

How Fast Should Fashion Really Be? An Investigation into Whether It Is Possible for ‘Fast Fashion’ to Adapt to Meet Social Sustainability Goals

Shakira Wanduragala¹

¹The University of Exeter, UK

Correspondence: Shakira Wanduragala, The University of Exeter, UK. E-mail: Shakira.Wanduragala@fundamentalmedia.com

Received: November 18, 2022

Accepted: January 2, 2024

Online Published: January 9, 2024

doi:10.5539/jsd.v17n2p35

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5539/jsd.v17n2p35>

Abstract

In the last decade, there have been a number of fatal disasters in garment factories across the world, with many of these factories producing garments for the ‘fast fashion’ industry. With the ‘fast fashion’ industry continuing to grow at an exponential rate, it is important, now more than ever, to understand how garment workers at the heart of this growth can be protected in a socially sustainable way. The motivation of this study is to look into ways of empowering producers of the garments, not just those who wear them. The objective of this research is to understand whether it is possible for ‘fast fashion’ to meet social sustainability goals, or whether the model is inherently unsustainable. To address this question, a systematic literature review was conducted, which maps literature on ‘fast fashion’ and social sustainability. This review looks at the two concepts independently, then draws the literature together to explain the relationship, and outlines approaches that can be taken to ameliorate it. The paper presents an argument for how policymakers, businesses and consumers can play a part in making fast fashion more socially sustainable in the hope of one day being able to empower all. The conclusion of this review is that fast fashion is only capable of exhibiting ‘weak’ sustainability, and that systemic change would be needed across stakeholders to address social sustainability goals effectively.

Keywords: social sustainability, fast fashion, sustainable development

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Motivation

In 2013, Rana Plaza, a garment factory in Bangladesh, collapsed, killing 1,134 garment workers and injuring over 2,500 more. This was the deadliest recorded garment factory disaster in history; however, it was not an isolated incident. Since the collapse of Rana Plaza, there have been 109 garment factory accidents recorded in Bangladesh (International Labour Organization, 2018). Many of these factories are producing garments for the ‘fast fashion’ (FF) industry. The FF industry is concerned with the rapid production of garments, that can reach the retail market in the quickest time possible. Garment production is a labour-intensive industry and largely occurs in developing countries (Note 1), due to the abundance of workers who will accept work at a low wage (Turker & Altuntas, 2014). The Rana Plaza disaster shines a light on the dangerous conditions that these individuals are forced to work in. This disaster raised a number of concerns about the treatment of garment workers, and left people questioning whether the fashion industry was socially sustainable.

Social sustainability (SocSus) is concerned with providing equity and social justice in outcomes (Berlin & Adams, 2017; Colantonio, 2009; Sachs, 1999; Vallance, Perkins & Dixon, 2011). Conceptually, both equity and social justice are concerned with providing fairness and avoiding extreme deprivation. In 2015, the United Nations (UN) defined 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) that aim to tackle global challenges –13 of which have strong links to providing equity and social justice, thus, can act as SocSus goals.

The Rana Plaza disaster caused extreme deprivation in outcomes and exhibited a clear lack of SocSus. Further to this, the disaster disproportionately affected garment workers, with many losing their lives, whilst organisations producing in these garment factories faced little consequence. This disregard is further shown in the provision of garment workers’ wages, with just 2% of fashion workers around the world being paid a liveable salary (Segundo, 2020).

It seems paradoxical, given the poor safety conditions and wages garment workers endure, that many FF businesses advertise their offerings as ‘empowering’. Missguided, a multi-millionpound FF business, uses the tagline ‘committed to empowering all’, across its social media platforms. Despite this, Missguided were found to be paying garment workers, in a Leicester factory, illegal wages in 2018 (Crumbie, 2019). This revelation diametrically opposes the idea of ‘empowering all’ and motivated the direction of this study. It seems garment workers are being exploited in the name of empowering FF consumers. This paper looks to understand whether FF can ever be socially sustainable, in the hope of one day, sincerely empowering all.

1.2 Research Aim and Objective

This paper seeks to address, “what do we know about whether it is possible for ‘fast fashion’ to adapt to meet social sustainability goals?”. The objective is to understand whether it is possible for FF to adapt to meet SocSus goals or whether the model of FF is inherently unsustainable.

In order to address this question, a systematic literature review was conducted. This review included key word searches on ScienceDirect, JSTOR, Google Scholar and EBSCO. The key words used were ‘fast fashion’, ‘social sustainability’, ‘sustainable development’ and ‘sustainable supply chains’. A systematic literature review was chosen in order to understand the breadth and depth of existing literature, and to recognise areas for future development. Xiao and Watson (2017) note the importance of understanding existing work to further advance knowledge in an arena. This literature reviews seeks to map the respective SocSus and FF literature and analyse how viable it is for FF to become socially sustainable.

There is already comprehensive literature on the FF industry and SocSus, but these analyses are typically siloed with few efforts to combine the two. Existing literature, that does combine the two, generally has a focus on how one stakeholder group, such as policymakers, can work towards making FF more socially sustainable. This paper will highlight the current level of SocSus in FF and outline approaches that can be taken by a number of important stakeholders in society, namely, policymakers, businesses and consumers, to make the industry more socially sustainable. This is different to previous literature, as this paper discusses the role each stakeholder plays in exacerbating FF’s SocSus problem, and outlines approaches for each group to take. Further to this, the discussion critically analyses the effectiveness of these approaches in practice. The fact that there is limited literature analysing FF and SocSus is problematic because at present, a number of negative externalities are being inflicted upon garment workers with insufficient repercussions. Without connecting the two concepts, it is inevitable that garment factory disasters will continue to occur. It is important to act now, before the next disaster occurs. FF has claimed the lives of thousands of garment workers and working towards SocSus goals in the industry seeks to ensure this doesn’t continue.

1.3 Structure of Literature Review

The remainder of the paper will be structured as follows – the second section explores literature that is relevant to the research question. This review is structured into five sections, each of which aims to answer a question that relates to the overall research objective, as detailed below:

- What is fast fashion?
- What is social sustainability?
- What is the relationship between fast fashion and social sustainability?
- What explains this relationship?
- What approaches can be taken for fast fashion to meet social sustainability goals?

The literature in each section is critically analysed and will form the foundations of the proceeding discussion.

The third section is a discussion of the findings from the literature review, which assesses the viability of the suggested approaches in practice. This section aims to conclude the paper by relating the findings of the literature review back to the research question. The overall assessment is that the model of FF is inherently unsustainable and will only ever be able to exhibit ‘weak’ sustainability, which is not enough to address SocSus goals.

2. Literature Review

2.1 What Is Fast Fashion?

In the late 1980s, the fashion industry developed infrastructure that promoted quick responses through reduced lead times, and low costs (Tyler, Heeley, & Bhamra, 2006). This later became known as the concept of ‘fast fashion’, a term first coined by the New York Times in the 1990s (O’Neill, 2020; Rauturier, 2020). The FF model is a “streamlined system involving rapid design, production, distribution, and marketing” (Cohen, 2011).

This rapid production can be detrimental to parties like luxury designers, but also presents positive effects for groups like consumers. Bick, Halsey and Ekenga (2018) note that “the word ‘fast’ describes how quickly retailers can move designs from the catwalk to stores”. This can result in designer trends from the catwalk, becoming available to high-street consumers before the original items reach luxury stores (Beebe, 2010). Due to this, FF businesses have been criticized for undermining the intellectual property of luxury designers, thus, weakening the incentive for consumers to invest in the original designs (Brewer, 2019). However, Brewer (2019) also notes that there are positive effects that derive from this rapid production, as it allows a wide audience to share in copies of the most exclusive designer garments and democratizes fashion. Previous to rapid production, fashion was an industry valued for its craftsmanship and quality, which came at a high price tag (Ledezma, 2017). The FF model defies this notion and makes the fashion industry accessible to a wider audience.

Over the last decade, there has been a shift in what consumers value, with many valuing low prices over high quality (Sudbury & Böltner, 2011). FF’s value proposition is based on product freshness and bargain prices (Caro & Martínez-de-Albéniz, 2015), which directly meets this demand. Non-fast fashion retailers release up to six seasons a year (WeConnectFashion, 2021), but advancements in garment production, resulting in rapid manufacturing, allows FF businesses to offer hundreds of new products a week (Crumbie, 2019). For example, Misguided release around 1,000 new products a month (Coresight, 2020). In order to manage this continuous supply, small collections of merchandise are produced which encourages consumers to make more frequent purchases, promoting the notion of ‘Here Today, Gone Tomorrow’ (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010). This has led to a change in purchasing behaviour, with 80 billion pieces of new clothing bought worldwide each year, a 400% rise on the amount consumed two decades ago (Moore, 2015).

This change in purchasing behaviour is reflected in the FF industry’s profits, which have grown exponentially over the last decade. FF is growing faster than the traditional apparel market (Caro & Martínez-de-Albéniz, 2015) and is showing non-fast fashion retailers the benefits of regular product releases. Prices in the FF arena are consistently dropping, and quality lowering, yet profits are continuing to rise (Bussat, 2020). The FF industry receives, on average, 9% higher marginal profits than non-fast fashion retailers (Verendia, 2020). These supernormal profits (Note 3) derive from regular product releases, in limited quantities, that reduce surplus stock. Regular releases are made possible by offshoring production processes to developing countries. Offshoring production enables businesses to keep prices low for consumers, an important factor in an increasingly crowded market, and maximise profits. FF is a model driven by trends and consumer behaviour (Tokatli, 2007) thus, has had to make price and production adjustments to directly meet the needs of consumers.

