

Committee: ECOSOC

Agenda Item: The exploitation of human rights caused by fast fashion companies

Student Officers: İnci Su Aslan , Irmak Karadoğan



Introduction to the Team

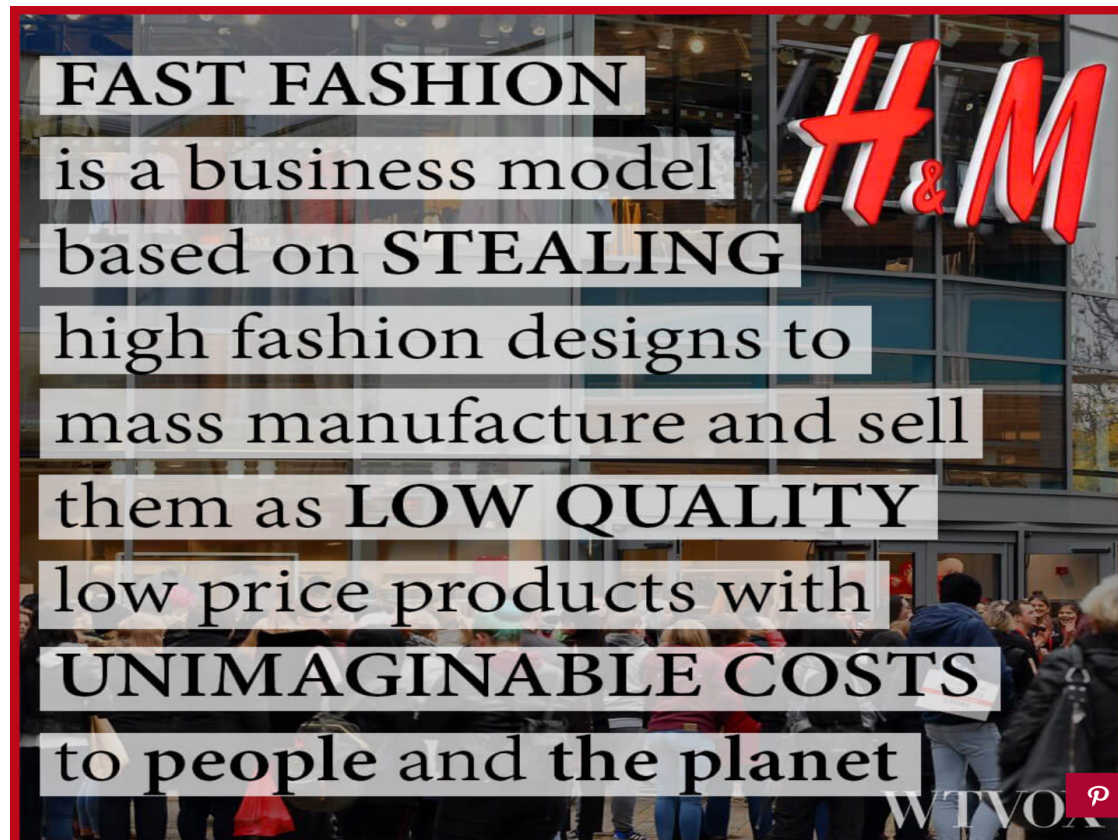
President Chair: İnci Su Aslan

Co-Chair: Irmak Karadoğan

Greetings Fellow Delegates,

I'm your head chair İnci Su Aslan. I am a 10th grader at FMV Isık Anatolian Highschool. I am so excited to meet you all and I would like you to know about me a little before the conference as well. I have been in the MUN family since I started high school and it has become a part of my lifestyle and a passion. Now I'm here and looking forward to chairing this committee. I also would like to talk about my personality a bit since I'm extremely emotional and also my sign is Pisces so it is not hard to guess why. I love playing the piano even though my voice sucks and I love dancing. You can learn more about me at the committee. I really can't wait to hear from you guys. This will be one of the best experiences you'll ever have and a great start if you are a first timer. I trust you guys and hope we will have a great debate in the committee. See you!!!

