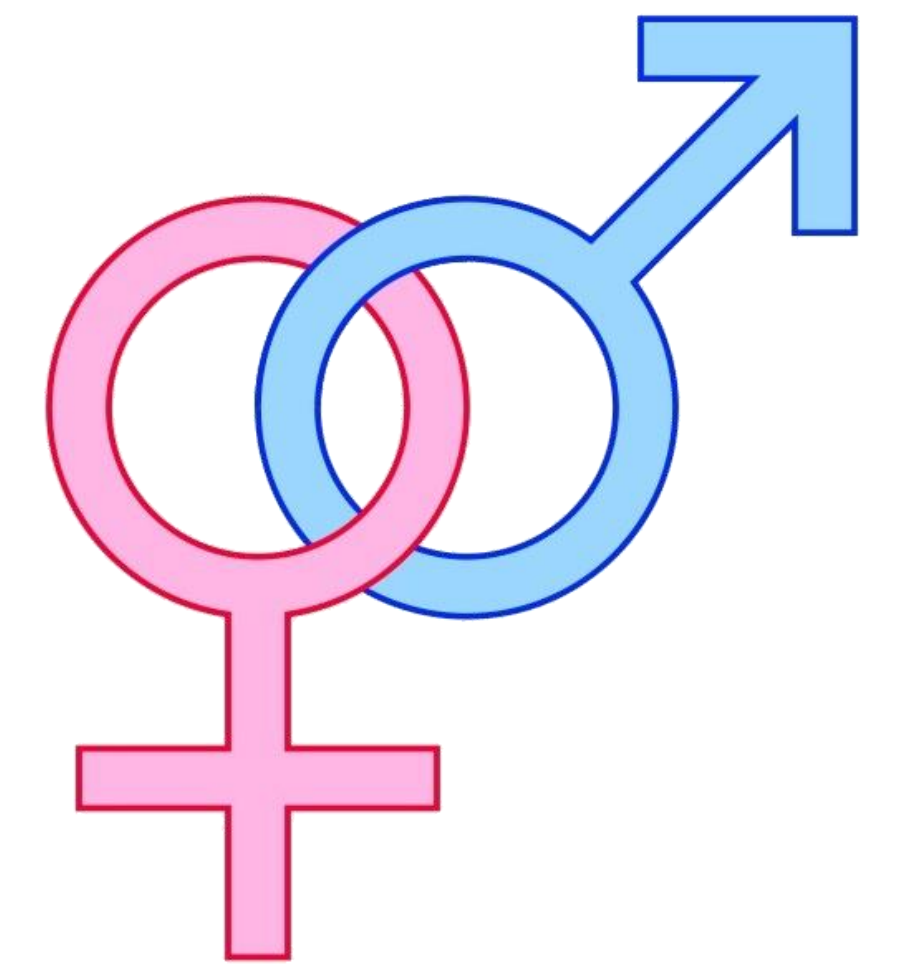
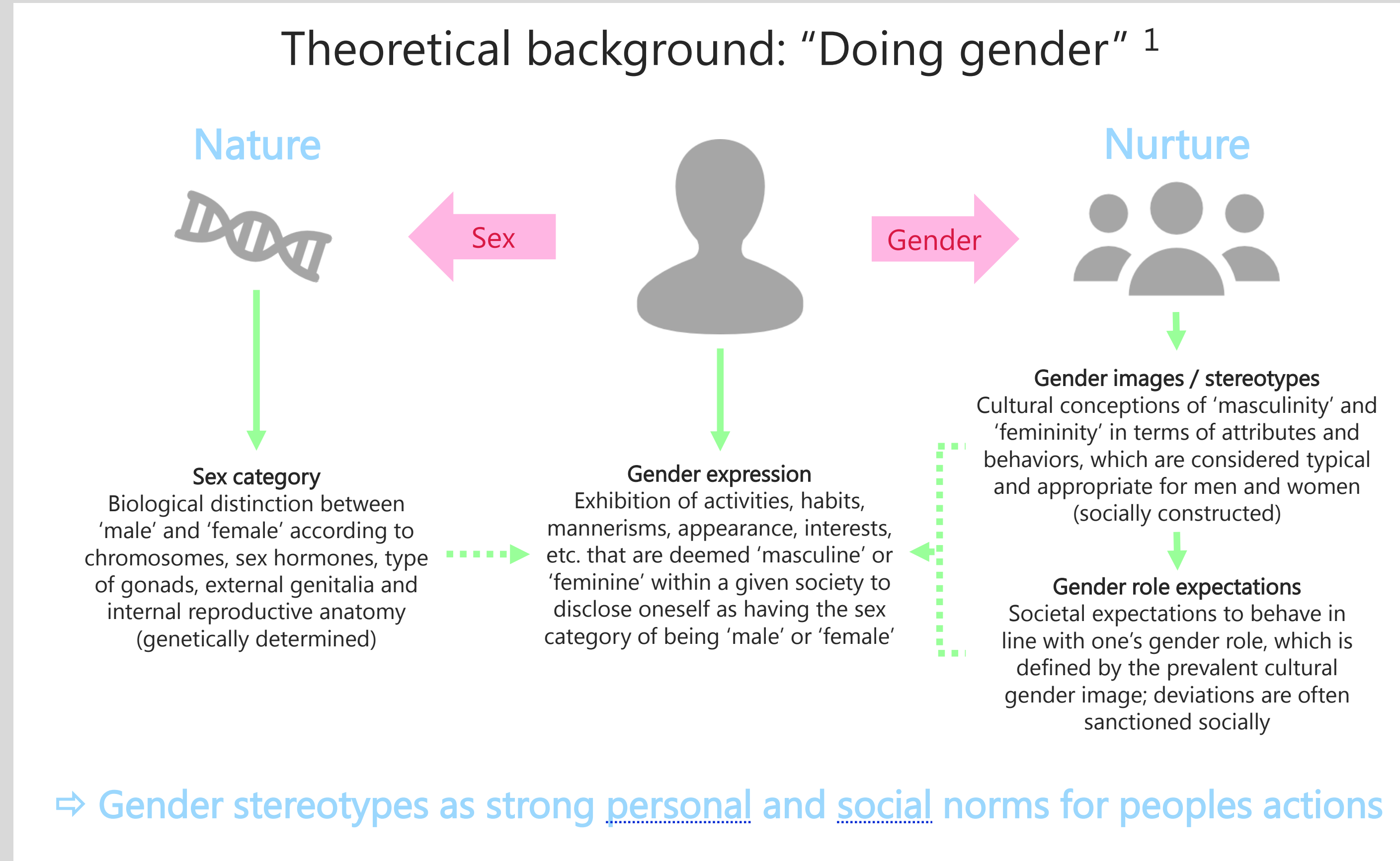
