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Management of sustainable fashion retail based on reuse– A struggle with multiple logics
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ABSTRACT
In scholarly conversations, reuse is one of the common suggested strategies to render fashion retail sustainable. Previous research has stressed the complexity of fashion reuse and the importance of a well-organized system. The complexity stems from processes that involve many actors as well as products hard to evaluate. Consequently, it is challenging to organize reuse-based fashion retail, and studies are needed to further develop knowledge regarding how to manage such systems. Hence, the purpose of this paper is to highlight the complexity in the management of such an initiative, by identifying and explaining obstacles as well as implications. With institutional logics as a framework, three local logics (shopping mall, reuse, and work integration) are used to analyze the management of a reuse-based mall. Despite the mall’s success in getting sufficient donations and creating publicity, it has struggled to establish itself as viable reuse-based fashion retail. The findings illustrate the complexity created by the interplay of different logics and how the complexity influences both the daily and strategic management of the mall. Further, the outcome of this interplay depends largely on which rationality is enacted by involved actors. The study also extends literature on institutional logics, showing that differences in individual actors’ attention, knowledge, skills, coordination, and material conditions influence how logics are enacted and managed. We suggest that there are inherent managerial contradictions in the sustainable practices in fashion retail. Thus, in scholarly conversations, it is important to discuss what different divergent sustainability dimensions imply when seeking solutions for sustainable retail. In practice, there is a need to acknowledge and balance the presence of multiple logics, making it crucial to have competence in all logics. Also, managers of reuse-based fashion retail must consciously and continuously scrutinize their own strategies and actions to avoid an imbalance between the logics.

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Sustainable fashion retail; institutional logics; management of fashion reuse; multiple logics; circular fashion supply chain

Introduction
Fashion retailers as well as scholars have introduced reuse of fashion as a strategy to render fashion retail sustainable (Kant Hvass 2014; Karaosman, Morales-Alonso, and Brun 2017; Yang, Song, and Tong 2017). The main argument for reuse is that it decreases the production of new garments, hence, reducing the negative environmental impact...
In practice, reuse occurs when a garment is used again. In research, reuse typically refers to processes to prepare garments for reuse as they are, or to transform garments into goods such as insulation, furniture, and art (c.f. Hawley 2006). The management of reuse has seldom been studied in previous research (Paras, Pal, and Ekwall 2017). Typically, research on fashion reuse has focused on conceptual frameworks, characteristics of the business, and how goods are handled. Nevertheless, managerial issues are also important aspects (c.f. Steger 1996; Paras et al. 2018) and organizations, systems, and intra-organizational processes are key factors for success (Hawley 2000; Morana and Seuring 2011). However, this might be difficult to achieve as it is necessary to involve many actors (Ekström and Salomonson 2014). Undeveloped and unstandardized processes within and between organizations are challenges that hinder efficient reuse processes (Pal 2017). For example, these difficulties are evident in the failed attempts to establish a local reuse system at a shopping destination (Gustafsson, Hjelmgren, and Czarniawska 2015). Accordingly, Paras, Pal, and Ekwall (2017) suggest the need for empirical investigations of reuse systems to deepen the knowledge about fashion reuse.

To extend this knowledge, the purpose of this paper is to highlight the complexity in the management of fashion retail based on reuse by identifying and explaining the obstacles in the process. This is achieved by analyzing ReTuna – a shopping mall based on reuse – from the perspective of institutional logics. ReTuna is as an illustration of the challenges faced in achieving sustainable retail. ReTuna, owned by the municipality of Eskilstuna, Sweden, was opened in 2015. The owner’s goals related to economic, environmental, and social dimensions of sustainability: to create a positive financial result, to reduce the amount of waste in the community by enabling reuse, to increase the awareness of sustainable consumption, and to create jobs. To fulfill the goals, ReTuna collects goods and distributes them to its tenants, who then process and resell them. Three years after its opening, ReTuna is a success in several aspects. The mall has received large quantities of donated goods and has attracted media attention. However, it has not succeeded in actually handling and reselling donated fashion items. Therefore, the question was raised as to why the mall has been unsuccessful when it comes to fashion reuse. A close reading of the empirical material with this question in mind made us aware of the presence of three different management perspectives, i.e. shopping mall organization, fashion reuse, and work integration. Thus, to further analyze and explain the situation, institutional logics presented itself as one theory. With the help of this theory, the analysis showed that the goal of recirculating as much fashion goods as possible was hindered by actors not being able to equally balance divergent sustainability dimensions. The imbalance is an outcome of the actors’ differing prioritizations and a lack of knowledge, experience and skills, coordination as well as the configuration of material conditions. Hence, we suggest that there are inherent managerial contradictions in sustainable fashion retail practices. Thus, it is important to discuss what the different divergent sustainability dimensions imply when seeking solutions for sustainable retail.

