

Sustainability and Fast Fashion
SocTech Common Class, Fall 2013

Assignments:

All groups:

Survey of clothing manufacturers:

Before class take a few moments to look at the labels on the clothing in your closets. Where was the clothing made? Record the names of the countries anonymously on a google doc. Note how many times a country is named.

Reading assignment:

All students read the following articles or chapters to be posted on Moodle:

Excerpts from Schor, *Plenitude*, “From Consumer Boom to Ecological Crisis” (20 pages)

Excerpts from Cline, *Overdressed*, “High and Low Fashion Make Friends” and “Fast Fashion” (55 pages)

”In Trendy World Of Fast Fashion, Styles Aren't Made To Last” (3 pages)

“Are consumers done with fast fashion?” (3 pages)

“Showing Off Shopping Sprees, Fashion 'Haulers' Cash In Online” (3 pages)

“The Global Afterlife Of Your Donated Clothes” (3 pages)

“Fast Fashion, Sustainability, and the Ethical Appeal of Luxury Brands” (18 pages)—optional for all; required for group 4

“H&M: can fast fashion and sustainability ever really mix?” (3 pages)

Also complete the research on the question assigned to your group. During the class, you will be role playing the companies or individuals represented by your group. Your outside research should not take very long, but will allow you to support your arguments in the fishbowl in class. You will have a few minutes to share your findings with other members of your group before we begin the fishbowl.

Group Assignments: Overall assignment—the question of fast fashion raises a number of interesting questions from different points of view—fast fashion manufacturers, small manufacturers, fashion designers, so-called fashionistas, consumers, and recyclers. An over-riding question is whether the fast fashion industry is sustainable over the long haul. Each group of students will read the assigned readings and also prepare to participate in a fishbowl where they will do role playing of some of the relevant groups affected by or participants in the fast fashion industry.

Group 1:

Each member of the group should look up information on production facilities, corporate policies, fair labor practices, and sustainability practices for the following companies. What seems to be the corporate philosophy concerning fast fashion? If the philosophy is not stated explicitly, try to infer it from other information.

At least one member of the group should look at these major fast fashion manufacturer/retailers:

H&M

Zara's

Forever 21

Each member of Group 1 should also research at least one other company from the list below for a total of 2 companies per group member:

- ❖ [Gap](#)
- ❖ [Walmart](#)
- ❖ [Tommy Hilfiger \(PVH\)](#)
- ❖ [Calvin Klein \(PVH\)](#)
- ❖ [Benetton](#)
- ❖ [J.C. Penney](#)
- ❖ [Nike](#)
- ❖ [Target](#)

Group 2:

Each member of Group 2 should look up information on two manufacturers of sustainable fashion from the list below, focusing on the ethical practices and any other information that seems relevant to ethical production (labor practices, production, prices). Work with your group members to avoid researching the same companies. What seems to be the corporate philosophy concerning fast fashion? If the philosophy is not stated explicitly, try to infer it from other information.

This list of companies comes from the Shopping Directory included on [Overdressedthebook.com](#). Cline's Shopping Directory includes fashion designers or brands with a strong ethical commitment to sustainable production. Cline focused on products that are available online or in national retailers at reasonable prices. The fashion designers/brands on this list abide by at least one of the following standards:

- 1) Use of local/U.S. production
 - 2) If overseas production is used, products are either made under Fair Trade or Living Wage conditions or the company has a stringent commitment to improving the lives and wages of garment workers
 - 3) Use of sustainable materials, which might include reclaimed/recycled materials
 - 4) Have a company-wide commitment to lowering their products' environmental impact
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- ❖ A.D.O. – Feminine herbal-dyed and organic designs, using NYC production as well as Fair Trade factories overseas. Sample price: \$209 for print Hampton Dress
 - ❖ Alabama Chanin - Handmade, limited-edition clothing out of Florence, Alabama. Sample price: Camisole Top, \$220.
 - ❖ Again Apparel. – Edgy fashion, Made in L.A.
 - ❖ Arbor – Beachy tanks, tops, shorts, and swimwear. Men and women's. Made in U.S.A. with eco-friendly fabrics. Sample price: Ella tank, \$32.
 - ❖ Auralis - Made in U.S.A using sustainable fabrics like bamboo and organic cotton. Sample price: \$240 for a Convertible Jumper
 - ❖ Billy Reid – CFDA-winner designs high quality mens and womenswear, made in artisan factories in the U.S.A. and Italy. Sample price: Chambray Smith Shorts, \$185.
 - ❖ Blood Is the New Black – Graphic tees designed by emerging artists. Made in U.S.A. Sample price: Hang Loose Boyfriend Tee, \$44.
 - ❖ Carrie Parry - Brooklyn-made, beautifully tailored clothing made of luxurious sustainable materials like Bemberg Cupro. Sample price: Sleeveless Belted Dress, \$285.
 - ❖ Chinti and Parker - British basics company that uses eco-friendly fabrics like Seacel (made from seaweed) and a mix of Fair Trade and local production. Sample price: Wide Stripe Dress, \$136.
 - ❖ Dillards - Regional department store that carries Karen Kane, womens-wear line produced largely in the U.S. Sample Price: Wrap Dress, \$108.