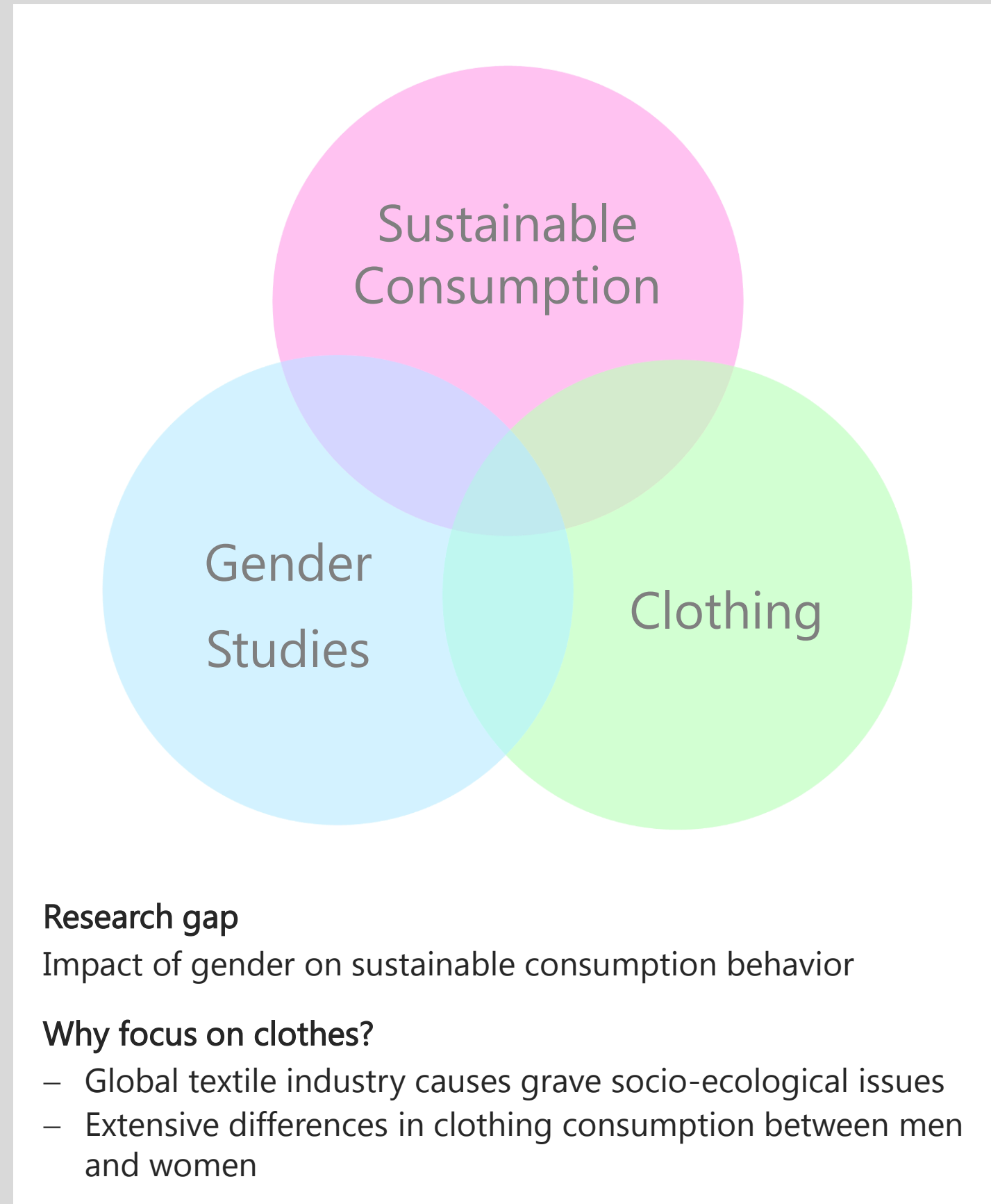


