

Literature review on fashion industry, slow fashion and fast fashion (I01-A1)

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May 2021

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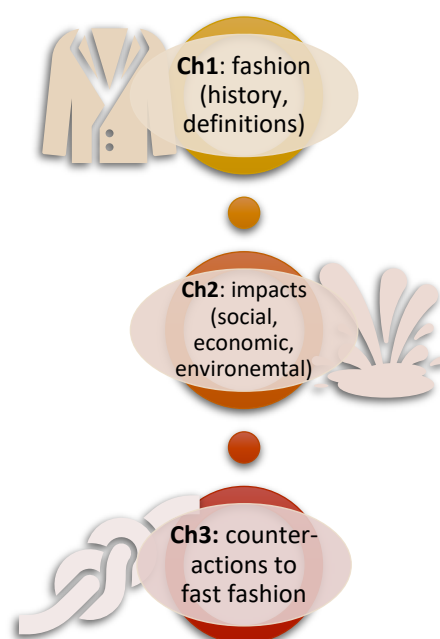
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Introduction

Our appearance, our clothing, is what speaks of us at first glance. The first impression, the first thought, is based on our appearance. At the same time, we can give a signal to our financial situation and cultural affiliation with our clothes. Subcultural features appear on our attire, the views we represent, we are even able to show our political convictions simply by our attire. We, the expression of our identity, our image of identity towards the community, play an extremely important role in dressing, and thus in fashion. **Fashion (clothing, footwear, accessories) is a key target of global consumption habits today, in particular since it is connoted to be “Fast”.** Partners in the “Fast Art, Slow Fashion” (FASF) project¹ attend to this particular phenomenon and strive to shed light on the fashion industry, on fast fashion and slow fashion respectively with this coordinated literature review.

Chapter 1 compiles and analyses general, scientific and official definitions in relation to fashion over time (historical developments) and space (project partners’ countries, and EU administration), whilst **Chapter 2** examines the social, environmental and economic impacts of the fashion industry along the global production chain. **Chapter 3** provides an insight on counter-initiatives such as Slow Fashion. Findings of the literature review are summarised in **Chapter 4**.

Figure 1 Structure of the literature review



Source: own compilation

¹ For more information about the ERASMUS+ project, visit <https://www.fasf.creativedu.hu>

Chapter 1: History of Fashion

1.1 Clothing and Fashion

“Through fashion, clothing becomes a philosophy of life”

When analysing different terms of today’s „**fashion industry**”, it’s worth starting with a distinction between „**clothing**” and „**fashion**” as both imply textiles to enwrap and serve human bodies: *“Clothing is our second skin, accompanies and protects us from heat or chill... Fashion is identity and cultural form of expression.”*²

Dictionaries like Merriam-Webster³ offer a **plethora of definitions of fashion**, most of which include a relation to time as well:

- the prevailing style (as in dress) during a particular time as well as a garment in such a style always wears the latest fashions;
- a prevailing custom, usage, or style;
- social standing or prominence especially as signaled by dress or conduct.

This social category is emphasised by other sources as well: **fashion in a general meaning** is the system of the practices which are controlling our social contacting and including this, our dressing customs. It is a social phenomenon, which is changing the look of our objects and garments and quickly and visibly has an impact on our social behavior. Fashion is inducing a wide range of people to make themselves similar to a desirable social group, i. e. with changing their consumption habits.⁴

*“Fashion is the dominant style within a given culture at a certain time. Fashion has to do with new trends: It refers to popular ways of dressing during a specific era.”*⁵

In history, this distinction of fashion from clothing is reaching back to very early times. According to Valerie Steele in her article “Definition of Fashion”, fashion is a phenomenon that has been evolving and leaving a mark in different societies and historical periods, such as Tang Dynasty China (618-907) and Heian Period Japan (795-1185). Nevertheless, the first known use of the term *Fashion* was in the 14th century.⁶

² Burckhardt, G., von Wedel-Parlow, F. (2017): Preface. In: Fair Fashion Guide, FEMNET (ed.), April 2017, p.3

³ Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Fashion. In *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/fashion>, last visited May 3, 2021

⁴ https://tudasbazis.sulinet.hu/hu/0d0cc85d-f7b5-41fb-aec0-d1b8362c7ebf_e90c4562-46d5-4b3a-a5ed-d640f67b512a_cca0d252-8fb4-416f-ac29-41411acedb91_42097f0a-9b1f-4765-81f9-3ebd8755883f_9596819a-6d5a-4fb6-8578-375c175bcf00_5fe3928b-45c8-476f-a62b-b244292b00f7 Downloaded: 28.04.2021.

⁵ <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/key-differences-between-fashion-and-style#what-is-style> Downloaded 26 April 2021

⁶ Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Fashion. In *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. Retrieved May 3, 2021, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/fashion>





The role of Britain in fashion

“In the western world, fashion was important all throughout history [...and] the important periods in the history of Britain were also critical parts in the aisles of world fashion history. Britain and other European countries influenced world fashion – colonial rule brought their dressing styles to a global audience and made them popular all around the world. During all these times, it was the royal courts that dictated fashion. Aristocratic people dressed elaborately and stylishly. Poor could not afford to change their clothes according to the whims of fashion.”⁷

The **first ever fashion magazine** has presumably been published in Frankfurt (Germany) in 1586, whilst Paris was the capital of European fashion and the source of most new styles in women's dress during the 17th century. The French word used to refer to fashion is “**La mode**” in which many scholars find a connection with the word “la modernité” (modernity), or the stylistic qualities of what is modern.⁸

Since the later nineteenth century, two terms were dominant in the world of fashion. One is **Haute Couture**, a term coined by French designers to describe garments that are special, hand-made, exclusive and unique. These clothes are unwearable in everyday life, luxury pieces of clothing, and inaccessible to ordinary people⁹. Haute Couture designers think of themselves as artists, and their creations can also be perceived as works of art, as they do not serve the purpose of being practical, wearable, accessible to as many people as possible, but rather striving for uniqueness, artistic perception and creativity. Famous Paris couturiers of the twentieth century include Gabrielle “Coco” Chanel, Christian Dior and Yves Saint Laurent.¹⁰ The other defining term is **Prêt-à-Porter fashion** which stands for ready-to-wear clothing. It is being prepared for a wide audience with mass production. These clothes show the unique style of each fashion house. Comfortable wear is already a consideration here, and clothes are affordable for a much larger group of society.¹¹



“Fashion is a language which tells a story about the person who wears it.”¹²

⁷ Tariq, S. (2019), History of fashion – A brief story of the evolution of fashion, <https://sewguide.com/evolution-of-history-of-fashion/>, last downloaded 30 April 2021

⁸ Steele, V. Definition of Fashion: <https://fashion-history.lovetoknow.com/alphabetical-index-fashion-clothing-history/definitionn-fashion>

⁹ <https://docplayer.hu/47861395-H-m-mint-fast-fashion.html> Downloaded: 14.05.2021

¹⁰ Steele, V. Definition of Fashion: <https://fashion-history.lovetoknow.com/alphabetical-index-fashion-clothing-history/definitionn-fashion>

¹¹ <https://docplayer.hu/47861395-H-m-mint-fast-fashion.html> Downloaded: 14.05.2021

¹² Katherine Hamnett, top fashion designer in Britain, as quoted by <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/1999/10/what-is-fashion/> Downloaded: 26 April 2021



For an understanding of fashion and its meaning today, it is further useful to hear some quotes from designers that have left their stigma in fashion industry:

Ralph Lauren	<i>"Fashion is not necessarily about labels. It's not about brands. It's about something else that comes from within you."</i> ¹³
Francis Bacon	<i>"Fashion is the attempt to realize art in living forms and social intercourse."</i> ¹⁴
Miuccia Prada	<i>"Fashion is instant language."</i> ¹⁵
Marc Jacobs	<i>"We don't need fashion to survive, we just desire it so much."</i> ¹⁶

It is through the increased publicity of such designers that another, more personal, even psychological aspect of fashion is being highlighted nowadays. As a Fashion Editor, Cynthia Durcanin puts it: *"Fashion is a state of mind. A spirit, an extension of one's self. Fashion talks, it can be an understated whisper, a high-energy scream or an all-knowing wink and a smile. Most of all fashion is about being comfortable with yourself, translating self-esteem into a personal style."*¹⁷

1.2 Surge of Fast Fashion

"Fast fashion is a design, manufacturing, and marketing method focused on rapidly producing high volumes of clothing."