The paper is organized as follows: First, we introduce the idea of institutional logics as our conceptual framework. This idea is then connected with the setting of ReTuna, using descriptions of three local logics: shopping mall, reuse of fashion, and work integration. Then follows a description of the fieldwork and the mall, ReTuna. Thereafter, we identify
challenges and suggest explanations for the complexity in the management of the mall. Finally, there is a discussion of the implications of the findings as well as the theoretical contribution of the study, with conclusions drawn.

Conceptual framework

Institutional logics draw on there being no general prevailing distinction between the rational and irrational in society, but distinctions between different orders of rationality, i.e. logics (Meyer and Rowan 1977; Friedland and Alford 1991). Consequently, something can be rational within a certain logic, but irrational within another since each has its own definition of what is rational (e.g. Thornton, Ocasio, and Lounsbury 2012). Friedland and Alford (1991) introduced five logics. The logics appears as material and symbolic traits, which guide individuals and organizations, i.e. influences interests, identities, values, and assumptions (Thornton and Ocasio 2008). However, individuals do not accept a certain logic as a script, but adapt and combine different logics in a bricolage (Binder 2007).

However, later research on institutional logics draws on a performative perspective and argues that these do not exist per se, but are performed into being (c.f. Lindberg 2014). Following this research, we see institutional logics as something enacted. Egels-Zandén, Lindberg, and Hyllman (2015) have a similar approach and use local logics to analyze a failed attempt to create a private regulatory organization for fashion retailers. In our case, reuse-based fashion retail includes at least three types of local logics: retail, reuse, and work integration.

A presence of multiple logics may result in conflicts and tensions because different logics emphasize different aspects (Thornton and Ocasio 2008). However, conflicts are not the only possible outcomes. Townley (2002) describes, for example, how the introduction of a new logic created a de-stabilized organization, changed internal organization identity, and changed valorization of decisions. Other possible outcomes are decoupling (Meyer and Rowan 1977), selective coupling, where intact demands from either of the logics are incorporated into the organizations (Pache and Santos 2013), and the use of different practices (Reay and Robert Hinings 2009). Reay and Robert Hinings (2009) also show that actors can keep contradictory logics apart and allow them to co-exist. Multiple logics can even support each other and create opportunities (Goodrick and Reay 2011). Also, Kvarnström (2016) argues that logics can be both contradictory and cooperative and describes how actors can manage different logics in parallel. The actors are able to speak the language of more than one logic, and they negotiate and balance the logics’ borders to understand how to stretch them (Kvarnström 2016). Following Kvarnström, actors at ReTuna need to be able to speak different languages, i.e. shopping mall, reuse, and work integration logics, to be successful. The actors at the mall must meet the expectations of both retail and reuse issues, and meet the expectations of work integration issues, as many of them are enrolled in such programs.

In this paper, we draw upon insights from previous research and see ReTuna as an illustration where actors enact multiple logics through talk and actions. Talk and actions work both in favor and in conflict with the rationalities that these logics represent. However, in addition to the actors’ talk and actions, we argue that the physical surrounding and material aspects are equally important and contribute to how the
logics are enacted. Thus, the actor’s ability to speak the languages and balance the requirements of the logics is shaped by the material context.

To analyze the mall context, we use a typology of local logics, inspired by Egels-Zandén, Lindberg, and Hyllman (2015) and earlier research (Thornton, Ocasio, and Lounsbury 2012; McPherson and Sauder 2013). The typology is adapted to the mall context and consists of four dimensions: Basis of attention, the overarching goal within the logic; Basis of strategy, how the overarching goal shall be achieved; Primary actors, most salient actors; Focus of practices, the focus of the primary actors’ practices. Compared to earlier typologies (Thornton, Ocasio, and Lounsbury 2012; McPherson and Sauder 2013; Egels-Zandén, Lindberg, and Hyllman 2015), the dimensions in Table 1 are adapted to stress practices and actors that are meaningful in relation to management of sustainable fashion retail. Hence, the typology makes it possible to identify and analyze what goes on in a sustainable fashion retail concept like ReTuna. Following, our understanding of the logics is explained, with a summary found in Table 1.

**Shopping mall logic**

The overarching aim of a shopping mall is *economic sustainability* through profit. The strategy for this is to create a system for *market transactions* where goods, services, and money are exchanged. The mall is adapted to target certain groups such as tourists or local shoppers (Csaba and Askegaard 1999) and sometimes given a certain profile or theme (Ghosh and Sara 1991; Pitt and Musa 2009). In the development of a mall, *mall management* and *tenants* are primary actors, and collaboration and coordination between them is important for success (Howard 1997; LeHew and Fairhurst 2000). However, the integration of and coordination between mall management and tenants vary between malls (Mertes 1949). The management can be very active, managing the business side of operations thoroughly, or acting in a more hands-off manner, as a landlord.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Typology of the local logics.</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shopping mall logic</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Basis of attention</td>
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<td>Basis of strategy</td>
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<td>Primary actors</td>
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<td>Focus of practices</td>
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The focus of practices in a shopping mall relates to creating an appealing shopping site. The basis is a good location with surrounding retail environment, convenient access, and a trading area that generates sufficient financial viability (LeHew and Fairhurst 2000). The co-location of the stores creates possibilities for each tenant to sell goods directed toward their own customers and those of other tenants (Carlson 1991). The shared location also makes it possible to promote control of the in-house environment and the visitors’ movements (Goss 1993). Access is also enabled by generous opening hours, communications, parking places, and high visibility (Mejia and Benjamin 2002).