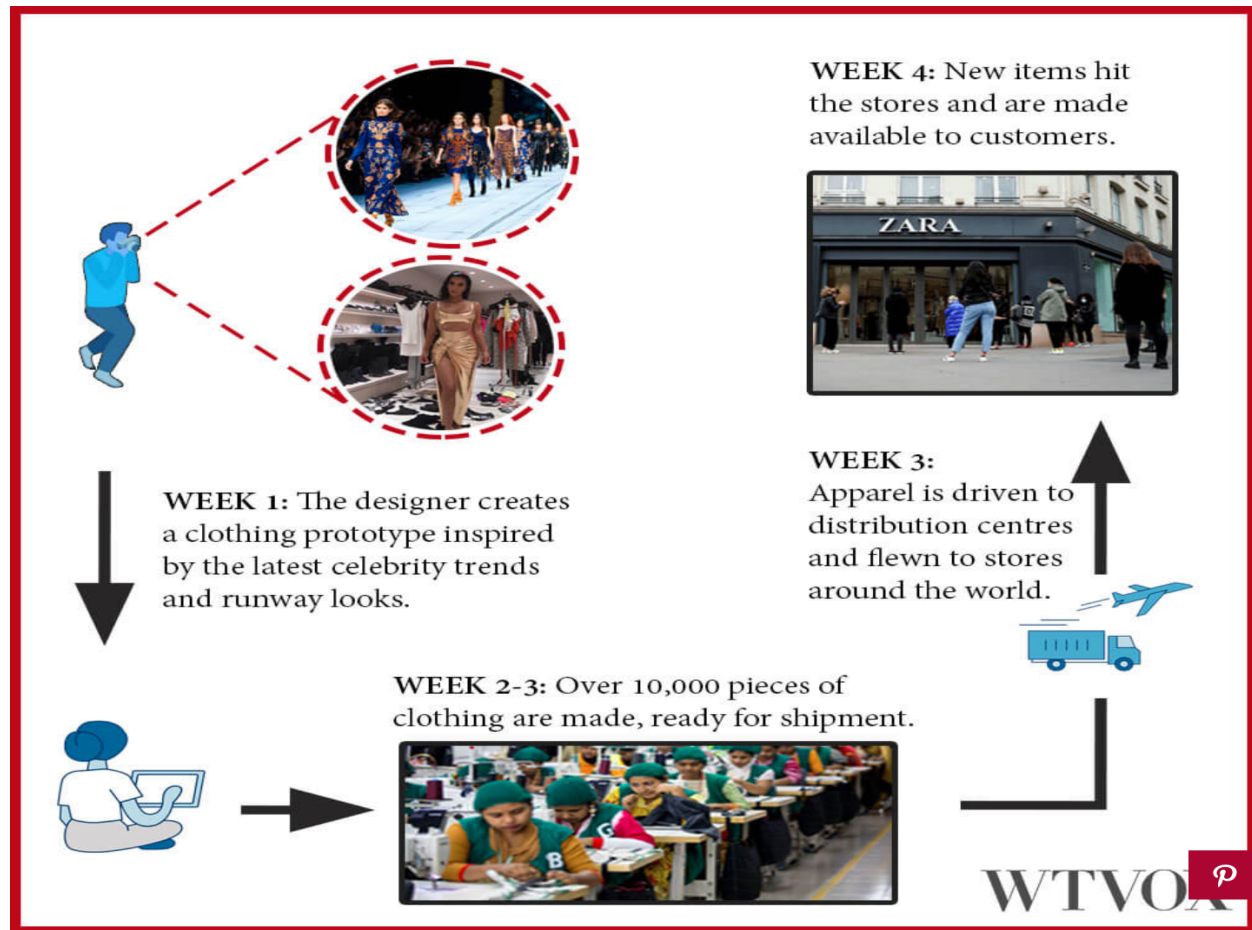
Hello, my name is Irmak Karadoğan. I am a 10th grader at FMV Isık Anatolian Highschool. I like drawing and playing the violin. I love spending time with the loved ones. I hope we'll have a great time together and will have some amazing memories that will last a lifetime. I hope we'll have a fruitful debate in order to solve the issue. I can assure you that this conference will be the conference that you will remember in the future. I'll try my best to make you all have some great, quality time. See you soon.



Introduction

The retail marketplace is dominated by fast fashion, a three-trillion-dollar industry, transforming the way customers buy and thereby changing the whole fashion industry. Looking closer to the fast fashion industry: We can define it as cheap, disposable clothing that is made indiscriminately, imprudently, and often without consideration for environmental and labor conditions. When we look at daily life, most of the apparel pieces we shop for are mainly fast fashion. The reason why we have it in our life is because of the fact that Fast Fashion implies brief, consecutive cycles of manufacturing as easily and as cheaply as possible the latest fashion trends in order to maximize overall demand for them and with recent seasonal changes, the need to constantly be in demand and never be seen twice with a single item of clothing has opened the way for fast fashion to swoop in with huge quantities of inexpensive clothes that travel directly to big chain outlets. Up to 25 million modern victims of slavery are reported by the United Nations to be oppressed around the world, a number that can produce unquestionable terror. The fashion industry is far from the only culprit, and authorities have failed to recognize the problem's complexity or to fix the problems easily. Till now.

