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**THE PHENOMENON OF ENVIRONMENTAL
JUSTICE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA WITHIN THE
TEXTILE AND APPAREL INDUSTRY**

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ABSTRACT

L'obiettivo di questa tesi è quello di analizzare la stretta correlazione tra lo sviluppo industriale del settore tessile e dell'abbigliamento nel Sud-est asiatico e il conseguente aumento del fenomeno dell'Environmental Justice (giustizia ambientale) in questa stessa area considerata un territorio in via di sviluppo; andando a definire quali sono le implicazioni politiche derivanti da questo fenomeno e indagando in che modo esso può influenzare le relazioni internazionali e le relative politiche future in ambito di giustizia ambientale e sociale.

Quando ho scelto di approfondire il tema dell'environmental justice mi sono quindi chiesta quali fossero i territori nel mondo più soggetti a questo fenomeno, e quali potevano essere i relativi settori economici che più influivano sulla presenza o l'aumento di proteste legate alla giustizia ambientale nelle aree interessate. Ciò che ho realizzato è che, nonostante il fenomeno dell'environmental justice nacque e si diffuse inizialmente e principalmente negli Stati Uniti, molte comunità nel mondo, per diverse ragioni e a diversi livelli, sono state in qualche modo coinvolte in situazioni dove la loro salute e sicurezza, il loro lavoro e la loro stabilità sono stati messi a rischio da disastri ambientali spesso causati o intensificati da decisioni economiche o politiche. Tra questi territori, i più colpiti sono sicuramente i paesi in via di sviluppo. Questi ultimi sono infatti in generale particolarmente esposti al cambiamento climatico e ai suoi effetti. Inoltre, a causa della povertà più diffusa e della possibile presenza di una scarsa governance, spesso accade che non hanno risorse per combattere questi fenomeni. Quindi, la scelta di focalizzare la mia analisi sui paesi in via di sviluppo e principalmente sul Sud-est asiatico è stata guidata da due ragioni principali che motivano perché quest'area geografica è particolarmente centrale nello studio del dibattito sulla giustizia ambientale: una ragione climatica e una ragione economica.

Per quanto riguarda la prima ragione, è già stato sottolineato come i paesi in via di sviluppo sono più esposti alle insidie climatiche rispetto ai paesi sviluppati. Più nello specifico, come dichiarato dalla Asian Development Bank, "il cambiamento climatico riguarderà tutto il mondo ma i paesi in via di sviluppo saranno colpiti più duramente, più velocemente e avranno meno mezzi per rispondere"¹. Una controprova di questa dichiarazione, la si può trovare nel libro "Natura, Turismo, Etnia come driver per la (de)marginalizzazione" in cui l'autore Stanko Pelc afferma che "tra il 1991 e il 2005, quasi il 90% delle morti causate da disastri ambientali così come il 98% delle persone affette si trova nei paesi in via di sviluppo. Questi ultimi sono più vulnerabili ai disastri perché la popolazione vive in aree ad alto rischio, le abitazioni mancano di infrastrutture adeguate e possono quindi facilmente venire distrutte nel caso in cui si presenti un disastro naturale. Inoltre, questi stati non sono

equipaggiati con sistemi di allerta preventiva, e dispongono di poche risorse e sistemi per la sicurezza che possono far fronte a questi disastri”². Secondo il Climate Change Index pubblicato dall’organizzazione ambientalista Germanwatch nel 2021, “otto su dieci stati tra i più affetti dagli impatti di disastri ambientali estremi nel 2019 fanno parte di paesi sotto sviluppati”³.

La seconda ragione che spiega perchè il Sud-est asiatico può essere studiato come un esempio rilevante di environmental injustice è quella economica. L’industria che ho scelto di approfondire per analizzare il dibattito sulla giustizia ambientale in questo territorio è quella del tessile e dell’abbigliamento, considerata un’industria di lancio per l’economia nei paesi in via di sviluppo per il fatto che è facilmente accessibile anche ad una forza lavoro poco qualificata. A questo riguardo, negli ultimi decenni il Sud-est asiatico è stato sottoposto a un rapido sviluppo economico in diverse aree industriali e in particolare nell’area del tessile e dell’abbigliamento che oggi rappresenta il 50% del totale degli export manifatturieri. Questo sviluppo economico, particolarmente favorito dal fenomeno del fast fashion e della delocalizzazione delle industrie occidentali nei paesi in via di sviluppo, ha creato uno stato di dipendenza dal mondo occidentale e una incapacità di stare al passo con le misure ambientali necessarie per garantire il rispetto degli standard promossi dall’environmental justice stessa.

Ciò che lega l’industria del tessile e dell’abbigliamento al fenomeno della giustizia ambientale è il fatto che, non solo questa industria è tra i settori che stanno contribuendo maggiormente all’aumento e al peggioramento dei disastri ambientali, ma allo stesso tempo essa è anche al centro di scandali legati agli ingiusti trattamenti riservati alla sua forza lavoro. La gestione non etica dei lavoratori non riguarda solo l’eccessivo monte ore di lavoro giornaliero piuttosto che il lavoro minorile, ma riguarda anche l’esposizione pericolosa a rischi ambientali causati ad esempio dalle modalità di produzione che non assicurano standard di salute e sicurezza idonei. Inoltre, ciò che rende quest’industria particolarmente adatta alla mia analisi è che essa può essere definita come la perfetta rappresentazione della catena del valore globale. Il fatto che le diverse fasi di cui essa si compone, dalla lavorazione delle materie prime fino alla distribuzione e consumo del prodotto finito, siano sparse in tutto il mondo e implementate ad un ritmo estremamente veloce, la rende un’industria ideale per l’analisi di alcune dinamiche internazionali legate all’ambiente e ai movimenti sociali, in quanto essa si pone come un attore cruciale per la comprensione di alcune problematiche legate alla governance, alla globalizzazione così come ai diritti umani ed il commercio etico.

L’analisi del rapporto tra il fenomeno dell’environmental justice e il settore industriale in questione è stata possibile partendo inizialmente dalla definizione del concetto di giustizia ambientale e dallo

studio delle sue origini. Capire in modo approfondito le radici e la diffusione di questo fenomeno nel mondo aiuta infatti a contestualizzare lo sviluppo delle proteste per la giustizia ambientale nel Sud-est asiatico. Per quanto riguarda la definizione, ho scelto di prendere come riferimento la descrizione fornita dalla United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)⁴, in quanto considerata fin dalla sua fondazione nel 1970 una delle agenzie di riferimento in tutto il mondo per ciò che riguarda la protezione ambientale e la salute umana. Inoltre, all'interno del sito ufficiale dell'EPA, una timeline dettagliata⁵ sull'origine e sullo sviluppo del fenomeno dell'environmental justice è stata di supporto per definirne i relativi momenti storici chiave. L'elaborato inizia infatti riportando l'episodio storico considerato, non solo dall'EPA ma anche da alcuni dei maggiori esponenti di questo fenomeno come l'accademico americano e attivista ambientale Robert Doyle Bullard, come il primo caso in cui il concetto di environmental justice viene fatto emergere e viene definito. La letteratura di Robert D. Bullard, nello specifico il libro del 1990 "Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class and Environmental Quality"⁶, è stato utilizzato come punto di partenza per capire l'evoluzione della giustizia ambientale e del relativo movimento sociale. Il testo di Robert D. Bullard si collega infatti a due fonti primarie che sono state considerate nell'elaborato sempre in relazione alla nascita del fenomeno e del concetto di environmental justice, ovvero il report "Siting of hazardous waste landfills and their correlation with racial and economic status of surrounding communities"⁷ del 1983 pubblicato dal US General Accounting Office (GAO) e il report "Toxic Waste and Race in the United States"⁸ del 1987 pubblicato dalla United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice. Entrambi i report si sono dimostrati rilevanti per l'analisi che essi propongono rispetto alla correlazione tra la presenza di siti pericolosi dal punto di vista dell'impatto sull'ambiente e sulla salute e la concomitante presenza in quello stesso territorio delle comunità più vulnerabili. La rilevanza di questi report è data dal fatto che essi si presentano come i primi studi demografici in quest'ambito. Il libro "Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class and Environmental Quality" si è dimostrato un punto di riferimento fondamentale anche dal punto di vista temporale in quanto ad esso segue, l'anno seguente, l'istituzione dei Principi dell'Environmental Justice⁹ adottati in occasione del First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit. Alcuni di questi 17 principi, quelli che mi sono più serviti come spunto di riflessione per lo sviluppo dell'elaborato, sono stati riportati nella tesi in quanto, come Robert D. Bullard sostiene, possono essere considerati come il momento più importante nella storia della giustizia ambientale¹⁰.

Definiti la definizione e le origini del fenomeno in questione, l'elaborato apre la strada e si sviluppa in più direzioni: da un lato si concentra nell'indagare ulteriori concetti che sono legati e comparabili a quello dell'environmental justice, come il concetto di environmental racism, per meglio definire il quadro teorico all'interno del quale il testo si sviluppa. Anche in questo caso Bullard verrà citato

come fonte secondaria per la definizione del concetto di environmental racism. Dall'altro lato viene approfondito il concetto di movimento sociale, prima nella sua definizione intrinseca, attraverso la condivisione e la comparazione delle teorie di sociologi tra i quali Dieter Rucht, John McCarthy e Charles Tilly; e conseguentemente nella sua definizione in relazione ai movimenti sociali legati all'ambiente. A tal proposito, l'elaborato approfondisce questo tema a partire dagli 1960 e 1970, decenni in cui il legame tra natura e società inizia ad essere discusso e messo in discussione. Questo legame è stato analizzato attraverso il report *The Limits to Growth*¹¹ del 1972 commissionato al Club di Roma dall'Istituto di Tecnologia del Massachusetts e attraverso l'analisi di tre teorie legate ai movimenti ambientalisti: "environmentalism of the poor", "eco-efficiency", "the cult of wilderness". Tre teorie analizzate attraverso il libro "Varieties of Environmentalism"¹² pubblicato dallo storico indiano Ramachandra Guha e dall'economista spagnolo Joan Martinez Alier alla fine degli anni 1990. Joan Martinez Alier verrà citato più volte anche in relazione all'*Environmental Justice Atlas*¹³, una mappa utilizzata per mostrare come il fenomeno della giustizia ambientale si sia diffuso non solo negli Stati Uniti ma in tutto il mondo. La sua diffusione ha portato ad una sempre maggiore molteplicità di tematiche trattate sotto la sua sfera, tra cui tematiche legate alla climate justice (giustizia climatica), che verrà considerata attraverso la definizione data dall'Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) nello specifico nel Sesto Rapporto di valutazione del 2022¹⁴. I dati forniti dall'IPCC si sono dimostrati particolarmente utili in tutto l'arco della tesi, in particolare nel capitolo 2, nel quale il territorio del Sud-est asiatico è stato inizialmente analizzato dal punto di vista geografico e in correlazione ai problemi ambientali legati alla sua conformazione. Oltre alle fonti dell'IPCC, il tema del cambiamento climatico nel Sud-est asiatico è stato approfondito grazie alle ricerche provenienti dall'UN Environmental Program (UNEP)¹⁵ così come dai report regionali dell'Asian Development Bank (ADB)¹⁶. Per rinforzare ulteriormente i dati relativi al cambiamento climato nel Sud-est asiatico tra il 1960 e il 2020, la tesi è stata integrata con dei grafici derivanti dall'International Monetary Fund Climate Change Dashboard¹⁷, che comparano questi due periodi attraverso misurazioni riguardanti ad esempio il livello medio dei mari e la presenza di disastri ambientali.