Further, architectural design and property management must ensure that both spatial and non-spatial factors of the mall are appealing (Brown 1976) and offer a unified shopping experience. Promotional activities to attract customers such as events, in-house marketing, and advertisements across various marketing channels are an additional key practice.

Another practice is the refinement of the mall’s mix of tenants (Kirkup and Rafiq 1994), which is managed through the leasing strategy and terms of the tenancy. The tenant mix relates not only to the stores but also to the possibilities for dining and entertainment (Wakefield and Baker 1998). Cinemas, carousels, play zones for children, and sporting activities can also be used to broaden the range of activities, as recreation is an important benefit for visitors (Terblanche 1999; Ng 2003; Singh and Bose 2008). A wide range of experiences attract customers (Ooi and Sim 2007), and a key aspect is the anchor store, typically a well-known one with a wide assortment (Damian et al. 2011).

**The logic of reuse**

The aim of reuse is to create environmental sustainability by extending the lifecycle of the products. This is achieved by organizing a production system that collects used goods and puts them back into the path of consumption (Chavan 2014). In fashion reuse systems, primary actors are organized in networks, but the composition of actors varies (Ekström 2015; O’Reilly and Kumar 2016). Collectors, sorters, re-processors, and retailers are primary actors even though there are variations, i.e. a collector can be an individual waste picker, a company, a charity organization, or a municipality owned organization.

The focus of practices in a fashion reuse system is to organize production processes and product development to transform and then sell the goods, i.e. retailing. The process starts with collecting discarded products (Tibben-Lembke and Rogers 2002), and convenient consumer access to collection sites is key to maximizing donations (Habrokshire and Hodges 2009; Morgan and Birtwistle 2009; Bianchi and Birtwistle 2010). Next step is sorting, where waste and different fractions of clothes are separated simultaneously as the goods are categorized (Rogers and Tibben-Lembke 2001; Abraham 2011). Sorting and categorization of fashion items are complex aspects due to a large variety of materials and products and dependence on workers interpreting each item (Botticello 2012; Palmsköld 2015). A good connection between collection and sorting facilities improves the efficiency (Beamon and Fernandes 2004) in the same way as facilities with correct capacity and optimal location.

Product development, or reprocessing, such as repairing, redesigning, and washing can improve or restore the functionality and value of a product (Min and Hyun-Jeung
Reducing costs during the reprocessing is important (Zhao, Liu, and Wei 2013), but the distribution of responsibility for operations, skills of staff, and types of available equipment also affects the product development. Processed goods can either be resold to consumers for consumption or to businesses for further product development (Pal 2017). In the case of a consumer focus, a niched assortment, multiple sales channels, and a developed visual merchandising and display of goods can raise the value of the goods (Pal 2017).

**The logic of work integration**

Work integration aims at creating social sustainability by developing and reintegrating individual participants outside the workforce. To reintegrate the participants, a strategy built on training programs and mentoring is used, together with work tasks related to the commercial activities. For example, people who have been unemployed for a long time are hired to produce goods and services that are sold on the market (Pache and Santos 2013), or immigrants are offered language practice while participating in a business. Thus, the focus of a business can be the production of commercial products and services or the integration of the participants into the workforce, in different degrees.

Primary actors in work integration are participants, tutors, managers, volunteers, and sometimes technical staff. Participants are always present, but the mix of other actors depends on how the business is organized. Further, there are public, private, and non-governmental organizations running work integration activities, and part of the financing is often subsidies as a compensation for the integration parts of the business (Stryjan 2004). The situation creates businesses that cross borders, where public, private, and civil society meet (Stryjan 2004).

Practices in work integration focus on the development of the individual participant, and the core is active participation in work tasks. The participant is trained, both on the tasks per se and in general work-related abilities like social interaction and accountability by working. The participants therefore are both employees and clients of the enterprises (Gelbmann and Hammerl 2015), and the management has to balance these two roles. Hence, it might be necessary to adapt tasks, education, and the working environment to the participant’s level. The active participation can also be supported by education (i.e. language or computer skills) and mentoring.

**Method**

This paper is based on an ongoing field study of ReTuna that started in November 2015. The study of ReTuna is inspired by ethnographic field work methods (Binder 2007; Czarniawska 2007) in the sense that it is based on interviews, observations, and shadowing, focusing on actions and practices within the mall-context. ReTuna has been chosen because it is a novel example of sustainable fashion retail in its effort to create a shopping mall based on reuse.