Fast Fashion Business Model:



Definition of key terms

Supplier: a company, person, etc. that provides things that people want or need, especially over a long period of time:

Consumer: a person who buys goods or services for their own use

Monopoly: (an organization or group that has) complete control of something, especially an area of business, so that others have no share

Paradigm: a model of something, or a very clear and typical example of something.

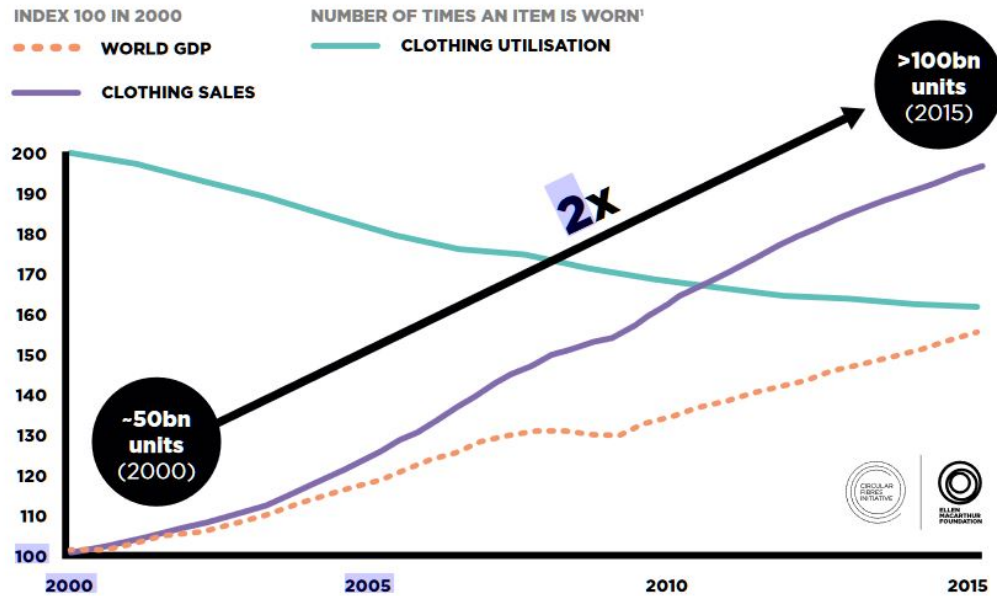
Globalization: the increase of trade around the world, especially by large companies producing and trading goods in many different countries

Consumption: the amount used or eaten

More Focused On The Issue

Focusing on the issue, These brands mostly target their factories in countries such as India, China, and Bangladesh taking into consideration that a large number of citizens in these due to the low manufacturing cost, and force them to accomplish tremendous amounts of work in order to allow them to even have a chance of earning a living wage. According to a survey by 'Fashion Checker', 93% of fast fashion brands are not paying garment workers a living wage. Also when we look a bit closer, they use significant quantities of lead (which is toxic to both the worker and the consumer) and other dangerous chemicals or dyes in their accessories and clothing. This alone negatively impacts their welfare, the violence they face from the hands of their bosses, and their lack of facilities, such as food or access to toilets, along with the long hours they must endure. Also, it violates the children rights since in filthy sweatshops where these kids face violence and threats just for the sake of our convenience of keeping up with trends, no child should work and there are 152 million child laborers around the world who work in unsafe environments for more than 9 hours a day, according to The Global Statistics of Child Labour.