Questo stesso territorio, in particolare gli stati di Indonesia, Vietnam e Cambogia, è stato poi approfondito dal punto di vista economico, analizzando come lo sviluppo industriale del settore del tessile e dell'abbigliamento dagli anni 1960 in poi abbia portato a un conseguente aumento del fenomeno della giustizia ambientale. In questo passaggio tra passato e presente si intersecano diverse fonti; le più rilevanti sono quelle derivanti dalla Commissione e del Parlamento Europeo, proprio perché nella parte dedicata allo sviluppo del settore tessile vi è un focus sulla delocalizzazione delle industrie europee nel Sud-est asiatico. L'Unione Europea è citata quindi come il principale mercato

partner di questa regione. Come anticipato, il focus tra gli scambi commerciali tra i due paesi non è finalizzato alla sola comprensione delle partnership commerciali (per le quali sono presenti a supporto due grafici derivanti dall'International Trade Centre¹⁸) ma più all'analisi di come quest'industria e la sua espansione possa essere classificata tra le cause dell'aumento dell'inquinamento ambientale così come dei casi di ingiustizia ambientale. La documentazione ripresa dalla Commissione e dal Parlamento Europeo si focalizza infatti principalmente sull'impatto ambientale e sociale dell'industria dell'abbigliamento nei paesi in via di sviluppo.

Per ognuno dei tre stati analizzati (Indonesia, Vietnam e Cambogia) la tesi si concentra su degli esempi reali di casi di environmental justice, ripresi in parte dall'Environmental Justice Atlas (che attraverso i filtri disponibili mi ha permesso di ricercare casi legati all'industria tessile e dell'abbigliamento), in parte da movimenti no-profit conosciuti in tutto il mondo come Fashion Revolution¹⁹ e in parte dall'ASEAN Briefing²⁰, una piattaforma che condivide dati e report di business relativi ai paesi del Sud-est asiatico appartenenti all'Associazione delle Nazioni del Sud-est asiatico. I casi analizzati hanno l'obiettivo non solo di mostrare la correlazione tra inquinamento climatico e salute umana, ma anche di mostrare come il problema sollevato dal dibattito sull'environmental justice non sia dato solo dall'aumento delle emissioni (in questo caso provocato dalle industrie tessili) ma da una serie di altri fattori correlati quali ad esempio l'utilizzo nella produzione di abbigliamento di sostanze altamente nocive non solo per l'ambiente ma anche per la salute umana, il massiccio utilizzo di risorse naturali quali l'acqua o il legno, fondamentali per la sussistenza delle comunità coinvolte, la presenza di discariche tessili in prossimità dei villaggi piuttosto che la possibile correlazione tra l'aumento dei casi affetti da Covid-19 nelle aree dedite alla produzione tessile. Questi casi e le relative violazioni dei diritti umani sono considerati sempre in relazione alle convenzioni dell'International Labour Organization²¹.

Dopo essere entrati nello specifico di alcuni esempi concreti di giustizia ambientale, l'elaborato si allarga ad una visione più ampia, focalizzandosi sulla rilevanza del tema nelle relazioni internazionali, sulle iniziative e sulle regolamentazioni volte a ridurre l'impatto del cambiamento climatico sull'ambiente e sulla società, implementate a livello nazionale ed internazionale sia dagli stati che dalle industrie private. In questa parte, l'elaborato cerca di capire fino a che punto le politiche sviluppate in ambito ambientale affrontino allo stesso tempo anche i problemi di natura sociale. Per approfondire questa tematica, è stato analizzato il rapporto tra stato e azienda privata, con il fine di argomentare come queste due entità possono collaborare per garantire l'implementazione di iniziative in linea con quelli che sono i principi della giustizia ambientale. Più nello specifico verranno approfonditi gli UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights²², considerati nella tesi come

un punto di partenza per ragionare su come a livello internazionale state e non-state actors affrontino insieme il dibattito sulla giustizia ambientale. Questi principi vengono infatti declinati ancor più nello specifico nel Sud-est asiatico per capire se, nell'ambito dell'industria moda, essi vengono implementati e come. Il rapporto tra Unione Europea e stati del Sud-est asiatico e il loro livello di coinvolgimento nel tema dell'environmental justice viene inoltre misurato attraverso lo studio dei più recenti Free-Trade Agreements (FTA) alcuni già implementati ed altri in via di implementazione. A tal proposito fonti primarie quali i trattati bilaterali tra UE e paesi dell'ASEAN sono stati analizzati ed integrati con commenti derivanti da fonti giornalistiche specializzate nel settore moda e nel tema della sostenibilità.

L'elaborato si chiude con un approfondimento sull'Accordo di Parigi del 2015 e su come, e a che livello, questo accordo abbiamo integrato al suo interno il tema della giustizia ambientale. Oltre a citare come fonte primaria l'Accordo di Parigi, l'elaborato si appoggia a fonti secondarie quali il testo del professor Sam Adelman "Human Rights in the Paris Agreement: Too Little, Too Late?"²³ per commentare la relazione tra l'accordo in questione e la giustizia ambientale. Da questo trattato, analizzato inizialmente in modo generale, la tesi si declina poi nella spiegazione di come esso abbia dato vita a due iniziative importanti dal punto di vista della sostenibilità del sistema moda a livello internazionale: ovvero il Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action e l'United Nations Fashion Alliance. È infatti a partire a queste due entità che si rafforza poi la conclusione finale, la quale riassumendo i concetti fondamentali cerca di spiegare come il fenomeno della giustizia ambientale e i relativi concetti sviluppati in questa tesi possono influenzare le future relazioni internazionali nell'ambito della sostenibilità.

INTRODUCTION

The thesis “The phenomenon of Environmental Justice in Southeast Asia within the textile and apparel industry” analyses how the environmental justice debate has become particularly relevant within the Southeast Asian countries, in relation with the industrialization of the region by the textile and apparel industrial sector that has developed in the last decades. To build this analysis, the thesis will start with an overview of the origins of environmental justice that would help to contextualize the subject: the place where the concept of environmental justice generated and the reason why it is born will be deepened together with understanding of the meaning it was assigned. After explaining the initial context of where it originates, the thesis will underline the initial outcomes that this phenomenon began to generate, starting from the emergence of the Environmental Justice Principles in the United States. After this first general historical introduction, the difference and the interconnections between the concept of environmental justice and the concept of “environmental racism” will be outlined with a focus on some specific literature that gave prominence to the two terms.

One of the outcome of the environmental justice phenomenon was the rise of the environmental justice social movement. Before getting into the specifics of this movement, different theoretical theories defining the notion of “social movement” will be highlighted together with an overview of how and in which shape the debate about environmental justice spread outside the United States. This phenomenon will be explained through the mention of some specific episodes of environmental justice that has occurred worldwide. The global diffusion of the concept of environmental justice will be integrated with an overview of the most famous international organizations born and risen to support this spreading around the world, and whose struggles are mapped by the Environmental Justice Atlas, a tool useful to understand the precise localization of environmental justice struggles in the different continents, divided by categories according to the problem they face. After this insight on the history of environmental justice, on its principles and the movements related; the notion of “climate justice” will be examined in order to understand how it has contributed to the development and the strengthening of social and environmental related claims. The insight into the origin and the meaning of climate justice will be integrated by the notions of “historical responsibility approach” and “common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities”, with the aim of highlighting the assumption that developed and developed countries are not responsible at the same level of GHG emissions. This insight will help to support the idea of need of cooperation between developing and developed countries in the field of climate and environmental justice. These concepts

are also the basis of the 2002 Bali Principles, produced by the International Climate Justice Network, that in fact will be cited following the concept of climate debt. In the conclusion of chapter one the Loss and Damage Mechanism will be explained in relation to the vulnerability to which developing countries are exposed from an environmental point of view. This will create the link to the following chapter that will enter more specifically into the vulnerable countries of Southeast Asia.

Chapter two indeed will begin with an explanation of why Southeast Asian territories can be considered more exposed to climate change hazards. This assumption will be motivated through an overview of Southeast Asia's geographical conformation as well as with the sharing of some data taken from the IPCC about climate change in this territory. To better understand the transformation that this territory has undertaken over the years from the point of view of climate change, three graphs showing the annual surface temperature change, the change in mean sea levels and the climate related disaster frequency will close this introductory part. Through a review of the economic history of the region, what follows will be an insight of how the economic development in this territory have contributed not only to the augmentation and worsening of climate hazards, but also to an increase in social-related issues.

One of the industrial sectors that from the 1960s worked as a driver for the economic development of Southeast Asia is the textile and apparel one, consider a jump-start industry due to its low start-up costs . After some key information regarding this industry and its processes from a global and general point of view, the thesis will outline its diffusion in Southeast Asia and will underline how its spreading in developing countries has brought both advantages and disadvantages. If on one hand the textile and apparel industry serves as a mean of economic empowerment for the country, on the other hand it also generates environmental and human rights abuses, condemned by international law. Chapter two continues with presenting the phenomenon of the offshoring of the Western textile industry in developing countries, specifically Southeast Asia, and the related international trade agreements that contributed to make this phenomenon possible. To support the idea that the delocalization of this industry in developing countries have contributed to the worsening of the local population's living conditions, its environmental impact will be deepened thanks to some reports that will show how in the last decades, also because of the arrival of fast fashion, the textile industry has multiplied its levels of pollution. The origins of textile and apparel pollution are hence explored.

After this analysis of the textile industry, its delocalization as well as its environmental impact, the thesis will enter into the core subject of the environmental justice phenomenon in Southeast Asia.

This paragraph will start with a comparison between the evolution of the environmental justice debate in the United States and in Asia, where the studies on this theme are more recent and scattered. This introductory part about the environmental justice in Asia will bring to the related subject of the social justice and workers' rights within the textile and apparel industry and the related Conventions by the International Labour Organization. The focus will be in three main Southeast Asian countries which are: Indonesia, Vietnam and Cambodia. For each one of these countries their political structure, economic development and key environmental and social regulations implemented at present will be analysed. This premise will be useful in order to better understand the contexts within which the following environmental justice episodes took place. More specifically, for each of the three countries the thesis will present different episode of environmental injustices experienced by local workers and citizens that work or live near factories producing textiles and garments.

Chapter three will focus on the relevance that the subject discussed has for the international relations. To motivate this purpose, analysing how the fashion industry became globalized and which have been the effects of globalization will be a useful first step for the understanding of the importance and the influence this industry can play in the international arena. As a matter of fact, globalization has played a crucial role in shaping the fashion industry as it has generated both advantages and disadvantages that will be considered before investigating the policy implications that derive from the environmental justice debate. Given the different environmental and social related issues that the environmental justice debate can rise, international governments are implicated and involved in ensuring the implementations of regulations aimed at preventing climate change and human rights abuses. Different regulations and initiatives worldwide thus will be deepened and a paragraph will be dedicated to the understanding of the United Nations Guiding Principles of Business and Human Rights and of how this principles are implemented by fashion industry businesses. The second part of chapter three will be dedicated to analyse to what extent the actual agreements on trade between Southeast Asian countries and developed countries are addressing the phenomenon of environmental justice. More specifically there will be a focus on the Free Trade Agreements signed between Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia and the European Union. The chapter will end with the Paris Agreement and on how it includes in its discourse the themes of environmental justice, and with the presentation of two main systems that guides the fashion industry towards the road of sustainability, which are the Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action as well as the UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion.