The paper is mainly based on observations and semi-structured in situ interviews (Botticello 2012), with representatives from stores, the mall management, and the collection and sorting center. Appendix 1 summarizes details about the observations and the interviews. The interviewees, who worked at the mall, provided first-hand
knowledge at both the strategic and operational level. Follow-up interviews have been performed, but the interviewees vary between the years since the mix of tenants as well as the work-force changed. Generally, the interviews inquired about each store, department, or position in relation to the organization and processes; i.e. aim and purpose, task, education and experience of owners, staff and volunteers; tools used and resources; assortment and treatment of goods (sourcing, reprocessing, and disposal); perspectives on sustainability; views on the mall and relations to other actors in the mall; and customers and marketing. All of the interviews were fully transcribed into the NVivo software package.

Observations and photographs add to stories shared by interviewees (Czarniawska 2014), and the interviews in this fieldwork have been complemented with repeated (participating) observations in stores and the collection and sorting center. The observations focused on practices performed by the actors as well as the organization of stores and activities. During the observations, questions were posed relating to the same issues that were discussed during the interviews. Research notes from the observations and interviews were made the same day, and 991 photographs further documented the observations. For this paper, photographs of the organization of stores, exposure of goods, and work tasks supported the written documentation in relation to the actors and their focus of practices.

Transcribed interviews and research notes have been analyzed through an iterative process, i.e. repeatedly sorted and analyzed as it has grown. To start with, the main focus was on shopping mall and fashion reuse. Therefore, coding themes from the literature such as assortment planning, localization, mall development, collection, sorting, pricing, and marketing were used. Through this process, we identified how the shopping mall and reuse issues as well as a third perspective, work integration, made it difficult to manage the situation. These findings were discussed with the mall manager and shop managers to validate the interpretations. Thereafter, the empirical findings were re-analyzed from the perspective of institutional logics. The re-interpretation resulted in the development of the typology in Table 1. With the help of the dimensions and sub-themes in the typology (basis of attention, basis of strategy, primary actors, and focus of practices), we identified how different activities at different levels influence the management of fashion retail at the mall. Hence, the analysis identified how actors’ actions stressed differences between the logics. These differences created obstacles and a complexity in the management that hindered the mall from establishing a viable fashion retail, based on reuse.

ReTuna

The shops at ReTuna sell reused products, but this unconventional sourcing of goods aside, ReTuna aims to be a traditional mall, with individual outlets, pop-up stores, and a café that serves lunch and snacks to its visitors. The mall’s total area is 5,000 square meters distributed over two floors, of which 3,600 are leasable. It is located next to a waste recycling station in an industrial area five kilometers from the city. Cars are the most convenient means for both customers and those intending to make donations, as public transportation is limited. On average, 400 visitors dispose of goods at the waste recycling station, and 750 people visit the mall each day.
The number of stores and pop-up shops varies around fourteen, and most shops are staffed by the owner(s) and in some cases an employee, who generally has no previous experience or training related to retail or fashion and is a participant in a job-training program or similar.

All tenants obtain their products from the collection and sorting center. Those who wish to donate goods drive onto a roofed gateway, where staff from the center help to unload the goods onto trolleys, which are pushed into the sorting center. There, store assistants from each clothes store open the packages, briefly sort the clothes, place children’s wear in the storage areas of the shops that sell these, and pick the garments they want. The sorting is based on the judgment of individual staff members regarding what is possible to sell and what is missing in the shop. The lack of structure in the sorting, limited storage possibilities, and variation in the influx of clothing result in disparities in each store’s assortment regarding size, quality, and types of clothing. Since the influx of donated fashion has exceeded what the shops are able to reprocess and/or sell, unselected items are sent to two national charity organizations, which include them in their own processes.

Some of the shops reprocess clothing and textiles, and each tenant reprocessors the products differently in terms of which processes are performed and how these are undertaken. The store owners and/or assistants perform the reprocessing in the store, in an external facility, at home, or in the collection and sorting center. During the first year, one of the clothing stores rented extra space equipped with household equipment within the mall for washing, ironing, and repairing donated clothes.

The mall organizes activities such as ‘Crazy Monday,’ with special offers, and workshops on reuse to attract customers and inform about sustainable consumption. In addition, social media and web pages are the main marketing channels. An unexpected but important marketing channel has been the large number of conferences and study visits hosted by the mall. Many of the participants at these events shop while at the mall, later spreading word about the mall and in some cases returning with family and friends.

Most of the shops are furnished incrementally, often with donated items, resulting in most not having a unifying theme. Each shop is mandated to design and organize itself, including issues such as playing music, but only three of the interviewees described an interior strategy. All in all, ReTuna is continuously changing its appearance due to the actions of the mall management and the shop owners.