Fast Fashion has been established in the fashion industry for more than 30 years putting under question the efficacy and efficiency of sustainability, consciousness and ethical mindset. Mass-produced street wear appeared in the 1980s when manufacturers aimed at further minimising production costs and maximising profits. From now on, the manufacturers also carried out in-house design, production and sales¹⁸. Fast fashion draws from existing trends: ideas from Prêt-à-Porter fashion shows are "stolen" mixed with Haute Couture elements. Shoppers find out about fashion magazines and catwalks, which is why fast fashion brands do not have to advertise themselves so widely. They do not have to spend a lot on design, they do not have to pay for "artists" as they replicate the work of well-known fashion designers. We do not know the designers, only the branding of the store is put into the clothes. The fast production process alone can be accelerated by the fact that they do not spend months planning.¹⁹

¹³ <https://www.themodestman.com/fashion-quotes/#:~:text=Our%20Top%2020%20Fashion%20Quotes%201%20%E2%80%9CFashion%20is.can%20bestow.%E2%80%9D%206%20%E2%80%93%20Ralph%20Waldo%20Emerson.%20>

¹⁴ <https://www.harpersbazaar.com/fashion/designers/a1576/50-famous-fashion-quotes/>

¹⁵ <https://shortstatusquotes.com/short-fashion-quotes-status/>

¹⁶ <https://shortstatusquotes.com/short-fashion-quotes-status/>

¹⁷ <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/1999/10/what-is-fashion/> Downloaded: 26 April 2021

¹⁸ http://publikaciok.lib.uni-corvinus.hu/publikus/szd/Belicza_Kitti.pdf Downloaded: 14.05.2021.

¹⁹ <https://docplayer.hu/47861395-H-m-mint-fast-fashion.html> Downloaded: 14.05.2021



We can understand the power that this phenomenon holds by defining what it means in detail. Since the 1980's, the before-mentioned industrialisation and globalisation have laid the fundament for mass-production of ready-to-wear clothing – as it is described in a European Parliament Briefing²⁰:

*“The other significant trend was the rise of Fast Fashion. Epitomised by the multinational retail chains, it relies on mass production, low prices and large volumes of sales.
”* *The business model is based on knocking off styles from high-end fashion shows and delivering them in a short time at cheap prices, typically using lower quality materials.”*

This definition includes the key distinction to luxury brands which typically manufacture limited quantities of products with a quality that lasts over time, while fast fashion brands refer to low-cost clothing collections.”²¹ Criteria like the copying of catwalk styles, fast production, cheap prices and high frequency in new collections seem to form the building block of what is described as Fast Fashion. Here are **some more definitions**:

„Fast fashion is an industrial practice...

widely applied in fashion retailing. Its central idea is to **offer a continuous stream of new merchandise** to the market which reflects the latest fashion trend, and helps capture the hottest design that the market most prefers.”
(Source: Choi, T.-M. – Hui, C.-L. – Liu, N. – Ng, S.F. – Yu, Y. (2014): Fast fashion sales forecasting with limited data and time. Decision Support Systems, 59, 84-92)

“Fast fashion is the term used to describe **clothing designs...**

that move quickly from the catwalk to stores to take advantage of trends. The collections are often based on **styles presented at Fashion Week runway shows or worn by celebrities**. Fast fashion allows mainstream consumers to purchase the hot new look or the next big thing at an affordable price.”
(Source: <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/f/fast-fashion.asp> Downloaded: 26 April 2021)

“Fast fashion can be defined as **cheap, trendy clothing...**

that samples ideas from the catwalk or celebrity culture and turns them into garments in high street stores **at breakneck speed** to meet consumer demand.”
(Source: <https://goodonyou.eco/what-is-fast-fashion/> Downloaded: 26 April 2021)

“Fast fashion” is a clothing **supply chain model...**

that is intended to respond quickly to the latest fashion trends by **frequently updating the clothing products available in stores**”
(Source: Zamani, B. – Sadin, G. – Peters, G. M. (2017): Life cycle assessment of clothing libraries: can collaborative consumption reduce the environmental impact of fast fashion? Journal of Cleaner Production, 162, 1368-1375)

“An approach to the **design, creation, and marketing of clothing fashions...**

that emphasizes **making fashion trends quickly and cheaply available to consumers.**”
(Source: Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/fast%20fashion>, last visited May 3, 2021)

²⁰ [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/633143/EPRS_BRI\(2019\)633143_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/633143/EPRS_BRI(2019)633143_EN.pdf)

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²¹ Grazzini, L. – Acuti, D. – Aiello, G. (2021): Solving puzzle of sustainable fashion consumption: The role of consumers' implicit attitudes and perceived warmth. Journal of Cleaner Production, 287, 125579

The last definition of the above list gives an idea of **the origins of the term *Fast Fashion***. In fact, the phrase was influenced by the term *Fast Food* – in both cases the emphasis is on speed and cheapness. The clothes get from the design desk to the user very quickly. This, of course, comes at a price. The products are manufactured in poor conditions, they use cheap materials, so their quality is poor. Production usually takes place in Asian countries where workers are paid low wages. Because of this, fast fashion is able to keep its prices low, making these products affordable.

Although the term **Fast Fashion was first used in the US in the 1980s**, the expression did not receive worldwide adoption until popularized by the Spanish-based apparel giant Zara.²² Today, any of those shops are belonging in this category, which purpose is to copy the trends of the largest fashion companies and making the garments attainable at a low price, but in a worse quality. Some of the most successful are Zara, H&M, C&A.²³ The fast indicator is a feature of the production and supply chain, companies are not only fast but also fresh. Instead of the usual 6 collections a year, new goods arrive every 2 weeks.²⁴



Whether this development is driven by an **increased demand of consumers or the marketing strategies of retailers**, it is viewed differently in the sources revisited.



The following quotes put a focus on the **consumers' demand**:

- "Fast fashion refers to the term regarding the consumerist phenomenon characterized by an **insatiable desire for new clothes**, which retailers have happily responded to by getting the newest trends from the catwalks straight into the shops as quickly and cheaply as possible."²⁵
- "The versatility of fast fashion is connecting the temporality of the everyday identity. The consumers are buying those products, which are representing their actual or ideal self-image. This is why **consumers are mostly looking for temporality and variety**. One of the desires of the post-modern world is the constant renewal. The fast fashion culture is providing a tool to this with its products."²⁶

²² Naderi, S. – Kilib, K. – Dasci, A. (2020): A deterministic model for the transshipment problem of a fast fashion retailer under capacity constraints. *International Journal of Production Economics*, 227, 107687

²³ Dózsa K. (2020): Áldás vagy csapás a nőknek a fast fashion? Büntudat, megszegyenítés, feminizmus formálja a képet. <https://noizz.hu/fashion/fast-fashion-es-a-nok-buntudat-megszegenites-feminizmus-formalja-a-kepet/vt7megh> Downloaded: 28.04.2021.

²⁴ http://publikaciok.lib.uni-corvinus.hu/publikus/szd/Belicza_Kitti.pdf Downloaded: 14.05.2021.

²⁵ Mageean, L. (2021): What is Wrong with Fast Fashion?, <https://www.whichplm.com/what-is-wrong-with-fast-fashion/>, Downloaded: 5 May 2021

²⁶ Egri, P. (2013): H&M mint fast fashion? *Korunk*, 12, <https://docplayer.hu/47861395-H-m-mint-fast-fashion.html> Downloaded: 28.04.2021.

- “Fast fashion helps to satisfy **deeply held desires among young consumers** in the industrialized world for fashion, even if it embodies unsustainability.”²⁷
- “To keep up with demand, fashion brands are quick to overstock stores and **satisfy shoppers’ whims**. After that, they’re just as quick to throw their collections away to make room for the next “micro-season.” That’s how fast fashion operates in a nutshell.”²⁸
- “It became common due to the cheaper, speedier manufacturing and shipping methods, an increase in the consumers’ appetite for up-to-the-minute styles, and the increase in the consumer purchasing power- especially among young people- to indulge these **instant gratification desires**”.²⁹



Quotes referring to the **marketing strategies** as a key driver of fast fashion:

- “Fast fashion is a term coined by retailers to encapsulate how trends move rapidly from the catwalk to the store. Manufacturing is quick and cheap, and **consumers are encouraged to continually consume ever-changing collections of affordable clothes**, such as a certain cut of jeans available only for a limited time in GAP or Zara.”³⁰
- “This is Fast Fashion: Mass-production of cheap, disposable clothing. Countless new collections per year make us feel constantly out of date and **encourage us to keep buying more**.”³¹
- “The blindingly fast pace at which clothes are now manufactured, worn, and discarded means that they’ve become more disposable, more commodities than keepsakes, and that **shoppers are essentially conditioned to expect a constant stream of new items**.”³²
- „With fast fashion trendy, low-cost clothing sold by mass market retailers has evolved from a durable good to a daily purchase for **many consumers, who enjoy the “thrill” of the deal** and shop often to restock their closets.”³³
- “It is continuously producing a demand by accelerating the **decreasing of the moral of the already owned wardrobe**”³⁴.

Anyway, *“Fast Fashion” is a buzz phrase in the sustainability world today³⁵ with its manifold impacts on global economy, on the environment and the people involved – from producers to consumers.*

²⁷Yang et al., 2017, cited by Grazzini, L. – Acuti, D. – Aiello, G. (2021): Solving puzzle of sustainable fashion consumption: The role of consumers’ implicit attitudes and perceived warmth. Journal of Cleaner Production, 287, 125579

²⁸<https://healthyhumanlife.com/blogs/news/what-is-fast-fashion> Downloaded 26 April 2021

²⁹Hayes, A. (2021): Fast Fashion, <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/f/fast-fashion.asp>, Downloaded: 5 May 2021

³⁰Brooks A. (2015): Systems of provision: Fast fashion and jeans. Geoforum, 63, 36-39.