1 Average number of times a garment is worn before it ceases to be used

History

Much to our shock, most of the labels we're familiar with, such as Zara, H&M, Mango, Topshop, and many more, are fast fashion brands. Take Zara as an example: Inditex, the parent company of the brand, owns 2,700 stores in more than 60 countries, is reportedly estimated at \$24 billion, and has \$8 billion in annual revenue. People first heard the term "fast fashion" when Zara landed in New York in the early 1990s. The New York Times created it to explain Zara's project to take just 15 days for a dress to go from the stage of design to be sold in shops. During the Industrial Revolution, which brought modern sewing equipment, manufacturers, and ready-produced garments, or clothing that is made in bulk in a number of sizes rather than being made to order, the cycle of fashion picked up the pace. The sewing machine, first invented in 1846, led to a rapid decline in textile costs and a significant rise in the scale of clothing manufacture. Young people generated new movements in the 1960s and 70s and clothes became a medium of personal expression, but there was also a difference between high fashion and high street styles. Low-cost apparel achieved its zenith in the late 1990s and 2000s. Online shopping took off, and the high street was taken over by fast fashion stores including H&M and Zara. The looks and concept components were taken from the top fashion houses by these brands and copied easily and cheaply. It's plain to see how the movement catches on with everyone now able to browse for on-trend apparel wherever they choose.



Involved Countries and Organizations

Bangladesh

Globalization has expanded job prospects through foreign direct investment in less developed countries such as Bangladesh. Being highly industrialized has contributed to rising wages and efficiency, which, in theory, contributes to raising the quality of life of the citizens. Factory work is the only labor available in rural Bangladesh. Therefore, many Western fast fashion brands partner with local elites to set up small textile factories with bad working conditions in cities such as Dhaka.

China

The rapid fashion clothing consumption introduced by foreign countries has arrived on the Chinese clothing market at the beginning of the 20th century with the globalization of the global economy. As a major clothing consumption market in China, fast fashion clothing markets have an important share in the entire domestic clothing market. ZARA has entered the Chinese retail business for the first time since 2006, with a brand new luxury sales platform. Since then, domestic and international quick fashion brands have burst into the Chinese market, and with a swift trend and fast fashion has swept the Chinese apparel market.

USA

Fast fashion in the United States began in the 1980s, starting as an offshoot of the production strategies of "quick response" that developed at that time. The US is the biggest fashion market in the world today. The effect of American customers and mass culture has also led to the success of fast fashion. The US economy and demographic provide the ideal landscape for

fast-fashion stores to succeed, and as a result, many fast-fashion retailers started or have major headquarters in the United States. In addition, since becoming wildly popular in the American market, European fast-fashion stores such as Zara and H&M have achieved global success.

Clean Clothes Campaign

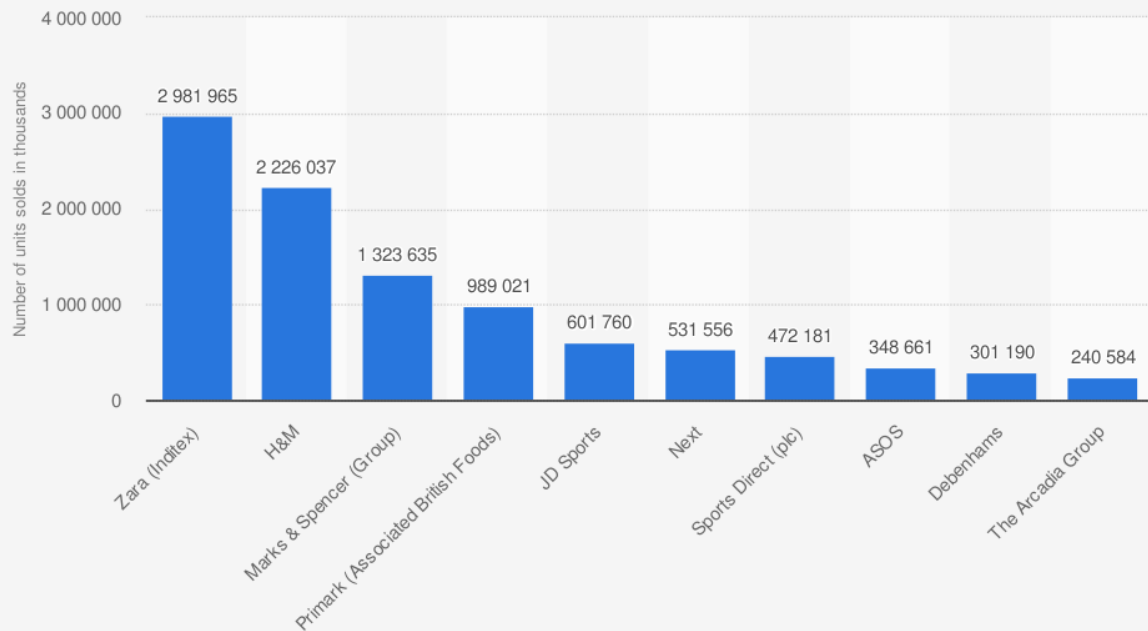
The Clean Clothes Initiative is an international network devoted to strengthening working practices and inspiring staff in the global sectors of apparel and sportswear. Since 1989, CCC has mobilized to ensure that workers' fundamental rights are protected. They educate and organize clients, petition businesses and legislatures, and provide workers with concrete resources for unity as they fight for their rights and seek fair working conditions. The Clean Clothes Initiative puts labor unions and NGOs together, representing a diverse variety of viewpoints and concerns, such as women's rights, customer advocacy, and the elimination of poverty. As a grassroots network of hundreds of groups and unions, both in the clothing and consumer markets, they will recognize and turn local issues and priorities into global action. To help staff in achieving their targets, they build campaign strategies. They also work closely with related movements for labor rights.