**Findings**

The analysis helped us to categorize the findings into four areas of obstacles and conflicts. In brief, the logics are not equally balanced, and the shopping mall logic dominates at the owner and mall management level, while the work integration logic dominates at the fashion tenant level. Further, practices performed by individuals and the material context deepen the imbalance between the logics. As a result, the reuse logic has a marginalized role.
Clear goals, but the focus is not aligned

In the public presentation, it states that the mall shall reduce waste and increase knowledge about sustainable consumption (reuse logic) and deliver a positive financial result (shopping mall logic). As the mall manager (January 2016) states: ‘Right now, we call ourselves a commercial reuse-based mall and it is these two aspects that I choose to emphasize; we should have a commercial business that is sustainable.’ In practice, the owner and the mall management focus on financial issues. This is visible in the use of financial control and key indicators (for example, average purchase) for monitoring the mall. A monitoring function from the reuse perspective with reuse-adopted indicators such as the number of items sold and percentage of sold goods in relation to wasted goods have been discussed, but has been dismissed. The mall manager (October 2016) elaborates on the situation: ‘We have talked about measuring it. First in kilos, to have a scale, and then to measure, count the number of articles. In the end, the task would require four to five full-time employees and that is not feasible.’ The shopping mall logic is further prioritized with a focus on financial performance. The contracts pertaining to the financially unsuccessful tenants have consistently been terminated. In sum, the present focus of the mall management is the shopping mall logic and the reuse logic is not prioritized.

The fashion tenants’ focus does not prioritize the reuse logic either. Instead, they prioritize the work integration logic and financial sustainability. A quote from the CEO of the first fashion shop illustrates this:

In fact, there were two [goals], well measurable, and the first was to be financially viable and to earn money. Then it was to give the participants a chance to grow and get other jobs. Maybe, they could move on to other jobs later on. This [store] was meant to be a trampoline for them to go further. (CEO of the Clothes shop, March 2017)

In sum, there is a contradiction between the mall’s main goals, and what the mall management and its tenants focus on. Further, the monitoring aspects and key indicators do not match the goals and do not support the establishment of a successful fashion retail based on reuse.

Different strategies and a marginalized production system for reuse

In line with the focus described above, the mall management has emphasized the creation of a system for market transactions, i.e. the shopping mall logic. Two examples of this emphasis are the mall management’s evaluation of potential tenants and the organization of the mall. The evaluation is based on two criteria related to traditional shopping mall aspects, i.e. financial calculations and potential customers, while a third, enough donated goods, is reuse-related. Thus, a tenant with a business proposal, with the potential to reappoint a lot of fashion products for consumption, but that is not financially viable from the beginning is rejected. The mall manager describes the evaluation process like this:

To be established here, you need to write down a plan for your business. How much you will earn? What is your income? You need to look into everything. Will my products sell? Will I be able to sell it? Do I have a good business plan …..then, I will agree on a meeting, to get
Further, the mall management’s strategic emphasis is reflected in the choice of a traditional shopping mall organization with independent retailers. The decentralized organization gives each tenant full responsibility to shape the reuse process, i.e. provide equipment, routines, facilities, and criteria for sorting and reprocessing activities. Hence, the sorting and reprocessing are organized at an individual level with everyone having their own sorting criteria, using their own equipment, and finding their own facilities. Consequently, there are differences in what is picked, as one person may base his or her sorting on specific brands, while another may reject brands and instead choose clothes based on their design. As there have been few attempts to support and coordinate the development of the reuse process, the possibilities to create attractive reused concepts based on efficient production processes are limited to the level of knowledge and the resources available to each tenant’s staff.

Most of the tenants selling fashion stress the work integration logic, either directly because their business idea is to rehabilitate and integrate those who are unemployed/immigrants, or indirectly by staffing the store with the help of public subsidies. In the former scenario, the focus has been to develop each participant, and the development of stores, processes, and products has been secondary. In the latter, the staffs’ lack of competence and experience has resulted in a failure for the business. A quote from the mall manager about the Kids & Toys shop that closed during its first year illustrates this:

… this Kids & Toys shop near the exhibition area has closed. It was closed in the end of July/beginning of August. And it was about sales of course. He made too little money. I can see that he didn’t have this combination, and no reuse. He had a commercial business, but there were no price tags, and the staff in the store could not speak English or Swedish. That meant that customers that entered the store couldn’t shop because they didn’t know what things cost and the store assistants couldn’t explain. He had employees that were here due to a social enterprise idea. Well, it was unsuccessful since all these three pieces were missing. (Mall manager, October 2016)

To conclude, the mall management and the fashion retail tenants have followed different strategies in accordance with either the shopping mall logic or the work integration logic. The reuse ambition has been marginalized, and an efficient production system for preparing fashion for reuse has not been developed.

