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Wellbeing Wardrobe: A wellbeing economy for the fashion and textile sector

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Executive Summary

Our current dominant economic paradigm, focused on continuous GDP growth and material accumulation, is not sustainable. This growth-oriented mindset has resulted in dangerous climate change and biodiversity loss, tested the limits of critical planetary boundaries, and failed to provide stable livelihoods, adequate nutrition or access to education, housing, healthcare and decent work to a large percentage of the global population. We need a new way forward.

There are a range of growth-alternative economic models, including wellbeing economics, doughnut economies, steady-state, post-growth and degrowth, all of which provide a way to pursue human and ecological wellbeing rather than GDP growth. In this report, we refer to these growth-alternative models using an umbrella term: the wellbeing economy.

The wellbeing economy is defined by several overarching objectives, including:

- Reducing the environmental impact of human activities through practices such as reduced material and energy consumption, and more localised economies;
- Supporting income distribution, both within countries and globally, through practices such as redistributive income, universal basic income, non-monetary exchange systems and new modes of ownership;
- Fuelling the transition from material and consumption-based societies to more participatory and community-oriented societies through practices such as shorter work weeks, limits to advertising and new ways of recognising unpaid and/or informal labour.

The Wellbeing Economy and the Fashion Industry

The fashion, textile and garment sector provides an urgent example of the need to pursue economic alternatives. The advent of fast fashion, just-in-time inventory measures, and the rapid industrialisation of countries in the Global South has seen the textile and garment sector positioned as a stepping stone to industrial development, accelerating international trade in these emerging economies. Such trade has brought economic and employment benefits to certain sectors of society in those nations. Yet the quality and longevity of these benefits – especially compared to the negative environmental costs – had been called into question, even before the impacts of the current Covid-19 pandemic became apparent.

Many of the current sustainability initiatives in the fashion industry take a green-growth approach and are oriented towards economic opportunity, rather than environmental imperatives. Initiatives such as shifting to more sustainable fibres and textiles, or providing supposedly ethically-conscious options, are commendable but typically only account for a small percentage of a brand's offerings, allowing the majority of operations to continue in a business-as-usual manner. The introduction of certification and labelling systems which seek to (at best) 'green' but (at worst) 'greenwash' existing practices do not fundamentally overhaul the existing unsustainable practices that are at the core of many business models. Regardless of these initiatives, the fashion, textile and garment sector is increasing material throughput *and* increasing disposal and waste of clothing and textiles. This in turn has led to troublingly high industry contributions to global carbon emissions, natural resource use (of water and land) and biodiversity loss.

The Wellbeing Wardrobe

Achieving a post-growth fashion and garment sector will require far-reaching reforms and the reconceptualisation of roles and responsibilities in our society. The European Union (EU) Textile Strategy offers an opportunity to start the journey, and the Wellbeing Wardrobe project sets out to contribute to the debate around clothing, textiles and garment policy in the EU, and to highlight where concepts of wellbeing and post-growth economics could increase the scope and effectiveness of the EU Textile Strategy.

This includes exploring innovative business models (including various not-for-profit configurations, social enterprises and B-corps) and different ways of consuming and significantly reducing clothing consumption (such as slow fashion, second-hand, swaps and rentals). We also consider alternatives to the clothes-for-

cash model, including new ways of using, making and remaking clothing, and question assumptions about the life cycle of clothing and end-of-garment-life waste.

Rethinking the impacts and meaning of fashion and clothing will foster dialogue between industry and consumers regarding what constitutes sufficient consumption and how this can be achieved. In addition, deep supply chain collaboration across fashion, textile and garment sectors will be crucial to ensuring a just transition for all involved. This shift will also require better indicators that measure and track wellbeing principles across the sector, and improved data quality and metrics to determine and evaluate progress.

A New Direction

The aim of this report is to start envisaging this new direction and to ask the question: what might a post-growth sector designed around a wholly different economic model (rather than simply an optimised version of the current one) really look like? To answer this question, we draw together two distinct bodies of literature – wellbeing economics and fashion sustainability – to find intersections and identify common ground as a basis for conversations and practices that take us towards a sector that operates within planetary boundaries and ensures livelihoods and dignity for all those who make and wear clothing. This is the vision of a Wellbeing Wardrobe.



Our Vision

Our vision is based on four key principles grounded in the attributes of wellbeing economics:

1. **Limits** - Creating a wellbeing economics focus
2. **Fairness** - Designing distributive systems for global and intergenerational equity
3. **Just Governance** - Participatory and deliberative processes informing inclusive transitions
4. **New systems** - new systems and business structures for providing and exchanging goods and services

Policy Context and Opportunities for Wellbeing Economics

Policy development towards supporting sustainable textiles and garments in Europe tends to focus on optimising and increasing efficiency within the existing patterns of the supply chain, for instance, through increased design for circularity based on recycling and/or using recycled materials.

There is opportunity to extend the ambition of policy measures and proposals, so they start to engage more deeply with, and support the emergence of a wellbeing economics approach.

Policy change plays an essential role in supporting the attributes of a wellbeing economy, including the creation and implementation of limits and thresholds to reduce production and consumption to sustainable levels; support for the development of participatory and redistributive processes and mechanisms at local and international levels; and adequate support to encourage businesses and communities to let go of old

ideas about work, value and exchange. Given the complexity of the global garment industry and the many different levels of stakeholders involved, policies to encourage the sector to embrace a wellbeing economy will need to be developed through the broadest possible consultation, not in isolation.

Our work with stakeholders over the course of this project has highlighted a number of priority areas for policy interventions. The move away from growth economies to a wellbeing economy will involve multiple pathways, levels and contexts. Some can be implemented right away, while others represent transformational change. Thus, it is with this understanding that we make the following policy recommendations, including opportunities and actions that can be undertaken now to accelerate the transition beyond growth, and others that will need further work, momentum, and commitment from stakeholders. In many instances, these areas are inter-dependent in that they would require implementation in all or most areas to enable change.

| Attribute | Policy opportunities |
|---|---|
| <p data-bbox="159 622 311 683">Establishing limits</p>  | <p data-bbox="359 622 1404 817">The research shows that we need to reduce the amounts of textiles and clothing that we produce and consume. For the garments we continue to make and use, these need to be of higher quality, be used and cared for longer, and have multiple lifecycles (either with us or through second-hand markets and other forms of exchange). We also need to better understand what drives over-consumption and over-production and how these drivers can be re-oriented within a wellbeing approach.</p> <p data-bbox="359 824 925 855"><i>Recommendations within existing policy frameworks</i></p> <ul data-bbox="359 862 1428 1579" style="list-style-type: none"> • Within existing policy frameworks, we need a comprehensive strategy of eco-design requirements, labelling and extended producer responsibility (EPR) schemes that make sustainable clothing and textiles the norm. These strategies must take every opportunity to achieve quality and durability in the clothing, with pressure to eliminate over-production and consumption, and reward re-circulation. • Expanding EPR schemes to encourage increased focus on quality and reduced volumes. For example, EPR fees could be increased when certain volume thresholds are reached, so as to encourage brands to supply high quality and lower volumes of clothing into the market. • Broadening circular economy policy and incentives away from just addressing waste and recycling to support strategies that truly embrace circularity across the product lifecycle. This can include: levies for virgin fibre use, increasing the re-use and repair economy through investigating tax incentives, rebates, and other forms of support for consumers and businesses providing repair, reuse and second-hand sales services, and options for mandating fashion brands to provide these services for their customers. • Ban the export of textile waste as well as the destruction of unsold or excess clothing and textile goods. • Provide support for public awareness-raising campaigns that emphasise less consumption • Provide support for training people in sustainable fashion practices such as care, repair and reuse of garments and textiles. • Set a clear legislative framework for the claims that can be made about products in advertising to combat 'greenwashing'. <p data-bbox="359 1585 774 1617"><i>Policy for more transformative change</i></p> <ul data-bbox="359 1624 1428 1982" style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop methods for establishing clothing, resource, and pollution budgets or limits. There is the opportunity to learn from other sectors such as carbon budgets and fishing quotas systems. These budgets will need to be developed with clear linkages to planetary boundaries and other existing climate and sustainability policies, and dialogue would need to inform at what level, scale, and form these budgets could be considered and applied. Options for application could include resource-use reduction targets or consumption-based emissions targets, or a combination of both. Targets would start as voluntary to build capacity and awareness for change, but also have clearly established pathways to mandatory application. • Quantify the role, and understand the drivers of e-commerce platforms/markets and targeted advertising on social media platforms in driving clothing consumption and investigate regulatory options to allow consumers to limit their exposure to this form of advertising. |

| Attribute | Policy opportunities |
|---|---|
| Promote fairness | <p>We need to develop equitable wealth and resource distributive systems are needed to ensure global and intergenerational fairness.</p> <p><i>Recommendations within existing policy frameworks</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Due Diligence requirements and standards in EU Trade Agreements to eliminate hazardous and toxic chemical use, regulate the use of other chemicals and materials, and to obligate brands, and buyers to ensure safe and just working conditions (including living wages) throughout their whole supply chain. • Revise the EU Public Procurement Directives to include social criteria and make sustainable procurement the default approach, instead of the cheapest option. • Enforce value chain accountability through robust Due Diligence regulations with specific provisions for the textile sector, and enable full supply chain transparency through disclosure of all facilities across value chains. • Develop and use wellbeing indicators in the fashion, textile and garment sector that focus on health, social and environment indicators, rather than only financial and income measures. Support a range of businesses, public authorities, and other industry stakeholders to collect data and report against these indicators to use this information in their decision-making. <p><i>Policy for more transformative change</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As regulating purchasing practices is key to improving labour rights, in this respect, legislation on Unfair Trading Practices in the garment sector is vital to address the negotiation of disproportionately low buying prices, short lead times, and unauthorised subcontracting. • Support global alignment in progress towards wellbeing economies for the textile and garment sector. This would bring together all stakeholders across the globe with an agenda for a global living wage and coordinate multilateral organisations and national and international institutions in addressing several key sustainable trade practices including trade volumes, material and chemical composition, traceability, and transparency. • Investment in the transition to wellbeing economies would also be needed to identify and implement redistributive measures that support a just transition and establishment of a wellbeing economy for workers throughout the supply chain. There is also a need for investments that regenerate environments from the impacts of the textile and garment sector, such as water pollution. |
| Create healthy and just governance | <p>This requires robust participatory and deliberative processes that emphasise inclusivity, open dialogue, and diversity to creating lasting change. Good governance encourages capacity-building and stakeholder engagement across every level of the fashion industry.</p> <p><i>Recommendations within existing policy frameworks</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch EU and national citizen assemblies on wellbeing indicators for our economy and create balanced multi-stakeholders' deliberative processes accompanying EU and national authorities. <p><i>Policy for more transformative change</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create safe spaces and clear, deliberative processes for planning a wellbeing economy at the global level. This includes ensuring the participation of a wide range of stakeholders, paying attention to enable engagement from underrepresented groups. • Support local and global social movements that champion deliberative processes for the wellbeing economy and use these processes to inform and scrutinise public policy. There is also a need to investigate best practice in the formation of inclusive multi-stakeholder dialogues in terms of composition, capacity, issues mapping and adequate and effective decision-making processes. • Create transformational education and learning systems for wellbeing economies generally, and then specifically for the fashion, textiles, and garment sector. These systems can then be used to change the culture and narrative around fashion, such as supporting decreased production/consumption of clothing, increased quality of work, capacity and participation in deliberative processes, and knowledge and awareness of new business models. |



| Attribute | Policy opportunities |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure participation in multi-stakeholder initiatives does not provide companies with 'safe harbour' from any legal liability. |
| <p>Embrace new exchange systems</p>  | <p>Innovative exchange models can ensure the fashion industry thrives while still meeting human and environmental wellbeing needs</p> <p><i>Recommendations within existing policy frameworks</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure a broad range of policy support for sustainable and less profit-driven activities in the fashion and textile sector. This could include resources for not-for-profit business structures, regulations ensuring 'easy-start' not-for-profit businesses, tax incentives and other support such as access to seed funding, incubator support, legal and other business services. Increased support and focus (including financial support) for sustainable fashion practice that does not involve market exchange including design and repair cafes, clothing swaps – this could include developing case studies and how-to guides of non-market exchange fashion practices, start-up and seed funding to assist early activities, and support for awareness raising with the community. This could be aligned with the EU Social Economy Plan. <p><i>Policy for more transformative change</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes to legal and regulatory frameworks that encourage/prefer not-for-profit business structures and provide obligations on businesses to ensure environmental and social value creation. This could include public procurement guidance to integrate not for profit and/or social economy partners in all bids. Enhanced support for new sustainable fashion and other non-market exchange fashion practices including facilitating the availability of physical space (e.g., within existing city centres and shopping centres) and accessibility (for example subsidising access for all members of the community) to design and repair services, clothing swaps, and supporting wide access to training and skills for clothing repair and re-design. |



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1: Introduction and Approach

1.1 Growth is not the answer

Our current dominant economic paradigm, focused on continuous GDP growth and material accumulation, is not serving humanity or the planet well. 2022 marks 50 years since the publication of the landmark Club of Rome *Limits to Growth* report that described the global need to reduce resource consumption substantially to avoid uncontrolled societal and ecosystem collapse. In the five decades since this warning was published, our economic system – predicated on continuous growth in economic activity and output – has been unable to reduce resource consumption in any meaningful way. The consequences of this failure are evident in dangerous climate change and biodiversity loss, testing the limits of critical planetary boundaries. At the same time, this consumption-based economic model has been unable to provide stable livelihoods, adequate nutrition, or adequate access to education, housing, health care and decent work to a large percentage of the global population.

Evidence from the past decades has shown that economies and societies based on increased consumption have not experienced increased levels of human happiness or wellbeing: there's a disconnect between happiness/wellbeing once certain income thresholds are reached, and the benefits of additional income diminish or reverse quite quickly after this threshold is met (Ahlström et al., 2020; Jackson, 2020). In high-income countries, this wealth is not distributed equally but rather increasingly concentrated in the hands of a few (Piketty, 2014). The impact of rising inequality in high-income countries appears to counteract any further gains of income, leading to an overall decrease in perceptions of prosperity (Jackson, 2020).

In response to this, both the limits and alternatives to growth are being investigated by various degrowth, post-growth and wellbeing economy communities. These groups underline the critical impossibility of perpetual growth and seek ways and mechanisms to bring humanity within planetary boundaries for resource use while prioritising wellbeing, equality, climate justice and sustainable livelihoods (Coscieme et al., 2019; Cosme et al., 2017; Crownshaw et al., 2019; Fioramonti et al., 2019, 2022; Gibson-Graham, 2006; Hickel, 2021; Kallis, 2011; O'Neill et al., 2018; Perkins, 2019; Raworth, 2017; Schneider et al., 2010; Steffen et al., 2015; The European Environmental Bureau, 2019).