- ❖ Eileen Fisher - Classic, understated womenswear with a strong commitment to corporate responsibility. They are now carrying Fair Trade, bluesign-certified silks, and recycled collections. Sample price: Box-Top in Sheer Silk Georgette, \$168
- ❖ Etrican - Youthful, flirty eco-fashion label out of Singapore. Sample price: \$26 for flower print skirt
- ❖ Dobbin - Made in NY line for fuller-figured woman. Focus on fit and quality fabrics. Sample price: Juliet Stretch Dress, \$168.
- ❖ Five8ths - Handmade, tailored shirts and jackets out of Baltimore.
- ❖ Feral Childe - Made in U.S. and featuring original silkscreened prints. Sample price: \$145 for 100% silk Crater Top
- ❖ Green Eileen - High quality, gently used Eileen Fisher Clothing. Their retail location is in Yonkers, New York.
- ❖ Neiman Marcus - Search “Made in USA” on NeimanMarcus.com and find thousands of domestically-produced garments at a range of price points.
- ❖ Nordstrom – Search “Made in USA” on Nordstrom.com and find thousands of domestically-produced garments at a range of price points.
- ❖ Anderson-Little — Classic, made-to-order navy wool/microfiber blend blazers for men made in Florida. Price: All blazers are \$179 and can be ordered online.
- ❖ American Apparel — Made in Los Angeles.
- ❖ Amour Vert — Trendy, youthful fashion that uses a zero-waste design philosophy, organic and sustainable fabrics, low impact dyes, and U.S. production.
- ❖ Band of Outsiders — Clothing and accessories. Some items made in L.A. Check the label!
- ❖ Berle Manufacturing — Trousers manufactured in Charleston, South Carolina.
- ❖ Beyond Clothing — Outdoor clothing produced in Seattle, Washington.
- ❖ Bill’s Khakis — Mens jeans, shirts, sweaters, outerwear and of course khakis cut and sewn in Reading, Pennsylvania. Sample price: Original Twill Khakis, \$125.
- ❖ Birdwell Beach Britches — Swimwear made in Santa Ana, California.
- ❖ Butter by Nadia - Draped, versatile dresses in bold hues. Made in the U.S.A. Sample price: Jersey Wrap Gown, \$315.
- ❖ Brooks Brothers — Tailored clothing and sportswear, some of which is still domestically made. Check the label!
- ❖ Bemidji Woolen Mills — Made in Bemidji, Minnesota.
- ❖ Camber — Basics like tee shirts, sweatshirts made in Norristown, Pennsylvania.
- ❖ Carhartt — Some of Carhartt’s workwear is made in Dearborn, Michigan. Check the label!
- ❖ CC Filson — Outwear, bags, accessories. Some items are made in Seattle, Washington. Check the label!
- ❖ CEGO — Men’s custom collared shirts (long sleeve and short sleeve) made in NYC. Sample price: Short sleeve Blue Sport Plaid, \$75.
- ❖ Commonwealth Proper — Custom and ready-to-wear men’s shirts and suits made in Philadelphia. Showrooms in Philadelphia and Los Angeles. Shirts, \$200. Suits, \$2650.
- ❖ Centralia Knitting Mills — Outerwear made in Centralia, Washington.
- ❖ Cockpit — Outerwear. Some items made in NYC. Check the label!
- ❖ Crescent Down Works — Outerwear made in Seattle.
- ❖ Ebbets Field Flannels — Jackets, jerseys, accessories made in Seattle.
- ❖ Engineered Garments — Clothing, bags, accessories made in NYC.
- ❖ Epaulet — Shirts and ties made in Brooklyn, New York.
- ❖ Freeman’s Sporting Club — Tailored clothing, sportswear, and accessories made in NYC.
- ❖ Grown & Sewn — Men’s khaki pants, shorts, and bags made in NYC. Sample price: Signature Twill pants in Khaki, \$185.
- ❖ Gitman Brothers — Woven shirts made in Ashland, Pennsylvania.
- ❖ Hamilton Shirts — Shirts made in Houston, Texas.
- ❖ Hart Schaffner Marx — Tailored clothing made in Chicago.
- ❖ Hickey — Rochester, New York — tailored clothing, sportswear*