**Roles and actors do not match**

At the mall, the same actor plays many roles, and the combination of different roles complicates the work and increases what is required. A store owner or store assistant can be the staff in a store, a tutor/participant in work integration activities, and simultaneously involved in other activities such as marketing events, sorting and reprocessing as well as developing the processes. However, each actor’s knowledge, experiences, and skills tie him/her to one of the logics. The first mall manager had a background in waste management, but lacked experience from the retail business and did not succeed in recruiting any tenants to the mall. Conversely, the present
manager has experience from retail and shopping malls and has attracted tenants, but has little experience of reuse. Similarly, neither the owner, nor the store assistants in the mall’s first fashion store had fashion, reuse, or retail knowledge and experience, as the company focused on work integration. This store did not develop its retail or reuse concept and did not survive the first year. As explained by the shop’s CEO in an interview following the store’s closing:

...this with social enterprises, I think that you take what you have, and try to do something. If I was going to start a city store, I would look into competence, and nothing else. If I were to start a shop here in town, I would really look at skills and nothing else. What kind of experience do you have? Can you do this? What is your record? But, it was not like that in this case . . . .this is a bit of the downside with social enterprises. It means that you start with the help of what they [the participants] can and their commitment. If it is going to work well, then you have to work hard with education issues. (CEO of the Clothes shop, March 2017)

The situation of the Clothes shop can be contrasted with the Furniture store & Textile shop and the Florist & Kitchen Accessories shop. The owner of the furniture store is an experienced carpenter, and the owner of the florist shop is a florist. Both have previous retail experience and have been successful in establishing their businesses. The same pattern can be seen in the other stores; store owners and assistants with knowledge and experience from retail and/or reuse have developed their stores and reuse concepts further than those without.

Similarly, only a few in the mall management and managers and staff of tenants working with work integration have experience and knowledge of fashion reuse. The work integration participants are primarily focused on developing themselves, without advancing their knowledge and skills in reuse and retail. In addition, there are a few managers with fashion reuse experience and knowledge and no other technical staff (e.g. with redesign skills); thus, there is no one from whom the participants can learn from when it comes to fashion reuse.

In sum, the same actor plays many roles related to the logics. This combination of various roles and lack of experience and knowledge in all logics complicates the work and hinders the progress of fashion reuse.

**Neither practices nor the material context balance the logics**

The practices of the actors in their different roles create a complexity as they are seldom aligned with all three logics. An example is how the use of donated furniture in the stores prevents the fulfillment of the mall management’s ambition to create a unified shopping experience. The shopping experience at ReTuna is guided by the impression of each individual store, being shaped by individuals with and without relevant experience and knowledge, using donated goods. It is therefore each store’s displayed merchandise, interior, and music that determine the mall’s expression. The broad range of store appearances gives the impression of second-hand shops, even though the ambition of the mall management is something else. The logic of shopping mall prescribes another appearance of the stores than what is achieved when the development of the stores is guided by the logics of reuse. The mall manager commented as follows:
Even though she has a flea market and I don’t feel good about it, I have tried to help her several times. I have had designers there. I have paid people to come in and help her, but you can’t move forward. She is a phase three and has been unemployed for a long time, who started as a work integration participant at the Clothes shop store and then she thought that she would like to make her own money. To make money is her driving force. That is a great start, and she does earn more now than before. She can be proud of being an entrepreneur. Now, I just wish that the next step will happen and that she will do well too. (Mall manager, October 2016)

Another example of how practices related to one logic affect another is the use of traditional marketing activities and do-it-yourself events. The mall organizes activities like sales and swapping events to improve the mall’s market position and inform about sustainable consumption. Conversely, a counter effect of these activities is that consumers expect a bargain-hunt with low prices and/or material for free. Hence, these activities decrease the value of the reused goods that are offered by the tenants. These kinds of activities facilitate the tenants that do not reprocess donated products (i.e. traditional charity second-hand shops), but disfavor tenants that try to refine donated products and raise the value.

Finally, it is not only the actions of human actors that result in a complexity to be managed. The material context of the mall is likewise a source of obstacles. The choice to locate the mall near a waste recycling station outside the city, both facilitates the creation of sustainable fashion retail and is a hindrance. The consequences of the location are three-fold: convenient for people to donate their unwanted goods at the same time as disposing of waste; not easily accessible since it is situated away from the city center and does not have good public transportation links; and it is not a wholly retail environment as it shares the site with the waste recycling station and a logistics center. Convenient access to the location is key in both shopping mall and reuse logic, but convenient access to ReTuna entails a balance between donors who bring goods and customers who wish to shop, and there may be little overlap between the two. Access to the mall is easy and parking spaces plentiful, but without a car it is more difficult. Hence, access for people without a car such as young people moving away from home, refugees, or environmentally conscious people, who are possible key customers, is limited without public transportation. At the same time, absence of a retail environment is a hindrance in attracting customers. From a shopping mall logic and to maximize sales, a location in a retail environment with better public accessibility would likely be preferable, but being in the vicinity of the waste-recycling station facilitates donation of goods. The material context in the shape of available infrastructure also influences the possibilities to develop the reuse process. Facilities for efficient reuse processes are lacking as the mall management has chosen a decentralized mall organization and given each tenant the responsibility for the infrastructure. The tenants, however, do not have the capacity and resources for this and use household processes and equipment, as illustrated in this dialogue with one of the shop owners:

[I] Because we want the whole mall to give the feeling of boutiques and not a flea market, it should be attractive and clean. So, we wash all the small things. [R] Do you do this in the store then? Or? [I] Well, I don’t have running water there. [R] Ok, that was what I thought and that is why I asked. [I] So, I get buckets of water that has to be changed in between.
(Owner of Fashion, Accessories and Interior shop November 2018)
In sum, practices at the mall and the material context are seldom aligned with all three logics at the same time. Instead, they reinforce the imbalance, which proves to be an obstacle for the reuse of fashion.