Exploring Gender Stereotypes in Clothing Consumption From a Sustainability Marketing Perspective

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Field & Framework



Gender stereotypes as barriers against adoption of sustainable consumption patterns, if...

a) ... those are considered unsuitable for a gender expression in accordance with one's sex category

b) ... unsustainable consumption patterns are integral part of the respective individual gender role

Aim & Method

Research objectives:

1. Identify common socio-cultural perceptions of 'feminine' and 'masculine' ways of acquiring, using and disposing of clothes
2. Examine, if and in which aspects these gender stereotypes counteract adoption of sustainable consumption patterns in clothing
3. Derive implications for Sustainability Marketing aiming at promoting sustainable clothing consumption

Data

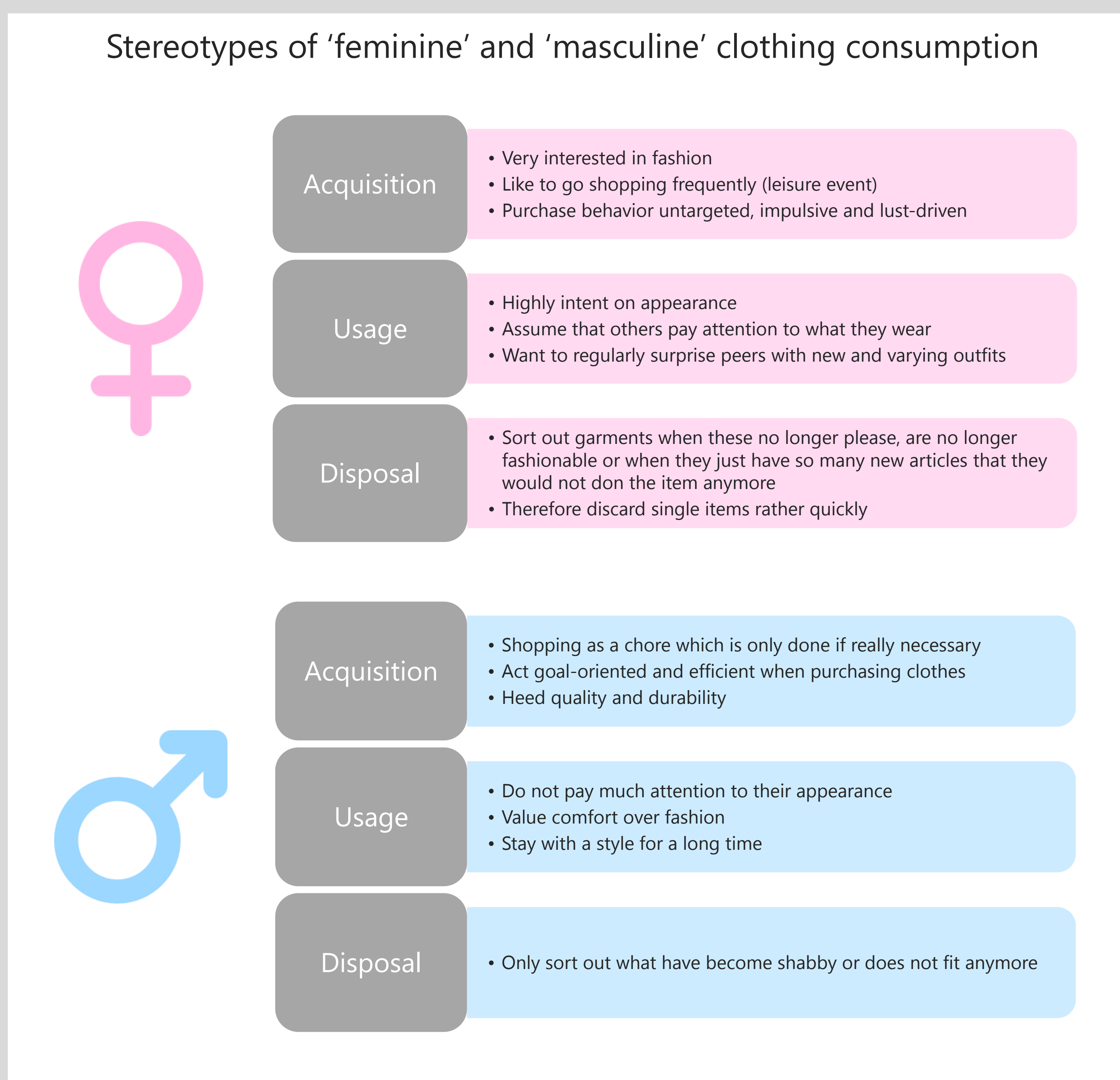
- 8 focus group discussions ²
- Conducted in Germany
- Semi-structured discussion guide
- 61 participants
- 27 men, 34 women
- Age between 19 and 65
- Various socio-demographic backgrounds

