably because my mom made it and I could wear it to Halloween. Some of the things that I keep I know I can wear to a function or whatever and because of my age I can get away with it. If I were some young thing that, and image to me is more who you are, not what I wear. And that matters more to me, not judge a book by its cover. I go into more depth of the spirit of the person.

Alter.

Jerry: Ok until one of the guys I work with asked if I was waiting for a flood. That's why I don't wear them anymore. You know 32 is my length for dress pants, but in jeans, they shrink. . . . I was thinking of cutting them off for shorts. . . . I just haven't gotten around to it, I guess.

Terri: And now it is out of style and I keep thinking well I'll chop this off and make something else out of it. I did think I'd make a skirt because I could wear it with a black sweater or something.

Terri: I did wash it because I thought it would look better if I washed it...Another reason why I have had it in my closet. I kept thinking that I could do something with this, to fix it. . . . I keep thinking it is brand new, it was expensive, so I just feel guilty and it is in my closet.

Waiting to be Certain that it is Not Needed Again

Just in case.

Raymond: It's kind of just in case when I run out of other things to wear.

Ed: They're just too baggy and long, my legs look like little sticks living in a circus tent. But my wife like them, so if we go somewhere that she wants me to wear trunks like this, well here they are.

Amy: I still have this. I don't wear it anymore, though I did for a little while. And this is actually something that I should take back and put it with the stuff for Goodwill. The reason I don't wear it, it is a wonderful color, it's off white, but it's just way too cutesy. I probably got it on sale at Emporium. But I just never liked it when it was on. For one thing, the sleeves feel a little too short, and it has this lacey thing, and it's not that I have anything against lace, but I have had lacey things that I like, but I think it is because it buttons up into a peter pan collar and it is just a little too prissy for me. So anyway because you had me look at my closet, I think this is something I will give away upon your departure. I have not worn this for years and years because since I started graduate school, and thus started teaching, twelve years ago, I maybe have worn it twice in those first few years, because I was desperate for clothes at first cause I hadn't been teaching or doing anything but raising small children. And I might have worn it twice, I hated it both times, and then I kept leaving it in the closet thinking one day I am going to go into my closet and I'm going to really need a blouse to wear with something to class, that I might really be needing something, that I would be desperate for a blouse. I thought I'd need it as a safety net, but I could never really talk myself into wearing it.

Amy: This is a vest I no longer wear. I am not quite sure why I no longer wear it. Because I love the color, and I love the material, and the style is good for me, and I can wear it with black pants and a cream colored shirt. And, I wore it a lot. This is something that I have not worn in five or six years. I am certainly going to keep it around as one of those things that might come in handy some time for whatever reason. . . . since I have lived without it for so long, I would only be slightly disappointed because I would think, "that sure would have come in handy some day." Here again I think this is something my sister gave me. She went through a spell where she would buy the wrong colors. She just made a mistake in the color, rust wasn't her color.

Dorothy: Like my sister sent me some other things. When I start wearing those things, this one will start not getting worn so much. . . . I'd probably keep it for a little while and say "I'll wear it." And after I have said it a couple of times...If I haven't worn something in a year, I would be gone to the Salvation Army. I don't like clutter. It's almost like clutter to me.

Back-up/replace first.

Terri: You know, they probably need to be replaced, so I don't wear them quite as much. I would probably get rid of the pants, but I would probably keep the shirt because there again I think it is not out of style, it's a classic and not worn out enough that it needs to be replaced. I would get rid of the pants, but I would first replace them. In fact, I just went to buy black khaki Gap pants, but they didn't have my size.

Amy: The turtleneck, I am actually debating about getting rid of it. I still wear it around the house, but not to teach in. But basically, some people don't always sort the laundry right, and so there is blue dye around the neck. And mostly, I just ignore it because other than that, I guess eventually, if I were in Penney's and saw a shirt the same color. I'd replace it right away if I happened to find a good replacement.

Denise: So, I don't get rid of it. It stays in there until I find a replacement. Then, I'll pass this one on to my girlfriend, just like the other ones.

Lisa: I've got different tops and all, that go with shorts and things, that are all worn out, and I now I have some my nice tops that I do wear and then get rid of those that don't look so nice anymore, ones that I have not worn in a couple of years.