³¹<https://www.sustainyourstyle.org/old-fast-fashion> Downloaded 26 April 2021

³²<https://www.vox.com/the-goods/2020/2/3/21080364/fast-fashion-h-and-m-zara> Downloaded 26 April 2021

³³Brydges, T. (2021): Closing the loop on take, make waste: Investigating circular economy practices in the Swedish fashion industry. Journal of Cleaner Production, 293, 126245

³⁴Kandikó, J. (1982): Divat és marketing. Közgazdasági Szemle, 29/1, 63-78.

³⁵<https://www.thegoodtrade.com/features/what-is-fast-fashion> Downloaded: 26 April 2021



Chapter 2: Impacts of Fast Fashion

2.1 Economic Impacts of Fast Fashion

"Fast fashion has revolutionised textile production" ³⁶

Fast fashion has been around for more than 20 years, and ever since its growth has continuously increased, due to the upsurge in consumer demand. Today, fashion is a major economic factor, and "textiles and clothing" a designated sector within manufacturing industry.³⁷ According to the NACE codes, C12-C15 branches belong to textile and clothing industry.³⁸ In the apparel industry, it is responsible for an average 4.78% growth in recent years. Its future impact is estimated to be at an 5.91% growth rate. As these numbers show, **fast fashion and its apparel plays a huge role in the economy of today.**

Figure 2 Why is fast fashion growing?



Source: own compilation



Clothing and global economy

"[...] clothing **production** has approximately doubled in the last 15 years, driven by a growing middle-class population across the globe and increased per capita sales in developed economies. **An expected 400 percent increase in world GDP by 2050 will mean even greater demand for clothing.** This could be an opportunity to do better. One report found that addressing environmental and social problems created by the fashion industry would provide a **\$192 billion overall benefit to the global economy** by 2030. The annual value of clothing discarded prematurely is more than \$400 billion."³⁹

Fast fashion changed how people dress and buy certain clothing items. We buy more than before, as there is supply and demand for clothes created by big fast fashion brands such as H&M, Zara, Forever 21, and so on. Shopping is viewed by the consumers as a free-time enjoyable and

³⁶ Greenpeace (2017): Konsumkollaps durch Fast Fashion. Greenpeace, January 2017, p.3

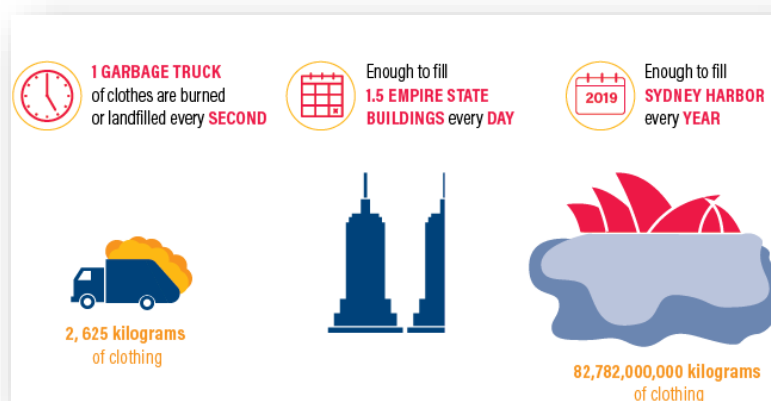
³⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/fashion/textiles-clothing_en Downloaded: 27 April 2021

³⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/competition/mergers/cases/index/nace_all.html Downloaded: 11 May 2021

³⁹ Drew, D. (2019): By the Numbers: The Economic, Social and Environmental Impacts of "Fast Fashion", <https://www.wri.org/insights/numbers-economic-social-and-environmental-impacts-fast-fashion>

entertaining activity. Therefore, the lifespan of these clothes is very short. With the upsurge in supply and demand, impulsive buying is also on the rise among consumers. As clothes are cheaper and poorer in quality, people buy more and use each piece of clothing less. **Consumer awareness, however, is low on the impact of fast fashion.**⁴⁰

Figure 3 How much clothing do we waste?



Source: <https://www.greenbiz.com/article/numbers-economic-social-and-environmental-impacts-fast-fashion> Downloaded: 3 May 2021



The size of the fashion industry

The size of the global fashion industry was USD 1,051.66 billion in 2011. The **market** is around USD 1,652.73 billion at present times. The **sportswear clothing category** is the highest and has been growing 8% a year. The majority (88%) of US shoppers prefer fast fashion, which is the highest number all around the world. This percentage is 46% in Europe, 25% in India 21% in China. The most popular fast-fashion **retailers** in the world are Uniqlo (21%), H&M (18%) and Zara (18%).

An average person buys five times more clothing now than they did in the 1980s. Fast fashion's growth would have been impossible without the **rise of e-commerce**. These two together constitute a massive economic growth. In 2018, the e-commerce revenue in the fashion industry worldwide was USD 481 and is expected to reach USD 713 billion in 2022. An estimate for the annual growth is around 10.36%. Moreover, USD 500 billion is wasted as people refuse to recycle or reuse. All in all, **the production of clothing items doubled in the last 15 years**, while less than 1% of these productions are recycled. Sales from clothing items are expected to reach 160 million tonnes of material in 2050.

⁴⁰ <https://www.attiremedia.com/articles/economic-drivers-of-fast-fashion> Downloaded: 3 May 2021

” *“My grandmother has only one shirt in her wardrobe. My mother has three. My daughter’s generation, 50. And 48% of them, she never wears.” (Jack Ma, Alibaba founder)*

Altogether, clothing production has almost doubled in the last 15 years, and its main driver was the **growing demand for cheap clothing** items across developed economies middle-class population. It is expected that there will soon be an almost 400 percent increase in world GDP by 2050, which would mean an ever-greater demand for clothes. This would equal a \$192 billion overall benefit to the global economy by 2030. In comparison, the value of discarded clothing items annually is more than \$400 billion.⁴¹



Zara – one of the largest fashion companies

One of the leaders of the fashion industry is Zara, part of the Inditex textile company, which started in 1963 and started retailing clothes in 1975 in Spain. The success of the company was unquestionable, it grew so much that in 1984, it could open its first logistics centre and began expansion to Portugal, US, and France. Later in the 1990s, it expanded to Mexico and Greece. With going public, Inditex opened its 2000th store and in the fiscal year of 2014, the net income of Zara was \$19.7 billion.

However, “*rapidly evolving trends shaped by the fashion industry, various media and the broader culture that surrounds consumption, place tremendous stress on production systems in the labor intensive clothing sector.*”⁴² **The fast fashion business model’s success lies in the fact that the production costs are low**, as they are employing low-paid workers, who most usually work under unsafe working conditions. More than 300 million people around the world are now employed in connection with fast fashion, most of them are from poor countries. Therefore, production is cheap, due to the low labour costs. The growing demand generated changes in the supply chain, with it being geographically more extensive. **The fast fashion business model also depends on speed.** Stocks of these retailers need to be replaced rapidly and the key to their success is continuous novelty. This way, companies like Zara can get new clothing items to its stores just in two or three weeks after production. This way, production is flexible and can react to trends easily. Due to its nature and economic model’s problems, there are many backlashes for the fast fashion industry, especially when it comes to the industry workers rights, safety, and wages, not to forget drawbacks in humans’ health, animals’ well-being and decline of the planet.

The minimum wage in Bangladesh, where some of the clothes are manufactured, is only \$68 per month.

Regardless of the criticism, fast fashion is considered to be a strong economic performer. Not only in-store visits are frequent (more than 1 per month in 2012 regarding Zara stores), but online

⁴¹ <https://www.greenbiz.com/article/numbers-economic-social-and-environmental-impacts-fast-fashion>

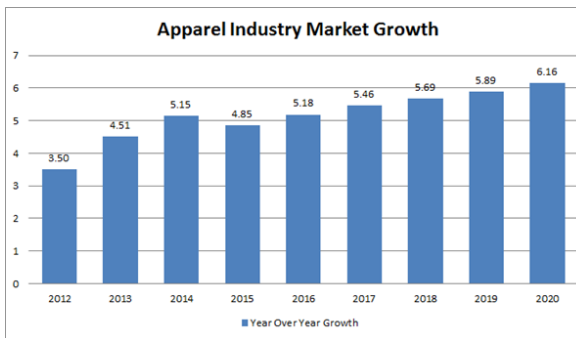
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⁴² Brooks A. (2015): Systems of provision: Fast fashion and jeans. Geoforum, 63, 36-39.

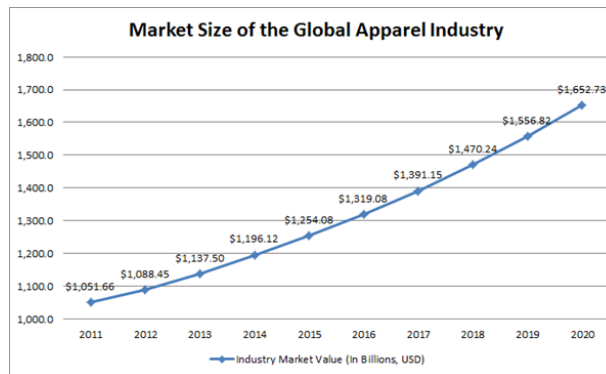


retail has also been on the rise. The so-called **haul videos on YouTube** have contributed to the continuous rise of online sales.⁴³ According to the research of MarketLine, there has been a 4.78% growth in the global apparel industry since 2011. We can find no signs that this increase will slow down in the future.⁴⁴ An average consumer buys 1.5 times more apparel than 6-7 years ago. It is claimed that the global GDP rose from 2011 to 2015 at a rate of 2.7%. If compared to clothing consumption, we can see that it significantly impacts this overall GDP growth.