Discussion

The analysis shows that the actors’ actions creates an interplay between the logics and a complexity that constrains the ambition of sustainable fashion retail based on reuse. It also shows that the actors do not manage the logics equally due to differences in prioritization, knowledge, experience, and material conditions. The challenges make it difficult to build sustainable fashion retail. The process is also hindered as there are few attempts to coordinate prioritizations and practices. From the perspective of sustainable fashion retail, these results extend previous research by highlighting the importance of a conscious management that balances the inconsistent demands, which are implied in the logics. From the perspective of institutional logics, the result shows that differences in attention, knowledge, skills, and the material context influence how actors enact logics.

Hence, individual actors are a key component in establishing sustainable fashion retail, which also points at the performative (Latour 2005) character of institutional logics. From a performative perspective, institutional logics are continuously enacted through actions, talk, thoughts, and relations and not something with its own life (cf. Lindberg (2014); Kvarnström (2016)). It is what the individual actors do in relation to other actors and material objects that continuously enacts the logics. The performative character of the logics entails that an individual actor is not connected to a certain logic per se. Instead, different actions in different situations favor/disfavor different logics. For example, when a sales assistant classifies a t-shirt as unsellable, it creates a conflict between the shopping mall and the reuse logic, while the same sales assistant might create another conflict by bringing a donated piece of furnishing to the store, hence, decreasing the feeling of a traditional mall. Therefore, it is the practice and not the actor him/herself that decides the outcome. The reasoning is similar to how Latour (2005) argues that actors continuously make up different groups in society, depending on their actions and the situation, instead of being fixed to a certain group. To see institutional logics as performative and see activities as a way to enact logics offers an explanation of how the co-existence of multiple logics in organizations can result in different practices (Reay and Robert Hinings 2009) and how individual actors can combine different logics in a bricolage (Binder 2007).

Also, the complexity that is created is a result of the actors not being able to manage the logics equally. Despite a common goal, differences emerge as the actors enact the logics differently through their prioritizations and abilities. However, the differences that arise are not to be seen as a decoupling (Meyer and Rowan 1977) or a selective coupling (Pache and Santos 2013) as all three logics are at play, but are not developed to the same extent. The logic prioritized by the actors is the one they have the most experience with and knowledge of and the one that has the best material preconditions. Thus, the embeddedness (Thornton and Ocasio 2008) in the shape of knowledge, skills, and material aspects are crucial with regard to which logic is prioritized.

The absence of coordination, and the decentralized organization strategy, has given individual actors the possibility to influence the development of the mall and how the
logics are managed. The result is that the reuse process is decidedly non-standardized and dependent on the individual’s judgment and decisions, a situation similar to those described by Hawley (2006), Botticello (2012), and Palmsköld (2015). However, the lack of key actors (e.g. re-processors and shop owners) with knowledge, experience, and skills creates an imbalance in how they are able to manage. Earlier research has shown that sufficient knowledge is crucial to develop businesses regardless of whether it is from a retail perspective (Littrell and Dickson 1998), a reuse perspective (Hawley 2006; Palmsköld 2013), or a work integration perspective (Gelbmann and Hammerl 2015). At ReTuna, this is missing at the same time as the goals of different activities diverge. Consequently, the actors are not able to balance nor negotiate the local logics, e.g. speak the different languages, as described by Kvarnström (2016). Hence, adequate knowledge, experience, and skills are important to be able to speak the language of a certain logic.

The material embeddedness for how the logics are managed is also important. The physical surrounding of the mall, the waste management station, has facilitated the reuse logic; furthermore, the amount of donated goods has exceeded both the expectations and what the mall is able to sell. The situation can be compared to the failed attempt by Gustafsson, Hjelmgren, and Czarniawska (2015) to collect used fashion in a retail environment. The collection site was located in a popular outlet retail area with easy access, but few consumers brought any donations. This implies that even if access is easy, which is important from both a reuse and shopping mall logic, it is not a given that the logics benefit from this, as easy access presumes different things in the logics. For the actors, the material embeddedness influences their actions, in the shape of which logic is given precedence.

