Just as real as it seems: meanings and practices arising from consumption of counterfeit fashion goods

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Declaration of Authorship

I Marcia Christina de Barros Ferreira hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

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Abstract

Consumers actively interpret the meanings in advertisements, brands, retail settings and consumption goods, incorporating them into particular lifestyles and identity projects. Consumption meanings are important for consumers not only because they support identity projects but also because they help consumers to experience social realities that are mediated by particular historical, political and economic processes. Fully aware of the risk in illegally acquiring counterfeits, consumers still use them to mediate social expectations and their desire for idealised consumption goods that are sometimes not available in local markets.

Previous research has demonstrated that consumers of counterfeits use these products together with genuine items as vehicles for self-expression. For further theoretical development, this research adopts a Consumer Culture Theory approach in order to investigate consumers' social experiences with counterfeit goods and to better understand the meaning creation processes arising from consumption of these goods. Using a Grounded Theory approach, this work analyses how materiality and risk intersect and influence counterfeit consumption meanings and practices. An emerging market, Brazil, was chosen as the research context based on its large market and easy access to counterfeit goods.

This research offers two key theoretical contributions. First it demonstrates that the motivation for consuming counterfeits is consumers' desire for fashion, not necessarily for luxury only. In putting together their fashion ensembles, consumers consider a wide range of fashion products: originals, imitations and counterfeits. By evidencing this practice, the research demonstrates that consumers' goals for acquiring and using counterfeits may be achieved through non-luxury products, and even through non-branded imitations. Second, the research identifies that processes of materialisation and consumers' risk management practices converge into four strategies: 1) authenticating actions; 2) creating constellations; 3) constant monitoring; and 4) developing competencies. The findings describe how consumers implement these strategies in shaping their social identity and experiences around consumption of counterfeit goods.

Acknowledgements

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Publication and Conference Papers

During the development of this research excerpts of texts have been presented at academic conferences and published in an academic journals:

Ferreira, Marcia Christina & Scaraboto, Daiane (2016) "My Plastic Dreams": Towards an Extended Understanding of Materiality in the Shaping of Consumer Identities. Journal of Business Research, 69 (1) 191-207.

Conference Presentations:

Ferreira, Marcia Christina (2014) "Materials, Meanings and (re)Materialisation in the Consumption of Counterfeit Goods". 9th Consumer Culture Theory Conference at Aalto University – Finland. (Article presentation)

Ferreira, Marcia Christina (2012) "Counterfeit Goods: Exploring and Enjoying the Risks of Consumption." 7th Consumer Culture Theory Conference at University of Oxford – United Kingdom (Poster presentation)

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter gives an overview of the thesis. First it discusses the research rationale. Following that it explains the research design presenting the objective, research questions and research methodology. Finally, it outlines the structure and content of each chapter within the thesis.

1.1 RATIONALE AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

Consumption meanings and practices are created and negotiated by consumers in their socio-cultural context in order to create their own cultural worlds (McCracken, 1990; Slater, 1997). Interpretive consumer research exploring cultural perspectives of consumption has expanded on the positivist literature by showing that consumers of counterfeits use these products together with genuine products as vehicles for self-expression (Hoe, Hogg & Hart, 2003; Strehlau, 2005; Gentry, Putrevu & Shultz, 2006; Perez, Castaño & Quintanilla, 2010; Jiang & Cova, 2012). Remarkably, this perspective is far from the prevailing approach in consumer research. Positivist studies, as expected, make up the majority of consumers research and they concentrate on profiling consumers (Eisend & Schuchert-Güler, 2006; Ahuvia, Gistri, Romani & Pace, 2012) as well as creating cognitive models that seek to explain consumers' attitudes towards counterfeits (Staake, Thiesse & Fleisch, 2009). Only recently has this research body started to consider co-ownership of counterfeits and genuine products in its works (Stöttinger & Penz, 2015), an idea that has been explored in the interpretive consumer research since the first studies on the consumption of counterfeits.

Many positivist studies have considered risk as a variable in their constructs in which they essentially try to correlate risk with consumers' moral beliefs to suggest actions to prevent the consumption of counterfeits. However consumers' morals are not necessarily in line with their 'risky' behaviour (Eckhardt & Belk, 2010), especially in plentiful markets of counterfeits where consumers face less risk of social disapproval (Strehlau, Vasconcelos & Huertas, 2006; Scalco & Pinheiro-Machado, 2010; Perez, Castaño & Quintanilla, 2010). Hence a gap remains in our knowledge regarding the influence of culture on consumers' understanding of risk and its consequences for their behaviour.

Knowledge of materiality is of great importance for the consumption of counterfeits especially when considering that consumption of clothing is the largest and most visible of counterfeiting businesses (Hardy, 2014). However, previous consumer research has not fully addressed the importance of fashion in the consumption of counterfeits. It has framed these products as luxury goods neglecting the fact that this is a market segment (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009) that relies heavily on fashion representations (Barthes, 1990[1967]). Moreover, this research has not considered that consumers may also see counterfeits as fashion products used in combination with many others. Nor has it addressed how important the material aspects of fashion products are to consumers, including counterfeits, in creating their outfits. It would thus be of interest to learn how materiality influences the consumption of counterfeits.

1.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Even though interpretive consumer research has shed some light on the phenomenon of counterfeiting (Eisend & Schuchert-Güler, 2006) it is mainly concerned with how consumers use counterfeits to support their identity projects (cf. Kravets & Sandikci, 2014; Kuever, 2014). However it is important to consider how consumers experience their social realities (Askegaard & Linnet, 2011) around the consumption of counterfeits. In addition, most studies have tended to neglect the quotidian actions consumers engage in to support their modes of consumption, which includes counterfeits. Moving beyond this prevailing outlook this thesis adopts a Consumer Culture Theory (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) approach in order to investigate consumers' everyday experiences with counterfeit goods to better understand the meaning creation processes arising from the consumption of these goods.

An emerging market, Brazil, was chosen as the research context based on its position as a plentiful market of counterfeits (Gentry, Commuri, Shultz & Putrevu, 2001), a trade condition in which consumers can easily look for counterfeits at the different levels of similarity alongside genuine products. In Brazil its large market for, and abundance of, counterfeit goods (Saraiva, 2011; Fekete, Leonardos & Amaral, 2014) leads the consumption of these products to be seen as more socially acceptable across social

classes (Scalco & Pinheiro-Machado, 2010), allowing for an exploration of the way consumers from different social backgrounds experience their social reality. Therefore this research context demonstrates its theoretical relevance in examining how the consumer culture in place in that society influences the consumption of counterfeits.

1.2.1 Research Aim:

This thesis aims to gain an understanding of how materiality and risk intersect influencing meanings and practices arising from the consumption of counterfeit fashion goods.

1.2.1.1 Research Questions:

The research questions are threefold:

- How do consumers' cultural understandings of risk influence their consumption of counterfeits fashion goods and social interactions?

- How do processes of materialisation engaged in by consumers of counterfeits support their consumption of counterfeit fashion goods?

- How do materiality and risk converge to shape consumers' social identity and experiences around the consumption of counterfeit fashion goods?

The overall objective of this thesis is to explore the way consumers articulate cultural meanings by developing consumption practices supporting the inclusion of counterfeits in their modes of consumption.

1.2.2 Research Methodology:

Interpretive research understands the 'world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it' (Locke, 2001, p.9), and therefore is concerned with the subjective nature of knowledge. Growing in popularity in management, marketing and consumer behaviour (Hackley, 2003), interpretive research aims to understand 'the meaning, for

participants in the study, of the events, situations, and actions they are involved with, and of the accounts that they give of their lives and experiences (Maxwell, 2008, p.221). Grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) is an interpretive research strategy that is ideally suited for this purpose as it allows the study of discourses, gestures, expressions and actions comprising the observation of behaviours (Goulding, 2002), and thus it is useful for the investigation of meanings and practices through experiences of consumption.

1.2.2.1 Grounded theory

Grounded theory presents as a distinctive feature 'its commitment to research and "discovery" through direct contact with the social world studied coupled with a rejection of a priori theorizing' (Locke, 2001, p.34). In contrast to the 'theory-driven and linear model of the research process, the grounded theory approach gives priority to the data and the field under study over theoretical assumptions' (Flick, 2009, p.90). Developed as a research strategy in which the systematisation of the collection, as well as the coding and analysis of the qualitative data aims to achieve the creation of theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), this approach 'also has a built-in mandate to strive towards verification through the process of category saturation' (Goulding, 2002, p.44).

Therefore grounded theory is an appropriate strategy to research social interactions given its emphasis on behaviours (Fischer & Otnes, 2006), and thus it is a valuable approach to Consumer Culture Theory (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) studies. Moreover, this research strategy is useful to investigate cultural issues in relation to consumer experiences, especially considering that such an approach 'allows the researcher to look beyond the surface, to embrace issues of myth making and power' as well as to explore the consumption meanings arising from individuals' actions in their socio-cultural context (Goulding, 2002, p.50). Hence grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) is a research strategy that is highly appropriate for the study of the consumption of counterfeits as proposed in this thesis.

1.3 OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

This thesis is divided into nine chapters. Having introduced the research rationale, research design and methodology in this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 gives an overview of the existing consumer research that explores the consumption of counterfeits. Chapter 3 draws on a wide body of literature from consumer culture and risk and then explores the relevance of risk to consumer behaviour. Chapter 4 discusses the background literature on fashion and materiality from the perspective of the various fields involved. Chapter 5 outlines the methodological approach and the findings that resulted from its implementation will be presented and discussed in the following three chapters. Chapter 6 explores emergent risk themes in the data, analysing the influence of consumers' cultural understandings of risk in their consumption of counterfeits and social interactions. Chapter 7 explores emergent materiality themes, by investigating how consumers engage in processes of materialisation that support many fashion products in combination with counterfeits. Chapter 8 brings a detailed discussion of the findings from the last two chapters exploring the relationship between materiality and risk that supports consumers' experiences around counterfeits. Chapter 9 summarises and draws conclusions from the key findings. It highlights the study's limitations and suggests future developments.

Chapter 2: Revisiting the Consumption of Counterfeit Goods

This chapter gives an overview of the consumer research on the consumption of counterfeit goods. First it discusses the origins of imitations. Then it presents a panorama of the global market of counterfeiting. Following that it discusses the traditional perspectives in consumer research and further reflects on the influence of consumer culture in the consumption of counterfeits. Finally, it examines the consumption of counterfeits in the Brazilian context.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The consumption of counterfeit goods has been part of the consumer research agenda for three decades. In most studies consumers of counterfeits are described as money-conscious (Harvey & Ronkainen, 1985; Chakraborty, Allred & Bristol, 1996; Ang, Cheng, Lim & Tambyah, 2001; Wiedmann, Hennigs & Klarmann, 2012), bargain hunters (Bush, Bloch & Dawson, 1989; Gistri, Romani, Pace, Gabrielli & Grappi, 2009b; Penz & Stöttinger, 2005) and/or brand aficionados (Wilcox, Kim & Sen, 2009; Ahuvia et al., 2012; Stöttinger & Penz, 2015), who are not rational decision makers but also highly unethical individuals (Cordell, Wongtada & Kieschnick, 1996; Ang et al., 2001; Hamelin, Nwankwo & Hadouchi, 2012). Interpretive consumer research has shed some light on the phenomenon, exploring many ways in which consumers can actively rework the meanings of consumption using counterfeits together with genuine products to express their identities (Hoe, Hogg & Hart, 2003; Strehlau, 2005; Jiang & Cova, 2012; Perez, Castaño & Quintanilla, 2010; Kuever, 2014). To advance on the current knowledge in this chapter relevant literature is reviewed to identify the limitations of the consumer research on the consumption of counterfeits.

The chapter starts with a brief history of imitation. Then it presents the latest figures for the global market of counterfeiting and discusses governmental actions to control the situation. Following that it presents the key definitions regarding the consumption of counterfeits. Next it explores traditional research perspectives and new directions in consumer research regarding the consumption of counterfeits. Then it discusses the conceptual frameworks that aim to classify consumers of counterfeit goods and explain their behaviours. Finally, it examines the consumption of counterfeits in Brazil, the

research context under examination for this thesis.

2.2 THE ORIGINS OF IMITATIONS

Consumption of counterfeit goods is a contemporary global phenomenon (Lambkin & Tyndall, 2009; Zimmerman, 2011; Raustiala, Sprigman & Sprigman, 2012). However the existence of counterfeit objects can be traced far back to Ancient times (Jones, 1994). Imitation of artefacts has been going on from the earliest times 'often based on the necessity to satisfy demand for a particular commodity, when other modes of obtaining it—by importing it (trade), stealing it (booty) or getting skilled craftspeople to produce it (as in the case of Sydonian women brought to Troy)—are impossible or impractical' (Gleba, 2014, p.97). Consequently, with knowledge circulation not only technologies but also culture, customs and artistic expressions were transmitted across borders as forms, patterns and styles brought by craftspeople and these began to be imitated locally (Rebay-Salisbury, Brysbaert & Foxhall, 2014). An example is a pottery jar made in Germany imitating the style and sheen of Roman metal vessels (The British Museum, n.d.) This piece dates from the late 3rd century A.D. and comprises both design and material imitations.

Inspiration from other cultures can even create fashions. The Roman emperor Hadrian's interest in Egyptian cults encouraged a series of copies and "interpretations" of Ptolemaic sculptures, like the ones found in Hadrian's villa at Tivoli[1] (Ashton, 2002). Hadrian's admiration for Egyptian style created a fashion among the Romans for 'collecting Egyptian ornaments, statues, and other things, that ensured not only a steady export of Egyptian antiquities to the cities of the Roman Empire, but that such antiquities would be copied by artisans working in Europe' (Curl, 2013 p. xxiii). In both examples, it is possible to see that the desire for fashionable objects drives imitations.

The circulation of commodities in early times also brought challenges regarding product integrity For this reason merchants of consumables in Mesopotamia created standardised seals and packaging to ensure the product's integrity and demarcate its place of production and quality (Wengrow, 2008). These seals worked as brands as they

guaranteed the products traded beyond face-to-face contacts (Holt, 2006). This seems a straightforward response to problems of product adulterations but it also indicates that imitations, and possibly counterfeiting, grew alongside trade expansions. Two studies on the consumption of counterfeits (Wilcox, Kim & Sen, 2009; Jiang & Cova, 2012) used the story of a merchant in Gaul, who was reported for counterfeiting wine by selling a cheap local product as an expensive Roman product around A.D. 27, to suggest at least two millenniums of brand counterfeiting. This example indicates that even though a brand arouses a response to prevent imitations inevitably this becomes another aspect of the product to be reproduced.

Imitation is not only linked to the reproduction of objects as individuals often get involved in the imitation of customs, clothing and behaviour of prominent members of society. In the sixteenth century the increasing use of goods for social competition generated a system of consumption where the nobility looked for signs of patina on objects to detect false representations (McCracken, 1990). Patina is the thin sheen layer that accumulates on objects over years of use testifying its existence in the family for several generations. McCracken (1990) explains that the social purpose of patina is to represent family traditions and nobility once objects can be easily counterfeited and used in misleading ways. The author explains that

> Some members of every community have engaged in acts of misrepresentation. In the sixteenth century, Sir Thomas Elyot expressed his irritation with the "taylour or barbour [who] in the excess of apparayle [would] counterfaite and be lyke a gentilman" (Elyot 1907).

> This difficulty has increased as people have moved from face-to-face societies in which the status of each individual is a matter of common knowledge to relatively anonymous societies in which status must often be inferred by an individual's physical possessions (McCracken, 1990, p.33 p.).

To McCracken (1990) the patina is one of four strategies in place at society to correct status misrepresentations. The other three strategies are sumptuary legislation, insignias of honour and "invisible inks" where knowledge and signs of belongings are cultivated within social groups (McCracken, 1990, p.34), as seen in the works of Bourdieu (1984)

and Douglas & Isherwood (1996). McCracken (1990) recognises that the patina strategy was eclipsed by the emergence of fashion in the eighteenth century. Nevertheless the author provides historical evidence that deceptive behaviour among consumers dates back to the sixteenth century. Therefore it is possible to see that the game of imitation is far from being a novelty in the history of consumer society.

Overall this section highlights that imitation lies at the centre of knowledge circulation, fashion dynamics and status representations. It also shows that brands emerged in response to forgeries predating the advent of trademark laws and mass-produced counterfeits.

2.2.2 The Global Market of Counterfeiting

Over the years technological developments have helped to amplify the scale of production of an array of counterfeit goods that are sold globally in local popular markets, personally and more recently in digital marketplaces (Johnson, 2015; Simpson, 2015). In spite of their widespread availability, estimating the size of a market grounded on illicit activities is challenging (Zimmerman, 2011). The latest effort by the International Chamber of Commerce to try to measure its size points out that the 'total global value of counterfeiting and piracy could reach a staggering $1.7 trillion' in 2015 (Hardy, 2014). Alternatively, the American border officials claimed to have seized $1.2 billion worth of counterfeits while the European Commission reported a 10% loss in revenue by the clothes and accessories industry due to counterfeiting in data released on July 21st 2015 (Economist, 2015). Certainly, this and any other numbers touted by authorities represent only a projection of the market, usually an estimated number based on the amount of counterfeit products intercepted by customs in several countries (Zimmerman, 2011).

In any case, the ever growing apprehension of counterfeits by the authorities around the globe (Moore, 2013; 2014; 2015) certainly points to the fact that watches, bags, clothing, jewellery and perfume represent the majority of counterfeits seized at borders (Hardy, 2014) and further suggests that consumers are getting used to the idea of consuming goods that are not necessarily sold by official or licensed retailers. In the

developed markets in Western Europe and American societies, neighbourhoods selling counterfeits have become tourist attractions, such as the Canal Street district in New York City, leading local authorities to ponder legislation to fine, or even arrest, consumers in action (Plot, 2013). Meanwhile e-commerce involving counterfeits goods has grown to such a significant level that producers of 'deluxe products' (Thomas, 2007) are not only filing lawsuits against digital marketplaces but also trying to implicate the third parties that have facilitated sales like PayPal (Whitworth, 2011) and Alibaba, the biggest Chinese digital marketplace (Economist, 2015). They are following the steps of the conglomerate LVMH, Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton SE, which won legal actions against Google and eBay a few years ago (Bauerova, 2008)

In emerging markets such as the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China), South Korea, Mexico, Indonesia, Turkey and Saudi Arabia the local and political circumstances prevent companies from seeking legal compensations from counterfeiters and dealers (Lambkin & Tyndall, 2009; Raustiala, Sprigman & Sprigman, 2012) and in extreme cases even consumers may find it challenging to trust the regulatory and legal regimes in their country as is the case in China (see Kuever, 2014). Adding to that, the poor governmental control in developing markets allows an abundance of counterfeits (BASCAP, 2007) to be offered alongside common products in popular markets and small shops that are visited on a regular basis by consumers (Perez, Castaño & Quintanilla, 2010; Kravets & Sandikci, 2014; Kuever, 2014), who nevertheless benefit from lax law enforcement (Staake, Thiesse & Fleisch, 2009). In these markets counterfeit goods can also be sold door-to-door (Perez, Castaño & Quintanilla, 2010; Pinheiro-Machado, 2010). In particular in Brazil, the country that serves as the context for this research, personal sellers are now offering counterfeits via social networks, as evidenced during the fieldwork for this thesis.

All things considered, the global market for counterfeit goods seems stronger than ever. Regardless of the market, whether developed or emerging, skilful counterfeiters, astute dealers and attentive sellers reach consumers through a variety of marketplaces. As a result the authorities' efforts to control the situation in developed markets (Mikuriya, 2015) seem hopeless with the current outdated legislation that is unable to deal with the problem on a global scale and without much cooperation from governments in emergent

markets (Raustiala, Sprigman & Sprigman, 2012). Unsurprisingly, counterfeiting is deemed 'the crime of the 21st century' (Lambkin & Tyndall, 2009, p.35). However it is puzzling that three decades ago the consumer research had already raised the issue without much success (Harvey & Ronkainen, 1985).

2.3 KEY CONCEPTS REGARDING THE CONSUMPTION OF COUNTERFEIT GOODS

> Counterfeiting can be defined as the unauthorised production, importation, distribution and sale of goods displaying trademarks without authorisation of use or ownership of the property rights (IPO, n.d.).

This definition, based on information from the Intellectual Property Office (n.d.), in the United Kingdom, intends to clarify that piracy and counterfeiting are in fact distinct types of intellectual property infringement. Essentially, 'copyrights and patents can only be pirated whereas trademarks can only be counterfeited' (Paradise [1999] in Eisend & Schuchert-Güler, 2006, p.5). This is because copyright and patents laws aim to secure the creative aspects of intellectual property and hence protect the authors' original artistic creation in 'many types of work, from music and lyrics to photographs and knitting patterns' (IPO, n.d. para. 1). They also protect the creative aspect of inventions, which 'covers how things work, what they do, how they do it, what they are made of and how they are made' (IPO, n.d. para. 2). However artistic creations and inventions need to remain intact to be recognised as they are. Consequently the resulting product needs to be replicated in full and so whenever someone's creativity is used without the owner's authorisation it can be said that have been smuggled, or pirated.

In contrast, the object's characteristics like its form, pattern and style can be fully imitated (Jones, 1994; Rebay-Salisbury, Brysbaert & Foxhall, 2014), as discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Moreover the reproduction of key details could be enough for an object to resemble another (as seen in Gleba, 2014), thus facilitating its imitation and further product counterfeiting. Unfortunately, intellectual property laws can only protect companies against unauthorised use of their brands—the logo (i.e. icon, typography and slogan) that identifies products and services in the marketplace—but not imitation of

their industrial designs (IPO, n.d.). This means that only products that display trademarks are in fact counterfeits and consequently their production, importation, distribution and sale are considered a criminal act. As a result of such law limitations companies have to register industrial designs separately for each product to in order to have legal rights protection over the product's visual appearance. It is worth noting that an industrial design can be registered worldwide via the Hague System of International Registration of Industrial Designs, which is under the administration of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO n.d.).

However, to register an industrial design takes time, a minimum of six months (WIPO n.d.), and this practice is impaired by the fashion system and its urge for novelty (Veblen, 2003[1899]; Simmel, 1957[1904]; McCracken, 1990). Moreover such a system of innovativeness has inevitably led the fashion industry towards a culture of "borrowed" inspirations, replications of past collections and style copycats (as seen in the examples in Crane, 2000). It is no surprise that imitation practices have come to define the newest market segment in the fashion industry, fast fashion (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2010).

In addition to that, fashion brands rely heavily on brand extension strategies to maximise profit and gain or maintain their visibility in the marketplace (Aaker & Keller, 1990). However gains in brand awareness compromise law protection as it is almost unfeasible to register the industrial design of every piece of merchandise created (cf. Whymark, 2015). A similar strategy is also common in the luxury market with most brands undertaking trading-down extensions of their products as they 'aim at leveraging the prestige of the name they carry in order to harvest the royalties of, say, masstige fragrances, eyewear, accessories, and so on' (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009, p.312). Their effort to stimulate the desire for consumption is (Sassatelli, 2007) inevitably reflected in the consumption of counterfeits with watches, bags, clothing, jewellery and perfume accounting for the majority of products on sale in counterfeit markets around the globe (Elings, Keith & Wukoson, 2013), as discussed previously.

The consumption of fashion in relation to the consumption of counterfeits is discussed in greater detail in chapter four.

2.3.1 Nuanced Definition of Counterfeit Goods

The consumer research literature offers less rigid conceptualisations of counterfeiting as it considers consumers' perceptions as well as the socio-cultural aspects of markets that influence the understandings of the nature of counterfeit goods. Gentry, et al. (2001) questioned the idea of a dichotomous choice between a trademark and the evident fake product (e.g. low quality reproductions, dissimilar imitations, misspelled labels, etc.) and proposed a more nuanced definition of counterfeit goods. To the authors the existence of counterfeits in the market allows consumers to search "within" brands and therefore their choice varies in a genuine-counterfeit continuum.

Figure 2.1
Genuine-counterfeit Continuum

Genuine item	Second	Overrun	Legitimate copycat	High quality counterfeit	Low quality counterfeit
Original product with full warranty	Manufacturer authorized products with defects or out of date	Manufacturer unauthorized locally produced to original standards	Retailers such as the Limited copy designs from fashion houses	Not produced to original standards yet similar on key attributes	Significantly different from original on several key attributes

Source: Gentry, et al. (2001, p.262).

Gentry, et al.'s (2001) continuum ranges from the genuine item, on the left, through to second-class products (legal merchandise sold in outlet retailers), and to overrun (unauthorised production and/or commercialisation) also known as seconded products (Kuever, 2014, p.182). Following this comes the legitimate copycat and finally the counterfeits, on the right. On the extreme right there are: (a) high quality counterfeits, sophisticated reproductions with regard to which the consumer regards the key attributes almost indistinguishable from the genuine product, and (b) low quality counterfeits, which are considered to be of inferior quality by the consumer because several key attributes are poorly reproduced and easier to distinguish from the original (Gentry et al., 2001).

This continuum represents a starting point for the idea that consumers' understanding of the phenomenon of counterfeiting prevails over more technical definitions, like that proposed by the Intellectual Property Office (IPO, n.d.). As shown in the genuine-counterfeit continuum (Gentry et al., 2001), a clear distinction between genuine products, seconded (Kuever, 2014), and various counterfeits is challenging because consumers take into account a combination of tangible and intangible attributes (Prendergast, Chuen & Phau, 2002). Also, from a theoretical perspective it is more important to understand whether the consumption of counterfeits is non-deceptive (Grossman & Shapiro, 1988) because consumers' awareness of their actions brings the possibility of investigating more personal and subjective values behind their choice of counterfeit goods.

In line with this idea, Eisend & Schuchert-Güller (2006) propose that:

> Counterfeiting means that an original product with a remarkable brand value worth copying already exists on the market. Its characteristics are copied into another product as to be indistinguishable from the original and sold at a lower price as if it were the original, whereas consumers are well aware of the difference between the two products. (Eisend & Schuchert-Güler, 2006, p.2)

Eisend & Schuchert-Güller's (2006) concept of counterfeiting takes into consideration consumers' perspectives as it highlights their capacity to distinguish between products and it therefore accounts for consumers' non-deceptive behaviour (Grossman & Shapiro, 1988). Additionally, their definition expands on other theoretical conceptualisations by including the brand value as an element being "copied" (Jiang & Cova, 2012).

Overall the technical and theoretical concepts discussed here are useful to clarify the concept of counterfeiting as the imitation of key attributes of a product with appealing style and, in most cases, remarkable brand image (Gentry et al., 2001; Eisend & Schuchert-Güler, 2006). Furthermore, it is also useful to clarify that imitations may display a brand from another retailer, what Gentry, et al. (2001, p.262) call a 'legitimate copycat'. This is the case for clothes and accessories on sale at fast fashion retailers (Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2010) that imitate the product designs of traditional luxury

brands (Truong:2009ef; Kapferer & Bastien, 2009). Other studies have also addressed the consumption of imitations without brand display; what they call generic merchandise (Grossman & Shapiro, 1988) and non-logo products (Bloch, Bush & Campbell, 1993). Therefore it is suggested in this thesis that the term inspired-item should be used in reference to imitations of product designs in both cases: (a) without a brand display or (b) bearing a brand from another retailer. Inspired-item is an emic term (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) grounded on the interviews and observational data collected for this thesis.

In addition, a review of the marketing and consumer research shows that terms such as originals, genuine or authentic products are used interchangeably. In order to maintain consistency within the text the term genuine-item, as per Commuri (2009), is used, to substitute for any term that makes reference to a trademark product sold under the authorisation of the company that holds its property rights. This term also aligns with the term inspired-item proposed here as a replacement for any term that makes reference to imitations of product design.

2.3.2 The Concept of a Plentiful Market of Counterfeits

A plentiful market of counterfeits is a trade condition in which consumers can easily consider not only genuine-items but also a variety of counterfeits when searching for goods (Gentry et al., 2001). This idea evolved from Gentry, et al.'s (2001, p.262) genuine-counterfeit continuum in order to support the development of the 'revised search model' that seeks to explain consumers' search including counterfeit items. The model is grounded on Bloch, Sherrel & Ridgway's (1986) traditional model of consumer search behaviour and extends it by considering that in a market where there are few counterfeit goods, once consumers decide to buy a product, their search will be restricted to the brand, assessing quality and price, as this typical search model predicts.

In contrast, consumers living in a plentiful market of counterfeits can look for products "with" a brand instead of genuine-items. As a result they can first make a product decision and then decide on a brand, or vice-versa (Gentry et al., 2001). Following that, consumers may wish to take their search for products a little further, considering not

only a genuine-item but also counterfeits at the different levels of quality and price before making their final decision (Gentry et al., 2001). Moreover, these consumers need to find extra tips to distinguish between genuine-items and an array of counterfeits on offer; as such they need to evaluate something other than the price and for this reason consumers start to pay attention to the retailer's characteristics when making a consumption decision (Gentry et al., 2001). Hence the authors adapt Bloch, Sherrell & Ridgway's (1986) model to explain a consumer search that includes counterfeit goods.

Figure 2.2
Revised Search Model
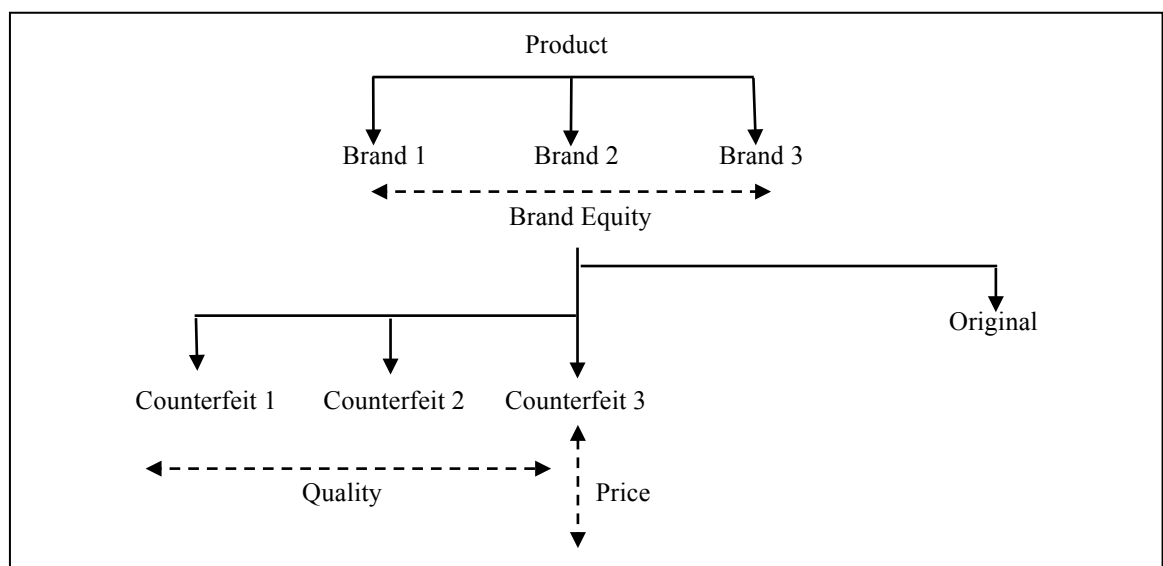
Source: Gentry, et al. (2001, p.264).

According to Gentry, et al. (2001) an abundant supply of and easy access to counterfeits leads consumers of counterfeits to give many different justifications for their consumption. In this situation, some consumers may justify their choice by the lower price (Bush, Bloch & Dawson, 1989) while others will justify it as a question of taste and appearance (Gentry, Putrevu & Shultz, 2006). Another aspect in their choice is the trade-off quality versus price, in which a counterfeit is regarded as a product that offers more for less (Gentry et al., 2001). As the authors explain, such justified choices are a way of: using price as a proxy for similarity; pre-testing the purchase of the genuine product; and experimenting with the latest fashion at a lower price (Gentry et al., 2001). There is also a choice based on two combined justifications: the growing acceptance of consumption and modification of the assessment criteria of such goods,

which makes counterfeit consumption a more socially acceptable and, in some cases, 'guilt-free alternative' (Gentry et al., 2001, p.259).

The 'revised search model' (Gentry et al., 2001, p.264) effectively illustrates the idea of the consumption of counterfeits as choices that vary according to consumers' perceptions. On the one hand, it provides a straightforward understanding of the reasons why some consumers are attracted by a counterfeit's low price while others will pay extra for quality (Gentry et al., 2001), which could mean more similarity to its trademark. On the other hand, the model focuses on the extreme right side of the genuine-counterfeit continuum and therefore it fails to incorporate the same variety of choices seen in the continuum (i.e. second class, overrun and legitimate copycat—i.e. inspired-item). The wider range of products in the model would have shed some light on Bloch, Bush & Campbell's (1993) first study, which investigated consumers' choice between three types of products: counterfeits, inspired-items and genuine-items, which was limited by the type of product selected for the study, a very basic shirt in a conventional style and colour from a middle-range brand.

Overall, the concept of a plentiful market of counterfeits helps to identify, and distinguish between, research contexts where the consumption of counterfeits is less constrained by legislation increasing the degree of freedom for consumers to consider more personal and subjective meanings. The BRIC countries, which are notorious for their popular markets with a high volume of counterfeit products (Perez, Castaño & Quintanilla, 2010; Pinheiro-Machado, 2010; Kuever, 2014) are good examples of plentiful counterfeit markets, though other countries around the globe such as Morocco, Turkey and Thailand (Commuri, 2009; Hamelin, Nwankwo & Hadouchi, 2012; Kravets & Sandikci, 2014) can also be conceptualised in the same way. Altogether these countries represent emerging markets where economic growth and recent socio-cultural changes facilitate access to consumer goods but the local conditions such as a 'haze of contrasting career paths, multifarious income sources, and contradictory consumption patterns' indicate the importance of accounting for particularities in consumer behaviour (Kravets & Sandikci, 2014, p.125).

2.4 TRADITIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE CONSUMPTION OF COUNTERFEIT GOODS

The consumption of counterfeit goods has been part of the consumer research agenda for three decades. Looking at the supply side, the first studies to address the topic mainly produced a snapshot of the counterfeit market in America around the late 1980s (Harvey & Ronkainen, 1985; Grossman & Shapiro, 1986; 1988). Notably, they already deemed the consumption of counterfeits an escalating problem that would cost millions to businesses and span the globe affecting not only local markets but also U.S. export markets in Asia, Mexico and Brazil (1985).

It was also seen in these first studies that mass produced counterfeits 'mushroomed' in America around the 1970s (Harvey & Ronkainen, 1985 p. 37) although it was already a mature market in other countries (Harvey & Ronkainen, 1985; Grossman & Shapiro, 1986). Like in Italy, where Louis Vuitton 'withdrew from that market entirely in the late 1970s when it found itself unable to compete with the counterfeiters of its products' (Grossman & Shapiro, 1988, p.81). The opposite reaction to the conglomerate LVMH's recent response to counterfeiting is discussed in section 2.2.2 (page 20). However, looking at these studies retrospectively we can see that rather than being a side effect of China's industrialisation from the late 1990s, the emergence of mass-produced counterfeits actually followed the development of the market economy and the evolution of the 'consumer society' (Sassatelli, 2007). This is in line with the surge of imitations of artefacts, the spread of fashion from ancient history (Gleba, 2014; Rebay-Salisbury, Brysbaert & Foxhall, 2014) and the increasing use of goods for status representation in the sixteenth century (McCracken, 1990).

The motivation behind the first studies on the consumption of counterfeits was *The Trademark Counterfeiting Act of 1984*, which made counterfeiting a 'criminal offence with stiff jail terms for individuals and multimillion dollar fines for business offenders' (Bush, Bloch & Dawson, 1989, p.60). Consequently, these studies focus on discussing a series of efforts to control the sales of counterfeits in the local market. As such they approach the consumption of counterfeits as either a managerial or an economic problem.

2.4.1 Managerial Perspectives

Harvey & Ronkainen's (1985) study is the first piece of research that is known to have investigated counterfeiting markets. The authors adopted a managerial approach where they first described a series of counterfeiting strategies and later proposed a series of actions to prevent counterfeiting. The four counterfeit strategies are: (a) direct counterfeiting that counts as the explicit involvement of the counterfeiter stealing or duplicating the product; (b) direct counterfeiting where employees provide the product information for the counterfeiter; (c) indirect counterfeiting where the product information is acquired by a third party; and (d) indirect counterfeiting, which involves a third party and a producer in a foreign market (Harvey & Ronkainen, 1985).

Harvey & Ronkainen (1985) suggest a series of actions whereby the government should educate and conduct bilateral and even multilateral negotiations with countries known for their production of counterfeits but sanction those with repeated cases of law infringements. They also suggest that industry lobby groups should appeal for tougher legislation, arguing that the newly created law is inefficient. Companies, in turn, should educate consumers, taking pro-active action against counterfeiting by registering trademarks and also building a task-force of vigilant employees to report cases of counterfeiting (Harvey & Ronkainen, 1985).

2.4.2 Economic Perspectives

Grossman & Shapiro's (1986) first study opts for an economic approach to investigate the counterfeiting markets. In this study they rely on classical economic ideas, such as a credible price-quality offer from trademark producers and more resources for border controls. In their second study, Grossman & Shapiro (1988) questioned a few economic conventions and introduced ideas to the topic by valuing consumers' perspectives. This contribution is discussed in the following section.

Grossman & Shapiro (1986) first study developed an economic model to capture the essential features of the counterfeiting market in order to analyse two public policies:

increasing border controls and new tariffs on low-quality imports. They proposed the creation of a tariff on low-quality imports, arguing that most foreign counterfeiting is shipped as generic merchandise, and labels are added to products after customs clearance. The authors grounded their proposal on a series of economic equations that show that a tariff on low-quality imports could discourage consumers from purchasing counterfeits because the taxes would increase the price of fake goods (as a consequence of higher operational costs) and reduce the gap between these products and high-quality goods on offer in the market. They claimed that the tariff would be more cost effective due to the direct costs associated with policing activities to control the borders and search for counterfeits in the market (Grossman & Shapiro, 1986).

Grossman & Shapiro (1986) have introduced these ideas to deal with counterfeiting when the market for these products started to show expressive growth. If applied, these ideas would possibly have controlled the growth of counterfeiting trade. Even today, increasing border controls, strengthening legislation and seeking legal action remain the strategies in play when it comes to combat counterfeiting (Lambkin & Tyndall, 2009; Zimmerman, 2011; Raustiala, Sprigman & Sprigman, 2012). However these actions have proved to be ineffective in controlling counterfeiting thus far (Economist, 2015). In addition, as the trade of counterfeit products migrates to digital channels (Simpson, 2015) it is becoming harder and harder to control the situation, as discussed in section 2.2.2 (pages 19-20).

2.4.3 Behavioural Perspectives

The evolution of consumer research came from Grossman & Shapiro's (1988) second study, which expanded the study's economic perspective by exploring the consumer perspective with regard to the consumption of counterfeits. Firstly, they argue that consumers' choice navigates between three types of products: the 'brand-name trademarks', the counterfeits and the generic merchandise (i.e. inspired-item) that imitates the genuine-items (Grossman & Shapiro, 1988, p.79). This choice, considering three types of products, was also applied by Bloch, Bush & Campbell (1993) but then this idea was put aside by future studies on consumer behaviour and consequently the majority of the literature still frames the consumption of counterfeits as a binary choice

between counterfeit and genuine products.

Secondly, Grossman & Shapiro (1988) introduce the idea of non-deceptive consumption of counterfeits by arguing that:

> Consumers often know (or strongly suspect) when they are purchasing a counterfeit. They distinguish fakes from legitimate, brand-name goods either by close inspection, or because the legitimate producers can effectively signal their authenticity by restricting and monitoring the distribution channels through which their goods are sold. (Grossman & Shapiro, 1988, p.80)

In contrast to the first idea (i.e. consumers' choice among genuine-items, counterfeits or inspired-items), the concept of non-deceptive consumption behaviour was promptly disseminated by other studies in the field (Bloch, Bush & Campbell, 1993; Chakraborty, Allred & Bristol, 1996; Wee, Ta & Cheok, 1995).

First, looking at the demand side, Bush, Bloch & Dawson (1989) evaluated consumers' opinions in a survey that also examined manufacturers' and distributors' capacity to identify counterfeit goods. This was the first study that empirically demonstrated that consumers are aware of buying counterfeits. This study also argues that because consumers of counterfeits are willing to sacrifice the product's long-term performance over its appearance the use of advertising emphasising the "dangers" of counterfeiting would not sensitise this audience (Bush, Bloch & Dawson, 1989).

Consumers' trade-off between product performance and brand image was further developed by Bloch, Bush & Campbell (1993, p.30). In their study consumers in shopping malls were asked to select from a 'designer label', a counterfeit and a non-logo shirt of a similar design and colour (i.e. an imitation), putting to the test Grossman & Shapiro's (1988) idea. For the most part Bloch, Bush, & Campbell's (1993, p.29) analysis described more commonplace ideas, such as, the 'counterfeit buyer is looking to gain the image benefits associated with the brand at a bargain price'. Interestingly, Bloch, Bush, & Campbell's (1993, p.34) study points out that all consumers evaluated the product's fashionability more than brand image despite their choice (i.e. designer label, counterfeit or non-logo t-shirt). Even though the authors discuss the implications

of this finding, this result suggests that consumers' desire for fashion is also an important aspect of the consumption of counterfeits.

Furthermore, Bloch, Bush & Campbell (1993) observed that consumers favour counterfeits in those product categories where performance risks are low such as clothes and jewellery, but this is not the case for drugs or auto-parts. The concept of performance risk was created by these authors to emphasise the role of risk in mediating the consumption of counterfeits. It means that consumers will consider what risks are at stake but not necessarily choose to avoid them (Bloch, Bush & Campbell, 1993). Thus performance risk underlines the importance of consumers' perception of risk in the consumption of counterfeits. Subsequent studies used risk as a variable to measure specific aspects of the consumption of counterfeits, much in line with the positivist agenda that dominates consumer research (Eisend & Schuchert-Güler, 2006; Staake, Thiesse & Fleisch, 2009). The following section explores positivist studies on risk and counterfeits.

To conclude this section it is important to highlight that the behavioural perspective is the prevailing approach in consumer research investigating the consumption of counterfeits. These studies aim to identify the purchase determinants in the consumption of counterfeit goods, and as such they tend to strive for objectivity, searching for rational answers driven by utilitarian principles (Eisend & Schuchert-Güler, 2006). In addition, Staake, Thiesse & Fleisch's (2009, p.325) comprehensive review shows that while consumers of counterfeits are far from underrepresented in the literature, most articles on the topic focus on 'selected aspects of consumer behavior, perhaps because established research tools can be applied to many related research questions of interest'. As a result the behavioural consumer research leaves unaddressed the meanings and experiences around the consumption of counterfeit goods. Recently, interpretive consumer research supported by the Consumer Culture Theory (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) approach has shed some light on the consumption of counterfeits by exploring the way in which consumption meanings are 'embodied and negotiated by consumers in particular social situations, roles and relationships' (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p.869). This approach is discussed in section 2.4.4 (page 36).

2.4.3.1 Risk Perception in the Consumption of Counterfeit Goods

Considering that a large number of factors influence the way in which individuals assess risk (Bora, 2007) the topic has been under investigation in the positivist literature on the consumption of counterfeits since early studies. The first study from Bloch, Bush & Campbell (1993) proposed the idea of performance risk to emphasise the role of risk in mediating the consumption of counterfeits. Despite this fact subsequent studies have chosen a more positivist route and have begun to argue that risk is a barrier that consumers must overcome in order to make the first decision in favour of counterfeit goods.

Certain that consumers' risk aversion would prevent the consumption of counterfeits, Wee, Tan & Cheok (1995, p.39) conducted a multiple regression analysis combining existing marketing constructs with a new set of variables: attitude towards counterfeiting, brand status, risk taking, and novelty seeking. Unable to prove the correlation between risk and consumers' purchasing intentions Wee, Tan & Cheok (1995) withdrew the variable risk taking from the model, failing to acknowledge that risk taking reflects a macro-social process (Lupton, 1999a; Mythen, 2004) while the other constructs (i.e. attitude towards counterfeiting, brand status and novelty-seeking) are mainly on an individual level of analysis by measuring consumers' perception of particular behaviours or products' attributes.

Following this, Cordell, Wongtada & Kieschnick (1996) focused on the relationship between consumers' willingness to buy counterfeits and their attitude towards lawfulness. Expecting that consumers would mitigate the risk of monetary loss the authors selected a series of attributes (i.e. price, brand awareness and retailer reputation) in order to measure consumers' expectations regarding financial and performance risks, with products subdivided into categories of high (electronics) and low (clothes) investment-at-risk. The results show that negative performance expectations prevent the consumption of counterfeits in both categories (Staake, Thiesse & Fleisch, 2009) but the study's relevance to research on risk lies in the section 'inconsistent' findings.

For Cordell, Wongtada & Kieschnick (1996) the variable price failed to explain why

discounts offered on genuine-items of low investment-at-risk such as clothes did not diminish consumers' willingness to buy counterfeits. Also, the authors claim that 'subjects were more likely to prefer the high risk counterfeit from the respected retailer than from the flea market' (Cordell, Wongtada & Kieschnick, 1996, p.50). In line with their model, a respected retailer is a type of store that lies in between a prestige store and a flea market but nevertheless the consumption of the product is non-deceptive. The inconsistency Cordell, Wongtada & Kieschnick (1996) attribute to these findings has in common the variable retailer reputation, which evokes consumers' risk experiences in everyday life. It shows that consumers' perceptions of risk are 'constantly constructed and negotiated as part of the network of social interaction' (Lupton, 1999a, p.31).

What Cordell, Wongtada & Kieschnick (1996) failed to acknowledge is that consumers' positive experiences in the retail environment mitigate the risks of consuming counterfeits despite the product categories (high and low investment-at-risk). Chakraborty, Allred, & Bristol (1996) tried to investigate how consumers' reality influences their risk perception. Therefore these authors developed a model in which individuals' perception of risk should help to predict, and then dissuade, consumers from 'non-deceptive' consumption of counterfeits (Grossman & Shapiro, 1988). Chakraborty, Allred, & Bristol's (1996) study measured consumers' ethnocentrism comparing it with their perceptions of risk regarding the genuine brand's country-of-origin and the country of manufacture of counterfeit goods. To the authors the place of production is a major source of risk and they claim: 'we found that highly ethnocentric consumers evaluate counterfeits to be of lesser quality when the original is made in the U.S. rather than in Germany' (Chakraborty, Allred & Bristol, 1996, p.379). Chakraborty, Allred, & Bristol's (1996) study followed a positivist approach that emphasises in risk the 'discrepancy between the calculations of an ideal rational agent and a real agent' (Edgar & Sedgwick, 2007, p.295). Nevertheless they neglected their own morality and cultural bias in the design of their predictive model (Douglas, 1992).

In every society there 'is a cultural pattern in the ways in which certain phenomena are identified and dealt with as 'risks'' (Lupton, 1999a, p.31). This makes ethnocentrism, the 'belief that the norms, values, ideology, customs, and traditions of one's own culture or subculture are superior to those characterizing other cultural settings' (Brown, 2007,

p.1478), a highly inadequate concept to deal with the perception of risk in the consumption of counterfeits, in particular, when considering the influence of individuals' morality (Belk, Devinney & Eckhardt, 2006; Eckhardt & Belk, 2010) and its interplay with the social relations (Douglas, 1992; Lupton, 1999a; Bourdieu, 2005) influencing consumers choice' and overall behaviour. Moreover, Chakraborty, Allred, & Bristol (1996) neglected Bloch, Bush & Campbell's (1993, p.35) work when they explained that 'counterfeit buyers are not deterred by concerns for legality and social welfare, and even recognize that they are buying lower quality' products. Therefore consumers' risk perception is not enough to prevent the consumption of counterfeits.

Moreover, Chakraborty, Allred & Bristol's (1996) study fails to use an established theoretical framework to measure consumers' attitudes towards counterfeits (Eisend & Schuchert-Güler, 2006). However the major problem lies in the fact that later studies (Wee, Ta & Cheok, 1995; Nia & Zaichkowsky, 2000; Ang et al., 2001; Tan, 2002) kept up with the practice of modelling consumers' perceived risk to measure attitudes towards counterfeits without considering the individual experiences, the market characteristics and consumer culture around the consumption of counterfeits. This is the case for Ang, Cheng, Lim & Tambyah's (2001) survey with consumers in Singapore, the results of which point out that some consumers consider the consumption of counterfeits less risky and less unethical. However the authors failed to see that the distinctive consumer culture in the Singaporean emerging market heavily influenced the result of their survey and instead they justified their findings with the fact that these consumers are quite price conscious and have a lower income (Ang et al., 2001).

The latest positivist studies that take risk into account (Hamelin, Nwankwo & Hadouchi, 2012; Romani, Gistri & Pace, 2012; Sharma & Chan, 2011; Yoo & Lee, 2012) have still developed models where consumers' perceived risk helps to measure their attitude towards the consumption of counterfeits. The exception is Stottinger & Penz's (2015) study, which opts for an approach that at least sees risk as a multi-dimensional construct while trying to link risk performance (Bush, Bloch & Dawson, 1989) to psychological risk (Veloutsou & Bian, 2008) to understand why consumers will have both genuine-items and counterfeit products from the same brand, and to explore consumer decisions beyond a dyadic choice.

For example, Hamelin, Nwankwo & Hadouchi (2012, p.163) created an intricate model that combines socio-demographic factors with 'blocking factors' (i.e. warranty, embarrassment, integrity, authority [control], health, disappointment and performance) and product attributes such as price, quality, design, safety, visibility, and access, not forgetting the country-of-origin construct, which shows that the logic behind Chakraborty, Allred & Bristol's (1996) study persists in the field. As Tulloch & Lupton (2002b, p.325) explain 'risk is the product of a way of seeing rather than an objective fact'. Therefore insights from an emerging market like Morocco, which was Hamelin, Nwankwo & Hadouchi's (2012, p.163) research context, would have helped to understand how consumers understand and experience risk outside Western Europe and American societies.

All things considered, the behavioural consumer research offers a narrow view of consumers' perception of risk as an analytical and cognitive event (Conchar, Zinkhan, Peters & Olavarrieta, 2004). Furthermore, these studies assume that consumers are averse to risk and thus their choices and actions are intended, most of all, to prevent risky situations (Edgar & Sedgwick, 2007). Risk, however, is not a criterion that individuals evaluate in isolation (Douglas, 1982; 1992; 2013) and this is not different in the case of the consumption of counterfeits. As Bloch, Bush & Campbell's (1993) study points out, consumers evaluate counterfeits' performance risk before purchasing them. Therefore this study shows that consumers seek to manage risks rather than prevent them. This idea opens up the possibility of investigating risk beyond the behavioural perspective by exploring the cultural patterns underling consumers' risk management practices to fully understand how risk is understood and negotiated in everyday life (Lupton, 1999a). The cultural perspective of risk is discussed in depth in chapter three.

2.4.4 New Directions in Consumer Research

Moving beyond the prevailing outlook in consumer research the interpretive perspective considers that counterfeits are consumed for reasons beyond their functional aspects and economic value, being used by consumers as communicative resources to interact with lived culture (Bourdieu, 1984; Slater, 1997; Featherstone, 2007). Consumer research following this perspective largely adopts Consumer Culture Theory (Arnould &

Thompson, 2005), an approach that underpins culture as the dynamic element driving the consumption cycle. This approach explores the many ways in which 'consumers' lives are constructed around multiple realities and posits that they use consumption to experience realities (linked to fantasies, evocative desires, aesthetics, and identity play) that differ dramatically for the quotidian' (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p.875). Therefore it allows for investigating the consumption of counterfeits as a meaningful activity in which consumers can construct identities, craft social differentiation, produce life experiences and so on.

Interpretive consumer research has shown that similar to the choice of any product, in the consumption of counterfeits individuals consider more personal and subjective meanings. Thus counterfeits can be just as closely related to the consumer's individuality as genuine-items (Gentry, Putrevu & Shultz, 2006). According to Hoe, Hogg & Hart (2003) this occurs because these items are as closely related to the consumer's self-image and identity as the genuine-items. Therefore, the consumer considers more personal and subjective values in choosing this product and is capable of transferring part of the meaning of the genuine product to her(him)self and building her/his identity if the counterfeit is "very similar" (Hoe, Hogg & Hart, 2003). Expanding on this idea, subsequent studies have shown that consumers of counterfeits use these products together with genuine-items as vehicles for self-expression (Strehlau, 2005; Jiang & Cova, 2012; Perez, Castaño & Quintanilla, 2010; Kuever, 2014).