CHAPTER 1 - OVERVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

1.1 The meaning and the origins of Environmental Justice

The notion of Environmental Justice, according to the US Environmental Protection Agency, can be defined as “the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, colour, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies”¹. The term was first mentioned in the state of North Carolina, more specifically in Warren County, a territory located in the Northern region of Piedmont and bordering with Virginia. The history of this county started with its foundation in 1779, in this period Warren County soon became one of the richest regions in Eastern US thanks to the development of tobacco and cotton farming activities that brought there numerous wealthy families. However, in the 20th century, its inability to attract in the territory also the industrial economic sectors caused a massive demographic depopulation as many workers moved to urban cities in search for more profitable jobs². What unites Warren County with the notion of Environmental Justice is the fact that in the year 1978, 31.000 liters of polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB), a highly dangerous chemical, were illegally dumped on behalf of the Ward Transformer Company across 14 counties in North Carolina³. After collecting the contaminated soil, the state had to decide whether to throw the toxic waste in Chatham or Warren County’s landfills. The main difference between Chatham and Warren Counties was that the second one was inhabited by a population of 60 percent black, and 25 percent of its families were below the poverty line, whereas in the first one there were only 27 percent black and 6 percent of poor. This social gap in class and difference in race has been considered the reason why the state chose as a target for pollution the Warren County landfill. This choice for one of the first times dramatically highlighted the close link between social class/race and political and economic decision in relation with environmental regulations. This is also a first emblematic example of “distributive injustice”, meaning the unfair localization of environmental burdens. More specifically, this example underlined how distributive justice is not independent of procedural justice. As reported by Professors of Environmental Social Science and Human Geography Jouni Paavola and Neil Adger in the analysis “Fair adaptation to climate change”⁴, when we speak about distributive justice, we make reference to “the incidence of benefits and costs, broadly conceived so as to encompass non-pecuniary advantages and burdens”⁵. On the contrary, procedural justice makes references to “the way in which parties are positioned vis-à-vis processes of planning and decision-making, encompassing issues such as recognition, participation and distribution of power”⁶. In other words, procedural justice is the way through which decisions and thus involved the figures involved

in decision-making. Therefore, in Warren County's case it can be stated that distributive justice is not independent from procedural justice for the fact that there is an unfair treatment (geographically expressed) towards a community that, because of their social and cultural condition, has to face up with a burden that has not been caused by them and at the same time they do not receive any benefit from it. This unfairness derives from a phenomenon of procedural injustice, that means the impossibility for the community to access to information and to participate in consultation and the negligence of decisions taken by the political and economic actors involved. Gordon Walker, Chair of Environment, Risk and Justice in the Lancaster Environment Centre at Lancaster University, in "Environmental justice: concepts, evidence and politics"⁷ summarized as follows this dependency of distributive justice from procedural one:

Distributive justice: "Location in a poor, black community. Risks and impacts locally concentrated, but few benefits"

Procedural justice "Lack of consultation and local involvement in decision to take the contaminated soil"⁸

After this episode, the Warren County community had to wait for almost 21 years before the government decided to start the detoxification of the area in 2001, causing a long-term exposure of the population to health problems⁹.

However, this episode was in any case the kick-off of a series of African American civil protests against social injustices that gave birth to the Environmental Justice social movement. It was in fact at this moment that the term was coined, specifically by two of the main activists involved against Warren County's incident, Reverends Leon White and Benjamin Chavis, whose United Church of Christ is considered as "the leading organizational force in the birth of the environmental justice movement"¹⁰, that will be deepened in the next subchapter. Unfortunately for the protestors, riots did not end successfully as after six weeks almost 523 arrests were made. Nevertheless, even if demonstrations in Warren County did not lead to a radical change as protestors were hoping, they laid the foundation for a new way of acting against social injustices. They acted as the starting point for the raise of a new conscience and activism all over the world. In fact, to testify how this first protest made his mark, in an article published by the New Yorker Reverend Benjamin Chavis stated that "Warren County made headlines. And because it made headlines in the media, we began to get calls from other communities. But you know that in the eighties you couldn't just say there was discrimination. You had to prove it"¹¹. After 5 years from the disaster, Reverend Chavis was able to

prove concretely the evidence of discrimination on that site. In fact, in 1987 he drew up a report entitled “Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States”. The research made, underlined that race is at first place when considering the variables linked to the disposal of toxic materials. More specifically, the report stated that “three out of five Black and Hispanic Americans lived in a community that housed what the Environmental Protection Agency called an uncontrolled toxic waste site, a closed or abandoned site that posed a threat to human health and the environment”¹². The social question raised by Reverend Chavis in his report soon turned into a national debate thanks to a documentary entitled “Earth keeping: Toxic Racism”, through which the notion of Environmental Justice became common all over US and started to be used to identify also other cases similar to the one of Warren County and spread in the American territories.

1.2 The Principles of Environmental Justice

Another important legacy of Rev. Chavis’s work has been the support in the definition of the Environmental Justice Principles, a document drafted in 1991 during the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit. The Environmental Justice Principles declaration was the first document aimed at defining the notion of Environmental Justice and giving a direction to activists that were fighting for this cause, underling their main values. The principle listed in the document are seventeen, of which three can be particularly relevant and linked to this thesis. What follows is first the introduction of the declaration, useful to understand which is the starting point of the Environmental Justice Movement not only in US but worldwide. The introduction is followed by three principles that will be resumed later in next subchapters.

Introduction of “The principles of Environmental Justice” draft

“WE, THE PEOPLE OF COLOR, gathered together at this multinational People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, to begin to build a national and international movement of all peoples of color to fight the destruction and taking of our lands and communities, do hereby re-establish our spiritual interdependence to the sacredness of our Mother Earth; to respect and celebrate each of our cultures, languages and beliefs about the natural world and our roles in healing ourselves; to insure environmental justice; to promote economic alternatives which would contribute to the development of environmentally safe livelihoods; and, to secure our political, economic and cultural liberation that has been denied for over 500 years of colonization and oppression,

resulting in the poisoning of our communities and land and the genocide of our peoples, do affirm and adopt these Principles of Environmental Justice”¹³.

Three within the seventeen principles

8) Environmental Justice affirms the right of all workers to a safe and healthy work environment without being forced to choose between an unsafe livelihood and unemployment. It also affirms the right of those who work at home to be free from environmental hazards.

12) Environmental Justice affirms the need for urban and rural ecological policies to clean up and rebuild our cities and rural areas in balance with nature, honouring the cultural integrity of all our communities, and provided fair access for all to the full range of resources.

14) Environmental Justice opposes the destructive operations of multi-national corporations.

1.3 The notion of Environmental Racism

With the definition of the Environmental Justice Principles came also a more precise reasoning about the notion of Environmental Racism. Even if the two terms are often interchanged, it can be stated that there is a slight difference between them. More precisely, as it has been reported at the beginning of this chapter, Environmental Justice can be broadly defined as “the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies”. Following this reasoning, it can be said that Environmental Justice is simply the consequence and the response to the spreading of Environmental Racism, which is the incommensurate impact of environmental risks towards some categories of the population. More specifically, according to the American academic Robert Doyle Bullard, Environmental racism refers to “the institutional rules, regulations, policies or government and/or corporate decisions that deliberately target certain communities for locally undesirable land uses and lax enforcement of zoning and environmental laws, resulting in communities being disproportionately exposed to toxic and hazardous waste based upon race”¹⁴.

From this initial part of chapter one, the fundamental aspect to retain is that after Warren County’s case, that happened towards the end of the seventies, violations of human health in relation to racist

environmental regulations started to be analysed under the same and recognized field of environmental justice. Starting from the 1980s, literature on that field started to flourish mainly in United States but also worldwide. Initially, research on this area focused on analysing the demography of certain zones in relation to environmental hazards. This sort of works took inspiration from Reverend Benjamin Chavis's report and tried to document the correlation between pollution and race and poverty. Among these sorts of works it can be cited for example the report entitled "Siting of hazardous waste landfills and their correlation with racial and economic status of surrounding communities". This report was implemented in 1983 by the General Accounting Office (GAO) in response to a congressional request and its aim was to provide knowledge about racial and economic traits of those portions of population that lived near four waste landfills in three states of Southern US. More precisely, what was requested was a research about the correlation between the location of hazardous waste landfills and the racial and economic position of the neighbouring communities¹⁵. To sum up the content of this report, it can be said that the General Accounting Office found that actually blacks represented the majority of the population in three of the four communities where the landfills were located. Besides, at least one quarter of the overall population have income below the poverty level.

Research on this field was not only based and limited to demographic data. On the contrary, an increasing list of academic works in different fields such as sociology, geosciences, law and economics started to be published with the same objective of investigating those types of correlations, discussing the issue with a sociological approach. One of the most well-known authors who focused his work on Environmental Justice's themes is Robert Doyle Bullard. Considered "the father of environmental justice", he dedicated his career as a professor to the teaching of Public Affairs and Sociology with a particular involvement in fighting environmental racism. One of his most famous books is "Dumping in Dixie" written in 1990. The book focuses on the difficulties faced by African Americans in US, for what concerns social and environmental issues, and underlines the effects of pollution in those communities. Besides, Dumping in Dixie is also one of the first work that studies mostly the psychological effects of pollution in black communities. It has been considered the first book that deeply investigates the concept of environmental justice with a global approach. In fact, after it has been published and given its resonance, the author started to be considered as one of the fundamental figures of the environmental justice movement¹⁶.

1.4 Theoretical definitions of a social movement

As it has already been stated, Warren County incident of 1978 has been one of the starting points of African American civil protests against the phenomenon of environmental racism, together with the actions implemented by Professor Robert D. Bullard and other activists. Before delving into the different dynamics that brought to the foundation and spreading of the Environmental Justice Movement it could be useful to briefly understand what a social movement is and how it can be defined, first in a general sense and then within the environmental sphere.

As sociologist Dieter Rucht states in the book “The history of social movements in global perspective”, there are different ways of defining social movements and it is not always simple to limit this phenomenon to a unique and nominal definition. According to Rucht, one of the main difficulties met by scholars when defining a social movement is that there can be the risk of being too inclusive: “When talking about social movements, we should be conscious about the kind of definition we use. More recently, almost all scholars, for good reasons, are offering nominal definitions only. Unlike so-called real definitions that imply assumptions about the nature or essence the matter or object under study, a nominal definition is nothing more than a convention to delineate a phenomenon so that it can be distinguished from other ones that are similar or opposite to the defined one”¹⁷. An example of a too inclusive definition is given by theorists John McCarthy and Mayer Nathan Zald who defined social movements as a “set of opinions and beliefs in a population which represents preferences for changing some elements of the social structure and/or reward distribution of a society”¹⁸. In analysing this definition, what emerges is that the term “population” includes the holders that consider themselves as not engaged in this quest for social change. Moreover, holders identified in this definition, may also be subjects that oppose that specific quest for change. Another example of a too wide definition is represented by sociologist Charles Tilly, who described a social movement as “a sustained series of interaction between power-holders and persons successfully claiming to speak on behalf of a constituency lacking formal representation, in the course of which these persons make publicly visible claims for changes in the distribution of the exercise of power, and back those demands with public demonstrations of support”¹⁹. In this case, the limit of the definition is given by the fact that it makes reference to the power-holders who are actually not the main subjects in the development of a social movement.

