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# CHALLENGING SLOW FASHION

DO 'OPEN SOURCE' AND 'CIRCULAR ECONOMY'  
STRATEGIES IMPLY A MORE ETHICAL FASHION INDUSTRY?

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## ABSTRACT

Delving into the general character of fashion and the particular sub-area of sustainable fashion, my work aims at a clearer definition of fashion—as a trend that is subjected to the collective mindset of individuals, and manifested in material pieces of clothing and attire. My investigation touches on the origin and perpetual dynamics of fashion, drawing insights from postmodern sociology, semiotics, critical theory, post-structuralism and systems theory. I briefly shed light on the industrialization, institutionalization and the resulting commodification of trends into fashionable clothing, including its problematic cultural, environmental and ethical implications. I then explore how this leads to a trend towards 'sustainable fashion' and its advanced form, 'slow fashion'.

I want to examine two strategies of slow fashion in detail: the participatory approach of 'Open Source' fashion, and the strengthened transparency standard of 'Circular Economy' in fashion. These two strategies are then highlighted by relevant case studies of contemporary fashion brands applying them to their business model. I will further evaluate the benefits and disadvantages of these strategies as well as their further effect on the democratization of production, the creative freedom of individuals within those strategies, and their overall capitalistic or non-capitalistic orientation.

Fashions long lasting cross-intertwining with economy, as well as the wide ranging application of information and communication technology and the impact of new manufacturing technologies within the apparel sector and the thereby inevitable change of supply chains, compel me to further illuminate a concurring change of mindsets within the economy.

This mindset change takes the form of post-Fordism, ethical economy and the co-production of value. This in turn leads to corresponding trends such as the Service-dominant logic and brand evangelism in marketing. I further accentuate the immediate adaption of digital social network technology in marketing and its effect on the sociological formation and evolution of fashion trends.