A large part of the reason for the consumption of counterfeits lies in the brand image, although at different levels (Commuri, 2009; Ahuvia et al., 2012; Kuever, 2014), which is why consumers' choices will always directly or indirectly involve a brand decision (Gentry, Putrevu & Shultz, 2006). However interpretive consumer research focusing on consumers' experiences around counterfeits demonstrates that the product design in clothing and fashion accessories also represents part of the desire for these goods (Juggessur & Cohen, 2009). Consequently, the meaning creation process becomes more complex while the consumers appreciate brand image (Commuri, 2009; Ahuvia et al., 2012; Kuever, 2014) but rework the symbolic meanings existing in advertisements, brands and retail settings, combining their counterfeits and genuine-items in the search for meaningful ways of life (Belk, 1988; McCracken, 1990; Sassatelli, 2007; Lury,

2011). This aspect needs further investigation and to address this gap this thesis investigates how consumers' social experiences with counterfeits influence meanings and practices arising from consumption of counterfeit goods.

Consumers' moral conflicts have also been studied with an interpretive perspective. These studies have shown that consumers overcome their contradictory behaviour by using any justifications for their consumption actions (Belk, Devinney & Eckhardt, 2006; Eckhardt & Belk, 2010). Curiously, even though they are aware of the legal implications of their choice consumers prefer counterfeit goods since they believe that they are an attractive option (Bloch, Bush & Campbell, 1993; Ang et al., 2001; Stöttinger & Penz, 2015) and Brazilians can be included here (Matos, Ituassu & Rossi, 2007; Strehlau, Vasconcelos & Huertas, 2006). Acting in a way that is detached from their moral intentions, i.e. knowing that the counterfeits are illegal, consumers have developed a series of strategies to justify their behaviour: such as economic rationalisation, institutional dependency, and developmental realism criticism over companies' market actions (Eckhardt & Belk, 2010).

Particularly interesting for the purpose of this thesis is the consumer strategy of balancing their own ethical behaviours against possible physical harm in consuming some products, which leads to moral rationalisation where "safer" counterfeits, such as clothes and accessories, are "allowed" to be consumed (Belk, Devinney & Eckhardt, 2006). Not only do these studies (Belk, Devinney & Eckhardt, 2006; Eckhardt & Belk, 2010) provide empirical evidence for Bloch, Bush & Campbell's (1989) observation, they also demonstrate that consumers' morals may vary according to their "risky" appetite. This finding reinforces the importance of investigating consumers' perception of risk in the consumption of counterfeits. Yet only recently has interpretive consumer research started to take risk into consideration (see Perez, Castaño & Quintanilla, 2010; Kuever, 2014). The cultural aspects of risk and the interpretive studies that address risk are discussed in chapter three.

2.5 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS ON CONSUMPTION OF COUNTERFEITS

It took almost a decade since Gentry, et al. (2001) introduced their model for frameworks cross-tabulating consumers' choice between genuine-items and counterfeits along with other variables to emerge in the literature in order to classify consumers according to their consumption practices (Han, Nunes & Drèze, 2010; Ahuvia et al., 2012) and understandings of the concept of counterfeit goods (Kuever, 2014). It is worth noting that these frameworks follow different research perspectives; positivist for the Taxonomy of Luxury Goods (Han, Nunes & Drèze, 2010, p.17), and interpretive for Omnivorous consumption behaviour (Ahuvia et al., 2012, p.284) and The real and false framework (Kuever, 2014). Another reason why these frameworks are discussed is because they illustrate a single aspect of the consumption of counterfeits—categorising either consumers (Han, Nunes & Drèze, 2010; Ahuvia et al., 2012) or products (Kuever, 2014)—while the 'revised search model' (Gentry et al., 2001 p.264) has a broader application as it contemplates consumers' interactions in plentiful counterfeit markets.

2.5.1 Taxonomy of Luxury Goods

Han, Nunes, & Drèze's (2010, pp.16-17) matrix contrasts consumers' presumable wealth with their appetite for 'status or social prestige value'. The result is the classification of consumers of counterfeits into four categories using the 'four Ps of luxury: patricians, parvenus, poseurs, and proletarians'. Following Wilcox, Kim & Sen's (2009, p.250) idea of brand conspicuousness, which distinguished luxury products into those with 'prominent and ubiquitous' brand display and those whose usage is more subtle, Han, Nunes, & Drèze (2010, p.15) measured consumers' perceptions using images of what they called 'quiet and loud' luxury products.

Figure 2.3
Signal Preference and Taxonomy Based on Wealth and Need for Status
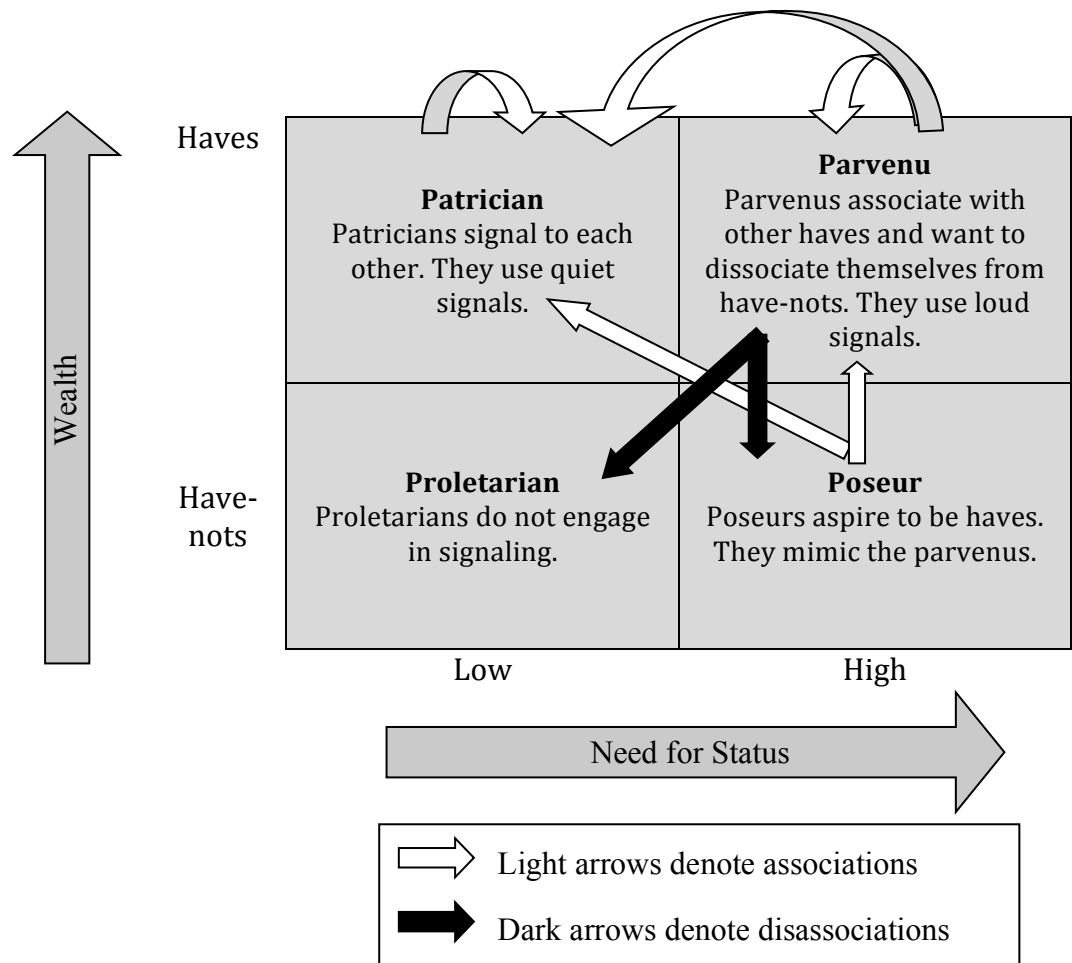
Source: (Han, Nunes & Drèze, 2010, p.17)

Clearly this study still keeps a positivist view because of its narrow focus in regard to the use of counterfeits solely as class emulation (Veblen, 2003[1899]) regardless of the social science traditions in addressing the topic (Simmel, 1957[1904]; Bourdieu, 1984; McCracken, 1990). This a priori classification is problematic because it assumes that counterfeit goods are essentially consumed as symbols of status, which narrows the scope of the research from its outset, leading to perspectives that simplistically regard consumers as status seekers using counterfeit products for the purpose of emulation and social stratification (as seen in Strehlau, Vasconcelos & Huertas, 2006; Gistri, Romani, Pace, Gabrielli & Grappi, 2009a; Juggessur & Cohen, 2009).

Another problem with Han, Nunes, & Drèze's (2010, p.15) study is that it fails to acknowledge that 'loud' products are actually accessible mass-luxury items (Brun & Castelli, 2013). A subsegment of the luxury market these 'new-luxury' products (Silverstein & Fiske, 2003) target middle-class consumers by offering products that are trading-down brand extensions (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009). Usually, in this market segment the product design must display strong or distinctive features (which sometimes means the display of an oversize logo) so the product can be easily identified by a large audience, "showing off" its premium price. An interesting aspect of Han, Nunes & Drèze's (2010) study is the importance assigned to product design to evoke consumers' desire (Juggessur & Cohen, 2009), therefore acknowledging that consumers consider a product's overall appearance and not only the brand (Prendergast, Chuen & Phau, 2002) in order to associate, or not, with a certain social group as well as to create and sustain their sense of self in society (Belk, 1988; Ahuvia, 2005).

2.5.2 Omnivorous consumption behaviour

In response to Han, Nunes, & Drèze's (2010) study, Ahuvia, et al. (2012) proposed a matrix that, rather than contrasting consumers' purchasing power and brand display, simply divides consumers into groups of buyers and non-buyers of both types of luxury products: genuine-items and counterfeits. The study's main goal was to argue against common assumptions disseminated in the literature. For example, Ahuvia, et al. (2012) try to defy the assumption regarding the harm caused by counterfeits to the brand image and the company's revenues. This point has been timidly discussed in the consumer behaviour literature (see Staake, Thiesse & Fleisch, 2009) and, interestingly, heavily challenged in recent economic studies (Bekir, Harbi & Grolleau, 2012; 2013).

As Bekir, El Harbi & Grolleau (2012, pp.659-660) explain, 'genuine producers can strongly shape the 'rules of the game' (namely, the penalties imposed on counterfeiters)' for instance by creating a handbag made of high quality leather and expensive hardware. Consequently this strategy could put some counterfeiters out of business and, more importantly, this would '"increase" the net revenue of the genuine product compared to a situation where all counterfeiters are eliminated (Bekir, Harbi & Grolleau, 2012, p.660). In addition the authors argue that losses due to counterfeiting

are lower than stated by companies and thus profits could be higher than declared (Bekir, Harbi & Grolleau, 2012). The following article expands the discussion on possible gains for brand image (Bekir, Harbi & Grolleau, 2013), although it takes a very positivist approach. Nevertheless these studies show that even economic rationality is able to mathematically prove that counterfeiting is like the 'light of the sun: it can burn the genuine firm but living without can be more harmful' (Bekir, Harbi & Grolleau, 2012, p.659).

An interesting aspect of Ahuvia, et al.'s (2012) matrix is the idea of omnivorous consumer behaviour. As the authors explain: 'a more accurate image of a typical fake-buyer might consist of a middle to upper-middle class consumer with such a strong desire to own a collection of various BLGs [branded luxury goods]' (Ahuvia et al., 2012, p.286). Thus omnivorous consumers possess genuine-items as well as counterfeit goods, sometimes from the same brand, and both are used for a variety of reasons and in distinct social contexts (Ahuvia et al., 2012).

Figure 2.4
Definitions of Branded Luxury Goods Buyer Groups

	Genuine buyers Someone who has Purchased an authentic BLG within the timeframe of the study being cited.	**Genuine non-buyers** Someone who has not purchased an authentic BLG within the timeframe of the study being cited.
Fake buyers Some who has purchased a counterfeit BLG within the timeframe of the study being cited.	Omnivorous buyers	Fake-only buyers
Fake non-buyers Someone who has not purchased a counterfeit BLG within the timeframe of the study being cited.	Genuine-only buyers	BLG non-buyers

Source: (Ahuvia et al., 2012, p.284)

Above all Ahuvia, et al. (2012) argued that their matrix proved that it is more important to address consumers' experiences to understand the reasons behind the consumption of counterfeits than to try to profile and distinguish between those that prefer to buy the genuine-items and those who opt for counterfeits. They are not wrong in this point. However a decade ago interpretive studies, mostly supported by a Consumer Culture Theory (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) approach, were already discussing the fact that counterfeits are as closely related to a person's self-image and identity as regular products (Hoe, Hogg & Hart, 2003; Strehlau, 2005; Gentry, Putrevu & Shultz, 2006; Juggessur & Cohen, 2009; Perez, Castaño & Quintanilla, 2010; Jiang & Cova, 2012). In addition Perez, Castaño & Quintanilha's (2010) study specifically addresses the experiences of consumers that co-own counterfeits and genuine-items (i.e. omnivorous behaviour).

More recently, even positivist scholars have started wondering about overall consumption experiences and considering that counterfeit goods are no longer consumed in isolation but rather in combination with genuine-items. Stottinger & Penz's (2015) latest study used a series of focus groups to investigate consumers' co-ownership of genuine-items and counterfeit products from the same brand, though without acknowledging Ahuvia, et al.'s (2012) idea of omnivorous behaviour in their work. Stottinger & Penz (2015) aimed to understand the complexity of consumers' choice in the consumption of counterfeit goods. However their study was limited by the idea that co-ownership of counterfeits and genuine-items was only motivated by consumers' brand admiration.

Certainly individuals' experiences around counterfeit goods are important and the works of Ahuvia, et al. (2012) and Stottinger & Penz (2015) stresses this point. However, there is more to the consumption of counterfeits than dichotomous choices (Gentry, Putrevu & Shultz, 2006) or co-ownership of counterfeits and genuine-items. For instance inspired-items might serve consumers in a similar way when they wish to create fashion ensembles (Barthes, 1990[1967]); this is further explored on chapter four. It is also important to consider that consumption is a meaning creation process that works in respect of the characteristics of markets and society and in relation to consumers' desire to belong to a social group and to participate in something bigger, a

consumer culture that infiltrates territorial demarcations and works across borders enticing their imagination (Featherstone, 2007; Slater, 1997). Hence consumers' omnivorous behaviour cannot be set apart from the consumer culture in place in society.

A good example is found in Kravets & Sandikci's (2014) study, which explored the consumption of clothing in an emerging market and found that consumers use counterfeits and genuine-items interchangeably and in support of their social identity. To overcome the tension between neoliberal ideals and their aspiration in a society in constant change, middle-class consumers in Turkey developed a distinct 'mode of consumption that could be described as formulaic creativity—working with a standard set of products and rules to achieve individualized and competent, yet ordinary outcomes' (Kravets & Sandikci, 2014, p.136). Thus counterfeits are included in a set of products used by these consumers in their endeavour to display a sort of middle-classiness in line with their social identity.

Therefore Kravets & Sandikci's (2014) study shows that consumers' omnivorous behaviour goes beyond co-ownership of products in support of identity projects (Belk, 1988; Ahuvia, 2005) as it helps consumers to experience their social realities in line with their social identity. Unfortunately Ahuvia, et al.'s (2012) study neglected not only the macro-social context but also the fact that consumer culture in developed markets is considerably distinct from other markets. Meanwhile they tried to support the idea of collateral damage to brands of 'deluxe products' (Thomas, 2007) such as the American companies Coach and Michael Kors, due to the counterfeiting of luxury brands (Ahuvia et al., 2012). This idea of collateral damage to brands of 'deluxe products' (Thomas, 2007) would have difficulty resonating in emerging markets.

Taking for instance Brazil, the field observations for this thesis started in 2011, when it was observed that the Michael Kors brand had "arrived" in the country as an imported product bought by consumers while travelling abroad. Soon afterwards counterfeit versions flooded the popular markets in the country. In the following year the soap opera Avenida Brazil showed its principal dramatis personae, the villain Carminha, using a golden handbag from Michael Kors in most of the episodes. Television shows are consumer culture catalysts in emerging markets, influencing what is chosen as the

reference of "good" taste and fashion (as seen in Kravets & Sandikci, 2014). In particular in Brazil, soap operas are long public affairs broadcast over 8 months 6 days a week at television peak times, reaching viewers of all social classes (Carneiro, 2012).

Avenida Brasil is the most successful soap opera in many years with an average audience of 46 million viewers per night representing 65% of the market (Antunes, 2012). Following the soap opera's success both genuine-items and counterfeit versions of Michael Kors masstiges—mass prestige products (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009)—such as watches, eyewear and accessories entered the Brazilian market. The final act was the opening of the first Michael Kors flagship store in 2013 (Harper's Bazaar, 2013) which in this case offers some evidence against Ahuvia, et al.'s (2012) idea of collateral damage to brands of 'deluxe products' (Thomas, 2007) due to counterfeiting. More importantly this case shows that the omnivorous consumer behaviour perspective needs not only to understand consumers' experience but also to consider the consumer culture in place in the society to further explore the meaning creation process arising from the consumption of counterfeits, as seen in Kravets & Sandikci's (2014) work.

2.5.2.1 *Challenging the key assumption in consumer research*

Only recently have a few studies in consumer research started to consider the co-ownership of counterfeits and genuine-items by the same consumers (Ahuvia et al., 2012; Stöttinger & Penz, 2015). There has been a long hiatus since the studies of Grossman & Shapiro (1988) and Bloch, Bush & Campbell (1993), which evaluated consumers' choice among three different types of products: genuine-items, counterfeits and imitations (i.e. inspired-items) These new studies (Ahuvia et al., 2012; Stöttinger & Penz, 2015) bring forward the idea of the omnivorous consumption of counterfeits. This concept is discussed in the previous section.

Non-deceptive consumption of counterfeits (Grossman & Shapiro, 1988) has also been challenged by Ahuvia, et al. (2012), who argue that the level of deceptive consumption of counterfeits has grown as a side effect of sales in digital marketplaces. Although this may be happening in Western Europe and American societies, the background of Ahuvia, et al. (2012)'s study, in emerging markets where counterfeit goods are plentiful

(Gentry et al., 2001) consumers do not 'necessarily perceive innate differences between originals and counterfeits and treat them as substitutes in certain conditions' (Kravets & Sandikci, 2014, p.138).

For this reason consumers in emerging markets see online retailers as just another point of sale; the key issue for these consumers is the vendor's trustworthiness and their own knowledge in selecting the best products, which could be genuine-items or counterfeit goods (Kuever, 2014). In Brazil, for instance, consumers not only buy counterfeits from digital marketplaces based locally like Mercado Livre, an imitation of eBay that has operated in South America since the late 1990s, they are also avid consumers of new overseas digital marketplaces coming to the country, such as Alibaba, which has operated in Brazil since 2010 offering homepage and costumer services in Portuguese (Drska, 2015). Following Alibaba's success, eBay entered the Brazilian market in 2014 (Costa, 2014).

Moreover, Brazilian consumers buy counterfeits from sites operating abroad and import the products themselves, as revealed by consumers interviewed for this thesis. These interviewees, for example, buy counterfeits via eBay operating in North America. That being the case, the challenges in controlling the consumption of counterfeits are much wider with consumers using the whole world as an interconnected marketplace. Furthermore, with the consumption of counterfeits transcending physical locations and borders it is even more important to pay attention to consumers' social world and culture (Holt, 2002; Sassatelli, 2007; Lury, 2011) in order to examine the meanings and practices arising from the consumption of these goods.

In conclusion, some aspects of the consumption of counterfeits such as non-deceptive choice, product cross comparison including imitations, the desire for fashion and the subjective perception of risk have been discussed since the first studies on the topic emerged in the field of marketing and consumer behaviour. Yet the prevailing positivist agenda has resulted in a selective use of these ideas (Staake, Thiesse & Fleisch, 2009) while neglecting the socio-cultural aspects of markets and consumer behaviour that would bring an in-depth understanding of the consumption of counterfeit goods.

2.5.3 The real and false framework

In emerging markets consumers face additional difficulties in purchasing all kinds of goods, not only counterfeits. Investigating the consumption of counterfeits in China Kuever's (2014) study explores consumers' choices, valuing both the 'structuring force of such large-scale contexts, and the meaningful projects that arise in everyday sociality' (Askegaard & Linnet, 2011, p.396). Like Kravets & Sandikci's (2014, p.127) study, which looked at the social frameworks structuring the consumption of middle-class consumers in Turkey to offer 'a nuanced understanding of the differences in consumption by emphasising culture as a key domain in which class hierarchies are reflected, asserted, and contested', Kuever's (2014) study investigates the peculiarities of the Chinese context to better understand how consumers are questioning the nature of counterfeit goods and thus developing a more dynamic distinction between these goods and genuine-items.

As discussed previously in this chapter, China is one of the most extreme cases of plentiful counterfeit markets (Gentry et al., 2001) but it is also a country that is producing many of the trademark products sold around the globe. As a result, says Kuever (2014), Chinese consumers have become very much aware that international and local brands are being produced in the same factory and have also noticed that multinationals are producing low-grade products under global brands to sell on local markets. Furthermore, Chinese consumers face a widespread problem of trustworthiness in their market that comes not only from dodgy retailers but also from the fact that they cannot rely on public policy to guarantee their safety, remarkably in the case of ailments and medicine (Kuever, 2014).

Hence, from this awareness, new ways to evaluate and distinguish between all sorts of products sold on Chinese markets (i.e. global and local branded products, imitations and multiple levels of counterfeit goods) have emerged. For instance, it is not only important to Chinese consumers to know a product's destination market, they also want to trace their whole supply chain, including the origin, production and materials (Kuever, 2014). Consequently information and skills to evaluate the different products on offer has become an essential set of knowledge used by Chinese consumers in

support of their omnivorous consumption behaviour and so a new mode of classification has emerged in Chinese society where '[t]he crucial distinction in this system is not between the real and the fake but between the known and the unknown' (Kuever, 2014, p.182).

Therefore Kuever (2014, p.174) proposes a typology to explain 'how new calculations of value are being produced under glocalized regimes of manufacture and distribution'. Hence a matrix that navigates between the axes of real and false has been formulated by the author 'based first on the relationship between an object's implicit and explicit claims about brand affiliation, origin, material composition, etc., and second on consumers' evaluation of these claims' (Kuever, 2014, p.181).

Figure 2.5
The real and false framework
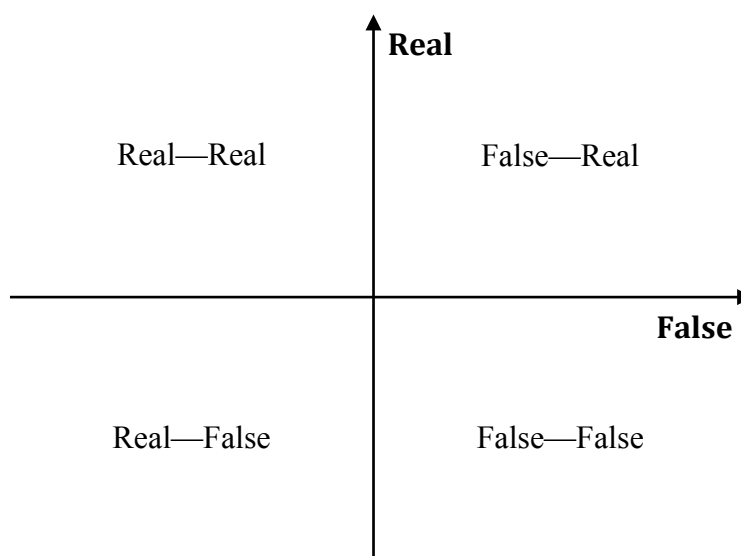
Source: Visual representation of Kuever's (2014) matrix created for this thesis.

In Kuever's (2014, p.182) matrix the false—false quadrant belongs to known counterfeits and shanzhai goods (i.e. imitations of global products without the trademark or bearing a local brand, and thus inspired-items) because there is no claim of "realness" in these products 'they do not claim equivalence or any connection to the legitimate production of these products'. Behind this idea is the notion of "real" as 'an assessment of the "truth" of an object' and not authenticity as a matter of property rights (Kuever, 2014, p.181).

On the diagonally opposed quadrant, the author explains that to Chinese consumers real—real products are those produced and sold via authorised channels. However these products can turn into false—real products if repairs are needed and the certified store identifies a forgery. Inferior quality products from global brands sold in China are also included in the false—real quadrant because if 'a product "lies" to the consumer about its origin, materials, purity, etc., a buyer is cheated, or worse' (Kuever, 2014, p.183). Finally, there is the quadrant of real—false products:

> a watch identical but for a slight scratch on the face and a missing brand stamp might sell through informal channels for a tenth of the price, a Rolex in all but name. This watch is not a fake, but a real—false: it is "true" because it is identical to the "legitimate" object, but makes no claims to legitimacy. Seconded luxury products may be rare, but accessible real—false goods proliferate. … Shop owners purchase their stock from factories in Guangdong, who first remove all identifying tags … Once in their lifetime these were branded goods, but to consumers, the removal of a tag does nothing to delegitimize these products (Kuever, 2014, p.182).

Kuever's (2014) typology mirrors Gentry, et al.'s (2001) genuine-counterfeit continuum with counterfeits navigating between the lower right quadrant false—false clockwise to the quadrant real—false on the lower left side of the matrix. This quadrant is the middle ground in the genuine-counterfeit continuum (Gentry et al., 2001) whilst the real—real quadrant in the upper left side represents genuine-items.

However Kuever's (2014) typology does a better job by incorporating the consumers' perception of the production and distribution of all goods in the market; aspects that Gentry, et al. (2001) slightly touch upon while developing the counterfeit-plentiful market model (Gentry et al., 2001). Kuever's (2014) work also expands on Gentry, et al.'s (2001) work by showing not only that fake products navigate on the genuine-counterfeit continuum but also that their classification is not static as consumers may reevaluate the nature of a product over its lifespan. An idea that explicits that authenticity as matter of property rights, a concept widely discussed in the literature (Eisend & Schuchert-Güler, 2006; Staake, Thiesse & Fleisch, 2009), is rather irrelevant as consumers seek the "truth" in the consumption of goods.

Overall Kuever's (2014) typology brings forward the idea that consumers' conceptualisation of counterfeit goods is underpinned by the cultural and societal aspect of the markets. That means Kuever's (2014) typology would be relevant to understanding the consumption of counterfeit goods in other emerging markets. Products in the real—false categories (Kuever, 2014) benefit from the fact that myths abound in markets regarding high uncertainty (a key aspect of emerging markets) where consumers fear that counterfeits could be sold by certified retailers but they also believe tales and testimonies about "real" products falling from the back of trucks, product leakage and after hours production in licensed manufacturers by the same craftsperson. As such this idea finds resonance in other emerging markets (as seen in Strehlau, Vasconcelos & Huertas, 2006; Commuri, 2009; Perez, Castaño & Quintanilla, 2010; Pinheiro-Machado, 2010).

However, this may not be the case for products in the false—real category in particular because some emerging markets have a longer history of industrialisation, regulations and authority control over the production of consumer goods, like Brazil, where several governmental bodies legislate over food and medicament production (Anvisa— Brazilian Health Surveillance Agency) and the health and safety standards of consumer goods (Inmetro—National Institute of Metrology Quality and Technology). It is worth noting that these institutions are highly respected by Brazilian consumers despite the widespread corruption in other political spheres. Hence a point to take into consideration here is that consumers' conceptualisation of counterfeits in emerging markets is as dynamic as is shown in the works reviewed for this thesis (i.e. Gentry et al., 2001; Kuever, 2014; Kravets & Sandikci, 2014). However consumers' perception of risk varies considerably and is influenced by the social and historical processes of economic development that have occurred in emerging market countries.

2.6 BRAZIL AND ITS PLENTIFUL MARKET OF COUNTERFEITS

> Looking at procurement of goods and experiences in unremarkable sites (supermarkets, banks) and the means employed (comparison shopping, stock-pilling), as well as remarkable sites (Disney) and means (e.g., contraband of microwave), I also draw attention to the way that desires and value, and

frustration and politic, were developing together, creating a dual vision – of the immediate reality of crises and the desired reality of First World (O'Dougherty, 2002, p.15).

Counterfeit goods emerged in the Brazilian marketplace in the late 1990s following the growth of popular markets (VEJA, 1995). O'Dougherty's (2002) study, cited above, reported an intensification of consumption that occurred in Brazil as a result of the sudden economic expansion and political changes after the Real Economic Plan in 1994. Driven by these unexpected changes, a blurred vision has emerged in the society where Brazilians have started placing side by side their aspirations for a better life (largely defined by consumption patterns) and their discontentment (mostly related to governmental issues and unethical politicians) in order to understand the society's new reality (O'Dougherty, 2002).

From this moment of vast social changes, counterfeits became widely available, and thereafter, the consumption of these products became widespread in the society (Rodrigues, 2006; Rolli, 2013). To illustrate the dimensions of the market, a decade after the Real Economic Plan, 93.8% of the young middle classes had already bought counterfeits despite being fully aware that the merchandise was illegal, as reported by the Federation of Industries of Rio de Janeiro (Braga & Castro, 2006). The latest official figures from Brazil's Federation of Trade in Goods, Services and Tourism (FECOMÉRCIO, 2011) show that more than 70 million Brazilians consume these products (nearly half of the population). Even today the market for counterfeits remains robust, being fuelled by demand from a lower income population that has seen an increase in income in recent years (Saraiva, 2011; Fekete, Leonardos & Amaral, 2014).

Considering that it is illegal it might be expected that consumers of counterfeits are at least aware of the implications of their acts. Yet most Brazilians do not demonstrate any concern (Rodrigues, 2006). Brazil's poor governmental controls have led to the purchasing of counterfeit goods being seen as more socially acceptable across social classes (Scalco & Pinheiro-Machado, 2010) and in some cases a guilt-free practice (Strehlau, 2005). Hence Brazil can be characterised as a plentiful market of counterfeits. Just to recall, a plentiful market of counterfeits is a trade condition in which consumers

can easily look for counterfeits at the different levels of similarity alongside genuine-items (Gentry et al., 2001).

The consumer research in Brazil shows that the consumption of counterfeits is largely non-deceptive (Pinheiro-Machado, 2010), contradicting the monetary logic often associated with the consumption of these products (Chakraborty, Allred & Bristol, 1996) as this happens because other reasons influence consumer choices. First, convenience is a factor that scores highly in consumers' decisions, due to the abundant availability of counterfeit goods in the marketplace (Matos, Ituassu & Rossi, 2007). Second, the higher the consumer's income, the greater his or her consumption, as shown by the University of São Paulo's research (Rehder, 2007). Third consumer decisions seem to favour a product's appearance over quality or price, which shows the relevance of consumers' subjective perceptions over tangible product attributes (Ferreira, Botelho & Almeida, 2008).

Moreover, consumer research has provided evidence that some consumers regard shopping for counterfeits as a pleasant activity that is similar to the purchase of genuine-items (Strehlau, 2005; Matos, Ituassu & Rossi, 2007). The consumption of counterfeits allows a distinctive construction of meanings (Hoe, Hogg & Hart, 2003). In Brazil consumers have justified the use of these products in at least two ways: self-expression for whoever publicly accepts the use of counterfeits and social approval for whoever chooses its disguised use (Strehlau, Vasconcelos & Huertas, 2006). Finally, consumer research has shown that many Brazilians find authentic significance through the experiences they live in the consumption of counterfeits (Ferreira, 2008; Scalco & Pinheiro-Machado, 2010).

Nevertheless, a dynamic plentiful market of counterfeits (Gentry et al., 2001) such as Brazil also brings challenges to consumers regarding the consumption of these products. Nowadays, fully aware of the risks in their choice, Brazilians have started to consider other types of risks while deciding on some merchandise, regardless of the product type: genuine-items, counterfeits or inspired-items. To mitigate any problems Brazil's informal markets reassure consumers that they can have a less risky consumption experience in purchasing counterfeit goods, and consumers even have opportunities to

purchase safeguards such as exchange policies offered by counterfeit goods dealers, as observed during the fieldwork and evidenced in the interview data. It is worth stating that such safeguards are not easily obtained at licensed retailers in the country. Despite these facts, the only study that investigates consumers' perceptions of risk in the Brazilian context (Matos, Ituassu & Rossi, 2007) also take consumers' aversion to risk for granted.

2.6.1 The Latest Socio-economic Changes in Brazil

Brazil has a fast paced economy, for better or worse, with consumers adapting to new circumstances in a similar rhythm. Following the economic prosperity of the last two decades and the abundant offers of credit in the market the lower middle class have embraced the opportunity to travel abroad amplifying the consumption pattern. For instance, during the fieldwork the tendency to travel to over-consume in discount outlets and high street shops and the emergence of new consumption rituals such as doing the baby layette abroad were observed. On the other hand, the new working class, composed of consumers from the lowest classes who have gained economic power, keeps the counterfeit goods in high demand in the local market. Although it is beyond the scope of this research to foresee the longevity of the market for counterfeits in Brazil, the latest economic crisis is unlikely to change consumer behaviour. For instance, the lower middle class would return to consuming counterfeits from the internal market and the working class would keep their consumption patterns. Also, new technologies are opening up new markets such as the growing business of selling counterfeits via social networks—a fieldwork discovery evidenced by the observational data.

To conclude, this section demonstrates that the consumption of counterfeits in Brazil is a highly meaningful activity where socially shared meanings and practices can be identified (Slater, 1997; Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Sassatelli, 2007). Hence Brazil's plentiful market offers a rich research context to investigate the consumption of counterfeits.

2.7 SUMMARY

The overview of consumer research investigating the consumption of counterfeit goods pointed out that the majority of the existing literature concentrates on profiling consumers (Eisend & Schuchert-Güler, 2006; Ahuvia et al., 2012) as well as creating cognitive models for testing a variety of constructs such as consumer awareness, purchase intention, motives, personality and many others (Eisend & Schuchert-Güler, 2006; Staake, Thiesse & Fleisch, 2009). In this overview it has also been identified that interpretive consumer research has grown in recent years with many studies exploring cultural aspects of consumption that influence consumers of counterfeits.

Furthermore, three key ideas have emerged in this overview. First, it is essential to identify macro-social dynamics of the market involved in the consumption of counterfeits. Social and historical processes of economic development change society's perceptions of the consumption of counterfeits. For instance in plentiful markets of counterfeits the consumption of these goods is less constrained by legislation, increasing the degree of freedom for consumers to consider more personal and subjective meanings (Gentry et al., 2001).

Second, as consumer culture reflects society's 'meanings, values, norms, ideals, and conventions' (Arnould & Thompson, 2015, p.6) new modes of consumption are developed around the consumption of counterfeits. For example, consumers interpret the meanings from advertisements, brands, retail settings and material goods (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) to combine counterfeits with other products to create outfits that express their individuality in line with their social identity (Kravets & Sandikci, 2014). In keeping with this idea, it is worth considering that counterfeits are fashion items and not only luxury products. This point is discussed in greater detail in chapter four.

Third, risk is more than a variable to predict consumer behaviour. In fact risk is constantly negotiated by consumers of counterfeits based on their social expectations and responsibilities (see in Bloch, Bush & Campbell, 1993; Belk, Devinney & Eckhardt, 2006; Eckhardt & Belk, 2010). For instance in Brazil, low governmental control, abundant offer of counterfeits (Rodrigues, 2006; Rolli, 2013) and social

acceptance (Rodrigues, 2006; Rolli, 2013) have changed individuals' perceptions of risk due to consumers' (very) low expectations of being arrested for buying these products (Braga & Castro, 2006; Saraiva, 2011) or feeling ashamed of their actions (Strehlau, 2005; Matos, Ituassu & Rossi, 2007; Scalco & Pinheiro-Machado, 2010). Yet consumer research has left unexplored how culture underpins consumers' perceptions of risk in this country. This point is discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

Chapter 3: Consumption and Cultural Understandings of Risk

This chapter explores the concept of risk and discusses its relevance to the consumer research on the consumption of counterfeits. The review in the previous chapter showed that risk has been overlooked in interpretive consumer research. Therefore this chapter examines Consumer Culture Theory and draws on wider social science theories to bring risk into interpretive consumer research. Then it looks at the existing literature on Consumer Culture Theory that addresses risk and the consumption of counterfeits. In conclusion this chapter investigates the intersections of risk and interpretive consumer research.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Risk cannot be isolated from the context in which it arises and thus what is identified as risky is in fact an inevitable outcome of social and cultural processes (Lupton, 1999b). However, the perception of 'risk only arises when an activity or event contains some degree of uncertainty' (Mythen, 2004, p.14). In linking their expectations to their own perceptions of uncertainty individuals see that 'risk is not only the probability of an event but also the probable magnitude of its outcome, and everything depends on the value that is set on the outcome' (Douglas, 1992, p.31). Consumers of counterfeits form a social group where shared meanings and practices reflect their cultural understandings of risk. For these reasons it is important to investigate how risk underpins their consumption behaviours. Consumer Culture Theory (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) helps to uncover many facets of consumer behaviour, allowing us to explore how consumers employ some common practices to make sense of uncertainties in the social environment. Still it is only recently that cultural understandings of risk have begun to be investigated with regard to the consumption of counterfeits.

First this chapter discusses the theoretical foundations of Consumer Culture Theory (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Then, risk conceptualisations in social science are explained and contrasted. Following that, cultural responses to risk are discussed in depth. Finally, the chapter explores risk management practice in interpretive consumer research.

3.2 CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES OF CONSUMPTION

Different theoretical lenses impact the representation of consumers as they reflect theoretical conceptualisations that ground the understandings of knowledge in a specific field (Maclaran, Hogg & Bradshaw, 2009). In contrast to the economic and psychological perspectives in consumer research, which represent consumers as calculative and rational human beings (Sassatelli, 2007), the cultural lens understands that consumption is a collective process and therefore 'consumers are themselves productive in their appropriation of things – making new meanings, uses and relationships' (Slater, 2003, p.148).

The cultural perspective of consumption understands that:

> Consumer society or culture has been created by both broad social phenomena (like the growth in social mobility, the evolution of the relationship between the sexes, urbanization, etc.) and more specific economic phenomena (the growth in consumption of luxury goods per capita, the development of standardized production, the reinforcing of a complex commercial system, the spread of consumer credit services, etc.), which in turn have been accompanied and mediated by new economic ethics of production and use and new cultural views of social identity. This has been a transformation of massive importance, which has given way to a form of life characterized by the centrality of the social figure of the 'consumer' (Sassatelli, 2007, p.50).

This perspective highlights an understanding of consumption as a 'social arrangement in which the relation between lived culture and social resources, between meaningful ways of life and the symbolic and material resources on which they depend, is mediated through markets' (Slater, 1997, p.8). It also points out that contemporary 'consumer culture has contributed to the emergence and growth of object worlds that encourage forms of reflexivity in individual and collective identity' (Lury, 2011, p.7) .

Growing considerably in recent years (Slater, 2003), theories of consumption 'have tried to steer a middle course that reconciles the more pessimistic classical heritage with a recognition of the fact that consumption is not only indispensable in modernity, but also a domain in which people can express themselves positively' (Ritzer, Goodman &

Wiedenhoft, 2001, p.418). Consequently consumer culture studies have begun to represent the consumer as 'neither a rational actor, nor as a helpless dupe, but rather as a self-conscious manipulator of the symbolic meanings that are attached to products' and selected by consumers with clear intent mind (Campbell, 2005, p.24). Consumers then have begun to be seen as active participants in society using marketplace meanings and the consumption of goods in the search for meaningful ways of life (Belk, 1988; McCracken, 1990; Sassatelli, 2007; Lury, 2011).

Fundamentally, cultural perspectives of consumption offer a theoretical lens to uncover the layers of cultural meanings that structure the 'consumer action in a given social context or shape consumers' interpretation of their experience' (Thompson & Troester, 2002, p.550). This approach has expanded on the mainstream literature by shifting 'the focus from a narrow concern with purchasing acts towards broader conceptualizations of the experiences embodied in consumer behaviour' (Maclaran, Hogg & Bradshaw, 2009, p.332). Overall, studies that value cultural perspectives of consumption aim to understand how consumers actively take part in society using consumption meanings to create their own cultural worlds (McCracken, 1990; Slater, 1997). In particular, these studies explore the many ways in which consumers' cultural identities are related to their collective social identities to uncover the similar shared ideas, beliefs and goals that ground individuals' consumption experiences in their social lives (Featherstone, 2007[1991]; Ritzer & Smart, 2001; Sassatelli, 2007).

Over a decade ago consumer culture studies were united under the term Consumer Culture Theory (Arnould & Thompson, 2005), forming a 'conceptually dynamic field of inquiry that encompasses a multiplicity of theoretical approaches, methodological orientations, representational practices, and which speaks to a range of stakeholders' (Arnould & Thompson, 2015, p.4). This approach is discussed below.

3.2.1 Consumer Culture Theory

Consumer Culture Theory (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) studies have been investigating the consumers' quest for experiences and meanings in their social life (Belk, 2007). Together with other interpretive approaches, Consumer Culture Theory

(Arnould & Thompson, 2005) has moved beyond the prevailing positivist outlook in the marketing and consumer behaviour fields by exploring the 'cultural components that provide rich accounts of lived experiences that regularly define consumption'. (Maclaran, Hogg & Bradshaw, 2009, p.332). In emphasising culture as the dynamic element driving the consumption cycle this theoretical framework has come to define consumers as 'interpretative agents whose meaning-creating activities range from those that tacitly embrace the dominant representation of consumers' existed on the marketplace to those that consciously deviate from it' (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p.874).

The term Consumer Culture Theory was coined by Arnould and Thompson (2005) to consolidate a research agenda that emerged in the mid-1980s under a variety of terms (humanistic, naturalistic, interpretive, postmodern) that positioning itself as 'the nexus of disciplines as varied as anthropology, sociology, media studies, critical studies, and feminist studies' (Joy & Li, 2012, p.141). The fast, and now wide, acceptance of the term suggests that 'CCT demarcation did indeed redress a gap in the sense making resources that the marketing and consumer researchers had been using to classify culturally oriented studies of consumption in the matrix of knowledge production' (Arnould & Thompson, 2015, p.3).

In a nutshell, Consumer Culture Theory (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p.875) widely explored how consumption meanings are 'embodied and negotiated by consumers in particular social situations roles and relationships' (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p.869). Therefore this approach 'strives to systematically link individual level (or idiographic) meanings to different levels of cultural processes and structure and then to situate these relationships within historical and marketplace contexts' (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p.875). It explores how consumers 'actively rework and transform symbolic meanings encoded in advertisements, brands, retail settings or material goods to manifest their particular personal and social circumstance and further their identity and lifestyle goals' (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p.871).

Consumer Culture Theory (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) started with a research agenda that largely encompassed four thematics areas: (a) consumer identity projects, (b)

marketplace cultures, (c) the sociohistoric patterning of consumption, and (d) mass-mediated marketplace ideologies and consumers' interpretive strategies. Arnould & Thompson (2015, p.5), in their latest article, argue that this theoretical approach has evolved and now navigates around 'four conceptual axes: (1) the ontological conception of culture as distributed networks; (2) the politics of consumption; (3) consumer marketing theoretics; and (4) regional cultural theoretics'. In relation to the older categorisation, this thesis can be positioned in the thematic area 'marketplace cultures', which aims to 'unravel the processes by which consumer culture is instantiated in particular cultural milieu and the implications of this process for people experiencing it' (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p.873). This thesis argues that plentiful markets of counterfeits (Gentry et al., 2001), such as Brazil, can be seen as a cultural milieu because consumers' everyday experiences around counterfeit goods reflect the consumer culture in place in their society and furthermore, they serve as a macro-social context to investigate how risk, materiality and social experiences intersect in the consumption of counterfeit goods.

Regarding the newest categorisation, this thesis fits within the category 'culture as distributed networks'. This research body is diverse but united by theories of materiality that see 'the world as constituted from more or less temporary amalgamations of heterogeneous material and semiotic elements, amongst which capacities and actions emerge not as properties of individual elements, but through the relationships established between them' (Canniford & Bajde, 2015, p.1). This thesis opts for a theory of materiality grounded on the notion of objectification (Miller, 1987; 2005) where material interactions are embedded in the routines of consumption (Dant, 2008) and consumers' actions have a dynamic force of their own, creating sensations, competencies and strategies for doing more or different things (Trentmann, 2009). This approach to materiality places a great emphasis on consumer creativity (Miller, 1987; 2005), a relevant aspect in the consumption of clothing (Campbell, 1996). Therefore it is useful to understand the consumption of counterfeits.

Overall, Arnould & Thompson's (2015) new article makes a similar appraisal to that of Joy & Li (2012, p.143), who argue that Consumer Culture Theory (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) has greatly illuminated the experiential and symbolic aspects of

consumption by producing theoretical 'frameworks that are interpretive critical, emancipatory, and transformative'. However, some critical voices have argued that it is about time that Consumer Culture Theory (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) studies moved beyond the celebratory 'self-actualization' narratives (Askegaard & Linnet, 2011, p.386) that tend to 'interpret any and all resistance to corporate formulated signs or attempts at formulating meanings by consumers, as genuine agency (Firat & Tadajewski, 2009, p.129). This is an important observation when considering that consumers of counterfeits are not resisting the market, but on the contrary, are not playing exactly by society's rules.

In line with Askegaard & Linnet (2011, p.399), this thesis argues that studies adopting this theoretical perspective should also consider the role of the 'social institution of consumption and how it shapes our lives and choices beyond our individual identity projects'. Furthermore, this thesis argues that there is a need to investigate how the dynamics of macro-social contexts are translated by consumers in their everyday consumption practices. This idea is discussed in the following section and expanded in relation to the formation of cultural understandings of risk in society discussed in this chapter. The theory of materiality (Miller, 1987; 2005) is explored in greater detail in chapter four.

3.2.2 Everyday Practical Uses of Culture

Modern modes of consumption arbitrate around consumers' lifestyle projects (Sassatelli, 2007), an idea that is very much in use by marketers to understand the 'complex, multidimensional relations between subjects and the objects they consume' (Ritzer & Smart, 2001, p.420). Interpretive consumer research has explored in great depth the complex relation between subjects and objects of consumption (Belk, 2007; Lury, 2011) and the latest studies have sought to advance the literature by placing the meanings of objects on the 'centre stage of analyses of consumption as an aspect of cultural reproduction' (Slater, 2003, pp.152-3).

For instance, Featherstone (2007[1991]) advanced the consumer research by applying Bourdieu's (1984) ideas in less moralistic ways to create a more nuanced

conceptualisation of consumers (Ritzer & Smart, 2001, p.420). To Featherstone (2007[1991]) the increasing power of the 'new' cultural intermediaries (Bourdieu, 1984) not only 'cuts across traditional social divisions' (Sassatelli, 2007, p.49) but also invokes 'aesthetic self-consciousness and reflexiveness' (Featherstone, 2007[1991], p.7). Therefore consumers are able to 'appropriate creatively consumer objects rather than being controlled through them' (Ritzer & Smart, 2001, p.420). As Featherstone (2007[1991]) explains:

> The new petit bourgeois is a pretender, aspiring to more than he is, who adopts an investment orientation to life; he possesses little economic or cultural capital and therefore must acquire it. The new petit bourgeois therefore adopts a learning mode to life; he is consciously educating himself in the field of taste, style, lifestyle. (Featherstone, 2007[1991], p.88)

Hence it is possible to see that to Featherstone (2007[1991]) the emergence of new modes of consumption in contemporaneity is accompanied by a larger process of aestheticisation of ordinary consumption objects, mass design, and more importantly the 'development of credit services for consumption (i.e. monthly rate payments for the credit cards of department stores)' lowering the barriers to product acquisition (Sassatelli, 2007, p.49). Hence, it is possible to argue that through the notion of consumption as a lifestyle project (Featherstone, 2007[1991]; Ritzer & Smart, 2001) the consumption of objects has become a 'sign within a social circulation of meanings' (Slater, 2003, p.153). This perspective in relation to the consumption of counterfeit goods will be discussed in greater detail in chapter four.

In addition, Featherstone's (2007[1991]) observation emphasises that consumers engage in a self-learning process that helps them to live, or at least pretend to live, the life they aspire supported by their developed sense of style and individuality. Nevertheless, this self-learning process relies on social interactions. Therefore it is important to 'investigate the actual everyday practical uses of culture by different social groups which directs us to the way in which culture interrelates with social structures and cannot be regarded as an autonomous sphere' (Featherstone, 2007[1991], p.117). Hence exploring how social groups developed their cultural underpinnings in response to their social structures can bring new understandings regarding consumers' everyday practical

actions in relation to consumption.

Consumers of counterfeits form, broadly, a social group and as such they develop shared practical knowledge that helps them to understand and experience their reality. In everyday life individuals perform a series of activities that require managing risk. These include walking around, exercising, cooking (Lupton, 1999a) and let us not forget, consuming. If these activities are assessed within the paradigm of individual decision making, for every choice made, risk is assessed. In despite of that consumer research offers a narrow view of risk as an analytical and cognitive event (Conchar et al., 2004), as discussed previously in chapter three. These positivist studies neglect the fact that understandings of risk are developed in a way that 'people respond emotively and aesthetically to risk as members of cultural subgroups rather than as atomized individuals' (Lupton & Tulloch, 2002b, p.319). Therefore it is possible to explore in the light of the consumption of counterfeits the multiple meanings around risk underpinning people's behaviour in order in understand how individuals define and reflect their social experience (Douglas, 1992). The following section discusses the theories of risk in social science in great depth in order to support this idea.

3.3 UNDERSTANDING RISK CONCEPTUALISATIONS

Risk is a dynamic phenomenon, continually in transformation and being shaped and reshaped as a consequence of changes in everyday life (Mythen & Walklate, 2006; Lupton & Tulloch, 2002b). Hence, the classification of risk is extremely broad and encompasses a diverse range of issues (Anderson, 2006). Theoretically, a 'risk only arises when an activity or event contains some degree of uncertainty' (Mythen, 2004, p.14), but since risk cannot be isolated from the context in which it arises, what is identified as risky, either by 'experts' or by lay people, can be understood as an inevitable outcome of social and cultural processes (Lupton, 1999b).

In a broad sense, society over the course of history has developed a system of strategies and beliefs in an attempt to deal with uncertainties and threats (Lupton, 1999a). Lupton (1999a) explains that nowadays, as in pre-modern times, the symbolic basis of

uncertainties to the individual continues to be the anxiety created by the possibility of loss and its consequences. Also, as before, individuals 'seek to contain and manage the anxiety and fear aroused by what they perceive to be a danger or threat' by developing a range of strategies for risk prevention (Lupton, 1999a, p.3). Based on the perception of uncertainty, what has changed throughout history is society's comprehension of risk (Mythen, 2004).

Research philosophies, epistemologies and methods explaining risk have also evolved over time. There has been a move 'away from religious fate and towards technical and scientific rationality' (Mythen, 2004, p.54), which has evolved to become symbolic understandings of risk (Lupton, 1999a; Warde, 1994; Wong & King, 2008). In other words, towards following an interpretive approach by theorising risk according to social science traditions (Lupton, 2006). On the one hand, risk in mainstream economic perspectives becomes a scientific calculation of probabilities while uncertainty becomes a term used as an alternative risk when probabilities of risk are inestimable or unknown (Lupton, 1999a). As such, the properties of probability and uncertainty are linked to the idea of predicting and controlling the future (Mythen, 2004). Consequently, in positivist approaches, the 'essence of risk is not that it is happening, but that it might be happening' (Beck, Adam & Loon, 2000, p.5).

On the other hand, according to socio-cultural approaches, the meaning of risk cannot be objectively determined merely by considering the 'importance of acknowledging the social, cultural, historical and geographical influences on how certain social groups or subcultures think about and respond to risk' (Lupton, 2006, p.26). By viewing risk as socially negotiated via the propagation of shared ideas, values and beliefs (Giddens, 1990; Foucault, 1991; Douglas, 1992; Beck, 1992), socio-cultural studies theorise that the 'perceptions of risk are culturally formed as a result of the interplay between institutional discourses and individual subjectivities' (Mythen, 2004, p.97). However, the non-material nature of risk expressed through symbolic uncertainties (e.g. individual perceptions of danger, threats, personal harms and so on) 'does not grant privilege to any specific form of knowledge' (Beck, Adam & Loon, 2000, p.4).

So what is challenging about risk conceptualisation is 'how to reconcile the individual

process of risk decision-making with that of understanding societal process, whether these are institutionalised in political, policy or cultural processes, or less visible to the individual and embedded in the structure of society itself' (Mythen & Walklate, 2006, p.232).