Therefore, how social movements can be defined? First, as stated before, the main aim of a social movement is to promote, or even oppose, a social change of society. Social movements have different objectives, from the claiming of new rights to the search for economic emancipation. They can be categorized according to their way of organizing themselves: from informal riots to structured

networks, from violent and extremist activities to nonviolent and moderate ones. For what concerns people involved in social movements, normally they are ordinary people which are in contrast with the economic elites or with some political parties. In general, it can be stated that the social change desired is encouraged through values that are on the opposite side of the ones hold up by the dominating classes. To sum up, social movements are defined as “conscious, concerted, and sustained efforts by ordinary people to change some aspect of their society by using extra-institutional means. Movements are more conscious and organized than fads and fashion. They last longer than a single protest or riot”²⁰.

Regardless the definition, it is interesting to notice how the perception of social movement has been transformed over the years. Before, all those acts that were seen as external from the institutional channels were consider illegal and dangerous by scholars, who considered activists as irrational and not allowed to mobilize themselves for a cause. The shift came in the 1960s when mainly the academic sector (professors, students) started to reconsider their attitude towards these kind of groups and in general towards all those people that belonged to the lower classes of society but whom were claiming something, such as freedoms and improvements of the quality of life. Behind this turn there were economic, political and cultural changes, but overall it can be stated that the Civil Rights Movement played a fundamental role in spreading the real conditions in which Southern African American lived during the period of the segregation. Therefore, starting from the 1960s social movement began to be perceived as formed by rational people and their protests were consider legal and legitimate. Activists were not considered only rational but also “business-oriented” in the sense that, as John McCarthy and Mayer Zald stated, social movements started reasoning like if they were business firms: “they try to accumulate resources, hire staff and sell their point of view to potential contributors”²¹. In brief, protestors were no longer described as incapable or threatening.

Regarding the social movements related to the environment, foremost it can be stated that the perception of the environment as a fragile entity that needs to be valued and protected, evolved massively starting from the 1960s, when the strict link between society and nature started to be discussed. During that period environment began to be perceived as a global affair: it took shape the idea that every part of the globe is touched by pollution because the Earth is a unique one, and its resources are limited. In the nineteenth century many environmentalists started to recognize not only that the Earth is a unique ecosystem, but also that human beings were not detached from nature, on the contrary they were totally a part the ecosystem that surrounded them. This idea of deep connection with nature, of being part of the place where we live and to identify with it, became the basis for many

environmentalist protests. It is anyway important to remember that before this first global wave of awareness in the nineteenth century, societies were already involved in dynamics aimed at valuing the environment, and this connection was expressed differently according to the different countries. For example in Europe, Germany considered the problem of environment in relation to human health issues. They focused on the consume of meat, they paid attention to the quality of air and they discussed the problem of smoking. On the contrary, in Italy a more romantic and less scientific approach was adopted as there protecting the environment meant celebrating and preserving the beauty of nature. The most important Italian scholar who worked on this field was Benedetto Croce, for whom nature was important to the extent it promotes literature and arts. Therefore, in the first half of the Twentieth century the protection of nature reflected also strong national values. From the 1960s, the most relevant concept that started to be questioned was the economic growth and capitalism, together with its role of guiding and inspiring the society.

The perception of the environment as a global discourse spread thanks to some forerunners that pioneered this new approach and functioned as a watershed for a new vision of the environment. Among them, particularly relevant was the Club of Rome, which is still today a non-governmental organization of economists, businessmen and scientists from all over the world whose mission is to act as a sort of initiator of global changes, analysing the main problems that humanity has to face up (such as environmental deterioration and poverty) and proposing their alternative solutions. This elitist club was founded in 1968 and it attracted the public attention particularly for their first report published in 1972 and entitled *The Limits to Growth*. The report, commissioned to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, had the aim of proving that “the global system of nature in which we all live probably cannot support present rates of economic and population growth much beyond the year 2100, if that long, even with advanced technology”²². Besides, the report contains also a message of hope: “Man can create a society in which he can live indefinitely on earth if he imposes limits on himself and his production of material goods to achieve a state of global equilibrium with population and production in carefully selected balance”²³. Even if controversial, the report proved to be extremely influential at the global level as it brought to the public sphere a critical question: how was it possible to have an endless growth in a finite world? Another forerunner of the spreading of environmentalism was the ecologist and writer Rachel Carson, whose book entitled *Silent Spring* published in 1962, highlights the hidden environmental cost of the industrial development caused in particular by chemical industries. Besides protesting against the use of chemicals and pesticides, the book also triggered the evolution of the modern Environmental Movement.

According to scholars Christopher Rootes and Robert Brulle environmental movements can be defined as: “networks of informal interactions that may include, as well as individuals and groups who have no organizational affiliation, organizations of varying degrees of formality (including even political parties, especially Green parties) that are engaged in collective action motivated by shared identity or concern about environmental issues”²⁴. Given its generality, this definition can work to describe in broad terms what an environmental movement is. However, considering the wide spreading of environmental movement, it is important to state that it can be reformulated into different varieties. As detected by Indian historian Ramachandra Guha and Spanish economist Joan Martinez Alier in their book “Varieties of Environmentalism” published in 1997, a first classification of the different forms of environmentalism lies on the distinction between a “Northern” variety of environmentalism (the one established in developed countries) and a “Southern” one, referred to underdeveloped and developing countries. Within the first vision, the Northern one, societies perceive humanity and nature as something separated, in the sense that human beings fight for the protection of nature but as if they were a separate entity and therefore not an integral part of it. For this form of environmentalism, typical of Western countries, environmental protection became a sort of elitist recreation for bourgeois and aristocratic classes that could afford such activities. In Martinez Alier’s 2002 book “The Environmentalism of the poor”, the scholar states that in this first version of environmentalism the main focus is the “cult of wilderness”, meaning the desire to conserve the immaculate beauty of untouched nature, in a traditional way mainly through national parks. Joan Martinez Alier considers it as the oldest organized variety of environmentalism and it has been represented by different international organizations such as for example the Sierra Club founded in the late Nineteenth century in the United States with the aspiration of protecting beautiful landscapes, rivers, forests, endangered animal species. Another organization born within this idea of conservationism and founded by a bourgeois membership was the World Wildlife Fund established in 1961 by Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands and Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. Usually this form of environmentalism mobilizes through opinion campaigns or lobbying, but it is criticized mainly for its lack of social concern. Within this variety in fact, environmental concerns are just limited to nature and does not take into consideration social-related problems, basically because urban spaces are not considered as part of the environment. The second variety of environmentalism cited by Alier, still considered prevalently a Northern phenomenon, is what he calls “Eco-efficiency”. This variety defends economic growth, it has a scientific and utilitarian approach but it pays attention to the need for environmental policies. Therefore, here the main focus is not a sacred conception of nature, but instead the possibility to produce more goods and services with less resources while

producing less pollution. The basic aim of this approach is not to protect nature as something sacred, but to include in the economic system, using it in a sustainable, competent, innovative way.

Even if environmentalism was considered for decades as a Northern discourse, with the environment being global also the Southern visions started to become relevant. The third form of environmentalism reported by Martinez Alier is indeed a Southern one and focuses on the strict connection between nature and humanity, conceived as a same entity. This variety is called “Environmentalism of the poor” which indeed corresponds to the Northern branch of environmental justice. The term “environmentalism of the poor” was coined by the Peruvian historian Alberto Flores Galindo in 1988 and it defines those indigenous and peasant groups in the global South that have often “coevolved sustainably with Nature and have ensured the conservation of biodiversity”²⁵. Environmental justice can be considered a Northern version of the environmentalism of the poor and in both Northern and Southern versions, the environment is something that concerns more directly the weaker and poorer communities, meaning that there is an unequal distribution of pollution across social landscapes. Therefore, the important notion to retain is that environmentalism here is conceived as directly linked with livelihood. If we go back to the strict definition of environmental justice, it is not simple to define what the terms “environment” and “Justice” stands for. The term environment basically detached completely from the traditional and conventional idea of nature conceived as something wild and untouched, as the cult of wilderness has promoted. For the Environmental justice movement, environment has to be conceived as the place where human beings “live, work and play”²⁶, therefore they fight against those environmental risks that put at stake their daily life and ask for state protection. However, even if the original point of the movement was about the unfair localisation of environmental risks, those environmental conditions started to be perceived mainly as a sign, a mark that highlights a wider reality, that is the economic and social gap that poorer and discriminated people were obliged to live every day. Under this general premise, environmental justice can take different shapes according to the social situations of the communities involved. In fact, some people are more conscious of the global challenge and resonance of their striving, while others are more interested in their own local problems related to subsistence and livelihood.

1.5 The Environmental Justice Social Movement

If we consider the first actions made within the environmental justice field, the People for Community Recovery (PCR) was one of the main leader in promoting the implementation and spreading of the environmental justice movement as it was formed by a wide variety of local groups whose citizens

were actively engaged in society. This group was founded in 1979 and its activities were concentrated in the Chicago area, known for recording the highest percentage of cancer during those years. In general, the environmental movement has always relied on local and regional networks and associations that partnered with local institutions such as schools, universities and churches, promoting mobilization through local activism and direct actions. However, the concept of environmental justice and environmentalism of the poor was brought to the public sphere not only by activists involved in local protest but also thanks to the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm in 1972. During this diplomatic event, Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi introduced this alternative form of environmentalism that differed from the Western and up to that moment standard ones. What she wanted to express in that occasion was the idea that poverty and environmental degradation are extremely interconnected and therefore have to work together in order to ameliorate both dimensions: "We do not wish to impoverish the environment any further and yet we cannot for a moment forget the grim poverty of large numbers of people. Are not poverty and need the greatest polluters?"²⁷. With this argument Indian Prime Minister questioned with a message that is sometimes still considered controversial: who can care for the environment when their basic needs are not being met? For what concerns the conference in Stockholm in general, it brought to the development of the concept of global environmental cooperation, inviting nations to act for the environment with an international approach. This change of attitude was represented in the conference's slogan of "only one earth" that became symbolic for the entire environmental movement. The main fundamental heritage of this conference was first of all the foundation of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), but also the awareness of the need of connecting the livelihood of poor communities with the protection of the environment.

To conclude, even if these three forms of environmentalism (cult of wilderness, eco-efficiency, environmentalism of the poor) have been explained in a linear order, they do not have to be considered on a chronological scale, as they emerged and continue to exist quite simultaneously. Following the reasoning of Martínez Alier, the history of environmentalism is so wide that it cannot be retraced within a chronological framework. If we consider the third variety of environmentalism, which is the central one in this thesis, even if most historians share the fact that environmental protests concerning social issues have been rising massively from the seventies, it has to be remembered that many struggles happened before this date, both inside and outside the US as it will be outlined in the next paragraph.

1.7 The Environmental Justice outside the United States

Heeten Kalan, senior program officer of the Global Environmental Health and Justice Fund of the New World Foundation in New York City, affirmed that “environmental and human rights have no boundaries, because pollution has no boundaries”²⁸. Indeed, an overview of Environmental Justice movements worldwide can offer an understanding of how this debate became global. The development of environmental justice at a global level grew simultaneously with some agreements implemented internationally in the field of environment. According to Robert Bullard, in the occasion of the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 the environmental justice theme was not considered central in the discourse, as much of the efforts were concentrated towards the protection of the ecosystems such as the Amazon forest. In 2002 the city of Johannesburg host the World Summit on Sustainable Development, where environmental justice was considered officially an issue to be discussed during the convention, and the same happened two years later in New York during the UN Millennium Summit, where the issue of human health and safety was directly related to the idea of sustainable development. After this moment, organization worldwide started to organize more formally in different forms, from community-based groups to international organization fighting a transversal problem. The most important point within the creation of these international organizations is that they understood that, even in every situation has its own specific issue and details, there are also common experiences that are the same for every struggle and from which other countries can take inspiration. Therefore, organization started to understand the importance of having an international approach in order to collaborate and share best practices.