The fashion, textile and garment industry provides an urgent example of the need to pursue economic alternatives. The sector is one of the largest and most globalised in the world, and has grown rapidly, doubling in size in the last 15 years (Cornell et al., 2021). The advent of fast fashion, built upon just-in-time inventory measures and globalised supply chains, has fundamentally reconfigured the industry. It has also contributed to the rapid industrialisation of countries in the Global South that have seen the textile and garment sector positioned as a stepping stone to industrial development, accelerating international trade in these emerging economies. Such trade has brought economic and employment benefits to some. Yet the quality and longevity of these benefits, when measured against their deepening environmental costs, had been called into question even before the impacts of the current Covid-19 pandemic began to be felt (Anner, 2020; Brydges & Hanlon, 2020; Sharpe et al., 2021).

In recent years, the fashion and textile sector has developed a range of sustainability strategies, including new certification and labelling systems, substituting recycled or innovative fibres, collaborative consumption, and circular economy practices (Armstrong et al., 2015; Bae, 2020; Brooks, 2013; Brydges, 2021; Brydges et al., 2021; Buchel et al., 2022; Henninger et al., 2019; Holtström et al., 2019; Sandvik & Stubbs, 2019; Thorpe, 2014). These strategies have led to some product-level efficiency gains, but on the whole have failed to address the core problem: the overproduction and consumption of clothing.

The current situation sees the fashion, textile and garment sector increasing both material throughput *and* disposal and waste of clothing and textiles, leading to growing contributions to global carbon emissions, natural resource use (of water and land) and biodiversity loss (Palm et al., 2021). The many sustainability initiatives and investments, including some that have been operating for decades, have not reversed these issues. The Global Pulse Report (2019) shows an increasing gap between sector growth and sustainability performance (Palm et al., 2021; BCG 2019). This underlines the pressing need for new operating models for the sector.

The purpose of this report is to start envisaging this new direction towards a post-growth sector: creating a different economic model, not just an optimised version of the current one (Fletcher and Tham, 2019). We draw together two distinct bodies of knowledge – the post-growth and wellbeing economies literature and the fashion sustainability literature – to find intersections and identify common ground as a basis for conversations and practices that can take us towards a sector that operates within planetary boundaries and ensures livelihoods and dignity for all those who make and wear clothing. This is the vision of what we call a Wellbeing Wardrobe.

Specifically, this project sets out to:

- identify how the post-growth and wellbeing economy literature can be applied to the fashion and textiles industry;
- explore how to redefine the fashion business model to a growth-independent fashion, textile and garment industry operating within a wellbeing economy;
- identify policy recommendations and potential indicators that have emerged from in-depth stakeholder engagement to support this transformation.

Achieving a post-growth fashion and garment sector will require far-reaching reforms and a reconceptualisation of roles and responsibilities in our society. The European Union (EU) Textile Strategy offers an opportunity to start the journey. This project aims to contribute to the debate around clothing, textiles and garment policy in the EU and to highlight where concepts of wellbeing and post-growth economies could increase the effectiveness and reach of the EU Textile Strategy.

1.2 Approach & Methodology

The first step of our approach is to review the conceptual elements of the various strands of post-growth and wellbeing concepts and provide an assessment of how they can be linked with existing sustainable fashion practices.¹ Linking and strengthening current practices is only the first step. This review also sets out to identify new and reimagined practices and governance mechanisms, including various policy levers that could support a post-growth transition.

There is already a robust literature on both the limitations of existing growth-dependent business models (see Hickel & Kallis, 2020; Jänicke, 2012; Lorek & Spangenberg, 2014) and the limited impact of sustainability strategies in the fashion industry (see Clark, 2008; Fletcher, 2010, 2014; Gwilt & Rissanen, 2012; Henninger et al., 2016; Leslie et al., 2014). Our aim in this review is to identify pathways and industry sustainability strategies that are consistent with the intentions of a wellbeing economy.

After briefly outlining the characteristics of post-growth and wellbeing economies, we focus on identifying and assessing existing strategies that could be supported and amplified to achieve a wellbeing economy in the sector. Many of these strategies will be insufficient to achieve the substantial transition needed, and there are significant gaps in the capacity and ability of the current sector to operationalise a wellbeing-focused economy. We used this initial analysis to design a participatory stakeholder workshop² that further developed pathways to address the limitations and gaps in current approaches.

¹ For detailed outline of literature selection and review methodology, please see Annex 1.

² For details of the project workshop, please see Annex 1.

2: Moving Beyond Growth-Driven Economics to the Wellbeing Economy

2.1 The wellbeing economy is a pathway away from growth economic models

Communities of practice and theories investigating growth-alternative economic models encompass concepts such as degrowth, post-growth, steady state economics and wellbeing economies. Each of these various post-growth concepts has different areas of emphasis, but there are some common overarching objectives, including:

- to reduce the environmental impact of human activities through practices such as reduced material and energy consumption, and more localised economies;
- to support income distribution both within countries but also globally through practices such as redistributive income, universal basic income, non-monetary exchange systems and new modes of ownership;
- to fuel the transition from material consumption-based societies to more participatory and community-oriented societies through practices such as shorter work weeks, limits to advertising and new ways of recognising unpaid and/or informal labour (Cosme et al., 2017; Kallis, 2011; Mastini et al., 2021; Schneider et al., 2010; Sekulova et al., 2013).

While each of these concepts uses slightly different terminology and language, the terms are interrelated in conceptualisation and in their overall vision of post-growth economies and societies. For this reason, we are broadly grouping them under the umbrella concept of wellbeing economies.

The process of moving beyond growth economies is seen as a planned process of “reduction in energy and resource use designed to bring the economy back into balance with the living world in a way that reduces inequality and improves human wellbeing” (Hickel, 2021, p. 1105). This reduction must be “a voluntary transition towards a just, participatory and ecologically sustainable society” (Degrowth and Research, 2010, p. 524).

It is also seen as a transitional process: once activities are brought within a safe operating space for equitably meeting needs within planetary boundaries and social foundations, economies would then move to a steady-state focus. The wellbeing economy is not focused on reducing GDP, but rather on restructuring the economy to reduce the material throughput to a level where it is consistent with environmental limits. This needs to be achieved in a careful, managed way to achieve a safe and just transition (Hickel, 2021).

The transition to wellbeing economies represents a significant socio-economic shift, and there have been concerns about the impact of this change on various communities (Büchs & Koch, 2019). It is clear that operationalising wellbeing will require a stronger focus on positive narratives of abundance, wellness and conviviality, the good life and the good society, and opportunities for the pursuit of human and ecological health, rather than on economic growth, as we move from a focus on material consumption to a multidimensional conceptualisation of wellbeing (Andreoni & Galmarini, 2014; Büchs & Koch, 2019; Fioramonti et al., 2022; Klamer, 2002; The European Environmental Bureau, 2019; Trebeck, 2020; Weinhardt et al., 2021).



Wellbeing economies challenges us to recognise that many of the most developed countries in the world have 'arrived' in terms of the levels of prosperity required for wellbeing (Trebeck & Williams, 2019). The concept of 'arrival' is based on the premise that development has a destination, and that many countries have arrived at that destination where the basic needs of citizens (collectively) have been achieved and a high quality of life has been obtained for some (Trebeck & Williams, 2019). However, it also recognises that there are still stark wealth inequalities both within and across countries. The goals of a wellbeing economy include greater fairness and equality, good social relationships as well as human mental and physical health, and a thriving environment (Coscieme et al., 2019). These goals are clearly not being met if we consider the current global disparities in wealth and quality of life.

A wellbeing economy approach would involve focusing on simplicity and/or downscaling through forms of exchange that create a sense of community, conviviality and reciprocity (Andreoni & Galmarini, 2014). The wellbeing economy attributes more value to currently undervalued activities such as collaboration, sharing, recycling and upcycling, and blurs the boundaries between consumers and producers (Coscieme et al., 2019). Wellbeing has been defined in different ways; however, it broadly refers to the satisfaction of human needs (Andreoni & Galmarini, 2014; Büchs & Koch, 2019). This includes basic human needs such as food and water security or safety, as well as our mental and emotional needs for identity, close relationships, meaningful work, and opportunities to be involved in community and political life. These mental and emotional needs are critical indications of quality of life and can be met with low resource inputs (Büchs & Koch, 2019).

The positive vision of a wellbeing economy also enables creativity and innovation by allowing adaptability for varied and context-specific pathways to wellbeing. This adaptability and context-setting also applies to policy thinking and making (Fioramonti et al., 2022). Transitioning to a wellbeing economy and determining how to satisfy the needs of future generations is a challenge that needs to be addressed through regular deliberative forums. This process of deliberation could help to support a cultural shift towards wellbeing and would combine input from experts and citizens to develop a dialogue between the Global South and North (Büchs & Koch, 2019).

There are a growing number of examples of the wellbeing economy in action. The Welsh Government is applying aspects of the wellbeing economy through its foundational economy concept, and is one of the first administrations to build future sustainability-proofing into all its policy areas through the Well-Being of Future Generations Act (2015), and appointing a dedicated commissioner to oversee this agenda. More recently, the establishment of the Wellbeing Economy Governments partnership (WEGo) between Scotland, Iceland, New Zealand, Wales and Finland is an example of national governments working together to develop wellbeing economy policy. Together, members of the WEGo partnership have embraced wellbeing economy principles that emphasise social and environmental outcomes while also creating an alternative development pathway to GDP growth (Scottish Government, 2022). While this is an example of the implementation of the wellbeing economy at a national level, the Scottish case also provides a case study of how the wellbeing economy can be created at a local level. The Scottish Government's community wealth building program helps local communities and businesses to pursue common good through encouraging more resilient and fairer local economies (Scotland's Centre for Regional Inclusive Growth, 2022).

A number of civil society organisations promote the wellbeing economy, including Economy for the Common Good and the Wellbeing Economy Alliance (WEAll), which includes over two hundred organisations (Wellbeing Economy Alliance, 2022). Economy for the Common Good has a vision to minimise inequalities, keep natural resource consumption within planetary boundaries and promote intergenerational equity. Their vision includes creative business activity, living in dignity, meaningful work, community and political engagement, and personal development (Economy for the Common Good, n.d.). Key aspects of WEAll's vision are for policy to be framed in terms of human and ecological wellbeing, businesses to meet social needs and contribute to regeneration, and collaboration between government, business and civil society to develop the rules of the economy (Wellbeing Economy Alliance, 2022). The strategic goals of these organisations are strongly aligned with the post-growth and wellbeing literature.

2.2 The wellbeing economy provides a way to address global inequality

A goal of the wellbeing economy must be understanding and addressing the global dimensions of the concept. Several authors have questioned whether post-growth strategies are once again perpetuating patterns of colonisation in setting the global agenda according to what is right for the North; others have asked whether current post-growth thinking includes and can align with similar Southern growth-critical concepts such as conviviality and *buen vivir*, *ubuntu*, radical ecological democracy and the importance of 'being' rather than 'having' (Dengler & Seebacher, 2019; Jackson, 2021).

Many authors highlight that the objectives of post-growth or wellbeing economies are and will continue to be differently oriented in the North and South (Büchs & Koch, 2019; Rahnema & Bawtree, 1997). The focus in the North might be on post-growth or post-materialism, while in the South the focus is on post-development, with the goal of challenging the assumption that development *needs* growth, or that the South needs to catch up to the North (Escobar, 2015). This means that the dimensions and priorities of wellbeing economies will not be the same for the North and the South, in what Abramsky refers to as "common but differentiated responsibilities" (2010, p. 2).

The current growth-focused economic paradigm has resulted in global industrial development practices that have enabled the specialisation of the Global South in the export of raw materials as well as light, low-cost manufacturing. Workers in these industries are subjected to poor working conditions and limited protections. The environmental degradation and resource exploitation of these current production and consumption systems is also concentrated in the Global South. In the short term, it is likely that the reduction in the demand for energy, materials and light manufacturing associated with adopting wellbeing economy principles will have disruptive and unintended consequences on employment and livelihoods in the Global South (Dengler & Seebacher, 2019). These impacts will also be unfairly gendered (Dengler & Seebacher, 2019), particularly in the fashion and textile sector in the South (which depends on low-paid labour by women) (Anderson et al., 2021; Sharpe et al., 2021).

However, beyond these short-term disruptions, a focus on wellbeing economies offers real opportunities to address global inequalities in livelihoods and environmental health. Effectively managing this transition in both the North and the South will be a challenging task, but it is not insurmountable when we consider the benefits of achieving wellbeing economies globally.

2.3 New collective governance and dialogue mechanisms can lead the way to wellbeing economies

The ecological and social 'debt' that has resulted from growth-focused development, as well as transition impacts associated with the move to wellbeing economies, can be addressed through justice processes that provide reparations and opportunities for rehabilitation (Abramsky, 2010; Hickel, 2021). Considering and enacting such reparations will require fundamental reform to our international institutions of economic governance to establish some form of collective management of global society's resources and wealth: an extremely difficult step, but a necessary precursor to the participatory processes needed to enable human prosperity within planetary boundaries (Abramsky, 2010; Hickel, 2021).

More broadly, the transition to post-growth is envisaged as a multi-actor process where a diverse range of communities and institutions will need to work together. Public dialogue and social movements play an important role in increasing the demand for collective forms of governance. These new mechanisms for deliberative and participatory decision-making will need both grassroots and top-down approaches (Brand et al., 2021). This sets an inclusive agenda for diverse measures that could be taken to reduce ecologically destructive activities and encourage social cohesion and equality (Hickel, 2021).

To date, academics and various consumer, user, and activist groups have been the most active in these circles, and the post-growth strategies implemented thus far have tended to focus on grassroots and local interventions. Encouraging and emboldening existing community dialogue processes and social movements already at the interface of these issues would build capacity and momentum for a broader cohort of actors to get involved.

Deliberative dialogues also help to develop policy systems, economies and business models that are distributive by design (Raworth, 2017). Post-growth strategies envisage micro-level changes to individual lifestyles and consumption behaviours, and also macro-level economic, political and technological shifts to move away from the pursuit of growth (Büchs & Koch, 2019; Kallis, 2011; Schneider et al., 2010).

This ambitious agenda for change will require sustained dialogue between community stakeholders, policymakers and businesses, as well as clearly articulated guidelines as to the role technological innovation could play, and how to rethink growth and profit within the economy and individual business models. All of these aspects are currently underdeveloped (Khmara & Kronenberg, 2020).