Denise: It was something that I could wear to school, or I could wear out, cause when my friend and I would go out, it was comfortable, it looks nice. I have been trying to find others. So, I don't get rid of it. It stays in there until I find a replacement.

Terri: I don't know why I haven't thrown this away. This is the only thing I have that I haven't worn in forever. Just a plain black blazer. They are so versatile. I have never replaced it. And it is old. This I probably had in Wyoming, do you know how old that is? At least 20 years. I mean I got this when I worked retail. And then I had the kids and didn't wear it very often. I mean you can dress up a pair of jeans and go to the Holt center, so I kept it because it is my one black blazer, but it is so out of style, it's old, funky, and so I need to get rid of it, but until I replace it, it is like oh I can't get rid of it.

Waiting for Disposal Opportunity.

Denise: This here, I made this before the kids dad and I were married. He worked for [company] and they were having a Christmas party. It's small. I was small at one time. And I wore this, and I had made a white satin blouse to go with it. It's velvet and it's fully lined, and it's always been my favorite. . . . You know, if somebody were to come along and it fit them, I would give it to them and hope that they would get as much or more enjoyment out of it than I did. I never went very many places, so therefore it was not something I could wear a lot.

Jerry: Oh, I think because Mike might have been able to use them for Jazz band, he wears a dress shirt, and then um maybe someone who works with my wife might be able to use them.

Jerry: Probably because it was such a nice jacket and I wanted to see if somebody else could fit into it and wear it.

Jerry: Maybe because I think well it's kind of valuable. Is there somebody I know that could use it?

Raymond: Mostly, we put it on the side in the closet, when they kind of accumulate and then we pass them. I ask my customers if they know somebody who needs clothes and we usually do that most of the time. I don't like to give them mostly to goodwill because they sell them, they resell them, so I prefer to know someone that knows someone to give it. . . . This is something we would give away to a friend because they have never been mended, they are still in tact, they have no holes in them and you know no buttons missing. I don't feel bad about passing them down to people we know or friends or anybody that need them. . . . Because we only have a couple of them now. We have to go through the whole thing to make it worth giving away. We like to give a bag of clothes, not just one thing to a person.

Ed: My son gave me a similar pair, but with too big a waist. They're better made, so that's too bad. I've got them in my closet and hope to give them to someone when they reach that size, maybe my nephew in a couple of years.

Carey: This shirt I actually bought for going to a Christmas party. And I bought it last year. And honestly, I bought it and I wore it and it doesn't give at all and it was kind of pouching right here and I just realized that you know this was not my style at all. So I still have it because I bought it recent, but I don't know that I'll wear it. And again, this is something I should hand down to somebody that is my size, my sister, she's small, and my mom. . . . I think with this one it's because it's new. And I think, you know, there is a couple of people that are a similar size to me that I know and I just think it's kind of a nice way of recycling something rather than, you know, just tossing it. You know, actually now that we are talking about it, I'll probably think of handing it down pretty soon. And, you know, I would think probably before the holidays because it's kind of a festive blouse. . . . I'd be fine. Cause it just isn't me. It's almost similar that this blue [tank top] is sort of the same way. It's a little bit too shiny and too fancy, I think.

Terri: I don't know why I have it, I hate it, I think maybe cause I wore it twice and it looks nice, and I felt like maybe somebody would like it and then I get embarrassed asking someone "would you like this" when I hate it. That dress would be cute on somebody, the right person.

Terri: I thought I'd like it. Every time I went to put it on, I couldn't face wearing it. You know, it's denim, it looks like me, it casual. And so, I'm like, "what's wrong?" I could wear it to work and I put it on and then I think "uh uh." And I'll just take it off. I

think I want to find someone who would wear this, but I don't know who would. I might be embarrassed to ask someone if they want it. . . .

Nancy: I have some kids who are growing up in the daycare, and I am going to give them some of my clothes, just because I am running out of room. I have aerobic stuff, I have stuff for every sport, for like, I must own 600 shirts. When I moved into this house, I had 372 pairs of shoes, three huge boxes of shoes alone. I don't ever wear shoes, In this house I don't wear shoes. It's ridiculous. They are hanging over the door getting in the way. I should toss them, but they are still in good shape, and if you send them to consignment, you don't get your money worth.

Waiting to Engage in the Process of Disposal Versus Storage Decision Making.