Many research have been published to present environmental justice movements across the world, such as the book “A history of environmentalism. Local struggles, global histories” edited by the environmental historians Marco Armiero and Lise Sedrez, that really gives a comprehension of how local debates has to be understood and approached under a global lens, with the idea that “everything is connected to everything else”. As stated in the previous paragraphs, the notion of environmental justice born and developed in the United States starting from the 1980s. However, United States are not the only country were this concept spread and took shape. From North to South, from developed to developing countries, stories of environmental justice have marked different territories in different times. Whether we call it environmentalism of the poor or environmental justice, what has been already stated is that from the seventies these struggles by local communities against dangerous factories, infrastructures and waste facilities spread worldwide. In this case, a chronological overview of some of the main episodes related to environmental justice is functional to understand how the debate evolve and took diverse shapes according to the different historical periods.

A transversal environmental justice debate that is common across different countries worldwide is the one of mining. The two oldest episodes in this field dates back to 1880 and 1907 and they both concern the mining activities, the first in Andalusia and the second Japan. In both cases, protests were against the pollution created by metals that were damaging not only for agriculture but also for human health. In Japan, they also protested against the construction of a basin were to concentrate the polluted waters and that caused the destruction of Yanaka, a near town. The same problem came in Peru 20 years later where two mining companies polluted pasture lands. The development of mining activities in this area came with the development of the electrical instruments production, made with zinc and copper. In Bougainville too, West Papua, citizens protested against mining companies, as a local activist reported: “These companies have taken over and occupied our land...Even the sacred mountains we think of as our mother have been arbitrarily torn up, and they have not felt the least bit guilty... Our environment has been ruined, and our forests and rivers polluted by waste... We have not been silent. We protest and are angry. But we have been arrested, beaten and put into containers: we have been tortured and even killed”²⁹. Other movements that reached the global dimension took place in Bhopal, India, in 1984 where a cloud of gas went from a pesticide plant and caused thousands of deaths. The movements that born soon after the disaster, “Bhopal the global social movement”, underlined from the beginning the relevance of globalization in what has happened and the fact that globalization tends to put at risk more the developing countries than the developed ones. In this case too the movement try not only to secure health care but also to influence the international arena linking themselves with the global anti-toxic movements. Therefore, on the one hand the global anti-toxic movement benefits from the Bhopal disaster for pretending new international regulations, and on the other hand the Bhopal movement benefit from the global one for raising public outrage and to avoid that the disaster could happen in other part of the world. Overall, it can be said that the outcomes of the movement was the formation of a Ministry of Environment in India together with a series of international agreements concerning the trade and the use of toxic substances. Another struggle that is particularly relevant in understanding the global dimension of local protests is for instance the Ogoni struggle in the Niger Delta. This struggle and the movement related (Movement for the survival of the Ogoni people) against the Shell oil company lasted all along during the 1990s. The territory was weakened by environmental problems such as air, water and land pollution caused by the lack of a strong environmental regulation from whom oil companies benefited causing serious damages to the Niger Delta ecosystem and population. In 1990 the population signed the Ogoni Bill of Rights, which highlighted the desire to control their land by themselves for preventing further degradation. Peaceful protests continue during the decade up to influencing and reaching the consensus of nearer

communities and international arena In Geneva, in 1992, Shell was accused of genocide and this company, as well as other oil companies in developing countries had to review their role in the countries where they work and had to add into their policy a fairer approach, including corporate social responsibility initiatives in the field of security and community development. Moving from Nigeria to Brazil, another crucial struggle involved the rubber tappers community in the Amazon rainforest. This case is a particularly relevant example of environmentalism of the poor as the community involved worked and lived in the same place, in deep connection with the natural world. The rubber extraction has been since centuries central in the economy of South America, however, the local rubber tappers working on it has always been treated unfairly. This started to change in the seventies when Chico Mendes, the secretary of a union born to fight against the deforestation by labourers, tried to establish a branch of the union in the Acre territory. After some years of peaceful demonstrations and attempts to raise awareness on the importance of education he was assassinated. Thanks to its influence in Brazil, after his death deforestation in the Amazon Forest dramatically decreased. As this story proves, indigenous populations are particularly impacted by the effect of anthropogenic warming not only due to the geographical areas where they are located, but also because of the cultural and sacred connections they have with their territory and their land. Deforestation menaces their subsistence as land their source of livelihood and of work too, threatening therefore their right to life. In 2007 the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was adopted by the UN General Assembly during their 62nd session in New York. In the declaration, indigenous populations were entitled without discrimination to human rights recognized by international law, and it “recognizes indigenous people rights to self-determination, culture and property, including the right to resist forced relocation or assimilation”³⁰.

The last case that will be reviews is the one related to the waste crisis in the Italian region of Campania. In 2009 it was inaugurated the first incinerator operating in Campania. The company that was the assignment decided itself were to build the incinerator, and the choice went to Acerra, a territory already vulnerable from an ecological point of view. A committee made of citizens was created to denounce the unfair waste management, they protested through the occupation of the space where the building was being constructed and through demonstrations that gathered up to 30 000 people. Even if the incineration was inaugurated and it is still in function, citizens are still asking for its closure. The interesting thing about this case is that people involved in these protests do not define themselves as “environmentalists” and do not have any green background, they are fighting just to protect their livelihood and the place where they live, without any environmentalist ambitions. As stated by Marco Armiero in “A history of Environmentalism”, the thought of Acerra citizens

“incorporates the basic notion of ecological thinking, that is the awareness that everything is connected with everything else. In the environmental justice framework, the city is connected to the countryside, the production of goods to the disposal of waste, social structures to pollution and health”³¹.

1.6 Global Organizations working on Environmental Justice

There are many different environmental justice organizations around the world that base their work and strategy on the strength of a global net. One of them is Via Campesina, an organization created by agricultural producers in Indonesia and that gathered members from more than 50 countries, united by the same issues. The aim of this association is to create a net of information and exchanges from which farmers can empower themselves, learning from the experiences of other farmers around the world. Another environmental justice organization is the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives, an organization with 77 members born in the Philippines that struggle to reduce the spreading of incinerator within vulnerable communities, developing common strategies and promoting international coordination. GAIA also promoted a campaign to avoid that the World Bank would fund the building of incinerator worldwide, bringing effective information on how this construction would affect the local populations. Friends of the Earth International is another important organization operating in the field of the environment. Known as the world’s biggest grassroots environmental organization, it works as a common ground for all those environmental justice activists that want and need to promote their struggle at a global level. The last organization that can be mentioned as a body operating in the field of environmental justice at an international level is the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL), a network aimed at supporting the most vulnerable communities in Eastern Europe that find themselves living in poor and unsafe environments.

1.8. The Environmental Justice Atlas

A useful tool when studying how the debate of environmental justice has spread around the world is the Global Atlas of Environmental Justice³². The Atlas, created by Leah Temper and Joan Martinez Alier at the Institute of Environmental Science and Technology, points at giving visibility to all those struggles that are taking place at global level. Besides, the platform is useful for whoever wanted to get a deeper understanding of environmental justice related issues. How does the Atlas work? In order to be always updated with the most recent conflicts happening worldwide, collaborators around the world (both academic and informal groups) contribute to investigate and to make public

environmental justice cases. The Atlas constantly update and make the list of collaborators available in its site. The cases are checked and filtered by the Atlas team not only to ensure that information are correct but also to categorize the different cases into some specific clusters, such as conflicts related to fossil fuels, water and waste management, infrastructures, biodiversity conservation, tourism recreation, industrial and utilities conflicts. This would help users to make their research more accurate and precise, through the related filters. More specifically, the Search & Filter function allows to search conflicts not only by the cause, but according to the territory in question, the starting date of the conflict, its intensity, and the type of resistance (such as mobilizing groups or environmental justice organizations), its impacts and relative outcomes.

In order to be accepted and published into the Atlas, a socio-environmental conflict has to respond to specific criteria. First of all, these conflicts have to be intended as mobilizations by local communities or social movements that are protesting against specific economic activities or regulations that may cause a damage to the environment in which they live and consequently to their subsistence. The Atlas thus documents at what extent these economic activities are effectively impacting in a negative way the environmental and social dimensions, through measuring the claim and mobilization of social organizations as well as how these conflicts are reported by media.

If we study how the environmental justice episodes are dislocated across the continents in the Atlas, we will see that they are present both in developed and developing countries, but that in some areas there is a higher concentration of episodes, particularly all along the coasts.