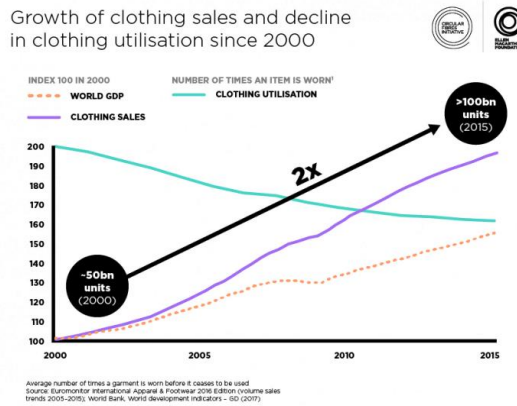
Figure 4 Some indicators on apparel industry



Source: <https://fee.org/articles/fast-fashion-has-changed-the-industry-and-the-economy/> Downloaded 3 May 2021



Source: <https://fee.org/articles/fast-fashion-has-changed-the-industry-and-the-economy/> Downloaded 3 May 2021



Source: <https://motif.org/news/circular-fashion-economy/> Downloaded: 3 May 2021

⁴³ <https://smartasset.com/credit-cards/the-economics-of-fast-fashion> Downloaded: 3 May 2021

⁴⁴ <https://fee.org/articles/fast-fashion-has-changed-the-industry-and-the-economy/> Downloaded: 3 May 2021

2.2 Social Impacts of Fast Fashion

As fashion is a kind of habit, a harmful habit that prevails in a given period can also be fashionable. In this form, fast fashion as an institution can also be considered fashion. **Not only are the garments in the stores fashionable, but so is the service itself.** Today, it is fashionable to shop at H&M or Zara stores. In a consumer society, shopping is already a fashionable activity in itself. The splendor and popularity of the malls and shopping malls, the beautifully decorated shop windows all represent this fashion wave, consumption, fast fashion.

When the clothing industry began to take a bigger step after World War II, supply increased, and more clothes and styles became available. At that time, customers no longer realized their own ideas, they did not buy custom clothes, but relied on manufacturers. As a result, the world of personality, of individual clothes, is lost. And the U.S. has become a paradise for mass media.⁴⁵ From the 1960s onwards, **the target audience of fashion houses became teenagers, as it was the first young generation to have money, so they became potential buyers.** This new generation had a new kind of sense of freedom, looking for as many ways as possible to express it. This age group wanted to wear anything, anytime, anywhere, this approach became the determinant for which different fashion companies offered a wide range.⁴⁶ This has led to another phenomenon: *“Most people in the world today wear what can be described as “world fashion,” a simplified and very low-cost version of Western clothing, often a T-shirt with pants or a skirt, manufactured on a mass scale.”*⁴⁷ However, this view is not shared unilaterally – Alistair O’Neill contradicts: *“Fashion is most often thought of as a global industry that is invested in anticipating what we wear and how we wish to appear to others. But fashion isn’t just a business. It’s also a **cultural and social phenomenon**, driven by the desire for the new. As such, the industry can never fully control fashion: fashion is*

FACTS ABOUT FAST FASHION

FORCED LABOR

In China, Uyghurs and other minorities are forced to work in cotton fields and factories without pay



WATER CONSUMPTION

Just one single cotton t-shirt takes 2700 litres of water for its production.

WORKERS

80% of the workers are women



COTTON

The materials used in the textile industry are 26% cotton

⁴⁵ http://publikaciok.lib.uni-corvinus.hu/publikus/szd/Belicza_Kitti.pdf Downloaded: 14.05.2021.

⁴⁶ http://publikaciok.lib.uni-corvinus.hu/publikus/szd/Belicza_Kitti.pdf Downloaded: 14.05.2021.

⁴⁷ <https://www.britannica.com/art/fashion-industry/Fashion-retailing-marketing-and-merchandising#ref296480> Downloaded 26 April 2021

*all about being open to change.*⁴⁸ However, the results are unambiguous: countless new fashion collections per year („micro-seasons”) are promoting a throwaway culture⁴⁹ in which clothing has evolved from a durable good to a daily purchase, thus fashion is “*accelerating the decreasing of the moral of the already owned wardrobe*”.⁵⁰ Due to affordability and huge supply, the value of clothing has declined in recent decades.

We analyse the social impacts from four aspects:



(1) Raw materials

The materials used in the textile industry are 26% cotton. 2.5% of the world's cultivable land is made up of cotton. Cotton is a source of income for 1 billion people, 100 million of whom are farmers. India accounts for 25% of world cotton production, providing a livelihood for 5.8 million farmers. These farmers are mostly smallholders, cultivating less than 2 acres of land. 60% of India's textile industry is cotton. Farmers working here are forced to sell their crops at a depressed price, they have very few opportunities to assert their interests. They run into financial difficulties because of corporate governance: they have to buy expensive GMO seeds, they have to use expensive tools, the fertilizer is expensive, and there is no government credit to help them.⁵¹ Environmental effects further worsen their situation: if the weather is favorable, the high product will take down the value, but if the weather is bad, the crop will be less and of poor quality.

In 2013, 11,772 farmers committed suicide in India. In the last 16 years, 250,000 farmers have committed suicide.

(Source: <https://edition.cnn.com/2015/04/19/asia/india-cotton-farmers-suicide/index.html> Downloaded: 14.05.2021)

⁴⁸ O'Neill, A.: What is Fashion, <https://artsandculture.google.com/theme/what-is-fashion/hwKYSaJMOwAKA?hl=en> Downloaded 26 April 2021

⁴⁹ Legere, A. – Kang, J. (2020): The role of self-concept in shaping sustainable consumption: A model of slow fashion. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 258, 120699)

⁵⁰ Kandikó, J. (1982): Divat és marketing. *Közgazdasági Szemle*, 29/1, 63-78.

⁵¹ <https://www.fashionrevolution.org/standing-up-for-the-farmers-who-grow-our-cotton/> Downloaded: 14.05.2021



Production in Uzbekistan

In Uzbekistan, adults and children are forced to work by the state on cotton fields. Chemical insecticides cause serious health problems: respiratory diseases, skin and eye irritation, seizures, death. The development of Parkinson's disease, mental illness and certain types of cancer can also be traced back to this. In the cotton-producing regions, 70-80 children are born with mental or physical disabilities in every village. Because workers are employed for low wages, parents have no money for treatments.⁵²



Exploitation in China

In China, Uyghurs and other minorities are forced to work in cotton fields without pay. Between 2017 and 2019, more than 80,000 Uyghurs were relocated within China to carry out forced labor in factories. Workers are often interned in camps where they are victims of torture, rape, forced sterilization, indoctrination. Adrian Zenz estimates that approx. half a million Uyghur are forced to work in different factories and on the fields. The trade from here involves 82 international brands, but whichever company opposes it is boycotted by China. So China is forcing companies to choose between losing the market or not standing up for human rights. China is indispensable in the textile industry as the world's largest producer and importer of cotton. It treats sustainability only as an environmental issue, it does not consider human factors important.⁵³

(2) Production

Western companies are outsourcing production to the east because of cost-effectiveness, where labor is cheaper, and regulations are also looser. Factories are not owned by companies, **they are only entrusted with production**. The conditions are set by the companies, the contracts and agreements are unilateral. Competition between the factories is fierce as they fear losing Western customers. Companies pay after the arrival of the manufactured and delivered goods, they do not accept a defective product. It happens that companies do not pay for some defective products, and it also happens that they do not take over the ordered product. Factories may not use the product manufactured but not taken over elsewhere, they may not sell it to another company. As a result, these products are forced to be destroyed or handed over to the customer free of charge or at a discount.

Limited opportunities for factories to contract with others

Companies do not allow factories to contract with others, which further increases their vulnerability. Factories cannot advertise themselves with the company so that the company can stay ahead of its competitors. For companies, cost reduction is a priority, so they also take the opportunity of the factories to provide good working conditions⁵⁴.