3.3.1 Key Approaches to Risk in Social Science

Cognitive science paradigms acknowledge risk as a rational phenomenon, and aim to identify categories of risk by mapping its causal factors in order to build predicative models that aspire to prevent undesirable outcomes (Lupton, 1999b; Beck, Adam & Loon, 2000). In the social science literature, the prominent focus in psychological studies is on the individual's cognition of risk, and they largely assume a realist position (Lupton, 1999a). Considering that individuals respond to uncertainties via 'frames of perception and understanding that structure judgements' (Lupton, 1999b, p.2), a variety of psychometric methods have been developed in order to establish which risks are perceived as harmful (Mythen, 2004). Describing the individual's actions as volitional and rational, cognitive and realist research seems to present risk avoidance as a rational choice and risk taking as an irrational choice (Beck, Adam & Loon, 2000). Many psychological studies are conducted using technico-scientific methods to measure individuals' perceptions of risk, and are not concerned with 'debates over the cultural formation of moral character or directions of social changes' (Mythen & Walken, 2006 p.28).

In exploring the social and cultural contexts in which risk is investigated, leading interpretive studies define the phenomenon in different ways (Tansey & O'Riordan, 1999). Lupton (1999a, p.36) endeavours to understand the nature of risk through the 'notion of a continuum that moves from the realist position at one pole to 'strong' social constructionist, or relativist, positions on risk, at the other pole'. The realist approach to risk is the most commonly applied in the social science literature, which predominantly adopts the cognitive science viewpoint based on psychology (Lupton, 1999b). In contrast, sociological and anthropological perspectives assume a more relativistic position by seeing risk as inextricably linked with social and cultural norms, ideas and habits (Lupton, 2006). By contrasting the epistemologies and methods employed in

studies on risk, Lupton reflects on the extent to which leading studies have illuminated the socio-cultural dimensions of risk (Mythen & Walklate, 2006). As with any model, it is worth noting that the continuum framework put forward by Lupton (1999a, p.35) may result in generalisations since some studies may not fit neatly into a category.

Discussions about risk conceptualisation also encompass questions of cultural meaning and representation, as well as political assumptions, which suggests that interpretive research is moving closer towards the relativist position in Lupton's (1999a, p.36) continuum of risk. Briefly, weak social constructionists perceive 'risks as cultural mediations of "real" dangers and hazards'; by contrast, strong social constructionists understand risk as anything that emerges into social existence when recognised by its social actors (Lupton, 1999a, p.31). In line with these ideas three major theoretical perspectives were identified by Lupton (1999a; 1999b; 2006): risk society, cultural/symbolic and governmentality.

Risk society theorists tend to take a fairly realist approach to risk in their emphasis on how risks have proliferated in late modern Western societies. From their perspective, risks are objective and real, although how we respond to them is always mediated through social and cultural processes. The cultural/symbolic perspective takes a somewhat stronger social constructionist approach in emphasising to a greater extent the role played by social and cultural processes in identifying what risk is. The governmentality perspective adopts the strongest social constructionist approach of the three perspectives. Nothing is seen to be a risk in itself; rather, events are constructed as risks through discourse. While all sorts of potential dangers or hazards exist in the world, only a small number of them are singled out and dealt with as "risks". (Lupton, 2006, p.14)

Altogether, the three perspectives 'stand in clear contrast to technico-scientific approaches to risk in taking into account the broader social and cultural, and in some cases, historical, contexts in which risk as a concept derives its meanings and resonance' (Lupton, 1999b, p.1).

3.3.1.1 Risk society approach

Inspired by Ulrich Beck's pioneering work (1992), the risk society perspective, to some extent, is also contemplated in the works of Anthony Giddens (Mythen, 2004; Lupton, 2006). Both theorists focus their analysis on the macro-structural factors that influence the growing concern about risk in contemporary society (Lupton, 1999b). Essentially, what characterises risk society is the existence of manufactured uncertainties, which are the unintentional side effects of technological and economic expansion (Beck, 2008). Such a unique collection of humanly produced risks has resulted in a profound change in the social structure, politics and cultural experience (Giddens, 1990). Altogether, the changes in society resulting from risk perceptions, combined with an all-embracing structural alteration, is leading contemporary culture towards what Beck (1992) calls reflexive modernity.

Reflexive modernity inspires individuals to assume greater responsibility for the consequences of their choices and actions (Mythen, 2004, p.17). Thus the risk society perspective outlines risk as the product of human action and decision making (Lupton & Tulloch, 2002b). The idea of risk society 'not only opened up the issue of risk for wider social science debate but also captured the public imagination' (Beck, Adam & Loon, 2000, p.12). Although heightened risk consciousness might empower people to enact positive lifestyle changes, an overflow of techno-scientific information is causing conflicts over the meaning and impact of risk (Mythen, 2004). Consequently, lay people are continually challenged by uncertainties over specialists' judgements, government actions and mass media information; in the risk society approach, 'risk is a highly political concept, often inspiring grass-roots political action' (Lupton, 2006, p.12).

3.3.1.2 *Cultural/symbolic approach*

Mary Douglas has been a central figure in the socio-cultural analysis of risk and is a primary reference with regard to the cultural/symbolic approach (Lupton, 1999a, p.37). This approach claims that understandings about risk are founded on social expectations and responsibilities, and so are closely aligned with cultural beliefs and practices (Lupton, 2006). According to Douglas (1992 xi), 'cultural theory is a way of thinking about culture that draws the social environment systematically into the picture of individual choices.' Thus, individuals' pre-conceived 'cultural beliefs help people to

make sense of risk, and notions of risk are therefore not individualistic but rather shared within a community' (Lupton, 2006, p.14). Lupton (1999a, p.37) explains that the cultural/symbolic approach to risk is better understood when considering Douglas' 'trajectory of theorizing on the body, selfhood and the regulation of contamination and danger that she began three decades ago [in Putity and Danger], in which the symbolic aspects of judgements about danger, pollution and Otherness were identified'.

In subsequent works, Douglas (1992) points out that risk in contemporary societies works as a cultural strategy by helping social groups to make sense of uncertainties identified as 'otherness', for instance threats coming from outsiders. Therefore, the notion of risk arises 'not so much from the presence of physical hazards but from transgression of norms that inhere to particular social groups' (Tansey & O'Riordan, 1999, p.77). In addition, there are uncertainties related to trust, for example 'a growing distrust of social institutions and traditional authorities and an increasing awareness of the threats inherent in everyday life' (Lupton, 1999a, p.12). In both positions risk beliefs and practices become instruments of social cohesion and for this reason what is defined as potentially "risky" ends up being 'connected with legitimating moral principles. Like the distinctions drawn between dirty and pure objects or actions, danger is explained qua risk using cultural frames that are inevitably moral and political, and which rely on identifying responsibility for risk' (Lupton, 1999a, p.46).

3.3.1.3 Governmentality approach

The last perspective on risk was developed around 'Foucault's insights on governmentality and on ethical self-formation to explore risk in the context of surveillance, discipline and regulation of populations, and how concepts of risk construct particular norms of behavior which are used to encourage individuals to engage voluntarily in self-regulation in response to these norms' (Lupton, 1999a, p.26). Castel (1991), Ewald (1991) and Dean (1997) are the prominent names in the Governmentality approach. In their work they 'have accentuated the role of social institutions in constructing how understandings of risk restrict and regiment human behavior' (Mythen, 2004, p.5).

The governmentality perspective (Foucault, 1991) centres particularly on the discourses that surround and construct risk, and on 'the organized ways of talking about and acting upon risk that are shared within social groups'; effectively, governmentality studies emphasise the role of risk as a 'major apparatus through which individuals in a society are encouraged to engage in self-regulation' (Lupton, 2006, p.14). Even though governmentality studies (Castel, 1991; Ewald, 1991; Dean, 1997) have shed some light on the 'question of how risk related discourses and strategies operate, how they may be taken up, negotiated or resisted by those who are the subject of them, remains under-examined' (Lupton, 1999a, p.105).

3.3.2 Contrasting the Socio-cultural Approach on Risk

According to the risk society perspective, the notion of risk is grounded in individual experiences and mirrors realist ideas about the risk phenomenon based on social, political or economic conditions in contemporary society (Beck, 1992; Beck, Adam & Loon, 2000). Cultural/symbolic studies see risk conceptualisation as being developed collectively by people via shared meanings and practices, and evaluated according to 'political, aesthetic, and moral matter' (Douglas, 1992, p.31). In the risk society perspective, risk response becomes a matter of political action (Beck, 1992), while in the cultural/symbolic approach, the moral implication of risk goes further in empowering society to create its own ethical system (Douglas, 1992).

Whilst stressing the relativity of judgements in society, the cultural/symbolic approach is similar to the governmentality perspective in the sense that 'risk discourses and strategies are used to deal with social disorder and to regulate and order members of communities' (Lupton, 2006, p.14). However, the governmentality perspective, with its strongly constructionist outlook, characterises the risk response as a self-regulatory action, in which risk-avoidance behaviour becomes a 'moral enterprise relating to issues of self-control, self-knowledge and self-improvement' (Lupton, 1999a, p.93). Another aspect contrasting the perspectives points out that while the risk society and the governmentality approaches see risk as a particular phenomenon developed throughout modernity, the cultural/symbolic approach claims that contemporary society responds to risk in a similar fashion to traditional societies (Lupton, 2006).

Although en vogue in today's media, risk has always permeated human experiences (Giddens, 1990). Accumulating, accessing and disseminating risk information over time, individuals' perceptions of risk are more 'fluid and culturally variable than the totalizing narrative of the risk society grants' (Mythen, 2004, p.115). Cultural beliefs and practices can 'say a lot that is useful about the control of knowledge, the emergence of consensus and the development of expectations' in society (Douglas, 1992, p.19). Mediated through social-cultural frameworks, understandings, knowledge and meanings of risk turn into a 'very loose term in everyday parlance' (Lupton, 1999a, p.9). However only in contemporaneity has it become clear that on a more mundane level individuals negotiate risk on a daily basis (Mythen & Walklate, 2006).

Lupton & Tulloch (2002b; 2002a; 2006) adopt the cultural/symbolic approach to explore the way in which individuals deal with risk in more mundane situations. In one of their studies the authors demonstrates that individuals recognise risk as an important part of their life and selfhood, and are able to contrast its positive and negative outcomes. For them positive voluntary risk is taken to be threefold: (1) as a way of moving life forward, in changing jobs or getting married; (2) as a means of distraction and escape from daily life; as in the exhilaration in radical sports; and (3) as a means to extend control over the body, for example practising exercises that push one's body limits (Lupton & Tulloch, 2002b). However, this research fails to address a genuine everyday risk situation, because all three categories of risk still deal with unusual conditions requiring an extra effort in individuals' decisions. All in all, life-changing decisions require cautious risk assessment.

Lay reactions to risk should not be taken as erroneous or biased if they differ from expert evaluations. Instead they should be seen as 'shared conventions, expectations and cultural categories that are founded on clear social functions and responsibilities' (Lupton, 1999a, p.39). Firstly, the supposedly neutral position of expert knowledge implies a distinction between groups in terms of rationality by representing 'lay people as deficient in their abilities, drawing on "irrational" assumptions when making judgements' on risk (Lupton & Tulloch, 2002a). Secondly, lay and expert risk knowledge are both subjected to cultural beliefs and pre-established assumptions, although those thoughts cannot be set apart during judgements on risk (Lupton, 1999b, p.15).

Nowadays, in specialised and mass media communications the term 'risk' is generally used to express negative or undesirable outcomes; yet in the colloquial usage of the term, matters of calculable probability are not necessarily important, particularly considering that actual risk and uncertainty tend to be perceived as equivalent (Lupton, 1999a). Nevertheless, the relationship between media representation and public understanding is far from linear (Mythen, 2004). According to Lupton (2006), the assessment of which phenomena are regarded as risky (or safe enough to ignore) depends on the outcome of individuals' judgements, and therefore risk comprehension is dynamic, shifting in time and space. As such, 'practical life private decisions about risk are taken by comparing many risks, and their probable good and bad outcomes', which serves to demonstrate the multiple meanings around risk underpinning people's behaviour (Douglas, 1992, p.31). This possibility is discussed next in line with the cultural/symbolic perspective of risk.

3.4 CULTURAL RESPONSES TO RISK AND THE FORMATION OF COSMOLOGIES IN SOCIETY

The consumption of objects is not only useful to shape individuals' sense of self in society (seen Belk:1988tq; Ahuvia, 2005); the objects also 'act as sources of social identity and carry or communicate social meanings' (Lury, 2011, p.14). In this perspective the consumption of objects becomes foundational to social practices as they ground modes of consumption where individuals can express their ideas, values and beliefs (Sassatelli, 2007). However, individuals seek concordance between symbolic and social experiences in society (Douglas, 1970) whilst they deal with notions of culture that are fundamentally loose (Six, 2014). For this reason while the consumption of objects and their uses help individuals to reflect and communicate their social identities they also become 'instrumental in reproducing cosmologies' (Slater, 2003, p.153).

To recall, cosmologies are world-views (Ostrander, 1982) corresponding to personal beliefs that individuals use to justify their actions (Fardon, 2002, p.233). Yet, Douglas (1982, p.5) explains that as social accounts of culture, cosmologies bring forward those

'ultimate justifying ideas which tend to be invoked as if part of the natural order' but in fact they result from social interactions. Consequently, individuals' cosmological style, emerging from their experiences in society, (Fardon, 2002) as much as it reflects their personal beliefs in fact produces a 'cosmology that structurally mirrors social relations' (Spickard, 1989, p.158).

3.4.1 Cosmological Styles Underpinning Perceptions of Risk

In Douglas' (1970; 1982; 2013) work the concept of cosmology offers a middle ground in the relation between the social environment and social organisations. On one side of the relation cosmology helps to sustain social organisations. As the author explains, 'three, four or five types of social environment are enough to generate three, four or five cosmologies, which stabilize [three,] four or five kinds of [social] organisation' (Douglas, 2013, p.54). To sustain a social organisation—which is a social group 'represented by any community' (Douglas, 2013, p.53)—a cosmology is evoked in a way that justifies the cultural underpinnings that define this group. The position this group assumes in relation to a cosmology is demarcated in opposition to the definitions that are established by other groups. Such opposition gives form to cultural bias as the group pledges the right to defend their organisation's cultural underpinnings.

Douglas (1970; 1982; 1992; 2013) further developed this idea in a fourfold typology of cultures, which is useful in explaining the formation of cosmologies in society. To the author the typology of cultures:

> classifies different types of cultures according to the amount of autonomy enjoyed by individuals. Taking patterns of autonomy as a key to cultural bias, cultural theory considers the different kinds of constraints and how to measure them. The way persons justify, to themselves and to others, the limitations that their society places on autonomy is central to the idea of cultural bias. The theory uses a typology that contrasts group membership (as one kind of restriction on autonomy) with restrictions on individual freedom to negotiate and choose among options (Douglas, 1992, p.187).

Therefore the typology of cultures contemplates that the bidimensional grid (i.e. social

regulation) and group (i.e. social integration) offers a useful framework to 'describe society as the individual encounters it' (Spickard, 1989, p.154). Furthermore, the relation among dimensions that explain the cosmological style of each cultural type (Fardon, 2002) also reveals the group's attitudes, which are employed to justify their perception of their social reality (Douglas, 1970; 1982; 2013).

Douglas (Douglas, 1982; 1992; 1997; 2013; Douglas & Isherwood, 1996) has worked with many colleagues to explore her typology of cultures widely as 'systems of classification, styles of reasoning, patterns of perception, memory and aspiration, planning horizons, beliefs, values, understandings of nature and the world, tastes in consumption, world-views and styles of emotion' (Six, 2007, p.64). Such prolific work has ended up being 'appreciated and understood both more deeply and more widely in political science, public policy and public management research, organisation studies, risk studies, human geography, development studies, and criminology than in anthropology' (Six, 2014, p.293). Douglas (2013, p.58) used the typology of cultures as an analytical framework to 'map the distribution of contemporary attitudes to risk' revealing that individuals' perceptions of uncertainty are linked not only to danger but also to trust (Fardon, 2013).

However, when it comes to cultural bias, applying Douglas' (1970; 1982; 2013) matrix to the consumption of counterfeits seems like an unnecessary exercise, because there are essentially two positions: either an individual consumes counterfeits or he/she does not. This does not mean that consumers of counterfeits believe their actions correct — quite the opposite. The literature review on consumption of counterfeits in chapter two shows that consumers are fully aware of the implications of their choices. Thus, this choice to consume counterfeits only means that they do this in spite of what the other (larger) part of society thinks about their consumption choice. Hence, they need to deal with the non-consumers' cultural bias against counterfeits which would define upfront the consumption of these products as a risk-taking practice (i.e. unsafe but also morally wrong).

Therefore thesis argues that consumers of counterfeits form a social group where shared meanings and practices reflect their cultural understandings of risk. For this reason it is

important to investigate the formation of cosmological styles used by consumers of counterfeits to justify their consumption choice in order to better understand how their cultural understandings of risk influence their modes of consumption and, ultimately, their social interactions.

3.4.2 Cosmological Position Underpinning Social Groups

Douglas' (1970; 1982; 2013) typology of cultures, in fact, contemplates one side of the relation where cosmology is central to connecting the social environment and social organisations. Now, on the other side of the relation the cosmology is generated by interactions in the social environment (Douglas, 2013); that is to say the individuals' social practices. On this side the social environment—the 'structural features of social organisation' (Six, 2014, p.301)—offers a macro-social context in which to explore the way that cosmological styles are evoked by individuals to express their social experiences (Fardon, 2002). Just to recall, on the other side, the typology of cultures explores how cosmologies 'structurally mirror social relations', which differ among social organisations (Spickard, 1989, p.158).

Individuals' social experiences, nevertheless, are grounded on notions of 'kinds of ideal person', explains Douglas (2013, p.125). The author inverts her rational, quote in the previous section, and says:

> For explanatory value, three, four, or five types of social organization are enough to generate three, four, or five explanatory cosmologies, which stabilize three, four, or five kinds of ideal person. For we assume that each person is gathering clues about what the world is like from the others in their ambit, and learning how to behave, which means learning how to think and choose conformably (Douglas, 2013, p.125).

The notion of an 'ideal person' in fact asserts that individuals' moral commitment found in their cosmological styles is also important because it brings stability into casual relations between social organisations and cosmology (Ostrander, 1982). As Douglas (1970, p.74) explains, to individuals 'experience of cognitive dissonance is disturbing, so the experience of consonance in layer after layer of experience and context after

context is satisfying'. Hence individuals resort to social organisations in a way that they can either deal with problems they face in their social environment (Six, 2007) or, maybe, experience some kind of social control (Spickard, 1989). Hence cosmological styles are developed around boundary controls aiming to protect the integrity of individuals in social organisations (Lupton, 1999a).

Therefore risk offers a macro narrative where social organisations develop cosmological styles in a way that supports the group's underling moral principles (Lupton, 1999a). As discussed in the previous section, risk works as a cultural strategy that helps social groups to make sense of uncertainties identified as 'otherness'; for instance threats coming from outsiders (Douglas, 1992). Distinctions are also made with regard to objects and behaviours that are deemed improper, impure and so on (Douglas, 1966). Therefore risk cosmology is framed as a 'cultural response to transgressions' and thus crossing social organisations' cultural demarcations means facing the risks of contamination, anomalies and ultimately exclusion from the group (Lupton, 1999a, p.46).

Moral aspects of cosmologies have been present in Douglas' (1966) work since her seminal book Purity and Danger. In this work the author investigates how 'ideas of pollution and taboo and other boundary-violating practices are sustained by underlying dynamics of social organization' (Six, 2007, p.64). Recently, Dion, Sabri & Guillard (2014) brought Douglas' (Douglas, 1966) ideas to the quotidian of consumer behaviour to discuss how notions of symbolic pollution are negotiated by the daily practices required to keep a house clean and tidy. The authors point out that in the macro and micro levels of social practices tidiness reinforces both structures of social reality (Dion, Sabri & Guillard, 2014). However at the micro-level Dion, Sabri & Guillard (2014) argue that consumers' daily practices aim to negotiate practical boundaries so that they can cope with unavoidable symbolic pollution. In addition Dion, Sabri & Guillard's (2014, p.582) work shows that 'transgressions have different meanings, depending on context, and that respondents are willing to break tidiness rules because danger-beliefs associated with transgressions are context-dependent'. These findings are interesting for two reasons. First they show that consumers negotiate boundaries between classifications towards cultural understandings of risk. Second, they show that risk is

used to evoke cosmological style in order to justify consumers' 'shift from moral beliefs that present untidiness as socially threatening to personal danger-beliefs that link untidiness to quality of life, personal efficiency, and so forth' (Dion, Sabri & Guillard, 2014, p.584).

Exploring the way in which consumers negotiate their understandings of symbolic pollution Dion, Sabri & Guillard's (2014) study demonstrates that cosmology is a useful concept to investigate how consumers to define the reality of their social experience (Douglas, 1970; 1982; 2013). In addition by showing the relevance of risk in consumers' cosmological styles Dion, Sabri & Guillard's (2014) work also demonstrates the importance of exploring the relation between cosmology and the social environment. This brings some novelty to the application of Douglas' (1982; 1992; 2013) work on risk where the relation between cosmology and social organisation is emphasised to a greater extent. As seen in the previous section.

However, Dion, Sabri & Guillard's (2014) work pays little attention to consumers' actual social interactions in the macro-social environment, a limitation resulting from this study's research context. Social interaction is an important aspect of the formation of cosmologies. It allows individuals to express their 'kinds of ideal person' (Douglas, 2013, p.125), although they need to find concordance between symbolic and social experiences (Douglas, 1970) what means finding a common ground between their sense of self (Belk, 1988) and their everyday consumption practices. Hence cosmological styles potentially reveal consumers' shared ideas, values and beliefs.

Douglas started to address this idea in her work with Isherwood (1996), focusing on the way in which the consumption of objects is used as a resource to deploy and control social practices (Fardon, 2002). This work strengthens the idea that the consumption of objects is part of a dynamic information system and therefore they 'can only communicate their meanings if they are supported by other goods' (Sassatelli, 2007 p.62). More importantly, Douglas & Isherwood (1996) highlight that the inclusion or exclusion of the consumption of objects in a system either reinforces or undermines the existing boundaries. Consequently, modes of consumption work as if 'goods are both the hardware and the software, so to speak, of an information system whose principal

concern is to monitor its own performance' (Douglas & Isherwood, 1996, p.49).

Taking Douglas & Isherwood's (1996) analogy of software and hardware, it is possible to say that counterfeit goods, as "hardware", are instrumental to consumers in reproducing cosmologies (Slater, 2003). Meanwhile, as "software", counterfeit goods provide new understandings of how symbolic and social experiences find concordance in a given social environment (Douglas, 1970); that is to say a counterfeit-plentiful market such as Brazil. Furthermore, this thesis proposes to follow Douglas' (1966; 1970; 1992; 2013) ideas to investigate risk as a key rationale in consumers' moral universe in order to explore how consumers of counterfeits, as a social group—a loosely shaped community—employ some common practices in order to justify their perception of risk grounding their social reality and ultimately their consumption practices.

Risk management practices in the Consumer Culture Theory (2005) literature are discussed next.

3.5 RISK MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN CONSUMER CULTURE THEORY

Risk is a topic that is overlooked in Consumer Culture Theory (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) literature. Besides Dion, Sabri & Guillard's (2014) work—which looks at mundane actions (i.e. keeping a house clean and tidy) in the formation of a moral order to deal with the risks of symbolic pollution (Douglas, 1966)—only a few studies have addressed the role of risk in consumption and all of the studies have investigated risk as an extraordinary event in consumers' lives. The majority focus their discussion on the outcomes (mostly positive) of risk taking activities such as river rafting (Arnould & Price, 1993), sky-diving (Celsi, Rose & Leigh, 1993) and mountain climbing (Belk & Tumbat, 2011), while Humphreys & Thompson (2014) focus on individuals' (negative) perceptions of extraordinary ecological catastrophes rather than small scale deforestation, fires and floods that also endanger the environment. Even though these studies provide a richer description of risk in consumption than most cognitive research (Conchar et al., 2004), they do not look in depth at the way in which individuals negotiate the risks associated with consumption in everyday life.

Ultimately the decision to take risks is a personal choice (Douglas, 1982; 1992; 2013). However 'moral and culturally learned shared assumption' plays a considerable part in defining which situations are potentially harmful, and therefore risky, for individuals, their communities and society (Lupton, 1999a, p.121). River rafting (Arnould & Price, 1993), sky-diving (Celsi, Rose & Leigh, 1993), mountain climbing (Belk & Tumbat, 2011) and many extreme sports potentially threaten someone's physical integrity, and therefore they are seen as risk-related activities. Yet these consumption practices are likened to the idea of pleasure and sense of selfhood (Arnould & Price, 1993; Celsi, Rose & Leigh, 1993; Belk & Tumbat, 2011). In these situations the 'risk-taker may be viewed as someone who possesses courage, not only in placing her or himself in danger but also in her or his deliberate contravening of societal norms' (Lupton, 1999a, p.159). Even gambling is no longer seen as posing a financial threat, therefore it is not seen as a risky behaviour. Consumers are now encouraged to travel to cities like Las Vegas to enjoy life rather than incur in a risk-related activity but of course they gamble (Humphreys, 2010a; 2010b).

The consumption of counterfeits, however, is far from deserving a similar judgment of risk. Douglas (1992) explains that notions of risk help social groups to make sense of uncertainties. However in emphasising the potential harm in consuming counterfeits the prevailing institutional discourse in the mass media (VEJA, 1995; Bauerova, 2008; Rodrigues, 2006; Antunes, 2012; Economist, 2015) connects the notion of risk to the consumption of counterfeits and consequently relates consumers' actions to 'legitimating moral principles' (Lupton, 1999a, p.46). Therefore it is not surprising that most positivist consumer researches take for granted risk cultural bias (Douglas, 1982; 1992; 2013) while most studies in Consumer Culture Theory (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) discuss mainly the positive outcomes of risk taking situations. Consequently in both groups of literature risk management practices remain underexplored.

3.5.1 Consumers' Perception of Risk in the Consumption of Counterfeits

Overlooked in the Consumer Culture Theory (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) literature, risk is an important element in the consumption of counterfeit goods. Perez, Castaño & Quintanilha (2010) and Kuever's (2014) works have started to address this gap,

showing the relevance of the consumers' perception of risk in supporting their consumption experiences.

Perez, Castaño & Quintanilla (2010) study looks at the positive aspects of risk taking practices Their findings show that first the consumption of counterfeits can be seen as an efficient way to manage financial resources (Perez, Castaño & Quintanilla, 2010), and is thus a less risky choice. Second, it points out that consumers of counterfeits see their practices as 'fun by experiencing adventure, enjoyment, and risk' (Perez, Castaño & Quintanilla, 2010, p.219). Third there is also the enjoyment of fooling others by wearing counterfeits without being caught what indicates that these consumers also see the consumption of counterfeits as a game where the most capable player deserves to win. Furthermore, this study points out that that consumers of counterfeits have a different relationship with risk as they 'calculated [a] trade-off between the social gains derived from using counterfeits and the risk of being discovered' (Perez, Castaño & Quintanilla, 2010, p.220) in order to create and sustain their sense of self in society (Belk, 1988; Ahuvia, 2005).

Kuever (2014) study throws some light on the discussion regarding risk and brand country-of-origin[2]. Taking the Chinese emerging market as a research context, this study argues that when uncertainties about the distribution channel are high the brand's true country-of-origin becomes irrelevant information in consumers' choice. As the author explains, Chinese consumers know that products from international and local brands can be produced in the same factory so for them 'the destination market of a product is more important than where it is made or what brand it is' (Kuever, 2014, p.178). Therefore consumers search for information about the materials and place of production and rely on trustworthy dealers (Kuever, 2014) to avoid the risks they face in their local market.

In addition Kuever (2014) discusses how the macro-social context structuring forces in China affect consumers' choice giving force to a peculiar process of glocalisation where consumers devalue international brands that are produced in the local market. However, the author neglects other macro-social frameworks that are important to investigate the 'context of contexts: societal class divisions, historical and global processes, cultural

values and norms' (Askegaard & Linnet, 2011, p.396). For instance, Kuever (2014) could have investigated the influence of social norms on consumers' perception of risk in Chinese society. Instead she opted for a risk society perspective (Beck, 1992; Beck, Giddens & Lash, 1994) where risk is defined as collective (social) danger and, more importantly, where the possibility of personal harm is greatly emphasised (Mythen & Walklate, 2006). Thus Kuever (2014) takes consumers' aversion to risk for granted and therefore the author investigates consumers' perception of risk with a similar mindset to that seen in the mainstream positivist consumer research.

3.6 SUMMARY

Risk cannot be isolated from the context in which it arises and thus what is identified as risky is in fact an inevitable outcome of social and cultural processes (Lupton, 1999b). Therefore risk conceptualisation in social science acknowledges that perceptions of risk are culturally shaped as a result of the interplay between institutional discourses and individual subjectivities (Mythen, 2004). Lupton (1999a), in endeavouring to understand the nature of risk through the notion of a continuum, identifies three key perspectives: risk society, cultural/symbolic and governmentality (Lupton, 1999a; 2006). In an intermediate position, the cultural/symbolic perspective emphasises that risk works as a cultural strategy by helping social groups to make sense of uncertainties, and therefore it acknowledges risk conceptualisation as being developed collectively via shared meanings and practices (Douglas, 1982; 1992; 2013).

Consumers of counterfeits form a social group—a loosely shaped community—where shared meanings and practices reflect their cultural understandings of risk. For these reasons it is important to investigate how risk underpins their consumption behaviours. Consumer Culture Theory (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) studies have started to address the topic pointing out that consumers of counterfeits navigate among untrustworthy marketplace situations (Kuever, 2014) as they seek enjoyable consumption experiences (Perez, Castaño & Quintanilla, 2010). These consumers also need to deal with risk cultural bias in a society where the consumption of these products is largely defined upfront as a risk taking practice (i.e. unsafe but also morally wrong). Thus further

theoretical development is needed to understand how consumers' perceptions of risk are formed according to their cultural underpinnings and mediated in line with their experience in macro-social contexts.

Chapter 4: Fashion, Materiality and Consumption of Counterfeits

This chapter discusses the consumption of counterfeits in relation to fashion and its link with materiality to better understand the consumption of these goods. First it explores consumers' interpretation of fashion cultural representations and their practical use in fashion ensembles to express their sense of style and individuality. Then, it develops the claim that consumers' desire for fashion is the main motivation for their consumption of counterfeits. It concludes a discussion on the latest developments in theories of materiality.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In markets plentiful in counterfeits (Gentry et al., 2001) these goods become as valid a consumption option as genuine and inspired products. Therefore this chapter puts forward the idea that consumers see counterfeit clothes and apparel as material resources that are used by them, like any other garments, in support of their individual and social identities (Kravets & Sandikci, 2014). In keeping with this idea, this chapter proposes that consumers see counterfeits as fashion products, not necessarily luxury goods. Classy, a common meta-narrative used in the fashion industry for luxury goods, is just one of many representations available to consumers. In fact, there are many other fashion representations (e.g. trendy, vintage, gothic, gangsta [the hip-hop fashion style], among others) that are used as symbolic resources by consumers to represent who they are, at least at that moment. This shows that consumers use their creativity to compose fashion ensembles (Barthes, 2013) in line with their social reality (Askegaard & Linnet, 2011) to express their sense of style and individuality (Featherstone, 2007[1991]).

Therefore this chapter reviews the literature on the consumption of fashion with a great emphasis on the symbolic aspects that support the consumption of clothing as a system of signification. First it discusses the reasons why the consumption of clothing should be seen as a comprehensive action that involves not only selection/purchase but also ensemble/display (Campbell, 1996). Then it discusses fashion in the light of the seminal works The System of Fashion (Barthes, 1990[1967]) and The System of Objects (Baudrillard, 2005[1968]) to argue that consumers' interpretation happens in reference to the conceptual fashion product and therefore consumers' creativity in composing

fashion ensembles is not limited by the type of product they consume (i.e. genuine-items, counterfeits and inspired-items). Finally, the materiality literature is examined starting with a discussion of consumers' material interaction with distinctive consumption goods of a similar product design concept.

4.2 CLOTHING, FASHION AND ITS COMPOSITE CULTURAL INDUSTRY

Consumer culture studies have long been investigating consumers' desire for fashionable clothes and accessories (McCracken, 1990; Slater, 1997; Sassatelli, 2007).

> Fashion is always part of dress; but its origins can represent either of our two categories. Fashion can be part of a dress object that has been artificially elaborated by specialists at any one moment (for example, haute couture); at another moment, it can be constructed by the propagation of a simple act of dressing that is then reproduced at the collective level and for a number of reasons. (Barthes, 2013, p.10)

In most studies the primary focus is on understanding consumers' identity projects (Belk, 1988; Ahuvia, 2005). Here fashion goods help consumers to embrace, or resist, personal changes (e.g. Thompson & Haytko, 1997; Murray, 2002; Piacentini & Mailer, 2004; Newholm & Hopkinson, 2009; Marion & Nairn, 2011; Choi, Ko & Megehee, 2014). Few studies have investigated fashion as a catalyst for changes in social relations (McQuarrie, Miller & Phillips, 2013; Scaraboto & Fischer, 2013; Dolbec & Fischer, 2015; Parmentier & Fischer, 2015). Here the dynamics of change are investigated in online communities and thus fashion provides the research context where the consumer's interaction happens but less attention is paid to the way in which clothes and accessories are actually consumed.

Consumer society in the above studies is fairly stable and as a result they neglect the fact that clothes and accessories also have an important role in bringing a sense of stability to consumers in respect of both individual and social identities. In emerging market countries the society is constantly changing and thus the consumption of fashion offers consumers not only material aspirations (Sandikci & Ger, 2010; Ourahmoune &

Ozcaglar-Toulouse, 2012) but also a middle ground between a distant and an alluring fashion imaginary and their changeable reality (Kravets & Sandikci, 2014). Consequently, making a "reading" of consumers' selective selection and display of objects as if they were sending a massage does not necessarily lead to an understanding of the meaningful, genuine, consumption acts that govern their decisions (Douglas & Isherwood, 1996[1979]; McCracken, 1990; Campbell, 1996).

This is particularly critical in the consumption of clothes and accessories where research has tended to analyse the meanings attached to these consumption objects and linked them to the meanings attached to their usage (Campbell, 1996).

> In this way the meaning of one or more actions is deduced from a knowledge of the cultural significance of the object involved. Yet such an interpretation is arrived at without any attempt to ascertain precisely what action the individual is engaged in, let alone what reasons governed the critical decisions (if indeed any were made) to buy and then wear the item in question. Just because observers (academic or otherwise) find it relatively easy to ascribe meanings to products it should not be assumed that these correspond to those meanings that inform the actions of individuals when making use of those products. This confusion arises because of the rather too easy assumption that individuals select and use the products they do because of the commonly agreed meanings that it is claimed they possess. (Campbell, 1996, pp.93-94)

In fact meanings around the consumption of clothing are not so easy to determine. One of the reasons for this lies in the fact that fashion, as an aesthetic phenomenon, works like a 'composite cultural industry' where fashion journalists, fashion leaders (i.e. artists, musicians, sports people and celebrities) and frontline fashion specialists (i.e. shopkeepers and stockists) function as cultural intermediaries helping to translate the fashion industry's (i.e. the developers and producers of fashion goods) latest creations to consumers (Sassatelli, 2007, p.71). The fashion 'composite cultural industry' also participates in a larger visual culture of images and spectacles (Kellner, 2014) where it provides a fashion imaginary to the associated fields of the mass-media, design and advertising (Bourdieu, 1984).

Consumers, on the other hand, make fashion choices that 'require the continual

assessment and evaluation of consumer goods and activities in light of their potential contributions to identities or images they are attempting to project' (Crane, 2000, p.10). Seminal studies on fashion have largely investigated how consumers' preferences (i.e. tastes) for categories and styles of clothing have become useful to project a specific image helping them demarcate social relationships (Featherstone, 2007[1991]). Fashion modes of consumption have been described by these key theorists as a matter of emulation and status competition (Veblen, 2003[1899]), as a continuous process of innovation, imitation and change encompassing all social strata (Simmel, 1957[1904]) and as a distinct consumption pattern that materialises the society hierarchy of tastes (Bourdieu, 1984).

Over time the consumption of fashion changed as consumers started to assume the responsibility for their choices and tastes (Sassatelli, 2007, p.71) judging everyday life according to its aesthetic qualities (Gronow, 1997). Therefore the consumption of fashion became a process of collective selection in which taste formation is collective but the formation of a collective taste is a result of different experiences that happen in social interactions (Blumer, 1969). Fashion representations are also a process of collective creation because the 'latest trend' (i.e. a fashion code) filters and changes, as it passes from developers, to producers, to fashion cultural intermediaries and then to consumers, who nevertheless 'contribute to the ongoing negotiation of the fashion code, responding both to the fashion industry and to wider cultural circumstances' (Sassatelli, 2007, p.71). Lately consumers have started to play a part as fashion cultural intermediaries as a result of their extensive participation in digital media platforms as arbitrators of taste (McQuarrie, Miller & Phillips, 2013; Dolbec & Fischer, 2015).

Consequently consumers' formation of taste happens in reference to a dynamic social space (Bourdieu, 1984) where media, design and advertising align with the fashion 'composite cultural industry' (Sassatelli, 2007, p.71). Yet it is important to consider that consumers use this 'composite' of fashion representations as symbolic resources not only in support of their identity projects but also to negotiate their desired social identity in societies in constant change (Kravets & Sandikci, 2014). Hence consumption, including fashion consumption, becomes a reflexive act where consumers "negotiate" their self-representations vis-a-vis consumption objects (Falk & Campbell, 1997)

because consumers need to interpret both—the meanings of cultural representations and the physical aspects of consumption goods—to assimilate them into their actions so that consumption can in fact be materialised (Slater, 2002) into meaningful consumption acts (Campbell, 1996).

For instance, Campbell (1996) gives the example of a fur coat where the prevailing cultural significance would link the use of this consumption object to a 'message' of affluence and opulence; this is traditionally codified by the industry and fashion intermediaries as luxury consumption. Yet this is just the most common meaning attached to a fur because when it comes to the meanings attached to its use consumers may have different motives and reasons (Campbell, 1996). Recently, the fashion 'composite cultural industry' (Sassatelli, 2007, p.71) has proposed a new representation of the use of fur coats as a fashion statement where consumers can reject the prevailing usage of the consumption object in order to achieve a more modern and edgy look (Skov, 2005). Consumers interpret this new representation as fashion "trends" where they can work on carefully selecting and combining clothes and accessories to express their sense of style and individuality (Featherstone, 2007[1991]).

Sassatelli (2007) explains such a formation of taste in great detail:

> Skov's (2005) research on the return of the fur coat shows, for example, that the renewed fashion for furs in recent years has been the result of combined changes in production, distribution and consumption, partly in response to animal welfare protests. Changes in production of furs (from wild to farmed) and in their marketing (increased use of promotional techniques), in the manufacture of fur garments (from craft to ready-to-wear) and their distribution (from specialized shops to fashion boutiques), and in consumers' outlook (a new generation of women exploring new images of femininity) have contributed to reposition the fur coat. Now furs may be coded as a young, sexy and rebellious fashion statement for the assertive woman in her thirties as opposed to a life investment for the middle-aged, middle-class traditional woman (Sassatelli, 2007, p.71).

Figure 4.1 illustrates one possible way in which consumers can translate fashion trends into meaningful consumption actions:

Figure 4.1
The meaningfulness of consumers' actions

Source: Blog Atlantic // Pacific. Post 'rain or shine', March 2012. Observational data collected by the author of this thesis.

Consumers' meaningful actions in this case (Fig. 4.1) appropriate and combine knowledge of the distinct cultural significance and thus it does not matter whether the consumption object, the fur coat, is an inspired-item (i.e. imitation in style and/or natural material) because it is the significance around the use, the fashion ensemble, that grounds the meaningfulness of consumers' actions. As Campbell (1996, p.96) explains, the problem of ascribing meanings to products without considering the consumers' motives and reasons not only separates the consumption of clothes into two actions (i.e. selection/purchase and ensemble/display) but deems each activity as a meaningful 'action' in itself. This consequently confuses mundane, behavioural, activities with consumption acts, 'although it is really only the second of these categories that is "meaningful" in the sense of manifesting consciously formulated intentions towards the consumption of objects (Campbell, 1996, p.95).

In the literature review on the consumption of counterfeits (Chap. 2) it became clear that most studies on the topic have focused on measuring consumer behavioural activities centred on the choice of counterfeits over genuine-items. Few studies that value the

cultural aspects of the consumption of counterfeits have begun to understand how meanings for genuine-items were appropriated by consumers of counterfeits in meaningful ways (Hoe, Hogg & Hart, 2003; Strehlau, 2005; Perez, Castaño & Quintanilla, 2010; Jiang & Cova, 2012). These studies highlighted consumers' stylistic self-consciousness, self-expression and individuality (Featherstone, 1991) treating the consumption act as a conscious action of selection/purchase of counterfeits (Campbell, 1996). However they left unaddressed the action of ensemble/display, which happens in combination with genuine and inspired items. Therefore reaching an understanding of the consumption of counterfeits as a comprehensive, genuine, consumption act involving not only selection/purchase but also ensemble/display involving not only counterfeits but also genuine and inspired products will shed some light on the current understanding of the consumption of counterfeit goods.

Another problem with most studies on the consumption of counterfeits is the a priori classification of fake products as luxury products. To begin with the premium market segment has fine exemplars of well-crafted consumption objects made of exquisite materials but the majority of luxury brands offer more fashionability than truly luxurious products (Truong, McColl & Kitchen, 2009; Kapferer & Bastien, 2009). Also, this market and the segment of deluxe brands (Thomas, 2007) customarily sell high quality imitations of products in high demand from competitors, a sort of premium inspired-item. Hence it becomes very difficult to pinpoint a uniform 'message' from the fashion industry regarding luxury and its consumption practices, let alone transferring such cultural significance to counterfeit products .

More to the point, classifying the consumption of counterfeits as luxury products conflicts with Campbell's (1996) observation in two ways. First, regardless of the type of object consumed (i.e. genuine-items, counterfeits or inspired-items), the translation of cultural significance, such as luxury, does not allow the interpretation of the two-stage decision process (i.e. selection/purchase and ensemble/display) as discussed above (Campbell, 1996). Second, even if consumers comply with some accepted cultural significance, the stage of selection/purchase would require from consumers a different rational (reasons and motives) as they consider genuine-items, counterfeit and inspired-items to match their stylistic, self-expressive and identity goals (Featherstone, 1991).

Furthermore, the stage of ensemble/display would gain additional complexity because items can be interchanged and also combined, multiplying ensembles that would bring distinctive meanings to the action of display. Moreover the material aspects of genuine-items, counterfeits and inspired-items input more variation into the ensemble/display and therefore I wonder if consumers' material interaction with distinctive goods of a similar product design would bring more meaningfulness to their consumption acts.

4.2.1 Consumption of clothing and the meaningfulness of consumption acts

At the beginning of this chapter it was discussed the importance of understanding the consumption of clothes as a comprehensive decision-making process involving the actions of selection/purchase and ensemble/display (Campbell, 1996) and supported by consumers' stylistic self-consciousness, self-expression and individuality (Featherstone, 1991). To Campbell (1996). Consumption acts are not truly meaningful if there is no awareness in consumers' actions. This means that individuals' actions must go beyond mundane activities and include highly symbolic motivations, collective significance and also consumption decisions where choices are significantly different because each action can convey different messages to observers (Campbell, 1996), and probably meanings to consumers.

Marion & Narin's (2011) study offers an example of meaningful, genuine, consumption actions that are found in teenage consumers' ultimate goal of self-expression, which aligns with both their present and future identities. Focusing on teenagers' tactics of combining fashion clothes, accessories and makeup (i.e. ensemble/display) Marion & Narin's (2011) study explores consumers' 'choice between significantly different alternatives, ones that could be equated with competing lifestyles or identities' (Campbell, 1996, p.102). Furthermore, Marion & Narin (2011) exemplify how distinct cultural significance can be appropriated and transformed by consumers' actions. Therefore this study shows that teenagers' outfits go beyond the reproduction of fashion cultural representations in line with their group identity because their consumption practices move towards creativity with the aim of displaying their sense of uniqueness (Marion & Nairn, 2011). More importantly, Marion & Narin's (2011) study shows that such uniqueness was articulated by consumers around the material aspects of carefully

chosen fashion objects.

Kravets & Sandikci (2014) offers another example of meaningful consumption acts. The authors opt for a macro-level perspective to explore how outfits become important to consumers in the display of their middle-classness without contradicting their social identity (Kravets & Sandikci, 2014). In this study consumers' actions of ensemble/display follow what the authors call formulaic creativity. Formulaic creativity, the authors explain, is a mode of consumption that entails consumers articulating outfits using a 'standard set of products and rules to produce individualized and competent, yet ordinary, outcomes' (Kravets & Sandikci, 2014, p.126). In showing consumers' acts are reflections of their motives and reasons it is possible to say that formulaic creativity (Kravets & Sandikci, 2014) constitutes a consumer behaviour that is 'action in the true sense' (Campbell, 1996, p.103).

In addition, Kravets & Sandikci's (2014) study offers a prime example of meaningful consumption that is no longer individual but collective (Campbell, 1996). Moreover, Kravets & Sandikci (2014) show that even actions that are intended to signal consumers' alignment with their middle-class position are followed by a considerable effort to create significant alternatives. Here Kravets & Sandikci's (2014) findings joins with Marion & Narin's (2011) observation in showing that consumers' sense of individuality (Featherstone, 1991) lies in the creative combination of outfits, though not much details is given regarding the physical aspects of the fashion objects.

In Marion & Narin's (2011) and Kravets & Sandikci's (2014) studies the Lévi-Strauss' (1966[1962]) concept of bricolage was used to highlight consumers' awareness of their actions and to incorporate the foundational criteria—high symbolic motivation, collective significance and significantly different decisions—identified by Campbell (1996). However these studies pay less attention to consumers' modes of engagement with advertising (O'Donohoe, 1994) and extensive media representations (Crane, 2000) around the significance of fashion goods (Campbell, 1996). One of the reasons for this is that the concept of bricolage places a heavy emphasis on the contrast between consumers' selective and expressive actions in composing one outfit over other possible combinations. The underlying logic here is significance by difference (Levi-Strauss,

1966[1962]), but other logics are in place when it comes to a system of consumption (Baudrillard, 2005[1968]). For this reason less is said in Marion & Narin (2011) and Kravets & Sandikci (2014) about the way in which consumers interpret meanings and signs that are widespread in the media and use them as symbolic resources to compose their desired outfits in respect of their individual or social identity.

However, it is possible to see in fashion a certain 'spirit of bricolage' (Kaiser & Ketchum, 2005) and Barthes (1990[1967]) wisely expands on this idea making several references to Lévi-Strauss's (1966[1962]) work in the development of his theory of fashion as an interrelated system of symbolic representations. Therefore Barthes' (1990[1967]) system of fashion offers an alternative conceptualisation to understand consumers' ensemble/display in their consumption of counterfeits. As Kravets & Sandikci' (2014, p.138) formulaic creativity has shown counterfeit goods are used interchangeably by consumers, and as the authors suggest, future research is needed to investigating why consumers 'do not necessarily perceive innate differences between originals and counterfeits and treat them as substitutes in certain conditions'.

Barthes' (1990[1967]) work could help in bringing a new perspective to this case because the system of fashion offers a comprehensive way to understand the formation of symbolic representations developed by the fashion industry and communicated by fashion cultural intermediaries (Sassatelli, 2007). Such a perspective is indeed very helpful to understand consumers' reasoning in composing alternative ensembles/displays because as Campbell (1996, p.96) advocates, clothes and accessories are 'perceived symbolically, and consequently equated with the discovery of a referent or referents' helping consumers to set the parameters for a comprehensive process that will transform their consumption into real meaningful acts.

Nevertheless fashion imaginary constructed by the advertising industry (Kellner, 2014; Phillips & McQuarrie, 2010) is coupled with the fashion 'composite cultural industry' (Sassatelli, 2007, p.71) and representations from the associated fields (Bourdieu, 1984) to collectively create a cohesive notion of a cultural representation of fashion. This notion feedback on both fashion industry and fashion cultural intermediaries and further extents to consumers' actions on digital media as platforms (McQuarrie, Miller &

Phillips, 2013; Scaraboto & Fischer, 2013; Dolbec & Fischer, 2015). This aspect is briefly discussed in the following section as a way to support the explanation of the system of fashion (Barthes, 1990[1967]) and it is explored in depth in the subsequent section.

4.3 CONSUMERS' INTERPRETATIONS OF THE FASHION IMAGINARY

Fashion for Barthes (1990[1967]; 2013) is a visual language that represents what fashionable dressing means through systems of meanings that overlay the formation and diffusion of meaningful outfits with a rhetorical system that represents fashion as imaginative practices throughout the world. To consumers the visual language of fashion offers an 'extraordinarily rich variety of alternatives' (Crane, 2000) and therefore it 'enables individuals to direct their attention toward appearance style, to engage in interpretive processes, and to participate in the social construction of meaning' (Kaiser & Ketchum, 2005, p.127). Meanwhile the fashion industry's creation and production of clothes and accessories uses its own visual language in the construction of the fashion imaginary (Kellner, 2014).

Fashion imaginary, however, is not about a realist representation of social life but rather plausible simulations of reality that appropriate cultural realms, like gender and sexuality, extending human emotions and desires to advertising, mostly magazines, in such a way that 'affect and image are welded together in human experience both within the private realm of cognition and in the public realm of cultural representation' (Ryan, 2010, p.29). Fashion advertising is a subject that is larger than the scope of this thesis. However it is important to discuss, just briefly, the role of advertising in the formation of fashion imaginary (Kellner, 2014) and, more importantly, consumers' interaction with fashion imagination. As explained before the fashion system (McCracken, 1990) encompasses the fashion 'composite cultural industry' (Sassatelli, 2007, p.71) and the associated fields of the mass-media, design and advertising (Bourdieu, 1984) in the creation of a larger visual culture of images and spectacles (Kellner, 2014).

Fashion advertising, like all other kinds of advertising, has a dual function. For Kellner

(2014) the advertising industry is

> as concerned with selling life-styles and socially desirable identities, which are associated with their products, as with selling the product themselves or rather, that advertisers use symbolic constructs with which the consumer is invited to identify to try to induce her to use their product (Kellner, 2014, p.190).

As a result the system of fashion (Barthes, 1990[1967]) becomes auto referent, creator and creature, in the formation of a rich imaginary with dual symbolic power. Hence in pursuing its goals fashion advertising foments its highly desirable reality, which provides consumers with a foundational symbolic resource whereby they can set the parameters of the aesthetic qualities they desire in everyday life (Gronow, 1997).

On the other hand, advertising functions as a 'literature of consumption' helping consumers to situate what is seen in their own experiences of the world (Scott, 1994b), which requires from consumers the interpretation of a sophisticated textual and visual rhetoric (Scott, 1994a). As O'Donohoe's (1994) work demonstrates, consumers are in fact quite literate in terms of reading advertising messages. Focusing on consumers' actual use of advertising images and messages O'Donohoe (1994) shows that consumers employ the meanings of adverts beyond their commercial intents. Therefore the author explains that non-marketing use of advertising offers consumers several forms of gratification such as the simple actions of structuring time and scanning the environment. Moreover, there are also more meaningful actions such as symbolic resources for consumers' identity projects (O'Donohoe, 1994).

However, not enough is known about consumers' literacy regarding the consumption of fashion advertising in the Consumer Culture Theory (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) literature. Phillips & McQuarrie (2010) have tried to expand on this idea as they explored how consumers interpret the visual representations in fashion advertising. The authors used the system of fashion (Barthes, 1990[1967]) to ground the idea that the fashion imaginary can be the object of consumption per se without the need to elicit further actions by consumers (Phillips & McQuarrie, 2010), such as fashion outfits making reference to a particular advert.

This observation allows us to infer that such playfulness also means that if consumers decide to act in reference to a fashion imaginary they may decide not to follow the fashion rules 'by the book' and rather become creative whilst assembling their outfits. This possibility was observed in Marion & Narin's (2011) and Kravets & Sandikci's (2014) studies, though they used Lévi-Strauss's concept of bricolage (Levi-Strauss, 1966[1962]) as discussed in the previous section. However Phillips & McQuarrie (2010) never explored the way in which consumers' fashion literacy helps them to translate advertising messages into meaningful actions, as O'Donohoe (1994) did when studying the advertising industry.

Consumers' interpretative freedom and playfulness in regard to fashion cultural representations shows, however, that there is a need to understand not only how consumers interpret the visual language of fashion but also how they "speak" such a language as they undertake the actions of selection/purchase and ensemble/display (Campbell, 1996). Considering this reason, first the system of fashion (Barthes, 1990[1967]) will be explained in detail below, keeping in mind the potential of Barthes' (1990[1967]) theory to understand consumers' ensemble/display of counterfeits, which happens in combination with genuine-items and inspired-items. Then, in the following section, Baudrillard's (2005[1968]; 1988[1972]) system of signs will be discussed in the light of the consumption of counterfeits.