Lucas: Well, I intend to, but I never do. I just leave it in the closet until the closet goes over full, and then you get into a mad rush and go through and say I'm getting rid of this, this, this, and throw it in the pile and take them all down to the goodwill. I have been thinking about doing this for six months now and I haven't done it yet. I've been thinking about it but I haven't had time. . . . I have been too lazy to get rid of it. . . . Soon, next run through.

Ken: I guess I want more time to figure out what else to get rid of beside these blouses in the box.

Invisible Inactive Inventory

Kathleen: But it's like I really didn't know what all was in there. You know, too much to look at. . . . I'm retired now. And I had time. So I could look at the boxes. And I thought they were usable, but after I looked at everything, I had already replaced everything. But I didn't give away things that were sentimental. . . . I had time.

Katie: We went to the back of the closet tonight and I saw this. And I thought, "oh my god, I still have this?"

Katie It's traumatic. Some things, in fact, I have some clothes that my mother has given to me that I never liked that are in there because she gave them to me and I don't want to wear them.

Katie: This leggings and the top. Why is it still in there, I don't wear it anymore. And I keep it cause I think it will be really comfortable around the house. I don't ever come home and put on clothes. If I want to get comfortable at home I put on pajamas. I thought why are these still in there cause the knees are baggy. Actually, I don't know why I still have it. Because I didn't know I even had it. And actually, I am going to put it in the bag with the top.

Katie: And this, I loved and I wore it for a couple of years. If I don't wear it, it just gets pushed to the back. And the last time I put it on, maybe two years ago, it just didn't feel right anymore. Oh I liked it because I loved the color. . . . Actually, I am probably going to go and put that in the bag tonight.

Amy: I loved it, because the colors are right. I love yellow and I love turquoise. I wore it a lot. It was psychedelic print, and that's probably why I had gotten rid of it. But at some point it was just too much the 70s and it was also a style that was fun, and as I became onto being a mom, it just didn't seem like a mom outfit. [feel] Very cool. I felt very trendy. My mother was very conservative with our clothes, and as you can see, this was a couple of inches above my knee, and it took a long time to convince my mother to allow that, and so this one was not as short as others that people wore, but it was short. And it was the kind of material that people wore at that time. I liked it, at a certain time. . . . I am sure that what I did with it is keep it in the back of my closet like all of the other things that I don't wear.

Amy: It's like I put off, like I have to go through my clothes. There are things in my closet that I haven't worn is 20 years. Sometimes old jeans, they are not anything special, they just get pushed to the back. My closet, it's not easy to get into, so the first rack is what I pick things from.

Lucas: Put it in the back of the closet so I wouldn't run across with it again.

Ed: It was the back corner of my lower closet rack, and on the rack I hung my t-shirts on hangers and it just got very densely packed. I just wore about the first ten of them. I really wasn't too aware of them. It was sort of dark and dusty back there, so you know I didn't really think about them. So I reached back there and grabbed literally three feet of t-shirts. . . . I think, maybe since I bought them, I think I just couldn't face the idea where I am admitting I made a mistake and bought something I didn't need. Like on vacations, you would buy a memento and buy something that you wouldn't actually use and then you'd look back and see that you made a decision that you bought something that really wasn't valuable. It comes to a point of questioning your judgment.

Ed: Ya, I've got t-shirts from all different event and things, they always give me a large or extra large and I get lost in them, like you could put two of me in the. So I just put them on a hanger and put em in the back of my closet.

Marleen: It had an ink stain down here and I had to wear jumpers and things with it, so it wasn't as useful to me so it just moved farther back in my closet.

Transitional Inactive Inventory

Denise: I have a bunch of clothes for a garage sale that I can't wear anymore. So, I keep procrastinating with that, so I'll probably just call [charitable organization] and

have them come and get it, so somebody else can use them, cause they are good clothes.

Raymond: Mostly, we put it on the side in the closet, when they kind of accumulate and then we pass them. I ask my customers if they know somebody who needs clothes and we usually do that most of the time. I don't like to give them mostly to goodwill because they sell them, they resell them, so I prefer to know someone that knows someone to give it. . . . This is something we would give away to a friend because they have never been mended, they are still in tact, they have no holes in them and you know no buttons missing. I don't feel bad about passing them down to people we know or friends or anybody that need them. . . . Because we only have a couple of them now. We have to go through the whole thing to make it worth giving away. We like to give a bag of clothes, not just one thing to a person.