⁵² <https://www.fashionrevolution.org/standing-up-for-the-farmers-who-grow-our-cotton/> Downloaded: 14.05.2021

⁵³ <https://www.fashionrevolution.org/human-rights-transparency-and-accountability-in-fashion-a-conversation-on-uyghur-forced-labour/> Downloaded: 14.05.2021

⁵⁴ <https://www.fashionrevolution.org/made-in-china-we-are-not-machines-we-are-humans/> Downloaded: 14.05.2021



It is also remarkable how fast fashion has affected **human rights** as well by exploiting overseas workers to maximize profits. Companies and factories by aiming to maximize profit based on the consumers' demands are taking advantage of labor force and especially young and underage women. According to Borgen Magazine, *"these women work long hours with minimal pay, and they work in unsafe working conditions. Many women start working underage because they need a way to support themselves."* The issue is not only about the measly wages but for the dangerous working conditions with no benefits or protection.⁵⁵



The sad story of Rana Plaza in Bangladesh

Rana Plaza was an 8-storey building in Bangladesh with clothing factories on the top five floors with more than 3,000 employees. On April 24, 2013, **Rana Plaza collapsed**, burying the workers. Although the building had already been evacuated the day before due to visible cracks, labor inspectors forced workers back into the factory with the threat of a monthly pay cut⁵⁶. **1129 people lost their lives in Rana Plaza**⁵⁷. Workers' wages ranged at the time from an average of \$ 35 to \$ 60 per month. The cost of making the clothes is \$5, which are sold for \$80.⁵⁸ The majority of those working in the clothing industry are young women, often victims of violence. Many of them financially support their families, they cannot afford to lose income.⁵⁹ Bangladesh has the second largest garment exports in the world, approx. It employs 4.4 million people in this industry, mostly women. These workers often leave their home villages to work in factories in larger cities. They rarely see their families, they just give up their roots and traditions in many cases because of work.

More than 200 retailers and brands have teamed up to establish two agreements with Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh and Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety. Since their inception, they have resolved more than 700 complaints, helping 2,000,000 workers.⁶⁰ The Accord expires on May 31, 2021, which is worrying because without it, workers will be left without legal protection.⁶¹ It serves Western brands in 5,000 factories with 4 million employees in Bangladesh alone. 85% of workers are women, 80% of fast fashion clothes are made by those aged 18-24, with a minimum wage of 3 \$/day.⁶²

(3) Customers

After the collapse of Rana Plaza, nearly half of U.S. consumers said they would consider **changing their consumption habits**. As a result, there has been an increase in demand for rented and used clothing, which strengthens sustainability. Meanwhile, some shoppers in the fast fashion store have developed shame. Fast fashion shoppers are often ashamed of shopping in these stores, why they do not consciously buy. This practice is not good as fast fashion also has implications for

⁵⁵ Maiti, R. (2020): Fast Fashion: Its Detrimental Effect on the Environment. <https://earth.org/fast-fashions-detrimental-effect-on-the-environment/#:~:text=Among%20the%20environmental%20impacts%20of%20fast%20fashion%20are.use%20of%20massive%20amounts%20of%20water%20and%20energy.>

⁵⁶ <https://www.fashionrevolution.org/bangladesh-accord-an-urgent-call-to-action-to-protectprogress/> Downloaded: 14.05.2021

⁵⁷ <https://ourgoodbrands.com/real-impact-fast-fashion-industry-world/> Downloaded: 14.05.2021

⁵⁸ <https://www.reutersevents.com/sustainability/supply-chains/rana-plaza-rebuilding-more-factory> Downloaded: 14.05.2021

⁵⁹ <https://www.fashionrevolution.org/bangladesh-accord-an-urgent-call-to-action-to-protectprogress/> Downloaded: 14.05.2021

⁶⁰ <https://cleanclothes.org/campaigns/protect-progress> Downloaded: 14.05.2021

⁶¹ <https://www.fashionrevolution.org/bangladesh-accord-an-urgent-call-to-action-to-protectprogress/> Downloaded: 14.05.2021

⁶² <https://ourgoodbrands.com/real-impact-fast-fashion-industry-world/> Downloaded: 14.05.2021



consumers. Whereas previously fashionable clothes were only available to the affluent, fast fashion made fashionable clothes available. This, in turn, has provided **an opportunity for the poorer to dress fashionably**, and low prices help shoppers replace their old garments. According to a survey, 62% of those surveyed were ashamed of wearing fast fashion clothes in their first job interview. Because of the importance of first impressions, however, many only have the opportunity to do so. **Fast fashion helps women get ahead in the corporate world.** A distinction must be made between shame and guilt. Shame does not feel changeable, while guilt encourages development. It's not a good practice to embarrass others because they shop at a fast fashion store. **Conscious education and social dialogue should come to the fore.** Shaming others takes the focus away from the real problem: the big companies.⁶³

Between 1980 and 2010, women's participation in the workforce nearly doubled. They had the opportunity to expand their clothing, thereby expressing their social and economic status. Previously, this was just an elite privilege. With its availability, fast fashion has made it possible for women and minorities to break out.

(4) Identity

Fast fashion is versatile, today's identity is temporary. This is served by fast fashion. Consumers buy products that **express their temporary identity or approach their ideal self-image**. For this reason, the goal is temporariness and versatility. An important element of the postmodern world is continuous renewal. The tool for this is fast fashion. Fast fashion is designed for speed and affordability, so they can respond to ever-changing customer needs.⁶⁴ **One of the strengths of slow fashion is also self-expression.** Tools for slow fashion include second-hand clothes and vintage stores. In addition to information and awareness, it is about cultural and individual diversity. It shapes our personality, helps us communicate with our appearance.⁶⁵

2.2 Environmental Impacts of Fast Fashion

Environmental impacts are "the effect that the activities of people and businesses have on the environment".⁶⁶ In the case of the **production of clothing** (and textiles in general) the impacts on the

Environmental impacts: input and output side, mainly negative impacts

environment appear in all steps of the processing, from the use of resources (input) to the emission of toxins (output). This holds true both for natural fibres and synthetic fibres. Although effects can be both positive or negative by definition, **environmental impacts in textile industry are usually considered negative.**

⁶³ <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/fast-fashion-is-a-feminist-issue> Downloaded: 14.05.2021

⁶⁴ <https://docplayer.hu/47861395-H-m-mint-fast-fashion.html> Downloaded: 14.05.2021

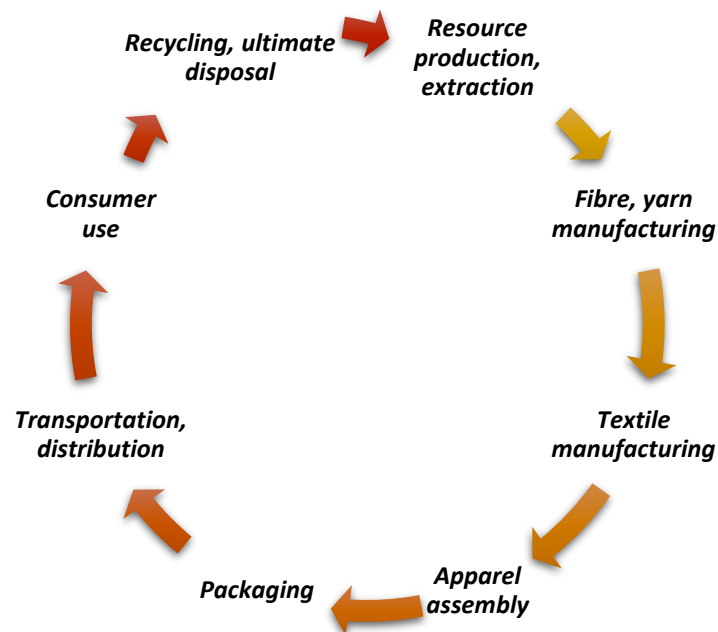
⁶⁵ <https://www.ruhastory.com/post/de-mi-is-az-a-fenntarthat%C3%B3-divat-fast-fashion-%C3%A9s-slow-fashion> Downloaded: 14.05.2021

⁶⁶ Cambridge Business English Dictionary: Environmental Impact, in <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/environmental-impact>, last visited May 24, 2021

According to Kozłowski et al. (2012), **“Apparel has a long and complicated life cycle (i.e. the supply chain and ‘downstream’ processes after manufacturing) consisting of many phases including resource production and extraction, fibre and yarn manufacturing, textile manufacturing, apparel assembly, packaging, transportation and distribution, consumer use, recycling and ultimate disposal. The environmental impacts associated with the production and use of apparel throughout its lifespan include wastewater emissions, solid waste production and significant depletion of resources from consumption of water, minerals, fossil fuels and energy.”**⁶⁷ The European Parliamentary Service describes the impacts similarly: *“The production of raw materials, spinning them into fibres, weaving fabrics and dyeing require enormous amounts of water and chemicals, including pesticides for growing raw materials such as cotton. Consumer use also has a large environmental footprint due to the water, energy and chemicals used in washing, tumble drying and ironing, as well as to microplastics shed into the environment.”*⁶⁸

Environmental impacts appear throughout the whole lifecycle

Figure 5 Life cycle in apparel industry



Source: own compilation

According to Borgen Magazine, fast fashion accounts for 10% of all carbon emissions⁶⁹ in the world and is the second largest industry when it comes to pollution after the oil industry. Fast