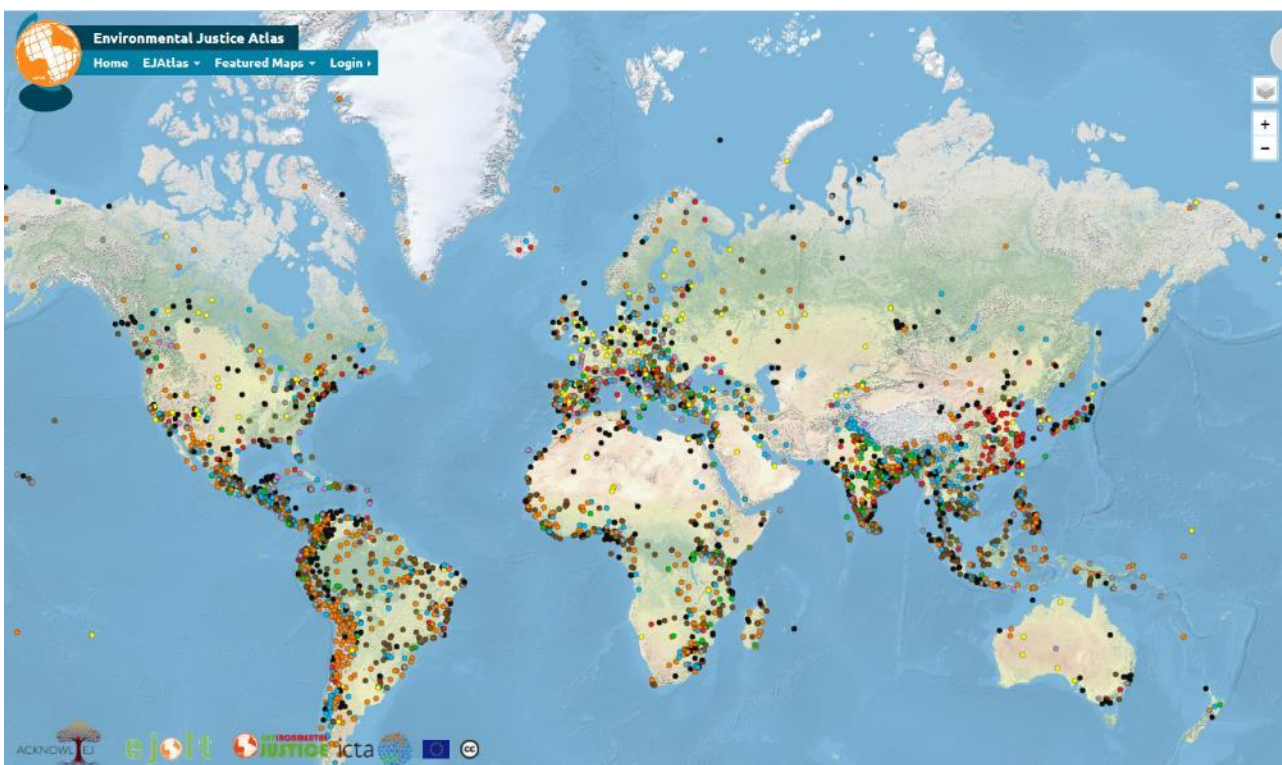


Figure 1: Global Environmental Justice Atlas. Source: EJAtlas

As it can be realized analysing the screenshot above, the first thing that stands out is that cases of environmental justice are spread all around the world. However, there are some areas where there is a higher concentration of cases, both in developed and developing countries. What changes mainly is the type of case that involved these two areas. In the Americas, the more we go down towards the South, the greater is the possibility to find concentration of environmental justice struggles. The highest concentration is found in Central American and in South American along the West coast from Colombia to Chile. In the former, the cases mostly referred to water management issue while in the latter the conflicts concern more the mining activities and the processing of fossil fuels. If we move from the coast to the inside land the conflicts regard mainly the forests and the agriculture. In Africa the main concentration are found in the east coast, with issues primarily related to mining extraction and land conflicts, and in Nigeria where conflicts concerning fossil fuels and energy are at the forefront. In Europe conflicts are instead more various, from protests against the nuclear power to infrastructure and built environment, from industrial and utilities conflicts to issues about tourism recreation as well as waste and water management. According to the atlas, the majority of conflicts in Europe are concentrated in Spain and the Balkans. In Asia, most cases of environmental justice are undoubtedly focused in Southern and Eastern Asia, from India up to Japan passing through the Southeast Asian archipelago. In the Himalayan territory protests concern mostly biodiversity and water management while in the coast and inner land of India there are a wide variety of conflicts that concern again mineral extraction, fossil fuels, infrastructure, and biodiversity as well as the industry. In China and Japan is extremely evident that the majority of issues are related with industrial and utilities conflicts and fossil fuels and energy ones. Concerning Southeast Asia, environmental justice related issues are mainly focused on water management, biomass and land conflicts, infrastructure and built environment. Tourism recreation and industrial conflicts are also present but to a lesser extent. Given the centrality of this territory for this thesis, the respective environmental justices-related issues will be deepened separately in Chapter 2.

1.7 From Environmental Justice to Climate Justice

Through this overview of certain specific struggles that happened outside the United States, we can realize how the concept of environmental justice spread over the years. In doing that, it has included in its discourse a huge number of different subjects (from urbanization to transports, from risk management to human health, from water distribution to energy development) that has occurred

simultaneously with its geographical spreading and with its application to global regulations in the field of toxics trade, food sovereignty and climate justice, which is broadly speaking the assessment of climate action through the involvement of ethical considerations³³. These commitments were already partially hinted in the 17 Principles of Environmental Justice edited during the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, where this search for equity, self-determination, health safety, protection from toxins, was already made clear. All these characteristics typical of this phenomenon represent also a certain attitude towards climate justice, therefore the environmental justice debate became important for the comprehension and the development of climate justice. As for the term “climate justice”, first of all it can be said that its origins have been traced up to the Socrates and Plato’s era³⁴.

However, the first use of the term seems to date back to 1989 when the Professor of International Law and member of the International Advisory Council for Environmental Justice Edith Brown Weiss wrote the book “In Fairness to Future Generations: International Law, Common Patrimony, and Intergenerational Equity”³⁵. This book in fact could be considered as one of the first sources of inspiration for the development of contemporary international environmental law. One of the concept that has been illustrated in this publication is the one of inter-generational equity, meaning that moral obligations of present society towards future generations need to be enforced into laws. The concept of inter-generational equity is inspired by John Rawl’s Theory of Justice and it is based on the assumption that every generation has the right to benefit from the same natural resources and this right has to be enforced into law: “At the present time, our concern for future generations can be considered as a moral protection of interests. But recognition of a moral obligation does not in itself create legal obligations and rights. Rather it is a stage in the evolution of the public conscience”³⁶. To better explain the meaning and the difference of the two definition, it could be stated that environmental justice has the aim of promoting social justice principles through the fair distribution of environmental impacts and risks, while climate justice promotes all those actions aimed at preventing climate change, through a community-led approach. Beyond Weiss’s approach to climate justice, other scholars have developed justice-related thoughts and ideas not only around the concept of climate change but also addressing ethical issues related to environmental justice, religion, equity and fairness.

In 2001, the Environmental Justice and Climate Change Initiative was created, after the first Climate Justice Summit hold during COP6. Members, who came from different environmental justice backgrounds and communities, drafted the ten principles of climate justice, aimed at reducing

emissions and the employ of toxic substances, safeguarding endangered communities, promoting green energy. In 2005, after hurricane Katrina in United States there has been a more and more increasing attitude to think that the environment is not only a consequence of social injustice and health problems; on the contrary it started to be considered as the unique means to achieve fair justice and treatment. Therefore, it can be said that after hurricane Katrina many environmental justice activists and institutions started to consider more proactively the problem of climate change. This was particularly relevant in the United States and particularly in California, where in 2006 it was developed the California Global Warming Solutions Act in which environmental justice groups made the claim that it was necessary to include a participatory mechanism that enabled the creation of an advisory committee formed by member states from the communities that experienced the highest air pollution, to avoid the unfair treatment between rich and poor communities. In 2008, the Environmental Justice Leadership Forum on Climate Change (EJLFCC) was created with the aim again to match the needs of vulnerable communities together with the promotion of climate actions and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) too, implemented a crucial initiative on both environmental and climate justice, with the same objectives.

The timeline that follows could help to resume the main highlights that brought to the development of both the concepts of Environmental Justice and Climate Justice:

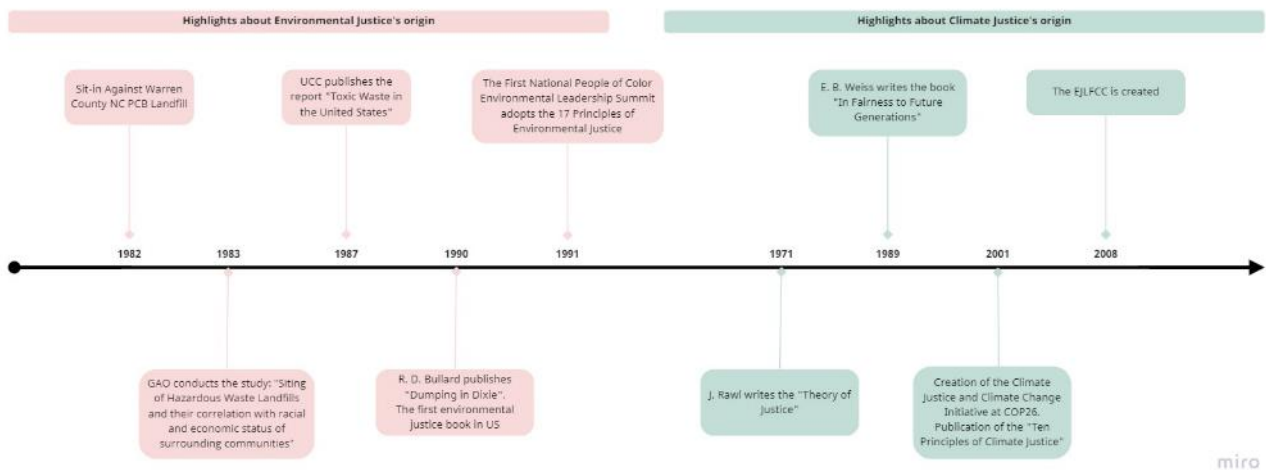


Figure 2: Timeline with the main episodes that brought to the creation of the concepts of environmental and climate justice. Source: author's own elaboration

This appearance of the notion of climate justice next to the one of environmental justice created also some frictions between the two groups. The main point of discussion was the fact that environmental justice activists aimed at developing their discourse at a local level for the care of the local communities involved in their struggles, while climate change scholars were more oriented to

promote a global approach because of the worldwide dimension of climate change. These different positions are well explained by the following statement reported by some environmental justice activists: “We frame climate change in terms of impacted communities—what the facilities look like, health impacts, access to health or water or jobs. Reflected back to us, we are told that all we care about is local impacts and since carbon is global, our focus is misplaced, at best, or irrelevant, at worst.³⁷” The friction was not only on the communication field but also on the contents themselves. For instance, if we consider for example a polluting factory, a climate justice approach would just think on how to reduce emission for avoiding climate change, while an environmental justice approach would think on how to avoid environmental risks for vulnerable communities. “Traditional climate activists espouse ‘our economy works, except for the carbon thing. How do we simply make our economy less carbon-intensive?’”. One main point of discussion was in fact about the theme of energy. For climate justice scholars, the solution to reduce carbon emission is to impose a carbon tax, however this would bring to a rise of the price of energy to the disadvantage of poor communities. On the contrary, the environmental justice focus is not just on the reduction of fossil fuels but the consequence of those emissions and of the price of energy for vulnerable populations.

Beyond the differences that could arise between the two concepts, in 2013 during COP19, the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts (WIM) was established, in order to “address loss and damage associated with impacts of climate change, including extreme events and slow onset events, in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change”³⁸. In other terms, the Loss and Damage Mechanism (L&D) addresses the difficulties and the impacts deriving from severe climate events mainly generated by global warming, for instance sea level rise as well as deforestation, promoting the coordination between stakeholders and the support in capacity building. Loss and damage are thus the adverse consequences of climate hazards that population couldn’t confront and face with. “Damage” indicates damages that are measured in monetary terms, while “loss” refers to a larger group that contains non-monetary damages such as abuses of human rights. Therefore, the main distinction between loss and damage is that the first is irrevocable while the second isn’t³⁹.

Why is the L&D Mechanism related to the concept of climate justice? Because, as anticipated, L&D represents not only a policy instrument but also the amount of the impacts caused by climate hazards. L&D could be either financial or physical: from the destruction of the property or the agricultural production, up to the reduced health or the loss of local cultural heritage. These impacts are mostly felt by developing countries, but they are not the one responsible for it. It is for this reason that L&D

is strongly related to subjects such as activism and mobilization on climate change. The figure that follows, taken from the document “Loss and damage from climate change: A new climate justice agenda”⁴⁰, shows the different possible definitions of climate change impacts linked to L&D.