In order to meet growing demand from consumers, there have been huge developments in garment production. The global production of clothing increased by 60% between 2000 and 2014 (Unicef, 2021). FF depends on agility-orientated supply chains, that are equipped to bring goods to the market quickly and cost-efficiently (Yau, 2019). This is achieved through the use of production methods such as quick response, just-in-time and dynamic assortment planning. Quick response and just-in time production shorten lead times and increase supply chain efficiency (Caro & Martínez-de-Albéniz, 2015), whilst dynamic assortment allows retailers to respond to real-time data and produce on a demand driven basis.

With the rise of globalisation and growth of the global economy, supply chains have become international (Bick et. al., 2018). FF is concerned with supply chain optimisation; thus, offshoring production allows for cheaper and faster manufacturing of garments (Ledezma, 2017). This globalised business model has led to extensive subcontracting networks being formed, increasing the complexity of supply chains (Islam, Khattak, & Stringer, 2017). Most of this production is offshored to developing countries where individuals accept work at a lower wage (Turker & Altuntas, 2014), with women age 18-35 representing 80% of this workforce (Unicef, 2021).

Despite production taking place in developing countries, many FF businesses operate from and within developed societies in the West. Capitalist structures are rooted in many of these societies, that emphasise the role of profit creation. Businesses are profit-seeking entities that often adopt strategic approaches to reach high profits, irrespective of the negative externalities produced. An externality is a consequence of industrial or commercial activity, which affects other parties without this being reflected in the market prices (Oxford, 2021). An example of a strategic approach is FF businesses offshoring production to developing countries, to maximise profits through the payment of low wages. The offshoring of this production inflicts a number of externalities on garment workers, a notion that will be discussed in greater detail in section 2.3. In the pursuit of economic profit, capitalist structures often justify externalities, seeing it as a consequence of economic growth. These capitalist structures epitomise the ‘profit at any cost’ notion (Morgan, 2015).

As mentioned above, businesses are driven by the profits this industry has to offer, but the question must be asked,

what has driven consumers to engage in this new purchasing behaviour? A notable factor is the inception of new forms of advertising in society. Advertising has always been used as a tool by businesses to encourage consumption, under the notion that consumption helps to solve life problems (Morgan, 2015). Social media is a form of advertising that has played an influential role in changing purchasing behaviour. Ahmad, Salman and Ashiq (2015) argue that there is a significant relationship between social media and the fashion industry. This relationship is especially strong between businesses and consumers, as it can help to connect buyers to the market. The 24/7 nature of social media fuels a virtually instantaneous movement of trends within communities and networks across the world (Brewer, 2019). Brewer (2019) also explains that the speed at which social media can spread trends, alongside rising levels of disposable income, drives “insatiable consumer demand for cheap knock-off styles”.

A particular realm of social media has driven this increase in consumption: ‘influencer culture’. Influencer culture, in its most basic form, involves individuals with a large online following posting about goods and services, to influence their followers to purchase them. Influencers hold enormous sway over what people wear and purchase by simply posting a picture. Research shows that more than half of shoppers believe social media influencers are behind the rise of FF (Skeldon, 2019). Linden (2016) explores the idea that consumers take interest in celebrity culture and want to buy similar things, and notes that FF opens the door for consumers to do so.

It can be argued that increased consumption, driven by factors such as the role of influencers, leads to an overconsumption problem in the FF industry. Consumers have responded to lower prices by buying more items of clothing (Remy, Speelman, & Swartz, 2016). This response is driven by the ‘Here Today, Gone Tomorrow’ narrative, and the consistent message from retailers that what was in style yesterday, isn’t today (Unicef, 2021). Trends change at high speeds and studies show consumers consistently fear being left out and no longer considered fashionable (Mrad, Majdalani, Chi Cui, & Khansa, 2020). Due to these ever-changing trends, FF has become synonymous with throwaway culture. Abrams (2015) argues that FF is being seen and marketed as an increasingly disposable good, due to its inexpensive nature. Although consumers are buying more clothing than they did previously, they are only keeping it half as long (Crumbie, 2019). For example, 22% of 16–24-year-olds will throw away an item after being photographed in it fewer than 3 times (Chan, 2021), imitative behaviour of influencers. Linden (2016) affirms that “the fast fashion phenomenon is without question a human consumption problem” –a notion that will be explored in greater depth in upcoming sections.

The concept of throwaway culture has both negative environmental and social impacts. From an environmental perspective, throwaway culture creates a waste problem, with an increasing number of garments being disposed of, increasing levels of pollution. In terms of social impacts, the insatiable demand for new products, to replace garments that have been disposed of, inflicts time pressures on garment workers, leading to many working long hours in dangerous conditions. This notion results in the FF industry often being labelled as unsustainable, as the current model of production is creating a number of negative externalities.

2.2 What Is Social Sustainability?

In order to define SocSus, it is important to first define what is meant by the term sustainability. Joy, Sherry, Venkatesh, Wang, and Chan (2015) draw together the most common components of academic definitions, to create a three dimensional notion of what sustainability is, namely, “an activity that can be continued indefinitely without causing harm; doing unto others as you would have them do unto you; and meeting a current generation’s needs without compromising those of future generations”. The National Science Foundation Workshop on Urban Sustainability (2000) argue that sustainability is “laden with so many definitions that it risks plunging into becoming meaningless, at best, and becoming a catchphrase for demagoguery, at worst”. The definition set out by Joy et al. (2015) aims to circumvent this risk by formulating a universal definition that can help to define the boundaries of sustainability. However, it must be noted that this definition has several issues in practice. For example, it does not explicitly define what constitutes as ‘harm’, and the phrase ‘doing unto others as you would have them do unto you’ is subjective in nature thus, is open to individual interpretation.

The concept of sustainability can be separated into two classifications – ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ sustainability. To evade the ambiguity of the definition by Joy et al. (2015), the concept of ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ sustainability will be used throughout this paper. ‘Strong’ sustainability relies upon the notion that the economy, society and the environment are nested spheres, as shown in figure 1. This understanding considers the economy to be reliant on society, and society to be reliant upon the environment. This thinking believes the economy to be constrained by the capacity of the planet, due to the fact economic and environmental capital is complementary, not interchangeable. ‘Weak’ sustainability flouts this notion and considers that manufactured capital can take the place of natural capital, meaning economic gains are less restrained.

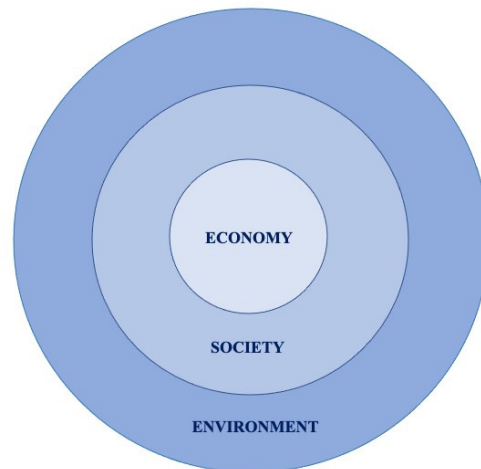


Figure 1. Nested spheres

Sustainability is a concept that is highly related to the concept of sustainable development. Sustainable development refers to the processes and pathways needed to achieve the long-term goal of sustainability (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2021). Hopwood, Mellor and O' Brien (2005) discuss the notion that historically, economic growth was seen as key to humanity's wellbeing. It was believed that growth would help to overcome poverty and ensure greater economic wellbeing for all. The UN recognised the flaws in this argument and set up the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) in 1983, to assess strategies to ensure sustainable development. The Brundtland Report, a report by the WCED, defined sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987)- a notion still widely accepted today, as shown in the work of Joy et al. (2015).

Sustainable development is intrinsically concerned with three pillars of sustainability – the economy, society and the environment. This grouping is commonly referred to as the 'triple bottom line', especially in business (Elkington, 2004). However, the 'triple bottom line' is a concept that has faced criticism for missing the scale and scope of sustainability issues. In essence, due to the interdependent nature of these pillars, economic activity must be within the scope of what the environment can cope with or the system fails. Thus, the triple bottom line misses the most central issue of sustainability problems, that the economy can only operate if the environment is sustained.

Sustainable social development can be seen as a vehicle to reaching SocSus. Social development is "about improving the well-being of every individual in society so they can reach their full potential" (Brunswick, 2008). Glasser (2016) notes that this notion is a twodimensional goal and process as it seeks to improve the quality of life for all, equitably, both now and in the future, whilst adapting human activity to fit environmental boundaries.

There is no universally accepted definition for SocSus. Berlin and Adams (2017) discuss the difficulty in defining it "since the angle of which human-related problem to solve often determines the scope". Across scholarly definitions of SocSus, equity and social justice arise as common components (Berlin & Adams, 2017; Colantonio, 2009; Sachs, 1999; Vallance et al., 2011). The World Bank defines equity as "equal access to the opportunities that allow people to pursue a life of their own choosing and to avoid extreme deprivations in outcomes" (The World Bank, 2006). Whilst Miller (2001) defines social justice as "the morally proper distribution of goods and bads over members of society". Miller's definition of social justice is strongly linked to the distribution of positive and negative externalities in a society. At the core of both of these definitions is fairness, which is relevant in dealing with a plethora of human-related problems such as access to housing, education, healthcare and employment.

SocSus goals revolve around human development and can be met through sustainable development. Vallance et al. (2011) note the breath of these goals that range from tangible basic requirements like water and food, to less tangible needs such as education and employment.