4.3.1 Understanding the visual language of fashion

To better explain the overlays of the formation, diffusion and representation crux of the phenomenon of fashion, Barthes (1990[1967]) developed a system of signification where the articulation of meanings occurs in two interconnected levels. The interconnection happens because fashion as a visual language always makes reference to a material object, a garment, and this physical element permeates the system of signification in two ways: as a unit that encapsulates a fashion sign and as a component of meaningful outfits. These two levels of the articulation of meanings are useful to explain the use of material objects in the formation of fashion ensembles (first level) and its role as an essential part of rhetorical systems that combine messages containing modes of action transmitted to consumers in respect of clothing and the fashion world

(second level). The abstract relation where the fashion sign makes reference to a garment's conceptual product design actually feeds back from the second level to the first level and for this reason the system of fashion works as an interconnected relation of formation, diffusion and representation.

Figure 4.2
The System of Fashion
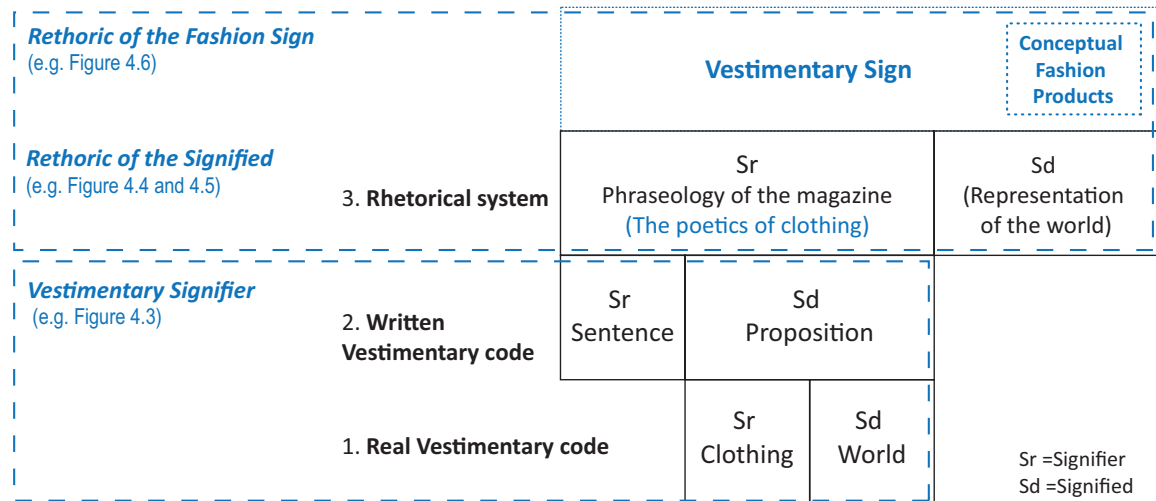
Source: Adaption from Barthes (1990 [1967], p.38). Modifications showed in blue.

The formation of each level is grounded on the idea that meaningful relations in fashion are formed around the articulation of the vestimentary signifier. This is possible because in fashion what is important is the breadth of variation of the signifiers and the 'role it plays in relation to other signs, the systematic fashion in which it resembles them or differs from them [therefore] every sign takes its being from its surroundings not from its roots' (Barthes, 1990[1967], p.26). This idea is important because it expands the system of fashion beyond a traditional semiological analysis and its classic triangular relation among sign, signifier and signified (Sebeok, 1994). Furthermore it allows Barthes (1990[1967]) to posit that the vestimentary signifier in fact fuses real and written vestimentary codes. To Barthes:

> Fashion, since it is experience as anterior to language and its elements are supposedly real, not spoken; it clearly places a real garment in relation to an empirical circumstance in the world; its typical sign is: real garment ≡ real world, [3]and it is for this reason that it will henceforth be called: the real vestimentary code. (Barthes, 1990[1967], p.34)

First level of articulation of meanings

At this level the vestimentary signifier 'obeys the principle of metalanguages: the sign of the real vestimentary code becomes the simple signified (proposition) of the written vestimentary code; this second signified is in turn provided with an autonomous signifier: the sentence' (Barthes, 1990[1967], p.35). So, opposite to semiological analysis where the three entities (sign, signifier and signified) must be subsumed in one meaningful relation (Sebeok, 1994). In fashion, the combined written and real vestimentary codes generate a vestimentary signifier that in fact aggregates signification as it bridges visible and invisible worlds, the garment and the speech, around an ensemble. However this vestimentary signifier participates in an additional rhetorical system of an 'autonomous relation with each element of the vestimentary code, and no longer with its ensemble alone' (Barthes, 1990[1967], p.225). It is at that point that fashion moves to a second level of articulation of meanings.

Figure 4.3
Examples of Vestimentary Signifiers

Source: From left to right: Harper's Bazaar, February 2014 and InStyle, November 2013. Observational data collected by the author of this thesis.

Second level of articulation of meanings

At this level the additional rhetorical system brings forward three autonomous relations. The first relation generates a rhetorical system of clothing where an ensemble "models" the social world with intent to place the reader in the system of fashion (Barthes, 1990[1967]). In order for this to happen an ensemble (i.e. vestimentary signifier) represents ways of doing fashion by articulating ideas from three semantic fields—the cognitive model of culture, the affective model of caritatism and the vitalist model of detail (Barthes, 1990[1967]). Yet these models work in combination helping the socio-cultural representations in the system of fashion to remain altogether projective (Barthes, 1990[1967]).

The model of culture makes use of four aesthetic themes: idyllic nature, exotic geography, art and history (Figure 4.4-A making reference to art); this one an allusion to trends from other times like retro, 1960s fashion, etc. A key goal is to use these aesthetic references to place clothing (i.e. vestimentary code) under a sign that makes reference to both culture and society. A basic example would be: 'the dress Manet would have loved to paint' (Barthes, 1990[1967], p.239). The model of caritatism is based on the individual's need to relate to an object and thus fashion conveys the idea of affection as a complementary relation where a 'garment is sometimes loving, sometimes loved' (Barthes, 1990[1967], p.241). Consequently the model of caritatism juxtaposes emotions in such a way that fashion is represented as 'excessively serious and excessively frivolous, which is the basis for the rhetoric of Fashion' (Barthes, 1990[1967], p.242). See in figure 4.4-D and 4.4-B respectively. Finally the 'model of details' (Figure 4.4-C) that contrasts the ideas of tenuousness and creativity,

> a little nothing that changes everything; those little nothings that can do everything; just a detail will change its appearance; the details insure your personality, etc. By giving a great deal of semantic power to "nothing," Fashion is, of course, merely following its own system, whose matrices and chains are precisely responsible for radiating meaning through inert materials; structurally, the meaning of Fashion is a meaning at a distance; and within this structure it is precisely this "nothing" which is the radiant nucleus: its importance is energetic rather than extensive, there is a propagation from the detail to the ensemble, nothing can signify everything. (Barthes, 1990[1967], p.239)

Altogether the three themes articulated in the rhetorical system of clothing navigate between 'two contiguous states, one real and the other dreamed' to captivate their audiences (Barthes, 1990[1967]).

Figure 4.4
Examples of the Phraseology of the Magazine

Source: Fashion editorials (clockwise from the top left hand side): (A) The best and the brightest by Harper's Bazaar US, September 2014; (B) The Heiress by Harper's Bazaar Singapore, December 2011; (C) Girls Best Friend by Glamour UK, September 2013 and (D) Strictly Business by Marie Clare US, September 2012. Observational data collected by the author of this thesis.

The second rhetorical relation, the world of fashion, brings essence to "models" and that means bringing additional significance to the rhetorical system of clothing by transforming ways of doing fashion into 'visions of "doing"' (Barthes, 1990[1967], p.252):

> As we see, the semantic discontinuity of the vestimentary code (since this code includes only discrete units) reappears on the rhetorical level in the form of essentially separate entities; through the connotation of its second system … it can be said that the function of rhetoric here is to transform uses into rituals: in their connoted aspect, weekend, spring, and the Riviera are "scenes" in the sense this word could have in a liturgy, or, better still, in a theory of fantasy; for, in the end, it is a matter of absolute projections, infinitely repeated and infinitely evocative; the rhetorical activity of Fashion escapes time … Applied to "doing," the rhetoric of Fashion appears as a "preparation" (in the chemical sense), destined to rid human activity of its major scoria (alienation, boredom, uncertainty, or more fundamentally: impossibility), while retaining its essential quality of a pleasure and the reassuring clarity of a sign: doing the shopping is no longer impossible, or costly, or tiring, or troublesome, or disappointing: the episode is reduced to a pure, precious sensation, simultaneously tenuous and strong, which combines unlimited buying power, the promise of beauty, the thrill of the city, and the delight of a perfectly idle super-activity. (Barthes, 1990[1967], pp.252-253.

Figure 4.5
Example of the Representation of the World

Source: Fashion editorial: Street Chic by Harper's Bazaar, March 2013. Observational data collected by the author of this thesis.

Abstract level of articulation of meanings

Finally the last rhetorical relation aims the production of fashion signs and so it leaves behind the rhetoric of the signifier and signified that is grounded in previous relations (i.e. the rhetorical systems of clothing and the fashion world) to create an additional rhetorical system that is able to 'convert its sign into a natural fact or a rational law' (Barthes, 1990[1967], p.263). The rhetorical system here reaches the highest level of abstraction in which the sign of fashion will follow a trajectory:

> Between the (real) law and the (mythical) fact, we witness a curious interchange of means and ends: Fashion's reality is essentially the arbitrariness which establishes it: here we cannot logically transform a law into a fact except metaphorically; now, what does Fashion say? When it does acknowledge its law, it is as metaphor, and when it takes shelter behind the fact, it is as if it were literal; it metaphorizes the Skier's Ten Commandments (which is its reality), it observes the fact that this year, blue is the fashion (which is pure metaphor); it gives its reality the rhetorical emphasis of a deliberate metaphor, and its metaphors the simplicity of an observation-of-fact; it assumes the panache of connotation where it is merely denotative, and the humble figure of denotation when it deploys its purest rhetoric. Here again, there is the exact inversion of reality and its image (Barthes, 1990[1967], p.272)

Fashion then becomes a language 'spoken in proverbs, and thus [it can] be placed no longer under the law of men but under the laws of things' (Barthes, 1990[1967], p.217). Therefore the rhetoric of the fashion sign requires a rationalisation of the vestimentary sign so that the language of fashion, as a visual system of signification, can be understood. Rationalisation occurs in the selection of a vestimentary sign that is then represented by the unity, for example a material object that encapsulates in its conceptual product design the "true" significance of the fashion sign (Barthes, 1990[1967]). As the author explains:

> the unit of the vestimentary sign (i.e., of the sign of the vestimentary code, divested of its rhetorical apparatus) is defined by the singularity of the signifying relation, not by the singularity of either the signifier or the signified; in other words, though reduced to the unit, the vestimentary sign can include several fragments of signifiers (combinations of matrices and elements of the matrix

itself) and several fragments of signifieds (combinations of semantic units). (Barthes, 1990[1967], p.213)

In Bathes' (1990[1967], p.213) convoluted writing style 'the sign of the vestimentary code, divested of its rhetorical apparatus[4]' is the idealized outfit in which an unique relation of forms, patterns and styles represents the fashion sign, exemplified in figure 4.6.

Hence the second level of articulation of meanings inevitably feeds back to the system's first level because it is the unit of the vestimentary sign represented in material object that functions as a key resource of the formation of the fashion sign. It is possible to infer then that consumers, in order to create their own visual system of fashionable dress, make use of their own ensemble of the real vestimentary code in respect of the written vestimentary codes as well as a signified rhetorical system of the clothing and fashion world, giving life to their own vestimentary signifier (Barthes, 1990[1967]).

Figure 4.6
The Rhetoric of the Fashion Sign

Source: Fashion editorials: She's a Rainbow by Harper's Bazaar Australia, December 2013 and Do not Tease … trial and pink-Shocking! by Vogue Brazil, February 2014. Observational data collected by the author of this thesis.

However as Barthes (1990[1967]) explains, the fashion language would remain at the level of a metaphor if it were not for the material support of a piece of clothing. Therefore one cannot ignore that the material objects, the clothes, have a truly active position in the system of fashion. Barthes(1990[1967]) says that:

> Materiality, inertia, and conductivity make the support of signification into an original element of the Fashion system, at least in relation to language […]. Therefore, the linguistic syntagm cannot be divided into active and inert parts, significant and insignificant elements: in language, everything signifies. The support of signification draws its necessity and its originality precisely from the fact that the garment is not in itself a system of signification, as is language; in terms of substance, the support represents the materiality of the garment, in such a way that it exists outside any process of signification (or at least prior to this process): in the matrix, the support testifies to the garment's technical existence as opposed to the variant which testifies to its signifying existence […]. In short, the support would be a decisive operational concept in the analysis of differential systems. It is likely that for all cultural objects originally intended to serve a functional end, the sufficient unit will always be composed, at the very least, of a support and a variant. (Barthes, 1990[1967], pp.65-66)

In terms of composition, the notion of support and variant (i.e. a piece of clothing and its respective ensemble) aligns with the Campbell's (1996) idea of the consumption of clothing as a comprehensive dual decision-making process (i.e. selection/purchase and ensemble/display). For this reason it is possible to say that the consumption of counterfeits lies in the realm of fashion, not in a widespread narrative supported by the fashion industry. Like luxury consumption that is based on a prevailing cultural significance, as seen in the example discussed in the beginning of this chapter in figure 4.1 (page 87). This happens because the consumption of clothes is about creativity (see in Marion & Nairn, 2011; Kravets & Sandikci, 2014) grounded on consumers' interpretation of fashion cultural representations and, most importantly, on their ability to transform their actions of selection/purchase and ensemble/display into meaningful consumption acts (Campbell, 1996).

It is however in terms of conductivity that the notion of support and variant excels. Following Barthes (1990[1967]) it is possible to argue that as long as the material support refers to a vestimentary sign a meaningful fashion ensemble can occur (i.e.

vestimentary signifier). As a result, consumers' interpretation of the system of fashion does not seem limited to the type of product consumed (genuine-item, counterfeit or inspired-item) because the variant signification lies not only in the way fashion is represented as visions of "doing" but also in the way it finds its "true" significance in the fashion sign (Barthes, 1990[1967]).

However the most interesting possibility lies in the fact that conductivity transforms the material support into an original element capable of its own signification. It is here that outfits may, or may not, bring distinct meanings to consumers' actions (Campbell, 1996) because in consumers' articulation of vestimentary signifiers the real vestimentary code will be supported by the materiality of the distinct consumption of objects. The first possibility of conductivity—consumers' use of different products (genuine-item, counterfeit or inspired-item) in reference to the same fashion sign—is discussed in a following section while the second will be explored throughout the course of this thesis.

4.3.2 From System of Fashion to Systems of Consumption

In Consumer Culture Theory (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) studies, when it comes to understanding how fashion imaginary inspires consumers' actions most studies have investigated the way in which the consumption of clothing is useful in creating or sustaining their sense of individuality in society (e.g. Thompson & Haytko, 1997; Murray, 2002; Piacentini & Mailer, 2004; Newholm & Hopkinson, 2009; Marion & Nairn, 2011; Choi, Ko & Megehee, 2014). However when making reference to the system of fashion (Barthes, 1990[1967]) most studies emphasise the ideological aspects of fashion that deal with consumption constraints (Newholm & Hopkinson, 2009), for instance, the difficulties in keeping up with trends as fashion imposes a fast rhythm of creation and replacement of styles (Slater, 1997). This literature also explores the high demand for consumers to understand the rules of what should, or should not, be worn at a particular point in time (Crane, 2000).

However, as seen in Barthes (Barthes, 1990[1967]), the consumption of fashion is as much about imagination as it is about the right and wrong selection of items in an outfit.

Moreover Baudrillard (2005[1968]; 1998[1970]) asserts that the 'aestheticization of everyday life' has transformed society in a way that reality becomes experienced, mostly, through images and therefore consumption has transformed into an activity involving the manipulation of signs (Featherstone, 2007[1991], p.64). It is truly difficult to imagine the consumption of fashion without a pinch of imagination. Certainly the consumption of counterfeits arbitrates such an imaginative reality but less is known about how such a reality is experienced when the objects consumed have, virtually, the same image. And this means that genuine-items, counterfeits and inspired-items all make reference to the same fashion sign (Barthes, 1990[1967]). Therefore these objects are all open to consumers for the activity of manipulating signs (Baudrillard, 2005[1968]).

Baudrillard (2005[1968]), like Barthes (1990[1967]), draws on semiology to develop his theory and both authors contend that the system of significations work like a visual language. However unlike Barthes (1990[1967]), who saw the system of fashion as a formation of meanings stacked up until a fashion sign was reached. Baudrillard (2005[1968]; 1998[1970]) believes that a system of consumption is about transformations working in a never-ending spiral pursuing a sign value that will soon be substituted for another practice.

According to Baudrillard (2005[1968]; 1998[1970]) this is a consequence of the intense transmission and production of meanings carried out by a legion of cultural intermediaries in all fields (Bourdieu, 1984) added to an abundant availability of consumer goods in society (Featherstone, 2007[1991]; Slater, 1997). Hence consumption will only turn into meaningful actions (Campbell, 1996) when consumption objects are transformed into sign value through the active participation of consumers in a system of consumption, such as fashion, where the fashion codes are 'organized in an intensifying dynamic of creation, re-creation and collapse' (Newholm & Hopkinson, 2009, p.440).

4.3.2.1 Principles and codes of values in the system of signs

It was seen in Barthes (1990[1967]) that fashion ensembles (i.e. vestimentary signifier)

can be created by consumers like personal visual discourses that follow a mode of expression, a language, constituting a larger system—the system of fashion. These personal discourses in fact function as codes, in this case fashion codes, in which elements are combined to position their distinction but are interchanged through similarities in the message (Baudrillard, 2005[1968]). For this reason the value of the system lies in the message not in the form of the speech, states Baudrillard (2005[1968]), who also opposes the traditional semiotic analysis (Sebeok, 1994). Furthermore, as images, texts and material objects are codified into a language, they form a system of sign value that can be expanded to other realms like publicity and architecture, Baudrillard (2005[1968]) claims, expanding now on Barthes' (1990[1967]) system of fashion.

More to the point, says Baudrillard (2005[1968], p.218), the existence of multiple systems of signification in society grounds a larger system, a system of consumption, where the 'virtual totality of all objects and messages ready-constituted as a more or less coherent discourse' are transformed into activities of interpretation and used for sign value. For this reason consumption, as a language of signs, requires consumers to have a certain literacy of the 'the code', which means they need to understand the culturally 'coherent but dynamic arrangement of arbitrary meanings attached to objects' (Newholm & Hopkinson, 2009, p.441).

The code of fashion in Barthes' (1990[1967]) theory works around the formation of a specific system of signification founded on the principle of equivalence to reach combinatory differentiation. Meanwhile in Baudrillard's (2005[1968]; 1988[1972]) theory the system of consumption works as a matter of symbolic transformation that can be understood according to four principles: utility, equivalence, difference and ambivalence. These principles work in relation to four codes of values: the functional logic of use value (utility); the economic logic of exchange value (equivalence), the differential logic of sign value (difference) and the logic of symbolic exchange (ambivalence) (Baudrillard, 1988[1972], p.57). These codes of value can be articulated interchangeably and this helps to clarify that there is no transfiguration of use, economic and sign value into "symbolic" value because the principle of ambivalence in the symbolic exchange requires 'a radical separation and transgression, an eventual

deconstruction' of the other three forms (utility, equivalence and difference) (Baudrillard, 1988[1972], p.59).

Barthes (1990[1967], p.291) reads the ambiguity in fashion as an intrinsic characteristic while Baudrillard (2005[1968]) thinks that the system of sign value brings different values to its modes of consumption. To Barthes (1990[1967], p.291) fashion has an ambiguous status; because 'it signifies the world and signifies itself, it constructs itself here as a program of behavior, and there as a luxurious spectacle'. Baudrillard (2005[1968]; 1988[1972]) however understands fashion as a system of significations that works as praxis of consumption. Thus the four principles of symbolic transformations (i.e. utility, equivalence, difference and ambivalence) no longer work in a bilateral relation. This happens because in fashion the logic of sign value (difference) in relation to symbolic exchange (ambivalence) shows that the fashion sign (Barthes, 1990[1967]) in fact seeks the transgression of both utility and equivalence principles constituting an multidimensional relation between the other two codes of value (i.e. use value and economic value).

Even though the logic of sign value (difference) may never subsume to the symbolic exchange's logic of ambivalence (Baudrillard, 1988[1972]), the multidimensional relation with the other two codes of value (i.e. use value and economic value) helps to appease the ambiguity in the consumption of fashion. The ambiguity is also reduced because fashion establishes a symbolic relation with other systems of sign value such as media and advertising. This additional relation allows a certain 'autonomy of the signifier, through, for example, the manipulation of signs in the media and advertising, [which] means that signs are able to float free from objects and are available for use in a multiplicity of associative relations' (Featherstone, 2007[1991], p.15).

Yet a reverse, multidimensional, relation between the four codes of value also occurs (Baudrillard, 1988[1972]). Whilst in the inverse order of articulation among symbolic exchange and use, economic and sign values work in a way that also reduces the ambivalence as they reinforce the values from the three codes of value

once symbolic exchange is broken, this same material is abstracted into utility

> value, commercial value, statutory value. The symbolic is transformed into the instrumental, either commodity or sign. Any one of the various codes may be specifically involved, but they are all joined in the single form of political economy, which is opposed, as a whole, to symbolic exchange. (Baudrillard, 1988[1972], p.60)

Such a reverse multidimensional relation helps to explain why some forms of articulation become prevalent in society (Baudrillard, 1988[1972]). As Sassatelli (2007) explains, there are historical reasons for such an association and thus, over time, the consumption of luxury goods, including fashion items,

> became disentangled from the kind of legal-political regime provided by sumptuary laws, and instead became caught up in the cultural-economic regime found in the dynamics of fashion. In the fashion regime, aesthetic judgements such as 'tasteful' and 'tasteless' may work as political and moral tools, to justify social inclusion or exclusion (see Bourdieu 1984) (2007).

The fashion industry profits from the notion of frivolity and luxury using the system of fashion (Barthes, 1990[1967]) in a way that reinforces those meanings in the construction of the fashion imaginary (Phillips & McQuarrie, 2010), promptly supported by a legion of fashion specialists and cultural intermediaries (Featherstone, 2007[1991]; Slater, 1997; Sassatelli, 2007).

Certainly, class distinction (Bourdieu, 1984) is an important dimension of the consumption of counterfeits. However previous studies have explored this role in distinct research contexts (Gistri et al., 2009b; Wiedmann, Hennigs & Klarmann, 2012), including Brazil (Strehlau, 2005; Strehlau, Vasconcelos & Huertas, 2006) and using distinct methods (Geiger-Oneto, Gelb, Walker & Hess, 2013). More to the point, it was seen in the previous chapters that consumers have developed a peculiar moral standard when it comes to the consumption of counterfeits (Belk, Devinney & Eckhardt, 2006; Eckhardt & Belk, 2010). Furthermore, as Kravets & Sandikci (2014) point out, when it comes to class distinction (Bourdieu, 1984) counterfeits can be used interchangeably with genuine-items as long as consumers are capable of wisely articulating their outfits, making reference to the system of fashion (Barthes, 1990[1967]) but in a way that 'respects' the tastes of their class.

Hence when it comes to consumers' taste regimes (Sassatelli, 2007) politics and morality seem to follow consumers' own goals, such as status (Veblen, 2003[1899]), emulation (Simmel, 1957[1904]) or class differentiation (Bourdieu, 1984) as well as their identity projects (Belk, 1988; Ahuvia, 2005). However it seems that consumers place their counterfeits tactically to their advantage, as seen in Kravets & Sandikci (Kravets & Sandikci, 2014). This thesis advances this debate, first by understanding how the system of sign value offers some grounds for consumers' activity of manipulating signs (Featherstone, 2007[1991]) while consuming counterfeit goods, and second, by expanding the debate towards an understanding of how such a manipulation of signs allows the materialisation of meanings, paying particular attention to consumers' relation with the physical aspects of consumption objects (Slater, 2002; Miller, 1987). The first point is discussed in the following section while theories of materiality (Miller, 1987; Tilley, 2006; Woodward, 2011) will be discussed further on in this chapter.

Final comment. Baudrillard (2005[1968]; 1998[1970]) is very unsympathetic to the aestheticization of consumption using the logic of the codes of value to be very critical of and pessimistic about consumer society. However, this thesis step aside the author's overly-pessimistic perspective about consumer society to draw attention to consumers' interpretation of the 'moving ensemble of production and reproduction, of conversion, transgression and reduction of values' that supports consumption systems of sign value such as fashion, advertising, design and media (Baudrillard, 1988[1972], p.60).

4.3.3 The logic of equivalence of signs in the consumption of counterfeits

It was argued previously that Barthes' (1990[1967]) system of fashion excels due to the fact that the author values the material aspects of clothing as he emphasises an important aspect in the relation between support and variant: conductivity. The idea of conductivity allows consumers to transform a material support, a piece of cloth, into an original element capable of its own signification. In this section the first possibility of conductivity—consumers' use of different products (genuine-items, counterfeits or inspired-items) in reference to the same fashion sign—is theoretically investigated in the light of the system of sign value (Baudrillard, 2005[1968]; 1998[1970]).

Mass produced products already bring challenges with regard to the specificity of their origin because the existence of multiple copies means the extinction of the original reference and that alone 'facilitates the general law of equivalences, and that is to say, the *very possibility of reproduction*' (Baudrillard, 1993[1976], p.55 highlight in original). Yet in the case of counterfeits the situation is intensified because sometimes it is not possible to establish the original source for analogy or reflection (e.g. not available in the local market). In the case of fashion items, a single set of meanings (i.e. vestimentary sign) that belongs to the conceptual fashion product can be appropriated by consumers despite the specificities of the product origin: genuine-item or counterfeit. However, those meanings are embodied by consumers of counterfeits through a set of practices that may or may not have similarities with consumption actions that occur in the shadow of a genuine-item, for instance, because a genuine-item is far from equivalent to other items in economic value (Baudrillard, 1988[1972]).

Hence consumers of counterfeits navigate through the same fashion codes in the system of sign value (e.g. 1920s style shoes to complete a retro style outfit) as consumers of genuine-items, but the theory is that sometimes consumers need to further explore the process of decoding and materialisation of sign value to reach the intended consumption meaning. At this point, the materiality of counterfeits seems to play a very important part in fulfilling the desires, needs and imaginations of consumer of counterfeits in Brazil or elsewhere. Understanding how this happens is one of the primary research objectives of this thesis. For this reason, the value of the logic of equivalence of the signs (Baudrillard, 1988[1972]) in the context of fashion, including genuine-items and counterfeits will now be illustrated.

Figure 4.7
Consumers articulating the logic of equivalence of the signs

Source: Observational data collected by the author of this thesis.

The visual representation presented in figure 4.7 is a theoretical extension of the system of sign value (Baudrillard, 2005[1968]; 1998[1970]) conducted with the intention of starting a discussion on how the articulation of sign value happens in 'praxis'.

As discussed in the previous section, the fashion sign makes reference to a garment and its "true" signification embodied in the conceptual fashion product (Barthes, 1990[1967]). In the theoretical extension of the system of signs (Baudrillard,

2005[1968]; 1998[1970]) it was possible to illustrate the 'praxis' of consumers' articulation of vestimentary signifiers (Barthes, 1990[1967]) in spite of the distinct materialities of consumption objects (i.e. genuine-items or counterfeits). Combining material substances and product design concept (i.e. forms, patterns and styles) the object's constitutive features are shaped, allowing it to be recognisable. It is exactly the repetition of these key constitutive features, elements of materiality, that transform objects into inspired-items and counterfeits, allowing consumers to freely articulate the logic of equivalence of the signs (Baudrillard, 1993).

In figure 4.8 it is possible to see that through the reproduction of key elements of materiality—pink, structured shape, side flaps and disproportionately small top handles—the conceptual fashion product is replicated giving life to imitations that may range from the inspired-items sold by traditional luxury brands (Truong, McColl & Kitchen; Kapferer & Bastien, 2009), deluxe brands (Thomas, 2007) and fast-fashion retailers (Barnes:2010gy; Crane, 2000), non-branded products from high street shops and to counterfeits at different levels of reproduction. The finest of all counterfeit imitations, the "replica", makes a very similar reproduction of the key elements of materiality paying special attention to the material substances (e.g. good quality leather) and details of the project design while low-grade forgeries only partially replicate the constitutive features; for example, the far right handbag in figure 4.8 below basically reproduces the colour but it has no side flaps and the handles do not follow the small proportions seen in the conceptual product design.

Figure 4.8
Conceptual fashion product and its reproductions

Source: Observational data collected by the author of this thesis.[5]

Figure 4.8 presents images from several reproductions of a conceptual fashion product. The conceptual fashion product is the first product on the left hand side. It is a ground zero product—the "original" fashion creation—the first one launched proposing a product design concept now imitated by many producers.

As well as the many counterfeits that can easily be found in the market nowadays competitors in the premium market segment also offer their "own" version of conceptual product designs. Such a variety not only corroborates my argument about the existence of a premium market for imitations, but also takes the logic of equivalence of the signs (Baudrillard, 1988[1972]) to another level because the premium inspired-items are equivalent in terms of economic value (Baudrillard, 1988[1972]). I argue that in some cases the decision regarding what constitutes a genuine-item lies mostly in the mind of consumers, or as Baudrillard (1993[1976]) explains:

> Everywhere we see the same 'genesis of simulacra': the commutability of the beautiful and the ugly in fashion, of the left and the right in politics, of the true and the false in every media message, the useful and the useless at the level of objects, nature and culture at every level of signification. All the great humanist criteria of value, the whole civilisation of moral, aesthetic and practical judgement are effaced in our system of images and signs. Everything becomes undecidable, the characteristic effect of the domination of the code, which everywhere rests on the principle of neutralisation, of indifference. (Baudrillard, 1993[1976], pp.8-9).

Considering that nowadays a genuine-item sits in an extremely fluid position because of the existence of several counterfeits and inspired-items that also vary from premium to low-key imitations therefore a genuine-item that inspired many imitations and counterfeits will be called conceptual fashion product. Further, reflecting on the existence of many reproductions in the marketplace it seems important to revisit the 'revise search model' that investigates consumer search including counterfeits (Gentry et al., 2001 p.264).

To ground the development of their model Gentry et al. (2001, p.264) first proposed a more nuanced definition of counterfeit goods, arguing that differences between the items sold in a market plentiful in counterfeits can be placed on a continuum ranging

from genuine-item, to second-class products from outlets, seconded products, legitimate copycats (i.e. inspired-items), and finally counterfeit products, which vary from being fairly similar to weakly resembling the "original" fashion creation. Therefore the authors used the notion of the continuum to propose that consumers search "within" brands when the markets offer an abundance of counterfeit products (Gentry et al., 2001).

However when looking at consumers' practice in figure 4.7 (page 110), which exemplifies the logic of equivalence of the signs (Baudrillard, 1988[1972]) it is possible to see that inspired-items also serve consumers in the articulation of vestimentary signifiers (Barthes, 1990[1967]). More importantly, the inspired-items' constitutive features also vary along a continuum, from leather to synthetic to plastic (Fig. 4.8 page 111), which therefore allows consumers to extend their search "within" conceptual fashion products. In addition premium inspired-items also offer equivalence in terms of economic value (Baudrillard, 1988[1972]). Consequently, I suggest the inclusion of inspired-items in the 'revise search model' (Gentry et al., 2001, p.264) grounding this idea in the fact that currently this model does not contemplate products in which key elements of materiality reproduce as closely as possible the conceptual fashion product, and not only products that imitate the conceptual product design. Hence I argue that Baudrillard's (1988[1972]) logic of equivalence of signs, when applied to the consumption of counterfeits, allows the inclusion of inspired-items in the 'revised search model'(Gentry et al., 2001, p.264) thereby extending this model.

Furthermore, the logic of equivalence of the signs (Baudrillard, 1988[1972]) helps to demonstrate that consumers in fact use counterfeits and inspired-items to make reference to the same fashion sign (Barthes, 1990[1967]) using the best of their creativity to express their stylistic, self-expressive and identity goals (Featherstone, 1991). This indicates that the main motivation for consuming counterfeit goods lies in the consumption of fashion rather than luxury consumption behaviour. However there is still a need to better understand how fashion ensembles turn into meaningful consumption actions considering that one fashion object can significantly resemble another yet be materiality distinct from it (e.g. plastic instead of leather, same shape with slightly different ornaments, different colour hues and so on). Therefore theories of

materiality are explored below.

4.4 CONSUMPTION, MATERIALITY AND OBJECTIFICATION

Consuming goods involves some creative interplay with materiality, which is contextually engrained. Therefore studies of materiality investigate the ways in which objects are situated in the lives of individuals, groups, and, more broadly, social institutions (Tilley, 2006). For instance, Sandikci & Ger's (2010) study of the fashion practices of Turkish covered women shows that consumers materialise their sense of style in such a way that the consumption object becomes useful in the mediation of the conflicting social values of secularism and the Islamic faith. Shankar et al. (2009) note that while choosing an identity may seem an agentic choice, it can also be a very threatening one because of its potential to cause social rejection. Even though Shankar et al.'s (2009) analysis focuses on what constrains consumer identity projects, it also highlights the role of objects as a stabilising force in human life.

Considering that objects can have allure and thus demand consumers' actions, materiality becomes the foundation of individuals' experiences and practices (Woodward, 2007). Kuruoglu and Ger's (2014) study is a case in point. In their study consumers' deep emotional and material involvement with a consumption object foments the practice of the illegal circulation of Kurdish music cassettes in Turkey (Kuruoğlu & Ger, 2014). Studying the interaction between guitarists and their instruments, Fernandez & Lasrovicka (2011) observed that replica guitars gain "magic" properties if consumers are deeply engaged with them (i.e. anthropomorphising, playing and imagining their performances). The author describes this material engagement as contagious, an imitative magic that helps to imbue the replica instruments with power (Fernandez & Lastovicka, 2011). Both studies talk about re-contextualisation of the consumption object in such a way that its consumption, as a cultural practice, transforms its meanings through the 'context and manner of its use' (Campbell, 2005).

Altogether these studies explored the way in which consumption objects play a mediating role and are able to connect—and transform—objects and consumers

simultaneously (Tilley, 2006). This is possible because these studies regarded consumers' practices as a process where the object's 'appropriation consists of the transmutation of goods, through consumption activities, into potentially inalienable culture (Miller, 1987, p.215). Even though not all of the studies referenced in the section (i.e. Sandikci & Ger, 2010; Fernandez & Lastovicka, 2011; Bettany, 2007) embrace the concept of objectification (Miller, 1987; 2005) they studied the materiality of consumption objects as a dynamic process able to attenuate the dichotomy between objects and subjects; a foundational idea in Miller's theory of materiality (1987; 2005 among many other books).

4.4.1 Theoretical Approaches to Materiality

Recently, there has been a growing interest in theories of materiality in Consumer Culture Theory (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) studies. In their latest article Arnould & Thompson (2015, p.5) recognizes this trend and classifies this research body under the category the 'ontological conception of culture as distributed networks'. These studies largely fit in one of the two key approaches to materiality: actor network/assemblage and objectification/embodiment.

The actor network/assemblage approach to materiality largely follows the steps of Bruno Latour (Latour, 2005), Michel Callon (1986), John Law (2009) and, more recently, Manuel DeLanda (2006). The current research in the field is diverse but united by a conceptual frame that explores 'role of objects as agents liking production and consumption, and carrying with them possibilities for reshaping this relationship' (Shove & Araujo, 2010, p.27). For instance, Watson & Shove (2008) have explored the concepts of human and non-human hybridity from Latour's (2005) actor network theory to study do-it-yourself (DIY) consumption. These authors argued that the dynamics of consumption can be explored through the hybrid relationship between the subject and the object, whereby consumers' meanings become dependent upon the context of usage thus everyday practice co-evolved as an active integration between objects, skills and knowledge (2008 p. 71-72). This idea is illustrated by Watson & Shove's (2008) example of water-based paints:

> a few decades ago, painting a panel door was a complicated business. For best results, paint had to be applied to each section in the right sequence: time and experience were both required to do so without drags or drips. Today, amateur decorators can choose fast-drying non-drip water-based paints that 'know' how to go on to a door. With these technologies in place, even first-time painters can produce an acceptable finish. (Watson & Shove, 2008 pp. 77-78)

Therefore, it is possible to seen in Watson and Shove's (2008) example that interactions become the site of agency in which the "agency becomes a kind of participatory intervention in an attempt to accomplish purposes that might otherwise be dissipated in other intervening forces' wake" (Borgerson, 2005, p.442). While linking materiality to the subject's intentionality, most studies undertaking the actor network theory say that "object agency is perceived in effects—in an environment, or on other subjects or objects," which narrows down the agency of object (Borgerson, 2013, p.132).

Yet material objects might have a more prominent role in generating and influencing the overall outcomes of social actions. Considering that objects can have allure and thus demand consumer's actions, materiality becomes the foundation of individuals' experience and practices (Woodward, 2007). While it is possible to agree with Watson & Shove (2008) in viewing consumers' actions as a set of skills and knowledge. It is also important to recall that consumption of counterfeits is rather dependent on how objects are selected and used in harmony with other objects, as it happens in the creation of fashion ensembles. Building on this, this thesis draws attention to this relationship but focus on fashion products where the product design scores high in symbolic meanings. Fashion products can be placed in opposition to DIY tools, where the object's form and functionalities are more prominently featured. Besides that, counterfeit fashion goods bring to centre stage the process of materialisation where material interactions are embedded in the routines of consumption and can even occur through sensory exchanges between a consumer and the goods (Dant, 2008).

The objectification/embodiment approach to materiality looks at both 'the way meaning is materially created and communicated and the way social action is materially mediated' (Woodward, 2012, p.672). This research body is grounded on the concept of objectification, 'the inevitable process by which all expression, conscious or

unconscious, social or individual, takes specific form' (Miller, 1987, p.81). Therefore, this is the theoretical approach to materiality adopted in this thesis, considering that these studies have shown that consumption objects have a capacity to introduce reflexive thoughts and actions into the relationship between subject and object suggesting that the agency of objects plays a more prominent role in the process of materialisation than Consumer Culture Theory (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) research has thus far granted to it (Borgerson, 2005). In order to advance these understandings, it is provided in the following section an overview of the research on objectification and consumption.

4.4.2 Objectification[6]

Objectification can be understood as a process where consumers materialise their particular understanding of the world yet objectify their individuality and 'values through material culture and consumption acts' (Miller, 2005, p.54). Grounded in the indispensable engagement with objects, the notion of objectification has shifted the understanding of material culture from that of a physical representation of ideas to that of a dynamic relation in which cultural forms come into being as they are objectified (Miller, 1987).

For illustration purposes, the process of objectification happens in a series of steps. As objects become part of the lives of consumers, they are reworked in order to support distinct forms of sociality as well as a variety of consumer identity projects (2006). While the reworking happens, consumers are also transformed as ideas, values and relations are promptly internalised by them. It is the substrate of consumers' transformations that is then recast onto objects, completing the objectification process. Hence, objectification is a dialectic process whereby consumers and objects are co-constitutive in their relationship. As Tilley (2006, p.61) puts it:

> Personal, social and cultural identity is embodied in our persons and objectified in our things. Through the things we can understand ourselves and others, not because they are externalizations of ourselves or others, reflecting something prior and more basic in our consciousness or social relations but because these

things are the very medium through which we make and know ourselves.

Understanding material forms as a medium for objectification challenges the dualism between consumers and objects in two ways. First, objectification is implicated in action. Therefore, the object–consumer relation is the focal point in the process, whereas the objectification is made evident through consumers' practical engagement with objects in any given time and place. Epp & Price (2010), for example, tracked the history of a family object (a dining table) to show that transformations in the family's network of practices resulted in the object's movement in the network. As a medium for family members' interactions, the table was moved back and forth, changing from an irreplaceable to an almost displaced possession due to life contingencies (such as changes in the family, space constraints, and a manifestation of other objects) to support the family's identity transformations. This example illustrates how processes of objectification are accomplished through action, a point covered well by the materiality literature through applications of the concept of objectification in a variety of research contexts (Ger & Wilk, 2005; Brownlie & Hewer, 2007; Patterson & Schroeder, 2010)

Second, the interaction between consumers and objects sustains the process of objectification. Through an engagement with objects, the relation becomes 'bound up not only with the agency of persons but with the agency of things in relation to these persons' (2006, p.63). Thus the agency on both parts keeps the objectification going. Largely understood as the ability to act, agency bonds participants in the process of objectification because intentionality becomes a property of both consumers and objects (Borgerson, 2005).

For instance, Bettany (2007) demonstrated how intentions shared between agents shape and qualify an interaction. In that study, the object (a tool for plucking a dog's coat) acts as a medium in the relationship if used with the purpose of presenting the dog in a way that is as near to the ideal shape as possible; thus the object is materialised as being a tool of artifice and adaptation. Conversely, the object is materialised as a tool of authenticity and preservation if the dog's breeder has not intervened through artificial grooming practices. Thus, a distinct use of the object reflects upon the dog's breeder, who can win prizes and gain higher status in the community, illustrating how object–

consumer interactions can sustain the action. Moreover, as interactions keep happening the object increases its power over the subject, reaching a point where different outcomes become part of a richer process of objectification.

Always in synergy, the object and consumer relation explained by the notion of objectification sees each part as co-constitutive. For instance, consumers can infuse specific objects with sentiments and ideals, thus granting these objects, over time, a status of being indispensable and cherished possessions (Curasi, Price & Arnould, 2004). In this status, consumption objects come to objectify particular meanings, values and social relations, therefore supporting consumers' identity projects (Kravets & Orge, 2010). Objectification then is a sort of materialisation in the making that never ceases to reproduce, legitimise, or transform both entities: consumers and objects.

4.4.2.1 Productive Material Interactions

Material goods are seen as they are used in social life (Tilley, 2006) and thus they are frequently understood through the lens of material embeddedness (Woodward, 2007; Schatzki, 2010) and studied as the process of objectification (Miller, 1987; 2005), as discussed above. Conversely, material goods have also been examined as the embodiment of cultural ideals, achieved through a process supported by interactions between consumers and objects (Ingold, 2007; Dant, 2008; Woodward, 2011). The engagement between consumers and objects is what is common to both approaches to materialisation, and people's engagement with goods is motivated by the possibility of self-transformation (Woodward, 2011).

Advancing the concept of materiality, Borgerson (2013) has expanded the notion of materialisation to recast the importance of material embodiment in the process of objectification. She does so by arguing that object interfaces are in fact what instigate interactions between objects and consumers and then transform the subjectivity of both. Woodward (2011, p.367) also sees materialisation as productive interaction—an unfolding sequence of material engagements that allows 'strong links between embodied practices, imagination and emotion'—and this point strengthens the notions of both processes of materiality being interdependent.

Even though theories of objectification have advanced consumer researchers' understanding of materiality (Borgerson, 2005), they have downplayed the role of the material substances and design intentions that go into composing objects in that process (Ingold, 2007; Dant, 2008). In other disciplines, researchers examining how consumers relate to objects have noted that individuals relate not only to finished objects, but also to the elements that compose those objects. Dant (2008, p.11), for instance, explains the role of one such element, the design:

> Those who design and manufacture objects anticipate how they will be interacted with and how they will fit within the existing material culture. Their intentions are embedded within the form of the objects they produce and are responded to or 'read' during interaction by consumers or users.

Similarly, Ingold (2012, p.435) has observed that material substances play a fundamental role in the relationship between objects and consumers: 'To view [a] thing as a sample of material, by contrast, is to see it as a potential—for further making, growth, and transformation. In a world of materials, nothing is ever finished: "everything may be something, but being something is always on the way to becoming something else" (…). And to focus on the life of materials is to prioritize the processes of production, (…) over those of consumption'. Consequently, the concept of material embodiment has evolved from the materialisation of cultural ideas (Tilley, 2006) towards the notion of a productive material interaction that is nevertheless grounded on the concept of objectification (Miller, 1987; 2005).

Inspired by these authors, Ferreira & Scaraboto (2016) also addressed objectification and material embodiment as a productive material interaction and used this concept as a starting point in their work to suggest an expanded view of materiality that considers not only finished objects but also the material characteristics objectified in them. The authors then proposed an extended model of materialisation in which material substances, designer intentions and marketing efforts jointly influence the materiality of objects.

Figure 4.9
Extended model of materialisation
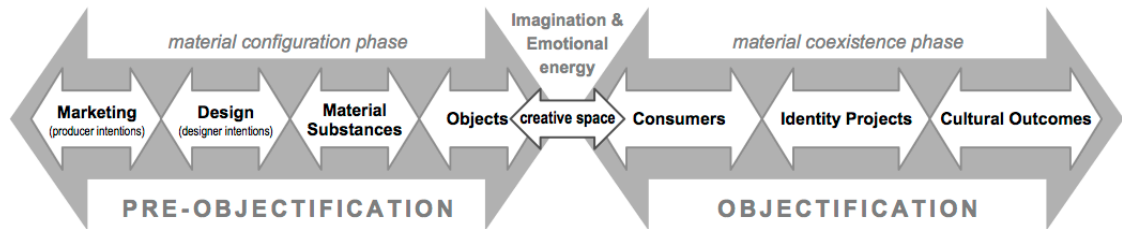
Source: Ferreira & Scaraboto's (2016, p.195)

Ferreira & Scaraboto's (2016) model (Fig. 4.9) is based on Winnicott's (1971) concept of a "third space", a creative space that is loaded with the emotional energy that emerges as the object and consumer interact. From this perspective, pre-objectification consists in the earlier phase in the materialisation process where material substances, designer intentions and marketing efforts are the elements involved in creating and producing a consumption object. Objectification, in turn, is the stage of the materialisation process in which the outcomes of objects and consumers relations are materialised, and consumer and object transformations become embedded in consumers' identity projects and cultural forms.

It is expected that the ways in which consumers relate to the material substances, design intentions (i.e. product design concept which forms, patterns and styles allures consumers interactions) and marketing efforts objectified in the counterfeits they possess help them to transform their mundane, behavioural, activities into meaningful consciously formulated intentions towards the consumption of objects (Campbell, 1996, p.96). The product design concept once materialised in clothes and accessories inevitably shapes how consumers touch, wear, clean, store and discard their objects. For this reason the notion of pre-objectification comes in handy to understand consumers' physical interaction with their goods.

However understanding the interactive process of materialisation (Ingold, 2007; Dant, 2008; Woodward, 2011; Borgerson, 2013) in the consumption of counterfeits gains priority in this thesis. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the consumption of clothing is

a combined action of selection/purchase and ensemble/display (Campbell, 1996) that arouses consumers' imagination as they interpret the fashion cultural imaginary (Kellner, 2014) and the visual language of fashion (Barthes, 1990). Furthermore, consumption, as a dynamic activity of sign manipulation (Baudrillard, 2005[1968]; 1998[1970]), offers the opportunity to investigate how consumers' fashion ensembles turn into meaningful consumption actions in the light of aesthetically similar but materiality distinct consumption objects: counterfeits and inspired-items.

4.5 SUMMARY

Fashion as an everyday signifying practice gives consumers a guideline for social practices (Featherstone, 2007[1991]), not just individually created identity narratives (Newholm & Hopkinson, 2009). Previously in this chapter the system of fashion (Barthes, 1990[1967]) was discussed in depth to better understand the formation of the fashion codes (Blumer, 1969; Gronow, 1997) that arouse consumers' imagination through cultural representations of fashion that participate in a larger visual culture of images and spectacles (Kellner, 2014) supported not only by the fashion 'composite cultural industry' (Sassatelli, 2007, p.71) but also its associated fields of mass-media, design and advertising (Bourdieu, 1984). In addition it was stated that the cultural representation of fashion filters, and changes, passes from developers, to producers, and to several fashion cultural intermediaries (Sassatelli, 2007) that more recently also include consumers functioning as arbitrators of taste (McQuarrie, Miller & Phillips, 2013; Dolbec & Fischer, 2015).

Therefore it was argued that while consumers interpret cultural representations of fashion its consumption occurs as they articulate by themselves the visual language of fashion (Barthes, 1990[1967]). Therefore consumers, in the formation of their own visual system of signification, create their own fashion ensembles (i.e. combinations of the real vestimentary code) arranged in respect to written vestimentary codes that they have seen in the media. This gives life to a vestimentary signifier that works in respect of signified rhetorical systems of clothing and the fashion world (Barthes, 1990[1967]). Hence, in line with Barthes (1990[1967]), it is possible to argue that because consumers

create fashion ensembles finding inspiration in the rhetorical systems of clothing and the fashion world, not only counterfeits but also inspired-items become plausible consumption choices because their similarity to the conceptual fashion product actually expands the variety of material resources that can be used by them creatively.

Furthermore, Barthes' (1990[1967]) work was then incorporated into the consumption system of signs (Baudrillard, 2005[1968]; 1988[1972]) to better understand how fashion in fact works as a system of consumption that tries to appease the ambiguity foundational to its existence. Understanding the multiplicity of the associative relations in the use of signs is the key motivation for applying Baudrillard's (2005; 2005[1968]; 1998[1970]) ideas in this thesis. Through this author's theoretical lens it is possible to argue that the consumption of counterfeits lies in the realm of fashion because what consumers "read" is largely the cultural representations of fashion while the choice between counterfeits, inspired-items and genuine-items requires further actions. These actions nevertheless follow the market's contingency, which facilities access to counterfeits and their acceptance in society (Gentry et al., 2001; Kravets & Sandikci, 2014). Therefore a last step was taken using visual representations to extend Baudrillard's (1988[1972]) logic of equivalence of the signs to the consumption of counterfeits.

The implications of the theoretical extension of the system of signs (Baudrillard, 2005[1968]; 1988[1972]) to the context of consumption of counterfeits are twofold: (a) it shows the need for the inclusion of inspired-items in the 'revised search model' (Gentry et al., 2001, p.264); (b) it suggests that the articulation of fashion signs (Barthes, 1990[1967]) is similar among consumers of counterfeits, genuine and inspired items as they all take into consideration the physicality of fashion objects so that consumption, as a language of signs (Baudrillard, 2005[1968]), can be "spoken" by them in such a way that it communicates their intended meanings. Hence this theoretical extension lends support to the claim that the motivation for consuming counterfeits can be the consumers' desire for fashion as their search for products of a similar fashion design concept can span the whole palette of fashion items, ranging from the conceptual fashion product to inspired imitations and counterfeits. This possibility is empirically investigated in this thesis, in chapter seven. Furthermore, the theoretical extension of the

system of signs (Baudrillard, 2005[1968]; 1988[1972]) allows for positing that the consumption of counterfeit goods goes beyond simple luxury consumption behaviour.

To conclude the chapter theories of materiality (Tilley, 2006; Woodward, 2007; Dant, 2008) were explored in order to build a theoretical ground to empirically investigate how consumers create their fashion ensembles (Barthes, 1990[1967]). It was found that Miller's (Miller, 1987; 2005) concept of objectification supports this idea. In addition this section reviewed the latest studies on materiality to trace the development of the field, which helped to support and further extend the idea of materialisation as a process of objectification (Miller, 1987; 2005). It was found that the theoretical development came through the notion of material embodiment that is no longer seen as a materialisation of cultural ideas (Tilley, 2006) but rather is seen as productive material interaction (Ingold, 2007; Dant, 2008; Woodward, 2011; Borgerson, 2013). The notion of productive material interaction takes good consideration of the object's intentionality (i.e. agency) in the materialisation of meanings. Therefore it became a useful concept to explore consumption meanings that arise even though consumers' interactions with consumption goods that are similar in their conceptual fashion product but materially distinct.

Chapter 5: The Methodology

This chapter elaborates and outlines the methodology that was drawn upon in this study. First it explores the overall assumptions underlying the chosen research paradigm. Then it explains and justifies the methodology adopted for the study. Following that it discusses the overarching research strategy adopted for the study explaining in depth the process of data collection and analysis.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Interpretive research represents a 'broad and diverse category of research traditions that emphasize the use of qualitative data in exploratory and creative research designs' (Hackley, 2003, p.25). Underneath the interpretivist paradigm 'qualitative investigators also work in various approaches or styles that reflect their orientation to particular communities of research practice' (Locke, 2001, p.13). Growing in popularity, interpretive research in management, marketing and consumer behaviour follows the 'interpretive turn' in which numerous articles have been published in leading academic journals and series of methodology textbooks launched by well-established publishers (Hackley, 2003). Likewise consumer research that was 'once so heavily reliant on the survey instrument as the main source of data collection, is starting to place greater emphasis on understanding consumer behavior through qualitative insights' (Goulding, 2002, p.9).