The typology of the local logics (Table 1), which our analysis draws from, has shown to be a suitable close-to-the-field tool for a discussion on how diverse sustainability dimensions are manifested at different levels in sustainable fashion retail. The typology can be used to show how the same sustainable fashion retail concept can contain different sustainability dimensions and that these are not always aligned with each other. Therefore, in research, it is important to go beyond the labeling of something as sustainable and explore how different sustainability dimensions relate to each other and what this implies in practice.

Conclusions

The purpose of this paper was to highlight the complexities in the management of sustainable fashion based on reuse by identifying and explaining obstacles in the process. The complexity is a result of the need to manage and balance different logics, which are enacted by the actors’ actions. Here, the logics are related to shopping mall, reuse, and work integration. Thus, the goal of re-circulating as much fashion products as possible is hindered by actors not being able to handle the three logics equally. Instead, the enactment of the logics is divergent due to a lack of knowledge, experience and skills, coordination, and material conditions. The theoretical implication of these findings is that it highlights inherent managerial contradictions in a sustainability concept like reuse. Thus, in scholarly conversations, it is important to discuss what the different divergent sustainability dimensions imply when seeking solutions for sustainability issues. Further, the findings also extend literature on institutional logics, showing that
differences within an actor and the material context surrounding him/her influence how the logics are enacted and managed.

A managerial implication of the result is the importance of considering that even if actors in a reuse-based fashion retail initiative have a common overarching sustainability goal, this does not mean that all their goals are equal. There might be other goals, based on other rationalities, which might be contradictory to the goal of establishing a fashion retail initiative based on reuse. In the management of such an initiative, it is important to consciously balance the inconsistent demands that might be implied in different logics. Furthermore, it is important to scrutinize the embeddedness of such an initiative to avoid an unconscious emphasis on either of the logics. For example, it is important to develop financial and non-financial indicators measuring the extended lifecycle of donated items as well as provide support to involved actors, i.e. education to provide adequate knowledge needed and facilities to enable efficient production processes.

Given the presented conclusions, one limitation of this study is that it is not possible to elaborate on the long-term development since the empirical work only covers three years. Gelbmann and Hammerl (2015) describe how work integration social enterprises in their study shifted focus from work integration to the production of sellable goods, along with an increased discussion about re-use and sustainability. Therefore, future long-term studies of the development of similar initiatives could be a tool to observe and analyze how different logics are managed in the long run since changes in the logics are often incremental (c.f. Djelic and Ainamo 2005).

Note

1. All quotes are translated from Swedish into English by the authors.

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Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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Currently, her main research concerns the development of textile recycling and sustainability in the textile industry. Her latest publications include:

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**References**


Appendix 1. Interviews and observations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who / What</th>
<th>Method and documentation</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The mall</td>
<td>Overview of observations of processes and shops at the mall, field notes and photos</td>
<td>2015-11</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2016-01</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>2016-10</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2018-11</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2019-04</td>
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<td>Mall management</td>
<td>Interviews with mall manager, in her office, transcribed recordings</td>
<td>2016-01</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collecting and sorting facility and building material shop</td>
<td>Observation in shop, field notes and photos</td>
<td>2016-05</td>
<td>20 min</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observation of collection, sorting and distribution to each stores' storage area, field notes and photos</td>
<td>2016-05</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview, team leader, at the sorting center, field notes</td>
<td>2016-05</td>
<td>30 min</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview, team leader, in sorting center, transcribed recording</td>
<td>2017-02</td>
<td>13 min</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Observation of collection, sorting and packaging, field notes and photos</td>
<td>2017-02</td>
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<td>Interview, team leader in the mall's cafeteria, transcribed recording</td>
<td>2018-11</td>
<td>27 min</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Observation in the shop and the collection/sorting center, field notes and photos</td>
<td>2018-11</td>
<td>4 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baby &amp; Kids shop</td>
<td>Observation in the shop including discussions with the owners, field notes and photos</td>
<td>2016-05</td>
<td>8 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observation in the shop, transcribed recording</td>
<td>2018-11</td>
<td>20 min</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observation in store, field notes and photos</td>
<td>2018-11</td>
<td>20 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observation in store, field notes and photos</td>
<td>2018-11</td>
<td>20 min</td>
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(Continued)
(Continued).

<table>
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<th>Method and documentation</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Duration</th>
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<td>Kitchen Shop</td>
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<td>30 min</td>
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<td>2016-10</td>
<td>13 min</td>
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<td>Observation in the shop</td>
<td>2016-05</td>
<td>20 min</td>
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<tr>
<td>Computer Shop</td>
<td>Observations in the store, field notes and photos</td>
<td>2016-05</td>
<td>4 hours</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Interview, store manager, in the shop, field notes and photos</td>
<td>2016-10</td>
<td>30 min</td>
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<td>Observation in the shop, field notes and photos</td>
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<td>15 min</td>
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<td>Interview, owner, transcribed recording</td>
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<td>2 hours</td>
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<td>2017-03</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Interview, store manager, in store, transcribed recording</td>
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<td>Kids &amp; Toys shop</td>
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<tr>
<td>with focus on reuse</td>
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