In 2015, the UN outlined 17 SDGs that aim to "end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030" (UNDP, 2021). These are integrated goals that note the inextricable nature of the economy, society and the environment. 13 of these SDGs have strong links to social development and are

fundamentally concerned with providing equity and social justice in society. Figure 2 shows the 13 relevant SDGs. These SDGs can act as SocSus goals, as sustainable development is intrinsic to reaching SocSus.

SDG Number	Goal
1	No Poverty
2	Zero Hunger
3	Good Health and Wellbeing
4	Quality Education
5	Gender Equality
6	Clean Water and Sanitation
7	Affordable and Clean Energy
8	Decent Work and Economic Growth
9	Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
10	Reduced Inequalities
11	Sustainable Cities and Communities
12	Responsible Consumption and Production
16	Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Figure 2. SDGs (UN, 2021)

Further to this, Vallance et al. (2011) note the importance of equity and social justice in reaching these outcomes, thus, these two concepts will be used as a lens throughout this paper to assess the level of SocSus exhibited.

2.3 What Is the Relationship between Fast Fashion and Social Sustainability?

This section will examine how the literature on FF and SocSus interrelates, in order to ascertain the current relationship between the two.

As previously defined, two core components of SocSus are equity and social justice. These two concepts will be used in this section as a lens to look at the FF industry and understand the level of SocSus it exhibits. In literature, equity and social justice are often interlinked concepts, that are both concerned with fairness, however, for the purpose of this paper, the two will stand alone in order to explain different angles of SocSus. Equity will be concerned with looking at whether individuals are able to pursue a life of their own choosing, in such, avoiding extreme deprivation in outcomes, whilst social justice will look at the distribution of externalities, both positive and negative, on stakeholders. Further to this, SDGs will be referred to in order to understand whether FF is currently working towards SocSus goals. Both of these concepts are relevant to the FF arena, as the employment it provides is an intrinsic factor to wellbeing, thus, to social development, which is the pathway to SocSus.

The FF industry employs millions of garment workers globally. Garment workers are the backbone of FF's rapid production, as they aid the creation of supernormal profits for businesses. The working conditions of garment workers will be the focus of this section as this is a key constituent of SocSus that is directly relevant to the FF industry.

As previously mentioned, offshoring production to developing countries is common practice in the FF industry, with 90% of the worlds clothing being produced by low and middle- income countries (LMICs) (Bick et al., 2018). Many of these countries have high rates of poverty, where labour laws are weak, and enforcement even weaker

(Barenblat, 2019). Crane (2013) notes that “poverty creates a ‘push factor’ creating a fertile context for the worst kinds of labour exploitation”, which Ichimura (2011) argues leaves the workforce highly vulnerable to “discrimination, bad treatment, low wages, and long working hours”.

Bad treatment of workers is widespread in the garment production industry. Barnes and LeaGreenwood (2006) argue that “increased time pressures on the order cycles of the fast fashion industry result in employee abuse and other unethical working practices at manufacturing sites”. For example, 68% of female garment workers in Cambodia say they have experienced harassment at work, whilst 60% in Bangladesh have been intimidated or threatened with violence (Global Fund for Women, 2021). Just one recent example of this bad treatment is the dismissal of garment workers at the Dihuali Factory in Myanmar for demanding clean drinking water, toilets and fire safety (Cano, 2020). This treatment of garment workers is detrimental to general health and wellbeing, thus directly contradicts SDGs 3 and 8 (Good Health and Wellbeing; Decent Work and Economic Growth). These conditions are laden with abuse, thus, likely, present a number of concerns for the safety of garment workers in the workplace every day.

Not only do the abusive conditions likely provide garment workers with concerns for their safety, the dangerous conditions in which they are required to work in also exacerbates this worry. The FF industry has developed a reputation for the lack of safety in garment factories globally. The collapse of Rana Plaza, a garment factory in Bangladesh, is a striking example of this. This incident killed 1,134 people and injured approximately 2,500 others (Ansary & Barua, 2015), making it the deadliest recorded garment factory disaster in history. The garment workers had told the owners in previous weeks that they had concerns over structural safety and were ignored, despite the fact the building was built three floors higher than it was licensed for (Hobson, 2013). This type of incident is not uncommon. There have been at least 1,800 deaths, due to poor garment factory safety, in Bangladesh alone, since 2005 (Hobson, 2013). Once again, this lack of structural safety in the workplace, that often leads to dangerous conditions, diametrically opposes SDGs 3 and 8 (Good Health and Wellbeing; Decent Work and Economic Growth).

Further to these perilous conditions, there is a wide literature on the economic exploitation of garment workers. It is estimated that just 2% of fashion workers around the world are being paid a liveable salary (Segundo, 2020), whilst it would take just four days for a CEO from one of the top five global fashion brands to earn what a Bangladeshi garment worker earns in a lifetime (Oxfam, 2018). This example illustrates an enormous wealth disparity and highlights how vastly FF businesses profit off low wage labour. The Executive Director of Oxfam International, Winnie Byanyima notes that “the billionaire boom is not a sign of a thriving economy, but a symptom of a failing economic system” (Oxfam, 2018). Many garment workers have a lack of understanding of their rights, and this economic system takes advantage of this to bolster FF’s profits (Oxfam, 2019).

The failings of this economic system can be seen in the deprivation of outcomes endured by garment workers. Crane (2013) argues that the wages being paid subject garment workers to economic exploitation through underpayment. In 2019, a report by Oxfam found that 0% of Bangladeshi and 1% of Vietnamese garment workers earned a living wage (Oxfam, 2019). The report also found that many garment workers were struggling to feed themselves and their families, regularly skipping meals and eating inadequately, and were also falling into debt leading to poor living conditions and no income for healthcare or education. The notions outlined in the previous statement refer to the negative externalities imposed upon garment workers in the pursuit of supernormal profit. The poverty traps (Note 2) garment workers fall into are caused by the poor conditions and wages FF businesses provide. The poverty elicited by FF is not captured in the market price and ultimately, heightens inequity, preventing garment workers from being able to pursue a life of their own choosing. These negative externalities imposed by FF businesses directly counter SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 10 (No Poverty; Zero Hunger; Good Health and Wellbeing; Quality Education; Decent Work and Economic Growth; Reduced Inequalities).

Although a vast proportion of garment production is offshored to developing countries, this exploitation is not exclusive to these regions. A Financial Times exposé discovered that workers in a garment factory in Leicester were being paid illegal wages, as little as £3.50 an hour (Crumbie, 2019). This notes the global scale of these issues. This exploitation exacerbates inequality and is greatly unjust. The same businesses experiencing supernormal profits, are inflicting a burden of negative externalities onto poor communities, an arguably imbalanced distribution.

Since the Rana Plaza disaster, there have been efforts to ameliorate working conditions in the FF industry, however, this reform has had limited impact in meeting SDGs. ‘The Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh’ and ‘Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety’ were established. Both of these programmes were implemented by fashion businesses to aid inspections and structural improvements of factories (Burke, 2015). Although this has

improved conditions on some level, Bozic and Bathman (2018) discuss the negative attention the ‘Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety’ received due to its non-legally binding nature.

Rubya (2015) also argues that ‘The Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh’ has limited power, due to “weak Bangladeshi laws, which are inadequately designed to combat violations of basic human rights within the industry”. Lee, Seifert and Cherrier (2017) claim that despite these implementations, there are many factories in Bangladesh where conditions have not improved. Further to this, these safety issues are not exclusive to Bangladesh, they affect garment workers globally, thus, the implementation of the accord and alliance has a limited impact on the wider garment industry.

There was also reform in the arena of wages in reaction to the Rana Plaza disaster. After the disaster, minimum wage in Bangladesh was raised from \$38 per month, to \$68, an increase of 77% (Hertzman, 2015). This may seem like progressive change, however, a report by the Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies concluded that to cover basic necessities, garment workers would need to earn a minimum of \$100 a month (Hertzman, 2015). This case is a pertinent example of how a minimum wage differs to a living wage. Globally, governments calculate a national minimum wage for their country. Often, this minimum wage is not enough for families to live on, thus, a living wage can be calculated, based upon what a fulltime worker needs to cover essentials such as housing, food, healthcare, clothing, transportation, utilities, childcare, education, and other vital needs (Oxfam, 2019). The provision of a living wage is not currently enforceable, it relies upon voluntary introduction from businesses. In 2018, five years after the Rana Plaza disaster, and subsequent wage reform, the Fair Labour Association found that the average garment worker in Bangladesh would still need an 80% pay rise to begin earning the most conservative living wage benchmark (Kent, 2019b). This shows the ineffective nature of the reform in meeting SDGs. Without the provision of a living wage, garment workers cannot escape poverty traps which leaves many confined to poor living conditions.

Considering the limited impact of the aforementioned reform, there is a high level of hypocrisy in FF. The same FF businesses that impose dangerous and exploitive working conditions on garment workers, are advertising their offerings as ‘empowering’ to FF consumers. Arguably, the conditions under which the garments were made were not empowering. Further to this, between 2016 and 2018, there was a 630% increase in the use of the word ‘feminist’ in brand marketing (Business of Fashion; McKinsey & Company, 2019). Griffin (2017) discusses the absurdity of this notion, with the same garment that declares its wearer a feminist likely being made at the expense of another woman, given that 80% of the garment production workforce is female (Unicef, 2021). This is a paradoxical notion that is inherently deceptive.