New indicators of what constitutes a healthy economy are needed to facilitate an equitable transition. Metrics should no longer only track economic activity and growth but assess wellbeing, social equality and ecological regeneration. This will allow new values and narratives about wellbeing, sufficiency, sustainable livelihoods and decent work to flourish. It's crucial that mechanisms are developed to measure and recognise currently invisible, undervalued contributions to prosperity from the caring economy and volunteering, and to shift the wider emphasis from materiality to relationality (Jackson, 2021).



2.4 Business focus will be on meeting societal needs within planetary boundaries

There is an unresolved tension as to the extent to which post-growth can be achieved within our current economic system (Hankammer et al., 2021). Businesses need a clear sense of what role they can play in helping to co-create new business models and structures in a post-growth economy. This would require significant culture change, since most businesses are focused on achieving profit and delivering financial gains to owners and shareholders. The emphasis on growth provides a great deal of the momentum for current economic models.

Profit itself is not the issue, but rather how it is created and how it is used. There may be certain instances where for-profit business is positive and meets societal needs in a post-growth economy due to how that profit is achieved, shared or re-invested (Bocken & Short, 2016; Schneider et al., 2010). Not-for-profit businesses that create other types of value (e.g. social and/or environmental rather than just financial) fit more naturally within a post-growth economy. These businesses often help to circulate wealth more fairly and can act against systemic pressures to deliver profits to private owners by overproducing and overconsuming (Hinton, 2020; Hinton & Maclurcan, 2017, 2019).

It's also important to note there's a difference between post-growth as an achieved outcome and the challenging period of change while businesses move towards becoming post-growth. During this transition period, business models and legally defined business structures have to be altered to encourage companies across the board to focus less on profit and more on creating social and environmental value (Hinton, 2020).

We have some insights into what these transitioning business models and structures might look like. Sufficiency business models – while still operating within a traditional growth economy paradigm – position business strategy within a sufficiency rather than growth mindset (Bocken & Short, 2016). This approach asks what exactly constitutes ‘sufficiency’ at individual, household, national and global scales (Sahakian et al., 2021) and sets informed limits to consumption (Spengler, 2016).

As with doughnut economic models, a business sufficiency strategy promotes ‘consumption corridors,’ where a minimum consumption standard is set (to enable people now and in the future to meet their needs), and a maximum limit is set, where consumption does not reduce the ability of others to meet their needs or live ‘a good life’ (Fuchs et al., 2021). To be effective, these constraints must be negotiated in a deliberative way by society (Godin et al., 2020). The ‘consumption corridors’ concept has been trialled in the fashion industry, with recent studies on voluntary simplicity and laundering (Godin et al., 2020; Vladimirova, 2021).

Hankammer et al. (2021) have created a comprehensive framework of elements of various business models that are approaching post-growth (please see Table 1). Some of the elements listed in the first column already feature in the voluntary business strategies of existing companies, which shows that mainstream corporations can capably re-align themselves within a post-growth economy. These business models are very much in the *transitioning* space, and while they may not represent viable models in a ‘pure’ post-growth economy, they still prove “the possibility of organisations approaching degrowth within the current capitalist system” (2021, p. 2).

Table 1 Business model elements for approaching post-growth

| Element | Characteristics |
|---|---|
| Repurpose business for the environment and society | De-emphasise profit maximisation in favour of social and environmental benefits; keep business small (or organic growth) to ensure direct contacts with employees and customers; smaller size of high-quality product offering. |
| Promote societal acceptance of post-growth | Promote positive image of life beyond materialism, including supporting and fostering social dialogue on post-growth, and coalition-building with other organisations to support post-growth. |
| Reduce environmental impact | Improve environmental performance within the firm and reduce resource use; offer repair and take-back services for products; eliminate hazardous wastes. |
| Product and service design for sustainability | Product development that promotes longevity and integrates conviviality, repairability, modularity, co-creation and co-financing of products. |
| Encourage sufficiency | Maintain strong relationships with customers to influence consumption behaviours away from overconsumption and support consumers to become ‘prosumers.’ |
| Enable usage and sharing of products | Design strategies for product life extension; support forms of collaborative consumption and peer-to-peer sharing such as renting, trading and leasing; remain cognisant of re-bounce effects; allow trade of skills and knowledge rather than just money. |
| Develop and implement democratic governance | Ask for leadership commitment and organisational culture change to build an identity around values of sufficiency, honesty and transparency; create mechanisms for democratic ownership (participatory decision-making, peer governance, commons-based peer ownership). |
| Improve work-life balance for employees | Focus on providing high-quality work and wellbeing for employees, including measures such as job-sharing and work-life balance (to allow employees to participate in volunteering and other free-time amateur activities). |
| Be local not global | Revitalise local communities through re-localisation (which brings added benefits of efficient material and energy use); local-aware product design; involvement of local actors to contribute to autonomy and conviviality of communities. |
| Enable autonomy and capacity development | Provide more equal distribution and access to resources by helping people and organisations to strengthen skills and competencies and increase empowerment. |
| Share and collaborate with other organisations | Share knowledge, skills and experiences across organisations to prevent re-inventing; share physical resources such as buildings and equipment. |

Source: summarised from Hankammer et al. (2021)

2.5 Common attributes and ambitions of wellbeing economics

Our review of the literature on wellbeing economies identifies the following common attributes:

| Attributes | Policy Opportunities |
|---|--|
| <p>Establishing limits</p>  | <p>Creating a wellbeing economy involves establishing limits on production and consumption and learning to live within these boundaries. These lower and upper thresholds of sufficiency will have different dimensions across the Global North and the Global South. New indicators of wellbeing can guide progress towards satisfying human needs (such as mental and physical health, living and working in dignity, opportunities for community, and political participation) while also supporting ecological health.</p> |
| <p>Promote Fairness</p>  | <p>We need to design distributive systems to ensure global and intergenerational equity, and redistribute global resources and wealth across diverse contexts and communities.</p> |
| <p>Just governance</p>  | <p>Participatory and deliberative processes are essential to guarantee that any proposed transition is inclusive and open to debate. The transition to wellbeing economies will require major system-level changes in many domains. Managing these transitions depends on sophisticated and robust participatory approaches, and on building skills and capacity to ensure a diverse range of participants can contribute. Public dialogue and social movements help to establish momentum for these wider conversations.</p> |
| <p>New exchange systems:</p>  | <p>New business structures and systems are key to providing and exchanging goods and services in ways that do not only depend on overproduction and overconsumption. Creative business exchange models could meet social needs (such as conviviality and reciprocity) and provide meaningful work while also being environmentally regenerative.</p> |

In the sections to follow, we will use these attributes to guide our review of sustainable fashion literature and practice, and to suggest priority actions and policy opportunities for a wellbeing economy approach to the global fashion and textile sector.

3: Fashion in a Wellbeing Economy

3.1 Assessing current wellbeing economy practices in the fashion sector

Fashion is one of the most unsustainable industries in the world, according to both environmental and social sustainability metrics (Bick et al., 2018; Bocken & Short, 2021; Brydges & Hanlon, 2020; Leal Filho et al., 2019; Myers, 2021; Niinimäki et al., 2020; Ro, 2020; Wicker, 2020). Although sustainability has been a focus for the fashion and textile sector in recent years, any proposed solutions have tended to fit within the growth paradigm. This is apparent in mainstream fashion sustainability discourses such as the Global Fashion Agenda (2020), an industry funded collaborative forum, which in their 2020 CEO Agenda calls for the following steps to be taken:

Creative leadership to champion change management and forward-looking approaches to progress by redefining measures of success and decoupling growth from resource constraints...investigate new business models outside current market mechanisms to drive change, implement innovation and tap into collaborative business opportunities. This is not only essential to future-proof your business, but it is also crucial for humanity to operate within planetary boundaries and to meet the needs of future generations.

There are many sustainability initiatives that have been implemented within the sector. While commendable, most encourage only incremental change and perpetuate a growth-oriented fashion economy. Examples include shifting to more sustainable fibres and textiles; providing ethically-conscious fashion options to consumers; and introducing certification and labelling systems. Yet these strategies are still overwhelmingly oriented towards economic opportunity rather than environmental health, and assume that economic activity can be decoupled from resource use. Such an approach takes growth for granted, and doesn't reduce production and consumption overall. These initiatives seek to green existing practices without fundamentally overhauling the economic rationale at the core of many fashion brands' business models.

Given this starting point, the following section provides an assessment of existing sustainability-focused practices in the fashion and textile sector as a way of understanding the current landscape. Although incremental, such small steps or acts of change – when linked to a radical agenda – can support the kind of transformation required to meet needs within planetary boundaries (Göpel, 2016).

In Table 2 (below), we have highlighted existing fashion activities and practices that align with some of the wellbeing economy attributes established in the previous section of this report. Many of these current sector activities could be placed in multiple categories (while those who believe the pace of change within the industry is too slow may question why they are placed in these categories at all). Our aim here is to look for diverse pathways to change, take a portfolio approach, and be generous in acknowledging avenues to link existing practice to a new direction. This is with the understanding that these current practices are largely niche or too small in scale or scope to transform the sector. This is an issue we will discuss this further in Section 4.

Table 2 Assessing existing sustainable fashion activities against wellbeing economy attributes

| Wellbeing economy attribute | Relevant current activities in the fashion sector |
|--|---|
| 1. Creating a wellbeing economy focus | |
| Establishing limits and learning to live within these boundaries | Slow fashion Sufficiency and consumption corridors Increasing focus on repair and care of existing garments |
| Different dimensions of wellbeing economies across the Global South and North | Sustainable fashion campaigns and social movements |
| New indicators of wellbeing to guide progress | Indicators to measure wellbeing economy outcomes in the sector Improving data quality Transparency measures |

| 2. Designing distributive systems for global and intergenerational equity | |
|--|---|
| <i>Developing and implementing measures for collective sharing and income fairness in diverse contexts</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiatives for fair work Ethical fashion and textiles Shifting to local production |
| 3. Participatory and deliberative processes informing inclusive transitions | |
| <i>Sophisticated and robust participatory approaches</i> | Dialogues in the sector |
| <i>Focus on learning</i> | Capacity-building activities |
| <i>Social dialogue and social movements</i> | Multi-stakeholder dialogue processes |
| 4. New systems and business structures for providing and exchanging goods and services | |
| <i>Support creative activities of making and exchanging goods and services that meet social needs and provide dignified and meaningful work.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changing the culture and narrative around fashion Collaborative consumption: peer-to-peer exchanges, fashion rental, fashion subscription Co-operatives |
| <i>Support new models of business and exchange that meet societal needs and generate conviviality, reciprocity and are environmentally regenerative.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Second-hand shopping Not-for-profit social enterprises, B-corps Ecopreneurs, SMEs |

3.2 Establishing limits and learning to live within them

We should note at the outset that there is virtually no serious focus on limiting fashion consumption, or thinking about limits or boundaries to production, at individual, local, national or global levels. There are, however, some promising initiatives (such as slow fashion, sufficiency measures and consumption corridors), which could be scaled up and mainstreamed to start deeper conversations around degrowth within the clothing and textile industry.

3.2.1 Slow fashion

Slow fashion is a system of production and consumption based upon classic design and high-quality production to produce garments that are worn, cared for, repaired when needed, and passed on to have the longest possible life (Brydges et al., 2014; Brydges, 2018; Clark, 2008; Earley, 2017; Fletcher, 2010; Leslie et al., 2014; Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013). This includes practices such as designing for adaptability and durability, which can be achieved through creating timeless styles using quality materials (so that garments can be worn for many years), as well as design interventions such as adjustable hems and waistbands that can be let out or taken in as bodies and needs change (Brydges, 2018).

Slow fashion is not only about challenging the speed of production and consumption. It also aligns with wellbeing economy concepts by advocating for the construction of new fashion systems built upon growth-independent business models, where fewer garments are produced. By defining itself *against* fast fashion, slow fashion embraces a new clothes culture that rejects trends and disposability and instead celebrates and values garments (Clark, 2008; Fletcher, 2010).

Slow fashion operates at a different spatial scale: one that is community-oriented and localised, giving producers (designers and manufacturers) and consumers an opportunity to collaborate and interact, and fostering awareness of the true cost of the fashion industry on people and the planet (Fletcher, 2010). Some of these businesses are social enterprises and are thus already oriented away from profit-driven growth and towards other kinds of value, voluntarily removing themselves from the conventional growth-oriented fashion system (Christie et al., 2021; Thorpe, 2014).

3.2.2 Sufficiency and consumption corridors

Sufficiency in a fashion context can be defined as “restrict(ing) consumption to a level that is enough for a healthy and satisfactory life but avoids excess” (Kleinhüchelkotten & Neitzke, 2019, p.2). In the limited studies that have been undertaken of consumer understandings of sufficiency when it relates to clothing (i.e. the number of garments a person should own or purchase), responses were highly subjective and individualised (Frick et al., 2021; Vladimirova, 2021).

The concept of ‘consumption corridors’ has been developed to help quantify a range or number of garments that may be considered sufficient for an individual (Vladimirova, 2021). Yet, it is challenging to reach a consensus as to what this entails due to differences in individual needs and climate. In one European study, sufficiency was found to be connected to gendered and class-based altruistic notions of freedom, wellbeing and achieving “the good life” (Vladimirova, 2021). Related practices of sufficiency can include purchasing less new clothing, better care and repair of existing clothing, second-hand purchases and clothing swaps (Frick et al., 2021; Kleinhüchelkotten & Neitzke, 2019; Vladimirova, 2021).

3.2.3 Repair and care for existing clothing

Extending the useful life of garments through practices of repair and care are also put forth as strategies for limiting the consumption behaviours of consumers (Fletcher, 2013; Payne, 2019; Taylor, 2019). In line with post-growth as well as circular economy discourses, there is discussion about how to empower consumers to take up practices such as mending (Rodabaugh, 2018) or ‘hacking’ garments, repair (Egels-Zandén et al., 2015) and better laundering (such as washing garments less often, and using cooler water and eco-detergents) (Kleinhüchelkotten & Neitzke, 2019). The goal is to help people no longer think of clothing as disposable and keep garments in use as long as possible (Binotto & Payne, 2016). Fashion brands can play a role in helping to educate their customers about these practices (Brydges, 2021), and fashion design and education institutions can teach people to sew, mend, fix and make (Rissanen, 2017).



3.2.4 Gaps and future actions

Our review revealed a lack of major initiatives from mainstream producers to support slow fashion or sufficiency movements within the industry. Only relatively niche brands support take-back and repair, and a fraction of overall garment production could be described as high-quality, ethically-sourced, responsibly manufactured, and transparent about material content, labour conditions and environmental impact.