Brand Example: ZARA



Zara, a Spanish fast-fashion giant has a laundry list of its own. The company is caught copying luxury brands' designs in the past and this issue still continues in some of their designs. But the problem is not only the fact that they copy but that they sell it at a much lower price. Also, the quality is questionable.

Leading 10 European fast fashion brands based on units sold per year worldwide in the financial year 2018/2019* (in 1,000s)



Source
AskTraders
© Statista 2020

Additional Information:
Europe; AskTraders; Various sources; 2018/2019

Timeline of events

1820-1840	The Industrial Revolution is introducing innovations to the world, such as sewing machinery manufacturing, clothing factories, and mass manufacturing.
1939-1945	Style and fabric restrictions led to the uniform manufacturing of clothes that middle-class shoppers started to like after World War II.
1947	H&M was founded in Sweden.
1964	TOPSHOP was founded in London.
1960-1970	Young millennials are starting to appreciate cheaply-made, trend-focused clothes to convey their style.
1975	The first Zara store opened in Coruna.
1984	Forever21 was founded in Los Angeles.

1989	Zara opens the first US store in New York. With that, The New York Times mentioned the term “Fast Fashion”
1990-2000	High-street retail is dominated by fast fashion.
2000	H&M opens the first US store in New York.
2009	TOPSHOP opens the first US store in New York.

Previous attempts to solve the issue

-The treatment of garment factory workers in Asia was termed "slave labor" by the European Parliament in 2014. In sweatshops, mainly women and children are kept working an average of 14 to 16 hours a day. Concepts of access to showers break to relax and eat are mere rights to be withdrawn when first-world fashion firms are close to deadlines.

-In the 'Detox Catwalk' campaign initiated by Greenpeace, 64 sample large ready wear brands promised to turn to be more ecological and focus on the solutions by 2020, and in 2016, the report proved that the brands started to carry out replacement procedures.

-For a host of UN agencies working to make fashion sustainable, the UN Sustainable Fashion Alliance provides a shared forum and dialogue: the Food and Agricultural Organization supports Blue Fashion, which uses sustainable maritime materials and saves arable land; the International Trade Centre has set up the Ethical Fashion Initiative to showcase artisans from the developing world.

-An Amendment act was made. The Act provides that no child shall be permitted to work between 7 pm and 8 am and shall not be permitted to work overtime. No child shall work for more than 3 hours before he has an interval of one hour. Spread over has been fixed at six hours.

Possible solutions

-Fast fashion brands can be sued for violation of human rights. Sweatshops in countries such as China and Bangladesh are pushing employees to work in terrible conditions for challenging hours to generate an incredibly low payment. Brands are pushing employees to cope with substances that are potentially harmful and hazardous.

-People should be encouraged in order to buy second-hand clothes. Awareness can be raised by NGOs or social media in order to make the broadcasts reach every part of the world.

-Special boxes should be made by authorities and placed in crowded streets in order for people to put their old or damaged clothes. With this recycling process, less work will be done by factories.

-Governments should give permission to the UN for them to send agents in order to control and investigate the factories' working conditions and how the employees are treated.

Useful links

What is Fast Fashion? Everything to Know:

<https://australianstyleinstitute.com.au/shopping-habits-say-fast-fashion-ethics-sustainability/>

The problem with fast fashion:<https://www.bwss.org/fastfashion/>

What Happens When Fashion Becomes Fast, Disposable And Cheap?:

<https://www.npr.org/2016/04/08/473513620/what-happens-when-fashion-becomes-fast-disposable-and-cheap>

How the Fast Fashion Industry interferes with human rights:

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