This section has provided a plethora of evidence on the dangerous working conditions in the garment industry. With this evidence in mind, it is clear that FF is currently exhibiting a very low, if no, level of SocSus. The described safety issues and economic exploitation drives garment workers into poverty traps and extreme deprivation. This results in garment workers being unable to pursue a life of their own choosing, thus is largely unequitable. Further to this, these conditions are severely unjust. There is an unequal distribution of externalities, with garment workers absorbing a large burden of negative externalities. This burden of negative externalities is categorised by a number of non-financial costs, including inflated poverty and inequality. This system of exploitation results in the poorest communities falling into poverty traps, whilst the wealthiest affiliates reap the benefits. As previously mentioned, economic systems are currently structured to favour FF businesses, that pursue strategic approaches to reach supernormal profits, at the detriment of garment workers who absorb these externalities.

Further to this, the evidence presented in this section shows that FF is currently not meeting any SDGs, in fact, FF is exacerbating the issues SDGs aim to combat. FF diametrically opposes SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 11 (No Poverty; Zero Hunger; Good Health and Wellbeing; Quality Education; Clean Water and Sanitation; Decent Work and Economic Growth; Reduced Inequalities; Sustainable Cities and Communities). The pernicious working conditions provided in the FF industry results in many workers falling into poverty, which affects their access to food, clean water, healthcare and education, which ultimately exacerbates inequality and creates impoverished communities. The FF industry works to elicit exponential economic growth, and thus, profits, at the expense of garment worker wellbeing.

In summary, the current practices in the FF industry diametrically conflict the concept of SocSus and its goals. With this evidence in mind, it seems suitable to refer back to the assertions by Crane (2013) and Ichimura (2011) that poverty creates a fertile context for poor treatment and low wages. This section has proved this notion to be true. The poverty traps FF elicits creates a cycle, whereby this exploitation will continue, unless action is taken. A powerful assertion that was made in the Brundtland report is that “the distribution of power and influence within

society lies at the heart of most development challenges” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). This is a notion that will be explored in greater depth later in this paper.

2.4 What Explains This Relationship?

There are a number of parties who are directly and indirectly responsible for the conditions in the FF industry, namely, policymakers, businesses and consumers. This section draws upon literature that seeks to illuminate possible explanations of why FF is operating in an unsustainable manner.

An argument can be made for policymakers being responsible for allowing this exploitation to occur. Crane (2013) argues that “slavery is most likely to persist where informal institutional rules and norms provide an accommodative culture.” This notion alludes to the fact that weak law and enforcement enable this exploitation to persist. In the previous section, the assertion by Barenblat (2019) that many developing countries have weak labour laws and even weaker enforcement, which intensifies exploitation and poverty was proved to be accurate, a notion that supports Crane’s argument. The reform that was introduced after Rana Plaza was largely ineffective and unenforceable. Bick et al. (2018) consider issues like poor political infrastructure and organisational management to be responsible for a lack of strict law and enforcement, issues that are often characteristic to developing countries. Islam et al. (2017) claim that this lack of law and enforcement is because “governments do not want to lose their comparative advantage in low-cost production, and therefore are at an impasse in terms of balancing growth and ensuring decent working standards”. This refers to the ‘race-to-the-bottom’ scenario, whereby there is a lack of regulation to retain economic activity in an area. Mayer and Barenblat (2020) blame this on the “neoliberal deregulated global economy”, which allows for garment workers to be exploited in the pursuit of economic rewards.

Businesses are directly responsible for creating the environment for the ‘race-to-the-bottom’ scenario. Many FF businesses choose to produce in the cheapest region, leading countries to cut prices more and more to ensure a comparative advantage. A report by Oxfam (2019) found that businesses often engage in a practice called ‘underground bidding’, whereby the cheapest producer is found by taking price quotes from one factory to another to get them to lower their price. This practice is characterised by capitalist structures that emphasise the role of profit maximisation, structures which are inadequate to address social and environmental challenges (Mackey & Sisodia, 2013; Salvetti & Nijhof, 2018; Stubbs & Cocklin, 2008). Shareholder value theory, a concept discussed by Friedman (1962), believes that the sole responsibility of a business is to increase profits. Hira and Benson-Rea (2017) ponder on the outdated nature of this consideration and discuss the movement towards reflecting sustainability in the decisionmaking process. Greenfield (2005) reiterates the importance of this movement, claiming “it is absurd to argue that companies best serve society by simply ignoring all but corporate profits”.

FF businesses are responsible for inflicting the consequences of the race-to-the-bottom scenario upon garment workers. Labour is treated as a negotiable business expense, that can be reduced to maximise profits. As previously discussed, just 2% of fashion workers around the world are being paid a liveable salary (Segundo, 2020) to which businesses turn a blind eye, as they benefit from this system (Oxfam, 2019). The biggest obstacles to paying garment workers fairly are that the industry remains divided on what constitutes a living wage and who is responsible for providing it (Kent, 2019b). This is largely due to FF’s globalised business model that is based upon complex supply chains, which Ledezma (2017) notes are characterised by independent contractors, where FF businesses bear no legal responsibility. These convoluted supply chains create opaque working practices, a notable barrier to change. Carry Somers, co-founder of the Fashion Revolution movement, states “exploitation thrives in hidden places” thus, fashion needs to cease opportunistic behaviours and create transparent supply chains to work towards SDGs (Kent, 2019a).

It can be argued that consumers are indirectly responsible for FF’s sustainability issues. As previously discussed, Linden (2016) affirms that “the fast fashion phenomenon is without question a human consumption problem”. As FF has become cheaper, consumers have increased their consumption (Remy et al., 2016), which has increased time pressures on garment workers. As mentioned, FF is a model driven by consumers behaviour that produces garments on a demand driven basis. With this notion in mind, it can be argued that if consumers didn’t demand the rapid production of inexpensive garments, FF businesses would not produce them. However, if consumers didn’t demand FF at all, there would also be injurious effects on garment workers as many of them may lose employment and fall into further poverty.

For many consumers, the issues associated with the FF industry are ‘out of sight and out of mind’. Pedersen and Andersen (2013) argue that “the nature of supply chains hamper visibility; as a result, both consumers and marketers become disconnected from problems arising in the supply chain”, and go on to say, “most people have little, or no knowledge of wages paid, chemicals used and treatment of workers simply because the industry has moved too far out of sight”. This notion is intensified by the hypocrisy in FF advertising, which can put consumers

under the illusion that FF's offerings are 'empowering' for all. It can be argued many consumers are uninformed about the conditions that persist in the garment industry and are unaware that they indirectly feed into a model that exacerbates inequality.

This section has outlined how policymakers, businesses and consumers, directly or indirectly, heighten sustainability issues in the FF industry. The next section of this paper amalgamates literature on the approaches each stakeholder can take, to mitigate the negative externalities imposed upon garment workers.

2.5 What Approaches Can Be Taken for Fast Fashion to Meet Social Sustainability Goals?

When looking at how to make the FF industry more socially sustainable, it is important to first define the nature of the problem. Using Glasser's (2019) categorisation of problem classes, SocSus can be defined as a 'wicked' problem. Wicked problems are, by nature, ill-defined and there is often a lack of agreement of what the problem is, and whether it is truly a problem or not. Due to this, solutions are not well-defined, or agreed upon, and sometimes require systemic structure transformation. Glasser (2019) notes that no matter how "sophisticated, objective and data-driven" the problem may be, wicked problems cannot be amended. The problem is further complicated by the fact that many of the components of wicked problems are frequently evolving, thus, are impervious to resolution, as they have no stopping rule. SocSus pertains to this type of problem as there is a lack of clarity surrounding the problem, with many believing there are no problems at all. There are a number of different approaches that can be taken, but there is no one solution to 'solving' the SocSus problem. The way FF is currently operating is contributing to this problem and is one of the evolving components. Balint, Stewart, Desai and Walters (2011) argue that in transitioning towards sustainable living, we must embrace the "wicked" nature of problems.

Policymakers are a party that have notable power and can influence FF to become more sustainable. Hopwood et al. (2005) discuss the status quo argument which considers the idea that growth can help to overcome problems, a notion that dominates policy at present. Hopwood et al. (2005) contend that the status quo argument is inadequate in answering the needs of sustainable development, as it allows businesses and policymakers to operate under 'business as usual', justifying rapid growth as 'sustainable growth'. Christie and Warburton (2001) point out the danger of this notion and argue that there needs to be radical reform, so policymakers work towards "sustainable, accountable and equitable forms of capitalism". This in itself is a questionable notion as it is debateable as to whether capitalism is capable of being sustainable or equitable, due to the very nature of the ideology.

As mentioned by Christie and Warburton (2001), reform is intrinsic to drive change and will elicit a shift away from the status quo viewpoint. Reformers are a group that believe policymakers have a key role in moving towards sustainable development through regulation and legislation (Hopwood et al., 2005). A report on the fashion industry by Oxfam (2019) argues that policymakers should legislate to protect human rights and develop and implement a national action plan for businesses. Pedersen and Andersen (2013) argue that both 'soft' and 'hard' policies can be used, ranging from building awareness through the media, to the use of taxation in the form of incentives or penalties. In deploying policies that protect human rights, via labour laws policymakers would be moving closer towards SDG 16, which calls for strong institutions providing equity and justice. Further to this, by regulating businesses to ensure they are engaging in sustainable practices, policymakers would drive movements towards SDGs 8 and 12 (Decent Work and Economic Growth; Responsible Consumption and Production). It has been proven that regulation can be effective in improving labour standards, shown in the West, however it is an evolutionary and long process than requires widespread implementation (Hira & Benson-Rea, 2017). Williamson, Lynch-Wood, and Ramsay (2006) argue the importance of policy, as businesses are more successful in meeting sustainability goals when they operate within well-functioning regulatory systems, as it "bridges the gap between the firm's profit orientated self-interest and the interest of society".