Solutions that could help transition the industry towards a wellbeing economy include: resource caps to steeply decrease production volumes; more sophisticated Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) guarantees that mandate higher quality and durability of garments; expanding repair and reuse services and

incentives for their use; stringent requirements for paying workers a living wage; and transparency about resources and materials used in production.

Further pathways for change include increasing public awareness of the environmental and social benefits to valuing garments, and widely sharing knowledge and building skills to care for and repair garments. There are also opportunities to support the non-market exchange of items and skills in the creation, customisation and repair of garments.

3.3 Differing impacts on the Global North and the Global South

There is still very little acknowledgement of the different and unequal global impacts of transitioning the fashion industry to a wellbeing economy. The sector is firmly established as a development model for rapidly industrialising countries in the Global South, despite the enormous environmental and social costs associated with the sector. Some sustainable fashion campaigns have tried to be upfront about this by supporting a living wage for workers, gender equality or increasing awareness of the environmental impacts of the textile and garment industry.

The post-development literature offers useful perspectives to guide progress on this issue, including moving away from the goals of development and industrialisation – which has been significant in the fashion sector, driven by the increasing scale, size and complexity of the industry – as well as a focus on place-based approaches and the role of grassroots movements in shaping pathways to wellbeing (Escobar, 2015).

3.4 Developing new indicators

Several different models have been proposed to measure wellbeing economy outcomes more broadly, but wellbeing metrics for the fashion and textile sector are lacking. In the wellbeing economy literature, subjective measures of wellbeing have been found to vary widely, and thus a focus on basic human needs and objectives has proved the most useful (Büchs & Koch, 2019).

A wellbeing model from Andreoni and Galmarini (2014) delineates types of wellbeing capital as follows: social capital, health capital, consumption capital, and the quality of natural capital. They highlight that social, health and the quality of natural capital are positively correlated with wellbeing, while consumption capital has diminishing returns for wellbeing. A *Sustainable Wellbeing Index* (SWI) has also been developed by Costanza et al. (2016), where SWI is a function of net economic contribution, natural capital/ecosystem services and social capital/community contribution.

Another wellbeing indicator framework, *The Good Life for All Within Planetary Boundaries*, quantifies the resource requirements of meeting basic human needs within planetary boundaries (O'Neill et al., 2018). This framework finds that while it's possible to meet basic human physical needs and eliminate extreme poverty while living within planetary boundaries, more qualitative goals such as high life satisfaction are not possible unless we move towards sufficiency and equity approaches.

3.4.1 Improving data quality

A related challenge facing the fashion industry is a lack of reliable, high-quality data which accurately portrays the environmental and social impacts of the industry (Bick et al., 2018; Niinimäki et al., 2020; Vladimirova, 2021) and can be used in concrete ways to shape business and production practices. The complexity and opacity of supply chains makes it difficult to fully map or measure the industry's footprint, which means that many industry actors get away with making nebulous claims regarding the supposed sustainability of their collections and practices – an increasingly common phenomenon known as 'greenwashing' (Friedman, 2018; Henninger et al., 2016; Niinimäki, 2015).

Sustainability auditing and brand-led sustainability certification schemes are widespread within the industry and have been the main source of data on labour standards and, more recently, on environmental regulatory compliance (ILO, 2021a). These initiatives have primarily focused on improving labour conditions and standards within the sector, such as reducing child and forced labour, ensuring minimum wages, occupational health and safety standards, and addressing gender-based inequality, violence and harassment.

Recent analysis has shown that for social sustainability issues – primarily labour standards – this form of voluntary, industry-led regulation has delivered little to no improvements in labour standards over the past three decades (Kuruvilla, 2021). The pandemic has further compounded pressure on wages and labour standards. Manufacturers surveyed in late 2020 from a range of production countries (including Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Pakistan and Viet Nam) state that, on average, prices received for the same items in 2019 have been reduced by 12 per cent in 2020 and payment terms to suppliers, including the amount of time suppliers have to wait to get paid, have extended (Anner, 2020). Environmental initiatives have not been as clearly monitored, but similarly have been unable to stem widespread environmental damage in the sector (ILO, 2021b; Niinimäki et al., 2020; Ortmann, 2017).



3.4.2 Gaps and future actions

There are global initiatives to develop industry-wide ecological sustainability commitments. However, voluntary commitments tend not to focus on sufficiency and reducing production and consumption, and thus do not develop reliable indicators and metrics needed to guide real progress in the direction of sufficiency. Voluntary commitments also do not establish robust systems for enforcement or accountability, and do not always make the data on compliance accessible to the public. There is a need for agreements that drive industry-wide change at many levels: targeting both ecological sustainability and worker wellbeing through accountability mechanisms or regulatory arrangements.

Developing improved metrics on sustainability data within the industry is also essential in order to evaluate the impact of any post-growth or wellbeing economy interventions compared to business-as-usual or green growth scenarios (Sandin et al., 2015). The environmental impacts of different material compositions of clothing and consumption alternatives such as fashion rental are not yet clear: better data is needed to investigate whether these alternatives are actually more or less sustainable than clothing ownership (see Levanen et al., 2021).

Improving the transparency of how various forms of value are created (or destroyed – in terms of environmental value) can support deliberations about how this value is shared equitably across the supply chain. This kind of data will be an important tool to inform not only the actions of businesses but consumer decisions. Blockchain and other nascent technologies may come to play an important role in improving the availability and quality of data, which in turn may support increased transparency and accountability in the industry.

3.5 Designing distributive systems for global and intergenerational equity

This principle focuses on systems and supply chains that support greater distribution of benefits to stakeholders across the sector and supply chain. It also refers to systems that promote equality through sharing the responsibility for resource management and environmental protection globally and with

consideration of future generations. Policies and tax reforms can support a more equitable distribution of wealth.

Within the textile and garment sector, this kind of regulation is crucial to ensure fair trade and labour protections. The question of global equity and shared responsibility raises important questions about global supply chains and highlights the challenge of making a fair and just transition away from a polluting industry on which many livelihoods still depend.

3.5.1 Initiatives for fair work

There is a growing range of industry commitments, accords and private sector organisations aimed at supporting worker wellbeing. For example, organisations such as the Fair Wear Foundation offer brands the opportunity to outsource the oversight of their overseas factories to private auditors (Egels-Zandén et al., 2015; Lindholm et al., 2016). While supporting supply chain transparency, these codes of conduct and audits face challenges in fulfilling core objectives, such as identifying worker rights violations and ensuring compliance with local labour laws (Kuruvilla, 2021). Effective and binding agreements are still rare, but there are important exceptions, for instance, the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh, which is an independent, legally binding agreement between brands and trade unions to improve worker safety in the garment and textile industry.

In recent years, several countries have introduced laws for due diligence regarding human rights and slavery, including France, Germany, the UK and Australia (Friedman, 2022). In Australia, businesses with an annual turnover of \$100 million or more publish an annual modern slavery statement, including reporting on risks and mitigation strategies (Modern Slavery Act 2018, n.d.). While this can increase transparency across fashion supply chains and improve working conditions, there are currently no penalties for companies who find modern slavery in their supply chains, nor is there any penalty for failing to report it (Goldworthy, 2021).

While many of these initiatives are focused on the Global South, there is also a need for worker rights protections in the Global North, since buying locally-made fashion does not automatically guarantee good working conditions for the maker. Allegations of garment labourers working in exploitative conditions have been levelled at fashion brands producing their clothing in countries such as the UK (Duncan, 2020) and Australia (Renaldi, 2020).

Voluntary reporting and participation in these initiatives, as well as a lack of legal or financial enforcement mechanisms, are all barriers to authentic industry change with respect to worker wellbeing. There has been a patchwork of brand-level initiatives, such as corporate commitments to pay a living wage, but more sustained government-led policy and regulation is needed. For instance, industry responses to the Covid-19 pandemic showed that retail workers in the Global North received immediate wage support while garment workers in the Global South had no choice but to continue to work (Brydges & Hanlon, 2020).

3.5.2 Ethical fashion

Ethical fashion can refer to products that aim to improve worker wellbeing, animal welfare or environmental health (Mukherjee, 2015; Stringer et al., 2020). Ethical products are those that are “high quality, well-designed and environmentally sustainable” but also “help disadvantaged groups and reflect good working conditions” (Domeisen, 2006, p. 2). These products face several practical challenges in terms of having a measurable positive impact: some ethical products may still contribute to increased consumption and waste, and not ethical products are created equal in terms of their differing social or environmental impacts.

This lack of clarity sometimes leaves consumers confused. Studies have shown consumers across geographic contexts report feeling that they lack the necessary information to decide whether a garment is ethical or not (Carey & Cervellon, 2014; Haug & Busch, 2015; Joergens, 2006; Pérez et al., 2021). Factors such as style and cost are still the most important factor influencing purchasing for most consumers (Beard, 2015; Joergens, 2006).

There is an important role for fashion brands to play in improving transparency and the communication of their ethical credentials. The fact that research over the last 15 years continues to reach similar conclusions suggests fashion brands have made minimal progress in this regard. One of the challenges may be that connections in global supply chains between designers, manufacturers, brands and consumers are contingent and unstable (Khan, 2019).

3.5.3 Shifting to local production

Post-growth proponents hope that, as global economic systems recalibrate to operate within planetary boundaries, there will be a rejection of globalised supply chains and a return to local economic activities (see Cosme et al., 2017; Crownshaw et al., 2019). There is a growing chorus of fashion studies scholars who are advocating for localised approaches to the production of fashion as fundamental to a reimagined fashion industry (Fletcher & Tham, 2019; Payne, 2019). The relocalising of garment production is described as heralding opportunities for new and better working conditions in the fashion industry (Clark, 2019). However, it is important to consider the potentially negative implications of reshoring for millions of garment workers around the world. Rather than pit local and global workers against one another, we should advocate for better jobs for *all* in the fashion industry (Clarke-Sather & Cobb, 2019).

Global consumption patterns and markets will also change in sometimes unpredictable ways if we seek to redistribute prosperity globally. We could see increasing consumption of certain products and services in the Global South as these populations are better able to meet their needs. There are both opportunities and challenges to shifting to a wellbeing economy in the fashion and textile sector. These transitions are rarely smooth, and they can have unintended short-term negative consequences if they are not properly and fairly managed.

3.5.4 Gaps and future direction

Given the complexities and challenges of designing distributive systems and supporting global and intergenerational equity, there are a number of potential avenues for the industry to be explored in more detail. These include the use of tax reforms or legislation to address inequities in the supply chain, as well as a consideration of the role of industry commitments to fairer working conditions and greater transparency to ensure compliance with regulatory/legal obligations.

There is a need for improved communication, transparency and clarity surrounding these initiatives, particularly so that consumers have the tools they need to interpret the actions of brands and make more informed decisions. Confusion around concepts such as ethical fashion continue to be a barrier for sustained consumer engagement, and run the risk of further exacerbating challenges pertaining to greenwashing in the industry.

Close consideration must be paid to implications for both global and local supply chains. Whereas localising production may improve working conditions, increase garment prices and help to drive sufficiency, this takes away livelihoods for workers in the Global South in the short-term. Thus, a just transition process to redistribute resources would be needed to support real change in the industry. Localised production in Western countries is also not a guarantee that garment worker rights are being protected. In this context, how do we enable shared responsibility and shared benefits? Creating effective multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms will be key, and this is a theme we explore in the following section.

3.6 Inclusive and participatory processes

In order to embark on this significant shift for industry and society, broad groups of stakeholders need to participate in deliberative processes to agree on goals. Setting a new orientation for the globalised fashion industry will depend on significant input from each node of the supply chain and across geographic contexts. It will also require political leadership and open dialogue between industry and consumers regarding what constitutes sufficient consumption and how this can be achieved.

In terms of existing dialogue, there is a growing range of industry intermediaries and non-governmental organisations that welcome global fashion brands to subscribe to voluntary industry commitments, such as the Global Fashion Pact, the Sustainable Apparel Coalition and the Better Cotton Initiative (Gwilt et al., 2019). While these forums play an important role in starting these conversations within the sector and welcoming companies to start trying to improve on industry practices, they face challenges due to a lack of clarity and specific targets or outcomes.

3.6.1 Deliberative and participatory decision-making

There is a growing body of research by fashion practitioners and educators focused on spurring new forms of deliberative and participatory decision-making and engagement across the fashion industry (Taylor, 2019; Williams, 2019). This is borne of the recognition that moving the industry into a post-growth future oriented towards sustainability rather than profit will require collaboration between all those involved in the industry's diverse supply chains (Taylor, 2019; Williams, 2019). Much of this work is consumer-oriented, exploring the ways in which innovative forms of collective participation in the fashion industry (for instance, swap shops or community closets) can give consumers the opportunity to build personal and community knowledge about the industry and change cultures of fashion (Williams, 2019).



3.6.2 Industry agreements

The Global Fashion Pact, released at the 2019 G7 summit in Paris, called on the fashion industry to commit to three key environmental goals: “mitigate climate change, restore biodiversity and protect the oceans” (The Fashion Pact, 2020, p. 6). These broad goals, which are matched with targets and key performance indicators are described as being inspired in part by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals regarding climate action, life below water and life on land (The Fashion Pact, 2020). While these goals are in alignment with objectives of environmental sustainability and wellbeing, they do not address issues of overproduction and overconsumption (UN SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production) or worker welfare (UN SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth).

3.6.3 Gaps and future direction

There is a lack of dialogue in the industry regarding making a viable transition to a wellbeing economy. Genuinely deliberative processes need to be established across a broad range of fashion industry stakeholders and across geographic contexts. A first step will be education and culture change to rewrite the narrative around our consumption of textiles to embrace concepts of sufficiency.

Deep supply chain collaboration will be critical to enable a post-growth transformation of the fashion and textile sector. The highly competitive nature of the sector is often cited as a reason for the fragility of linkages across the supply chain (Sharpe et al., 2021). We need to better understand how our existing collaborative structures, including multi-stakeholder platforms, can be reformed by a post-growth reduction in competitive imperatives. Relatedly, there is a need for further research and attention to the importance of sector-level collaboration between businesses. Despite the fact that this is a necessary precondition for businesses to play an active role as drivers of systemic change, it's an aspect that has been largely overlooked.

With respect to the operationalisation of the wellbeing economy within the fashion industry, there is an urgent question as to how to ensure there is buy-in from multiple stakeholders involved in the sector. Dialogue and

debate is needed both within and across the sector (and should include consumers) so that everybody has a voice in shaping what the transition to a wellbeing economy looks like in practice. Capacity building is a critical precursor to effective collaboration and equality in dialogue, since different stakeholders do not all have the same ability, rights or power to demand change.