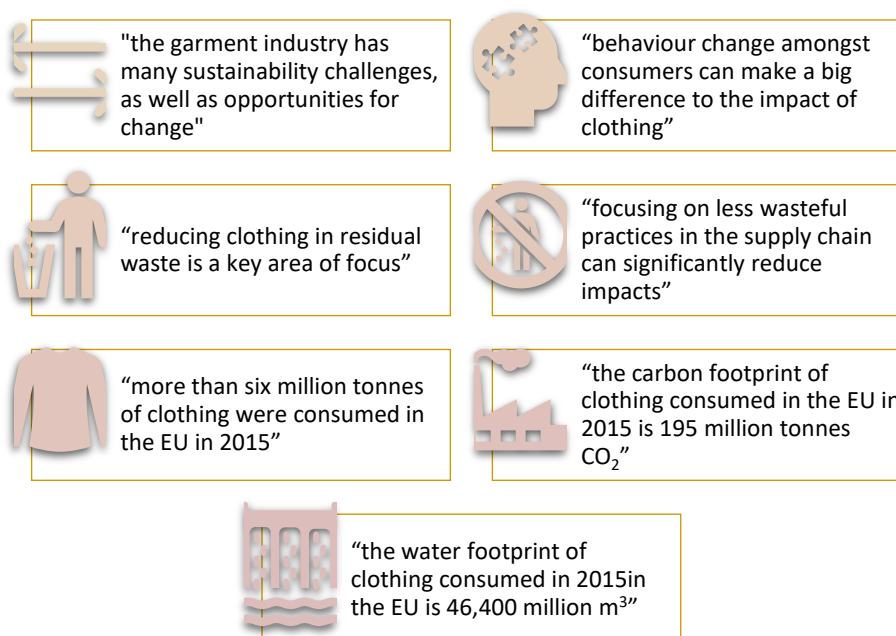
⁶⁷ Kozłowski A., Bardecki M. & Searcy C. (2012): Environmental Impacts in the Fashion Industry: A Life-cycle and Stakeholder Framework, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/jcorpciti.45.17?read-now=1&seq=1> All three paragraphs are from this site

⁶⁸ Šajin, N. (2019): Environmental impact of the textile and clothing industry. What consumers need to know, EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service, download from: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/633143/EPRS_BRI%282019%29633143_EN.pdf

⁶⁹ <https://theculturetrip.com/north-america/usa/articles/why-fast-fashion-is-killing-the-planet-and-your-ethics/>

Fashion manufacturers produce massively up to 150 billion clothing items every year but since the quality of the clothes is “poor” due to the low cost of making them, people tend to throw them away after only a few uses in order to consume new clothing.⁷⁰

Most of the chemicals used for the production end up in landfills and back in the environment after being thrown out and **not recycled**. This is a problem since approximately 500,000 tons of microfibres of tiny pieces of non-biodegradable materials from the thrown away clothes, end up in the oceans every year. Borgen Magazine mentions that “Fast fashion is a major factor in the destruction and pollution of the environment. Thus, pollution is just one of the negative effects of fast fashion.”⁷¹ The **global environmental impacts of clothing** in Europe have also been examined by the European Clothing Action Plan ECAP research project (under EU LIFE funding) which summarised the following key issues in its 2017 report:⁷²



⁷⁰ Maiti, R. (2020): Fast Fashion: Its Detrimental Effect on the Environment. <https://earth.org/fast-fashions-detrimental-effect-on-the-environment/#:~:text=Among%20the%20environmental%20impacts%20of%20fast%20fashion%20are.use%20of%20massive%20amounts%20of%20water%20and%20energy>

⁷¹ Maiti, R. (2020): Fast Fashion: Its Detrimental Effect on the Environment. <https://earth.org/fast-fashions-detrimental-effect-on-the-environment/#:~:text=Among%20the%20environmental%20impacts%20of%20fast%20fashion%20are.use%20of%20massive%20amounts%20of%20water%20and%20energy>

⁷² WRAP, 2017, Banbury, Mapping clothing impacts in Europe: the environmental cost, prepared by Sarah Gray, download from <http://www.ecap.eu.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Mapping-clothing-impacts-in-Europe.pdf>

The fact that fashion industry has been under the spotlight as a significant contributor to a plethora of environmental and social problems is based on a notion of continual consumption by constantly answering consumer's demands with new trends which leads to fashion obsolescence. "The fashion industry follows a linear model with three key stages: take (the harvesting of raw materials), make (the production of garments), and waste (the wearing and subsequent disposal of garments)."⁷³ This is a concerning issue since **the majority of clothing and textile waste ends up in landfills instead of being recycled or reused.**

"In 2000, global clothing sales were worth US\$1 trillion, with a third of sales in Western Europe, a third in North America and a quarter in Asia (Allwood et al. 2006). This not only increases the breadth of the environmental impacts but also exacerbates the issues surrounding disposal of the vast amounts of textile waste that are generated."

Kozłowski et al. (2012)

The awareness about the seriousness of such impacts is increasing with the studies and monitoring undertaken in recent decades. Different indicators and indices are engaged to assess environmental impacts of the textile and clothing industry:

Environmental footprint, carbon footprint and water footprint

help to understand specific impacts of different products throughout the processing chain. The main concepts involved in ecological footprinting are embodied energy, energy productivity, natural productivity, equivalence factors for land type, etc.).

Source: Roca, E., Herva, E.M. (2016) Ecological footprints in the textile industry, Pages 63-82, in: Handbook of Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) of Textiles and Clothing, Woodhead Publishing Series in Textiles, <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-100169-1.00003-4>

Water quality, health of textile workers

assess specific (local) impacts of different production steps

Life Cycle Inventories (LCI) and in particular, Life Cycle Impact Assessment (LCIA)

give an overview on different impacts. s.a. Global Warming Potential, Eutrophication Potential, Primary Energy Demand, Water Use etc.

Source: Thylmann, D.; Dr. Deimling, S.; D'Souza, F. (2014): The Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) of Organic Cotton Fiber, commissioned by Textile exchange. Download from https://textileexchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/TE-LCA_of_Organic_Cotton-Fiber-Summary_of-Findings.pdf

⁷³ Brydges, T. (2021): Closing the loop on take, make waste: Investigating circular economy practices in the Swedish fashion industry. Journal of Cleaner Production, 293, 126245) 1. pp

Chapter 3: Responses to Fast Fashion

3.1. Slow Fashion

“Many sources define slow fashion by describing what it’s not. For instance, slow fashion is the antithesis of fast fashion.”⁷⁴

Slow or sustainable fashion is often defined simply as the contrary to Fast Fashion, yet there are more complex definitions found which underline the specific mindset of the Slow Fashion concept:

- “Slow Fashion is the widespread **reaction to Fast Fashion**. It’s thoughtful, intentional, and holistic. It’s also an argument for hitting the brakes on excessive production, overcomplicated supply chains, and mindless consumption.”⁷⁵
- „Slow Fashion indicates the **new paradigm of apparel** that is made through environmentally, socially, and ethically responsible practices throughout the production cycle.”⁷⁶
- “Slow Fashion is an **awareness and approach** to fashion which considers the processes and resources required to make clothing. It advocates for buying better-quality garments that will last longer and valuing fair treatment of people, animals and the planet.”⁷⁷
- „Slow Fashion focuses on more than the materials from which clothes are made; it also emphasizes **slowing down** both the production and the consumption processes, encouraging sustainable values among all who partake in the fashion system.”⁷⁸
- „the term Slow Fashion encompasses the **whole range of sustainable clothing** - eco, green and ethical.”⁷⁹

Its concept borrows heavily from the **Slow Food Movement** where pleasure and consumption is linked with awareness and responsibility. In 1986, Carlo Petrini started the Slow Food movement in Italy, in order to demonstrate against Fast Food restaurants. Today, the Slow movement is not just against the cheap and unhealthy hamburgers, also against the cheap and polluting Fast Fashion.

Kate Fletcher, author, design activist, and professor, is widely credited with coining the term “Slow Fashion” in 2007: “*Slow Fashion is about designing, producing, consuming and living better. Slow Fashion is not time-based but quality-based (which has some time components). Slow is not*



⁷⁴ <https://www.sloww.co/slow-fashion-101/> Downloaded 26 April 2021

⁷⁵ Stanton, A. (2020): What does slow fashion actually mean?. <https://www.thegoodtrade.com/features/what-is-slow-fashion> Downloaded: 28.04.2021.

⁷⁶ Sung, J. – Woo, H. (2019): Investigating male consumers’ lifestyle of health and sustainability (LOHAS) and perception toward slow fashion. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 49, 120-128.pp

⁷⁷ <https://goodonyou.eco/what-is-slow-fashion/> Downloaded: 26 April 2021

⁷⁸ Clark, 2008 cited by Legere, A. – Kang, J. (2020): The role of self-concept in shaping sustainable consumption: A model of slow fashion. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 258, 120699

⁷⁹ Ertekin and Atik (2015), cited by West et al. 2021

the opposite of fast – there is no dualism – but a different approach in which designers, buyers, retailers and consumers are more aware of the impacts of products on workers, communities and ecosystems... Slow Fashion is about choice, information, cultural diversity and identity. Yet, critically, it is also about balance. It requires a combination of rapid imaginative change and symbolic (fashion) expression as well as durability and long-term engaging, quality products.”⁸⁰ Other slow fashion pioneers note that the movement encourages slower production, unifies sustainability with ethics, and ultimately invites consumers to invest in well-made and lasting clothes.