Policymakers within developed societies are beginning to use their power to encourage sustainable practices. This has been shown recently in the United States of America (USA) whereby the country blacklisted imports of cotton from the Xinjiang region, after allegations of forced labour (Business of Fashion, 2021). Further to this, a number of European countries are preparing laws that would hold businesses liable for human rights breaches in their supply chains (O'Connor, 2021). These are topical examples of how regulation and legislation can act as a propellant towards more sustainable practices.

Businesses arguably have the most influential role to play in ensuring FF becomes more socially sustainable. Abrams (2015) argues that businesses often dominate the conversation from a power standpoint, as seen in the race-to-the-bottom scenario, whereby countries implement weak regulation to attract businesses to produce garments there. The current problem is that many businesses are not using that power to exhibit socially sustainable behaviour. Berlin and Adams (2017) argue that "there is little agreement in research about what the meaning and

scope of social sustainability should be, leaving many companies and practitioners defining what it means for themselves". The problem with this is that as previously mentioned, businesses are profit seeking entities that do not always consider social and environmental externalities of their strategies. Working towards making more sustainable choices involves the role of business being re-conceptualised.

Whilst policymakers can implement legislation and regulation to encourage businesses to operate in a socially sustainable manner, businesses themselves can make voluntary changes to act in this way. Scherer and Palazzo (2011) argue that there are new views of the role of businesses, whereby there is an increasing expectation of them assuming social and political responsibilities to fill regulatory vacuums. Seuring and Müller (2008) note that for businesses to work towards this, there needs to be a change in performance objectives "from the single maximization of economic profit, to the overall maximisation of three profit areas"- these profit areas include the economy, the environment and society. An example of a change businesses can make is adopting a corporate social responsibility (CSR) policy. Holme and Watts (2000) define the implementation of this policy as "a continuing commitment by an organization to behave ethically and contribute to economic development, while also improving the quality of life of its employees (and their families), the local community, and society at large", a notion that ensures equity and social justice. There are notable benefits for businesses that adopt a CSR policy. Firstly, there are studies that show there is a strong positive correlation between economic performance, environmental performance and social performance (Cruz, 2009; Margolis & Walsh, 2003). Secondly, this policy can act as a way of pursuing a competitive advantage, which could subsequently push competitors to do the same and result in industry wide change (Brewer, 2019).

A key constituent of a CSR policy is accountability. The Business of Fashion (BOF) (2021) note that accountability is the cornerstone of any effort to drive meaningful change. An example of an arena that accountability can be taken in, to work towards SocSus goals, is the provision of a living wage. Labour Behind the Label (2021) articulate that calculating a living wage is not easy, but it is not impossible, and ABLE argue it can be determined based on local prices for housing and utilities, transportation, food and water, healthcare, childcare, education, and savings (Segundo, 2020). Providing a living wage would help to lift garment workers out of poverty traps and work towards SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 8 and 10 (No Poverty; Zero Hunger; Good Health and Wellbeing; Quality Education; Decent Work and Economic Growth; Reduced Inequalities). Head of Sustainability at H&M, Anna Gedda, argues that the benchmark of a living wage needs to be settled on an industry and country level to ensure equity across the board (Kent, 2019b). A 2018 report by Oxfam found that it would cost \$2.2 billion a year to increase wages of all Vietnamese garment workers, to a living wage, which is roughly a third of what was paid to shareholders of the top 5 companies in the garment sector in 2016.

Another integral element of a CSR policy is transparency. Transparency acts as a way to ensure accountability, as Fox (2007) argues that transparency is supposed to generate accountability. Bozic and Bathman (2018) define transparency as "disclosing of information publicly about industry specific supply chain practices that include supplier traceability, sustainability conditions and purchasing practices". It is inherently concerned with showing the impact business has on society and the environment. Remy et al. (2016) argue that rooting out SocSus issues in supply chains will require businesses to "measure sustainability of the entire supply chain, set goals for improvements, help suppliers to reduce their impact, and hold suppliers accountable if they don't". Fox (2007) also argues that transparency can help to "empower efforts to change the behaviour of powerful institutions by holding them accountable in the glare of the public eye". There has been an increasing emphasis on transparency in supply chains (Brewer, 2019) but, Bozic and Bathman (2018) argue that "without a clear definition and standardized framework of evaluating social transparency in global fashion supply chains, there is no reliable method of assessing industry efforts to become more socially transparent". There are already indices in the fashion industry that aim to benchmark sustainability performance, such as the BOF Sustainability Index and the HIGG Index. FF businesses need to exhibit a greater willingness to conform for this notion to be effective.

There is a wide rhetoric on the role of consumers in pushing sustainability efforts. Karlsson and Ramasar (2020) argue that the neo-classical logic is that if individuals begin to demand sustainable products, over un-sustainable ones, the market will adapt to meet this demand. This is echoed by a number of academics (Linden, 2016; Niinimäki, 2018) who highlight the role of consumers in driving change, due to the demand driven nature of FF.

Consumers 'vote with their dollars' (Ames, 2020), making purchases that align with their views. The creation of empowered, purpose driven consumers, who make informed purchasing decisions, can help to push FF to become more SocSus. This is called 'ethical consumerism', whereby consumers change their purchasing behaviour to reduce their consumption and/or to buy products that are described as sustainable, ethical or "green" (Sumner, 2018). This involves a rigorous assessment by consumers of the businesses that they are buying from to ensure products align with their values (Stephens, 2021). Collinge (2021) argues that this is a process of empowering

consumers to re-evaluate what they value, and shift to support it.

To ensure garment workers don't suffer negative effects from 'ethical consumerism', consumers need to reinforce to FF businesses their willingness to spend more on clothing if it is made in socially sustainable conditions. A 2015 Nielsen survey found that 66% of shoppers worldwide said they would be willing to pay more for products or services that are made with social or environmental commitments (Nguyen, 2020). Further to this, a survey by Deloitte (2017) concluded that paying a living wage to workers throughout the supply chain may only increase the retail price of a garment by 1%, showing the small cost that can help to reach SocSus.

In 2019, Theresa May urged that "the most powerful voice of all, belongs not to business or government, but to the consumer" (O'Connor, 2021). This is a notion that has historically been proven to be veracious. Consumers played a pivotal role in reducing the prevalence of child labour (Segundo, 2020). Consumers need to be educated on the problems that derive from FF production to tame their insatiable demand and encourage positive change. Change begins with a shift in attitude, which in this case, involves discarding of throwaway culture and reducing unfettered materialism to work towards SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production).

3. Discussion

3.1 Is It Possible for Fast Fashion to Meet Social Sustainability Goals?

The approaches outlined in the previous section seek to present an argument for how policymakers, businesses and consumers can play a part in making FF more socially sustainable. Crane (2013) argues that "ultimately, it is only through a better understanding of how the worst forms of human exploitation are made possible that we might hope to avert them". The preceding analysis of the relationship between FF and SocSus showed that there are clear instances of human exploitation in FF's supply chains, and only through understanding the causes that we can look at possible approaches to combatting them. Hopwood et al. (2005) note that "all proponents of sustainable development agree that society needs to change, though there are major debates as to the nature of sustainable development, the changes necessary and the tools and actors for these changes". This next section will analyse the actors for these changes and aim to conclude how effective they could be in practice.

Policymakers can help to make FF more socially sustainable through the implementation of legislation and regulation. These tools can help to monitor business practices in a bid to reduce extreme deprivation in outcomes and look to distribute the externalities of FF so that they do not disproportionately affect garment workers. Despite the proven success of this method in the West, there are a number of barriers that may hinder the effectiveness of policy. As previously mentioned, many garment workers reside and work in developing countries, many of which do not have robust infrastructure. Hira and Benson-Rea (2017) argue that many developing countries face "ongoing revenue shortfalls, corruption issues, a lack of capacity, and domestic sectoral interests", all of which act as barriers. The concerns that arise from this notion are that there may be a lack of political or financial infrastructure in these developing countries, which would prevent them from implementing and monitoring effective policies. As previously noted, Bick et al. (2018) argue current standards are largely not enforced due to poor political infrastructure, showing the weak enforcement power that would govern these policies. Further to this, in order to make extensive change, a global standard would need to be set to avoid the continuation of the race-to-the-bottom scenario. In actuality, the implementation of policy on a global scale would be a huge obstacle to overcome but is necessary if meaningful change is going to be made.