3.7 Inclusive and participatory processes with a focus on learning

Learning is a core process that will facilitate all elements of the transition to wellbeing economies. The related concept of Sustainability Transitions – the long-term and fundamental transformations in socio-technical systems towards sustainability (Markard et al., 2012) – although not positioned within a post-growth or wellbeing mindset, offers several useful analytical concepts to understand transition processes. These include: a framework for how societal level changes happen; the roles of different actors in transition; and how radical innovations and experiments (such as post-growth initiatives) can be supported to disrupt and transform the conventions, rules and norms that currently guide society (Buchel et al., 2022; Gibbs & O'Neill, 2017; Hankammer et al., 2021; Khmara & Kronenberg, 2020).

Sustainability Transitions pays close attention to processes of learning within transition, and delineates between deepening, broadening and scaling up (Khmara & Kronenberg, 2020; van den Bosch & Rotmans, 2008). Deepening means the social learning processes that allow participants to learn about transition innovation and experiments in specific contexts. Broadening refers to the diffusion or application of innovations and experiments in new contexts. Scaling up is how these innovations can move beyond the local level to contribute to transition at societal scales.

These three mechanisms of learning and transition provide a roadmap for how post-growth concepts could be applied to the fashion and textile sector. As already noted, sustainability activities within the industry – especially those that could be aligned with wellbeing economies – tend to be fairly limited in scope. These three learning processes (deepening, broadening and scaling up) can be used to help make sustainable fashion activities less niche and have a wider impact on mainstream practices.

In the sustainable fashion literature, there is already evidence of deepening (in fact, much of the literature analysed in this report could be classified in this way), such as case studies and examples of specific sustainable fashion practices and business models. Whether this deepening involves a broad enough range of sector participants is questionable. More work is needed to increase the awareness, ability and resources of a diverse group of industry actors to be able to learn from and act on this research, including design professionals, purchasing officers, textile and garment manufacturers and workers and consumers.

There are limited examples of existing learning processes within the industry that broaden and scale up. These next two steps of the learning and transition process will require the involvement of a wide group of actors beyond immediate fashion industry stakeholders: policymakers, funding and financial institutions, worker organisations, NGOs and civil society organisations.

3.8 Developing public dialogue and encouraging social movements

The fashion and textile sector has previously had limited success in creating true multi-stakeholder dialogues that adequately represent all participants in the global supply chain. The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the ineffectiveness of these dialogues in mitigating the negative impacts of disruptions on the least powerful and less affluent parts of the global supply chain (in spite of repeated calls from numerous multi-stakeholder platforms for urgent action on this issue) (Anner, 2020; Sharpe et al., 2021).

Social movements and campaigns – such as the Clean Clothes Campaign, Fashion Revolution and Greenpeace's Toxic Threads campaign – have raised awareness of certain issues such as pay rates, wage theft and pollution impacts, and created momentum and pressure for action to address these issues. These types of campaigns have a long history in the fashion industry, starting with the sweatshop exposés some twenty years ago. The goal of these campaigns is to encourage consumer boycotts as pressure for change. While these campaigns are commendable, and often trigger the creation of voluntary sector sustainability initiatives, these have in turn not had a long-lasting or significant impact on curtailing or improving social and environmental impacts within the sector.

Closer attention needs to be paid to what makes dialogue processes (especially multi-stakeholder dialogues) truly effective. The ability of participants to contribute meaningfully to the discussions is one of the top criteria for success (Melo, 2018). Other factors include how dialogue is initiated, how issues are mapped and presented, and how decisions are made and followed up. A key challenge in multi-stakeholder dialogue processes, especially in the global supply chains of the fashion and textile sector, is not only bringing together the broad range of actors involved in the sector, but overcoming the power asymmetries that exist between these actors.

3.9 New systems and business models and ways of providing clothes and textiles

To provide goods and services in a socially and ecologically sustainable way, there will need to be a transformation of existing business models. Businesses must be incentivised to achieve social goals and move away from conventional industry metrics like sales growth and profit margins (Fletcher, 2010; Stål & Corvellec, 2018; Taylor, 2019). The social enterprise model has been proposed as one way forward, where the enterprise pursues a social purpose while maintaining business viability (Thorpe, 2014). Producing and exchanging clothing and textiles does not have to be a market-only activity. Rather, resources can be redirected to support a wide form of non-market, reciprocal exchange activities of good and services: not only of clothing but also of sewing and customisation skills.

Not-for-profit (NFP) businesses are essential in enabling a shift away from growth economies. The lack of a profit motive reduces pressures to overproduce or overconsume to deliver profits to owners and shareholders. Moreover, profit must be used for social benefit, rather than private distribution. This is a key way in which this model is transformational: it is inherently distributive rather than accumulative.

Although NFP businesses are currently fairly niche in the wider economy (as well as in the fashion and textile sector), there is diversity in NFP business models in terms of how revenue is used, how ownership is structured, and how social and environmental value is created and distributed. Examples of NFP initiatives in the fashion and textiles sector are collaborative consumption models, social enterprises, B-corporations and cooperatives. In the fashion industry, we also see examples of charity shops (such as Goodwill in the U.S. or Myrorna in Sweden) which sell second-hand textiles and combine this with a worker-integration model. These examples illustrate how second-hand shopping and the NFP model can go hand-in-hand.



3.9.1 Collaborative consumption

Collaborative consumption business models, which have recently grown in popularity, include: peer-to-peer fashion sharing; business-to-consumer fashion rental; fashion libraries; and swap shops (Armstrong et al., 2015; Henninger et al., 2022; Henninger et al., 2019; Möhlmann, 2015). There are two key models of business-to-consumer approaches, both focused on the womenswear market: subscription rental services

(where an individual rents a pre-defined number of items on a weekly or monthly basis), and dress rental services (targeting special events such as weddings) (Brydges et al., 2021). Collaborative consumption models give consumers the opportunity to create a new relationship with clothing that is built on access, rather than ownership (Henninger et al., 2019). These business models also offer fashion brands the chance to challenge their growth-dependent mindset and cultivate a new revenue stream that is not reliant on the continuous production of new garments.

Despite growing levels of consumer interest and investment, collaborative consumption still only represents a very small proportion of the industry. For example, in the United States, it is estimated that the use of a rental platform makes up approximately 1% of the typical closet (thredUP, 2021). Collaborative consumption models need to be combined with other initiatives to support social and environmental improvements at earlier stages of supply chains (Brydges, 2021).

While fashion rental platforms have the potential to support the transition to more sustainable consumption behaviours, this still very much depends on consumer attitudes and willingness to change (Brydges et al., 2021; Iran et al., 2019). It is also difficult to evaluate the relative sustainability of complex consumption models or product-service systems such as fashion-sharing, rental or subscription, and definitive results from life cycle assessments are not available (Brydges et al., 2021; Joyner Armstrong & Park, 2017; Levanen et al., 2021).

Exactly how sustainable collaborative consumption is depends on many different factors, including whether rental replaces purchase (or leads to purchase), whether transport of shared garments is sustainable, and if the rental or subscription model leads to hyper-consumption (Retamal, 2017). The rebound effect must also be considered, which is when the sustainability gains achieved using a rental platform are negated through other consumption behaviours (Becker-Leifhold & Iran, 2018; Iran & Schrader, 2017).

3.9.2 Social enterprises and B-Corps

Social enterprise and B-Corp certifications are two kinds of business model that seek to move beyond the growth-oriented, profit-driven economy. Social enterprises operate with the objective of having a positive societal impact and include non-profits, registered charities and for-profit businesses oriented around a social transformation goal (Defourny & Nyssens, 2008; Doherty et al., 2006; Galera & Borzaga, 2009; Peattie & Morley, 2008).

In the fashion industry, social enterprises operate in a range of contexts with different goals, such as promoting local handicrafts and artisan techniques, or skills training and pathways to employment (Khan, 2019; McQuilten, 2017). Despite operating in a highly competitive global industry and within broader patterns of economic downturn and uncertainty, the social enterprise model has been identified as creating meaningful, rewarding and inclusive forms of employment in the fashion industry (McRobbie, 2013).

However, there are also several challenges faced by social enterprises. As these organisations seek to balance cultural, economic, political and artistic goals, they have to “walk a fine line between privileging economic development and collapsing back into the logic of commercial business” (McQuilten, 2017, p. 81). Social enterprises can also be precarious: they face constant struggles in sustainably scaling up operations and engaging with (or existing beyond) market forces. More broadly, social enterprises are susceptible to changes in the political climate, such as the reduction of social welfare programs and outsourcing of government services (McQuilten, 2017).

Whereas social enterprises are largely the purview of small and medium-size businesses, B-Corp certification includes some larger businesses looking to reorient their company away from a purely profit-driven motivation. B-Corp certification is “a designation that a business is meeting high standards of verified performance, accountability, and transparency on factors from employee benefits and charitable giving to supply chain practices and input materials” (B Lab, n.d.). In the absence of broader industry guidelines or standards for environmental and social sustainability, B-Corp certification provides businesses with a way to publicly demonstrate their commitments, and can be an important source of distinction and accountability (Farra, 2021).

Standards a business must meet to receive this certification include: a high social and environmental score on the B-Corp risk review; a legal commitment to change their corporate governance structure so the

business is accountable to all stakeholders (rather than solely to shareholders); and demonstrated transparency through allowing performance indicators and reporting to be publicly available online. Examples of B-Corps in the fashion industry include Patagonia, Eileen Fisher, Veja, Warby Parker and Outland Denim. It is noteworthy that these examples include larger businesses, which is exactly the type of business targeted for B-Corp certification, as it challenges them to reorient their focus away from shareholders towards broader environmental objectives (Wartzman, 2018).

There are a number of potential barriers SMEs face in achieving certification. One is that the process of applying for and maintaining the designation is complex and labour-intensive (Honeyman, 2014). Requirements for certification include developing clear social and environmental goals for the business and meeting the extensive B-Corp certification criteria. If certification is achieved, the articles of incorporation for the business have to be changed (Business Development Bank of Canada, n.d.). These factors mean that SMEs are less likely to be willing and/or able to apply for certification and need to find other methods of demonstrating their social and environmental sustainability credentials to the public.

If not-for-profit and socially sustainable business models were more common in the economy, this need for demonstrating credentials would not be necessary, as these practices would be mainstreamed overall. While B-Corp certification is a legal designation, its standards are not legally enforceable, so there are no real consequences for a business if they fail to meet the goals, apart from losing certification (Farra, 2021).

3.9.3 Cooperatives

The cooperative model has been applied in the fashion industry primarily in the realm of raw material production, and in the garment manufacturing sector in a number of garment-producing countries, including the Philippines (Beerepoot & Hernández-Agramonte, 2009), India (Bhowmik & Sarker, 2002) and Italy (Ceccagno, 2017). Worker-owned cooperatives allow workers to support one another, advocate for living wages and better working conditions, and sustain employment in the face of challenging working conditions and industrial relations (Beerepoot & Hernández-Agramonte, 2009; Bhowmik & Sarker, 2002; Ceccagno, 2017; Young & Cilla, 2015).

3.9.4 Second-hand shopping

As a practice, second-hand shopping can contribute to the principle of living within planetary boundaries by limiting the production and consumption of new garments. In addition to reducing waste, second-hand shopping has the potential to reduce the number of brand-new clothing items being produced, as the mode of consumption shifts towards using already existing items (Machado et al., 2019). It also has the potential to increase clothing utilisation, or the number of times a garment is worn, which decreases the GHG emissions associated with a garment (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017).

In recent years, the popularity of online platforms such as Depop and Facebook Marketplace has increased the volume and availability of second-hand purchasing far beyond older place-specific models of second-hand markets, vintage stores and charity shops (Hu et al., 2019). In addition to facilitating access to second-hand goods, these platforms help to keep garments used locally as opposed to the globalised supply chains of charity shops, which commonly send clothing from Western consumers around the world (ABC News, 2021; Brooks, 2015). This has several consequences, including the growth of garment grading and sorting economies around the world, as well as the creation of a problematic and polluting waste stream.

Ghana is an example of an international hub for second-hand clothing: once unusable items are sorted from those that can be reused, the remainder ends up in landfill or is otherwise inappropriately dumped (ABC News, 2021). Western consumers bear little accountability, responsibility or even awareness of this situation (Dahir, 2020; Wolff, 2021). These issues have only intensified during Covid-19 as lockdown-induced closet cleanouts have increased the volumes of waste sent to charity shops and other second-hand retailers (Brydges et al., 2020; Koncius, 2020).

Second-hand shopping does not challenge modes of overconsumption and fast fashion per se: it is still possible to overconsume and/or quickly dispose of second-hand garments. There is also no guarantee that second-hand clothes will be worn rather than re-sold, donated, recycled or sent to landfill. Despite public perceptions of its rising popularity, consumer research suggests that second-hand fashion continues to be

small in scope, with significant social and cultural norms acting as a barrier to mainstreaming the used clothing movement (Cervellon et al., 2012; Gullstrand Edbring et al., 2016; Lang & Zhang, 2019).

3.9.5 Gaps and future direction

Further research should be done on how social enterprises and B-corporations can be mainstreamed, and what kind of support actors in each of the respective sectors need to achieve their social and economic objectives. There is also a case for stronger support of not-for-profit and cooperative models within the fashion industry, so that they can grow from niche to large-scale.

In the fashion industry, it is often small businesses or ecopreneurs who are at the leading edge of sustainability and slow fashion innovations (Brydges et al., 2014; Brydges, 2018; Leslie et al., 2014). These are business driven by environmental rather than purely economic motivations, and as such are commonly described as being 'born green' (Demirel et al., 2019; O'Neill & Gibbs, 2016; Pacheco et al., 2010). Their activities may contribute to shifts in how we view entrepreneurialism and the economy by demonstrating the viability of the joint pursuit of environmental and business goals (Gibson-Graham, 2006; O'Neill & Gibbs, 2016). Small businesses in general have well-known limitations in developing and implementing innovative products and services, and this would be no different in the pursuit of wellbeing economies. The wider support systems available to small firms should be amplified for wellbeing-focused firms to ensure more of these companies become established in the sector.

Collaborative forms of consumption are gaining momentum, but further considerations are needed of how this model can be combined with sufficiency and supply chain improvements – including social and environmental measures – to support the transition to a wellbeing economy and allow alternative, non-monetary forms of exchange to flourish.