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 positioned the present thesis more clearly within the intersection of consumer culture, risk and materiality. This chapter now goes on to elaborate and outline the methodology that was drawn upon for this study. First it discusses the interpretivist paradigm and underpinning research assumptions that guided this study. Following that it elaborates on methodological issues pertaining to the research and justifies the choice of grounded theory to investigate the consumption of counterfeits. Then it explains the research strategy giving details of the data collection process. Finally it considers the analysis process used in this thesis.

5.2 RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS

The social phenomena under the subjectivist philosophy are perceived as a continuum of social interactions 'created from the perceptions and consequent actions of social actors' (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009, p.111). These interactions give force to 'meaning-making' processes where social actors and institutions get involved in producing their social realities (Flick, 2008, p.12). In line with the subjectivist philosophy, interpretive research aims to understand 'the meaning, for participants in the study, of the events, situations, and actions they are involved with, and of the accounts that they give of their lives and experiences (Maxwell, 2008, p.221). Therefore this research body is oriented towards 'analysing concrete cases in their temporal and local particularity and starting from people's expressions and activities in their local contexts' (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009, p.111). Overall, interpretive studies aim to provide an explanation of behaviours as well as develop theoretical frameworks (Hackley, 2003).

Consequently, there is a need to acknowledge which research perspective better suits the issue under investigation among the many perspectives available. Flick (2008; 2009) suggests that research perspectives can be broadly classified into three categories, as seen in figure 5.1 below.

Figure 5.1
Interpretive Research Approaches

	Approaches to subjective viewpoints	Description of the making of social situations	Hermeneutic analysis of underlying structures
Theoretical positions	Symbolic interactionism Phenomenology	Ethnomethodology Constructionism	Psychoanalysis Genetic structuralism
Methods of data collection	Semi-structured interviews Narrative interviews	Focus groups Ethnography Participant observation Recording interactions Collecting documents	Recording interactions Photography Film
Methods of interpretation	Theoretical coding Content analysis Narrative analysis Hermeneutic methods	Conversation analysis Discourse analysis Analysis of documents	Objective hermeneutics Deep hermeneutics

Source: Flick (2008, p.11).

Flick's (2008) categorisation (figure 5.1) helps us to understand that in the interpretivist paradigm scientific understanding lies in the methodological organisation of the research process. Altogether these three interpretive research approaches generate insights into the ways in which social reality is created by social actors in their interactions in society (Hackley, 2003). Yet these perspectives differ in their theoretical foundations and the way in which the data are collected as well as interpreted. The distinction between the interpretive research approaches emerges because of the different conceptualisations regarding 'how the subjects under study—their experiences, actions, and interactions—relate to the context in which they are studied' (Flick, 2009, p.56). Thus, more than a choice between certain methods, an interpretive research design 'comprises a specific understanding of the relation between issue and method' (Flick, 2009, p.90).

Consumer Culture Theory (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) aligns with the interpretivist paradigm where 'researchers' ethnographic approaches are dominant' (Joy & Li, 2012, p.143). Thus most studies would be categorised under the approach, 'Description of the making of social situations', the middle column in figure 5.1 (Flick, 2008, p.11). Because Consumer Culture Theory (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) studies aim to understand 'consumption apart from the usual frames of economics and psychology' (Joy & Li, 2012, p.142) the research approach in the third column, 'Hermeneutic analysis underlying structures', is less common, although examples can be found in Bahl & Milne (2010), Beruchashvili & Moisio (2013), and Choi, Ko & Megehee (2014).

This thesis adopts the research perspective 'Approach to subjective viewpoints', described in the first column in figure 5.1 (Flick, 2008, p.11). This research perspective is also adopted in many Consumer Culture Theory (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) studies that take 'into account that viewpoints and practices in the field are different because of the different subjective perspectives and social backgrounds related to them' (Flick, 2009, p.16). For instance, Scott (1994), Goulding, (1999), Belk & Tumbat (2011), Martin, & Schouten (2014) and Kravets & Sandikci (2014) are key references in the current research. The research perspective 'Approach to subjective viewpoints' (Flick, 2008, p.11) accommodates the diversity of opinions in everyday life

consumption offering established research strategies, such as hermeneutics, narrative analysis and grounded theory, which allow the researcher 'to build on a coherent and well-developed approach to research' (Maxwell, 2008, p.224).

> In contrast to this theory-driven and linear model of the research process, the grounded theory approach gives priority to the data and the field under study over theoretical assumptions. Theories should not be applied to the subject being studied but are "discovered" and formulated in working with the field and the empirical data to be found in it. People to be studied are selected according to their relevance to the research topic. They are not selected for constructing a (statistically) representative sample of a general population. The aim is not to reduce complexity by breaking it down into variables but rather to increase complexity by including context (Flick, 2009, pp.90-91).

Therefore, grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) is a research strategy that is appropriate to study social interaction given its emphasis on behaviour and it is thus a valuable research strategy in consumer behaviour studies (Goulding, 2002; Fischer & Otnes, 2006). Furthermore, this research strategy can be 'used to generate theory where little is already known, or to provide a fresh slant on existing knowledge' (Goulding, 2002, p.42). The consumption of counterfeits has been widely investigated under the positivist paradigm without much theoretical development (Eisend & Schuchert-Güler, 2006; Staake, Thiesse & Fleisch, 2009). In addition few studies exist that are in line with the interpretivist paradigm, as discussed in chapter two. Hence grounded theory was judged a suitable research strategy for the study proposed in this thesis.

5.2.1 Grounded Theory

Grounded theory's distinctive features are 'its commitment to research and "discovery" through direct contact with the social world studied coupled with a rejection of a priori theorizing' (Locke, 2001, p.34). Created by Glaser & Strauss (1967) in response to the dominant tradition of quantitative inquiries in social science, when developed, grounded theory 'made a cutting-edge statement' contesting the methodological consensus with its systematic approach to data collection and analysis (Charmaz, 2006, p.5). Over time grounded theory has undergone some methodological transformations that 'have

distanced it from its symbolic interactionism roots' (Goulding, 2002, pp.46-47). Although the departure from symbolic interactionism is only partial, grounded theory remains consistent with this theoretical position because its research practice and research focus insist firmly in keeping 'direct contact with the social world studied and in its attention to symbols and behavior, respectively. However, it distinguishes itself from this tradition in its particular analytic extensions of and supplements to participant observation' (Locke, 2001, p.34).

This 'analytical extension' (Locke, 2001, p.34) is grounded theory's inductive approach to "discovery" that navigates 'from phenomena and practices to theory and explanation' (Flick, 2008, p.19). However this research process evolves 'through the systematic and simultaneous process of data collection and analysis' (Goulding, 2002, p.170).

Flick (2009, p.90) explains that the research process starts with a definition of the field and research problem, where the researchers also read about a topic for theoretical sensitivity. Following that the researchers start the fieldwork through initial sampling and observation and progress to data analysis (open code). 'The longer the researchers work in the field and with materials, the more the approaches become systematic and theory oriented—sampling turns into theoretical sampling, coding goes beyond substantive coding towards axial (Strauss) or theoretical (Glaser) coding' (Flick, 2009, p.440). These stages, accompanied by a 'process of constant comparison of the data resulted in early conceptual categorisation' until many conceptual categorisations emerged (Goulding, 2002, p.114). Then comes the stage where conceptual categories are developed with concepts being examined in relation to the literature and then checked for relevance and centrality (Goulding, 2002; Flick, 2009). Finally, there is the 'reflexive phase in which questions about the theoretical saturation of categories and the theory become relevant' (Flick, 2009, p.441).

To Flick (2009, p.92) the circularity in the research process is one of the strengths of grounded theory, 'because it forces the researcher to permanently reflect on the whole research process and on particular steps in the light of the other steps – at least when it is applied consistently'. Locke (2001) regards this research strategy as useful to highlight the dynamics of the contexts under investigation while Charmaz (2006)

regards it as useful for its capacity to prioritise the meanings and actions in the analysis over mechanical procedures.

The 'rejection of a priori theorizing' is however a more controversial feature (Locke, 2001, p.34). Despite the fact that Glaser & Strauss (1967), in their seminal work, already talked about the incorporation of other sources of information into the research as longs as they are re-incorporated into the data and analysis:

> Generating a theory from data means that most hypotheses and concepts not only come from the data, but are systematically worked out in relation to the data during the course of the research. Generating a theory involves a process of research. By contrast, the source of certain ideas, or even "models", can come from sources other than the data. The biographies of scientists are replete with stories of occasional flashes of insight, of seminal ideas, garnered from sources outside the data. But the generation of theory from such insights must then be brought into relation to the data, or there is great danger that theory and empirical world will mismatch (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.2).

Glaser & Strauss' (1967) quote above serves to clarify the misinterpretation that claims that the method of grounded theory 'requires the researcher to enter the field with a very limited knowledge of the problem under investigation' (Goulding, 2002, p.70). In relation to this point Flick (2009) explains that 'in contrast to a widespread misunderstanding, this is postulated above all for the way to treat hypotheses and less for the decision concerning the research question'. The author explains that:

> Identifying an issue as a topic for a grounded theory study includes a decision for a research perspective, aiming at developing a new theory, where so far a lack of theoretical knowledge exists. It also includes designing the problem in a way that makes it worth studying from a theory development perspective and it includes constructing a phenomenon as a specific research issue. It finally includes developing a research question—which aspects will be studied first or mainly etc. (Flick, 2009, p.430).

In fact, reflections about the research process should be applied at the early stages of the study using the literature to enhance the researcher's theoretical sensitivity (Locke, 2001; Goulding, 2002). In addition, as Fischer & Otnes (2006, p.21) observed, the

comments of Glaser & Strauss (1967) also 'imply that researchers will find, not only their answers, but also their questions, in the research contexts they choose to investigate'. Besides, to 'read for ideas and to enhance theoretical sensitivity' is very different from reading in a substantive field in search of a gap in the literature (Goulding, 2002, p.71). Altogether these arguments show that insights from the existing literature and other sources of data are welcome in grounded theory, helping with theoretical developments without limiting the research with a priori assumptions.

All in all, grounded theorist researchers

> enter any research setting and any research topic oriented towards behavior at the symbolic and interactional levels. This means observing and understanding behavior from the participants' point of view, learning about participants' worlds, learning about their interpretation of self in the context of given interactions, and learning about the dynamic properties of interaction (Locke, 2001, p.12).

Therefore, grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) becomes a research strategy that is useful for investigating consumers' everyday lives (Fischer & Otnes, 2006) providing a methodological conceptualisation for researchers 'interested in patterns of action and interactions among various types of social units or actors' (Goulding, 2002, p.14). Furthermore, this research strategy supports 'the building of theory in new substantive areas, especially in fast-paced contexts where change is a constant' (Fischer & Otnes, 2006, p.29), like the plentiful market of counterfeits (Gentry et al., 2001) in general and in emerging countries such as Brazil in particular.

5.3 OVERALL RESEARCH STRATEGY

The previous section explained that grounded theory was developed as a research strategy in which the systematisation of collection and analysis of qualitative data aims to achieve the generation of a theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Notwithstanding that in grounded theory data collection and analysis occur simultaneously (Goulding, 2002, p.170), for the sake of clarity each aspect will be presented in a separate section.

Therefore this section discusses key aspects of the data collection and explains how the research process was conducted in practice for this thesis.

5.3.1 Research Problem and Questions

Contemporary studies using grounded theory have adopted the 'practice of posing research questions that link to a wider literature' (Fischer & Otnes, 2006, p.20). These questions reflect on whether a research problem can be empirically investigated (Flick, 2009) but it is known that these research questions will become 'more focused under way' (Flick, 2008, p.22).

For the research presented here two research questions were developed after deciding on a topic and research perspective: the consumption of counterfeits following the interpretive approach, which values the subjective viewpoint (Flick, 2008) in line with the Consumer Culture Theory (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) approach. These questions were developed with the aim of identifying issues that have been neglected either by consumer culture studies or by the context under investigation. This process started with finding relevant issues to investigate while reading for theoretical sensitivity (Goulding, 2002). However these questions were revised along the way as the research progressed, which is consistent with a grounded theory approach. The final questions are presented below:

- How do consumers' cultural understandings of risk influence their consumption of counterfeits fashion goods and social interactions?

- How do processes of materialisation engaged in by consumers of counterfeits support their consumption of counterfeit fashion goods?

- How do materiality and risk converge to shape consumers' social identity and experiences around the consumption of fashion counterfeit goods?

5.3.2 Data Collection Process

At the beginning of a grounded theory study the researcher defines the research problem, as presented above, and the field of investigation. It was decided to conduct the research in a plentiful market of counterfeits (Gentry et al., 2001) and the emerging country Brazil was selected due to the researcher's familiarity with the local culture and language. The consumption of counterfeits is widespread in this country. However the city of Rio de Janeiro was chosen for two reasons: (a) the researcher would have better access to consumers of counterfeits from different social backgrounds, and (b) the city accommodates one of the largest popular marketplaces selling counterfeits in the country.

After defining the research problem and field of investigation the next step was to decide on the data collection process. This process should be 'designed to help researchers make the move from empirical observation to composing conceptual categories and to delineating the ways in which the categories relate to each other' (Locke, 2001, pp.36-37). Yet it is important to acknowledge that in grounded theory the data collection process encompasses repeated field contacts and may require 'coming back to the field and participants to collect more data and to adapt data collection to the needs and questions resulting from the analysis of the data so far' (Flick, 2009, p.432). Accordingly several research decisions are supposed to be made during the data collection process.

Therefore, the decision was made to divide the field research into two phases. First an exploratory study was conducted over 31 days between May and June 2012. Ten months later the researcher resumed the data collection and fieldwork. This second phase was conducted over 70 days between April and June 2013. Details about the fieldwork are provided in a later section. Figure 5.2 explains the research process.

Figure 5.2
Research Process

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                   Research Problem                        │
│     Preliminary literature review (for theoretical        │
│                      sensitivity)                         │
│   Methodological evaluation and selection of grounded     │
│                        theory                             │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                            │
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                   Field Research 1                        │
│                   (exploratory stage)                     │
│       Interviews: 8 consumers (initial sampling)          │
│            Field Obesevation: 1 location (6 visits)       │
│          Simultaneous data collection and analysis        │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                            │
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                   Field Research 2                        │
│     Interviews: 42 consumers (theoretical sampling)       │
│             Field Obesevation: 6 locations.               │
│    Main location (18 visits). Other locations (one        │
│                      visit each)                          │
│          Simultaneous data collection and analysis        │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                            │
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                 Data Analysis Process                     │
│                (Following field research)                 │
│   Coding the data and identification of all possible      │
│                       concepts                            │
│          Constant comparison including memoing            │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                            │
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│            Conceptual Category Developement               │
│        The concepts started to cluster into groups        │
│          and the data analysis moved to the next          │
│                         cycle                             │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                            │
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                Theoretical Deveploment                    │
│     Abstract categories and contextualise in the          │
│                      literature                           │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                            │
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│              Core Categories and Theories                 │
│    Followed by review and evaluation for theoretical      │
│                       saturation                          │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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(N.B.: Figure 5.5 gives more details about the data analysis process)

Source: Graphic created by the author of this thesis following a similar example in Goulding (2002).

The decision to conduct two phases of field research was based on the fact that researchers should enter 'the field at a very early stage and collect data in whatever form appropriated' to avoid conducting the fieldwork with some prior disposition

(Goulding, 2002, p.56). This was a very useful direction; for instance, risk themes started to emerge during the exploratory phase.

However a practical reason was also taken into consideration for the division of field research into two phases. The physical distance of the field under investigation brought some access limitations. Thus the first exploratory phase was conducted to explore implications, and test ideas and research practices before the comprehensive phase of data collection (Maxwell, 2008, p.227). This phase was indeed beneficial, allowing for improving the data collection process in the second phase of field research. For example, the research period for the second phase of field research was extended to give more time for the researcher to analyse the data while in the field as required by grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

The following subsection gives details about the decisions regarding theoretical sampling, the interview process, field observations and secondary data collection.

5.3.2.1 Theoretical Sampling

Regarding the interaction between theory and empirical work, in grounded theory the sampling process evolves from 'selection through "initial sampling" or convenience sampling, which will allow you to get into the field and in touch with the first cases and insights' (Flick, 2009, p.433). Goulding (2002, p.67) states that at first 'the researcher will go to the most obvious places and the most likely informants in search of information'. Glaser and Strauss (1967) suggest beginning the sampling process by identifying 5 or 6 participants who have the phenomenon of interest in common.

The initial sampling for this study took place during the first phase of the field research, between May and June 2012. It started with the location of two key informants from different social classes with experience of consuming counterfeits. Goulding (2002, p.60) explains that 'the use key informants is particularly valuable during the early stages of grounded theory research when sampling is open and data collection is conducted with the objective of generating ideas for more focused work'. These two key informants led to others and the final sample consisted of: 8 consumers of

counterfeit goods, male and female respondents aged between 20 and 54, living in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. There is more information about these informants in Figure 5.3.

Moving to theoretical sampling

> Theoretical sampling is the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyzes his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges. This process of data collection is controlled by the emerging theory, whether substantive or formal (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.45).

According to Locke (Locke, 2001, p.55) the 'logic of theoretical sampling comes from researcher commitment to developing a theory about a substantive topic, and it is this commitment to developing a theory that sets the terms for sampling throughout the study'. Consequently the research participants are 'selected for their relevance for furthering the development of emerging categories and concepts' (Goulding, 2002, p.68). Seeking relevant data with the aim of elaborating an emerging theory the researcher 'conducts theoretical sampling by sampling to develop the properties of your categories until no new properties emerge' (Charmaz, 2006, p.97). Nonetheless, an 'adequate theoretical sample is judged on the basis of how widely and diversely the analyst chose his groups for saturating categories according to the type of theory he wished to develop' (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.63).

The theoretical sampling took place during the second phase of the field research. It started in April 2013 and continued until June 2013. Following the advice of Glaser & Strauss (1967) to organise sampling around groups, first, the two key informants were contacted once more, and they introduced other consumers of counterfeits who were willing to share their experiences. Then two other informants from the initial sampling from different social backgrounds were contacted, which started a second group. Their information was indeed very fruitful. Lastly, the researcher started a new group that was sampled by convenience.

However, informants suggested by informants were not approached immediately. The

data analysis was conducted simultaneously, and thus after 5 or 6 interviews the researcher started a constant comparative analysis and later open coding. Towards the middle of the data collection interview transcriptions (six) were outsourced to speed up access to the data. Concepts emerging from the analysis (e.g. pleading altruism), as well as situations (e.g. counterfeit makeup) were then taken into consideration before sampling for another round.

The overall theoretical sample comprised 42 consumers of counterfeit goods (8 from first field research and 34 from second field research), male and female respondents aged between 22 and 68, living in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; with the exception of one informant who lives in Espírito Santo but visits her family in Rio de Janeiro monthly. Additional sampling information is given in Figure 5.3:

Figure 5.3
The Research Sample

Pseudonymous	Demographic
Allan	Male, 30 years, civil servant
Amanda	Female, 56 years, product manager
Amy	Female, 25 years, salesperson
Andrea	Female, 59 years, online tutor
Anna	Female, 23 years old, civil servant
Antony	Male, 31 years, hair stylist
Beatriz	Female, 68 years, pensioner
Ben	Male, 47 years, fashion designer
Camila	Female, 42, teacher
Catherine	Female, 53 years, scout for TV shows & ads
Christine	Female, 50 years, housemaid
Claire	Female, 42 years, civil servant
David	Male, 35 years, graphic designer
Dawn	Female, 28 years, web designer
Elliot	Male, 42 years, advertiser
Emma	Female, 55 years, bank worker
James	Male, 25, unemployed
Jason	Male, 33 year, audio technician
Jefferson	Male, 54 years, office clerk

Joanne	Female, 28 years, housewife
John	Male, 35 years, advertiser
Joseph	Male, 25 years, dancer
Karen	Female, 38, office worker
Kate	Female, 25, small business owner
Lauren	Female, 40 years, graphic designer
Marie	Female, 53 years, personal assistant
Mark	Male, 36 years, advertiser/fashion designer
Matt	Male, 31 years, lecturer
Pamela	Female, 62 years, door-to-door vendor
Patricia	Female, 50 years, unemployed
Paul	Male, 25, junior analyst
Paula	Female, 52 years, senior lecturer
Philipa	Female, 22 years, small business owner
Rebecca	Female, 34 years, advertiser
Rene	Female, 47 years, receptionist
Rose	Female, 31 years, personal trainer
Rosemary	Female, 52, personal assistant
Sally	Female, 27 years, bank clerk
Sarah	Female, 46 years, housemaid
Simon	Male, 24, office clerk
Sofia	Female, 50 years, midlevel business owner
Thomas	Male, 52 years, architect

Source: Table created by the author of this thesis.

5.3.2.2 Interview Process

Interviews can take many forms, though they are 'not always easy to conduct and require a certain amount of skill and usually a great deal of practice' (Goulding, 2002, p.59). Usually conducted with a sense of uncertainty and a feeling of apprehension, it is paramount for the researcher to try and develop a rapport with those being interviewed and so acquire meaningful information (Spradley, 1979). The most common form of interviewing in grounded theory is face-to-face, making use of the 'semi-structured, open-ended, ethnographic, in-depth conversational interview' (Goulding, 2002). In

keeping with Goulding's (2002) recommendation the interview technique chosen for the interviews followed Spradley's (1979) guidance for ethnographic interviews.

Spradley (1979) proposes the creation of semi-structured questionnaires using descriptive questions to ensure that this technique allows the researcher to seek a relationship among entities that are conceptually meaningful to the individuals under investigation. As the author explains, the key principle in asking descriptive questions is that expanding the length of the question tends to expand the length of the response (Spradley, 1979). Accordingly, Spradley (1979, p.49) suggests five major types of descriptive questions that will help the researcher to 'take advantage of the power of language to construe settings: (1) grand tour questions; (2) mini-tour questions; (3) example questions; (4) experience questions and (5) native-language questions. Examples of descriptive questions (Spradley, 1979) are presented in Figure 5.4.

Figure 5.4
Descriptive Questions Examples

Grand tour question:

Could you describe a typical day shopping for a counterfeit product?

Mini-tour questions:

Could you tell me what happened the last time you went shopping for counterfeits / replicas / personal products?

Example questions:

Could you give me an example of a good counterfeit product?

Experience questions:

You probably have some interesting experiences with counterfeit products, can you recall any of them?

Source: Table created by the author of this thesis.

There is no formal native-language question because the interviewees use many terms for the word counterfeit. Many use just the word "fake", some use "replica" for a first-rate products and counterfeits or "second grade" for low-grade reproductions (as seen in Catherine's quote in page 204). Few interviewees even used for the term counterfeit the

word "piratão", a superlative for the word pirated in Portuguese. For this reason the interviewer was very careful to use the same terms used by the interviewees adapting the questions accordingly. Using the same expression for the word counterfeit was indeed important. On a couple of occasions informants commented on the interviewer mistake (as seen in Paul's quote in page 181). The questionnaire was slightly adapted for the second round of interviews where presuming and projective questions were included.

The interviews were conducted at locations convenient to the informants. Most of the informants were interviewed face-to-face (39 interviews) although 3 interviews were conducted via video conference (Skype). All of the interviews were conducted in Portuguese and recorded and transcribed verbatim. To support the findings field notes were taken during the interview and then used to clarify any doubts (Flick, 2009).

The complete questionnaire sample is included in the appendices section of the current document. It should be noted that the questions suggested there are just a guideline for the interview. If the consumers covered the question spontaneously they were not asked a second time.

5.3.2.3 Field observation and secondary data collection

In grounded theory the interview serves as a primary source of data 'because it has the potential to generate a rich and detailed accounted of individual's experiences' (Goulding, 2002, p.59). However, the importance of field observations should not be neglected considering that field notes have a foundational role in the process of constant comparison and help to strength the development of conceptual ideas during the data analysis (Locke, 2001). Yet field observation in grounded theory is different from ethnographic works because the researcher gives priority to observe the 'phenomenon or process' rather than making a detailed description of a setting (Charmaz, 2006, p.22).

Primary data collection

As explained previously the field research was divided into two phases:

First field research (between May,17[th] and June 17th 2012): This was the exploratory phase of the study. The field observation at this point aimed to verify whether the camelódromo of Uruguaina would provide information that had 'relevance and fit to the study' (Goulding, 2002, p.44). The camelódromo of Uruguaina is the largest popular marketplace with counterfeits in the city and is located in the city centre. It is visited by consumers from the whole of Rio the Janeiro state and from further afield. Six field observations were conducted at the camelódromo of Uruguaina during this period of data collection.

Second field research (between April 20th and June 29[th] 2013): This was the phase of data collection when the camelódromo of Uruguaina was observed weekly every Saturday and on other weekdays at different hours of the day for the whole period of data collection. Additional retail settings were also observed. Two upscale retail outlets were observed: the 'Village Mall', the newest and most expensive outlet in the city and its nearest competitor, the 'São Conrado Fashion Mall'. Two retail outlets in a working class neighbourhood were also observed: the 'Shoppping Tijuca' mall and the 'Tijuca Point', a commercial gallery selling counterfeits (i.e. a small commercial area filled with stands). A night street market in a poor neighbourhood was also observed: 'Calçadão de Madureira'. This is a peculiar retail outlet where the street vendors assemble their stalls on the streets to sell counterfeits once the regulated stores have closed for business. Due to security and logistical concerns this retail outlet was not further explored.

Secondary data collection

Grounded theory allows the use of secondary data to complement the primary data, such as interviews, to generate introspective accounts and to 'give context and factual substance to the analysis' (Goulding, 2002, p.56). During the collection of the secondary data the researcher decides on the type of data to include (e.g. reports, news, statistic) and 'may invoke varied data-gathering strategies' (Charmaz, 2006, p.29). The secondary data is presented throughout chapter four, although there is one example in

chapter eight (page 233). This data is in the thesis mainly to illustrate the field observation; it was not recorded at the time for practical or ethical reasons.

Websites, social network pages, and blogs were observed to complement the primary data from August 2013 after an informant revealed the existence of social network profiles that work as points of sale for counterfeits during the last round of data collection in Brazil. The profiles were monitored until December 2015. In addition, fashion blogs containing discussions about counterfeits were monitored between April and June 2014. The images used in chapter four to illustrate Figure 4.8 (page 111) were collected purposively over this period when the author of this dissertation started following consumers' conversations on these blogs around a particular topic, handbags, and that pointed to a particular model in high evidence at the time. The exception is the image of a premium inspired handbag that was added later (in April 2015) following conceptual theoretical development. The same logic of open coding was applied to the images, (Gibbs, 2008; Saldana, 2013) that is usually applied to text during qualitative data analysis.

5.4 THE ANALYSIS PROCESS

 This section discusses the data analysis process and explains the data analysis procedures adopted in this thesis. The emergent findings will be discussed in great depth in the following chapters.

The analytical process in grounded theory aims to 'penetrate the phenomena, by moving through various levels of theory building, from description through abstraction to conceptual categorisation, in order to probe underlying conditions, consequences and actions' (Goulding, 2002, p.36). Consequently the researcher engages in a 'data-driven coding' procedure (Gibbs, 2007, p.45) that focuses on 'inductively generating novel theoretical ideas or hypotheses from the data as opposed to testing theories specified beforehand. Insofar as these new theories "arise" out of the data and are supported by the data, they are said to be grounded' (Gibbs, 2007, p.49).

5.4.1 Data-analysis

The literature on grounded theory tends to emphasise the importance of two steps: sampling and data analysis. Considering the centrality of those issues 'it is not surprising that the controversies about the right way of doing grounded theory research focused on the way of coding and what that means for openness to material, data, and phenomena' (Flick, 2009, p.435). However there are different ways to conduct a grounded theory research. This has started in consequence of the 'split between how the two original authors conceptualise and operationalise the method, which has resulted in two versions being used' (Goulding, 2002, p.46).

Nowadays there are many distinct procedures to conduct data analyses. First there is the original procedure by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Following that Strauss & Corbin (1990) created a more objective process (Gibbs, 2007, p.45). A new variation has also been suggested by Charmaz (2006), which advocates a "constructive" approach to grounded theory (Flick, 2009). All three variants of the data analysis process 'treat open coding as an important step'. They 'see theoretical saturation as the goal and end point of coding' and finally they 'base their coding and analysis on constant comparison between materials (cases, interviews, statements, etc.)' (Flick, 2009, p.317).

Glaser & Strauss (1967, p.103) explain that the 'constant comparative method is designed to aid the analyst who possesses these abilities in generating a theory that is integrated, consistent, plausible, close to the data—and at the same time is in a form clear enough to be readily, if only partially, operationalized for testing in quantitative research'. Therefore the constant comparative method offers 'several contrasts one can construct to help understand what might lie behind the surface text (Gibbs, 2007, p.50).

Essentially, the objectives in any coding procedure are twofold: 'to develop and unfold an understanding of the issue or field under study first, which demands an open access to what should be coded and how; and secondly to identify an underlying structure, an organizing principle, a basic social process, or core category' (Flick, 2009, p.436). However, due to the divergence between the original authors it has become 'common for researchers now using the approach to specify which model was adopted, the Glaser

or the Strauss and Corbin version' (Goulding, 2002, p.106). There are also more pragmatic applications of grounded theory. For instance, Flick (2009) suggests a combination of methods, associating Charmaz's (2006) strategies to Glaser & Strauss' (1967, p.103) approach. Therefore the author suggests focusing on 'common core of methodological approach in the different versions of grounded theory methodology and see the differences in the detail more as alternative ways of how to proceed depending on your research question' (Flick, 2009, p.435).

Alternatively there are approaches to grounded theory from specific research fields, such as Locke's approach in management (2001) and Goulding's approach in marketing and consumer behaviour (2002). In the light of the numerous alternatives, this thesis uses Glaser & Strauss's (1967) seminal work as its main reference although the phase of conceptual category development and theoretical interpretation were influenced by Glaser's (1992) approach, which better accommodates the analysis of a 'pattern of behaviour that is both relevant and problematic to those being studied' (Goulding, 2002, p.85), such as the case of consumption of counterfeits.

The systematic and simultaneous process of data collection and analysis is central to grounded theory studies. Thus to illustrate how this developed in practice Figure 5.2 expands on the analytical process:

Figure 5.5
Research Analytical Process

Research Problem

Preliminary literature review (for theoretical sensitivity)
Methodological evaluation and selection of grounded theory

Field Research 1
(exploratory stage)

Interviews: 8 consumers (initial sampling)
Field Obesevation: 1 location (6 visits)

Simultaneous data collection and analysis

First Round of Coding Process
During field research: exploratory coding of the 2 interviews.
After: 8 interviews coded for preliminary assignment of the data.
Coding protocol: moslty discriptive coding and in vivo coding

FIRST CYCLE OF ANALYSIS

Field Research 2

Interviews: 42 consumers (theoretical sampling)
Field Obesevation: 6 locations.
Main location (18 visits). Other locations (one visit each)
Simultaneous data collection and analysis

Second Round of Coding Process
During field research: 6 interviews coded using grounded theory coding protocol
(in vivo coding, processing coding) and occasionally descriptive coding.

Data Analysis Process
(Following field research)

Coding the data and identification of all possible concepts
Constant comparison including memoing

Upon returning from the field research, 2 interviews were coded line-by-line
and the remaining interviews were coded using grounded theory coding protocol
(in vivo coding, processing coding).

Conceptual Category Development
The concepts started to cluster into groups and
the data analysis moved to the next cycle

SECOND CYCLE OF ANALYSIS

Theoretical Development
Abstract categories and contextualise in the literature

Core Categories and Theories
Followed by review and evaluation for theoretical saturation

Source: Graphic created by the author of this thesis following a similar example in Goulding (2002).

Figure 5.5 shows three rounds of the coding process represented by the dotted squares. The coding process in grounded theory 'involves meticulous analytic attention by applying specific types of codes to data through a series of cumulative coding cycles' (Saldana, 2013). As the author explains:

> In Vivo, Process, and Initial Coding are First Cycle methods—coding processes for the beginning stages of data analysis that fracture or split the data into individually coded segments. Focused, Axial, and Theoretical Coding are Second Cycle methods—coding processes for the latter stages of data analysis that both literally and metaphorically constantly compare, reorganize, or "focus" the codes into categories prioritize them to develop "axis" categories around which others revolve, and synthesize them to formulate a central or core category that becomes the foundation for explication of a grounded theory. Categories also have "properties" and "dimensions"—variable qualities that display the range or distribution within similarly coded data. (Saldana, 2013, pp.51-52)

Therefore in Figure 5.5 the first two rounds of the coding process represent the first cycle of analysis, in line with the decision to conduct two phases of field research, whilst the third round of the coding process represents the second cycle of analysis (Saldana, 2013). Figure 5.5 also shows the details of the second cycle of analysis and highlights the preliminary categorisation and all of its possible concepts underneath. Each one of the three rounds of the coding process has a coding protocol; a combination of coding techniques (e.g., descriptive coding, process coding, in vivo coding and so on) that best suits the aim of the analytical process (Saldana, 2013). The coding protocol in each round is discussed below.

First cycle of analysis

First round of coding process: this round started during the first field research and concluded a couple of months afterwards. In this cycle the researcher transcribed four interviews: two in the field and two after returning, which delayed the process considerably. Two interviews were coded manually (i.e. with paper and pencil) and the other six were coded using CAQDAS (Computer Assisted Qualitative Data AnalysiS) software (Atlas.Ti). The coding protocol comprehends an exploratory coding of the two

interviews in the field; preliminary assignment of the codes to the data before more refined coding systems are developed and applied. The other six interviews were coded with a combination of descriptive coding, in vivo coding and processing coding. The field notes were also analysed and used in the constant comparison activities (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Second round of coding process: this round also started during the field research and concluded a couple of months afterwards. As explained before, this time six interview transcriptions were outsourced, allowing the researcher, in the field, to use the protocol appropriate to the first cycle of analysis of grounded theory. It is worth noting that Saldaña (2013) replaces the term open coding with initial coding in his coding manual.

> In Vivo Coding and Process Coding are foundation methods for grounded theory, though they are applicable to other analytic approaches. In Vivo Coding draws from the participant's own language for codes. Process Coding uses gerunds exclusively for codes. These techniques are employed in other grounded theory methods: Initial, Focused, Axial, and Theoretical Coding. Initial Coding is the first major stage of a grounded theory approach to the data. The method is truly open-ended for a researcher's first review of the corpus, and can incorporate In Vivo and Process Coding. (Saldana, 2013, p.84)

According to Saldaña's (2013) directions process coding and in vivo coding were used during the second phase of the field research. Upon returning from the fieldwork the decision was made to code line-by-line one interview collected in each phase of the field research. The idea behind coding line-by-line 'is to force analytic thinking' yet keep the researcher close to the data (Gibbs, 2007, p.52). After this the interviews collected during the second phase of the field research were coded using Saldaña's (2013) coding protocol. The concepts started to cluster into groups and therefore the data analysis moved to the next cycle. This passage is illustrated in Figure 5.5 by the transition between the boxes preliminary categorisation and conceptual category development. In addition to the field notes analytic memos were used during the constant comparison activities (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Second cycle of analysis

Third round of coding process: By the end of second round of the coding process a provisional framework had emerged and therefore it was not necessary to conduct additional field research (Goulding, 2002). The second cycle of analysis started with theoretical coding, which progressed with the analysis by integrating and synthesising concepts and developing key conceptual categories (Saldana, 2013). Following that these categories were 'examined in terms of their fit with the literature on behaviour in order to enhance theoretical focus' (Goulding, 2002, p.114). Then, selective coding generated the central categories in the study. Selective coding identifies central categories that tie 'all other categories in the theory together into a story' (Gibbs, 2007, p.50). Lastly, the reflexive phase started by interrogating the data about the theoretical saturation of categories and theories (Flick, 2009).

It is worth noting that the data was analysed in its original language and the quotes presented in the following chapters were only translated for the final draft of this thesis.

5.5 SUMMARY

This study drew on approaches from within the interpretivist paradigm, which meant that the overriding goal of the research was a deeper understanding of the phenomenon rather than an explanation with universal laws and predictions. Consistent with this paradigm, grounded theory was adopted taking into account that this research strategy involves a process of systematisation of the collection, as well as the coding and analysis of the qualitative data, which allows for generating a theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). It is particularly useful for investigating a phenomenon that is under-theorised, such as the consumption of counterfeits. Furthermore, the adoption of grounded theory enabled a detailed investigation within a real-life context and an in-depth study of consumer behaviour, helping to understand the consumption meanings arising from consumers' actions in their socio-cultural context. Principles of theoretical sampling were applied to the selection of informants in this study. The research practice followed meticulous data collection combined with an attentive data analysis that included in the interpretation the perspectives and voices of those studied. Two phases of field research were conducted and two cycles of data analysis that consisted of three rounds of the

coding process were carried out until the emergent categories and conceptual linkages achieved theoretical saturation.

Chapter 6: Findings: Risk: the Influence of Risk in the Consumption of Counterfeits

This chapter explores emergent risk themes in the data. It commences with a discussion of the plentiful market of counterfeits in Brazil. Following that it analyses the influence of consumers' cultural understandings of risk on their consumption of counterfeits and social interactions. First the analysis focuses on how consumers evaluate the uncertainty levels in their social environment. Then it investigates how consumers develop risk management practices to reduce the uncertainties they face in their everyday consumption experiences with counterfeits.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In plentiful markets of counterfeits (Gentry et al., 2001) even though consumers can easily access these products the high level of uncertainty in the social environment alters consumers' perception of risks. This happens because understandings about risk are founded on social expectations and responsibilities, which are closely aligned with cultural beliefs and practices (Lupton, 2006). These points highlight that the perception of risk is culturally shaped and further suggests that consumers develop common practices to deal with the uncertainties they face in the marketplace.

The aim of this chapter is to explore the many ways in which consumers deal with uncertainties in their consumption of counterfeits and to identify their common practices. In doing so this chapter addresses how consumers' cultural understandings of risk influence their consumption of counterfeits fashion goods and social interactions.

The first section presents the plentiful market of counterfeits in Brazil. This section is complemented by an introspective account and fieldwork images. The second section moves to the analysis of consumers' perception of risk and draws its interpretations based on the literature on cultural risk discussed in chapter three. This analysis reveals the existence of two interconnected risk cycles. Therefore this section is structured in two subsections. The first subsection discusses the risk assessment cycle where consumers measure the uncertainty levels in the social environment. The second subsection discusses the risk management cycle, investigating consumers' active interactions in the social environment and their relations with social groups. Overall

these findings stress the importance of risk in the consumption of counterfeits. The last part provides a summary of the findings presented in the chapter.

6.2 THE PLENTIFUL MARKET OF COUNTERFEITS IN BRAZIL

In the plentiful market of counterfeits in Brazil these goods are sold alongside non-branded and mundane products in popular marketplaces (the bottom left photo in figure 6.1). These marketplaces also offer third-rate inspired-items. To recall, inspired-items are imitations of product designs without a brand display or bearing a brand from another retailer. Interestingly, the field observation revealed that counterfeits can be adapted to accommodate the Brazilians' tastes. For example, a Tommy Hilfiger travel bag with red, blue and white stripes in reference to the United States' flag was found in the combination of green, yellow and white, colours from the Brazilian flag, and also in light pink, baby blue and white (Fieldwork 27/04/2013). Such a mixed offering of products seems to neutralise the illegal aspects of the counterfeit trade in Brazil.

To complement the primary data, field observations were carried out in Rio de Janeiro, the location of one of the largest popular marketplaces selling counterfeits in the country: the camelódromo of Uruguaina. Camelódromo means a place for camelôs, slang for street-sellers. Uruguaiana's popular market started in 1994 as the first legalised area for street-sellers in the city (Costa, 2015). At that time, it was a small plot allotted by the government in the city centre to concentrate the street-sellers spread out over Rio Branco Avenue and the nearby streets. From these early days, the camelódromo of Uruguaiana has been extended to several neighbouring streets and constitutes a huge camelódromo that is widely recognised for its major market for counterfeits, which flourishes due to the high consumer demand (Braga & Castro, 2006).

Figure 6.1
Camelódromo of Uruguaiana

Source: Photos taken by the author of this thesis during fieldwork.

The field observation can be complemented by researcher introspection. These accounts are useful for reflecting on feelings and sensations that are experienced during fieldwork (Goulding, 2002). Presented here the researcher's introspective account of the camelódromo of Uruguaiana—the main outlet for counterfeits in Rio de Janeiro and widely referenced in the data—gives a real life impression that complements the

interviewees' descriptions of the marketplaces they visit to consume counterfeits.

> "The camelódromo of Uruguaiana is in fact a multidimensional place. Its size is intimidating! It is loud. It is dirty. It is crowded. It is impossible to make sense of the contrasting smells: food and fuel; sweat and perfumes; smoke and summer rain. Never mind following peoples' movements; there are too many and they walk around randomly. I felt transported to another dimension. A real life video-game and I had no idea where to start. Several entrances to choose and they are not that different, I must say. Where should I go next? Narrow corridors, not enough light. I lost myself in a labyrinth of cramped stalls piled high with products. They look real, but they seem fake. It is hard to grasp. I wonder if there is a prize at the end of this real life video-game?"

(Researcher introspective account, 23/05/2013)

The multidimensional nature of the camelódromo of Uruguaiana offers a rich research context and allows consumers many interpretations of the reality around them. Kate gave her impression:

> Kate: "Previously the Uruguaiana was a mess, now [after the fire] it seems you just got into a mall. Before the floor was the street pavement, nowadays it is carpet. There are garment racks for clothes so you can see them carefully. No more wrinkled and folded clothes. It is like a real store!"

(Kate, female, 25, small business owner)

Figure 6.2
Stand at the camelódromo of Uruguaiana

Source: Photos taken by the author during the fieldwork for this thesis.

Far from resembling a mall (Fig. 6.1), Uruguaiana's popular market in fact follows a trend observed in other mid-level marketplaces selling counterfeits in the country. In São Paulo mid-level marketplaces selling counterfeits are found in several neighbourhoods. These places have a hybrid nature where a large area is filled with stands but their layout emulates aspects of a store with glass displays, fitting rooms and clothing racks. Whilst in the camelódromo of Uruguaiana only some sellers' stalls actually look like Kate's description (Fig. 6.2) in the "stand centres" glass, acrylic and metal structures are the norm. Additionally, some of these mid-level marketplaces selling counterfeits offer extra services to consumers such as a food court, public toilets and security while a few have air-conditioning and even parking (Fig. 6.3).

Figure 6.3
Stand Centre in São Paulo

Source: Photos taken by the author for research prior to the fieldwork for this thesis.

São Paulo city centre is the place for popular marketplaces selling counterfeits. In the region around 25 de Março street there are two extra-large popular marketplaces that attract visitors from all over the country (Brancatelli, 2005). Shopping 25 the Março resembles the camelódromo of Uruguaiana with its mixed offering of products and more stalls than stands. Galeria Pagé is specialised in digital media, games and electronics with stands of all sizes. It is worth noting that the field observation was not carried out in São Paulo for this thesis. The "stand centres" were observed for previous research. Moreover the researcher knows the neighbourhoods well in both cities; she is a native from Rio de Janeiro and lived in São Paulo between 2000 and 2007.

However other marketplaces selling counterfeits were mentioned by interviewees and these are cited throughout the findings chapters of. In the following quote, Thomas shares his experiences of visiting the largest marketplace selling counterfeits in Brasilia, Brazil's capital city. The place is called Feira do Paraguai, the literal translation of which is Paraguay's market. Ironically this also makes reference to low-grade products smuggled from this country around the 1980s. Thomas could barely wait for the researcher to turn the recorder on to ask:

> Thomas: "Have you ever been to Feira do Paraguai?"
>
> Interviewer: No.
>
> Thomas: "You need to go to Brasilia."
>
> Interviewer: "Ok."
>
> Thomas: "I went there."
>
> Interviewer: "And how is it?"
>
> Thomas: "It is impressive. Impressive! [...] I heard about this market of imported goods, Feira do Paraguai [Paraguai's market], but who knows what that thing is called. I read somewhere that the authorities tried to shut it down but they decided to organise it instead because they were too strong or something. I read somewhere that the authorities tried to close it down but they decided to organise it instead because they were too strong or something. Then there you have the options of what is fake, then there is the replica and then the original. Got it? And then there is a slightly better replica, something in-between. Then, it's madness, I didn't have the time because in 2 or 3 hours I didn't visit even one tenth of that thing. Because it's immense, immense. It is immense! It leaves 25 de Março and Uruguaiana miles behind. It is something… I M P R E S S I V E. I found accessories for Nokia mobiles, Ericson mobiles, iPads, original and replica iPods; fakes that you could see that were fakes, others that you could not see they were fake and others that I don't know what they were. It is impressive. Purses that you can see selling here, in stores on the corner down the road. It's Louis Vuitton, Fendi, it's Victor Hugo, which is Brazilian, anyway ... Tommy Hilfiger, t-shirts from Abercrombie [and Fitch], Lacoste. EVERYTHING!"
>
> *(Thomas, male, 52, architect)*

This is one of the many interview quotes where consumers talked about consuming counterfeits while travelling. This shows that Brazilian consumers are not only omnivorous in their product choice (Ahuvia et al., 2012) but also in their marketplace

selection, as they buy counterfeits from many retail outlets, cities and countries, as well as through e-commerce. Additional descriptions from the Brazilian context are provided throughout the chapters when relevant to the analysis.

As expected, there are many distinctions among plentiful markets of counterfeits. Perez, Castaño & Quintanilha (2010) identified that in Mexico counterfeits are also found in small shops. In Brazil, licensed retailers do not offer counterfeits, despite their sizes, because they are severely regulated by the authorities in the country. There are many reasons for this, unfair practice and corruption is one of them (Duarte & Sallum, 2003). But in practical terms licensed retailers are inspected regularly while the size of some popular marketplaces makes them impractical, if not impossible, to control (Brancatelli, 2005; Costa, 2015). Hence to compete with vendors of counterfeits and circumvent law enforcement small shops in Brazil offer inspired-items as an alternative, varying from low-grade to first-rate imitations. Some licensed retailers even offer inspired-items from premium Brazilian brands. Claire commented on this in her interview:

> Claire: "Remember that store Vira-Volta?"
>
> Interviewer: "Vaguely"
>
> Claire: "There was this store, Vira-Volta, which rigorously copied Victor Hugo products, but branded them with the Vira-Volta logo. [...] Because even their logo was [pause] How is it? [pause] 'VV'. Their logo reminded you of [the Victor Hugo logo]. At a quick glance and people thought you were using a Victor Hugo handbag. I remember that I used it at the time."
>
> *(Claire, Female, 42, civil servant)*

It is worth noting that the Victor Hugo brand in fact imitates the product design of Louis Vuitton, an international traditional luxury brand (Truong, McColl & Kitchen; Kapferer & Bastien, 2009). Victor Hugo is one of the most expensive local brands in Brazil and this puts their products in the position of being premium inspired-items. Their products are also widely counterfeited in the country. Thomas commented on this in the quote above. But their products are not only counterfeited, they are also imitated by popular brands, such as Viral Volta, as seen in Claire's quote. This trickle-down of product design imitations and additional counterfeiting offers Brazilian consumers the possibility of creating fashion ensembles using counterfeits as well as inspired-items of

different rates. Figure 6.4 shows first-rate inspired-items.

Figure 6.4
First-rate imitations spotted in Rio de Janeiro

Source: Photos taken by the author during the fieldwork for this thesis.

Another distinction among plentiful markets of counterfeits is found in Kuever's (2014) work. The author explains that in China the regulations are lax and thus international brands producing locally sell inferior products in the country while Chinese producers for international brands make very similar products with their own brands. Thus Chinese consumers can carefully trace the place of production and distribution of products to guarantee the best choice. In Brazil, several governmental bodies (e.g. Anvisa—Brazilian Health Surveillance Agency and Inmetro—National Institute of Metrology Quality and Technology) legislate the production of consumer goods and thus licensed retailers are reliable making it less relevant to know the place of production and distribution of products in the country. In respect of counterfeits these products can be produced locally although the majority are smuggled to Brazil, mostly from Asia (Dweck, 2007). Thus consumers are fully aware that products on sale in popular markets have no guarantee of origin. The analysis evidences this fact as most of the interviewees assumed that all counterfeits on sale in the country are made in China (see Catherine and Amanda's quotes in the following section), even though this is not the case.

Overall this section discussed the essential aspects of Brazilian's plentiful market of counterfeits showing that these products are not only easy to find but also adapted to local tastes. Furthermore it points out that the omnivorous consumption behaviour of consumers (Ahuvia et al., 2012) extends from product to marketplace selection, which indicates that consumers need to assess the risks accordingly. The following section moves on to an analysis of consumers' perception of risks.

6.3 CULTURAL UNDERSTANDINGS OF RISK IN THE CONSUMPTION OF COUNTERFEITS

Consumers of counterfeits inevitably deal with non-consumers' risk cultural bias, which defines the consumption of these goods as potentially harmful to individuals and society. However consumers of counterfeits have a different understanding of risk. They believe that they can manage the uncertainties around the consumption of counterfeits. This means that they are willing to make an extra effort to find the best products in the marketplace. It also means an extra concern with the product per se and its use over its lifespan. Hence consumers' willingness to manage the risks generates an extra cycle where they try to minimise the uncertainties that exist in their modes of consumption, which includes counterfeits. For these reasons the first cycle of risk assessment evolves into an extra cycle of risk that accommodates the management practices required in the consumption of counterfeits. Figure 6.5 illustrates these two interconnected risk cycles.

Figure 6.5
Risk in the Consumption of Counterfeits
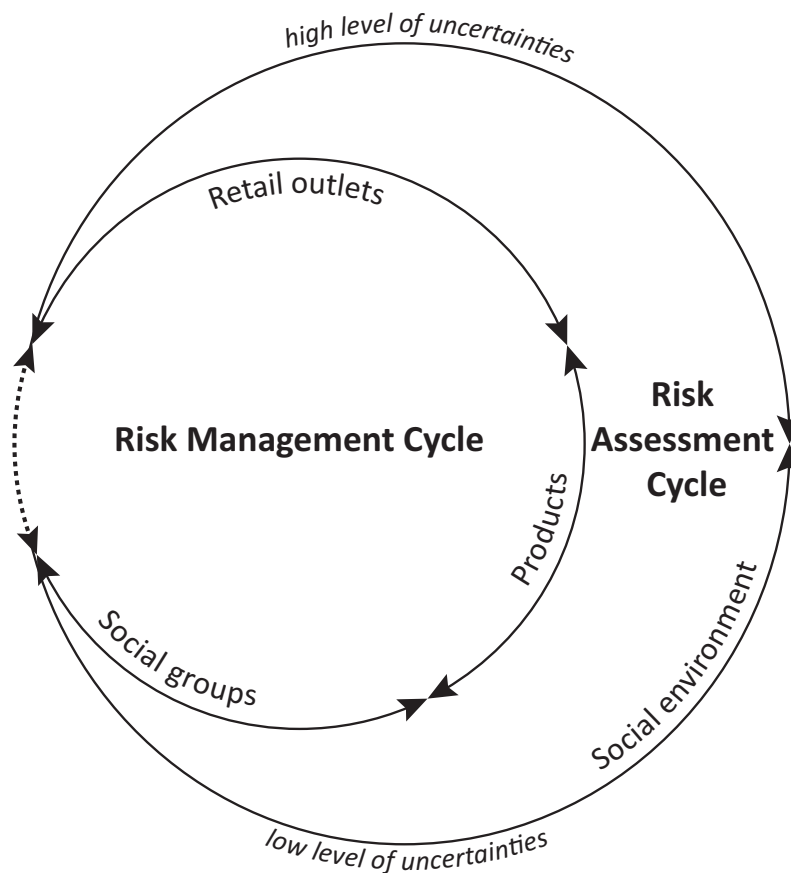
Source: A visual representation created by the author of this thesis.

In figure 6.5 the two interconnected risk cycles elucidate how consumers handle the uncertainties associated with consumption in plentiful markets of counterfeits. The external circle illustrates the risk assessment cycle where consumers measure the uncertainty levels in the social environment, while the internal circle illustrates the risk management cycle where consumers' social practices aim to reduce the uncertainties they face in their everyday consumption experiences around counterfeits.

In the risk assessment cycle consumers make their first appraisal of risk, deciding whether it is worth taking further action to consume counterfeits. The decision to continue means that risky situations must be assessed more carefully. Hence consumers move from a phase where risks are being taken into consideration to a phase where risk

situations are explored with great care. This transition is illustrated in figure 6.5 through the overlapping border of the circles. The decision to explore riskier situations starts the risk management cycle, illustrated by the inner circle, where a variety of practices are employed by consumers until they can reduce the risks so that they are within their tolerance level. However this is a trade-off in which consumers can give up consuming at any point of the risk management cycle and restart the risk assessment cycle once again.

The following subsections discuss each risk cycle independently, although bear in mind that they are interconnected activities. As with any visual representation, it is worth noting that the chart put forward in this section may result in generalisations, since some dimensions may not fit neatly into a category.