Denise: I've got five bags of clothes in the garage to go to the battered women. I called them, but they don't pick up, so I have to find someplace that will pick them up.

Ed: I've got this sweatshirt that my nephew gave me and it'd be fun to wear, but it's too long, and just huge. So it was probably destined for the Goodwill for about two years, I think that's about when he gave it to me, but what if he figured out I gave it away? And now I could take it, now since it's been long enough and he wouldn't know.

Disposal

Factors Which Prompt Disposal Versus Storage Decision Making

Call from Charitable Organization

Sherrie: Um, usually ARC calls, and I forget if St. Vincent calls, I think they do. If someone calls and says they will be in the area, do you have a box of things, I say yes. Sometimes I put things in a box for a long time that I know I'm not going to wear, so when finally when ARC calls I'll say yep and put it out there.

Gilbert: It happens one of two ways. We will decide that the closet needs cleaning. That may happen once a year. Then we will go through and gather things, put them in a pile, and go to goodwill. Or it's initiated by a call from goodwill that says we are going to be on your street next week, do you have something for us. We'll generally run around the house and gather things together.

Garment Specific Observation

Ruth: When I put them on and they don't button up, that makes me want to get rid of them. Stains, tears, holes, I just don't wanna wear that. Every, well if I am doing laundry and I see stuff that just, you know, my husbands are just the worst and I usually throw them away. And I'll say, "good God the back is paper thin," you know, so I just throw them away at the laundry mat so they just never make them home or he'd dig it out of the trash.

Amy: But I kind of come across things, it's not a big production, so I might come across it and I think oh, I need to do it right now and just take care of it, I have a special drawer, for things to go to the Goodwill. And I and the kids put stuff in there. My husband usually waits for me to put his stuff in there. When it gets full and we can't shut the drawer anymore, we put it in bags and take it to the Goodwill.

Season Change

Lisa: Well, I'm going to be going through my closets and drawers real soon now. When spring comes around and summer, it gets me motivated to go through and throw out.

In Need of Storage Space

Kathleen: Well, you know, I found that I wasn't going into the boxes, and I had saved them because I thought the clothes were still good and maybe I'll wear it. But, you know, my closets were full, I kept putting things in boxes and taking them out to the garage and they just started building up.

Gilbert: It's usually because we have no more space to keep it. Then we make a decision as to what things we want to keep and what things we want to get rid of. . . . I'd say maybe 3 or 4 years ago.

Duke: Lack of space, new purchases.

Amy: I didn't want to really get rid of it, but I did realize that I did need more room and I knew this would be something I wouldn't wear again.

Amy: And so, when I gave it away, I gave it to Goodwill and it was in really good condition, but it was just out of style. I know that I always have this thing where if I have made something and it is in good condition, I think, "Gee, I really don't want to." But, I will have some pressing need, like space, and then I just have to be brave and just do it.

Sudden Realization

Denise: I knew there were things that I shouldn't keep. I kept procrastinating, thinking that maybe after I got a kidney I could wear them again, but I have been on dialysis for three years, and there is no sense in keeping them. So I just had to face that I wasn't going to wear them again. So I tried all of my clothes on to see what fit. I've got five bags of clothes in the garage to go to the battered women. I called them, but they don't pick up, so I have to find someplace that will pick them up.

Katie: Now how I get rid of my clothes, I just realize I just have so much clothes, I don't wear all this stuff, and it's time to weed through. And I don't ever do it often enough, because there again, it takes time and I'd rather not take time on that. Thoroughly, maybe twice a year. But I don't get rid of a lot of stuff twice a year because I don't buy a lot of stuff, I don't buy so much, so maybe once a year.

Life Change

Marleen: I came into my own after I got my Master's. A lot of things, it seems like it was an evolution that happened, where a lot of things no longer were me and I made some massive cleanings between what was my college wardrobe and what was my grown up wardrobe, and it was cast aside. . . . I think it went to Goodwill. I honestly don't remember. I was engaged to be married and so I was kind of consolidating things that were just no longer part of who I was and that is where that came out of. . . . About the same time that the black and white dress went out, that one went out, too. Probably within a year or so after I stopped wearing it. And I think it is one of those that went to donation because it really wasn't one of those that were in disrepair, I was just done with it.