4: Transitioning Beyond Growth

4.1 Models for post-growth and wellbeing in the fashion literature

The environmental and social sustainability challenges facing the industry have led to a growing body of research on sustainable fashion alternatives, including slow, eco, green, fair trade, ethical and, most recently, circular fashion. Sustainable fashion and textiles can be defined as those which “foster ecological integrity, social quality and human flourishing through products, action, relationships and practices of use” (Fletcher, 2013, p.xviii). This definition positions sustainable fashion in relation to living within planetary and economic boundaries and aligns with aspects of the wellbeing economy.

While there is extensive literature examining sustainability in the fashion and textiles sector, there is a smaller body of research that integrates concepts of degrowth, post-growth, planetary boundaries and a wellbeing economy in relation to the fashion industry. Concepts such as slow fashion, sufficiency, ecocentrism, deliberative and participatory decision-making and doughnut economics are all used to explore what a post-growth fashion future might look like.

There is a productive overlap between these literatures in acknowledging that we are witnessing a crisis of overproduction (fuelled by growth-oriented business models) and overconsumption (caused by a culture of trend-driven fashion) (Clark, 2008, 2019; Clarke-Sather & Cobb, 2019; Fletcher, 2010; Stringer et al., 2020). Rather than incremental change, some fashion scholars advocate more radically transforming the growth-oriented fashion industry and developing entirely new, purpose-driven business models that are oriented around environmental and worker wellbeing (Clark, 2008; Fletcher, 2010; Thorpe, 2014).

A key contribution is the Earth Logic framework set out by Fletcher and Tham (2019). Earth Logic proposes six holistic landscapes for the fashion industry to challenge fashion’s growth logic and replace it with an Earth logic that prioritises protecting nature and biodiversity. The framework includes the following recommendations: a reduction in overall growth; developing a more localised approach to producing fashion; developing new fashion hubs; focusing on learning through building knowledge and skills; communicating more clearly about what truly sustainable fashion entails; and seeking governance and fresh ideas for organising the industry. There is an urgency underpinning this framework: the authors call for a reduction in resource use in the fashion industry of 75-95% compared to current levels in order to meet looming climate targets (Fletcher & Tham, 2019).



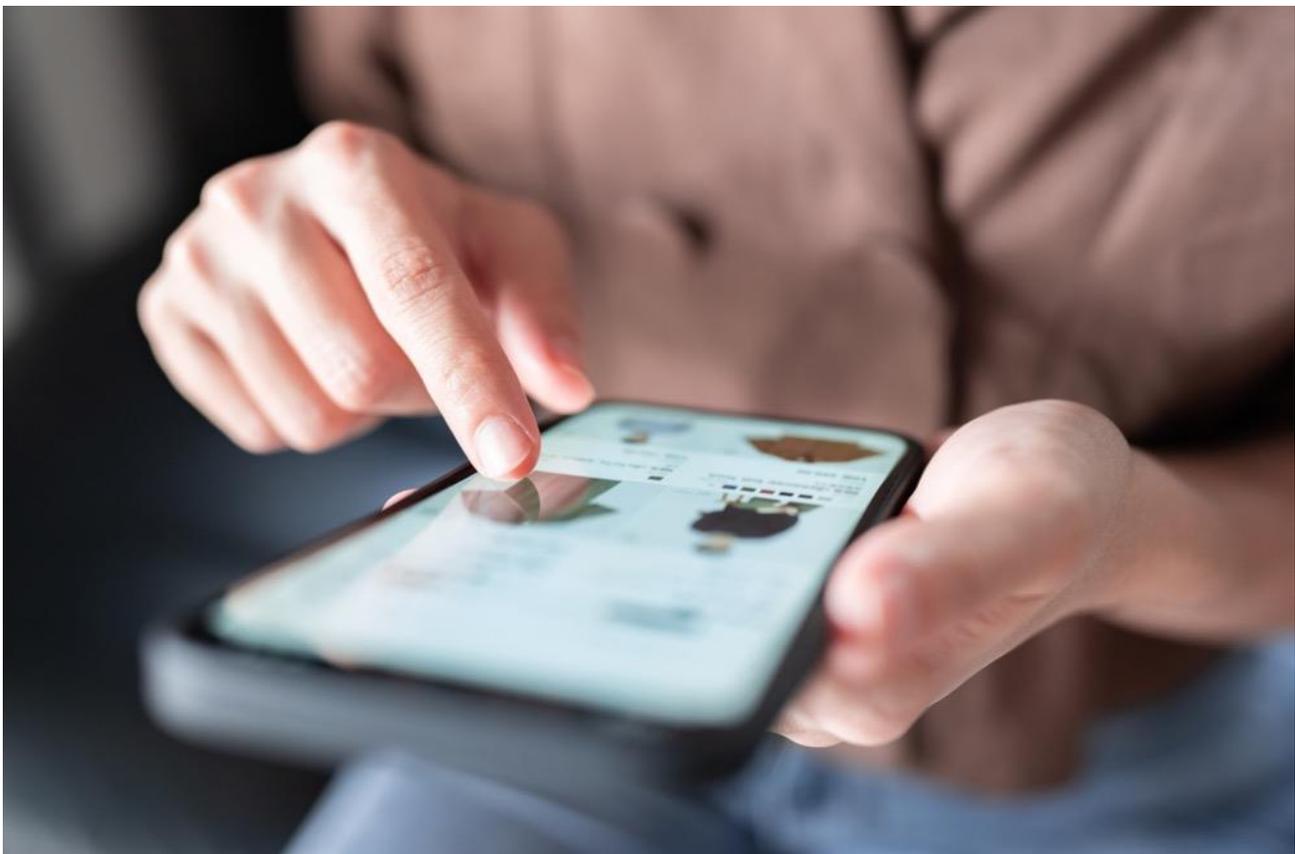
In another example of the application of post-growth concepts to the fashion industry, Clark (2019) utilises Raworth's (2017) doughnut economics framework to envision a fashion system that operates within planetary boundaries. This approach advocates for a transition away from quantitative growth models and a cultural shift in goals and attitudes to slow down the desire for perpetual commercial growth. Clark (2019, pp. 315-316) builds on Raworth's work in the following list of slow fashion principles (Clark's extension of this framework is in parentheses):

- 1) Changing the goal (from growth to dynamic balance);
- 2) Seeing the big picture (of embedded economy and longer-term thinking and planning);
- 3) Nurturing human nature (to become socially adaptable humans);
- 4) Getting savvy with systems (to recognise dynamic complexity);
- 5) Designing (economies) to distribute;
- 6) Creating to regenerate (through a cyclical rather than linear approach);
- 7) Being agnostic about growth (not always seeking more).

Clark (2019) argues these principles provide a roadmap towards an industry where fashion businesses can exist and thrive outside of large fashion brands, and be motivated by several key post-growth objectives including community, quality, circularity and reuse.

Other authors advocate for alternative approaches to the valuation and consumption of fashion, and new cultures of using, making and remaking (Payne, 2019). This includes studies of consumption corridors which aim to determine the minimum and maximum levels of consumption justified by an understanding of planetary boundaries (Vladimirova, 2021), as well as more conceptual work that reimagines our relationship to clothing and waste (Binotto & Payne, 2016; Fletcher, 2010).

An area for further study is how to practically integrate conceptualisations of the wellbeing economy into the fashion industry. With the growing interest in the wellbeing economy, there is a clear opportunity for the fashion industry to mobilise around this concept.



4.2 Visioning the transition

As part of this project, we worked with 50+ stakeholders representing different parts of the global supply chain to start imagining transformative change for the sector. We conducted participatory workshops with different groups of stakeholders, and these were held online in January and February 2022. The wellbeing economy attributes we have already outlined in previous sections of this report were shared with these stakeholders and we then conducted a number of participatory sessions to envisage and map key priorities to enable a transition to a wellbeing economy for the fashion industry.

The first group activity was to envision the transition across different scales. We asked participants to consider near-term, incremental adjustments; experiments (the second horizon); and the future vision for a thriving wellbeing economy for the fashion industry (the third horizon). This framing is explained in further detail in the Annex, while the participants' visual mapping of the three horizons is shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3 Themes/visions generated by workshop participants for a wellbeing economy in the fashion and textile sector

| Themes | Visions |
|---|---|
|  | <p>Creating a wellbeing economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A focus on wellbeing for various stakeholders, including consumers, workers and those dealing with fashion waste at garment end-of-life • Measuring progress in terms of wellbeing in qualitative and quantitative terms • Action from industry and consumers to drive the wellbeing economy, as well as global agreements and collaboration across sectors • Radical reduction in production volumes, zero waste, use of natural fibres, ensuring supply chain transparency and no greenwashing • Dematerialising and dismantling the global fashion system • Restricting advertising • Defining how much clothing an individual can purchase/use/consume to stay within planetary boundaries |
|  | <p>Designing distributive systems for global and intergenerational equity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redistributing benefits to improve livelihoods and cover reparations from high-income to low-income communities in the supply chain • Shift ownership structures and power dynamics by decolonizing and localising fashion governance and empowering suppliers/producers • Policy-based industrial transformation, including extended producer responsibility • Engage with a wide range of stakeholders in the supply chain and in communities • Make sustainable fashion more accessible and affordable |
|  | <p>Participatory and deliberative processes will be needed to inform inclusive transitions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a new narrative for fashion to align with United Nations SDGs • Enabling and nurturing a diversity of clothing cultures • Deliberating and 'staying with' the challenges ahead • Collaboration between civil society and fashion initiatives • Incorporate Indigenous knowledge • Engaging with learning for an Earth Logic and educate across sectors |
|  | <p>New systems and business structures for providing and exchanging goods and services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making new forms of clothing provision the norm, such as fashion libraries, sharing platforms between consumers, second-hand markets, social enterprises, repair shops and makerspaces • Data to confirm which business models and materials offer more sustainable options • Reconfiguring value and distinguishing between different types of value (not just financial), such as social and environmental • Engaging consumers to recognise the value of clothes and regain emotional connection(s) which can support the potential for long-term use |

4.3 Enabling the transition

The second workshop activity asked participants to consider the factors that may enable the transition to a wellbeing economy, the collaborations required, and the roles different stakeholders might play.

Table 4 Stakeholder-identified enablers of change, collaborations and roles for implementing the wellbeing economy in the fashion sector

| Factors | Key points |
|--|---|
| <p>Enablers for change</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data and information are a key enabler for change across a number of initiatives, including: to understand the value of clothing per wear; to measure which business models are more beneficial; to provide information and assistance to small innovators • Transparency in the supply chain for products and with regard to workers: possible mechanisms include product passports and/or converging certifications • Pricing and taxation of resource use, such as less tax on labour and the removal of unnecessary subsidies • Provide incentives for alternative business models and policies to support small, local, less profit-driven organisations • Set mandatory standards, limits on consumption, carbon budgets and ban advertising • Training and financial support for smaller players • Skills and training for workers to adapt to new jobs • Enable a just transition by creating jobs, sustaining people, designing better paid roles • A paradigm shift in materials usage • Disasters as thresholds for change or major economic shifts • Social movements to apply political pressure on government and businesses • Deliberations and citizen assemblies to address exploitation • Consumer buy-in and communities of businesses (innovation ecosystem) • Industry actors willing to collaborate on a different model |
| <p>Collaborations and roles</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions with other sectors to learn about potential changes to tax and regulatory mechanisms, as well as to understand similar challenges • Increased dialogue and public communication from NGOs, civil society, media and research actors to raise awareness of the challenges facing the sector • Include international production partners, trade unions and NGOs in discussions and decision-making • Strengthen community capacity to include voices and perspectives from labour rights and women's rights organisations • Cooperation across government, universities, industries and civil society (the 'quadruple helix') • Collaboration across all radical/alternative fashion organisations to amplify voices and impact • Education/government support for re-skilling workforce from production to reuse, repair, etc. • Partner with mainstream media to demonstrate 'the new normal' of post-growth • Influencers demonstrate practices such as reuse • Workshopping with social enterprises to identify what kind of support they need • Dialogue between producer communities and whole supply chain, policymakers and consumers |

5: The Role of Policy in Creating a Wellbeing Economy

Creating a wellbeing economy relies on the implementation of macro-policy proposals to support the transition away from a focus on economic growth, while also enabling the better redistribution of resources and introduction of ecologically regenerative practices. Key proponents of the wellbeing economy recommend a multi-level agenda of reforms targeting business practices, the fiscal system and social practices, and have several suggestions for new macroeconomic indicators and incentives (Fioramonti et al., 2019). The policy reforms proposed include:

- Transforming national economic accounting systems by including multi-dimensional indicators of wellbeing
- Offering tax rebates to wellbeing-oriented businesses to reward corporations that meet social and environmental goals
- Implementing universal basic income and universal basic services to meet human needs for income and basic services, including health, social services, education, housing, childcare, transport and digital access (Akenji et al., 2021)
- Transforming tax systems by reducing or eliminating tax on 'flows' such as labour, and instead focus on taxing environmental harms and existing stocks of wealth and land. This would result in payment of ecosystem services, and would also seek to support smallholder farmers, community care and household-based activities
- Reforming labour laws and expectations, including a shorter working week, decent wages, longer parental leave, working from home and improved work-life balance (Fioramonti et al., 2022)
- Supporting sustainable consumption alternatives, such as eliminating harmful options through 'choice editing,' setting limits for environmentally harmful consumption, considering 'carbon rationing,' and using a sufficiency approach to policy design focusing on needs provisioning (rather than an incremental technology-oriented approach)



The scale and breadth of these proposals highlights the transformation required to achieve a wellbeing economy. Critiques of post-growth thinking have highlighted the lack of clarity around policy proposals to support a post-growth economy, as well as a lack of focus on environmental sustainability in comparison to social sustainability goals. Other critiques cite either the heavily top-down implementation requirements of the policy agenda (even though academic discourses often push for voluntary, community-oriented transformation); or the inability to adequately scale most examples of implemented post-growth initiatives

because they are seen as too localised. There has also been a lack of consideration of the implications for developing countries (Cosme et al., 2017; Khmara & Kronenberg, 2020).

While many of these macro-level policy proposals will be important in operationalising the wellbeing economy within the fashion, textile and garment industry, there is also a specific agenda of policies that would need to be pursued within the sector itself.

5.1 EU policy context focused on optimising rather than changing the fashion sector model

In Europe, policy frameworks already exist for combined actions towards trade, labour and regulation. The declared intention of the EU Strategy for Sustainable Textiles is part of a broader policy commitment to support the transition to a climate-neutral circular economy. In the context of industrial recovery from the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the Strategy is guided by the following goals:

- increase competitiveness;
- applying circular economy principles to production, products, consumption, waste management and secondary raw materials;
- directing investment, research and innovation.