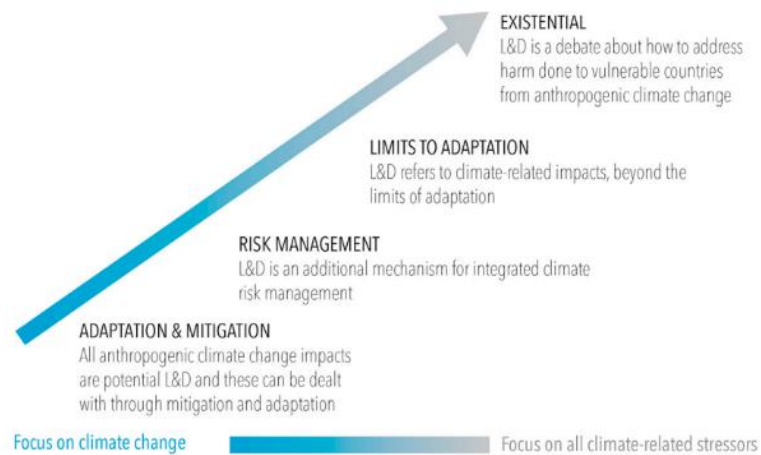


Figure 3: Definitions of climate change-related L&D. Source: Loss and damage from climate change, A new climate justice agenda

1.10 The historical responsibility approach and the Bali Principles

If developing countries are not responsible for climate change impacts, who would have to finance loss and damages in those countries? Related to this concept, there is the wider concept of the “historical responsibility approach”, meaning the idea to determine the obligations of a countries according to its level of greenhouse gas emissions. More concretely the main claim of this statement is that if a country pollutes more, it has to pay more. The proposal is the same underlined also in the concept of the “polluter pays principle” introduced by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in 1972⁴¹. According to the OECD, “the Polluter-Pays Principle means that the polluter should bear the costs of pollution prevention and control measures, the latter being measures decided by public authorities to ensure that the environment is in an acceptable state. In other words, the polluter has to bear the cost of steps that he is legally bound to take to protect the environment, such as measures to reduce the pollutant emissions at source and measures to avoid pollution by collective treatment of effluent from a polluting installation and other sources of pollution”⁴². This approach is directly linked with the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities” proposed twenty years before in 1992 by the United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change. During the convention, the parties acknowledged that “the global nature of climate change calls for the widest possible cooperation by all countries and their

participation in an effective and appropriate international response, in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities and their social and economic conditions”⁴³. This means that all countries in the world are responsible for the protection of climate change, yet not in an equal manner but depending on their economic development. All the principles just covered are a central subject within the environmental justice and climate justice debate, in the first case for the fact that also in the Environmental Justice principles there is the proposal to ask for a “compensation and reparation of damage”, while in the second case because the historic responsibility approach is directly related with the idea of “climate debt” of the developing countries, articulated within the Bali Principles Climate Justice of 2002. In the Bali Principles, produced by the International Climate Justice Network, there is an evident and declared reference to the US environmental justice movement. What follows are some of the Bali principles that recall the environmental justice ones:

- Affirming the sacredness of Mother Earth, ecological unity and the interdependence of all species, Climate Justice insists that communities have the right to be free from climate change, its related impacts and other forms of ecological destruction.
- Climate Justice affirms the rights of indigenous peoples and affected communities to represent and speak for themselves.
- Climate Justice affirms that governments are responsible for addressing climate change in a manner that is both democratically accountable to their people and in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.
- Climate Justice demands that communities, particularly affected communities play a leading role in national and international processes to address climate change.
- Affirming the principle of Ecological debt, Climate Justice protects the rights of victims of climate change and associated injustices to receive full compensation, restoration, and reparation for loss of land, livelihood and other damages.
- Climate Justice affirms the right of all people, including the poor, women, rural and indigenous peoples, to have access to affordable and sustainable energy.
- Climate Justice recognizes the right to self-determination of Indigenous Peoples, and their right to control their lands, including sub-surface land, territories and resources and the right to the protection against any action or conduct that may result in the destruction or degradation of their territories and cultural way of life.
- Climate Justice affirms the right of indigenous peoples and local communities to participate effectively at every level of decision-making, including needs assessment,

planning, implementation, enforcement and evaluation, the strict enforcement of principles of prior informed consent, and the right to say "No."

- Climate Justice opposes military action, occupation, repression and exploitation of lands, water, oceans, peoples and cultures, and other life forms, especially as it relates to the fossil fuel industry's role in this respect⁴⁴.

As it can be read, both documents highlight the sacredness of nature and the importance of protecting and recognizing vulnerable communities and their rights to receive compensations for the damaged endured.

In 2007, Climate Justice Now!, a network of organisations from around the globe committed to the fight for social, ecological and gender justice was created on the occasion of the COP13 in Bali. It is fundamental to highlight that with this new organisation the principles of environmental and climate justice became more and more similar and oriented toward the same objective, which is protecting both the environment and the livelihoods. On this regard, before moving on to a more recent publication related with climate justice, it could be interesting to have a deeper focus on the related mechanism of "loss and damage" that has to do with negotiations on the field of climate and environmental justice. As already stated, climate-related impacts generate irreparable consequences on human being's livelihood. From one side, developing countries and related social groups have always asked for remedies to climate-related loss, while on the other side, developed countries has always tried to avoid having assigned to themselves the responsibility for climate-related damages in order not to implement policy initiatives to deal with them. Within the United Nation Framework of Climate Change, this theme was developed by the 19th Conference of the Parties (COP19) in 2013. At that moment, the WIM, as anticipated before, was established. The introduction of this mechanism was considered by the developing countries as a success because it gave them the possibility to be supported by developed countries in a common dialogue based on the idea that developed countries, which are the ones who polluted more, have the duty to mobilize resources and capacity for supporting the poorest countries and preventing the risks caused by climate-related hazards.

In February 2022, the second instalment of the Sixth Amendment Report on Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation was published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The IPCC is the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change. It was established in 1988 with the aim of providing periodical scientific and socio-economic assessments regarding climate change and advancing adaptation and mitigations measures. The IPCC was conceived by the United

Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and it is composed by 195 member countries. The Sixth Amendment Report highlights the three main principles of climate justice (of which two of them have been highlighted before), which are: “distributive justice, procedural justice and recognition. Distributive justice refers to the allocation of burdens and benefits among individuals, nations and generations; procedural justice refers to who decides and participates in decision-making; and recognition entails basic respect and robust engagement with and fair consideration of diverse cultures and perspectives. To go deeper into these concepts, it can be said that the distributive justice is particularly important for adaptation measures to ensure fairness between individuals, fairness between states and fairness between generations⁴⁵. Fairness between individuals makes reference to the fact that the distribution of environmental risks should not involve only some specific individuals. Fairness between states is based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, highlighting the idea that all states must engage in the protection of the environment, but the type of actions implemented depends on the country’s economic situation. Fairness between generations means the obligation to guarantee to future generation a dignified life. Procedural justice makes reference to the integrity of the procedures to ensure that decisions are made following a fair process.

CHAPTER 2 - TEXTILE AND APPAREL INDUSTRY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

2.1 Why Southeast Asia as subject of study

Southeast Asia can be considered one of the most exposed regions to climate change and therefore to environmental hazards, with its vast and densely inhabited coasts, huge agricultural areas and with an important part of the population living below the poverty line. As stated in the issue brief prepared by the United Nations on the occasion of the Roundtable on “Ensuring access to environmental justice for all: challenges and opportunities in Southeast Asia”, held in 2021 as part of the Conference on Southeast Asia’s Challenges to Sustainable and Inclusive Development, “Southeast Asian population of 640 million people faces risks such as extreme weather events and rising sea levels. With heavily populated coastal regions the consequences include uninhabitable lands and vast displacements and migrations”¹. The United Nation Environment Programme (UNEP) stressed this point also in the publication “Climate Change and Human Rights”, stating that “Climate change threatens the effective enjoyment of a broad range of human rights of individuals, peoples and communities across the sub-region. Climate change threatens fundamental rights: to life, to health, to shelter, and to food and water, among others”². But why is this area so vulnerable to environmental hazards?

Geographically, when referring to this territory we consider the physical region situated approximately between the Southern China and the North side of Australia, within the Indian and Pacific oceans. Based on the United Nations Geoscheme, Southeast Asia is one of the macro-regions of the Asia continent. The region, composed of eleven countries (Brunei, Myanmar, Cambodia, Timor-Leste, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam), develops between the Indochinese peninsula and an archipelago made of islands that spread towards Australia. This area is highly seismic and numerous volcanos characterized the majority of the islands. The Northern and Eastern sides of the archipelago are lined by oceanic trenches that witness the sinking of the oceanic crust in the collision between the Pacific and Eurasian continental shelves. Temperature is high and rains are heavy. Tropical storms are diffused and typhoons to, particularly in the monsoon season.

2.2 Data about climate change in Southeast Asia

Because of its territorial conformation, Southeast Asia is by its nature more exposed to environmental threats. In fact, even if the region is considered as one of the most quickly growing of the world, “with long coastlines, high concentration of population and economic activity in coastal areas, reliance on agriculture in providing livelihoods for a large segment of the population, especially those living in poverty, and dependence on natural resources and forestry to drive development, it is highly vulnerable to the harsh impact of climate change”³. If we take into consideration one of the major causes of climate change that is global warming, temperature will risk hitting the 1.5C level within, or even before, the 2030s. In this regard, IPCC forecasts harsh consequences in particular for Southeast Asia. Every five or six years, the IPCC publishes a review report with the most updated knowledge on the science, the impacts and the economics of climate change that has to be approved by all the members of the panel. In 2021 the IPCC published the first instalment from Working Group I on the scientific basis of climate change (IPCC6AR). What the report states is that, independently of the future emission pathways over the next two decades, temperature will rise at least up to 2050. Temperature could stop growing beyond 2050 if we manage to achieve next zero emissions by that year. This will lead to dangerous weather extremes and rising sea levels in the coming years. As anticipated, the research forecasts harsh climate change’s impacts especially for Southeast Asia, considered one of the world’s most delicate and exposed regions to climate change. Even if this region is expected to warm moderately less if compared to the global average, sea levels are rising at an overwhelming fast pace, reducing the space where inhabitants of the coasts live. It is no coincidence that, at a global level, the majority of cities that risk coastal flooding are situated in Southeast Asia. In fact, as reported by C40 cities, one of the most well-known network of cities that collaborate for

fighting climate change, Southeast Asia cities such as Jakarta, Manila, and Bangkok are particularly vulnerable to sea level rise⁴. As a matter of fact, according to the Global Climate Risk Index, average temperatures in Southeast Asia have been continuously raising since the Sixties. More specifically, Vietnam, Myanmar, the Philippines and Thailand are among the ten countries in the world most affected by climate change in the past 20 years”⁵.

To better understand the above information, the charts below taken from the International Monetary Fund Climate Change Dashboard⁶, can give a deeper insight about the phenomenon of climate change in Asia and the related climate hazards. In the following charts and graphs some Southeast Asian countries have been selected and analysed through data about the annual surface temperature change, the change in mean sea levels and the climate-related disaster frequency. The comparison between data dating back to the 1960-2000 period and more contemporary will demonstrate that Southeast Asian territories are particularly vulnerable and exposed to climate hazards.

Annual Surface Temperature Change:

this indicator analyses the trends in surface temperature change and in this case it shows how every twenty years, from 1961 to 2021, the temperature in Southeast countries has been increasing. More specifically, the indicators present in the fourth line is: “Temperature change with respect to a baseline climatology, corresponding to the period 1951-1980”

| Country | ISO2 | ISO3 | Indicator | Code | Unit | Source | 1961 | 1980 | 2000 | 2021 |
|-------------|------|------|--------------------------------|-----------|----------------|-------------------------------|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| Cambodia | KH | KHM | Temperature change with res... | ECNCIT_dC | Degree Celsius | Food and Agriculture Organiz. | -0.062 | 0.332 | 0.253 | 0.893 |
| Indonesia | ID | IDN | Temperature change with res... | ECNCIT_dC | Degree Celsius | Food and Agriculture Organiz. | -0.095 | 0.253 | 0.285 | 0.994 |
| Myanmar | MM | MMR | Temperature change with res... | ECNCIT_dC | Degree Celsius | Food and Agriculture Organiz. | 0.005 | 0.313 | 0.11 | 1.565 |
| Philippines | PH | PHL | Temperature change with res... | ECNCIT_dC | Degree Celsius | Food and Agriculture Organiz. | -0.142 | 0.147 | 0.581 | 1.179 |
| Thailand | TH | THA | Temperature change with res... | ECNCIT_dC | Degree Celsius | Food and Agriculture Organiz. | -0.154 | 0.519 | 0.088 | 1.067 |
| Vietnam | VN | VNM | Temperature change with res... | ECNCIT_dC | Degree Celsius | Food and Agriculture Organiz. | 0.002 | 0.31 | 0.182 | 1.193 |

Table 4: Annual Surface Temperature Change in Southeast Asia compared to 1961. Source: IMF Climate Change Dashboard