Nancy: If I have to downsize to a smaller house.

Ed: Retirement happened. I just had so much stuff and it was stuff I knew I'd only wear to work. . . . I kept some of the best stuff, maybe 3 or 4 Dockers, but the rest, I just didn't need them.

Directions from Spouse

Gilbert: Well, when [wife] finally trips over it the last time and says it's gotta go.

Duke: Guest room, there's dress suits. One is current and there's one that's a polyester suit from hell, oh she said she got rid of it.

Duke: Do with it? It will go on the closet rack . . . and the wife will go through.

Raymond: Any time she doesn't want me to wear it. I can get rid of it now.

Raymond's wife: Mostly, we put it on the side in the closet, when they kind of accumulate and then we pass them. . . . Months to a year. Not more than one month to a year if something is not worn it does not stay in my house. During every season, we go out and buy new clothes and shirts. I have to look good for my job, being in the public eye.

Lucas: Large t-shirt, a heavy-t-shirt, heavy material, it was orange, and it was comfortable. [WIFE] did not like it. She didn't like the color orange on me, which those things I never pay attention to, so I was fine with it, so it was just a comfortable t-shirt. . . . [WIFE] threw it away.

Identification of Suitable Recipient

Denise: I have had others like this, and when I couldn't wear them anymore, I just passed them to a girlfriend...I have been trying to find others. So, I don't get rid of it. It stays in there until I find a replacement Pass this one on to my girlfriend, just like the other ones. . . . No I've never. Once I did. I had an aid whose daughter was about my size and I gave her a lot of stuff, but generally no. Generally, they go in the box for the garage.

Gilbert: I physically grew out of it. I gave it to a nephew to be able to have a business suit to be able to go out and find employment. It was well made.

Duke: Uh, I probably had this shirt 6 years and I'll probably have it another 6, it doesn't show wear. I still have it. . . . but if someone wants it, they can have it.

Raymond: We have friends that are construction workers, and they need more t-shirts that I don't wear anymore, and they don't care because they are going to be dirty themselves. So we give it to them.

Denise: No. Actually, when my daughter was home, I had her go through for skirts. Actually, she took one of my skorts.

Raymond: I ask my customers if they know somebody who needs clothes and we usually do that most of the time. I don't like to give them mostly to goodwill because they sell them, they resell them, so I prefer to know someone that knows someone to give it.

Gale: Every three or four times a year on an irregular basis, we do major cleanouts of toys and clothes. And I give it to my friend that has this thing. I got hooked up with her before I had the kids, and I would give her my don't wanna haves and she gave them to the Elementary District. She knows where to give my stuff away. She knows I give her good things and she knows where to give it to who does not have good things. And now that I have children and stuff, they have now been incorporated into it. And I used to just give her clothes and now I give her things like happy meal toys. She makes up little goodie bags. I call her up, and every now and then, and I had a

refrigerator, she found a home for it. So she's taken a refrigerator and a couple of big things, but mostly apparel. It's basically wear it, give it to Janine, or throw it away. And we don't give anything to Janine that can not be used. And if there is any question of whether it can be used or not, it gets thrown. There is not really a Goodwill, because if it is not good enough for Janine then it's probably not good enough for Goodwill. She has a building and now she has a closet. It's a free closet. I'm not the only one that donates, but I am probably the most frequent donor. I just know I give it to Janine and she finds it a happy home. And we do this regularly, so really we do not have too much that we keep.

Recirculation

Terri: The shirts ok, but you can tell that it is just not going to hold up and the buttons are nice enough to "chop off."

Marleen: I made a quilt from my prom dress from high school, and different things, the maternity dresses that I really loved, so I cut squares out of maternity dress that I really loved, the dress I wore home from the hospital when I had my son, the dress I wore home from the hospital when I had my daughter.

Marleen: Here is my dress. I love orange. When I got this, I love the fabric of it, and even though the beading is coming off of it, it's just a comfortable, if I don't want to wear anything that is going to bug me, it's evolved into a house dress, even though I could wear it outside the house, it's just comfortable. It's just one of those things that when I touch it, feel it, I just love it. . . . Because it has a fun fabric, a fun print to it. So I would say I would want to recycle it, I would probably want to do something fun with it, maybe a scarf.