The Strategy builds on broader European Union policy, including the European Green Deal, the Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP) and the Industrial Strategy, all of which identify textiles as a priority sector. This is in the broader context of a number of reports exploring the impact of the pandemic on the EU economy, including the textile sector, such as the Commission Staff Working Document *Identifying Europe's Recovery Needs* and the Communication *Europe's moment: Repair and Prepare for the Next Generation*.

To date, discussion on the emerging policy framework for supporting sustainable textiles and garments in Europe tends to focus on optimising and increasing efficiency in the existing patterns of the supply chain, including a focus on increased design for circularity (primarily through encouraging recycling and using recycled materials).

There is opportunity to extend the ambition of the measures so they start to support the emergence of a wellbeing economy approach. We have summarised current and emerging fashion and textile sector-specific EU policies in Table 5 below.

Table 5 Summary of key EU textile and garment industry policies, regulations or strategies

| Policy, Regulation or Strategy | Overview (Note: for accuracy, the following is the language of the relevant policy) |
|---|--|
| Strategy for Textiles (Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs) Proposal forthcoming: 30 March 2022 | <p>Will apply the new sustainable product framework, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing ecodesign measures to ensure that textile products are fit for circularity • ensuring the uptake of secondary raw materials • tackling the presence of hazardous chemicals • empowering business and private consumers to choose sustainable textiles and have easy access to reuse and repair services <p>The strategy will also provide incentives and support to: product-as-service models, circular materials and production processes, and international cooperation for increased transparency as part of an objective to support a better business and regulatory environment for sustainable and circular textiles in the EU.</p> <p>The strategy will also provide guidance for separate textile waste collection as part of the goal for EU countries to achieve high levels of separate textile waste collection by 2025. It will also boost textile sorting, re-use and recycling through innovation and other means, encouraging industrial applications and regulatory measures such as extended producer responsibility.</p> |
| Sustainable Product Policy and Ecodesign (Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and | <p>New legal framework to bring all products produced or sold in the EU in line with technical standards for sustainability.</p> <p>The legal framework relies on the following:</p> |

| Policy, Regulation or Strategy | Overview <i>(Note: for accuracy, the following is the language of the relevant policy)</i> |
|---|--|
| SMEs) Proposal forthcoming: 30 March 2022 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Ecodesign Directive which provides consistent EU-wide rules for improving the environmental performance of products and minimum mandatory requirements for the energy efficiency of these products 2. The Energy Labelling Regulation which may complement those ecodesign requirements with mandatory labelling requirements. |
| Textile Regulation (EU) No 1007/2011 | According to the Regulation, textile products must be labelled or marked whenever they are available on the market. The indication of the fibre composition of a product is mandatory at all stages of the industrial processing and commercial distribution of that product. |
| REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals) | <p>Regulation to improve the protection of human health and the environment from the risks that can be posed by chemicals, while enhancing the competitiveness of the EU chemicals industry.</p> <p>REACH lab testing is recommended (but not mandatory) under EU textile regulation to verify compliance and avoid fines/recalls for non-compliance.</p> |
| General Product Safety Directive | <p>Applies to consumer products when there are no specific provisions with the same objective in the rules of EU Law governing the safety of the products concerned (and thus applies to textiles).</p> <p>Note: The GPSD led to the update of EU Standards for Safety of Children's Clothing which will be used as a means of reference to assess the compliance of children's garments against this directive. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEN/TS 17394-1: 2021 Textiles and textile products – Part 1: Safety of children's clothing – Security of attachment of attached components to infants' clothing – Specification, • EN 17394-2:2020 Textiles and textile products – Part 2: Safety of children's clothing – Security of attachment of buttons – Test Method, • CEN/TS 17394-3:2021 Textiles and textile products – Part 3: Safety of children's clothing – Secure attachment of metal, mechanically applied press fasteners – Test method, • CEN/TS 17394-4:2021 Textiles and textile products – Part 4: Safety of children's clothing – Secure attachment of components other than buttons and metal, mechanically applied press fasteners – Test method. |
| Legislation for the organics sector | Of particular relevance is Regulation (EU) 2018/848 for the production and labelling of organic products, which provides the basis for the sustainable development of organic production while ensuring the effective functioning of the internal market, guaranteeing fair competition, ensuring consumer confidence and protecting consumer interests. |

These policy approaches could be further strengthened with:

- more stringent regulations both on fashion and textile products produced within and imported into the EU regarding transparency of materials and production conditions (both environmental and social);
- increasing seed and start-up support and funding to sustainable businesses and not-for-profits to increase their scale and potential to disrupt the fast fashion incumbents;
- more regulatory intervention on fast fashion firms headquartered within the EU, including starting discussions on limits and production volume caps, transparency of materials, payments of wages for workers, and responsibility for environmental damage in the production of inputs in their supply chains;
- more stringent requirements for provision of data, including discussions on adequate indicators and metrics, and the public reporting of performance on wellbeing factors.

These all represent further steps that can be taken – from a regulatory and government perspective – to strengthen existing efforts that are heading in the right direction, but require a different vision and tooling-up of regulatory and overseeing powers and capabilities to be implemented effectively. We see such efforts within the rubric of transformational change.

5.2 Policy opportunities for creating a wellbeing economy in the fashion sector

While the current policy framework has some elements of alignment with the requirements of wellbeing economy, there is significant scope for EU policy to lead the way in encouraging a wellbeing approach for the sector. There is a strong role for policy in supporting wellbeing economy through measures including: starting the discussion on limits and thresholds to bring production and consumption to sustainable levels; convening and supporting stakeholders to work out pathways to equitably enact these reductions; support for the development of participatory and redistributive processes and mechanisms at local, national and international levels; and adequate support to encourage the evolution of business and work. These policies need to be considered and developed in relationship to each other – as a roadmap for coordinated action, rather than in isolation.

In this report, we imagine a wellbeing economy approach to the fashion and textile sector – an approach that brings the sector back into alignment with planetary boundaries and focuses on the wellbeing of the people who both work and depend on the sector. Policy to implement the wellbeing economy will need to include all aspects of the economy and society, although here we are continuing the focus on the fashion, textile, and garment sector, we highlight these policy opportunities in the context of also needing this economy-wide focus.

Our work with stakeholders over the course of this project has highlighted priority actions for change and then linked these actions to policy opportunities. These policy opportunities are interdependent in that they would require implementation in all or most areas in order to enable change. We have highlighted where opportunities exist to build from existing policy frameworks and extend these frameworks in a way that can further and quickly increase sustainability in the sector. Table 6 (below) provides a summary of these opportunities and matches them to wellbeing economy attributes that we established earlier in this report.

These policy opportunities help craft and shape a wellbeing economy for the fashion and textile sector, and include: increasing the ambition of extended producer responsibilities to include design for durability and repair; and transparency and quality in production conditions and material composition, and starting to conceptualise and build awareness in the sector of setting clothing and textile limits at individual, sector, national and global levels. Policy that targets reducing clothing volumes needs in turn to support redistributive and just transition policies. Here we can see opportunities in convening and supporting cross-sector dialogues that inform and deliberate on the dimensions of limits and thresholds and set priorities for redistribution and global equality across the global supply chain (especially wellbeing for all textile and garment workers).

Further policy opportunities exist in better understanding the drivers of current production and consumption trends in the sector and investigating how these could be disrupted and/or mitigated – including how e-commerce platforms and markets are driving consumption, and how trade agreements can drive unfair trade practices.

Table 6 Summary of policy recommendations from stakeholder consultations and analysis

| Attribute | Policy opportunities |
|---|--|
| <p data-bbox="167 1765 311 1825">Establishing limits</p>  | <p data-bbox="367 1765 1452 1960">The research shows that we need to reduce the amounts of textiles and clothing that we produce and consume. For the garments we continue to make and use, these need to be of higher quality, be used and cared for longer, and have multiple lifecycles (either with us or through second-hand markets and other forms of exchange). We also need to better understand what drives over-consumption and over-production and how these drivers can be re-oriented within a wellbeing approach.</p> <p data-bbox="367 1966 925 1993"><i>Recommendations within existing policy frameworks</i></p> <ul data-bbox="367 2004 1348 2056" style="list-style-type: none"> • Within existing policy frameworks, we need a comprehensive strategy of eco-design requirements, labelling and extended producer responsibility (EPR) schemes that make |

| Attribute | Policy opportunities |
|--|---|
| | <p>sustainable clothing and textiles the norm. These strategies must take every opportunity to achieve quality and durability in the clothing, with pressure to eliminate over-production and consumption, and reward re-circulation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanding EPR schemes to encourage increased focus on quality and reduced volumes. For example, EPR fees could be increased when certain volume thresholds are reached, so as to encourage brands to supply high quality and lower volumes of clothing into the market. Broadening circular economy policy and incentives away from just addressing waste and recycling to support strategies that truly embrace circularity across the product lifecycle. This can include: levies for virgin fibre use, increasing the re-use and repair economy through investigating tax incentives, rebates, and other forms of support for consumers and businesses providing repair, reuse and second-hand sales services, and options for mandating fashion brands to provide these services for their customers. Ban the export of textile waste as well as the destruction of unsold or excess clothing and textile goods. Provide support for public awareness-raising campaigns that emphasise less consumption. Provide support for training people in sustainable fashion practices, such as care, repair and reuse of garments and textiles. Set a clear legislative framework for the claims that can be made about products in advertising to combat 'greenwashing'. <p><i>Policy for more transformative change</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop methods for establishing clothing, resource, and pollution budgets or limits. There is the opportunity to learn from other sectors such as carbon budgets and fishing quotas systems. These budgets will need to be developed with clear linkages to planetary boundaries and other existing climate and sustainability policies, and dialogue would need to inform at what level, scale, and form these budgets could be considered and applied. Options for application could be based on resource-use reduction targets or consumption-based emissions targets, or a combination of both. Targets would start as voluntary to build capacity and awareness for change, but also have clearly established pathways and timelines to mandatory application. Quantify the role, and understand the drivers of e-commerce platforms/markets and targeted advertising on social media platforms in driving clothing consumption and investigate regulatory options to limit provide more opportunity to consumer to limit their exposure to this form of advertising. |
| <p>Promote fairness</p>  | <p>We need to develop equitable wealth and resource distribution systems to ensure global and intergenerational fairness.</p> <p><i>Recommendations within existing policy frameworks</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use Due Diligence requirements and standards in EU Trade Agreements to eliminate hazardous and toxic chemical use, regulate the use of other chemicals and materials, and to obligate brands, and buyers to ensure safe and just working conditions (including living wages) throughout their whole supply chain. Revise the EU Public Procurement Directives to include social and environmental criteria and to mandate that public entities choose the most sustainable options in their procurement, instead of the cheapest option. Enforce value chain accountability through robust Due Diligence regulations with specific provisions for the fashion and textile sector, and enable full supply chain transparency through public disclosure of all facilities across value chains. Develop and use wellbeing indicators in the fashion and textile sector that focus on health, social and environment indicators, rather than only financial and income measures. Support a range of businesses, public authorities, and other industry stakeholders to collect data and report against these indicators to use this information in their decision-making. <p><i>Policy for more transformative change</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As regulating purchasing practices is key to improving labour rights, in this respect, legislation on Unfair Trading Practices in the fashion and textile sector is vital to address the negotiation of disproportionately low buying prices, short lead times, and unauthorised subcontracting. |

| Attribute | Policy opportunities |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold stakeholder assemblies to create an agenda and strategy for transitioning to wellbeing economies for the fashion and textile sector. This would bring together all stakeholders across the globe with an agenda for a global living wage and coordinate multilateral organisations and national and international institutions in addressing several key sustainable trade practices including trade volumes, material and chemical composition, traceability, and transparency. • Investment in the transition to wellbeing economies would also be needed to identify and implement redistributive measures that support a just transition and establishment of wellbeing economies for workers throughout the supply chain. There is also a need for investments that regenerate environments from the impacts of the fashion and textile sector, such as water pollution. |
| <p data-bbox="164 539 335 629">Create healthy and just governance</p>  | <p data-bbox="360 539 1444 629">This requires robust participatory and deliberative processes that emphasise inclusivity, open dialogue, and diversity to create lasting change. Good governance encourages capacity-building and stakeholder engagement across every level of the fashion industry.</p> <p data-bbox="360 645 925 674"><i>Recommendations within existing policy frameworks</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch EU and national citizen assemblies on wellbeing indicators for our economy and create balanced multi-stakeholders' deliberative processes accompanying EU and national authorities. <p data-bbox="360 757 774 786"><i>Policy for more transformative change</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create safe spaces and clear, deliberative processes for planning a wellbeing economy at the global level. This includes ensuring a wide range of stakeholders can participate, paying attention to enabling engagement from underrepresented stakeholders. • Support local and global social movements that champion deliberative processes for the wellbeing economy and use these processes to inform and scrutinise public policy. There is also a need to investigate best practice in the formation of inclusive multi-stakeholder dialogues in terms of composition, capacity, issues mapping and adequate and effective decision-making processes. • Create transformational education and learning systems for wellbeing economies generally, and then specifically for the fashion and textile sector. These systems can then be used to change the culture and narrative around fashion, such as supporting decreased production/ consumption of clothing, increased quality of work, capacity and participation in deliberative processes, and knowledge and awareness of new business models. • Ensure participation in multi-stakeholder initiatives does not provide companies with a 'safe harbour' from any legal liability for their actions. |
| <p data-bbox="164 1308 327 1397">Embrace new exchange systems</p>  | <p data-bbox="360 1308 1412 1368">Innovative exchange models can ensure the fashion industry still thrives while still meeting human and environmental wellbeing needs.</p> <p data-bbox="360 1384 925 1413"><i>Recommendations within existing policy frameworks</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a broad range of policy support for sustainable and less profit-driven activities in the fashion and textile sector. This could include resources for not-for-profit business structures, regulations ensuring 'easy-start' not-for-profit businesses, tax incentives and other support such as access to seed funding, incubator support, legal and other business services. • Increased support and focus (including financial support) for sustainable fashion practice that does not involve market exchange including design and repair cafes, clothing swaps – this could include developing case studies and how-to guides of non-market exchange fashion practices, start-up and seed funding to assist early activities, and support for awareness-raising with the community. This could be aligned with the EU social economy strategy. <p data-bbox="360 1720 774 1749"><i>Policy for more transformative change</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to legal and regulatory frameworks that encourage/prefer not-for-profit business structures and provide obligations on businesses to ensure environmental and social value creation. This could include public procurement guidance to integrate not-for-profit, social economy partners in all bids. • Enhanced support for new sustainable fashion and other non-market exchange fashion practices including facilitating the availability of physical space (e.g., within existing city centres and shopping centres) and accessibility (for example subsidising access for all members of the community) to design and repair services, clothing swaps, and supporting wide access to training and skills for clothing repair and re-design. |

6: Summary

The fashion and textile sector – which currently reflects the dominant economic paradigm of continuous GDP growth and material accumulation – is not working in the interests of the common good. The sector is one of the largest and most globalised industrial sectors in the world and is also one of the most unsustainable, based on both environmental and social metrics. While there have been many fashion sustainability initiatives and campaigns in the past decades, the situation is not improving: the gap between sector growth and sustainability performance is increasing.