- ❖ Hickey Freeman — Rochester, New York — tailored clothing.
- ❖ Honest by - High-end Antwerp-based line; vegan, locally made, and shares their full cost breakdown and production process. Sample price: \$283 for the Sleeveless Organic Linen Top.
- ❖ Individualized — Custom men's and women's woven shirts made in Perth Amboy, New Jersey since 1961.
- ❖ J. Press — Tailored clothing, sportswear and accessories, some of which is made in New Haven, Connecticut. Check the label!
- ❖ Langlitz Leathers — Motorcycle jackets made in Portland, Oregon.
- ❖ Loden Dager — Tailored clothing and sportswear made in NYC.
- ❖ Mercer & Sons — Custom shirts made in Yarmouth, Maine.
- ❖ Nanette Lepore - Famed womenswear designer who uses 80% domestic production. Sample price: \$278 Flower Fairy Dress
- ❖ New England Shirt Company — Shirts made in Fall River, Massachusetts.
- ❖ Organic by John Patrick - Pioneering eco-designer John Patrick's flirty, casual clothing is either organic cotton or recycled polyester. Sample price: \$245 for Vintage Print Shorts.
- ❖ One Mango Tree - On-trend fair trade and organic dresses and tops made in Uganda. Sample price: \$78 for Kitenge Shift Dress
- ❖ Oxxford Clothing — Tailored clothing made in Chicago.
- ❖ Patagonia - Sportswear brand that uses lower-impact dyes and finishes on fabrics. They also recycle worn-out items for customers. Sample price: \$65 Margot Dress.
- ❖ People Tree - A UK-based Fair Trade clothing company that sells trendy, youthful clothes at a very affordable price point. Sample price: \$21 for a Coral Dragonfly Oversized Tee
- ❖ Pendleton — High-quality, American heritage brand that still weaves wool in Oregon and makes many of their products there as well.
- ❖ The Podolls - San Francisco-based line made, much of it from organic cotton grown and sewn in the U.S.
- ❖ Pointer Brand — Clothing, denim, workwear made in Bristol, Tennessee.
- ❖ Post Overalls — Made in NYC.
- ❖ Purush - Designed in Brooklyn, made in new Delhi of natural, handmade fabrics. 10% of profits go to clean water projects in India. Sample price: \$68 Prakiti tank top
- ❖ Ramblers Way — Wool clothes made in Kennebunk, Maine.
- ❖ Rag & Bone — Versatile fashion and shoes, much of which is made in NYC. Check the label!
- ❖ Rogue Territory — Clothing and accessories made in L.A.
- ❖ Round House — Denim and workwear made in Shawnee, Oklahoma.
- ❖ Southwick — Tailored clothing made in Haverhill, Massachusetts.
- ❖ Schott NYC — Outerwear brand, specialty in motorcycle/leather jackets, most of which are made in NYC. Sample price: Women's Lambskin Perfecto moto jacket, \$560.
- ❖ Spiewak — Outerwear, some of which is made in NYC.
- ❖ Stan Ray — Workwear made in Houston, Texas.
- ❖ Sterlingwear — Outerwear made in Boston.
- ❖ Steven Alan — Select items produced in NYC. Check the label!
- ❖ Stormy Kromer — Hats, clothing, and outerwear made in Ironwood, Michigan.
- ❖ Taylor Stitch — Shirts made in San Francisco.
- ❖ Thom Browne — Tailored clothing and sportswear made in NYC.
- ❖ TS Designs - North-Carolina-made Ts in 100% organic cotton.
- ❖ Vanson Leathers — Leather jackets made in Fall River, Massachusetts.
- ❖ Western Mountaineering — Down jackets made in San Jose, California.
- ❖ Woolrich Woolen Mills Collection — Woolrich, Pennsylvania — clothing, accessories
- ❖ Wrath Arcane — Sportswear made in Cleveland, Ohio.
- ❖ Karen Kane - L.A. based womenswear brand; 80% produced in the U.S. Sample price: \$118 Cascade Tie Top
- ❖ Loomstate321 - U.S.-made Tencel dresses, tanks, and Ts. Sample price: \$163 for Oki Reversible Dress.