Businesses have a pivotal role to play in helping FF become socially sustainable. As previously stated, businesses hold a vast amount of power and influence within the FF industry. It is possible for this power to be used to ensure equity, by lifting garment workers out of poverty, which would help them to avoid extreme deprivation in outcomes and allow them to pursue a life of their own choosing. Gaziulusoy, Boyle and McDowall (2013) note that businesses need to develop a systemic understanding of their role and impact in society to start aligning it with sustainability visions and use their power in a responsible way. The approaches section discussed the concept of CSR policies, accountability and transparency to work towards this equity. Unfortunately, there are a number of issues surrounding each of the aforementioned approaches. CSR policies are voluntarily adopted by businesses, thus, lack a form of enforcement mechanism. Further to this, Fox (2007) notes that both transparency and accountability share a conceptual problem, they are rarely defined with precision. In the case of accountability, this allows businesses to make claims about their sustainability journeys that do not always have to be followed through, due to the lack of enforcement. The BOF Sustainability Index (2021) found that whilst fashion businesses are speaking about sustainability more than ever, there is a significant disparity between engagement and action. This is a notion that a report by Accenture (2013) also found with businesses "demonstrating a performance gap between ambition and execution on sustainability" (Accenture, 2013). This notion can be further reinforced by the fact that despite a vast rhetoric on providing garment workers with a living wage, the BOF Sustainability Index

(2021) found that none of the businesses audited were actually pricing for a living wage in the next few years. Fox (2007) resolves that transparency is far from sufficient in producing accountability, thus, there need to be greater means employed to ensure accountability. This could be achieved through regulation and legislation; however, the previous argument still holds that the implementation and monitoring of this, itself, presents issues. Ultimately, whilst FF operates using convoluted third-party supply chains, a deviation from responsibility will always be possible. Newbold (2021) notes that the reality is, many FF businesses don't know their full network of suppliers in order to disclose them, thus, a change in the complexity of supply chains would be imperative to see accurate transparency.

Due to the demand driven nature of the FF model, the approaches section inferred that a number of academics (Karlsson & Ramasar, 2020; Linden, 2016; Niinimäki, 2018), believe that consumers have a crucial role to play in driving sustainability. Under the neo-classical logic, if consumers demand sustainability, that is what the market will have to produce. The shift towards ethical consumerism would have notable benefits for sustainability. However, Nicholls and Lea (2006) note that there is an "ethical purchasing gap". There is a wide literature discussing this purchasing gap, mainly inferring that awareness of ethical products doesn't translate into consumption choices (Carrigan & Atalla, 2001; Sudbury & Böltner, 2011). This concept is similar to the "intention-action gap", a term coined by Michael Kremer, which argues there is a disparity between what consumers say and what they purchase. Both of these concepts show that consumer behaviour doesn't always translate into consumption. An example of this is the purchasing behaviour after the Rana Plaza disaster. Despite widespread concerns arising from the disaster, Primark, a fashion business producing in the factory, received a 20% increase in sales over the following months (Neville, 2013). This shows consumers don't always vote with their dollars. The difficulty in consumers driving this change towards sustainability is that it relies upon a change in attitude. Shifting towards more ethical consumption may have financial implications on consumers, as well as potentially negative consequences for garment workers at FF factories, who may suffer from a reduced demand.

The analysis of these approaches demonstrates that there are a number of issues with each method. Referring back to the assertion by Hopwood et al. (2005), it is clear that change needs to pervade the industry, but there is no definitive answer as to what that change should look like and who should implement it. If policymakers, businesses and consumers were to work in tandem, taking accountability for the externalities that derive from their actions, strides towards social sustainability could be made. However, the preceding analysis made it clear that there are huge barriers to this in practice and that these approaches may not be enough to meet SocSus goals. The model of FF is inherently unsustainable, thus, no matter what approach is taken, only 'weak' sustainability will be possible. For 'strong' sustainability to occur, there is a need for systemic change.

It has already been acknowledged that social sustainability is a wicked problem, thus, has no solution, it requires systemic change. Scoones et al. (2020) argue that there needs to be an overhaul of ideological underpinnings of social systems to make economies work for everyone, not just the fortunate few. Eva Kruse, Global Fashion Agenda Executive, makes a compelling argument that "we simply need to re-design the way we think and talk about value, growth and prosperity" (Milner, 2020). Kruse's argument is a starting point in making meaningful change, as this change can only occur when people question the status quo and their own role in the system (The Conversation, 2019). Hopwood et al. (2005) examine the view of 'transformationists' who deem the transformation of society as necessary. Transformationists argue that reform is not enough and that sustainability problems are rooted in the economic and power structures of society. They believe that the current system is based upon exploiting people and the environment for the gain of a small minority. This is a view held by Loorbach (2009) who argues that societal transformation is needed to achieve sustainability. Further to this Scoones et al. (2020) argue that the transformation of economies, societies and politics will be required to achieve SDGs by 2030.

Systemic change, that is directly relevant to the fast fashion arena, has started to suffuse literature. There is a growing amount of literature exploring the idea of 'slow fashion' (SF) (Linden, 2016). The SF movement involves changes to production, that result in garment workers receiving higher wages and greater protection. Further to this, SF aims to elicit a change in purchasing behaviour. Garments cost more but are created as pieces of "timeless style" that do not go out of fashion, as trends do. The model of FF is intrinsically unsustainable due to the fact it is driven by trends, which leads to insatiable demand. Fletcher (2010) argues that SF requires "a significant break with the current ways of producing fashion, involving systems' redesign, changed power relationships, reflection of true costs, more control over our lives and balance between economic, social and ecological systems". A participant in the study of FF by Pedersen and Andersen (2013) notes that "you can't just dissuade certain purchasing behaviours, without offering some better alternatives". The model of SF seeks to offer an alternative to FF that is aligned with SocSus goals.

Although there is an increasing literature on SF, it will be a long and arduous process before there is widespread

adoption. Brewer (2019) notes that SF “faces an uphill battle with cheap, knock-off designs mass-marketed in a world of increasing consumer appetite”. Brewer (2019)

argues that “stakeholders must work with the industry to highlight the advantages of slow fashion, while discouraging the excesses of fast fashion”. This shift to SF relies on education to elicit a change in attitudes, as greater consumer knowledge will begin to level the playing field between FF and SF (Brewer, 2019). The concept of SF has been briefly discussed in this paper, but there are considerable areas for further research in this field. This research is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

3.2 Concluding Remarks

This paper has presented a number of approaches that FF could take to work towards SocSus goals. However, given the problems noted with each approach, it is clear that FF is only capable of exhibiting ‘weak’ sustainability, which is not enough to meet social sustainability goals. In order to create ‘strong’ sustainability, there would need to be systemic change and a movement towards SF, a concept created with sustainability at the core. As previously mentioned, this systemic change will be needed to meet SDGs by 2030 and will require efforts from a wide range of stakeholders.

At this stage, I think it is pertinent to refer back to the assertion by the WCED (1987) that “the distribution of power and influence within society lies at the heart of most development challenges”. This notion has been reinforced throughout the paper, as each approach notes the power and influence that policymakers, businesses and consumers hold. Each stakeholder group has the potential to make strides in the social sustainability arena, if their power is applied in a responsible way. Equity and social justice will only be established once power and influence are used in a way that puts people first. Arguably, for garment workers, being able to pursue a life of their own choosing would be an empowering outcome, which shows the immense importance of ensuring equity in the future. Once FF businesses stop exploiting garment workers, in the name of empowering consumers, there may be hope for sincerely empowering all.

References

- Abrams, L. (2015, June 12). *This is a very painful reality! The staggering human and environmental cost of fast fashion*. Retrieved https://www.salon.com/2015/06/12/this_is_a_very_painful_reality_the_staggering_human_and_environmental_cost_of_fast_fashion/
- Accenture. (2013). *The UN Global Compact-Accenture CEO Study on Sustainability 2013: Architects of a Better World*. Accenture Sustainability Services.
- Ahmad, N., Salman, A., & Ashiq, R. (2015). The Impact of Social Media on Fashion Industry: Empirical Investigation from Karachiites. *Journal of Resources Development and Management*.
- Ames, C. (2020, November 11). *Voting with Your Dollar: Empower Your Everyday Purchases*. Retrieved from <https://growensemble.com/voting-withyour-dollar/>
- Ansary, M., & Barua, U. (2015). Workplace safety compliance of RMG industry in Bangladesh: Structural assessment of RMG factory Buildings. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 424-437. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdr.2015.09.008>
- Balint, P. J., Stewart, R. E., Desai, A., & Walters, L. C. (2011). *Wicked Environmental Problems*. Washington: Island Press. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdr.2015.09.008>
- Barenblat, A. (2019, September 17). *Does the Sustainable Fashion Movement Hurt Garment Makers?* Retrieved from <https://remake.world/stories/does-the-sustainable-fashion-movement-hurt-garment-makers/>
- Barnes, L., & Lea-Greenwood, G. (2006). Fast fashioning the supply chain: Shaping the research agenda. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 259-271. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13612020610679259>
- Beebe, B. (2010). Intellectual Property Law and the Sumptuary Code. *Harvard Law Review*, 810-889.
- Berlin, C., & Adams, C. (2017). Social Sustainability. In C. Berlin, & C. Adams (Eds.), *Production Ergonomics: Designing Work Systems to Support Optimal Human Performance* (pp. 241-258). London: Ubiquity Press. <https://doi.org/10.5334/bbe.m>
- Bhardwaj, V., & Fairhurst, A. (2010). Fast fashion: Response to changes in the fashion industry. *The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research*, 165-173. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09593960903498300>
- Bick, R., Halsey, E., & Ekenga, C. (2018). The global environmental injustice of fast fashion. *Environmental*