The sector urgently needs new ideas, operating models and procedures, as well as an entirely new economic philosophy. The aim of our project has been to start envisaging a new post-growth direction for the fashion and textile sector. We've called this vision the Wellbeing Wardrobe: imagining and designing a future sector that operates within planetary boundaries and ensures livelihoods and dignity for all those who make and wear clothing.

In this report, we set out to:

- Identify how the post-growth and wellbeing economy literature could be applied to the fashion and textiles industry;
- Explore how to redefine the fashion business model to a growth-independent fashion, textile and garment industry that operates within a wider wellbeing economy;
- Carry out stakeholder engagement to identify policy recommendations and potential indicators to support this transformation.

We drew together two distinct bodies of knowledge – the post-growth and wellbeing economy literature, and the fashion sustainability literature – to find intersections and common ground but also to highlight gaps where policymakers could usefully develop innovative ways of thinking about how we make, use and wear clothes, and help producers and consumers acknowledge the impacts of fast fashion and throwaway garment culture.

Our project advisory board (please see members listed in the Annex) generously contributed time and expertise in shaping our work. We also benefited from the insights of a broad range of stakeholders – industry members, academics, NGOs, workers organisations and policy experts – who contributed to our project workshop.

The various growth-alternative models and theories we investigated included degrowth, post-growth, steady state economics and the wellbeing economy. We grouped these concepts under one umbrella term of the wellbeing economy, as they share the same vision and make similar recommendations, such as:

- Reducing the environmental impact of human activities, through practices such as reduced material and energy consumption, and more localised economies;
- Supporting income distribution both within countries but also globally, through practices such as redistributive income, universal basic income, non-monetary exchange systems and new modes of ownership;
- Transitioning from material consumption-based societies to participatory and community-oriented ways of living, through practices such as shorter work weeks, limits to advertising, and new ways of recognising unpaid and/or informal labour.

The wellbeing economy offers opportunities to address the global inequalities in wealth and quality of life that are so much a feature of the fashion, textile and garment supply chain. The wellbeing economy will look very different in the Global North and South. In the North, the focus is on post-growth or post-materialism, while in the South the focus is on post-development (which means no longer equating development with growth, and rejecting the idea that the South needs to catch up to – or mimic – the North's overconsumption habits).

This difference in perspective and the broader ecological and social debt that has resulted from rapid development of the sector can be addressed through social and environmental justice processes (such as providing reparations and opportunities for rehabilitation). These processes will require fundamental reform

to our global institutions of economic governance. We must establish some form of collective governance of global society's resources and wealth, and welcome a diverse range of actors and institutions as participants in shaping this transition.

A wellbeing economy requires dialogue between policymakers and political and community leaders, a clearly articulated role for business, and incentives for rejecting growth and profit as the only legitimate goal of economic activity.

Our synthesis of the literature on the wellbeing economy found the following common attributes:

- **Limits:** Creating a wellbeing economy involves establishing limits and learning to live within them. These boundaries will have different dimensions across the Global North and the Global South, and will necessitate new indicators of human and ecological wellbeing to guide progress.
- **Fairness:** We will need to design distributive systems to ensure global and intergenerational equality, and to redistribute global resources and wealth more fairly in diverse contexts.
- **Just governance:** The transition to a wellbeing economy will involve system-level changes in many domains. Managing these transitions will require sophisticated and robust participatory approaches, as well as a focus on learning and capacity-building to ensure participants can meaningfully contribute. Public dialogue and social movements can help to establish momentum for change.
- **New exchange systems:** We need creative models for exchanging goods and services in ways that generate conviviality and reciprocity, provide dignified and meaningful work, and are environmentally regenerative.

We used this framework to assess current sustainability practices in the fashion and textile sector. Our assessment showed virtually no current focus on *limiting* fashion consumption, nor any significant initiatives designed to encourage living within planetary boundaries. Existing sustainable consumption and production practices are largely niche and will not deliver a sustainable and just transformation of the sector.

With the help of our advisory panel, we designed a series of stakeholder workshops and asked participants to envision activities and outcomes that could transform the fashion industry into a growth-independent wellbeing economy. Tables 3 & 4 and Figures 1 & 2 summarise these extensive discussions.

We built on these stakeholder inputs to identify actions and opportunities within the current EU policy context. In Europe, policy frameworks addressing the sustainability of the textile and garment industry already exist. However, a much broader international approach will be required, including formal and binding agreements, if real change is going to occur within the timescales necessary to address the scope of the challenges facing the industry.



Current policy developments for supporting sustainable textiles and garments in Europe are mostly focused on optimising and increasing efficiency within the *existing* business model (for instance, through increased design for circularity, recycling and/or using recycled materials). As such, this policy framework does not yet meaningfully engage with the requirements of the wellbeing economy, but there are opportunities to do this through:

- more stringent regulations both on fashion and textile products produced within the EU and imported from outside;
- increasing seed and start-up funding to sustainable businesses and not-for-profits to increase their scale and potential to disrupt the fast fashion incumbents;
- more regulatory intervention directed at fast fashion firms headquartered in Europe;
- more stringent requirements for provision of data and reporting of sustainability factors.

Policy plays a strong role in supporting the wellbeing economy, through the implementation of limits and thresholds that reduce production and consumption, support for participatory and redistributive processes and mechanisms at local, national and international levels, and encouraging public debate about the evolution of ideas about business and work. These policies must be developed as a comprehensive agenda, rather than in isolation.

Our work with stakeholders over the course of this project has highlighted priority areas for change and policy opportunities that we can take up now, and others that represent transformational change and that will require support and momentum from a broad range of the sector and community to be pursued. In many cases these areas are inter-dependent in that they would require implementation in all or most areas to enable change.

The move away from growth economies to a wellbeing economy will involve multiple pathways, levels and contexts. It is with this understanding that we make the policy recommendations in this report, including opportunities and actions that can be undertaken now to accelerate the transition beyond growth, and others that will need further work, momentum, and commitment from stakeholders.



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Annexes

Literature Review

In undertaking this review, our methodology included keyword searches for academic articles and books with the following terms: “degrowth” (or “planetary boundaries” or “doughnut economy” or “post-growth” or “steady state” or “wellbeing economy”) + policy. The second search included the previous terms with the addition of “fashion” (or “textile” or “apparel”). This search produced over 100 results. This was supplemented by a grey literature search using these previously mentioned terms, as well as a review of key research articles pertaining to the (broadly defined) field of sustainable fashion.

The next step in our rapid review methodology was to seek input from our project advisory panel. The advisory panel includes experts on post-growth and wellbeing economics (non-fashion), as well as experts and practitioners in environmental and social sustainability in the global textile and garment sector and the EU policy context. This group discussed and further refined the key concepts to be explored in this review. The themes and questions that emerged from these discussions include:

- What practices in the present can already contribute to the future we want? How are these linked to meta-trends?
- How do we redefine or reframe fashion, consumption and newness?
- How do we define wellbeing in the context of the fashion, garment and textile sector?
- How do we measure progress towards a post-growth/wellbeing-oriented sector?
- How do we enable decent work, equity, reduce exploitation, and give everyone a voice?
- For business models: what kind of value is created? How do we shift away from the profit motive? What is the role for different enterprise structures (such as not-for-profit businesses or social enterprises)?
- How do we transition from and manage/disrupt the existing situation/sector?
- What are the roles for various stakeholders and various activities in the fashion sector?
- What interventions are needed? How are industry and public policy interventions different?

These questions provided additional direction and focus for this review.

Stakeholder workshop

Approximately 50 stakeholders were invited to participate in the workshop. The list of potential participants was initially brainstormed in a meeting with the project advisory panel, with respect to three broad sectors/topics: 1) post-growth and wellbeing economics; 2) fashion, textile and garment sector; 3) policy and supply chain governance. The strategy was to find a balance across these stakeholder groups, which collectively represent the future vision, the sector itself, and the governance of the sector. This process created a longlist of around 70 potential organisations. The project team, with the EEB, then refined this list by removing duplication of similar organisations, with the aim of achieving a representative spread across the three broad sectors.

Working with stakeholders

To help stakeholders engage with the concepts of transformative change, the Three Horizons framework is a useful visual tool to support dialogue about the future – particularly where there is a high degree of uncertainty and complexity.

It essentially consists of three curves on a chart, where time is on the horizontal axis and the prevalence of activities is represented by the vertical axis (see Figure 2). The curve on the top left-hand side is the first horizon and represents the current way of doing things, which is supported by existing systems and patterns. The second horizon in the middle represents incremental change and innovations that are currently being tested, and it creates disruptions that can enable change towards the third horizon. The third horizon, on the top right-hand side, represents the future transformation we are striving for, which will ultimately replace the current first horizon.

As can be seen from the overlapping curves, there are elements of the third horizon already appearing in niches or pockets of the present day, and those activities become more prevalent over time. Equally, there are elements of the first horizon that are maintained in the third horizon (Sharpe et al., 2016).

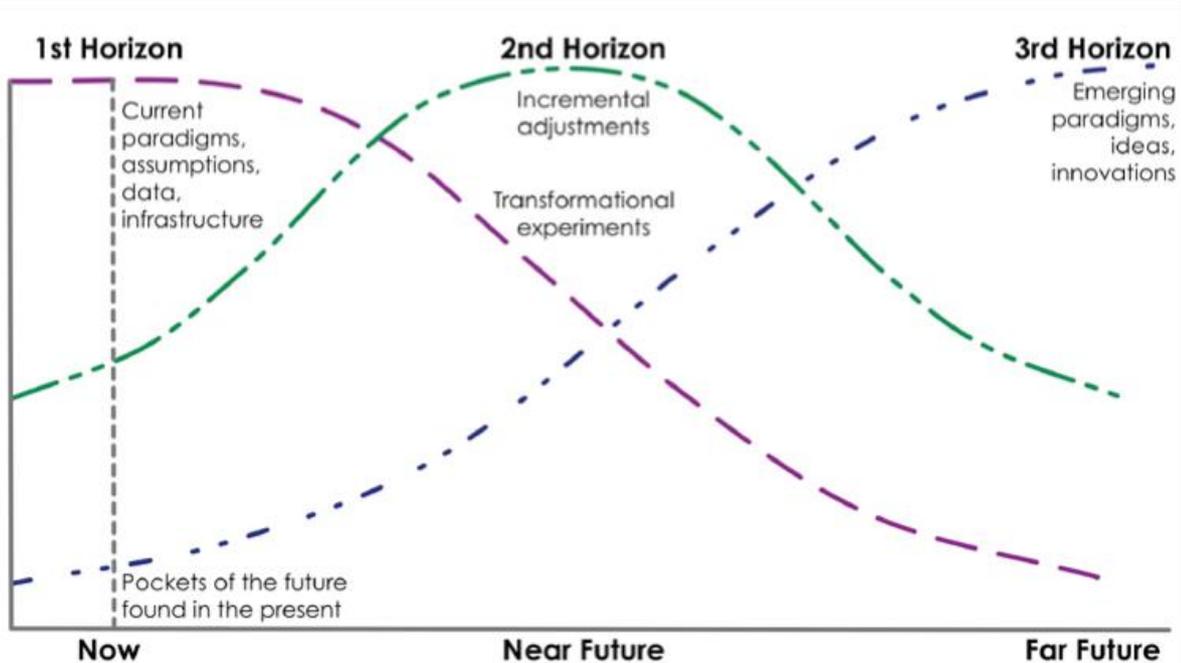


Figure 2: The Three Horizons Framework (International Training Centre, n.d.)

Using the Three Horizons tool can be useful to facilitate discussion between participants with diverse perspectives and values, and can provide space for creativity and imagination (Sharpe et al., 2016). We propose to continue to use this framework to engage stakeholders with the concepts of a wellbeing-oriented fashion sector and how we might facilitate that transition.

Members of Advisory Panel

Professor Kate Fletcher - Professor of Sustainability, Design, Fashion at the Centre for Sustainable Fashion, University of the Arts London, and Research Professor at the Royal Danish Academy in Copenhagen, Denmark. Kate combines design and holistic systems thinking to make and act upon change. Kate is the most cited scholar in fashion and sustainability and her work, like that on post-growth fashion and fashion localism, both defines and challenges the field. She has written and/or edited nine books translated into seven languages. Her latest work is about design, nature, and clothing.

Dr Jennifer Hinton - Researcher at Stockholm University (Department of Economic History and International Relations) and Senior Research Fellow at the Schumacher Institute. Jen is an expert on business frameworks for sustainability and utilising holistic approaches, systems analysis and systems thinking to address the role of business, markets, and profit in a sustainable post-growth economy.

Mr Edward Langham - Research Director at ISF-UTS. Ed is a sustainability researcher working on post-growth economic transition in the energy sector, including business model development and decentralised energy business model innovation.

Ms Aileen McLeod is a Director on the board of the Future Economy Company, a social enterprise based in Scotland that supports micro-enterprises, entrepreneurial capacity and creativity and enables them to realise diverse opportunities locally, nationally and internationally. It is a purpose driven business creating social impact that enables change, thus transforming employment, communities, and our economy. She is also a Senior Adviser on the Wellbeing Economy. Previously Aileen was a Member of the European Parliament (MEP) representing Scotland, Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP) and a Minister in the Scottish Government for the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform.

Associate Professor Timo Rissanen - School of Design at University of Technology Sydney. Timo is a fashion and textiles researcher at UTS with an interest in the interconnection between sustainability and social justice as they relate to the contemporary fashion industry. Timo's practice-based research includes work with the soil-to-soil fibre systems and Earth Logic research framework, as well as in the development of systems-level solutions to solving the challenges of fashion manufacturing waste.

Professor Mathilda Tham - Professor in Design at Linnaeus University, Sweden. Mathilda's work sits in a positive, creative, and activist space between design, futures studies and sustainability. Originally a fashion designer, today Mathilda's work is concerned with the design of futures scenarios for new ways of engaging with fashion, the design of processes of change and shared learning experiences, and the design of new research methods.

Dr Xubiao Zhang - Environment and Decent Work Specialist with the International Labour Organisation. Dr Zhang has worked on sustainable employment development in the textile and garment sector in Asia.