Katie: Well, they get, you wash them and you wear them a lot. Then, they get faded at the needs. They get grubby. So then you wear them camping. These . . . that get grubby get tossed, you can't wear them camping. The jeans I can wear ripped, for camping.

Kathleen: You know, when jeans, after you wash, they will kind of lose their color and they sometimes shorten up a little bit. So, I will buy jeans pretty regularly. If I am going to wear them to school, I want them looking pretty newish. Where the blue is still kind of nice and they are long enough. There are jeans I would wear to work and there a jeans that I would wear, say, hiking. And so some of my work jeans can be turned into hiking jeans until they get raggedy. And then I will just throw them out at that point.

Raymond's wife: You know there is levels of jeans, you know those are the ones that have the faded knees, the, you know whatever, and those are home things that you don't get to wear to go out. So when he's doing gardening I go take your jeans off and put the other ones on.

Amy: Anything that's jeans or t-shirts can be retired to gardening. The things with jeans, if the knees go out, it's gardening. There actually is a certain point, because the knees start wearing. But, usually I'll wear them for grocery store and running around town. But once the knees are getting worn out, I just don't even want to go to the grocery store. Cause I run into all sorts of people I know. And I guess I have gotten to the point where, I don't know, I don't want to look like I'm twenty.

Gilbert: This is about as threadbare as I can get away with at work. My other blue jeans are in far worse condition and have holes in the knees or elsewhere and I generally wear those to work around the house.

Dorothy: I would like to phase these out. But, they are the only "semi-black" shorts that I have. They are faded and they don't look so nice. Summer is almost over, so I won't replace them until next year. So next year, I'll ask my sister to scope out the store. . . . Un, I'll wear them around the house when I do clean-up or if I'm out in the yard or whatever. In other words, if it gets ruined, it's ok. . . .

Jerry: The pants I used to wear, like these jeans I am wearing now, and then when they get holes in them or stains, I wear them for working in the yard or projects at school. . . . And the pants, they are almost getting to the point where I am gonna have to get rid of them, but I really like the pants because I don't have to worry about ruining better jeans out in the yard or sliding under a car.

Dorothy: Once I know I am not wearing it, I don't want to hang onto it. It used to be every season when the weather would turn hot or turn cold and I would switch our closets over. But now I don't have clothes to switch over. So now I can usually tell when I wash them that they have reached that point that I would be embarrassed to wear them. Although, I will hold onto things for when I paint or something it just looks bad anyway. They will usually end up in a bag and it will be in the garage. When the bag is full, then we take it to Salvation Army.

Ken: Again, probably when the styles change. Then I'd use it as a good painting shirt. If I have to do a rental, I use some of those clothes that you can ruin and you don't care about getting paint on them.

Donna: The t-shirt is getting to its point where it's getting kind of faded out and where I may only wear it when I work in the yard or when I paint.

Lucas: Well, they are getting close. They are starting to get a little frayed. Now these I wouldn't immediately get rid of those, I'd do differently; these would be for work I'm doing around the house, crawling under the house and stuff like that. Now this isn't stuff I would give to the Goodwill. I'd wear them until they weren't wearable anymore. I'd have to throw them away.

Ed: I have some athletic shoes that should be tossed, I saved them for grubby yard and painting work. . . but they've been around for maybe eight years, and I've got

some more recent ones that I can use for grubby stuff instead, actually a couple of more recent ones.

Gilbert: If I was painting and I wound up staining them somehow, they'd become project shorts, un, if they became worn to a point that they were not suitable to be in public, then I'd buy a new pair of shorts.

Gilbert: Do with them? They would probably be worn out, so they'd find their way to the plastic bag for rags or whatever.

Gilbert: Maybe use the shirt for a rag.

Gale: I'd turn them into a rag. Sweatshirts and sweatpants make good rags.

Denise: When it has a hole in it. . . . It will either go on its way to someone else, or I would put it in the goodwill cause they could probably fix it differently. Or, I could take the buttons off and put it in the rag bag and use it for dusting.

Amy: This, to me, it too worn out for the type of garment that it is when it starts to fade like that and you would never wear silk in the garden.

Gale: I wear jeans all the time. One presentable and two unpresentable. These are new because I decided that my one presentable pair was no longer presentable. So I got these like last week. Just like my sneakers too, sneakers start out as my uniform shoes, when they are not good for uniform they become walking, and when they are not good for walking they become yard and garden.