”

“The movement works towards creating an industry that benefits the planet and all people.”⁸¹

Jung and Jin (2014) describe Slow Fashion as *“a phenomenon which incorporates Slow production and utilization without exploiting natural and human resources to expedite manufacturing speed (Fletcher), and Slow consumption entails a longer product lifespan from manufacturing to discarding.”⁸² This observation clearly defines the key stakeholders to make slow fashion a reality: producers and consumers.*

Producers

Slow fashion encourages sustainable practices, as well as **ethical working conditions** for farmers, tailors and other employees involved in the textile chain. It focuses on quality and longevity while standing up for both nature and people.⁸³ With slower production schedules, small-batch collections, and zero waste designs, Slow Fashion brands aim to **reduce the textile waste** clogging our landfills. Materials like hemp, yulex and tencel that are being used in the Slow Fashion sector, are biodegradable which means that they can reduce ecological and carbon footprints. Instead of chasing trends, Slow Fashion brands utilize enduring styles with layering options and create classic and versatile pieces. This encourages customers to build minimalist wardrobes and invest in garments that they keep for a lifetime.⁸⁴

Consumers

And with this, Slow Fashion is going beyond a brand’s efforts to make sustainable and ethical fashion garments. The movement also asks consumers to 1) adopt a non-consumerist mentality, and 2) shift toward shopping habits that are beneficial for the planet and the people who call it home.⁸⁵ The necessary shift required is **from quantity to quality focused consumption**, with citizens

⁸⁰ Fletcher, K. (2011): Slow fashion. In: The Ecologist, <https://theecologist.org/2007/jun/01/slow-fashion>, last visited May 3, 2021

⁸¹ <https://www.thegoodtrade.com/features/what-is-slow-fashion> Downloaded 26 April 2021

⁸² Jung, S. & Jin, B., (2014): A theoretical investigation of slow fashion: sustainable future of the apparel industry. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/ijcs.12127>

⁸³ <https://passionpassport.com/how-slow-fashion-can-save-the-environment/> Downloaded 26 April 2021

⁸⁴ Stanton, A. (2020): What does slow fashion actually mean?. <https://www.thegoodtrade.com/features/what-is-slow-fashion> Downloaded: 28.04.2021.

⁸⁵ <https://www.sustainablejungle.com/sustainable-fashion/what-is-slow-fashion/> Downloaded 26 April 2021



engaging in alternative forms of consumption (such as second-hand markets/vintage) and a commitment to conscientiously dispose (or extend the life) of used clothing.⁸⁶

Emilia Wik, Head Designer at BYEM, points out the psychological aspect of such a shift of consumption paradigms: “*Slow Fashion is also about returning to a **personal relationship with fashion**. One where trends and seasons don’t matter, but where your ethics and aesthetics seamlessly unite, and you can escape the stress of constant consumption, focusing on the style that truly appeals to you.*”⁸⁷ Beyond this bilateral relationship between consumer and fashion, Brooks refers to further relationships in the fashion industry: „*Jeans and their constituent parts – like any commodities – are not just ‘things’, but also are a set of social relationships; a link between a farmer and a cotton trader, a connection between a factory owner and a sewing machine operator, or a cultural symbol purchased by a teenager.*”⁸⁸ Here, Pookulangara and Shephard see another positive effect of Slow Fashion: “*a slowing down of consumption and production processes, and a closer **relationship between designers, producers and consumers**. It is thought to result, consequently, in better protection for the wellbeing of workers, communities, and the environment.*”⁸⁹

3.2. Other initiatives towards Sustainable Fashion

Campaigns

Several stakeholder initiatives, legislative changes and civil society campaigns have helped to identify impacts of Fast Fashion, monitor and reduce them. The increased awareness about negative impacts of the fashion industry has been the motivation for a number of **campaigns** worldwide. Some approach stakeholders in the textile industry to change the production principles whilst others are trying to motivate citizens to change their consumption behaviour:

The **Detox-Campaign of Greenpeace** is a global campaign to free clothing from toxins. It has resulted in more than 30 fashion labels (e.g. H&M, Adidas and Aldi) to commit to ending the use of toxins by 2020. The UK-based NGO WRAP has developed a Sustainable Clothing Guide to help brands and retailers to enhance the durability and quality of the clothing they produce.⁹⁰

The international **Clean Clothes Campaign** (www.cleanclothes.org) is driven by NGOs in 17 different countries which strive for better working conditions and labour rights in the global textile and fashion industry.

The Dutch NGO Solidaridad developed in 2020 a **Guidebook on Wet Processing** to provide an overview of the different negative environmental impacts of wet processing and how chemicals should be managed at a wet processing facility.⁹¹

⁸⁶ Jung and Jin, 2014, cited by West et al. 2021). (West, J. – Saunders, C. – Willet, J. (2021): A bottom up approach to slowing fashion: Tailored solutions for consumers. Journal of Cleaner Production, 296, 126387

⁸⁷ Raudsepp, J., Frig, M. (2018): What is the Difference Between Slow, Ethical and Sustainable Fashion? Four Industry Insiders Tell Us What They Think – Interview with Emilia Wik (Head Designer at BYEM), <http://www.savant-magazine.com/magazine/2018/4/5/difference-between-slow-ethical-and-sustainable-fashion-4-industry-insiders>, last visited May 3, 2021

⁸⁸ Brooks A. (2015): Systems of provision: Fast fashion and jeans. Geoforum, 63, 36-39.

⁸⁹ Pookulangara and Shephard, 2013 cited by West, J. – Saunders, C. – Willet, J. (2021): A bottom up approach to slowing fashion: Tailored solutions for consumers. Journal of Cleaner Production, 296, 126387

⁹⁰ WRAP (2017): Sustainable Clothing. A practical guide to enhancing clothing durability and quality. Downloaded: <https://wrap.org.uk/resources/guide/sustainable-clothing-guide#download-file>

⁹¹ <https://www.solidaridadnetwork.org/publications/solidaridad-wet-processing-guidebook/>

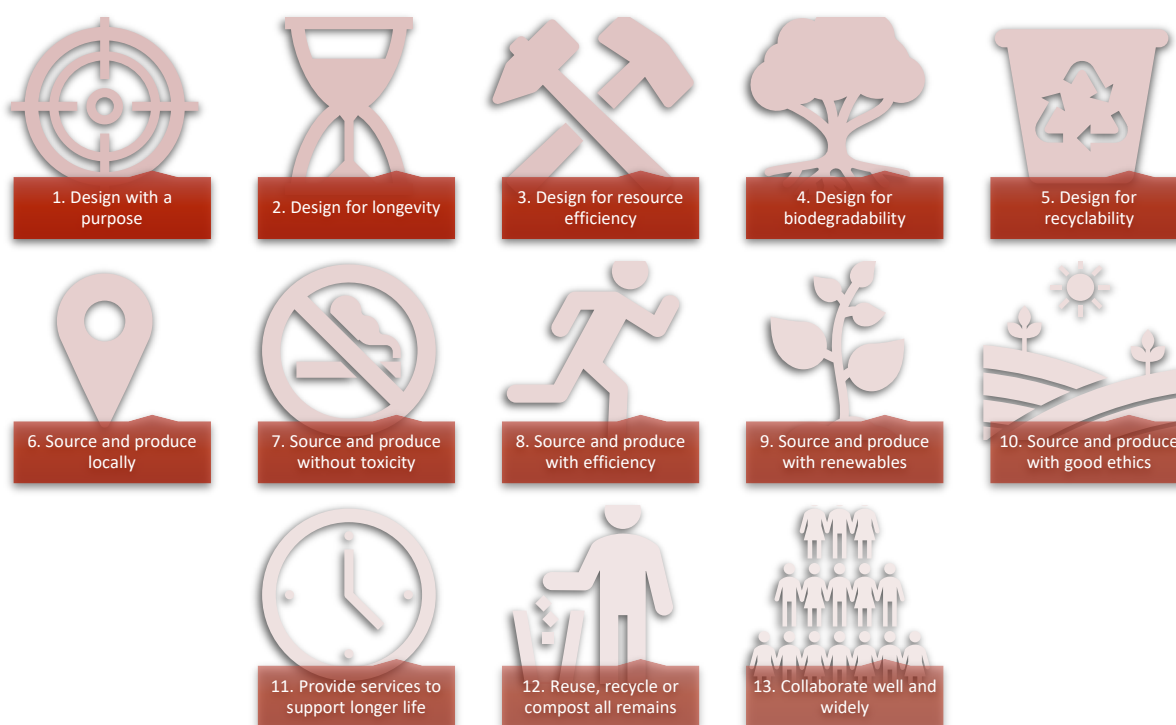
In order to raise awareness of citizens and change consumer behaviour, sustainable clothing guides are being developed as well.

Partly due to such campaigns, the recent years have seen more and more **corporate initiatives** as well, such as the **Fair Wear Foundation** (www.fairwear.org). Textile companies which become member in the commit to transforming their business towards ethical labour conditions in the manufacturing of clothes. The focus is not on single products, but on the entire company processes. Environmental standards are not considered.

Circular economy model

In order to tackle the problem of waste and encourage the full recycling of each and every individual clothing items, a new textile and fashion economy is envisaged. Moving beyond the take-make-waste model, examples of circular practices include new design strategies (such as seasonless collections) that may encourage consumers to keep and wear clothing longer.⁹² In this new **circular fashion economy**, new technologies, innovation, and new business models are used for manufacturing, and waste management. Sustainable fashion will have different impacts on the economy.⁹³ The **Green Strategy** consultancy firm clarified several principles to support circular and sustainable fashion. The first **13 principles** are defined from a **producer's perspective**, and **the other three are relevant to the consumer's perspective**.