6.3.1 The First Cycle of Risk

It has emerged in the analysis that consumers evaluate the uncertainties in the social environment taking into consideration two aspects of the macro-social context. First they consider the uncertainties in their market context, for instance the surrounding areas around marketplaces selling counterfeits. Second they consider the uncertainties arising from their social context where the outcome is less predictable. The first risk assessment situation is discussed below.

6.3.1.1 Measuring the uncertainty levels arising from market context

At first glance consumers follow the logic, the better the neighbourhood the better the marketplaces selling counterfeits. This is a common logic applied to any retailer store or product in the market. For instance Catherine explained her experiences in "stand centres":

> Catherine: "I lived in São Paulo. I lived in São Paulo for 8 years. Over there it is very easy to find replicas. Then, there in São Paulo, we used to buy a lot, in a sort of small shopping centre at Paulista [Avenue]. I don't know if you know them, the ones we call ching-lings. [slang for Chinese] In these small commercial centres [galleries] we used to buy a lot of good replicas, like

cameras and mobiles. Yes, these malls have this sort of A-class proposition. Yes, they are empty most of the time, especially during the week. On Sundays we go there for lunch, right? And shop."

(Catherine, female, 53 years, scout for TV shows and advertising)

Catherine stated later in the interview that the Paulista neighbourhood was "on her way to work", which could be interpreted as a consumption choice grounded on convenience. However, it is also important to consider aspects of the social environment that make a privileged neighbourhood like Paulista more appealing to consumers. São Paulo city centre has larger popular markets, some resembling Uruguaiana with its mixed infrastructure and others very similar to the "stand centres" at Paulista. Amanda explained how she shops in another privileged neighbourhood in São Paulo, Liberdade:

> Amanda: "I don't go out to buy handbags, but sometimes I'm looking for another product and whilst passing through a window I see a handbag. Wow that calls me! It's not very often. But it makes me happy and then I buy it if it's within my means. My budget. I pass through Liberdade. I don't look for handbags, but I stumble upon them. Right? Because when I go out on my lunch break and I'm already there, there are a lot of Chinese stores that sell all kinds of counterfeit products, you can imagine. Then I don't go out to buy handbags. I'm usually just there and they call me. Then the ones I like I buy and it doesn't matter if they are fake because I liked that model. You know what I mean?"

(Amanda, female, 56, product manager)

Amanda's experience of consuming fakes seems very similar to the consumption of any other product, as noted in other consumer behaviour studies (Strehlau, 2005; Matos, Ituassu & Rossi, 2007; Perez, Castaño & Quintanilla, 2010). Yet such a pleasant experience is inevitably linked to the fact that Liberdade, like Paulista, is a busy commercial neighbourhood, and is considered clean and safe. São Paulo city centre is quite the opposite. It is crowded and noisy, with a mixed class population and dirty streets. Therefore São Paulo city centre brings these consumers a sense of uncertainty because they see these unfamiliar places as 'otherness' (Douglas, 1966; 1982; 1992; 2013).

In Douglas' (1966; 1982; 1992; 2013) work the otherness sets the social organisation cultural demarcations, helping individuals to deal with uncertainties and thus cross the

boundaries, which means facing the risk of cultural transgressing (Lupton, 1999a). In the next passage Amanda explains how she deals with the uncertainties that arise from the otherness:

> Amanda: "As I told you it is like this. I didn't look specifically for a hidden place where someone told me it was available. And then I went to this joint to look for it. It's hmm when I buy it, it's when I wander the streets there. It's normal, in the markets in Rua da Liberdade, right? I don't go there looking for a smuggler because there is a good source. No. It doesn't work that way. You know what I mean?"

> *(Amanda, female, 56, product manager)*

Focusing on the micro-level of analysis, Dion, Sabri & Guillard's (2014) work shows that individuals negotiate practical boundaries at home so that they can cope with unavoidable symbolic pollution (i.e. untidiness in their daily life).

The quote from Amanda shows that at the macro-social level consumers also negotiate practical boundaries to delimitate their cultural transgression. To Amanda, dealing with an unknown vendor and neighbourhood presents a situation of double uncertainty, because the vendor, in the role of an unknown outsider, is also perceived by her as additional otherness. Therefore, this presents a situation where cultural transgressions are not recommended. On the other hand, millions of consumers buy counterfeits in São Paulo city centre in the region of 25 de Março and are willing to manage the risks that exist in that social environment. Hence it is possible to see in Amanda's passage that cultural understandings of risk in fact underpin consumers' behaviour (Douglas, 1992).

This is not to say that plentiful markets of counterfeits (Gentry et al., 2001) do not posit actual threats to consumers, because they do. Camila stated that she started consuming counterfeits when she moved to another state, Minas Gerais. The consumer culture in her new macro-social context seemed to favour the consumption of counterfeits and hence she decided to play along. She is now living in another state, Espírito Santo, which is closer to Rio de Janeiro, so she can visit her family frequently. Camila usually buys counterfeits in the feirinhas in her hometown. The literal translation of feirinhas is small street market but consumers in Brazil use the term feirinhas to make reference to small scale markets that usually sell counterfeit goods. When asked about a sense of

insecurity while buying counterfeits she explained:

> Camila: "No, never. It's relaxed, [in the feirinhas] you don't see government agents around. There is no control regarding this [counterfeits], so nobody feels threatened to purchase. Only on the street right? When you are buying from a street-seller on the street, then when the municipal agents arrive you feel it, right? Beyond this, it's fine."
>
> Interviewer: "For instance, has it ever happened to you?"
>
> Camila: "Once, in Rio, yes. We were at, how do we say? Going to the camelódromo and buying. Even browsing for trainers. No, it was not trainers. It was a football shirt. A shirt from Barcelona that my kids were asking for. Then the agents arrived and the environment became tense. People rushed to hide their products and you could feel it in Rio, er, then really, I felt bad."
>
> *(Camila, female, 42, teacher)*

Like Amanda, Camila also delimitated the boundaries for cultural transgression by framing the camelódromo of Uruguaiana as otherness after she faced the possibility of personal harm. In addition, Camila's quote reinforces the idea that social groups develop common understandings of risk to make sense of uncertainties. More importantly, Amanda and Camila measured the uncertainty levels in the social environment and thus these quotes exemplify well the risk assessment cycle. Furthermore, as they decided to avoid market context with high levels of uncertainty but continued to consume counterfeits in places where they felt safer their actions show the intersection that happens between the risk cycles.

6.3.1.2 *Considering the uncertainties that arise from social context*

Uncertainties can also arise from the use of consumption objects in daily life. A common risk assessment takes into consideration the implications of using a product in an unfamiliar situation. This is seen in Paula's quote:

> Paula: "I don't know. It has been 20 years I guess. I bought a watch in New York. There in hmm Chinatown. Like the original eh this watch, you may not believe it [but], it's better than a lot of other watches I bought here [in Brazil], from Swatch etc. Because its mechanism is very good. And once I went hmm.. I use it and nobody ever asked. You know? When I travel to São Paulo I use it

because if I'm robbed it only cost me 10 dollars [£7]. Or 15 dollars [£10] I don't know how many years ago. It has paid for itself a long time right? But I consider this watch the one that can be robbed, then I use it for this reason."

(Paula, female, 52, senior lecturer)

Paula travelled to São Paulo regularly because of her doctorate. The university was only accessible to her by bus. This informant lives in Rio de Janeiro, a city known for its high crime rates. Yet in her interview, São Paulo, an unfamiliar place, was put in the position of otherness. Hence Paula evoked a cosmological style that justified the inclusion of counterfeits in her modes of consumption.

Whilst Amanda and Camila were measuring the levels of uncertainty in the neighbourhood and preparing themselves to move to the next risk cycle (i.e. risk management cycle), Paula, in contrast, made a cultural boundary transgression because she considered that the uncertainty levels were so high due to an unfamiliar situation (i.e. taking a bus in an unknown city) that it became acceptable to use a counterfeit watch. She evoked a cosmology where the counterfeit is deemed less risky in terms of financial loss.

Thomas evoked a similar cosmological style regarding financial loss. Yet the consumption of counterfeit watches was very meaningful to him:

Thomas: "Look, I love watches, right? Then, if I find a good replica I go crazy. Because I love it and everything and I use them for fun. And I don't have any problems with guilt or remorse if by chance I'm robbed in the street and they take my watch that cost me 200 [£60] and not 13,000 [Reais][£3,900] right?"

(Thomas, male, 52, architect)

The perception of counterfeits as a safer, somehow advantageous, consumption option is common among consumers in Brazil, and this will be seen as an underlining theme in many passages in this dissertation. This aligns with Belk, Devinney and Eckhardt's (2006) work, which argues that consumers develop a moral rationalisation (i.e. cosmological style) where they claim that the consumption of clothing is acceptable because they do not see any risk of personal harm in it. However in plentiful markets of counterfeits (Gentry et al., 2001) consumers also deal with real threats in the social

environment bringing more granularity to the formation of cosmological styles and perceptions of risk.

For example, Amy believes that counterfeit goods can also put them in a vulnerable position. Amy is Catherine's daughter and she had just moved back to Rio de Janeiro after several years living in São Paulo. Amy said:

> Amy: "Sometimes there is this thing about buying counterfeits. There are people who buy them. But, for example, I could buy something, like a replica. Something that is good but that I wouldn't spend much money on. But if, like, something happens I wouldn't lose much. We have to think like that. I am very… it's because I'm very fearful, right? I always think that if I use something different, that is too flashy, then people will look. Because, like, I catch the bus, then I'm afraid to keep opening my handbag and catch people's attention. [...] But it's because it [the replica] catches people's attention. You may have another thing hmmm [...] But you may have something else that is valuable, that can catch someone's attention, then the guy can start paying attention to you, and then look for an opportunity hmm."
>
> *(Amy, female, 25, salesperson)*

In contrast to Camila, Amy avoids wearing counterfeits in an unfamiliar situation, again taking a bus in an unknown city. Thus Amy's risk assessment prevents her from evolving to the next cycle where she could manage risk in relation to social groups. Pamela also avoids showing off counterfeits on public transport:

> Pamela: "This is fake. He hmm I even wore this Bulor, it's not a Bulova. It's Bulgari, Bulgarei right? It is erm… everyone thinks it is a Bulgari. Even I when I catch a bus I take it off. Got it? It works perfectly."
>
> Interviewer: "Please explain something to me, why do you take it off when you catch the bus?"
>
> Pamela: "Because of robbery. I live in Rio de Janeiro, Niterói."
>
> Interviewer: "Yes, but if it is not an original product?"
>
> Pamela: "It cost me 200 Reais [£60]."
>
> Interviewer: "And where did you buy it?"
>
> Pamela: "And this part is all made of silver [showing her jewellery]. I'm the type of person that no matter what, see, I always look smart right?"

Interviewer: "Right."

Pamela: "I really use trousers, t-shirts, jeans, all this, but here in Rio de Janeiro you try eh you try to be as casual as possible, you know? Because, this one is original but also nobody knows Armani, right? So nobody wants this handbag. Someone will be interested if it's a Louis Vuitton. Then people will be interested, got it?"

(Pamela, female, 62, door-to-door vendor)

In this very interesting quote, first Pamela evokes a cosmology that is the opposite to Paula and Thomas, who deemed the use of counterfeits less risky in terms of financial loss. She is not willing to lose the same amount of money Thomas thinks he can spare it. Furthermore, Pamela explained that her counterfeit watch could potentially draw a robber's attention putting her in danger of personal harm, while a genuine-item, from a less well-known brand, was safer to use on the bus because she assumed that robbers would be ill-informed. Pamela showed a similar perception of risk to Amy (page 165) and Amanda (page 162). However her risk assessment merged with risk management as she decided to hide her counterfeit watch temporarily. This also exemplifies the intersection that happens between the two risk cycles.

Altogether the quotes show that in the risk assessment cycle consumers measure the uncertainty levels in the social environment not only considering the risk from market context but also from social context. In addition they show that the move from the risk management cycle progresses naturally as consumers decide to take their chances in the social environment.

6.3.2 The Second Cycle of Risk

It emerged in the analysis that in the second cycle of risk consumers' social practices aim to reduce the uncertainties they face in their everyday consumption experiences around counterfeits. This cycle contemplates consumers' active interactions in the social environment and their relations with social groups. It is at this moment that consumers evoke cosmological styles to express their experiences in society (Douglas, 1982; 1992; 2013) and this is reflected in the objects they consume and their use in helping consumers to reflect and communicate their social identities (Slater, 2003, p.153).

Consumers then develop risk management practices that can be grouped into three specific risk situations: retail outlets, counterfeits and social groups. These risk management situations are discussed below.

6.3.2.1 Risk management practices in the relation with retail outlets

In the previous section, the analysis revealed that after the first appraisal of risk consumers developed practical boundaries, avoiding places and situations where they perceived the uncertainties to be too high. Progressing to the second cycle, consumers explore riskier situations employing a variety of practices until they can reduce the risks to within their tolerance level. The following quote exemplifies this transitional moment from where risks are taken into consideration (i.e. the first cycle of risk) to a phase where risk situations are explored with great care (i.e. the second cycle of risk).

Paul told me that he had bought an excellent replica that "even came in a bag from a store that sells imported goods". Following that he was asked:

> Interviewer: "Do you think there is any official retailer that is selling at Uruguaiana?
>
> Paul: "Fake or robbed? I don't know. I know that there are a lot of products that come from thefts."
>
> Interviewer: "Don't you worry about that?"
>
> Paul: "Well, I do. Because suddenly you want to buy something, and then someone shows up offering you that same product and that person doesn't have a stand there. You have to suspect. [...] Ah, the risk there is very high. That's why you need to buy from stands that have a personal card. Stands where you are used to shopping. Got it? It's that thing where you took the risk the first time and it worked. You return a second time and then you become a regular client. You can also find original products being sold there."
>
> *(Paul, male, 25, junior analyst)*

Paul's quote confirms that once consumers decide to buy counterfeits they first try to mitigate the risk by comparing the available markets. Following that they start to evaluate the risks inside their chosen retail outlet. In contrast to Amanda and Camila, who opt for smaller markets, Paul's approach to shopping at the camelódromo of

Uruguaiana is quite strategic. Like other interviewees (e.g. Camila, Kate, James and Simon), Paul draws a distinction between dealers balancing location, size and business practices. He assesses each vendor's performance in great detail. Vendors inside the camelódromo are seen as more reliable because of their fixed location.

The second parameter is the size and appearance, as seen in Kate's quote in the previous section. Thus, ideally, the consumer gives preference to stands over stalls. In reality, there are many more stalls than stands at the camelódromo of Uruguaiana (field observation). Beyond the privileged location, the "stand centres" do not have stalls; most of them do not even have street-sellers outside (Figure 6.3). This could be an additional reason why some consumers prefer the "stand centres", like Amanda (page 161 and 162) and Catherine (page 160). All vendors have a fixed position in the "stand centres" and thus consumers have one less risk to consider.

After selecting the seller following the "safety" ranking, stands, stalls and street-sellers, which also circulate inside the camelódromo of Uruguaiana, consumers carefully evaluate the seller's business practices. They take into consideration how vendors pack their products (seen Paul's quote in page 167). Then they look at their exchange policy. Preferably this is a no fuss policy, as Joanne explained:

> Joanne: "No, both accept returns. But then they push back [at licensed retailers] you know? But then at Uruguaiana once the shopkeeper told me: 'ah love, it's broken, no problem, here is another one, bye, bye'. They want to get rid of you quickly. The important thing is that you bought from them so they can hit their targets and get your money. Their commission, you know? That's it. I find it very different between them. Sometimes they want to resolve your problem quickly, whilst at licensed retailers like Casas Bahia and Ponto Frio [Brazil's largest retailers] they keep you waiting: 'hey, calm down, we are going to try and process your return, and blah blah blah'. Then they don't have the product in stock and they keep you waiting: 'So, you come back another day'; and then the time you spend and how much you spend on transport to get there. You know what I mean?"

> *(Joanne, female, 28, housewife)*

Paul explained what he considers to be the best business practice. In the quote below he talks about the risk he took buying from an unknown vendor and the trouble he had returning pirated video-games that were defective:

> Paul: "No. No. He thought that hmm and told me 'Ah, no, you have swapped for blank ones'. I said no, 'I bought them here'. But would I have bought from a stand. I would have bought today and I could have returned it tomorrow. Lesson learnt."

> Interviewer: "Did you know the vendor?"

> Paul: "No, it was a vendor I was not familiar with. It had a good price and a wider variety. Would I have bought from the vendor I'm used to [pause], I even have a fidelity card that they stamp and for every ten purchases you get one for free. Then you are often there, with the stamp, they make no fuss to exchange [the defective product]."

> *(Paul, male, 25, junior analyst)*

Paul's quote shows a risk mediation strategy between product range and vendor trustworthiness. Pirated media is a low-value product and thus he was willing to take some risks. Paul's quote also shows that some vendors offer additional services such as a fidelity card. Altogether it is possible to identify a peculiar institutionalisation of the field, but this discussion is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

It is also possible to see that risk management practice becomes a learning process that relies heavily on social interaction:

> Matt: "In terms of garments I don't know if you can find original clothing or not. Maybe you can find it but I think it's probably a minority hmm. The majority of clothes there are counterfeits. There is something very interesting that grasps your attention if you immerse yourself in that environment. It is that there is a certain differentiation among vendors who sell this type of product right? They are not exactly the same products. They have different sources. So there are stands selling t-shirts, right? Extremely hmmm… That are extremely similar copies. With such quality… very high quality in that universe of counterfeit products. But there are also very poor copies. Then you start earning people's confidence, I mean the vendors, and then you start chatting with them and then you start getting closer to them. Then you start learning the ones who sell the best quality products. It's very interesting.

> *(Matt, male, 31, lecturer)*

In the following quote, Paul also mentions the benefit of developing a relationship with vendors:

Paul: "Always at the end of the day over there. After the 25th [of the month]. Then you start browsing, you start kind of [pause] There is always new merchandise arriving, you know? Sometimes you go to the stand and you are already familiar with them and then you make a reservation. You go there and then 'There is some new cool stuff coming for you, I'll save some for you' and then it's there reserved waiting for you."

(Paul, male, 25, junior analyst)

In both quotes the initial risk management practice of finding a trustworthy vendor to minimise uncertainties brought additional benefits to consumers as they gained access to better counterfeit goods. Hence balancing risks can evolve from practical actions to meaningful consumption experiences over time. However developing a good relationship with vendors is just the first step. Once consumers have decided to consume a counterfeit version of a product they start another sequence of risk management practices by carefully evaluating the many options offered in the markets. These practices are discussed below.

6.3.2.2 Risk management practices in relation to products

Performance risk (Bush, Bloch & Campbell, 1993) is an underlying idea in Gentry, et al.'s (2001, p.264) model of consumer choice, including counterfeits where they use the trade-off price vs. quality to explain consumers' choice among counterfeits. In the model, quality is measured in terms of similarities to the original and, what the authors call heuristics parameters: country of origin and retail outlet. These heuristics parameters were discussed previously in chapter 2 (page 31) while matters of similarity will be covered later in this section. In respect of price several studies point out similar results: the higher the price the better the reproduction (Wilcox, Kim & Sen, 2009; Han, Nunes & Drèze, 2010; Perez, Castaño & Quintanilla, 2010; Jiang & Cova, 2012 to cite a few). However when considering consumers' perception of risk more carefully it is possible to see that price is used for more than simply assessing the quality of the reproduction.

At the start, Catherine and Amy commented on trade-off price vs. quality; the latter was measured by Amy in terms of product durability. Showing their handbags during

interview, they explained:

> Amy: "Sometimes you want to buy a handbag, original, replica or fake, to show off. Sometimes the handbag is not very good, like this one [shows a handbag]. These replicas last a long time."

> Catherine: "See, that handbag over there, it's a replica and I bought it there at 25 [de Março], it cost me 400 Reais [£120]."

> Interviewer: "Interesting"

> Catherine: "See, it's a replica, you know, it's not a handbag. Ah, if it was, ah hmm counterfeit it would have cost 140 [£42], 150 Reais [£45]."

> *(Amy, female, 25, salesperson and Catherine, female, 53, scout for TV shows and advertising)*

Further on in the interview Catherine returned to the point and explained:

> Catherine: "You need courage to use hmmm something that people will always have a question mark right? For instance, a Chanel bag, I think it's more difficult for you to get away with using a fake, because whoever uses Chanel bags has a lot of money, because a Chanel bag costs 5,000 Reais [£1,500] right? You wouldn't buy a Chanel bag to use daily. You have a Chanel bag to go to a party, and those who attend these parties know if your bag is fake or not. Ah, a Chanel bag, I think it's trickier, you know. If you use a fake you will always feel uncertain if people will notice it. That other bag it's not a problem, this one [shows the replica] anyone could have an original or fake. How much does it cost a handbag like that? 1,000 Reais [£300], maybe?"

> *(Catherine, female, 53, scout for TV shows and advertising)*

In the latest quote it is possible to see that the price charged for an original-item is also used for comparison, as well as the prices among different levels of counterfeits. Consequently, Catherine perceived the original-item's high price as a source of uncertainty and therefore she delimitated her boundaries deeming the consumption of counterfeits from a particular brand a cultural transgression.

However many items can be incorporated into consumers' everyday lives if their quality is up to expectations. Showing her handbag, Catherine challenged the interviewer:

> Catherine: "And this one? What do you think? Do you think it is a fake?"

Interviewer: "No."

Catherine: "I don't think right?"

Interviewer: "No."

Catherine: "But it is."

Amy: "It's because you need to know how to choose the bag. Well, there are some [handbags] that are, hmm, that look original. Then if you have many that look original, so everyone will think they are all originals."

Catherine: "I use it anyway. Like, if they are not that flashy, if they are, you know? Discrete. I use it anyway. No problem. Because I think people will always wonder. Unless it's a person that really understands. That will examine the lining, the bottom. Then the person will hmmm."

Interviewer: "What do you mean the bottom?"

Catherine: "Well, I don't know. The stitches, the zipper, I don't know what, you know? The person will notice that something is not right. But besides that I don't think people will notice [the difference]."

(Amy, female, 25, salesperson and Catherine, female, 53 years, scout for TV shows and advertising)

In this quote Catherine plays the uncertainty in her favour and the monetary logic fades into the consumers' risk management practice, which, most of all, aims to avoid anomalies. If it were just about economic value five counterfeit handbags that cost, presumably, a thousand Reais each in the end would sum five thousand Reais, the cost Catherine claims for the high priced original-item. However it is not. It is about incorporating the otherness into everyday life, and finding a way to avoid symbolic and social pollution (Lupton, 1999b).

The price of original items is only seen as an anomaly when it poses a threat to the consumer's integrity, in terms of individual and social identity, as Catherine prefers not be seen as a consumer of counterfeits. Hence through careful boundary work, deciding which item and how many to consume, Catherine avoids anomalies because collectively the handbags bring symbolic meaning but individually they are unlikely to raise suspicions. Paula (page 163) also uses some economic rationality to justify the incorporation of counterfeits into her modes of consumption. However Catherine's risk management practice is considerably more nuanced.

Consumers' boundary work is indeed fine-tuned as consumers scrutinise counterfeits in greater detail than discussed in the literature. A lot is said about consumers' search for similarities in counterfeit goods (Hoe, Hogg & Hart, 2003; Strehlau, 2005; Gentry, Putrevu & Shultz, 2006; Jiang & Cova, 2012) and consumers in fact invest a significant amount of time learning about the original items. Every little detail counts, as explained by Sofia, who discussed how to spot a low-grade counterfeit Louis Vuitton from a distance:

> Sofia: "In many counterfeits you see around, one of the main details is the handbag handles; their finishing is too red. You know that bright red [giggles] used on old floor tiles? It's like that. Then that… and all that just jumps in your eyes and you immediately notice that a thousand miles away that it is not, not [original], you know? [loud laugh]."
>
> *(Sofia, female, 50, mid-size business owner)*

Sofia was talking about the red substance that is used to glue together the leather handles of the Louis Vuitton handbags. She compared the colour she saw in poor reproductions to a peculiar reddish colour used to dye concrete, which was widely used on the external areas of working class houses in Brazil in the 1970s. Jason was also very thorough in analysing the watch he received as a gift.

> Jason: "My watch is fake."
>
> Interviewer: "Ok."
>
> Jason: "It is. It is a Luminor Panerai. This watch costs more than 16,000 dollars [£10,240]. My boss gave it to me."
>
> Interviewer: "But did he tell you that it is fake?"
>
> Jason: "Yes, he did. He even told me that this is, hmm eh hmm, because in the world of counterfeit watches, it may sound incredible, but there is a whole range. It is divided into types and this one is supposed to belong to a certain type, one of the highest quality ones. Because, despite being a fake, it is fully functional. Perfectly functional. This here… if it stops it is probably the chronometer [showing the watch]. All of the controls here work perfectly, which doesn't usually happen on fakes."
>
> *(Jason, male, 33, audio technician)*

However, consumers' scrutiny goes beyond a bilateral comparison between counterfeits

and genuine-items. In fact the comparison is multi-dimensional, as consumers invest a great deal of time in learning and later examining the internal features of both products.

> Antony: "Ah, because when you browse a counterfeit product, if the person is experienced in purchasing, the person will notice that the product is a fake. Either it's the seam or the internal lining, you know? There is always that little edge, oops it's not original. This one is not original. Or it is the internal tag that is not properly sewn, you know?"
>
> Interviewer: "Do you pay attention to all of these details when you are purchasing?"
>
> Antony: "Everything, everything, everything. You need to check the sewing, everything."
>
> *(Antony, male, 31, hair stylist)*

Such attention to the internal features is applied to several products, like the handbags in Catherine's previous quote and sports trainers in Allan's quote below:

> Allan: "Right, you usually have to browse and inspect right? You feel by the… for instance, in trainers, it's the stitches. You inspect the finishing of the seam and the type of sole. Then it is this type of, ah… it is usually in inspecting the small details that you identify if it is a fake. The tag, usually the tag is that way. It's one of the most difficult parts to counterfeit, you know?"
>
> *(Allan, male, 30, civil servant)*

Comments about the importance of inspecting the internal tags, lining and finishing show that consumers carefully examine counterfeit objects, with the aim of both finding the best reproduction as well as identifying any "hidden" aspect in the object that would cause symbolic pollution.

The scrutiny of counterfeit goods is a risk management practice that also helps consumers to minimise deception regarding the product's performance. Bloch, Bush & Campbell's (1993) idea of performance risks was developed more than three decades ago, but apart from a few studies in the consumer culture field (Perez, Castaño & Quintanilla, 2010 and Kuever, 2014) there is not much in the literature to explain how consumers actually decide which counterfeits represent a risk that is worth taking. As seen in the previous chapter (Chap. 2) most studies have tried to understand product

performance in terms of the idea of quality, a very loose concept that is primarily discussed in terms of economic value and material durability. This concept was later combined with a variety of psychological and marketing constructs, such as country of origin, mainly influenced by Gentry et al's (2001) work.

In the data collected for this thesis performance can be moderated around simple risk management practices such as in Elliot and Kate's quotes below:

> Elliot: "I've been to Niterói today and there were some camelôs [street vendors] selling replica watches. Obviously if you compare them side-by-side and inspect them carefully you'll notice the replica. But, clubbing at night, nobody would notice the replica that cost 20 Reais [£6]."
>
> *(Elliot, male, 42, advertiser)*
>
> Kate: "Ah, how can I say? The ones bought at stores last much longer than the ones bough at camelôs. The ones from camelôs last a bit. Let's say, if the one bought at a store lasts twelve hours the one bought at the camelô lasts six hours. But when you go out at night nobody will wear make up for twelve hours you know? So you can use it."
>
> *(Kate, female, 25, small business owner)*

In these quotes counterfeits are chosen according to consumers' expectations of performance in terms of durability. Therefore they consider how long they will use their products thus lifespan of the original-items is irrelevant for them. To Elliot time is short and the street-seller is convenient. While for Kate the makeup only needs to last a night out. Just to recall, the previous section showed that street-sellers are the least trustworthy vendors and they usually offer low-grade counterfeits. Nevertheless, risk is mediated by controlling product usage.

Consumers' risk management practices can, however, aim to mediate the lower quality of many counterfeits. Antony's risk management practice is quite simple but effective:

> Antony: "Perfumes don't last as long. You wear a perfume, hmm, that has the same fragrance. But you apply it in the morning, then you need to carry it in your bag and then apply it again at lunch time."
>
> *(Antony, male, 31, hair stylist)*

Increasing the frequency of use was Antony's solution to preventing the risk of bad odour. Regulating the frequency was also the solution for James and Simon. Asked about positive experiences with counterfeits, James explained:

> James: "Positive? Well only clothing. I also buy shirts that last long. And I don't use them very often, only on weekends, so they last longer, and I don't wash them often. They last longer. But I don't think you can buy trainers there [at Uruguaiana]. Trainers, I think you need to buy them at stores, because they are not good over there. They don't last long, two, three months."
>
> *(James, male, 25, unemployed)*

Meanwhile, when asked what he does when his counterfeits get old Simon stated:

> Simon: "Shirts, when they get old, I donate to someone. Or sometimes I just leave them in my wardrobe for a while and then I bin them, you know? Sometimes, in my case, they last a bit longer because I don't use them often, you know? I use [the shirt] over a weekend, then after some time I use it again, because if I use it very often it won't last long for sure."
>
> *(Simon, male, 24, office clerk)*

In both quotes, product performance is managed by controlling their usage. Only when it is not possible to balance the risk, in the case of trainers, does James avoid the consumption of counterfeits.

However what it is at stake in this second tactic is product integrity. Counterfeits must be at their best to avoid giving clues regarding their true nature. While some of the interviewees saw in the counterfeits the opportunity to acquire new products frequently (see the first quote from Amanda in the next chapter page 198), others took extremely good care of their counterfeit goods. For instance, Thomas serviced his counterfeit watches:

> Interviewer: "When you buy counterfeits and you don't want them anymore, how do you discard them?"
>
> Thomas: "No, I, er throw, hmm, You know what? I think I never got rid of any because they've never worn out. I store them because suddenly I think: 'I'm going to keep it and fix it later'. Something like that happened before. These ones here [shows the watches] ran out of battery. But I wanted to take them to São Paulo where I bought them from a nice lady. I called her and she said: 'Just

mail them to me'. I mailed them and she serviced them, replaced the batteries and they came back as good as new. So, hmm."

Interviewer: "You mean the counterfeits?"

Thomas: "Yes, the fakes. You know? I paid for the postage, hmm, how much was it? Right, it was 80 Reais[£24] for all three watches. And they are as good as new. You know? She replaced the wristbands and everything. They look great!"

(Thomas, male, 52, architect)

Thomas stated that a good replica is difficult to find (as seen in his previous quote in page 164); therefore he takes particularly good care of his collection.

Looking in more detail into risk management practices in relation to consumption experiences it is possible to see that consumers of counterfeits inevitably incorporate otherness—the counterfeits—into their modes of consumption. They also need to guarantee the integrity of the object to prevent symbolic and social pollution (Lupton, 1999b) along the way. First, consumers allow counterfeits to cross the established cultural demarcations by selecting the purest reproduction that they can find, paying particular attention to the internal finishing as discussed above. Once consumers incorporate counterfeits into their everyday experiences it becomes essential to look after these objects' integrity. Otherwise they are pushed outside consumers' cultural boundaries, returning to their condition of otherness (Douglas, 1966). In Thomas's quote this is made clear by the fact that he keeps his counterfeit watches impeccable and as new as possible. While Simon makes some effort to control the fabric's durability he does not think twice about donating his shirt if it looks worn, meaning that it is symbolically dirty (page 176).

6.3.2.3 Risk management practices in relation to social groups

Cultural bias challenges the autonomy of the oppositional social group and thus individuals need to justify to themselves and others the limitations that society has placed on them (Douglas, 1992). As seen in the findings, consumers of counterfeits believe that they can wisely manage the risk in their modes of consumption. However

they need to justify the non-consumers' risk cultural bias that frames counterfeits as unsafe, impure, products; therefore seeing this type of consumption as improper and, consequently, the consumers as morally questionable. Hence consumers of counterfeits evoke cosmological styles to explain their cultural boundary transgressions and defend their integrity.

It has emerged in the findings that consumers justified their transgressions and tried to depollute their practices. Thus to deal with society's definition of counterfeits as dirty objects they came up with a cosmological style in which they linked the consumption of counterfeits with acts of altruism. Paul explained:

> Paul: "You don't want to think:'Ah, I'm taking someone's job because I'm buying counterfeits'. I'm giving someone else a job on the other end. If I buy at a [licensed] store, the street-vendor won't be selling anymore. It's that conflict, right? But because I'm a good guy I buy from both."
>
> *(Paul, male, 25, junior analyst)*

Paula also believes that she can justify the consumption of counterfeits as an act of altruism. She does charity work in an orphanage for girls who are victims of domestic abuse. In fact, Paula donates quite a lot. For instance she donated 500 Reais [£150] just for the Christmas party. Paula explained the reason why she donates counterfeits:

> Paula: "I go to the supermarket and do a grocery shop for the institution, so I can't afford to buy original products, which are very expensive, right? The kids need food, medicine, right? They need help to buy school supplies, and other things, but I can't afford it. You need to take advantage… you are buying in bulk, got it? But you are going to impress with the appearance. That's the key, right? The fake fulfils the kids' desire to have the product, show off and have that specific brand, I think. So, the kids try to ask 'Ah, I want that one from Ben 10', 'I want that...' I don't know what. There was something themed with little girls hmm… Ah, I think it was Powerpuff Girls. Then you try to buy something similar."
>
> *(Paula, female, 52, senior lecturer)*

In both quotes it is possible to see that consumers are claiming their autonomy and exploiting the notion of the 'ideal person' (Douglas, 1970) to justify their cultural transgression. In fact, the notion of the 'ideal person' is used by individuals to show

their commitment to their social group. Interestingly, these consumers of counterfeits use the same artifice to pledge their lack of commitment to their social group, and society at large. Thus the underlying idea in their cosmological style is that despite their "dirty" actions as a person they transcend the risks of pollution through their good intentions.

Considering that consumers of counterfeits form a social group—a loosely shaped community—they need to defend themselves from other groups, not only because they cross cultural boundaries and include counterfeits in the modes of consumption, but also because they need to make it clear that the other groups face no risk of contamination because of their practices. In Antony's cosmological styles seen in the quote bellow it is possible to understand why it is important to consumers to protect their integrity.

> Interviewer: "Have you ever received a compliment for using counterfeits?"
>
> Antony: "Ah, many. Often from women! Women compliment a lot, the style. They compliment because they want one [counterfeit postman bag]. They always ask where I bought it. Ah, I erm how can I say? Sometimes I lie. Sometimes I say it was a friend's gift. Because in some places there are certain people who want to criticise. So, over time you start learning not to be naive. The ones who ask to praise I always give them tips. I always tell them how I got it. And the ones who ask just for asking or to criticise I say it was a friend's or an in-law's gift or that a client bought it for me, got it? I never tell them where it came from and I also don't let the person handle it. They can only look at it when I'm using it, but they can't handle it."

(Antony, male, 31, hair stylist)

In this quote it is possible to see, once more, that social interactions are mediated by trust, as seen in the consumers' relationship with the vendors in the previous subsection. When dealing with a trustworthy person Antony is generous, even sharing his source, but otherwise he resorts to a white lie to protect his integrity. This shows that consumers draw an invisible line between those that deserve to know that they consume counterfeits and the others that do not. Hence it is possible to say that the boundary work they do to include/exclude one counterfeit in their modes of consumption is also in place when it comes to managing the risks in their social groups.

Consumers might consider the possibility of deceiving others that are not so close to

them in their social group. However when this cannot be managed they consider the possibility of leaving the group. When asked about her reaction if someone at a party asked if she were wearing a counterfeit Catherine explained:

> Catherine: "Well, I would feel embarrassed [loud and long laugh]."
>
> Interviewer: "Would you feel embarrassed?"
>
> Catherine: "Yes, I think I would. I don't feel embarrassed to use it because I know that people can't identify it, right? But I would feel embarrassed to say: 'Yes, it's a replica'. You are using a replica, and you are [pause] Yes, I think I would."
>
> Interviewer: "Would that affect your willingness to consume these products?"
>
> Catherine: "No."
>
> Interviewer: "And what about the people at the party?"
>
> Catherine: "I would probably never face those people again."
>
> *(Catherine, female, 53, scout for TV shows and advertising)*

Catherine's reaction was not the only one that emerged when consumers faced the need to defend their own integrity. The findings show that asserting their honesty is a recurring action. For example Kate stated:

> Kate: "I would say: 'Yes, it is counterfeit'; because I'm not embarrassed about what I use. If I decided to buy it, I know I run the risk of erm… Or if someone asks where I bought it, or how much it cost, erm I would just respond."
>
> *(Kate, female, 25, small business owner)*

Arguments such as that seen in Kate's quote represent only the consumers' first level of moral rationalisation. Other interviewees argued that everybody consumes counterfeits, implying they are as wrong as anybody else. This was explained by Matt, Camila and Simon as well as many other interviewees. Another common argument was that the police or the government is corrupt, implying they should then be excused from their own mistakes, as described by Pamela, Thomas, Sofia and other interviewees.

However, consumers can navigate from their initial moral rationalisation to cosmological styles where they claim autonomy from the oppositional social group as

an individual's right. Paul's quote navigates from another initial moral rationalisation "we don't have money for originals", including the other in the action, to a cosmological style where he defines himself as a bold, courageous person.

> Interviewer: "Do your friends know you buy counterfeits?"
>
> Paul: "No erm [giggles]. They know. The term counterfeit is not used anymore."
>
> Interviewer: "Ok, then replica."
>
> Paul: "No, often you are with friends who don't know. People can't distinguish. And nobody is so indiscreet, being your friend, to ask: 'So, is this shirt fake?'"
>
> Interviewer: "Right, that was the next question, ok. So, if someone asked you if the product you are wearing is fake, what would you say?"
>
> Paul: "Ah, I would confirm. I would say: 'Mate, do you think I have the money to buy this? Original? Are you nuts? You don't have either."
>
> Interviewer: "You wouldn't feel embarrassed then?"
>
> Paul: "Never. I've already spread out. If someone asks, I say: 'girl my replica is very well made'. I'm over it. It needs to be in your blood if you buy those products, because if you are unsecure, you completely lose your credit."
>
> *(Paul, male, 25, junior analyst)*

Paul's argument "it needs to be in your blood" claims his individual right to consume what he wants but also indicates that he is up to defying society risk cultural bias. Antony also defended his right to consume counterfeits by defining himself and his friends as courageous, audacious people.

> Antony: It depends. From the people I know who wear counterfeits, including the person that gave you my contact, 99% of them are very audacious and have a sense of style that is mega-ultra sensational. Understand? So it doesn't matter if people wear fakes or originals. What shows their personality, their presence is their good taste.
>
> *(Antony, male, 31, hair stylist)*

Irony is another way to claim autonomy from the oppositional social group as an individual's right. Catherine and the daughter Amy explained:

> Catherine: "We here only own branded products you know? [laughs] Only branded stuff."

Amy: "We disguise them well."

Catherine: "Yes, indeed we disguise them well."

Interviewer: [giggles]

Catherine: "That's true. It's a pity there are no fake cars, right? [laughs]"

Interviewer: [laughs]

Catherine: "Otherwise I would own a Mercedes."

(Amy, female, 25 , salesperson and Catherine, female, 53, scout for TV shows and advertising)

Thomas is another consumer who resorted to irony to claim his right to include counterfeits in his modes of consumption and protect his integrity. Thomas stated:

Thomas: "I travelled to Ecuador once to visit a friend and I wore this watch I had. It was a replica of a Breitling from a series inspired by Bentley. I love this car! By the way, I love English cars, more than Rolls Royces. Jaguar and Bentley are my favourites, and coincidently they are English. But I had this Breitling and it was really [loud laugh] Mar [laugh] ve [laugh] llous. I was wearing one at a dinner. I know some wealthy people in Ecuador. One of them was a consul here in Brazil and everything. He was with his brother, family and other people. His brother is a former minister and he approached me and said 'what a nice watch'. I said 'it is indeed [sounding ironic]. Do you want to try it? It will look better on your wrist than mine'. He wore it and said: 'Virgin Mary but how much did you pay for it?' I said 'A fortune! I paid a fortune' [laughing]. I was making fun of him. He, still wearing it, said: 'Don't you want to sell it?' I said 'Look if I were to sell it I would be robbing you because this is a cheap replica'. Then he cried with laughter. He said, 'I can't believe it! So do you gift it to me?' I said I wouldn't [interrupts laughing]. His appreciation was a compliment that I wanted to bring back home with me. Got it? So there is this playful thing that doesn't happen with others [originals]."

(Thomas, male, 52, architect)

Altogether, consumers' risk management practices in relation to social groups point out that in the formation of their cosmological styles consumers first aim to depollute their practices through acts of altruism and by including "the others" in their transgression (i.e.: everybody consumes, the authorities are also dirty, too expensive for us). Then consumers claim autonomy from the oppositional social group as an individual's right, defining themselves as courageous and ironic people.

6.4 SUMMARY

This chapter shows how consumers' cultural understandings of risk influence their consumption of counterfeits and social interactions. First it presents the plentiful market of counterfeits in Brazil and further argues that counterfeits are not only easy to find but also adapted to the local taste. Then the analysis shows that besides the offers of genuine and inspired items the Brazilian market has a wide variety of retail outlets offering counterfeits.

Further the analysis and interpretation of the findings lend support to the idea that risk in the consumption of counterfeits works as two interconnected risk cycles. In the first cycle, the risk assessment cycle, consumers measure the uncertainty levels in the social environment. In the following cycle, the risk management cycle, consumers' social practices aim to reduce the uncertainties they face in their everyday consumption experiences with counterfeits.

First, in the risk assessment cycle the analysis points out that consumers evaluate the uncertainties in the social environment taking into consideration two aspects of the macro-social context: market context (e.g. the areas surrounding marketplaces selling counterfeits) and their micro social context. The findings give convincing evidence that as consumers gain trust in the social environment they progress naturally to the risk management cycle where risky situations are assessed more carefully.

In the risk management cycle consumers explore riskier situations employing a variety of practices to reduce the consumption risks to within their tolerance level. Risk management situations can largely be grouped into three categories: retail outlets, products and social groups. Risk management practices in retail outlets are grounded in building a trusting relationship with the vendors. This practice can guarantee access to the best and newest products. With regard to counterfeits the analysis shows that risk is managed by investing time. It is not unusual for consumers to take their time to scout the whole retail outlet and carefully scrutinise products inside out before committing to a purchase. Lastly their risk management practices expand to their social groups where they need to depollute their practices and defend their right to consume counterfeits.

The importance of materiality in the consumption of counterfeits is investigated in the next chapter.

Chapter 7: Findings: Materiality: the Forms of Materialisation in which Consumers of Counterfeits Engage

This chapter explores emergent materiality themes in the data. First, it discusses the reasons why fashion allows many objects to be materialised in combination with counterfeits. Then, it explains the emergence of an interlaced process of materialisation in the consumption of counterfeits. Following, the analyses explore the three forms of materialisation that emerge from the data: conductive materialisation, sensorial materialisation, and enhanced materialisation.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The fashion industry creates fashion ensembles that are concrete representations of the fashion world (Barthes, 1990[1967]). Consumers then read these fashion ensembles to (re)create their own combinations of fashion items. However, as seen in chapter four (page 110), fashion ensembles are only blueprints because consumers creatively combine a myriad of fashion objects that can be genuine-items, counterfeits or inspired-items, to materialise the meanings they desire from the fashion world. In putting together their fashion ensembles, consumers of counterfeits develop a deep material engagement with their fashion objects. Despite that, there is little empirical research on how the materialisation of meanings occurs when consumers interact with fashion objects that are aesthetically similar but materiality distinct (e.g. plastic instead of leather, same shape with slightly different ornaments, different colour hues and so on).

Therefore this chapter aims to investigate how consumers' deep material interactions with fashion objects influence the materialisation of meanings and practices in their creation of fashion ensembles. In doing so, this chapter addresses how consumers of counterfeits engage in processes of materialisation to support their consumption of counterfeit fashion goods.

First, this chapter discusses how consumers' material interactions with fashion objects can be investigated in line with the latest theories of materiality. Next, it explains the emergence of an interlaced process of materialisation in the consumption of counterfeits and presents its graphical representation. Then, it moves on to an analysis of the

interlaced process of materialisation and its three foundational forms: conductive materialisation, sensorial materialisation, and enhanced materialisation. Finally, it provides a summary of the findings presented.

7.2 INTERLACED PROCESS OF MATERIALISATION

Materiality emerged in the data as deeply significant across the themes. This has already been observed in the previous chapter where consumers considered the material aspects of counterfeits to manage the risks in their consumption. For instance, Allan explained that with regard to sports trainers he inspects the seam and the type of sole (page 174), while Antony checks the handbag lining and how the internal tag is sewn (page 174). Catherine also checks the lining as well as the hardware and the bottom of the handbag (page 172). Hence for further theoretical development, this chapter puts the materiality of goods at the centre of the analysis and looks for new understandings about the consumption of counterfeit goods.

The analysis draws on the latest theories of materiality that are grounded on the concept of objectification. Objectification is an on-going process where the self is externalised while the object is re-contextualised and the resulting meanings are internalised by the subject and embodied into the object (Miller, 1987; 2005). Recent studies on materiality pay good attention to the embodiment of meanings, which follows an object's re-contextualisation, therefore extending the concept of objectification. Consequently, the concept of material embodiment has evolved from the materialisation of cultural ideas (Tilley, 2006) towards the notion of productive material interaction. Productive material interaction is an unfolding chain of interactions not only between the subject and the finished object but also between the subject and the object's material components (Ingold, 2007; Dant, 2008; Woodward, 2011; Borgerson, 2013). In the examples above, Allan, Antony and Claire interacted with the material components of the counterfeits.

However, such productive material interaction requires a new approach to investigate the materialisation of meanings in the consumption of counterfeits. Ingold (2011; 2012) agrees that material engagement unfolds into a chain of interactions and further suggests

that this chain looks more like a meshwork of materials. This is an interesting approach. However it contemplates only the material interactions around one object and its material components. Knappett (2011) agrees with Ingold (2011; 2012) in that, up close, material interactions do look like a meshwork of materials. However, the author claims that, at a distance, material engagements look as if an object were interlaced with many others. Hence, the meshwork of materials fuses into objects and further connects into networks (Knappett, 2011). These networks are called webs of materials and finished objects in this thesis to avoid confusion with the actor-network theory approach (Latour, 2005).

Webs of materials and finished objects are an important idea for this thesis because they allows for expanding the analysis of materiality towards the combination of fashion objects used by consumers of counterfeits to create their fashion ensembles. In keeping with this idea, the analysis follows the 'line of action and materials' (Knappett, 2011, p.47) where consumers draw their own web combining many fashion objects and these objects' material components.

The findings yielded by this analysis provide convincing evidence that consumers of counterfeits engage in an interlaced process of materialisation where different materials and several finished objects are objectified in combination. This interlaced process of materialisation works as a cobweb of meanings and practices that support consumers' creation of fashion ensembles.

It also emerged from the data that the interlaced process of materialisation has three foundational forms: conductive materialisation, sensorial materialisation, and enhanced materialisation. Furthermore, the analysis shows that the interlaced process of materialisation is a dynamic process wherein consumers' material interaction lies at the core of their action, as illustrated by the figure 7.1:

Figure 7.1
Interlaced Process of Materialisation
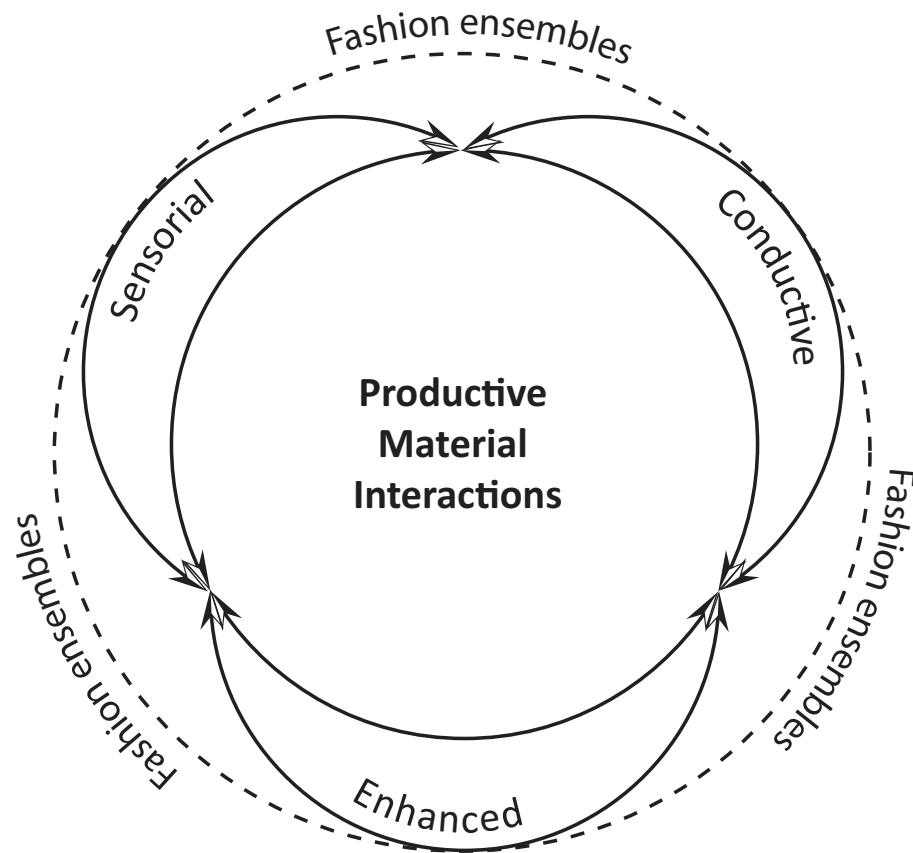
Source: Visual representation created by the author of this thesis.

In the centre of figure 7.1 lies the productive material interaction. The three interlocking circles represent the forms of materialisation. Each circle indicates an action that is key to each form of materialisation. The key action in conductive materialisation is composition; in sensorial materialisation it is fragmentation; and in enhanced materialisation it is amalgamation. These actions create the flows of materials and finished objects in the web of fashion ensembles that constitutes the consumption of counterfeits. The external dotted circle represents the web of fashion ensembles. Each form of materialisation is discussed below in the respective subsection.

As with any visual representation, it is worth noting that the interlaced process of materialisation put forward in this section may result in generalisations, since some dimensions may not fit neatly into a category.

7.2.1 Conductive Materialisation

Conductive materialisation is grounded on the action of composition. Composition means that consumers take into consideration not only the final style of their outfit but also how to combine finished objects and material components, bringing additional meaning to their fashion ensembles. Thus in composition, consumers do more than combining fashion objects; they also give them new meanings, which is an essential aspect of bricolage (Levi-Strauss, 1966[1962]). They try to reinforce the meanings already created in ways that integrate counterfeits in their composition.

Therefore consumers of counterfeits rely on what Barthes (1990[1967]) calls material support conductivity to create their fashion ensembles. To the author, in every fashion object lies the possibility of conductivity because it offers a material support that refers back to a vestimentary sign (i.e. an idealised outfit) and thus a meaningful fashion ensemble can be created (Barthes, 1990[1967]). In addition Barthes (1990[1967]) explains that conductivity can also transform the material support into an original element capable of its own signification (Barthes, 1990[1967]).

Consumers of counterfeits then make use of conductivity, composing outfits using three tactics: magnifying, concealing and artistry.