- Health*. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12940-018-0433-7>
- Böltner, S., & Sudbury, L. (2011). Fashion Marketing and the Ethical Movement Versus Individualist Consumption: Analysing the Attitude Behaviour Gap. *European Advances in Consumer Research*, 163-168.
- Bozic, D., & Bateman, A. H. (2018). Evaluating social transparency in global fashion supply chains. In M. Heuer, & C. Becker-Leifhold (Eds.), *Eco-Friendly and Fair: Fast Fashion and Consumer Behaviour* (pp. 165-173). Abingdon: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351058353-16>
- Brewer, M. K. (2019). Slow Fashion in a Fast Fashion World: Promoting Sustainability and Responsibility. *Laws*, 24. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351058353-16>
- Brito, M. d. (2008). Towards a sustainable fashion retail supply chain in Europe: Organisation and performance. *International Journal of Production Economics*, 534-553. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijpe.2007.06.012>
- Brunswick. (2008). *What is social development?* Retrieved from https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/esic/overview/content/what_is_social_development.html
- Burke, J. (2015, April 22). *Bangladesh garment workers suffer poor conditions two years after reform vows*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/22/garment-workers-in-bangladeshstill-suffering-two-years-after-factory-collapse>
- Business of Fashion; McKinsey & Company. (2019). *The State of Fashion 2019*. McKinsey & Company.
- Bussat, I. (2020, October 19). *The true cost of Fashion: Who made my clothes?* Retrieved from <https://thebadgeronline.com/2020/10/the-true-cost-of-fashion-whomade-my-clothes/>
- Cano, L. (2020, November 8). *Fired for requesting 'clean drinking water'*. Retrieved from <https://itslauracano.com/blog/mango-fired-for-requesting-cleandrinking-water/>
- Caro, F., & Martínez-de-Albéniz, V. (2015). Fast Fashion: Business Model Overview and Research Opportunities. In Agrawal, & Smith (Eds.), *Retail Supply Chain Management* (pp. 237-264). New York: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4899-7562-1_9
- Carrigan, M., & Attalla, A. (2001). The myth of the ethical consumer: Do ethics matter in purchase behaviour? *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 560-577. <https://doi.org/10.1108/07363760110410263>
- Chan, J. (2021). *Ethical Clothing: Fast Fashion & Sustainability on Social Media*. Retrieved from <https://www.linkfluence.com/blog/ethical-clothing-fast-fashion-sustainability-on-social-media>
- Christie, I., & Warburton, D. (2001). *From Here to Sustainability- Politics in the Real World*. London: Earthscan Publications. <https://doi.org/10.1108/emh.2001.12.4.444.3>
- Cohen, A. M. (2011, Sept/Oct). Fast Fashion: Tale of Two Markets. *The Futurist*, pp. 12-13.
- Colantonio, A. (2009). Social sustainability: a review and critique of traditional versus emerging themes and assessment methods. In M. Horner, A. Bebbington, & R. Emmanuel (Eds.), *SUE-Mot Conference 2009: Second International Conference on Whole Life Urban Sustainability and its Assessment: conference proceedings*. (pp. 865-885). Loughborough: Loughborough University.
- Collinge, M. (2021, April 8). *Shaming women out of fast-fashion won't combat sustainability; empowering women will*. Retrieved from <https://www.harpersbazaar.com/uk/fashion/a36050764/fast-fashion-shame-comment/>
- Collins. (2021). *Definition of 'developing country'*. Retrieved from <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/developing-country>
- Coresight. (2020). *Fast Fashion Speeding Toward Ultrafast Fashion*. Coresight Research.
- Crane, A. (2013). Modern Slavery as a Management Practice: Exploring the Conditions and Capabilities for Human Exploitation. *The Academy of Management*, 49-69. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2011.0145>
- Crumbie, A. (2019, September 5). *What is fast fashion and why is it a problem?* Retrieved from <https://www.ethicalconsumer.org/fashion-clothing/whatfast-fashion-why-it-problem>
- Cruz, J. M. (2009). The impact of corporate social responsibility in supply chain management: Multicriteria decision-making approach. *Decision Support Systems*, 224-236. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dss.2009.07.013>
- Deloitte. (2017). *A Living Wage in Australia's Clothing Supply Chain: Estimating factory wages as a share of Australia's retail price*. Deloitte Access Economics.
- Elkington, J. (2004). Enter the Triple Bottom Line. In A. Henriques, & J. Richardson (Eds.), *The Triple Bottom Line: does it all add up?* (pp. 1-16). Abingdon: Routledge.

- Fletcher, K. (2010). Slow Fashion: An Invitation for Systems Change. *The Journal of Design, Creative Process & the Fashion Industry*, 259-265. <https://doi.org/10.2752/175693810X12774625387594>
- Fox, J. (2007). The Uncertain Relationship between Transparency and Accountability. *Development in Practice*, 663-671. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09614520701469955>
- Friedman, M. (1962). *Capitalism and Freedom*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Gaziulusoy, A. I., Boyle, C., & McDowall, R. (2013). System innovation for sustainability: a systemic double-flow scnerario method for companies. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 104-116. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2012.05.013>
- Glasser, H. (2016). Visions of Sustainability. *Sustainability the Journal of Record*, 56-64. <https://doi.org/10.1089/SUS.2016.29044>
- Glasser, H. (2019). Toward Robust Foundations for Sustainable Well-Being Societies: Learning to Change by Changing How We Learn. In J. W. Cook (Ed.), *Sustainability, Human Well-Being, and the Future of Education* (pp. 31-89). London: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-78580-6_2
- Global Fund for Women. (2021). *Violence in the Garment Industry: Infographic*. Retrieved from <https://www.globalfundforwomen.org/garmentindustry-violence-infographic/>
- Greenfield, K. (2005). New Principles for Corporate Law. *Hastings Business Law Journal*, 87-118.
- Griffin, A. (2017, August 10). *Feminism or Fashion or Both?* Retrieved from <https://remake.world/stories/news/feminism-or-fashion-or-both/>
- Hertzman, E. (2015, April 27). *Fashion Brands Must Treat Garment Workers as Employees*. Retrieved from <https://www.businessoffashion.com/opinions/sustainability/op-ed-fashion-brands-must-treat-garment-workers-as-employees>
- Hira, A., & Benson-Rea, M. (2017). *Governing Corporate Social Responsibility in the Apparel Industry After Rana Plaza*. New York: Springer Nature. <https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-60179-7>
- Hobson, J. (2013). To die for? The health and safety of fast fashion. *Occupational Medicine*, 317-319. <https://doi.org/10.1093/occmed/kqt079>
- Hopwood, B., Mellor, M., & O' Brien, G. (2005). Sustainable Development: Mapping Different Approaches. *Sustainable Development*, 38-52. <https://doi.org/10.1002/sd.244>
- Ichimura, R. (2011). *Fashionable and Sustainable? Implementing Sustainability Aspects into Supply Chain Management in the Japanese Apparel Industry*. Retrieved from https://www.lumes.lu.se/sites/lumes.lu.se/files/ichimura_reiko_thesis_2011.pdf
- International Labour Organization. (2018). *The Rana Plaza Accident and its aftermath*. Retrieved from https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/geip/WCMS_614394/lang--en/index.htm
- Islam, M. T., Khattak, A., & Stringer, C. (2017). A Governance Deficit in the Apparel Industry in Bangladesh: Solutions to the Impasse? In A. Hira, & M. Benson-Rea (Eds.), *Governing Corporate Social Responsibility in the Apparel Industry after Rana Plaza* (pp. 111-147). New York: Springer Nature. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-60179-7_4
- Joy, A., Sherry, J. F., Venkatesh, A., Wang, J., & Chan, R. (2015). Fast Fashion, Sustainability, and the Ethical Appeal of Luxury Brands. *Fashion Theory*, 273-295. <https://doi.org/10.2752/175174112X13340749707123>
- Karlsson, M. T., & Ramasar, V. (2020). Selling women the green dream: the paradox of feminism and sustainability in fashion marketing. *Journal of Political Ecology*, 335-359.
- Kent, S. (2019a, April 24). *Fashion Industry Still Failing on Transparency*. Retrieved from <https://www.businessoffashion.com/articles/sustainability/fashion-industry-stillfailing-on-transparency>
- Kent, S. (2019b, May 2). *Why Fashion Doesn't Pay Fair*. Retrieved from <https://www.businessoffashion.com/articles/sustainability/why-fashiondoesnt-pay-fair>
- Labour Behind the Label. (2021). *A Living Wage is a Human Right*. Retrieved from <https://labourbehindthelabel.org/campaigns/living-wage/>
- Ledezma, V. (2017). Globalization and Fashion: Too Fast, Too Furious. *Laurier Undergraduate Journal of the Arts*.
- Lee, M. S., Seifert, M., & Cherrier, H. (2017). Anti-consumption and Governance in the Global Fashion Industry: Transparency is Key. In *Governing Corporate Social Responsibility in the Apparel Industry after Rana Plaza*