Thematic Analysis ³

- (1) Data familiarization
- (2) Data coding
- (3) Searching for themes
- (4) Reviewing themes
- (5) Defining final themes
- (6) Thick description of themes

Application of the MAXQDA software

Results



No gender differences in eco-friendliness and social compatibility

Acquisition

- Attention to ecologic production, fair trade etc. neither widespread with men nor women
- No gender issues in respective rationales (main barriers: perceived costs, image as scratchy and unfashionable)

Laundering

- Both, men and women, usually load the washer full, select the energy saving mode etc.
- Mostly not for sustainability reasons but for cost (→ again no gendered rationales)

Substantive gender differences in sufficiency

⇒ Gender stereotype of 'female fashion addictiveness' and respective gender role expectations prevent women from consuming clothes more sufficiently

Quotes from women:

- "Uh, that would be tough"
- "Shopping is just part of being a woman"
- "As woman you are often judged on how you look"
- "Women are somehow expected to dress well"

Quotes from men:

- "Well, no problem"
- "That's exactly what men do, when consuming clothes"
- "I don't think that it would be hard for me"
- "Men never feel like shopping anyway"

Implications

Recommendations for Sustainability Marketing

- Aim to invalidate gender role expectation that women have to be intent on their appearance to be considered 'feminine'
- Stress the social acceptance of females who have found their own style and do not join every trend
- Emphasize that the social standing of females does not depend only on how they look
- Expose the stereotype of the 'female fashionista' as a social construction
- Make it a subject of deliberate discussion
- Question the underlying role model
- Do not accentuate the 'masculinity' of consuming clothes sufficiently as this could imply consumption inducing effects with women

Represent sufficient clothing consumption as accepted and desirable behavior in men and women alike

Further research

- Dependence of content and reflexivity of gender stereotypes on socio-demographic background
- Influencing factors for impact of gender stereotypes on individual consumption patterns in clothing
- Potential measures to overcome prevalent gender stereotypes in clothing consumption
- Effectivity of different Sustainability Marketing tools in addressing obstructive gender stereotypes to foster sustainable clothing consumption

References

- 1) West, C. & Zimmerman, D. H. (1987): Doing gender. *Gender & Society*, Vol. 1 (2), p. 125-151.
- 2) Kruger, R. A. & Casey, M. A. (2015): *Focus groups – A practical guide for applied research*, Vol. 5. London: SAGE.
- 3) Braun, V. & Clark, V. (2006): Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, Vol. 3 (2), p.77-101.