Figure 6 Producers' perspectives – 13 principles



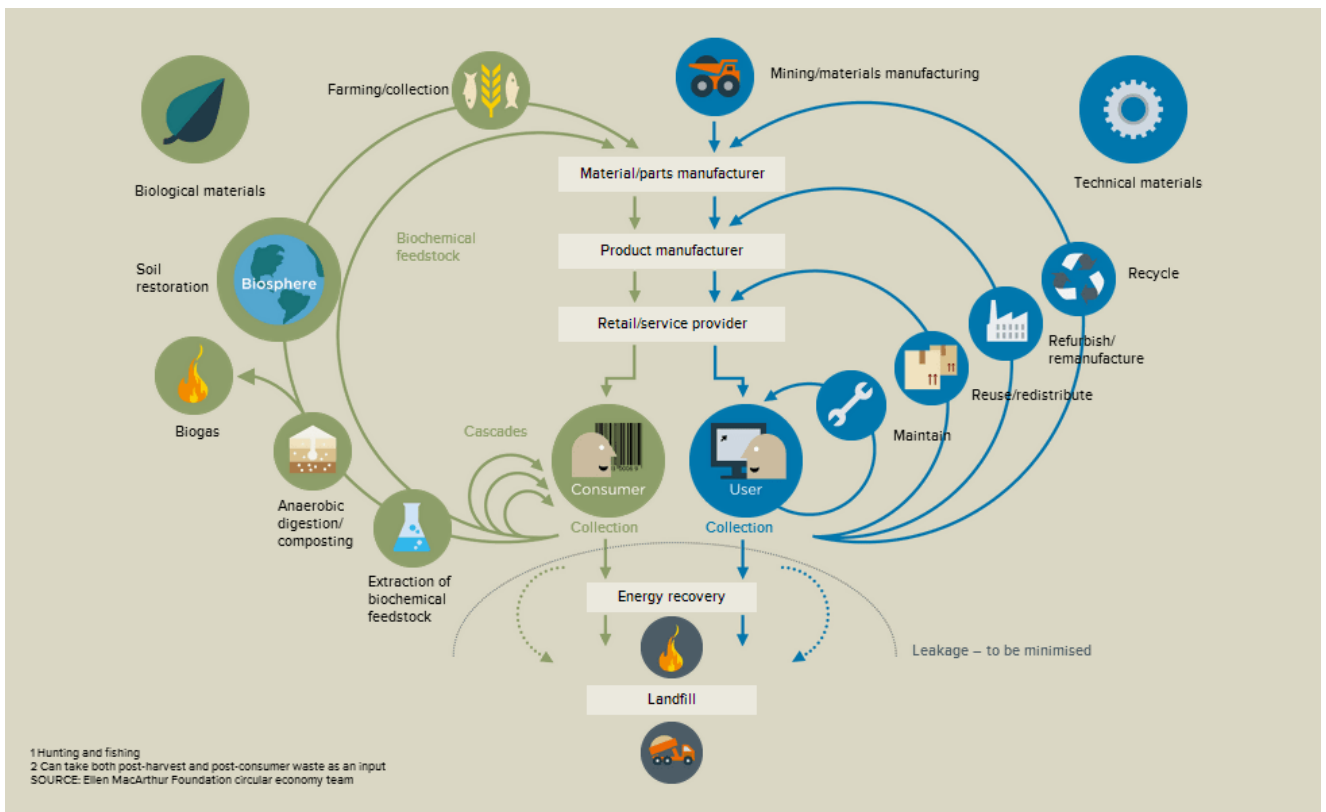
⁹² Brydges, T. (2021): Closing the loop on take, make waste: Investigating circular economy practices in the Swedish fashion industry. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 293, 126245

⁹³ <https://www.panaprium.com/blogs/i/how-does-fast-fashion-affect-the-economy> Downloaded: 3 May 2021

Figure 7 Consumers' perspectives – 3 additional principles



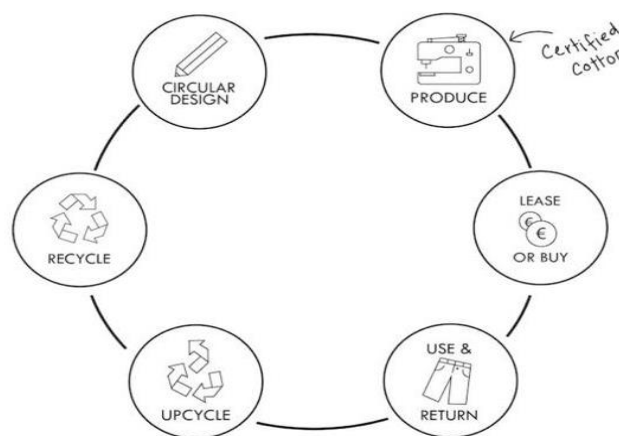
Figure 8 Circular fashion economy



Source: <https://motif.org/news/circular-fashion-economy/> Downloaded: 3 May 2021

The **circular fashion economy wheel** is shown on Figure 9. With this wheel's circular nature, the products never leave the cycle, meaning that they will end up in the ecosystem later, therefore having less impact on the environment. The products should keep flowing in the wheel for a long period of time. The idea behind this wheel would be that designers create the products, these products are transported with less carbon footprint, they are sold, redesigned or recycled, and if the product is disposed, it is done in an environmentally friendly manner.

Figure 9 Circular fashion economy wheel



Source: <https://motif.org/news/circular-fashion-economy/> Downloaded: 3 May 2021

There are many advantages to this model. For example, there is a less need for raw materials, eco-friendly jobs and industries can be created and brands may benefit from a better image. Limitations to this model include dependency on consumer action, tough system of a new business model based on recycled material, and the demanding integration of recycling material into the product life cycle.⁹⁴

Labels and Standards ⁹⁵

Since the definition of **sustainable fashion** is linked to different social, environmental and economic indicators, there is a number of different labels established to set and monitor respective standards. The most important label for environmental standards in clothing is the **Global Organic Textile Standard GOTS**. The 2nd grade of the GOTS label is assigned to textiles which consist of 70% certified organic natural fibres; for 1st grade GOTS this proportion must be even 95% for the entire textile chain. A rather new, government-run certification label is the "**Green Button**" which indicates socially and environmentally sustainable clothes. Another label, not only restricted to clothing, but other products as well, is **Cradle to Cradle Certified®** (www.c2ccertified.org/). It measures safer, more sustainable products made for the circular economy.

⁹⁴ <https://motif.org/news/circular-fashion-economy/> Downloaded: 3 May 2021

⁹⁵ Köhrer, E. And FEMNET (2017): Glossar. In: Fair Fashion Guide, FEMNET (ed.), April 2017, p.32

Chapter 4 Summary

The apparel industry has a negative multidimensional impact in sectors such as the environment, the society and the economy. Some examples are water usage, microfibers, greenhouse gases, deforestation, human rights abuses, habitat destruction and the list goes on. *“Slow fashion offers an alternative, with mindful manufacturing, fair labor rights, natural materials, and lasting garments. It’s encouraging to know that there are brands, communities, and individuals out there fighting for the planet and the safety of garment workers. And by buying garments from responsible brands as well as second-hand shops, we can ensure agency, and that we’re advocating for the environment and others.”*⁹⁶

When **comparing fast fashion and slow fashion**, in addition to the differences, it is important to mention the similarities. The **goal of both is to make us feel good in our clothes**, to be fashionable, attractive. It is important that we are accepted by our dress and that our lifestyle is reflected through our wardrobe. Social dialogue is the key to thematizing fast fashion concerns on as many surfaces and areas as possible. From a social point of view, perhaps the loss of identity is the most important: the people who are forced to work on farms, in factories, for this fashion industry, lose their own identity, their own cultural roots. In India, cotton is not utilized by local handicrafts, but is used to make clothes in line with Western fashion trends. Young people emigrating from villages and smaller settlements do not develop their talents in the local culture and industry, but pursue handicrafts in line with Western trends. The same is true of young people in the West: they are not able to permanently shape their own identity through clothes, as several new collections appear every year, so stylish, fashionable clothing can only be maintained if the wardrobe is regularly updated. Western, local seamstresses and tailors also get less work, even though these professionals would be able to create clothes that perfectly match our style, personality and body. Because of the ready-made sizes, we try to squeeze ourselves into one size at a time, while we are all different, with different sizes. Fast fashion has helped many people in the Western world, it has definitely facilitated social mobilization with its cheap, fashionable clothes. Social, material differences through our clothes are no longer necessarily identifiable today, as the poorer strata also have access to fashionable clothing. As global citizens, however, it is important to address the issue on an ongoing basis, as there are many disadvantages as well as advantages. The common dialogue must strive for creativity, the importance of individuality, so that we do not use fashion for changing, often changing collections, but also for the maximum expression of an individual's identity.

⁹⁶ <https://www.thegoodtrade.com/features/what-is-fast-fashion> Downloaded: 26 April 2021

LITERATURE REVIEW



In case you are more interested in fast fashion or slow fashion, you can check the references in footnotes. You can also visit the project website at <https://www.fasf.creativedu.hu> or follow the project in social media (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn).



Funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



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