- (pp. 156-174). New York: Springer Nature. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-60179-7_5
- Linden, A. R. (2016). *An Analysis of the Fast Fashion Industry*. Retrieved from https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1033&context=senproj_f2016
- Loorbach, D. (2009). Transition Management for Sustainable Development: A Prescriptive, Complexity-Based Governance Framework. *Governance*, 161-183. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0491.2009.01471.x>
- Mackey, J., & Sisodia, R. (2013). *Conscious Capitalism*. Boston: Harvard Business Review Press.
- Margolis, J. D., & Walsh, J. P. (2003). Misery Loves Companies: Rethinking Social Initiatives by Business. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 268-305. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3556659>
- Mayer, A., & Barenblat, A. (2020, May 27). *Brands are today's colonial masters*. Retrieved from <https://remake.world/stories/news/colonialism-in-fashion-brands-are-today's-colonial-masters/>
- Miller, D. (2001). *Principles of Social Justice*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. <https://doi.org/10.4159/9780674266117>
- Milner, D. (2020, January 28). *Is Your Fashion Brand Ethical?* Retrieved from https://www.businessoffashion.com/articles/sustainability/is-your-fashionbrand-ethical?fbclid=IwAR1HmB_uFQ1iQTLWxp5Aj7kMCePmyBho0nEVllmfYRfe_4zO KDzT0f5AiHw
- Moore, B. (2015, May 28). *'The True Cost' documentary tallies global effect of cheap clothes*. Retrieved from <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/movies/la-et-mn-true-cost-cheap-clothesdocumentary-20150528-story.html>
- Morgan, A. (Director). (2015). *The True Cost* [Motion Picture].
- Mrad, M., Majdalani, J., C. C., & Khansa, E. Z. (2020). Brand addiction in the contexts of luxury and fast-fashion brands. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2020.102089>
- National Science Foundation Workshop on Urban Sustainability. (2000). *Towards A Comprehensive Geographical Perspective On Urban Sustainability*. New Jersey: Rutgers.
- Neville, S. (2013, July 11). *Primark sales rise 20% despite Bangladesh factory disaster backlash*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2013/jul/11/primark-sales-rise-despitebangladesh-factory>
- Newbold, A. (2021, April 21). *The Human Cost of Fashion Is Taking Its Toll, Why Can't We Understand the Value of People?* Retrieved from <https://www.vogue.co.uk/fashion/article/fashion-revolution-campaign/amp>
- Nguyen, T. (2020, February 3). *Fast fashion, explained*. Retrieved from <https://www.vox.com/the-goods/2020/2/3/21080364/fast-fashion-h-and-m-zara>
- Nicholls, A., & Lee, N. (2006). Purchase decision-making in fair trade and the ethical purchase gap: Is there a fair trade. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 369-386.
- Niinimäki, K. (2018). Knowing better, but behaving emotionally. In C. Becker-Leifhold, & M. Heuer (Eds.), *Eco-Friendly and Fair* (pp. 49-57). Abingdon: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351058353-5>
- O'Connor, S. (2021, March 2). *It is not up to consumers to police modern slavery*. Retrieved from https://www.ft.com/content/7f7a4084-fc08-47a0-87c59206a19041ee?utm_source=Vogue+Business&utm_campaign=2250bc734a-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2021_03_01_12_55&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_5d1e7914df-2250bc734a-57721663
- O'Neill, L. (2020, February 25). *A Five-Minute History of Fast Fashion in the UK*. Retrieved from <https://www.vice.com/en/article/v74z9x/fast-fashion-history-zaratoshop-boohoo-misguided>
- Oxfam. (2017). *An Economy for the 99%*. Oxford: Oxfam International.
- Oxfam. (2018). *Reward work, not wealth*. Oxford: Oxfam International.
- Oxfam. (2019). *Made in Poverty: The true price of fashion*. Melbourne: Oxfam Australia.
- Oxford. (2021). *Definition of Externality*. Retrieved from <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/externality>
- Pedersen, E. R., & Andersen, K. R. (2013). *The SocioLog.dx Experience: A Global Expert Study on Sustainable Fashion*. Handelshøjskolen: Copenhagen Business School.
- Pettinger, T. (2019, September 10). *Supernormal Profits*. Retrieved from

- <https://www.economicshelp.org/blog/3181/economics/supernormal-profits/>
- Raturier, S. (2020, May 10). *What is Fast Fashion?* Retrieved from <https://goodonyou.eco/what-is-fast-fashion/>
- Remy, N., Speelman, E., & Swartz, S. (2016, October 20). *Style that's sustainable: A new fast-fashion formula*. Retrieved from <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/sustainability/our-insights/style-thatssustainable-a-new-fast-fashion-formula>
- Rubya, T. (2015). The Ready-Made Garment Industry: An Analysis of Bangladesh's Labor Law Provisions After the Savar Tragedy. *Brooklyn Journal of International Law*, 685-718.
- Sachs, I. (1999). Social sustainability and whole development. In E. Becker, & T. Jahn (Eds.), *Sustainability and the Social Sciences* (pp. 25-36). New York: Zed Books.
- Salveti, N., & Nijhof, A. (2018). From sustainable sourcing to sustainable consumption. In M. Heuer, & C. Becker-Leifhold (Eds.), *Eco-Friendly and Fair: Fast Fashion and Consumer Behaviour* (pp. 183-194). Abingdon: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351058353-18>
- Scherer, A. G., & Palazzo, G. (2011). The New Political Role of Business in a Globalized World: A Review of a New Perspective on CSR and its Implications for the Firm, Governance, and Democracy. *Journal of Management Studies*, 899-931. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2010.00950.x>
- Scoones, I., Stirling, A., Abrol, D., Atela, J., Charli-Joseph, L., Eakin, H., ... Yang, L. (2020). Transformations to sustainability: combining structural, systemic and enabling approaches. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, 65-75. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cosust.2019.12.004>
- Segundo, I. S. (2020). *Do You Know How Much Garment Workers Really Make?* Retrieved from <https://www.fashionrevolution.org/usa-blog/how-muchgarment-workers-really-make/>
- Seuring, S., & Müller, M. (2008). From a literature review to a conceptual framework for sustainable supply chain management. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 1699-1710. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2008.04.020>
- Skeldon, P. (2019, October 16). *Social influencers have led to the rise in fast fashion, with 30% of shoppers using Instagram for inspiration*. Retrieved from <https://internetretailing.net/mobile-theme/mobile-theme/social-influencers-have-ledto-the-rise-in-fast-fashion-with-30-of-shoppers-using-instagram-for-inspiration-20388>
- Stephens, D. (2021, February 12). *Racism and Inequality Are Stitched into the Garments We Wear*. Retrieved from <https://www.businessoffashion.com/podcasts/retail/racism-and-inequality-arestitched-into-the-garments-we-wear>
- Stubbs, W., & Cocklin, C. (2008). Conceptualizing a "Sustainability Business Model". *Organization & Environment*, 103-127. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1086026608318042>
- Sumner, M. (2018). Mind the gap: Fashion consumers' intentions and behaviours. In M. Heuer, & C. Becker-Leifhold (Eds.), *Eco-friendly and Fair* (pp. 27-35). Abingdon: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351058353-3>
- The Business of Fashion. (2021). *The Sustainability Gap: Introducing the BOF Sustainability Index*. Business of Fashion.
- The Conversation. (2019, March 15). *Climate strikes: Greta Thunberg calls for 'system change not climate change' – here's what that could look like*. Retrieved from <https://theconversation.com/climate-strikes-greta-thunberg-calls-forsystem-change-not-climate-change-heres-what-that-could-look-like-112891>
- The Economic Times. (2021). *Definition of 'Poverty Trap'*. Retrieved from <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/definition/poverty-trap>
- The World Bank. (2006). *Equity and Development*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Tokatli, N. (2007). Global Sourcing: Insights from the Global Clothing Industry- The Case of Zara, a Fast Fashion Retailer. *Journal of Economic Geography*, 21-38. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jeg/lbm035>
- Turker, D., & Altuntas, C. (2014). Sustainable supply chain management in the fast fashion industry: An analysis of corporate reports. *European Management Journal*, 837-849. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2014.02.001>
- Tyler, D., Heeley, J., & Bhamra, T. (2006). Supply chain influences on new product development in fashion clothing. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 316-328. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13612020610679295>
- UNDP. (2021). *Sustainable Development Goals*. Retrieved from

- <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html>
- Unicef. (2021). *Goal 12 Responsible Consumption*. Retrieved from <https://www.unicefyouth.ie/consumption>
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2021). *Sustainable Development*. Retrieved from <https://en.unesco.org/themes/educationsustainable-development/what-is-esd/sd>
- Vallance, S., Perkins, H. C., & Dixon, J. E. (2011). What is social sustainability? A clarification of concepts. *Geoforum*, 342-438. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2011.01.002>
- Verendia, K. (2020, July 3). *Fast Fashion: Market Failures*. Retrieved from <https://www.kathandtheplanet.com/post/fast-fashion-market-failures>
- WeConnectFashion. (2021). *Fashion Buying Calendar, Sell & Delivery Dates*. Retrieved from <https://www.weconnectfashion.com/articles/fashionbuying-calendar-sell-delivery-dates>
- Williamson, D., Lynch-Wood, G., & Ramsay, J. (2006). Drivers of Environmental Behaviour in Manufacturing SMEs and the Implications for CSR. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 317-330. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-006-9187-1>
- World Commission on Environment and Development. (1987). *Our Common Future*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Xiao, Y., & Watson, M. (2017). Guidance on Conducting a Systematic Literature Review. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X17723971>
- Yau, C. (2019, September 24). *Supply chain management: how does Zara do it?* Retrieved from <https://blog.edited.com/blog/resources/supply-chain-management>

Notes

Note 1. A non-industrialized, poor country that is seeking to develop its resources by industrialization (Collins, 2021).

Note 2. Poverty trap is a spiralling mechanism which forces people to remain poor (The Economic Times, 2021).

Note 3. Supernormal profit is all the excess profit a firm makes above the minimum return necessary to keep a firm in business (Pettinger, 2019).

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Stephen Jollands, for his unwavering patience and support throughout this process. My sincerest thanks for pushing me to produce something that I am truly proud of.

Authors contributions

Not applicable

Funding

Not applicable

Competing interests

The author declares that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Informed consent

Obtained.

Ethics approval

The Publication Ethics Committee of the Canadian Center of Science and Education.

The journal's policies adhere to the Core Practices established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

Provenance and peer review

Not commissioned; externally double-blind peer reviewed.

Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

Open access

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.