Tactics of Magnifying

The tactic of magnifying can be seen in Paul's quote below. He starts by discussing how carefully, and even strategically, he assembles his outfit:

> Paul: "Ah, you need to know. It is not everything that works, you know? You need to know. Nice shirts are easier to make look like the original. Then eventually I match shirt with shorts and trainers. It is not like: 'Pirate with pirate, pirate with original, original with original'."
>
> Interviewer: "So you'd rather chose another?"
>
> Paul: "It's not another, it is combined"
>
> *(Paul, male, 25, junior analyst)*

Later on in the interview Paul gives more detail about how his outfits are put together:

> Paul: "It depends a lot on how you are looking. It depends on your whole outfit. Let's consider nice trainers and nice shorts from a brand that is not that big. Because what is more interesting to buy in terms of counterfeits is shirts. Shorts, some new jeans, shorts I like. With a swanky shirt, like they say, 'no biggie'. That's fine, you look smart. Nobody can tell [that you are using fakes]. Trainers are the last product you want to buy fake. You need to do a lot of research to buy counterfeit trainers. It needs to be a model that is worth the effort. A replica needs to be really well made, otherwise, if you go in the rain, or after the first wash, completely wasted."
>
> *(Paul, male, 25, junior analyst)*

In Paul's fashion ensembles he has mastered the system of fashion's first level of articulation of meanings as he combines the written and real vestimentary codes (Barthes, 1990[1967]). The written vestimentary code is more dynamic in everyday life with consumers assimilating fashion representations beyond the fashion industry, for instance the soap operas in Brazil briefly discussed in chapter two (pages 44-45). Hence Paul assembles his outfits in line with the latest fashion within his social group. As Paul explained:

> Paul: "There has been a lot of progress in Uruguaina, right? As soon as a new brand comes onto the market, they are selling it, got it? And there is a new brand, Ed Hard. It's very popular in Europe, and it's selling a lot here. Despite being counterfeit, it is still expensive. An original costs 300 Reais [£90]. 150 [£45], 170 Reais [£51] at Uruguaiana. I managed to buy a few originals from a friend living abroad, but I don't deceive anyone, I have a few fakes, because there are some new models that cost 500 Reais [£150] for a shirt."
>
> Interviewer: "What do they look like? Tell me a bit more about them."
>
> Paul: "The prints are very elaborate; there are some neon effects, strass, lots of glitter; the fabric is very different, got it? There are some very innovative drawings, got it? The models are selling a lot. There is a Mexican skull, a panther. It is very elaborated, so the original is very expensive and you can't find them easily in Brazil and whoever imports those charges a lot."
>
> *(Paul, male, 25, junior analyst)*

To compose the real vestimentary code Paul takes advantage of the abundant offers of counterfeit t-shirts in the market and he selects the design that best suits his taste at the

highest level of reproduction he can find. He is extra careful to select his trainers. The market for this type of product has changed recently with the authorities having stricter control of these products. Simon reported: "They were selling fake trainers from Nike, Adidas, and then it was forbidden, you know?" As a result it is much harder to find a good reproduction at camelódromo in Uruguaina. Shoes are an important piece of clothing in the fashion ensemble; this point is discussed further on in the section. To finish the ensemble of his real vestimentary code Paul selects a basic style of shorts made of a neutral material, cotton (jeans).

The counterfeit "swanky" t-shirt is then incorporated into Paul's outfit ensemble as a statement piece. Indeed a typical tactic in the fashion industry that is widely adopted by consumers, as seen in the visual representations in the chapter four (page 110), is that consumers of genuine-item, counterfeit and inspired-item use a pink handbag as a fashion statement in the assembly of their outfits. It is possible for Paul to use a counterfeit t-shirt as a statement piece because the t-shirt design he chooses is materially rich and extremely well counterfeited (page 192). Therefore Paul uses the tactic of magnifying the counterfeit in his fashion ensemble to support his mode of consumption.

Figure 7.2
Ed Hardy T-shirt

Source: Observational data collected by the author of this thesis.

The quote above from Paul shows that consumers of counterfeits follow the latest trends developing a sense of style that aligns with their social group and dynamic social space (Bourdieu, 1984). However, Paul's flamboyant sense of style would not be acceptable in other social classes in Brazil. Hence, it is possible to argue that class emulation (Veblen, 2003[1899]) plays only a small part in the consumption of counterfeits in plentiful markets such as Brazil.

Kravets & Sandikci's (2014) work shows that fashion ensembles become important to consumers in the display of their middle-classness without contradicting their social identity and some consumers even use counterfeit goods interchangeably (Kravets & Sandikci, 2014). Advancing Kravets & Sandikci's (2014) work, Paul's quotes show that working-class consumers use counterfeits interchangeably in their fashion ensembles to participate, and sometimes excel, in their social group. This can also be seen, indirectly, in the quotes from Kate, Joanne, Simon and James, who were among the interviewees with the lowest income, living in the Favela da Mineira (a slum in Rio de Janeiro).

Tactics of Concealing

Considering that consumers' fashion ensembles display the aesthetics in play in their social identity (Kravets & Sandikci, 2014) additional strategies for the incorporation of counterfeits in their modes of consumption were identified. Patricia explained her ensemble:

> Patricia: "I bought a Bulgari watch with a guy, who in fact was an acquaintance of my boss. He had many models; he had half a dozen good watches."
>
> Interviewer: "Have you ever had an interesting experience consuming counterfeits?"
>
> Patricia: "Using those things? No, because the watch is small and discrete. But I have a friend who has some watches this big, huge. I don't know if they are fake or not. But I personally have never had any experience where I went out and someone spotted or mentioned […] I was a mega executive, when I used to drive to work, uff… always wearing suits, always wearing stilettos, always dressed up. But now, here in Rio, I have been getting a bit frumpy."
>
> *(Patricia, female, 50, unemployed)*

Patricia carefully chose counterfeit watches for her businesses attire and thus she used the tactic of concealing "masking" them under her professional appearance. Patricia applied an even simpler combination of written and real vestimentary codes (Barthes, 1990[1967]) because the articulation of meanings lies in a fashion ensemble that basically "models" Patricia's social world. Yet the tactic of concealing counterfeits into a fashion ensemble can have the same kind of playfulness as the tactics of magnifying seen in Paul's quotes. He uses his counterfeit t-shirt as a fashion statement. Elliot explained that fashion ensembles with several counterfeit items are easy to grasp:

> Elliot: "Ah, because everything is counterfeit, if he makes a mistake in the ensemble, it will be easy to spot it, right? […] Do you want to see a good example? For instance the watch, see? As long as it from a brand you can't identify, these watches are very high tech with lots of dials. People spot it very easily."
>
> Interviewer: "I see."
>
> Elliot: "But if it's a Swatch for example, that doesn't have a lot of dials. You can wear a Swatch, for example, which [the original] is worth 1,000 Reais [£300].

Then you wear nice shoes, nice trousers, jeans. Because jeans, people buy from any type [original, counterfeit, etc]. Because jeans are not easy to identify the brand, because the brand is usually in the pocket and the pocket is usually covered, for most men. Then the man wears the shirt outside the jeans and covers the pockets, so you can't know [the jeans brand]. So it doesn't matter. He will not buy Phillipe Martin jeans [original] that cost 500 Reais [£150] if he can buy here at Uruguaiana a fake Phillipe Martin for 50 Reais [£15]. Nobody will notice, because his shirt will cover it. Then he buys an original Phillipe Martin shirt. The jeans are fake, the shirt is original, the shoes are original and the watch is fake; then nobody spots it. He passes the test. Because if someone looks at him, Phillipe Martin shirt, can't identify the jeans, but nice shoes then the watch must be original. There are these strategies, you see?"

(Elliot, male, 42, advertiser)

Elliot's quote also shows the tactic of concealment where the display of counterfeits in the fashion ensemble is meticulously planned. Like in Paul's quotes, selecting the best reproduction is essential. However this selection must also consider whether the counterfeits and the other pieces of clothing in the ensemble match in terms of fashion style. Unlike in Patricia's quote where she "hides" her counterfeit watch with a business suit and high heels. The fashion style of the brand Elliot mentions is casual chic, just for reference, something like Banana Republic, and thus the slim Swatch is considered a better fit than the bulky sport watches.

Furthermore, we can see in Elliot's quote that particular attention is given to display. As Campbell (1996, p.95) explains in the consumption of clothes, ensemble/display transforms consumption into real meaningful actions.

For this reason, in Elliot's quote, it is possible to see that there is a certain enjoyment in the way this interviewee not only carefully builds his ensembles but also displays, and hides, aspects of the products he wants to remain unnoticed. For instance he shows off a counterfeit watch while covering the brand of his fake jeans. Together Patricia and Elliot's quotes show the consumers' tactic of concealing counterfeits in a fashion ensemble, following the logic of harmonisation of product design among all pieces of clothing.

Tactics of Artistry

Playfulness also finds its place in the selection of pieces of clothing for a fashion ensemble. Pamela's quotes show one more tactic for the incorporation of counterfeits into modes of consumption:

> Pamela: "I really mix things up. I combine things. This one here is Le Lis Blanc that my sister gave me. This one is Animale; my sister gave me that too. This handbang my sister also gave to me, but I hmm… Because I know how to make an ensemble I use the day I want to dress up. Watches, I probably have more than twenty. Very colourful. Counterfeits. Also all bought from camelôs [street vendors], 15 Reais [£5], I love watches. Then I have watches in blue, yellow, Chanel and much more. I have a bag of watches. There if you want to take a photo [giggles]."

> Interviewer: "Are they all counterfeit?"

> Pamela: "All fake. And nobody can tell, because I'm always dressed up, so everyone thinks, you know? [They say:] 'Cool, nice watch!' And I say: 'I bought from a camelô'; Nobody believes me, you know? Ho ho"

> Interviewer: "What do you mean by 'I am always dressed up'?"

> Pamela: "It is a matter of creating an ensemble, right? Having a style, you know? That's it, because I work. Then other day I went out, no, I went to the doctor and she told me: 'Wow you are all dressed up! These shades are nice, they look different.' I bought them in Argentina, so they're kind of different. I have a weakness for shades, accessories, the things that I think that complete your ensemble, you know? You may be wearing a basic outfit, but then you wear a pashmina, nice shoes, a nice wallet and then you are complete, you know? The basic outfit is over. And then I thought: 'Well because of my work, I need to dress up, have my hair done, wear perfume, right?' In the end I am a personal vendor right?"

> *(Pamela, female, 62, door-to-door vendor)*

Pamela's fashion ensemble was considerably more sophisticated than those of the other three interviewees. She combine counterfeits with midlevel local brands, like Elliot. She dresses up for work, like Patricia (page 193). Also, she makes bold fashion choices like Paul (page 190); colourful counterfeit watches, large clutches and differentiated accessories. As such Pamela's fashion ensembles reach the second level of articulation of meanings in the system of fashion, as she masters the vitalist model of detail (Barthes, 1990[1967]). This model contrasts the ideas of tenuousness and creativity: 'a little nothing that changes everything' (Barthes, 1990[1967], p.239), which Pamela[7] describes well in the quote. Hence Pamela uses the tactic of artistry—the creative use of

both counterfeits and fashion language - to incorporate the counterfeits into her modes of consumption.

All of the interviewees recast their consumption objects, counterfeits included, reworking the language of fashion in a way that they could materialise—objectify— particular cultural meanings (Miller, 1987; 2005). As discussed in chapter four, objectification is a co-constitutive relation that is able to connect—and transform— objects and consumers simultaneously (Tilley, 2006). In order for this to happen, first, objectification is implicated in the action. This implication can be evidenced in the analysis through the tactics that consumers developed to incorporate counterfeits into their modes of consumption (i.e. magnifying, concealing and artistry).

Second, the interaction between consumers and objects sustains the process of objectification. Productive material engagement (Ingold, 2007; Dant, 2008; Woodward, 2011; Borgerson, 2013) is high in the consumption of counterfeits, and this can be evidenced in many quotes throughout the findings chapters. However it was seen in this section that one piece of clothing, shoes, plays a more prominent role in supporting conductive materialisation. Shoes tie the other pieces of clothing together in the combination and so they become the material support that is able to sustain the meanings in the fashion ensemble. Certainly, the system of fashion (Barthes, 1990[1967]) adds considerable emphasis to the selection of shoes in fashion ensembles. However for consumers of counterfeits, it is as if shoes are endowed with authenticating capacity, in which their materiality testifies the ensemble, signifying existence (Barthes, 1990[1967]). Thus consumers also rely on the shoes' material support conductivity to create meaningful fashion ensembles.

Material conductivity is in fact widely explored by consumers of counterfeits. As Barthes (1990[1967]) explains, conductivity transforms the material support into an original element capable of its own signification in the fashion ensemble. Consumers of counterfeits learn that the materiality of counterfeits is important while comparing distinct levels of reproduction and genuine-items. Then the material aspects of all pieces of clothing in the ensembles start drawing consumers' attention. Antony explained:

> Antony: "For example, I went to a friend's party last Saturday and there was a

another friend wearing a beautiful dress. Short, but very pretty. But the accessories she wore killed the look. And they were expensive accessories from Vivara [a Brazilian jewellery]. Got it? An Invicta watch that she has. She likes masculine watches, she is very feminine, but she likes these oversized watches. A beautiful Invicta watch that, on average, cost 3,000 Reais [£900], got it? But she didn't combine anything, because the dress was sparkling, the sandal was sparkling, a heavy ear-ring, too many accessories on the neck. I mean, she was wearing expensive clothes, but she looked tacky. I was simply wearing a fake Armani shirt, my nice Armani watch, basic trainers and a fake baseball cap. It's because I need a cap because my hair is looking horrible, you know? And I was super dressed up. Then, fake or original, it depends a lot on the person's taste. The person may wear a Hering t-shirt [a brand similar to GAP], a C&A jeans, and wonderful Mizuno trainers, which is one of the most expensive models, and the person will be well dressed, got it?"

(Antony, Male, 31, hair stylist)

Material conductivity does more than materialise symbolic meanings in line with fashion representations. Antony's friend wears genuine jewellery but its material value is in conflict with the materiality of the other pieces of clothing. Antony's ensemble blends counterfeits and genuine-items. The shirt is materially alluring as he revealed earlier in the interview:

Antony: "For instance, last week I saw an Armani shirt I had never seen before here [in Brazil]. Nicely tailored, gorgeous, this friend of mine brought [the 'friend' is in fact his personal vendor of counterfeits]. It is gorgeous, so I bought the shirt. I know it's a replica, but I bought it anyway. I know I won't use it often, but it was love at first sight. I have already used it this past weekend and I thought I looked 'top'."

(Antony, male, 31, hair stylist)

For this reason, Antony's ensemble is tied up with his basic trainers, which means they are made from a material that does not conflict with the other pieces of clothing. Paul does the same by selecting a basic style of shorts made of a neutral material, cotton (jeans), avoiding conflict with the sparkles in his materiality rich t-shirt. Antony's ensemble tactic is artistry because he plays with the styles of several accessories like Pamela (page 195).

Overall consumers use the language of fashion to combine their outfits in such a way that they can materialise their particular understanding of the world yet objectify their

individuality (Miller, 1987; 2005). However it was identified that materialisation occurs in the combination of finished objects and their material components forming a web of fashion ensembles where each composition becomes a meaningful consumption action (Campbell, 1996). Therefore, fashion representations bring some legitimacy to modes of consumption that include counterfeits. However it is the action of composition that generates meanings in the consumption of counterfeits.

7.2.2 Sensorial materialisation

Sensorial materialisation is grounded in the action of fragmentation. Tactile interactions with counterfeits were very prominent in the findings. Consumers make this action an important step in their scrutiny of products in retail outlets. Yet further analysis focusing on materiality reveals that this action is grounded in the idea that counterfeits must feel right (i.e. embodiment) rather than be right, in terms of their similarity to genuine-items. Hence sensorial materialisation relies on the fragmentation of the finished object into a chain of tactile interactions so that the meanings from the counterfeits can be embodied by the consumers.

Amanda's quote shows an example of sensorial materialisation grounded on the action of segmentation:

> Amanda: "Yes, with handbags it is the finishing, right? If the stitches are straight or not, the buckle."
>
> Interviewer: "Right."
>
> Amanda: "If it's a buckle that looks like it is going to disassemble just by looking at it or that looks like a fake, you know? That's what I say, I don't mind if it's from an unknown brand or even branded, but obviously if I can see that is a fake, because it is too cheap to be original, I want one that doesn't look like a fake, you know? Or at least that doesn't look so clearly like a fake."
>
> Interviewer: "Ok, explain to me a bit more about which features it should have to not look like a fake?"
>
> Amanda: "For handbags it is the internal lining. Even if you don't expose the internal lining of your handbag, but anyway, it's the quality of the internal lining. The buckles, the buckles always have the brand printed, right? The brand,

the logo, whatever; it needs to be well-made, quality work. It can't be scratched, can't be crooked, can't be misshapen when compared to the original logo, right?"

Interviewer: "Ok."

Amanda: "I want the details which have the brand to be well made. And I know that the handbag won't last long, right? And that is not the objective anyway. I didn't buy the bag to last. I bought it because I liked it. Then if I use it occasionally for about a year or so… But, if you start using it every day to go to work it won't last three months, but if I use it occasionally for around a year, for that season and the next, I'll be happy. They are cheap, right? In general, you are going to pay 70 [£21], 90 Reais [£27] at most for a handbag. Then it gets me sorted and keeps me entertained and all, and I end up with some variety to combine."

Interviewer: "Ok."

Amanda: "Well, I want a handbag that appears good quality and lasts for a minimum time. It must not look shoddy but mainly it's the seams. Skewed, shredded and loose stitches give me affliction, you know?"

(Amanda, female, 56, product manager)

Amanda needs to be sure about her choice and thus she engages in a productive material interaction to decide if it is worth owning a counterfeit handbag. Like other interviewees she inspects the object inside out. The counterfeit must be impeccable; it must have buckles without scratches, and the logo should be properly engraved. This is all for a handbag she will use here and there. As argued in chapter six, she is looking for the most 'pure' object she can find. However the most important part of this lies in the last paragraph. To Amanda counterfeits not only need to look proper, they must also feel right.

Only when Amanda touches the handbag can she feel that it is possible to rework the counterfeit from its 'alienated and abstract forms to re-emerge as the specificity of the inalienable' consumption object (Miller, 1987, p.208). This indicates that the counterfeit's interface starts the process of material embodiment (Borgerson, 2013) that later evolves to the sensorial materialisation. Amanda also indicated that sensorial materialisation interlaces with other forms when she stated that she wanted to combine her outfit. This indicates the process of conductive materialisation, as discussed in the previous subsection.

Sensorial materialisation also helps to explain a fieldwork observation regarding consumers at the camelódromo of Uruguaiana. They were frequently squeezing the fabric between their fingers and twisting shoes to 'feel' the products on sale. As John explained:

> John: "Ah, for example, a cotton shirt. That's what I learnt since I was a kid, right? My mother always taught us to shop for things, shop at the supermarket, etc. Then I use the touch a lot, even for the quality, stitching. Printing when it is printed, then I inspect how it has been done. Basically this is it. And especially, it needs to fit me, right? Because I'm very picky when I shop for clothes; if I'm not sure I don't buy it."
>
> *(John, male, 35, advertiser)*

James also explained why he needed to interact with the material aspects of the product:

> James: "Ah, I inspect the stitching and the fabric a lot. Because there are clothes that you erm… that you buy where the stitching is already coming out. If you pull the thread the whole thing comes apart, got it? The stitching varies a lot, also the fabric."
>
> Interviewer: "How do you identify the fabric?"
>
> James: "Ah, the fabric is like this one [shows the shirt]. This shirt of mine I bought at a store. Then, [the counterfeit] is almost identical."
>
> Interviewer: "Do you usually shop alone or take someone with you? What is your routine?"
>
> James: "Most of the time I like to go by myself."
>
> Interviewer: "Why?"
>
> James: "No, because er… because I spend a lot of time. I like… when I go hmm I like to walk around. First I look at everything, you know? Then I browse everything by myself, because I think that I can choose what I want."
>
> *(James, male, 25, unemployed)*

Simon also takes all the time he needs buying his t-shirt:

> Simon: "Ah, I inspect it in detail. If I can try it, I try it first. To shop for shirts, clothes, I take my time, you know? I browse, then I decide what I'm going to buy or not. Think a lot, you know? But if there are other things, CD, watches, then I look and buy them, got it?"

(Simon, male, 24, office clerk)

In addition, Simon's quote also shows that he relies on sensorial materialisation when the product is of high esteem. Simon seems not to be so interested in watches but they are objects of affection to many of the interviewees and thus it is not surprising that the data shows that consumers also rely on sensorial aspects to interact with this type of product. Listing the type of products she consumes Amy stated:

> Amy: "I have watches that are fake. You need to know what is what."
>
> Interviewer: "How do you know?"
>
> Catherine: "The weight. You need to take it from your wrist and feel the weight."
>
> *(Amy, female, 25, salesperson and Catherine, female, 53, scout for TV shows and advertising)*

In this passage Catherine explains that weighing the product is useful to distinguish between counterfeits and genuine watches. However she plays this feature to her advantage when she says later that, "nobody would ask you to take it off". Moreover the act of feeling the watch's weight may also lead consumers to a more enjoyable experience:

> Mark: "I bought a replica watch that was a Bulgari, a replica Bulgari. Hmm At that time hmm I was always looking smart. I was looking for a watch that was beautiful and smart. I said: 'Ah, but eh I didn't want to buy one shoddy and made in Brazil. I wanted to kind of impress. People who buy expensive brands want to impress someone, right? It's always like that. Then I hmm… yes, I start looking at camelôs in Uruguaiana. I don't remember if it was in Uruguaiana or Brasília. Once I went to Brasília, and I remember going to a feira [street market]. There was a feira like the one in Uruguaiana there in Brasília. Then I liked the Bulgari. I knew it cost more than 1,000 Reais [£300], if I were to buy the original. And I bought one there for around 200 Reais [£60], and it was identical. I said: 'Yes, I'm going to buy it and see what happens.' And the watch was very heavy, beautiful, I said: 'It's not too shoddy. It doesn't look too shoddy.' Then I ended up buying it and it is still working. It has lasted a long time. It has ten… more than ten years and the watch is still working."
>
> *(Mark, male, 36, advertiser/fashion designer)*

Apart from CDs and DVDs, Mark only consumes counterfeit watches. In contrast to

Jason, who went into great detail explaining that in his watch, "All the controls work", Mark's last paragraph shows that he looked for a sensorial material interaction while selecting the watch. Altogether these quotes show that productive material interactions can be more meaningful when sensorial materialisation occurs.

Co-creative sensorial materialisation

Material components can even allure consumers, as is the case in the consumption of counterfeit makeup. Also seen in Antony's quote in this chapter (page 197) and Amanda's quote in charter six (page 161). In such consumption the finished makeup on the consumer's face is an example of material co-creative interaction, which contemplates the agency of both the consumer and the object (Borgerson, 2013). Kate engages in creative interplay with counterfeit makeup, letting the sensations play an important role in her consumption experience:

> Kate: "What my friends and I use a lot is counterfeit makeup. […] They have such pretty makeup palettes [cases] in Uruguaiana! Although I cannot use makeup because I have allergies, when I go out I like to wear it and some of the makeup is very pretty. Now they even have 3D makeup that is very strong, shiny and flashy, so everyone is buying that now."

> *(Kate, female, 25, small business owner)*

In addition it is possible to see the action of fragmentation in Kate's quote. She is mostly allured by the object's substances such as glitter and pigments and even overcomes her physical circumstances (allergy) to keep consuming it. Ingold (2012, p.435) explains that in the object's substance lies the potential for deep material interaction. In the consumption of counterfeit makeup consumers' interactions are indeed very productive. This happens because while applying the makeup consumers can internalise the fashion cultural forms (Miller, 1987) associated with the material's substance (e.g. trendy colour). Therefore consumers are able to recast fashion meanings into the finished makeup, completing the process of materialisation towards sensorial interactions.

The next quote from Joanne reinforces the idea that fashion plays an important part in

the consumption of counterfeit makeup:

> Joanne: "I like makeup and I don't mind the brand, I have no preference. The ones from Playboy are very good nowadays […] Fashionable colours, it's the shade that is in fashion. That they try to imitate. Then what colours do you want to wear? The one that is in fashion, to draw people's attention, like butternut [colour]. You don't realise, but if you wear a butternut eye shadow, it looks pretty, depending on where you are going and your outfit."

> *(Joanne, female, 28, housewife)*

Joanne naturally includes counterfeit makeup in her fashion ensemble, showing that even though the object is fragmented into its substance its elements still flow in the web of fashion ensembles that constitutes the consumption of counterfeits.

However, the agency of objects can result in negative materialisation. Sally explained why she had stopped using her counterfeit handbag:

> Sally: "It was in Uruguaiana, but like this 'sh… everyone will notice that my handbag is fake'. The finishing is ridiculous you know? You look at, like, the handle and humpf! It's not possible for that brand to make, like… it's completely different, got it? Then you put it aside, and I'm saying because I bought one once, and it is untouched. I don't use it, no way, because it is gorg... [pause]… it is pretty but when you start inspecting the finishing, and stuff. Then it rubs into something, and then it gets stained by your clothes, stained by your jeans. I said: 'this is not leather, this is not, so I don't want to make a fool of myself."

> *(Sally, female, 27, bank clerk)*

To Sally, feeling the handle made her decide to stop using the counterfeit handbag. In addition she revealed a negative interaction among the materials, as the counterfeit handbag was stained by her jeans. Thus this quote evidences that the interaction among objects may reveal their agency (Borgerson, 2013) but this can prevent rather than intensify co-creation, like in the case of counterfeit makeup.

Overall, this section shows that consumers, on the one hand, 'project onto objects particular meanings, fantasies, desires, and emotions, and on the other, objects are being taken into the self, used, elaborated, played with and eventually exhausted' (Woodward, 2011, p.374). Consequently consumers of counterfeits get involved into a process of

sensorial materialisation where material embodiment can no longer be seen as the one-way route of cultural representation proposed by Miller (1987; 2005). Thus, it is argued here that sensorial materialisation complements rather than substitutes conductive materialisation where fashion ensembles play a more prominent role.

7.2.3 Enhanced materialisation

Enhanced materialisation is grounded in the action of amalgamation. It seems unlikely that material aspects of counterfeits require additional intervention; yet the findings point to the fact such interventions do occur with consumers physically modifying their objects to increase/enhance their consumption experiences. In doing so consumers amalgamate one material component with another, changing the finished objects.

Enhanced materialisation conducted by consumer shows that physical interventions can be quite creative. Catherine was talking about the design of the counterfeit handbags that she consumes when her daughter Amy interrupted and told her to explain her intervention:

> Catherine: "Another thing, the handbag can't be one which has a large tag with Louis Vuitton print on it, you know? It doesn't work for me. For me, the less the better."
>
> Amy: "Like that thing you did here to disguise it."
>
> Catherine: "Yes, for me having less information works better."
>
> Interviewer: "What 'thing' did you do?"
>
> Catherine: "Sh… God, she had to bring this up. That handbag of mine [pause] You promise you won't laugh in my face? [giggles]"
>
> Interviewer: "No, I will not."
>
> Amy: "She is doing research."
>
> Catherine: "That handbag of mine is counterfeit. But I didn't use it, because it is what is called second grade, right? This part here is leather [shows the handle]. It's like the original; it's not like the material that is used on counterfeits. But it was not darkening and the original has a dark handle because the leather gets darker with use. You live in England, so you know very well the originals… and

then I just waxed it, I used shoe wax to darken it [the handle]."

(Amy, female, 25, salesperson and Catherine, female, 53, scout for TV shows and advertising)

Catherine performed a sort of patina effect imitation (McCracken, 1990) and this physical intervention in her handbag evidences a co-transformative material interaction (Borgerson, 2013). In doing so Catherine modified a finished object (i.e. handbag) incorporating in one of its components (i.e. handles) an external material component (i.e. wax). Hence Catherine's experience is enhanced as a result of her action of amalgamation.

There are also the interventions where consumers replace material components in their counterfeits. For example, Thomas and Amy had replaced the prescription lenses in their glasses. Amy and Catherine explained:

Catherine: "Glasses too. I've bought a lot of fake glasses."

Interviewer: "Really?"

Catherine: "I used to buy them in São Paulo."

Amy: "I even have prescription glasses that I bought at 25 de Março or somewhere like that."

Catherine: "And then you get the prescription lenses fitted."

Amy: "Because they are cheaper hmm… then because the lenses are expensive then I buy cheap glasses."

Catherine: "Armani."

Amy: "So I can get fitted the hmm."

(Amy, female, 25, salesperson and Catherine, female, 53 s, scout for TV shows and advertising)

Thomas had also replaced the prescription lenses in his glasses:

Thomas: "I look a lot for watches and certain glasses. But prescription glasses because I use contact lenses. Because fake glasses have poor sun protection and all that. And I know that this may cause problems. So, obviously there is a question of safety. That's why I avoid them, but I enjoy it too much, too much. I find it super fun."

(Thomas, male, 52, architect)

This is certainly a very functional intervention that benefits from the design of the product and brand, helping consumers to achieve enhanced materialisation.

As seen in chapter six, Thomas services his counterfeit watches. Later in the interview, he returned to the topic and it was possible to see that his intentions go beyond guaranteeing the functionality and integrity of the product. Showing his collection of watches, Thomas explained:

> Thomas: "Look! Look what happens. This Diesel is original. Look! That is what happens. Let me show you [shows a damaged wrist band] […] And this mode is a Bachelor that I had the battery changed. Got it? That's a fine watch."
>
> Interviewer: "It's nice."
>
> Thomas: "It's a luxury. And there is one more thing, I had this part changed. Then you can see it is leather and it is lasting more than the original [Diesel]."
>
> Interviewer: "Ok."
>
> Thomas: [laughs]
>
> Interviewer: "But is it real leather?"
>
> Thomas: "Yes, it is real leather, real leather indeed."
>
> *(Thomas, male, 52, architect)*

While Catherine had added a substance to the handles of her handbag Thomas had made an intentional physical modification to his watch by changing the wristband for a leather one. In doing so, Thomas had incorporated a component of higher material value (i.e. leather) showing that enhanced materialisation can also be achieved thought material support conductivity (Barthes, 1990[1967]).

Lastly, physical interventions in counterfeits can be slightly more extreme. Paul explained:

> Paul: "Now I'm going to tell you the best part, about fakes that you can't [identify] and the guys use a lot: baseball caps. You can't identify caps. Because everyone uses caps right? Baseball ones, you can't [identify] It is embroidered, plain, with a straight visor, with a logo on the back, that's it. If you remove the

internal tag and wear it, nobody will remove it from you head to inspect its inside. Then caps are the type of product that the manufacturers have for a long time failed to do something that 'ok, now you can identify which one is original and which one is fake'. No, caps you can't [identify]."

(Paul, male, 25, junior analyst)

Several examples of consumers paying attention to the interior parts of counterfeits can be seen throughout the findings chapters. However this case is different because by removing the cap's tag Paul had physically modified the object in a way that enhanced his consumption experience.

Overall, this process of materialisation shows that consumers intentionally modify their counterfeits, intervening physically in their composition. In doing so consumers are bringing the process of materialisation to the level of praxis by amalgamating substances (e.g. Wax, leather) and components (e.g. wristbands, lenses), transforming the meanings in their consumption. Therefore this shows that consumers understand, interact and even alter the pre-objectified elements in their objects (Ferreira & Scaraboto, 2016). To recall, pre-objectification encompasses consumers' interactions with material substances, design intentions and marketing efforts. Hence such interactions generate a creative space that is 'loaded with emotional energy, which feeds into the consumer's imagination and allows transitions between one's internal and external worlds, and one's current, past, and desired selves' (Ferreira & Scaraboto, 2016, p.195).

7.3 SUMMARY

This chapter has shown that consumers can materialise a combination of fashion objects and their material components towards their creation of fashion ensembles. This process is grounded on consumers' productive material interaction with their fashion objects, which unfolds into three forms of materialisation: conductive materialisation, sensorial materialisation, and enhanced materialisation.

Conductive materialisation. Consumers create fashion ensembles by combining

finished fashion objects and their material components quite strategically. They can use the tactic of magnification where a counterfeit prominent in style and materially rich is incorporated into their outfit as a statement piece. Concealment is another tactic in which counterfeits are made to fade into their outfits by meticulously planning their display. Last is the tactic of artistry, where they creatively play with counterfeits and fashion language, composing many outfits. These tactics rely on material conductivity to compose fashion ensembles that are capable of their own signification.

Sensorial materialisation. Consumers interact deeply with counterfeits, as they fragment the finished object into a chain of tactile interactions with its material components. This action helps consumers to remove the counterfeits from their condition as an alienating object (Miller, 1987). However this process only stops when an embodiment of meanings occurs through hedonic experiences with counterfeit goods. Furthermore, sensorial materialisation complements rather than substitutes conductive materialisation.

Enhanced materialisation. The findings point out that consumers voluntarily modify physical aspects of their counterfeits in order to improve material aspects of these goods. In doing so the enhanced materialisation becomes the most productive among the material interactions being able to transform consumers and counterfeits simultaneously (Borgerson, 2013). Additionally, enhanced materialisation reveals an imaginative interaction with counterfeits that considerably intensifies consumers' experiences with these products.

The interaction between the themes materiality and risk is discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 8: Discussion: the Dynamic Experiences in the Consumption of Counterfeits

This chapter discusses consumers' dynamic experiences in the consumption of counterfeits. First it explores consumers' experience in markets with a wide variety of fashion products of a similar design and the impact on their consumption search. Second it discusses how consumers' experiences around counterfeits are supported by strategies that balance materiality and risk intensifying the meanings in the consumption of counterfeits.

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter builds on the findings from the empirical elements of the study reported in the last two chapters. It starts with a discussion that proposes a new model to explaining consumer search including counterfeits (Gentry et al., 2001). This will lead to a deeper discussion of the relationship between materiality and risk that will put forward four strategies that support the consumption of counterfeits: 1) authenticating actions; 2) creating constellations; 3) constant monitoring; and 4) developing competencies. The last part provides a summary of the discussions presented in the chapter.

8.2 MAPPING THE PALETTE OF MARKETPLACE OPTIONS

This section advances the discussion about consumers' search including counterfeits proposed by the 'revise search model' (Gentry et al., 2001 p.264). This model explains that consumers' search goes a little further in plentiful markets of counterfeits because they can search "within" brands using price as a proxy for similarity between genuine-items and counterfeits (Gentry et al., 2001). This model was challenged in the theoretical extension of the logic of equivalence of the signs (Baudrillard, 1988[1972]) in the consumption of counterfeits presented in chapter four (pages 108-114) This theoretical extension has shown that consumers can create outfits using genuine-items, counterfeits or inspired-items because these products are similar in design concept. Hence this theoretical extension has fostered the debate about whether inspired-items should be included among consumers' search in markets where there is an abundant supply of and easy access to counterfeits and inspired-items.

In traditional markets it is not easy for consumers to find counterfeits and therefore their choice navigates around many inspired versions of the conceptual fashion product that they desire. In turn, it can be fairly easy to find counterfeits in emerging markets but consumers also have a wider choice of inspired-items, as the findings of this research point out (pages 151-158). Thus consumers' search goes from the finest luxury product (Truong, McColl & Kitchen; Kapferer & Bastien, 2009) in privileged neighbourhoods to the poorest reproduction on sale at popular markets (Field observation 03/05/2013).

Hence to deal with such an abundance of products resembling one another consumers' search goes beyond the trade-off genuine-item vs. counterfeits in their different level of reproductions described in the 'revised search model' (Gentry et al., 2001). The following interview quote sheds new light on this idea:

> Amy: "I have a handbag that when you look at it you are sure it is a counterfeit. But it's the easiest handbag for everyday use, because it is small. It is very practical, so I think 'I'm not bothered if someone thinks it is or not [that it is a counterfeit]'. If it looks good, because it is also orange. If it looks good with the rest of the outfit… because you also need to check whether the orange [from the handbag] will work with the green [from the clothes]. Then hmm, it's a practical handbag, then if I just go [around the corner], it's a handbag that is easy to use."
>
> Interviewer: "Is the handbag a counterfeit? Or it just looks like a counterfeit?
>
> Amy: "I'll show you".
>
> Catherine; "No, it is not a counterfeit. It doesn't have a brand."
>
> Amy: "Ah it is a counterfeit. No. But it is an imitation of something else."
>
> Catherine: "No, it is not."
>
> Interviewer: "Imitation of something, interesting..."
>
> Amy: "Look, it's a handbag that you can see that it is not a hmm It doesn't have anything, it doesn't have anything right?" [showing the handbag has no brand].
>
> Catherine: "It is counterfeit because it is made of a material that feels plastic."
>
> Amy: "But it is pretty. Then I use it because it is practical."
>
> Catherine: "I don't like this handbag and she [Amy] asks me: 'Mum which handbag should I use?' and I say not that one."
>
> Amy: "But this one I use it like this [and shows] and it is small. I just put enough

things to fill the space. Then there is another compartment that you can also use to put more stuff in. I like handbags with many compartments that are useful. Then I like to use it because it is pretty. Not pretty. Because it is small, that makes it easier to use right?"

(Amy, female, 25, salesperson and Catherine, female, 53, scout for TV shows and advertising)

On the basis of this quote and the evidence presented in previous chapters, it seems fair to suggest that consumers of counterfeits include inspired-items in their modes of consumption. Therefore it is possible to argue that the 'revise search model' (Gentry et al., 2001 p.264) offers a limited explanation regarding consumers' search for fashion products in plentiful markets of counterfeits.

Furthermore, the quote evidences that consumers can recognise key elements of materiality that make a product resemble another using this in reference to define products as counterfeits or inspired-items, in spite of brand display. In addition, this quote shows that consumers resort to these key elements of materiality to evaluate their products, for instance in the above quote where the interviewees compare plastic and leather. This resonates with other research findings in chapter six that show that consumption risks are managed by consumers through the material scrutiny of counterfeits (pages 173-175).

Together these points bring convincing evidence that materiality and risk are essential to explain consumers' search for fashion products in markets where there is an abundant supply of and easy access to counterfeits and inspired-items. Therefore, this thesis would like to propose a model that explores consumers search as a palette of marketplace options that they can navigate through as they look for the product design concept they desire.

Figure 8.1
The Palette of Marketplace Options
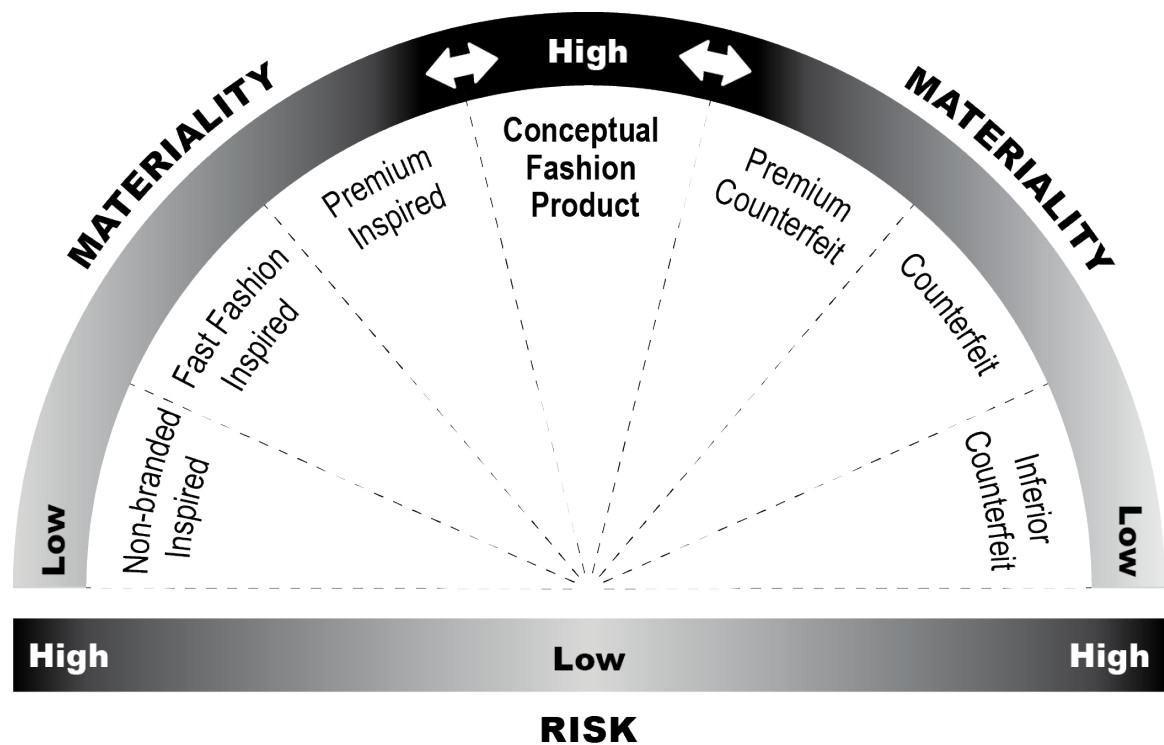
Source: Model developed by the author of this thesis.

This model offers an alternative framework to understand the way consumers search fashion products in the marketplace by bringing back the 'genuine-counterfeit continuum' (Gentry et al., 2001 p.262) however proposing a wider continuum as it accommodates inspired-items in the model but also considers the variation among them.

The model is arc shaped where variations occur from the middle towards the ends because the conceptual fashion product is the aesthetic reference for both: counterfeits and inspired-items. To recall, the conceptual fashion product is usually represented by the first product launched proposing a product design concept now imitated by many producers. Its curve contemplates the variation in materiality while the base shows the variation in risk.

Non-consumers of counterfeits would navigate on the left side of the arc while consumers of counterfeits would explore the arc's whole extension. The main difference between these consumers is their appetite for risk. Fully aware of the risks in their choice consumers of counterfeits engage with risk proactively developing a series of

risk management practices to deal with risky situations, as the findings have shown (chapter six). The consumption of counterfeits will never be a risk free choice but inspired-items, especially of low material quality, can also be seen as a risky option. For example, Catherine tries to persuade Amy to avoid her inspired handbag because "it is made of a material that feels plastic" therefore denouncing its inferior imitation (page 210). For this reason the model positions the riskier options at the extremity of the continuum. Non-branded product at the extreme left and inferior counterfeits at the extreme right. These products may be cheaper than others in the continuum but the risks of a negative consumption experience are much higher.

In terms of materiality, the premium counterfeit—the replica—is located at right side next to the conceptual fashion product because this reproduction nearly matches the conceptual fashion product in terms of product design concept and material properties (e.g. they are both made of leather). The counterfeit on the other hand imitates well details from the conceptual fashion product but it neglects its material properties varying from substandard leather to synthetic leather-like fabrics. The variation among materials grounds the idea of consumers' search as continuum because there are too many variation of material properties in counterfeits to allow a discrete classification of these products. Finally the inferior counterfeit neglects both product design concept and material properties as it reproduces only key elements of materiality like colour and, roughly, shape and use substandard materials such as plastic. Hence as product materiality decreases the risk increases; moving from the centre towards the extreme right hand side of the arc.

The same logic applies to the premium inspired-item located at left side next to the conceptual fashion product in the model because this product almost matches its reference in terms of material properties (e.g. they are both made of the finest leather) even though this product slightly differs in terms of product design concept. However the difference in design can be compensated by a nearly similar brand image. For instance, in figure 4.8 (page 111) the conceptual fashion product is represented by a pink handbag from the brand Cèline while the premium inspired-item is represented by the brand Gucci, although many reproductions were found from brands also working in the luxury market segment such as Saint Laurent and Valentino. Following on from this

we have the inspired products from deluxe brands (Thomas, 2007) offering good levels of material similarities, like the pink handbag from the brand Coach made of leather, although not the finest one (see the image called 'inspired *leather*' in figure 4.8 (page 111). Then we have the fast fashion inspired, which some products would be made in leather but many opting for alternative materials such as synthetic leather-like fabrics, plastic and so on. The impossibility of establishing a clear cut among the inspired products reinforces the idea of consumers' search as a continuum and, again, shows that as product materiality decreases the risk increases; moving from the centre towards the extreme left hand side of the arc.

Hence consumers choose the product that best represents the conceptual fashion product and also fits in their budget and brand preference. Again, if they are risk averse, consumers' search will navigate around the legal market of inspired fashion products and therefore less risky options, starting at the middle of the arc with the conceptual fashion product and moving anti-clockwise considering the premium, the fast fashion and finally the non-branded inspired products as they decrease in materiality. Consumers of counterfeits on the other hand will expand their search and evaluate the material aspects of all of the fashion products available in the market, again exploring the arc's whole extension.

Overall the palette of marketplace options pictures a dynamic consumer search where the consumption of fashion is the underlying motivation in the consumption of counterfeits. This argument is grounded on the theoretical extension of the logic of equivalence of the signs (Baudrillard, 1988[1972]) in the consumption of counterfeits (pages 108-114). The images from consumers wearing a small pink handbag cross-body in chapter four (page 110) well illustrates the palette of marketplace options. One consumer is wearing the conceptual fashion product. Another consumer declared she was wearing a counterfeit version while others opted for inspired-items from a different brand or non-branded. These images testify that consumers engage in a search spanning several products and their brands mapping the available options in their marketplace "within" conceptual fashion products.

Additionally, the data yielded by this study offers empirical evidence to support the

development of the palette of marketplace options. This can be illustrated by interviewee Claire, who revealed that her aunt consumes counterfeits because she believes that this is a way to stay in fashion. Claire explained that her aunt thinks the counterfeiters know best what "everybody is wearing" and hence for her buying these products is an easy way to be fashionable without going to the trouble of following the trends in the media (Field note 05/05/2013).

There is an additional benefit in moving away from the 'revise search model' (Gentry, et al., 2001 p.264). This very hierarchical model contemplates that consumers will first decide on a product, decide on a brand and only then start searching for alternatives among many counterfeits available in their market (Gentry, et al., 2001). In the palette of marketplace options consumer search is more fluid contemplating that consumers' search navigates around a conceptual fashion product allowing the inclusion of fashion products from several brands and even non-branded products in the model as exemplified above. Therefore the palette of marketplace overcomes the brand dependency that limits the 'revise search model' (Gentry, et al., 2001 p.264).

Any model may result in generalisations and consumers' understanding of fashion products may not fit neatly into the model categories. Notwithstanding this limitation, this researcher believes that this study offers some insights into consumers' choices by proposing the palette of marketplace options.

8.3 THE CONVERGENCE BETWEEN MATERIALITY AND RISK

The foregoing discussion argued that in their search for fashion items consumers have a conceptual fashion product in mind that they use as a reference to navigate through the available options in the marketplace. However in markets where as well as counterfeits inspired-items also abound the wide variety of products on offer brings challenges to consumers with regard to their choices.

In addition it was seen in the last chapter that fashion offers a blueprint to consumers in the creation of their fashion ensembles. Consumers of counterfeits then carefully combine and deeply interact with the materiality of all types of fashion products to

creatively combine their outfits. However the use of their fashion ensembles cannot be set apart from consumers' experience in society. Social interactions, in fact, help consumers to manage the risks of consuming counterfeits, as seen in the findings of chapter six.

This section puts forward a discussion of how consumers' risk management practices and interlaced process of materialisation converge into consumption strategies that support the consumption of counterfeits. In doing so this section addresses how these strategies are implemented by consumers in shaping their social identity and experiences around the consumption of counterfeit goods.

Four consumption strategies emerged in the convergence between materiality and risk: 1) creating constellations; 2) authenticating actions; 3) constant monitoring; and 4) developing competencies. The following figure stresses the essential concepts that emerged in the analysis of materiality and risk in the previous chapters. Furthermore, it places the four consumption strategies between these themes to illustrate that the convergence between them is rather dynamic.

Figure 8.2
Consumers' Strategies in the Consumption of Counterfeit Goods
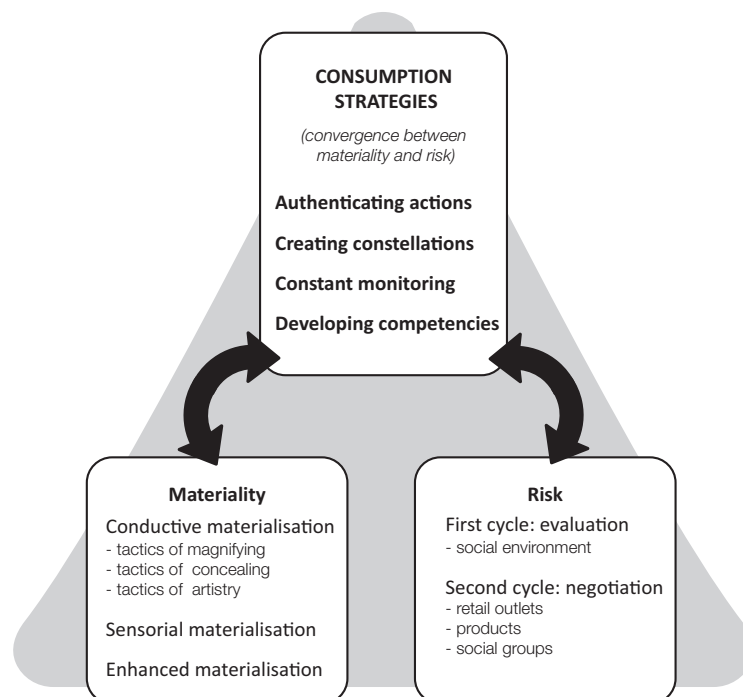
Source: Visual representation created by the author of this thesis.

8.3.1 Consumers' Strategies in the Consumption of Counterfeit Goods

Consumers' perception of risk is culturally ingrained and developed collectively (Douglas, 1982; 1992; 2013). Thus the way in which consumers deal with uncertainties arising from the social environment, retail settings and counterfeits inevitably affects their modes of consumption, as seen in the findings chapters (Chap. 6 and 7). Consumers may avoid consumption situations where they perceive that the uncertainties are too high but in the majority of cases they choose to negotiate the risks involved in consumption as best they can. It is then that materiality and risk start to converge changing the consumption meanings and practices around counterfeits.

The passage below exemplifies how materiality and risk converge. Catherine is a very skilful consumer of counterfeits, as seen throughout the findings (for example pages 171 and 201). Asked about a typical consumer of counterfeits she said:

> Catherine: "Ah, a typical consumer? Ah, a typical consumer I think they wear replicas from head to toe, right? Because this is what I'm telling you, it looks tacky. You know what I mean? If you wear that shirt with an alligator [Lacoste], Tommy [Hilfiger] trouser, Chanel shoes and Louis Vuitton handbag, I think you would look tacky. Got it? The person is wearing all hmm… it doesn't matter if it's original or fake. I think it's tacky you know? I think it's too much of a show off, it's exhibitionism, you know? It's tasteless. I think it's tacky. You need to know how to blend these things. […] A nouveau riche from Barra who is loaded. I have a friend who says: 'over there in Barra women have that full platinum blond hair, straightened and blow dried, wearing tons of jewellery, Chanel bag and this and that'. That's what I'm trying to say, they need to show they are loaded, got it?"

> Interviewer: "Interesting. So, you think that fashion is more than wearing brands?"

> Catherine: "Yes."

> Interviewer: "So you…"

> Catherine: [interrupts the interviewer] "I think it looks polluted if you wear everything showing off logos. It's nice to have a branded trouser, let's say Armani, for example, you wear a nice trouser. Does it have a tag? Yes, it does have a tag. But then you wear chic shoes, a stiletto, a basic shirt and a nice handbag. You are not polluted, you look smart, right? You are chic. Less is more"

(Catherine, female, 53, scout for TV shows and advertising)

It was argued in chapter six that the consumption of counterfeits is about incorporating otherness into everyday life and finding a way to avoid symbolic and social pollution (Lupton, 1999b). In order to avoid pollution consumers develop risk management practices, such as scrutinising the counterfeits inside out in the marketplace. They also avoid incorporating into their modes of consumption counterfeits that do not find resonance with their social class. Both situations were seen in Catherine's quotes in the previous chapters.

This is in line with Kravets & Sandikci's (2014) study, which found that consumers use counterfeits and genuine-items interchangeably in support of their social identity. However Catherine's quotes help us to understand that the incorporation of counterfeits in modes of consumption occurs only if the product does not cause anomalies. As discussed in chapter three, ambiguous objects and actions inevitably cause anomalies raising uncertainties with oneself (Lupton, 1999b). Furthermore, the findings generated by this study evidence that consumers of counterfeits in fact incorporate these products into their fashion ensembles very strategically. Therefore it is possible to argue that this thesis has extended Kravets & Sandikci's (2014) study. Therefore, it is possible to argue that this thesis has extended Kravets & Sandikci's (2014) study, because it has shown that consumers not only perceive material differences among the products, but they also use these differences to their advantage. For instance, the combination of a counterfeit shirt which is materially rich with a pair of jeans which is plain cotton makes the most of conductive materialisation, as seen in Antony's quote on page 197.

Pollution, however, can also be avoided by the right articulation of fashion ensembles. This is seen in the way that Catherine evokes a rhetoric that is common in the fashion industry: "less is more". In doing so Catherine reworks the language of fashion not only to convey meanings to her fashion ensembles; she finds this toward productive material interaction in the conductive materialisation. When Catherine complains that her daughter Amy dares to wear a handbag which is "made of a material that feels plastic" (page 210), she explains how the conductivity among materials and finished objects can be negative. Catherine's logic is that a low-grade material would make Amy's outfit

look cheap. Her daughter disagrees, and so does Thomas (pages 221-222), which happens because processes of materialisation connect—and transform—objects and consumers simultaneously (Tilley, 2006). Hence, the resulting meanings may differ; this is covered in the discussion of the strategy creating constellations later in this section.