- ❖ Etsy - Large community of handmade and vintage/refashioned clothing designers and sellers. All price points.

Group 3:

Your task is to investigate some of the “haulers” who seem to be marketing fast fashion on the internet. Look up the haulers mentioned in the NPR story. Also research “haulers” on the internet and see if you can find videos by any others. The three mentioned are:

- ❖ Abigail Moscaritolo, AbbyLynn401/YouTube
- ❖ Caitlin Ellsworth, known as [Glamourista16](#)
- ❖ [Elle and Blair Fowler](#)

What is their pitch to their viewers? How might they change their pitch if they were concerned about some of the implications of fast fashion?

Group 4:

Consumers: your task is to cull through “Fast Fashion, Sustainability, and the Ethical Appeal of Luxury Brands” (18 pages), the Cline *Overdressed* excerpts, and “Are consumers done with fast fashion?” (3 pages), and make a list of the different consumer attitudes toward fast fashion, sustainability, and other relevant points reflected in these readings. Also read the article on aspirational consumers and see if you can find on-line any of the petitions and actions undertaken by consumers concerned about the impact of fast fashion on the environment and social concerns. In the fishbowl, drawing on the readings, you are to represent the wide swath of consumers, who come to this question with different values and concerns. So, in preparation, ask yourselves:

- ❖ Do consumers care only about price?
- ❖ Or do they care about other aspects of consumption as well, including quality, durability, and the impact of consumption on the environment?
- ❖ Does being a responsible consumer require paying higher prices? Or consuming less?

Group 5:

The readings mention the following fashion experts:

- ❖ Simon Collins, Dean of Fashion at Parsons
- ❖ Sharon Graubard, Stylesight's design director
- ❖ other fashion experts of fast fashion.

Cull from the articles their views on fast fashion. Look up other experts in the fashion industry—e.g., Isaac Mizrahi, Jason Woo, Missoni-- who have produced both high fashion lines and as well as lines that fall into the fast fashion category. How do they view fast fashion? How do their high fashion lines differ from their fast fashion lines?

Group 6:

Also mentioned in some of the articles are celebrities who have lent their names to fast fashion lines, including:

- ❖ Sarah Jessica Parker
- ❖ Amanda Bynes
- ❖ Venus Williams
- ❖ Laird Hamilton
- ❖ Stephon Marbury
- ❖ Ben Wallace,
- ❖ and other celebrity endorsers of fast fashion lines.

Look up information on their current and past fashion or accessory lines, and describe their products and their corporate philosophy. What is their contribution to fashion, fast or otherwise? What is their brand like? Who is their target consumer?

Group 7:

The NPR story describes workers at Alta Gracia, one of the few companies which is trying to counter some of the negative effects on workers from fast fashion manufacturing. Look up the Alta Gracia company product line and corporate philosophy in some detail and be ready to report and to represent this view. Also look up some of the companies who used the factories in the collapsed building at Rana Plaza Building in Bangladesh in April and compare their working conditions to Alta Gracia.

Group 8:

Look up information on SMART (Secondary Materials and Recycled Textiles), at <http://smartasn.org/> and at any other resources mentioned in the NPR story. What happens to fast fashion textiles once discarded by consumers? What is the end product of fast fashion, in other words?

In class, if time:

Watch this brief video, "[Divided Over Bangladesh](#)", about how two different clothing companies are responding to the recent building collapse in Bangladesh.

Then fishbowl, WWF style. Eight groups, each representing an interested party in the sustainability questions surrounding fast fashion (4 students per group).

Opening questions: Each group prepare two minute responses to these questions. Begin in role playing for two rounds.

1. What responsibility do Western companies have to ensure the health and safety of the workers who manufacture the clothing they sell?
2. Do we as consumers have any responsibility for the workers in other countries who make our clothing? If yes, how do we exercise that responsibility? What should or can we do?

Then, let discussion flow.

End of class: free write on these questions:

Do American companies have a responsibility to ensure the health and safety of the workers who manufacture the clothing they sell?

Do American consumers [have any responsibility for workers in other countries who make their clothing?](#)