In terms of symbolic pollution Catherine's quote also evokes the purity of her consumption actions. For this reason Catherine deemed the excessive use of branded products amateurish, in the case of counterfeits, or frivolous, in the case of genuine-items. The rhetoric "less is more" is grounded on the system of fashion's model of caritatism, which juxtaposes emotions in such a way that fashion is represented as 'excessively serious and excessively frivolous' (Barthes, 1990[1967], p.242). Catherine's way of avoiding polluting her consumption experiences is excessively serious.

Accordingly, the need for a cosmological style in which risk and materiality converge is observed in Catherine's quote. In fact Miller's notion of objectification (Miller, 1987, p.8) also considers that individuals can transform material resources 'into expressive environments, daily routines and often cosmological ideals: that is, ideas about order, morality and family, and their relationships with the wider society'. Hence, risk as macro cultural cosmology partners with fashion rhetorics, a practical cosmological ideal, to support consumption strategies that expand on fashion's visual system of signification towards processes of materialisation that help to shape consumers' social identities and experiences around the consumption of counterfeit goods.

8.3.1.1 *Creating constellations*

Catherine's quote at the beginning of this section also shows that she uses the tactic of artistry. Catherine considers the style of her counterfeit handbag and shoes to match a branded trouser and basic blouse; like Pamela in the previous chapter (page 195). However there is not much regarding social experiences with counterfeits in Catherine's quote. In fact, consumers give great consideration to the occasion to create their fashion ensembles, like Antony's outfit for his friend's birthday party, also in the previous chapter (pages 196-197). Still fashion ensembles are more nuanced than a common

logic that says mundane occasions equate to simple outfits. For instance, even moderated consumers of counterfeits like Patricia dress up to work when she wears her fake watch, again in the previous chapter (page 193).

Amy's quote below helps us to understand the importance of fashion ensembles for a meaningful consumption experience:

> Amy: "If I go to a regular place just to enjoy myself, I use this little handbag, and I wear everything fake, ok? You can get away with it. But, I don't know, sometimes you want to go to a party, then you change [pause] you want to show off, then you want to show it's real. If you need to stand out you need to look classy, otherwise I'm quite relaxed with my outfit."
>
> Interviewer: "Interesting."
>
> Amy: "But when you want to show off you use the best you've got. That's when you want to have everything original, to be able to show off [giggles]. At that special event, then you need look your best. You spend more time looking for something more real. I went to a night out that was a bit special. Then you open your closet and think… you start browsing and look for something that looks more real [giggles] more,… more expensive. That looks like a bit, like, you know? It's a place you want to look smart. […]. For instance, I've got a silk blouse that I don't use often, but if there is an event I'll go straight to this silk blouse and wear the handbag that looks more real, the shoe with the highest heels, even if it hurts me, but it's the most real shoe, everything the most [giggles]… the most real, everything that looks the most expensive, most branded, right?"
>
> *(Amy, female, 25, salesperson)*

Amy stated that she was at ease creating outfits with her inspired handbag and several counterfeits for regular, mundane, night outs. However, for special occasions Amy relied on the material conductivity from her silk blouse to convey realness to her fashion ensemble, also using the tactic of artistry. Therefore, Amy's quotes show that the occasion drives the selection of the materials, and not the consumption objects while counterfeits only need to match the realness of her consumption experience. This explains why mundane experiences allow for ensembles with several counterfeits and even inspired-items while extraordinary experiences require a carefully chosen and meticulously combined outfit. This additionally prevents symbolic and social pollution (Lupton, 1999b), as seen in Catherine's quote at the beginning of this chapter.

Certainly, social experiences convey meanings to any consumption practices but consumers of counterfeits engage in processes of materialisation that transform the social environment into creative spaces (Ferreira & Scaraboto, 2016). In order for this to happen consumers' material engagement with counterfeits must create 'strong links between embodied practices, imagination and emotion' (Woodward, 2011, p.367). To illustrate the creative space in the consumption of counterfeits the following discussion focuses on three quotes from an informant, all involving a single product.

Thomas, during his interview, described several social experiences where object–consumer interaction transformed the subjectivity of both object and subject (Borgerson, 2013). First he stated:

> Well, I went to this fancy wedding wearing my fake Boucheron. It was the only watch that suited my suit. Lovely suit! I bought it at a Fashion Mall [upper class mall in Rio de Janeiro]. Not a famous brand though but it cost me 3,000 Reais [£900]. In that case I think my suit increased the value of my watch, you know?
>
> *(Thomas, male, 52, architect)*

Here again it is possible to see conductive materialisation in the interviewee's tactics: the best counterfeits with the best materials (i.e. wool) for the best occasions. However, the role of the occasion should not be neglected; both occasion and material increased Thomas' experience with the counterfeit watch.

The following quote reveals a different consumption meaning creation process. Now Thomas talks about his experience with the same watch in a different social environment:

> I've noticed that when I'm wearing my watch [fake Boucheron] on my first meeting with a client, they seem to treat me nicer.
>
> *(Thomas, male, 52, architect)*

This quote shows that Thomas's intention is to impress future clients. As seen throughout the findings it was not uncommon for the interviewees in the study to evoke symbolic meanings in this way. However, looking at the informant's actions in the first quote, the counterfeit received meanings from another object (an expensive suit) and

later the same item delivered significance to the person (by increasing his profile). Hence, the interlaced process of materialisation can be an ongoing and transformative one. When consumers extend this process to the social environment.

> The other day I was in a hurry so I picked the first watch I saw [fake Boucheron] then I wore a t-shirt, shorts and my Havaianas [a cheap product in Brazil] and went down to the bakery. People started staring at me thinking I was crazy to wear jewellery and rubber flip flops.
>
> *(Thomas, male, 52, architect)*

In this latest quote Thomas manages to articulate a third consumption meaning with the same counterfeit watch.

On the one hand, there is the special-occasion (wedding) and elegant outfits, and thus meanings around the counterfeit watch are played down—the suit increased the value of the watch. On the other hand, there is the mundane-occasion (bakery) and basic clothes, so meanings are piled up and now the watch becomes jewellery. Thus Thomas's watch covers both sides of the occasion and materials rational similarly to Amy. More importantly, when looking at Thomas's quotes altogether it is possible to see that the only limitation to the meaning creation process is consumers' imagination. Hence consumers of counterfeits do more than assembling fashion ensembles; they create constellations where meanings and practices are strategically conveyed into real consumption experiences.

8.3.1.2 *Authenticating actions*

It was seen in Douglas' (Douglas, 1982; 1992; 2013) work that notions of risk also help individuals to create cultural strategies to protect their own integrity. However the materiality of consumption objects that facilitates the creation of constellations may also put consumers' integrity at risk by denouncing the existence of counterfeits in modes of consumption compromising consumers' integrity. An example is seen in Paul's quote below. This interviewee was asked about the durability of counterfeits but presented a different perspective:

Paul: "Durability?"

Interviewer: "Yes."

Paul: "I need to take that into account. I need to think about that because I had shirts that after three washes were completely misshapen. I binned them. I inspect the material you know? To study it. That's why hmm… before buying it's better to check the original first. Some, you just wing it. Then you buy it and get burnt. Then people ask: 'where is that cool shirt?' I then tell the truth. If it's a nice and flashy shirt people ask. Then what you are going to say? 'I lent it to someone'? You expose yourself! If you don't buy a quality product you are going to use it very few times. Well, it's that situation… when you buy nice things, from nice brands, people start keeping an eye on you […]. Sometimes people ask, but they keep wondering because they think it doesn't look expensive, but they can't decide if it is or not. Suddenly for you one seems expensive and not the other, but then the person thinks: 'well, if he was using that fake I wonder he is using this one instead'. One is fake, the other is original in another situation."

(Paul, male, 25, junior analyst)

Paul's quote helps us to understand that what is at stake is not only the product performance, but also his integrity. In Paul's quote the risk lies in his friends asking why he no longer uses his t-shirt. This would create uncertainties regarding the ownership of other products that, sometimes, are genuine-items. He is aware that his consumption objects have collective meanings. He also knows that when a clothing item is aesthetically interesting his friends are expecting a repetition of this piece in his fashion ensembles. Thus Paul needs to think strategically about the social implications of owning a low-grade counterfeit t-shirt in the long term because the impossibility of vouching for the material presence of counterfeits in future fashion ensembles also jeopardises the meanings that he obtains collectively from all of his possessions.

Authenticating action then considers the co-ownership of consumption objects over time in the development of strategies to protect consumers' integrity. Amanda owns several counterfeits and genuine handbags and she explained her consumption strategy:

Amanda: "One of the things that for me is a no no hmm… how can I say? It's when a handbag I like is from a popular brand and it is clear that it is a fake. I prefer the ones from less known brands. Because then people won't associate: 'this person is using hmm I wonder if it's original or not?' Then you don't have this problem, you know? So, I hmm have got one or two. I've got two Louis

Vuitton [handbags] that I bought in New York in this same scheme, a Chinese store. I fell in love with the handbags and I inspected them inside and out and I couldn't find any defects; they looked original. They look hum. And they were very small. They are small, not those large ones that people think you spend millions on, they are small. So I thought that they didn't give it away easily, you know? So, because they look so much like originals I don't use them just anywhere. It's funny. I just use them when I go out."

Interviewer: "Interesting."

Amanda: "Yes [giggles] Because they look so much like the original that they are… and in the case of Louis Vuitton, it's not only the buckle right? The print by itself stands out. Then, I don't use them for everyday, that's why they last so long."

(Amanda, female, 56, product manager)

Amanda's strategy is much more sophisticated than Catherine's, who alternates several first-rate counterfeit handbags but excludes fakes from traditional luxury brands (Truong, McColl & Kitchen; Kapferer & Bastien, 2009) because such handbags do not fit her social position (page 169), as seen in chapter six. Like Paul, Amanda considers the co-ownership of counterfeits and genuine-items strategically. Probably Amanda had already rejected counterfeit handbags that would be considered an anomaly in her modes of consumption. Just to recall, Amanda resorts to sensorial materialisation when selecting her handbags, as seen in chapter seven (page 171). In this quote Amanda explains that she controls the display of her handbags that are counterfeits of luxury brands (Truong, McColl & Kitchen; Kapferer & Bastien, 2009) while she uses counterfeits and genuine handbags of deluxe brands (Thomas, 2007) for work. Hence, the selective display of counterfeits and genuine-items helps Amanda to authenticate her modes of consumption.

Materiality was also taken into consideration in an additional authenticating action. Amanda not only selected first-rate counterfeit handbags in Chinatown, she also considered the product size—small—the one that would look like she could afford it. Amanda works in a mid-level managerial position in a multinational firm and thus she considers the materiality of an object (size) in relation to her social position, not only in relation to the genuine-item (similarity). Hence in addition to selective display of her handbags Amanda also co-ordinates the materiality of the counterfeits with her social

identity in the development of a second authenticating action.

An additional example of authenticating action can be found in another quote from Paul's interview. After a very long description of his brother's business practices and different designs of gold-plated silver necklaces Paul spontaneously said:

> You need to be shameless to use it… Because people will notice. You don't have the kind of money to be wearing a necklace like that. It's shameless. I'm on foot [pause]. Let's say I'm on foot or riding a motorcycle around here. Do you think it makes sense to be wearing a 20,000 Reais [£6,000] necklace around here? It can't happen right? I find pendants that combine to form your name, but this is... unusual. I kind of like silver, because silver is not unusual because it's much cheaper. But gold, I don't like it very much.

(Paul, male, 25, junior analyst)

Paul's quote shows a very sophisticated triangulation between his social identity, the materiality of the counterfeit and his extended possessions (Belk, 1988), or more precisely the lack of them. Paul has a high status in his community in Santa Cruz as he holds a good position in an insurance company based in the city centre. Santa Cruz is a very poor neighbourhood located in Rio de Janeiro's west zone far away from the city centre. Thus his social position and taste acquired for working in a more "cosmopolitan" neighbourhood authenticate his nice clothes even when they are counterfeits. However Paul does not own a car or a motorcycle making the gold-plated silver necklaces difficult to incorporate into his modes of consumption without raising suspicions about him as well as his possessions.

Overall these quotes show that the strategy of authenticating action involves trying to suppress the "bad" materiality that is intrinsic to counterfeit goods.

8.3.1.3 Constant monitoring

Material interactions are intense and risks are ever present. For these reasons consumers of counterfeits are constantly monitoring their objects, themselves and the others that are trying to control, as much as possible, the outcomes of their consumption experiences around counterfeit goods. This is an additional strategy that takes into

consideration consumers' experiences in the social environment. Therefore constant monitoring complements their strategy of authenticating action, which focuses primarily on consumers' interactions within social groups. Constant monitoring is evidenced in the findings chapters (Chap. 6 and 7) and thus this section discusses the reasons why consumers strategically monitor their consumption experiences in everyday life.

Monitoring the object

It was argued that consumers take good care of their counterfeits because in this way they can incorporate the otherness—the counterfeits—into their modes of consumption without causing symbolic and social pollution (Lupton, 1999b). Evaluating product performance (Bush, Bloch & Campbell, 1993) is a common risk management practice. However there is an additional type of monitoring that is needed while they are using their counterfeits. Thomas explained:

> Thomas: "Something that is important is that my watches, a few originals which didn't cost much, are more sporty. I use them when I go to a casual event, especially because I can see the time better and I know they won't give me problems. They will not stop working suddenly [laughing out loud] and I will need to get it sorted. That already happened. [continues to laugh and talking] but I have already sent replicas to be fixed and they returned working perfectly. Nowadays they have Swiss precision."

> *(Thomas, male, 52, architect)*

It was seen in the findings that Thomas services his counterfeit watches (pages 176-177). The practice of enhanced materialisation was also seen when Thomas changed his watch wristband for a model made with leather (page 203). This time he revealed an additional reason, which was to ensure that the counterfeit watches would not let him down on a social occasion. Regularly servicing watches is an example of a constant monitoring strategy implemented by Thomas to avoid social embarrassment. Hence, it is possible to see that risk and materiality intersect in such a way that consumers can have some control of the outcomes of their consumption experiences around counterfeit goods.

Monitoring the others

Monitoring the perception of others is a very common strategy in the consumption of counterfeits. Sally, in the previous chapter (page 203), gave up wearing a counterfeit handbag because of a negative interaction between the materials, whereby her jeans stained her counterfeits. However, there was an additional reason why she gave up the counterfeit handbag. Returning to the topic later Sally revealed:

> Sally: "I don't use [counterfeit handbags] anymore… I don't like… I find them ugly. Because I often go to malls like this one [the interview was conducted in a upper-middle class mall]. People notice that it's not [original]. I feel [laughs] self-conscious, you know? That's why I don't use them. I would rather buy a handbag at Ponta do Pé in Saens Peña [a local brand from a popular retailer] and it's sorted. I use the handbag and there is nothing special about it. The other one [fake] only stresses me out, so that's it, why I try to use it […]. When I go to [the mall] Rio Design. That's something that I think puts you off from going there. I want to enter a store and try things. It doesn't matter if I like it or not. The saleswoman doesn't have to check whether I'm wearing a branded trainer. Anyway, I went in because I saw something I liked. Then there I feel I bit repressed because I can't… because I don't feel comfortable entering the stores. Like I told you about Chanel… I don't know, maybe there is something I can [afford], and I'm crazy to have it and I would spend my whole wage to have it. But then you look at those impeccably dressed saleswomen and they look down on you. I feel that represses you. But you want to own that, and you don't know how to acquire that, either because of the price or the way it is sold. Then you look for an alternative, right? That is the counterfeit, replica, buying abroad, anyway, I look for something else, right?"

> *(Sally, female, 27, bank clerk)*

Sally is uncomfortable with her social experience. The handbag's materiality denounces the existence of counterfeits in her modes of consumption. In chapter seven Sally stated that she had given up using her counterfeit handbag because its fabric stained by rubbing on her jeans. Therefore she started monitoring the reaction of others, particularity the salespeople in the mall.

However, constantly monitoring the perception of others is not necessarily done with the aim of preventing mistakes and further social embarrassment. Constant monitoring can also bring enjoyment if the consumers achieve some social approval. As Catherine stated:

> Catherine: "Once I entered a store in São Paulo and I was wearing a Miu-Miu

handbag, red, gorgeous. Then I went in and asked the price of a handbag. Then the saleswoman told me the price. I said: 'Expensive, no?' And she replied: 'not as expensive as yours'. I stayed quiet [short laugh], not as expensive as yours. She thought mine was original, right?"

Interviewer: "Was it a fake?"

Catherine: "Yes, it was a fake. But it was new, right, so it looked nice. It was fake and I: ok [short laugh]"

(Catherine, female, 53, scout for TV shows and advertising)

Monitoring themselves

This constant monitoring strategy is about self-control. Antony exemplified well his lack of self-control.

Antony: "Leo is a guy who has brought stuff to us here at the saloon for quite some time now, you know? He even told me where he buys the products he sells. I've been there a couple of times already, but it looks like he has something. I went to the place… it's in São Paulo, you know? I saw the merchandise, but it seems that when he is the one who picks them up, it looks like, the handbag has hmm… It's hard to explain."

Interviewer: "Interesting."

Antony: "Yes, it's very interesting."

Interviewer: "I never thought it worked that way."

Antony: "How it works? What he taught me… I'll try to teach you. There are consumers and there are the people who sell to consumers. I have a different view from his, you know? He has the vendor's perspective, so he inspects the merchandise… he spots things that I can't. When you have the buyer's perspective sometimes you buy a product and you only realise that it is defective or you don't like it when you get home… Because first you have that initial euphoria of buying. Then afterwards you have the euphoria for the passion of using. I have bought many fake products that when I got home: 'shi… why did I buy this? That's not what I wanted.' You know? Then I wanted to return them. But then there were products, especially originals that I bought in sales and I couldn't return them, you know? Then I end up putting that product aside somewhere and giving it to someone."

(Antony, male, 31, hair stylist)

Sometimes the consumption object is so alluring to Antony that he loses control and

does not scrutinise the product as he should. Thus the lack of self-control inevitably results in a regrettable consumption experience. Paul, probably the most experienced consumer interviewed, also talked about failing in his constant monitoring:

> Interviewer: "Can you tell me about your most recent experience at Uruguaiana?"
>
> Paul: "The last time I went there? The last time I went there to buy a mobile phone and I had a tough time. They kept sending me from one store to another and in the end I was left with a broken mobile."
>
> Interviewer: "What did you do? Didn't you return there to complain?"
>
> Paul: "I couldn't find the vendor any more. That's another thing… once you are there hmm… if you want to buy electronic products you need a store with a good reference. There are tons of people offering: 'Look, I'm selling. Are you looking for this?' A clear example, that is very popular… it's the Xbox. The [regulated] stores and Uruguaiana are both selling [originals]… there [Uruguaiana] cost 600 Reais [£180]. You go in a rush, and then the guy fools you and gives you another one [different from the one you tested]."
>
> *(Paul, male, 25, junior analyst)*

Buying electronics at Uruguaina is a risky business but Paul manages the situation through a set of risk-related practices, as seen in the previous chapter (pages 167-170). However, this time he was allured by the vendor's offer and lost control of the situation. In both quotes, failing to stay in control resulted in negative consumption experiences. In the section on associated materialisation, Elliot carefully decided which parts to display or hide in his fashion ensemble. Self-control is an underlying rationale in his meticulous action and therefore is a constant monitoring strategy.

Altogether the tactics of monitoring the object's material integrity, and measuring social (dis)approval and self-control expand consumers' action from the individual to the macro-social level, because it has shown that consumers not only perceive material differences among the products, but they also use these differences to their advantage. For instance, the combination of a counterfeit shirt which is materially rich with a pair of jeans which is plain cotton makes the most of conductive materialisation, as seen in Antony's quote on page 197.

8.3.1.4 Developing competencies

The social environment in emerging markets is constantly changing. In addition fashion dynamics and a constant influx of new products with features to deter counterfeiting create a cat-and-mouse game where the consumption of counterfeits requires that consumers do not tire of searching, creating elaborate ensembles and undertaking mindful actions. Hence continuously developing competencies is the way in which consumers stay in the game. The findings chapters (Chap. 6 and 7) describe an array of practices that consumers develop to manage risks and materialise meanings in the consumption of counterfeits.

Trial and error

Developing competences is a trial and error process, as seen in Catherine's quote below:

> Catherine: "You know which handbag I'm talking about right? One who knows about these things or works at a store or works with these products will notice it has a different line. You will notice this here see? It's smudged, can you see it? [showing another handbag]. That's more wax that I applied that smudged. Then people will notice, because of the zipper, or another detail they will know. Now, from where you are can you spot the difference?"
>
> *(Catherine, female, 53, scout for TV shows and advertising)*

In the previous chapter Catherine talked about simulating a patina effect on her handbags (page 204). In this passage it is possible to see that the practice of enhanced materialisation was perfected over time with some unsuccessful trials along the way.

Knowledge Sharing

In the same way that consumers try and find the best way to use and even to improve their counterfeits they also share knowledge within their social group. As can be seen from the following quote, Catherine taught her daughter Amy to identify a counterfeit handbag:

> Amy: "Ah, because I hmm we saw once in a store, remember I said: 'mum, look at that woman, the woman is wearing a handbag just like yours'. This print here

was very similar [point at the bag]. But my mum said: 'Hers is fake'."

Catherine: "That's because the handle was very light, you know? Very waxed."

Amy: "Then you need to know the details and see if she can disguise it better."

(Amy, female, 25, salesperson and Catherine, female, 53, scout for TV shows and advertising)

Sharing knowledge is in fact a very common way to develop competencies. Matt explained in the previous chapter that he likes to develop a relationship with vendors at Uruguaiana. However later he explained that he had learned the dynamics of the camelódromo as well as selecting first-rate counterfeits with his uncle:

Interviewer: "Can you describe me a typical day shopping for counterfeits?"

Matt: "A typical day? It was Saturday morning, no, it was Saturday afternoon and I had nothing better to do and I often went there with my uncle who enjoyed going there. He lives with me and used to invite me to go there […]. The truth is hmm… my uncle also likes to buy [counterfeits] and I started learning from him about these and I went there often with him. I had some interesting experiences with some products and some not so interesting ones with others. Those were experiences with shirts and underwear, for example Dolci & Gabana underwear I bought a couple of times from a vendor who usually sells first-rate products. What else? A shirt. Yes, I bought a shirt as well. With my uncle I bought some jeans, for example, some jeans that are still lasting. See? These type of products are the kind of products which last. I have had no problems and they last a long time."

(Matt, male, 31, lecturer)

James is another consumer who also shares his knowledge with close relatives while consuming counterfeits at the camelódromo of Uruguaina:

James: "I like to go alone, but sometimes I go with my cousin. I like to walk around there hmm."

Interviewer: "Is your cousin good company?"

James: "He visits the store before he decides to buy, you see? He likes to browse everything first, compare prices, etc. Otherwise he could buy a shirt here and then see another shirt that he likes more elsewhere, you know? I first need to select everything I'm going to buy."

(James, male, 25, unemployed)

James benefits from his cousin's knowledge. His cousin checks the genuine-item in the store beforehand. They also have the same buying style, which also facilitates knowledge sharing.

Keeping Updated

Like James' cousin, Paul explains that he also checks the genuine-item in the store. Paul's quote contains additional information. He visits the store not only to compare genuine-items with their counterfeits but also to keep up with the fashion trends.

> Paul: "The most important thing is for you to check the original."
>
> Interviewer: "Where do you go to check the original?"
>
> Paul: "I go to the store. I go there, buy something, try the others so I can learn from them and then you go and look for them elsewhere. And you find them. Although there are some you can't find […]. Ah, you buy a cheaper model. At these stores, you look and there are more accessible shirts, you look for those and buy a 'light' model. And then you check for new arrivals, what's new… you look, you try them. [And then you say to the salespeson] 'It fitted well, but I won't buy it this time. I'll save it for next time.'"
>
> *(Paul, male, 25, junior analyst)*

Sofia prefers blogs to learn how to create fashion ensembles:

> Sofia: "In general what happens? I'm the kind of person who follows ninety thousand fashion blogs. Then I kind of have a general idea of what I want […]. I think it has changed a lot because nowadays we have access to blogs, not only Brazilian but also foreign ones. I think this gives hmm… Although there are some trends that I think are too explicit right? We now have the opportunity to see these things."
>
> *(Sofia, female, 50, mid-size business owner)*

In both of these quotes the interviewees stated that they find their way to be ahead in the game by following the latest fashion. This is another developing competency necessary to fully enjoy the experiences around the consumption of counterfeits.

Overall the developing competencies strategy and its tactics (i.e. trial and error,

knowledge sharing and keeping updated) play an important role in keeping consumers' experiences going. Nevertheless the four consumption strategies are constantly interacting as the findings from the empirical elements of the study demonstrate.

8.4 EVERYDAY CONSUMPTION EXPERIENCE

In the consumption of counterfeits material and social interactions are rich and imagination abounds and consumers' effort to manage the untruthfulness of these goods transforms the consumption of counterfeits into an genuine 'inalienable culture' (Miller, 1987, p.17). Genuine products, on the other hand, prove hard to re-contextualise putting them in a position of alienating objects (Miller, 1987; 2005). Figure 8.4 brings an empirical example of the convergence between materiality and risk where the consumer implements the strategy of creating a constellation in a virtual social environment that supports this idea.

Figure 8.4
Everyday Consumption Experience

Translation from the post:

Look: animal print with bright colours
Style by Aline Rezender

Today's look is quite relaxed without losing the playfulness and style! I chose a leopard print top with black leggings then colourful sunglasses and handbag just to spice it up! As you all have seen on Facebook and Instagram I bought a pink handbag inspired by Céline at Ali Express and wanted to come soon and post it for you guys. By the way, these sunglasses are a replica of a Ray-Ban sold at Moda Fashion. I'm really into replicas for my look of the day because even my sandals from Imporium are inspired by Hérmés!!!

I've only just realised it!! haahahhaha

Source: Blog Malucas e Piradas by Aline Rezener (March 6, 2013). Observational data: collected by the author of this thesis.

In this image it is possible to see that Aline transformed her blog into a creative space (Ferreira & Scaraboto, 2016) because her photos and more importantly, the description of her fashion ensemble, transcends embodied practices, being overloaded with emotions and imagination (Woodward, 2011). Aline's consumption of counterfeits is also very public. Even though she prefers the word replica she does not cover her face showing audacity in her behaviour. Audacity is a risk management practice as discussed in the findings and Aline also extends this practice to her virtual social environment. Overall this example shows how Aline's dynamic experiences around counterfeits are supported by consumption strategies that balance materiality and risk intensifying the meanings in the consumption of counterfeits.

8.5 SUMMARY

The palette of marketplace options illustrates consumers' search in markets where inspired imitations and counterfeits abound and thus it lends support to the claim that the motivation for consuming counterfeits is consumers' desire for fashion, and not necessarily just for luxury goods. Further evidence that consumers create outfits combining genuine-items, counterfeits and inspired-items helps to demonstrate that consumers' goals in acquiring and using counterfeits may be achieved through non-luxury and even non-branded products.

The palette of marketplace options also proposes that consumers balance the materiality and risks involved in the choice among many products of a similar design. Therefore the model dynamic explains that as the materiality of counterfeits improves the risk reduces. However counterfeits will never be risk free. Some consumers may have fun and even joke about them but this does not change the fact that for a meaningful consumption experience they must implement at least one of these four strategies to keep consuming counterfeits: 1) creating constellations; 2) authenticating actions; 3) constantly monitoring; and 4) developing competencies.

Creating constellations. In the creating constellations strategy an underlining logic was identified in the creation of fashion ensembles where consumers match materials with

the occasion. For instance, fine silk or wool are worn for special events and rubber or cotton for mundane experiences. In this way consumers manage to "fit" the counterfeits properly to the occasion and thus the meanings and practice are strategically conveyed into a genuine consumption experience.

Authenticating actions. In the authenticating actions strategy the aim is to prevent uncertainties regarding their modes of consumption. Therefore consumers avoid products whose materiality could denounce that their fashion ensemble includes counterfeits. In this strategy the underlying idea is that counterfeits should be truthful with regard to their social identities.

Constant monitoring. In the constant monitoring strategy consumers try to control unwanted outcomes of their consumption experiences around counterfeit goods. Therefore they constantly monitor the otherness (Douglas, 1982; 1992; 2013) in their objects, themselves and the others in the social environment. Consequently, a constant monitoring strategy helps to understand the way consumers' action extends from individual to the macro-social level.

Developing competencies. In the developing competencies strategy consumers act in response to the constantly changing social environment. Thus they engage in a series of tactics that help them to keep up with the latest fashion and new product features created to deter counterfeiting besides dealing with the abundant choices they face in the marketplace. This strategy works as a catalyst in the ongoing experiences around the consumption of counterfeits.

The strategies of creating constellations and authenticating actions rely heavily on the material combination of all of their consumption goods, not only counterfeits. Meanwhile in the strategies of constant monitoring and developing competencies social interactions play a more important role therefore risk themes become more evident. Considering that the four consumption strategies are in constant interaction it is possible to claim that these strategies implemented by consumers of counterfeits help them in shaping their social identity and in their experiences around the consumption of counterfeit goods.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

This chapter draws the conclusions of the study and highlights what the main contributions of the research have been. It also discusses the limitations of the research before going on to propose a future research agenda.

9.1 INTRODUCTION

The overall purpose of this research project was to develop an enhanced understanding of consumers' everyday experiences with counterfeit goods. In order to do this the research considered the concepts of risk and materiality in conjunction with the relevant literature and an empirical study. The main guiding force for the primary research was to explore the way consumers articulate cultural meanings by developing consumption practices supporting the inclusion of counterfeits in their modes of consumption. The aim of this chapter is to draw together the conclusions of the study and discuss its overall contribution to the field of consumer research. It also discusses the study's limitations and then proposes fruitful areas for future research.

9.2 CONSUMERS' EVERYDAY EXPERIENCES WITH COUNTERFEIT GOODS

Drawing on literature from the fields of risk and materiality, this thesis conducted an interpretive study that explores the meanings and practices arising from the consumption of counterfeit goods. It did so in order to contribute to the growing number of studies that draw on the consumer culture literature to interpret the marketing phenomenon.

The review of the consumer behaviour literature highlighted the importance of the experiential aspects of the consumption of counterfeits and, in particular, the self-expressive content of much consumption activity. It also drew attention to the role of consumers' ability in generating the many complex meanings underpinning their consumption experiences around these goods. However consumption meanings are important for consumers not only because they support identity projects but also

because they help consumers to experience social realities. On this basis, it became relevant to investigate the consumption strategies implemented by consumers of counterfeits in shaping their social identities and experiences around the consumption of these goods.

The review of the literature on the consumption of counterfeits showed that risk is an important aspect in the consumption of these goods, yet this concept has been mainly explored by positivist consumer research studies as predictive variable for consumers' purchasing intentions neglecting that consumers' notion of risk is created and negotiated through social interactions (Lupton, 1999a). Consumer Culture Theory (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) studies have started to address the topic pointing out that consumers in plentiful markets of counterfeits navigate among untrustworthy marketplace situations (Kuever, 2014) as they seek enjoyable consumption experiences (Perez, Castaño & Quintanilla, 2010). The review in this thesis, based on wider social science literature, shows that consumers' perceptions of risk are formed according to their cultural underpinnings and mediated in line with their experience in society. The findings on risk are discussed later in this chapter.

Only recently have a few studies started to acknowledge the material aspects of counterfeits (Kravets & Sandikci, 2014; Kuever, 2014). However to the best of the researcher's knowledge this is the first research to empirically investigate materiality in the consumption of counterfeits in the Consumer Culture Theory (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) domain.

The review of the literature on the consumption of counterfeits also pointed out that most studies opt for a narrow frame of counterfeits as luxury goods. Therefore a thorough review of the seminal works on fashion consumption was carried out. This review demonstrated that the consumption of counterfeits is in fact the consumption of imitations of fashion styles. The implication of this theoretical extension is twofold. First, similar products could be taken into consideration in the creation of fashion ensembles as long as this product refers to the conceptual fashion product. Thus inspired-items become part of consumers' palette of marketplace options. Second, as much as consumers value brands the consumption of counterfeits is consumption with

brands rather than consumption of brands. Consumers that truly value a brand consume the genuine product they like the most chosen from among many on offer in the licensed retailers in the marketplace navigating only the left side of the palette of marketplace options (page 212). Consumers of counterfeits on the other hand extend their search for fashion products navigating the complete palette options considering as well a variety counterfeits.

However the literature on fashion consumption does not fully explain why consumers are willing to go the extra mile and maybe even face some risks to consume counterfeits. That is when the literature on materiality shows its relevance in understanding the consumption of counterfeits. The findings have shown that it is only through deep material interactions that counterfeits become meaningful to consumers. This happens because consumers need to rework their counterfeits not only symbolically but also physically. In the consumption of genuine products cultural meanings are reworked only symbolically because the guarantee of origin testifies the product's material qualities, such as its durability, performance and so on. When markets are less trustworthy consumers care more about the guarantee of origin, as occurs with global brands manufactured in China (Kuever, 2014).

In the consumption of clothing, a guarantee of origin is promptly testified by the brands and therefore consumers do not even need to dematerialise their fashion products. The fashion 'composite cultural industry' (Sassatelli, 2007, p.71) as well as marketers have already done this job for them, transforming products into malleable entities in order to influence markets and the dynamics of demand (Slater, 2002). Hence meanings are handed over to consumers and are almost ready to use. To express their individuality, consumers of genuine products rework these meanings via acts of personalisation. For instance, they may incorporate unusual items into their outfits. To express their creativity, consumers can alter the physical aspects of their objects, by doing some bricolage (Marion & Nairn, 2011).

Certainly counterfeits can be used for self expression (Hoe, Hogg & Hart, 2003; Strehlau, 2005; Gentry, Putrevu & Shultz, 2006; Perez, Castaño & Quintanilla, 2010; Jiang & Cova, 2012), but the findings have shown that consumers do much more than

use counterfeits as vessels for meaning. They re-contextualise the use of their counterfeits using fashion as a blueprint to communicate the desired meaning. But the novelty presented in this thesis is that other objects and materials are strategically placed into their fashion ensemble and therefore consumers manage to materialise their entire outfit; in this thesis this is called an interlaced process of materialisation. At this level of material interaction counterfeits become very interesting, and even alluring to many consumers.

An expensive handbag dictates its usage: posh party. Yet consumers do not want such constraints. They want to wear rubber flip-flops with an uber expensive (fake) watch to free their imagination. Thomas only went to the bakery down on the corner but he felt like a millionaire walking around Cannes. To him no genuine product would be so rewarding and thus he cares for his watches. The physicality of his watches is impeccable as are his dreams. It is true that many would consume counterfeits as disposable objects but the possibility for consumers to recast their imagination using fashion objects as they wish is available to all. It only needs a deep, productive, material interaction.

Inevitably the consumption of counterfeits changes consumers' social experiences. Their playfulness in the creation of fashion ensembles was self-evident. However the consumption of counterfeits is not only about adventures and fooling others, as seen in Perez, Castaño & Quintanilha (2010). The analysis and interpretation within the risk theme has shown that consumers do not feel ashamed of their choice but they do take the implications of their actions seriously. They are ethical in other instances in their lives, yet they need to deal with society's perceptions of counterfeits as unworthy products. Hence their creative freedom comes at a price, not a monetary one but a trade-off that requires a great deal of effort. To avoid uncertainties being raised about them consumers need to manage the risks beyond common situations.

Therefore risk management practices start even before they begin their search for counterfeits. Marketplaces are cherry picked, if possible. Then they carefully evaluate the vendors' business practices. A trusting relationship must be built, but this can be very rewarding (e.g. product reservation and exchange policy). Products, of course, are

the target of scrutiny. However consumers are not only looking for (dis)similarities; they want the purest counterfeits they can find, as the practice of thoroughly examining the products internally strongly suggests. Furthermore, risk management practices are a never-ending activity with consumers caring for their products over their lifespan. They seek to prevent symbolic pollution and thus worn, dingy and torn counterfeits have no place in their lives.

Trust, once more, is the way in which consumers manage how others perceive their cultural transgression; the inclusion of a "dirty" product (i.e. counterfeits) in their modes of consumption. When they trust the other person they ouvert their consumption of counterfeits, and even share precious knowledge. If they do not, they tell a white lie. Some consumers would tell lies as a matter of self-preservation but most of all their discourses indicated that they are trying to depollute their practices and defend their right to consume counterfeits. Risk themes contribute to the literature by showing that consumers of counterfeits have a holistic approach to risk and manage not only the risks involved in buying counterfeits but also their social experiences with these products.

Main Theoretical Contributions

This thesis takes an original approach to study the consumption of counterfeits by exploring the interconnection between meanings and practices. Therefore it discusses in great depth how consumers select their counterfeits, combine these products with genuine and inspired items, display their fashion ensemble and experience their social reality. Hence this thesis shows that the consumption of counterfeits is a creative act in which consumers strategically incorporate these products into their everyday consumption practice offering its first three contributions to the literature. First, by identifying of four strategies developed by consumers of counterfeits to support their social identity showing that the consumption of these products goes beyond the study of identity narratives contributing to interpretive consumer research, in particular Consumer Culture Theory (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) studies that have mainly investigated this phenomenon at individual level (as seen in Hoe, Hogg & Hart, 2003; Strehlau, 2005; Perez, Castaño & Quintanilla, 2010; Jiang & Cova, 2012). Second, in finding that counterfeits are combined with many fashion items this thesis contributes to

overall consumer research by showing that consumer practices go beyond co-ownership of counterfeits and genuine-items (as seen in Ahuvia et al., 2012; Stottinger & Penz, 2015). Finally, in showing that meanings in the consumption of counterfeits can arise from everyday practices around these products rather than extraordinary, luxury, consumption experience this thesis contributes to overall marketing literature.

The dynamics of macro-social contexts are translated by consumers in their everyday consumption practices. In investigating the marketplace culture rather than consumers' identity narratives this thesis aligns itself with what is happening at the moment in the Consumer Culture Theory (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) field bringing an additional contribution to the literature. This contribution is the palette of marketplace options, an alternative framework to the 'revise search model' (Gentry et al., 2001 p.264) that was challenged in the theoretical extension of the logic of equivalence of the signs (Baudrillard, 1988[1972]) presented in chapter four (pages 108-114). This extension fostered the debate about whether inspired-items should be included among consumers' search in markets where there is an abundant supply of and easy access to counterfeits. The findings in the study support the claim that consumers can recognise the key elements of materiality that make a product resemble another using this to define products as counterfeits or inspired-items, in spite of the brand display. In addition, the findings show that consumption risks are managed by consumers through their material scrutiny of counterfeits. Together these points bring convincing evidence that materiality and risk are essential to explaining consumers' search in plentiful markets of counterfeits.

Hence it is possible to argue that the 'revise search model' (Gentry et al., 2001 p.264) offers a limited explanation regarding consumers' search in plentiful markets of counterfeits while the palette of marketplace options (page 212) pictures the whole pallet of choices that consumers have in markets where there is an abundant supply of and easy access to counterfeits and inspired-items. In these markets consumers' search goes from the finest luxury product (Truong, McColl & Kitchen; Kapferer & Bastien, 2009) in privileged neighbourhoods to the poorest reproduction on sale in popular markets. Most importantly, through the palette of marketplace options this thesis consolidates the claim that the consumption of fashion is the underlying motivation in

the consumption of counterfeits. Therefore it is possible to infer that consumers' goals in acquiring and using counterfeits may be achieved through non-luxury products, and even through non-branded imitations.

The palette of marketplace options also challenges the idea of authenticity imposed by fashion brands that make use of trademark laws to legitimize their claim but in fact only offer to consumers a guarantee that their products are produced and sold by authorized companies. This is not to say that consumers of counterfeits don't value brands, quite the contrary. Brands are always present in the consumption of counterfeits. Even when they think that the materiality of the brand imposes more constrains than benefits in their search for products, as seen in Amanda's quote where she looks for a minimum sign of scratch in the metal tag (page 199). The key point is that the existence of many products resembling one another makes consumers more critical about the company business practices, like in-store service criticized by in Sally in chapter eight (page 227). Consequently consumers question the surplus charged for trademarked products opting for counterfeits. This at first glance may lead to the idea that counterfeits can undermine brand image however the multiple copies in the marketplace increase the brand visibility. Taking as example the case of Michel Kors, this brand has higher status in Brazil than in its country of origin even though the company owes its popularity to many counterfeits available in this market (pages 44-45). Therefore this finding contributes to the brand literature showing that counterfeits do not necessarily devalues brand image, as claimed by many studies.

The final theoretical contribution regards Arnould & Thompson's (2015) latest article argues that Consumer Culture Theory studies now navigate around 'four conceptual axes: (1) the ontological conception of culture as distributed networks; (2) the politics of consumption; (3) consumer marketing theoretics; and (4) regional cultural theoretics'. However it is argued that this thesis does not fit into the category of 'regional cultural theoretics' mainly because it disagrees with Arnould & Thompson's (2015) argument, which sets apart theoretical developments that do not come from Anglo-American societies. Such a categorisation indirectly complies with a "colonialist" view of knowledge production in which modernity becomes associated with the idea of westernisation (Mignolo, 1993). Therefore this categorisation reproduces an image of

the western experience as superior and, most importantly, maintains the peripheral position of non-Anglo-American societies in relation to modernity, which implies an understanding of the culture in these societies as peripheral in spatial terms and consequently late in temporal terms (Bortoluci & Jansen, 2013). As seen in Kravets & Sandikci's (2014) work emerging markets are as much relevant to theoretical developments as the theories developed that focus on Anglo-American societies. This thesis builds on Kravets & Sandikci's (2014) work in making an theoretical contribution to Consumer Culture Theory (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) showing that institutional boundaries are not relevant when it comes to theoretical developments.

Empirical contribution

The identification of the four consumption strategies employed by consumers of counterfeits also provides an empirical contribution to Consumer Culture Theory (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) literature. These strategies are the result of the convergence between the processes of materialisation and risk management practices engaged by consumers of counterfeits and they illustrate in practice how they carefully combine and deeply interact with the materiality of counterfeits, genuine and inspired items to creatively compose their fashion ensembles. However the use of their fashion ensembles cannot be set apart from consumers' experiences in society as the empirical data demonstrates. Social interactions, in fact, help consumers to manage the risks of consuming counterfeits. Just to recall the four strategies are: 1) authenticating actions; 2) creating constellations; 3) constant monitoring; and 4) developing competencies. The strategies of creating constellations and authenticating actions rely heavily on the material combination of all of their consumption goods, not only counterfeits. Meanwhile in the strategies of constant monitoring and developing competencies social interactions play a more important role. Considering that the four consumption strategies are constantly interacting it is possible to claim that these strategies implemented by consumers of counterfeits help them in shaping their social identity and in their experiences around the consumption of counterfeit goods.

9.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

Methodologically, although data were collected from different sources more data could have been gathered by employing other data collection methods. It would have been advantageous to record the face-to-face interviews on a video recorder to grasp the true extent of the emotions displayed by the informants throughout their encounters. In addition, several of the interviews were conducted at the informants' homes and occasionally, voluntarily, they showed their counterfeits to the researcher. Recording these moments of material interaction would have been extremely valuable. It would also have been advantageous to ask the informants to take pictures, for instance with their mobile phones, of their outfits over a period of time and then conduct a follow-up interview. This could have brought more nuanced information not only about materiality but also about their social experiences with their counterfeits.

This study is primarily concerned with the voice of consumers of counterfeits. However it would have been interesting to gain some insight into non-consumers' perspectives regarding these products, for instance, to understand their notion of risk and to see whether they avoid counterfeits because they are risk averse. Drawing attention to the role of the researcher as the instrument of the interpretivist process, it is important to consider that the analysis and the interpretation process were guided by the researcher's pre-understanding in terms of the academic literature, professional expertise and personal experience. Regarding the latter, the researcher has no personal experience of consuming counterfeits. This brings an exempted perspective on the issue; on the other hand, it could have greatly sensitised her to the consumer perspective. Hence it is worth acknowledging this personal limitation.

The overall interpretivist approach together with grounded theory aimed to seek a deep understanding of consumers' everyday experiences with counterfeit goods. Rather than testing a theory as the positivist paradigm encourages, this study sought to build it in line with the research strategy adopted. Therefore the findings in this study cannot be subject to any form of statistical analysis. It is argued that grounded theory is a research strategy that allows theoretical developments because 'hypotheses and concepts not only come from the data, but are systematically worked out in relation to the data during the course of the research (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.2). Furthermore, this approach 'also has a built-in mandate to strive towards verification through the process of

category saturation' (Goulding, 2002, p.44). Notwithstanding its limitations, a 'grounded theory that conceptualizes and conveys what is meaningful about a substantive area can make a valuable contribution' (Charmaz, 2006, p.183).

9.4 AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The primary emphasis of this research has been to gain a deeper and more insightful understanding of how consumers articulate the cultural meanings developing consumption distinctive practices to support the inclusion of counterfeits in their modes of consumption. This was done exclusively from the consumers' perspective. However the findings point out that, at least in Brazil, there is a movement towards the institutionalisation of the popular markets and vendors selling counterfeits in social networks. Thus this study opens up the possibility to research many new and existing aspects of materiality in retail outlets, for instance, vendors' motivation and rationale in offering additional services and even products with extra material components to allure consumers.

In fact, there are many other contexts in which materiality theorisation can be explored, such as communities of practices, as many examples in Schau, Muñiz & Arnould (2009). Do-it-yourself (DIY) practice is particularly interesting. This consumption practice has been investigated by Watson & Shove (2008 pp. 71-72) in line with actor network theory (Latour, 2005). These authors see DIY as a practice that integrates object, skills and knowledge. To contribute to the existing knowledge research could be conducted paying particular attention to objects' aesthetics and their capacity to enlist the experiential aspect of DIY practice using the notion of productive material interaction to pay more attention to the agency of the objects rather than focusing solely on human agency.

It would be fascinating to gain a deeper insight into risk management practices. In sociology, there have been developments regarding the concept of habitus (Bourdieu, 1986). And a few studies have started to discuss the possibility of generative capacity in the habitus (Noble & Watkins, 2003; Crawshaw, 2004). In developing the concept of

habitus Bourdieu (1986) was mainly concerned with its structured and reproductive nature (Smith & Riley, 2009). However Crossley (2001) claims that knowledge, skill and practical competence are acquired through socialisation. Hence this would bring some ambiguity to habitus because through sociality individuals would learn how to "bluff" their habitus (Crossley, 2001). Featherstone (2007[1991]) has discussed the possibility of a 'leaning' habitus as a consequence of consumption practices.

Advances have been made with regard to the habitus generative capacity in Noble & Watkins' (2003) work, which argues that habitus goes beyond the embodied predisposition formed in the early stages of life. The author claims that habitus is also an embodiment of the individual's social location and this process is self reflexive and impacts on dispositions 'changing the habitus form embodied capital to bodily capital' (Noble & Watkins, 2003, p.522). Complementing this idea Crawshaw (2004) has shown the individuals living in an unsafe neighbourhood develop "newish" habitus constructing risk as an ordinary event. It seems that risk has the capacity to transform habitus from a dormant, (sub)conscious, action into an habitual condition as a result of the repetition of a risky event. The new ideas on the concept of habitus (Bourdieu, 1986) could be extended to consumer behaviour in order to explore the consumption of counterfeits.

In spite of what is often said about the consumption of counterfeits being a matter of emulation and status competition, this thesis has shown that the consumption of counterfeits is a creative act which arouses the consumers' imagination although this act requires a bit of work. I would like to finish this work with an image I came across through the course of this study which well encapsulates this idea:

'With nylon stockings scarce, women would
paint their legs so it looked like stockings, 1942'
On Twitter @HistoryInPics (March 10, 2014)

Notes

[1] Imitations of styles often puzzle even experienced archaeologists willing to testify the authenticity of an artefact in which the carbon dating test reports a period in time that does not match with the piece's forms, the local culture or the location of the excavation site (Humphreys, 2002)

[2] It is worth noting that the real and false framework was the primary goal of Kuever's (Kuever, 2014) work as discussed in chapter two.

[3] In this passage Barthes (1990[1967], p.3) uses the symbol $\equiv$ to represent the relation of equivalence between the garment and reality.

[4] Figure 4.2 (page 95) helps to understand what Barthes (1990[1967], p.213) means by 'the sign of the vestimentary code, divested of its rhetorical apparatus'. In the graphic, the item 1. Real vestimentary code has two boxes: Sr clothing and Sd world. Sr stands for signifier, the physical aspects of the sign, as such the clothes became the material representation of one vestimentary code (i.e. one fashion ensemble). Sd stands for signified, the meanings conveyed by the sign, which is generated through the speech around one ensemble making reference to the real world. Thus divesting the rhetorical apparatus means to exclude the Sd world and all that is left is the sign, an abstract idea, symbolized by an idealized outfit.

[5] The examples used here were collected purposively over a period of three months, (between April and June, 2014) when the author of this thesis started following consumers' conversations around a particular topic, handbags, which pointed to a particular model in high evidence at the time. This premium inspired item was added in later (in April 2015).

[6] Although a considerable part of this section was published in Ferreira & Scaraboto (2016), I have written the majority of the materiality content.

[7] Pamela is in fact a fashionable lady (field observation). She used to work as a fashion stylist but nowadays she sells silver jewellery door-to-door. Her background certainly counts in favour of her ability to assemble fashion ensembles. Sofia and Thomas have never worked in the fashion industry, yet they show similar understandings of the system of fashion (Barthes, 1990[1967]).

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Appendix

Semi-structured questionnaire

Personal details:

Age:

Marriage status:

Occupation:

Number of children:

Number of people living at home:

Neighbourhood:

City:

Personal Income:

How much is spent on personal purchases:

Warming up questions:

This research is about shopping habits in general and not only about the purchase of replicas and counterfeit products. What kind of personal products do you like to buy? Personal products that you buy to pamper yourself in your leisure time.

Grand tour questions:

Can you describe to me a typical day when you are shopping for fun?

Probes:

- Where do you go?

- How often?

- Do you go alone or with someone else?

- How do you choose your products?

- What brands do you like?

- Do you consume counterfeit versions of branded clothes?

- Have you ever consumed these products?

Mini-tour questions:

Can you tell me what happened the last time you went shopping for counterfeits / replicas / personal products?

Example and Experience questions:

You probably have some interesting experiences with counterfeit products; can you recall any of them?

Tell me about the experience of buying or wearing counterfeit products that made you happiest / most disappointed / most proud / embarrassed?

Can you give me an example of a good counterfeit product?

Can you describe to me how you choose which counterfeit product you want to buy?

Now tell me about a disappointment. How did that make you feel?

What do you do with the product once it breaks or gets old?

Do feel upset? What else do you feel?

Do you try to return it? Try to repair it?

Do you mind if the product doesn't last long?

Does that put you off buying it again?

Structural question:

Besides price which other characteristics do you think are important when purchasing replicas / counterfeits / personal items?

Presuming questions:

Do you know if your friends buy counterfeit products?

Do they know you buy these products? / Do they know you know?

Do you mind their opinion?

What would you say to an acquaintance who asked you if you were using a counterfeit product?

How would that make you feel? Ashamed / Proud?

In a party, if someone made fun of people who consume counterfeit products, how would you react?

How would that make you feel? Ashamed / Proud?

Would that put you off buying counterfeits again?

Projective question – Social Relations:

How would you describe the fashion style of a typical consumer of replicas / counterfeits / personal items?

And what about a person who only wears branded products? How would you describe his/her fashion style?

When you are planning your outfit how do you decide what to wear?

Where do you look for inspiration for your outfit?

Do you pay attention to products' ads? Brands' ads?

Do you mix replicas/counterfeits and originals?

Are there any places where you wouldn't wear your replicas/counterfeits?

Projective question – Products:

Among all the products you mentioned which one is your favourite?

When you think about this product, what emotions come to your mind?

How does that make you feel?

If someone complimented you when you were wearing this product, how would that make you feel?

Thinking about a product you don't like, what emotions come to your mind?

How does that make you feel?

If someone complimented you when you were wearing this product, how would that make you feel?

Projective question – Brands:

Think about a brand you admire. What brand came to your mind?

If brand 'X' were an animal what animal would that be?

What about brand 'Y'?

How does that animal compare with the animal from brand X?

If brand 'X' were a person, what kind of person would that be?

What about brand 'Y'?

How does that person compare with person from brand 'X'?

Projective question – Product & Brand:

Now let's exercise you imagination. Imagine yourself, like in a dream, wearing your products and favourite brands. Tell me about your dream when you realise all your consumption desires?

What brands are in this dream?

Where would you be using all of these highly desired products?

Additional questions:

Do you think Brazilians value brands too much?

Are imported products given too much value as well? What do you think about this type of behaviour?

It is very easy to buy counterfeit products. If the government increased the control, would that put people off buying them?

Have you ever found yourself at risk when buying counterfeits?

Would that put you off buying these products again?

Wrapping up question:

We had a very interesting discussion. Is there anything else you would like to discuss?

What do you think about the collage exercise? Do you feel yourself well represented by the images you selected?