More specifically, if we take just the data of one of these countries such as Vietnam as an example, and we transform it into a graph, the change in temperature between 1961 and 2021 is even more evident:

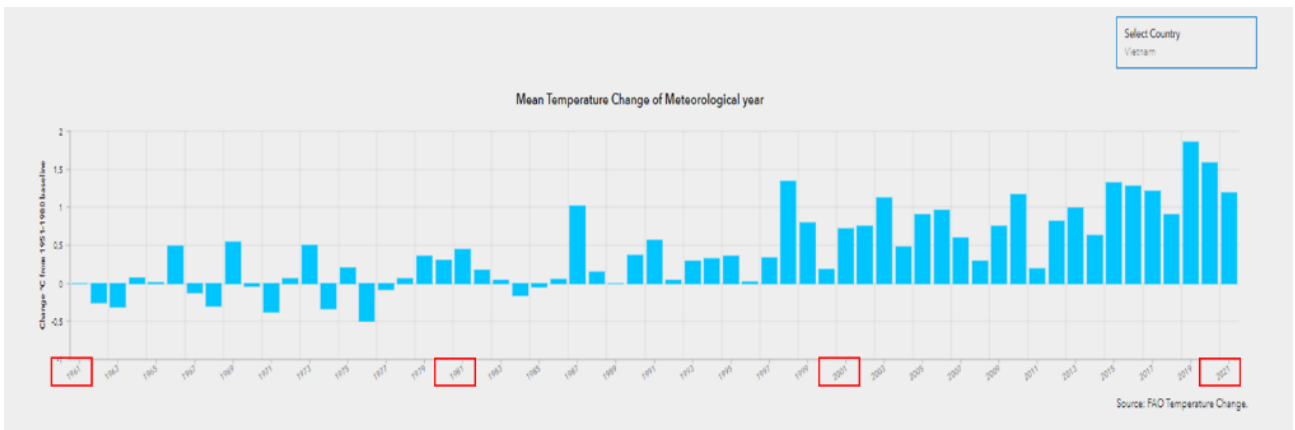


Table 5: Mean Temperature Change of Meteorological year. Source: IMF Climate Change Dashboard

Change in mean sea levels:

This is an indicator that show the global rise of sea levels since 1992. The data are monitored by satellite altimeters that periodically monitor the distance from the satellite up to the sea surface. In this case I have selected as an example the Bay Bengal, which is one of the main seas bordering with Southeast Asia. From the graph it is evident that the Bay Bengal is among the seas and oceans with the highest sea level rise since 1992 (3.7 inches).

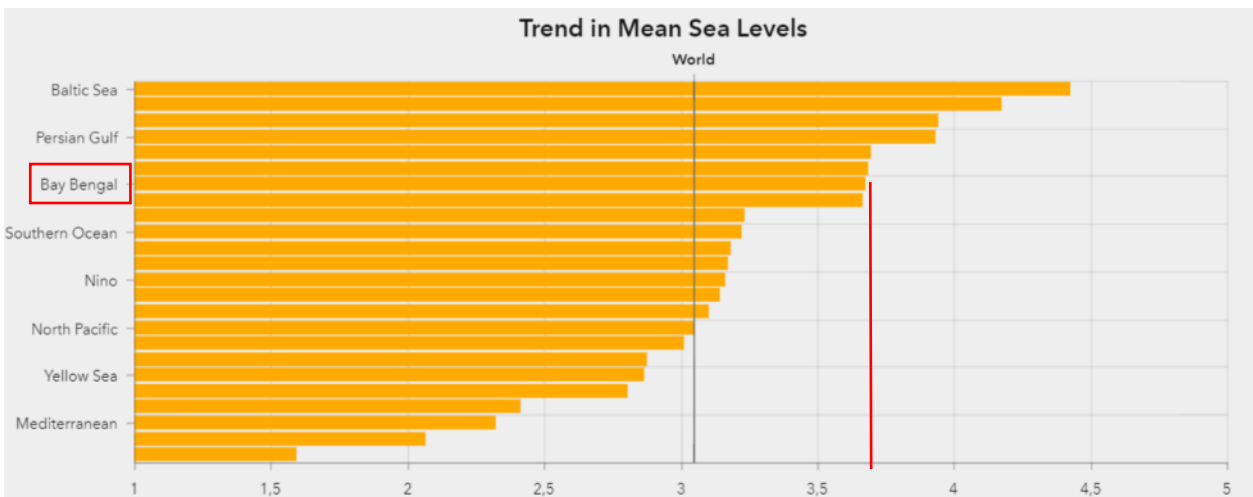


Table 7: Trend in Mean Sea Levels. Source: IMF Climate Change Dashboard

Climate related disaster frequency:

This indicator depicts the evolution of natural disaster within climate change from 1980 onwards.

In this graph too, specifically focused on Thailand, it can be perceived how, before 2000 floods were present but with a lower incidence if compared to the year after 2000. Besides, in the last two decades new climate hazards appear more frequently in the country such as drought, wildfire and extreme temperatures.

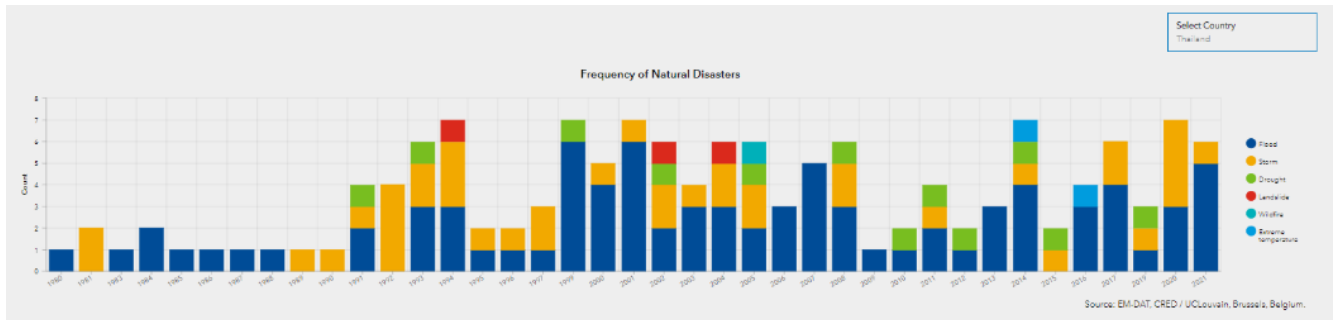


Figure 6: Frequency of Natural Disasters. Source: IMF Climate Change Dashboard

2.3 Climate change and human activity

In this regard, the IPCC’s report confirms that human activities are indisputably the main causes of the increasing climate hazards such as rising temperatures, increasingly common flood and more and more frequent droughts: “It is unequivocal that human influence has warmed the atmosphere, ocean and land. Widespread and rapid changes in the atmosphere, ocean, cryosphere and biosphere have occurred”⁷. Concerning human activity and therefore the economy, as already said, Southeast Asia is one of the most fast-growing regions in the world and many international industries consider this area as a potential one for developing their business.

Before focusing on the specific industrial sector to whom this thesis is dedicated, a general overview of Southeast Asia economic history is necessary. Before the arrival of the Europeans, spices were the main trade within the region, developed by Indian and Arab merchants. With the arrival of Europeans by the Sixteenth and Seventeenth centuries, came also the beginning of colonization period that reached its peak with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, when Western enterprises broke the Chinese trade monopoly and promoted the production of rice as the first source of exports. At a social level, the turning of Southeast Asia economy into a more globalized one provoked an impact on class differences with the result of a wider disparity among the rich and the poor ones. After the independency of most of the region’s countries obtained after World War II, the economic growth of the region has prioritised industrialization rather than agriculture, that in any case remains central and fundamental for the subsistence of the majority of those countries. Industrialization there evolved

quite recently, mostly from the 1960s and towards the end of the Twentieth century improved, for some countries, thanks also to the creation of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the cooperation among the states that took part in it. Founded in 1967 by the countries of Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines and expanded with the entry of Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Birmania, the aim of the association is the economic, political and cultural development of the region. Among the reasons of this growth there is a greater flexibility towards the Chinese and Indian economies that allow a better adaptation to the international markets' exigencies. However, even if the formation of the ASEAN brought to a significant economic development to the member countries, it also created an important disparity with those countries that are not part of it. More specifically, those taking part of the association, such as Brunei, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore and Thailand, have gone through an effective economic development starting from the 1960s, while non-ASEAN countries have experienced an evidently slower rate. From the 1960s on, and particularly during the 1980s, the manufacturing industry played a central role in the development of ASEAN economies. "Small factories dominate both in terms of the number of companies and the number of workers employed. Agricultural processing is most important in virtually all nations. The notable exception is Singapore, where the manufacture of a variety of products, headed by electrical and electronic and transport equipment, is dominant. In Thailand, Myanmar, and the Philippines, textiles and clothing are significant, as is the chemical industry in Thailand and Indonesia. Light, labour-intensive goods, such as electrical and electronic products, are increasingly important. It is in the manufacture of these products and textiles that the most employment has been gained"⁸.

2.4 Why the textile and apparel industry as subject of study

As just mentioned, the manufactory industry is the one that starting from the 1960s generated the most employment in some of Southeast Asian countries. To be clear, the manufactory industry comprehends all those industrial branches in which raw materials are processed and transformed into finished products. Among this sector, textile and apparel production occupies a great portion of manufactory production. In this case too, it can be useful to clarify what "textile" and "apparel" stand for, in order to better understand the next paragraphs. As stated in the European Commission Staff Working Document (SWD) of 2017 entitled "Sustainable garment value chains through EU development action", the textile industry is commonly related to the production of the fabrics and therefore the transformation of raw materials, while on the contrary the apparel industry (also called garment/clothing/fashion industry) refers to the sewing and therefore the production of garments

made with the fabrics produced by the textile industry and not only⁹. Despite this distinction, it must be remembered that the two industries are strictly linked and depends on each other as one is the continuity of the other. It can be also said that the garment industry could be shifted into two main realities: the high-quality garment industry, whose production is generally concentrated in developed countries, and the low-quality garment industry (fast fashion), characterized by mass production concentrated in developing countries. Moreover, to add more information regarding this kind of industry, it can be sad that the clothing production is a chain in which Western retailers, decide the main actions what concerns design, marketing and sales. While the practical part (production of clothes) is offshored to third parties mainly located in Asia. The clothing production and supply chain is in fact characterized by the evolution of raw materials into finished products, on the contrary the value chain is made up of functions that increase the economic value of the garment at every step. The garment supply chain and the value chain together create the global value chain. More precisely, this chain is formed by five different stages that, according to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), can be resumed as followed¹⁰:

1. Raw material supply (both natural and synthetic fibres)
2. Components' provision for garment assembly (such as yarns and fabrics)
3. Production networks formed by clothing factories that follow the cutting, sewing, ironing
4. Wet processes by domestic and overseas subcontractors, such as printing dyeing and washing
5. Export channels and marketing networks up to retail to the final consumer

2.5 Textile and apparel industries' diffusion in Southeast Asia

Why are those type of industries particularly diffused in Southeast Asian countries? Basically, it can be stated that the textile and apparel industry is historically represented as a jump-start industry for economic development in developing countries for the fact that it is characterised by a manpower-intensive sector that has low start-up costs, therefore it was among the first industries to globalize with the rise of export-oriented neoliberal policies. On average, apparel production represents the 50% of manufacturing workforce in the principal garment exporting countries in Asia. As a matter of fact, according to the World Trade Organization (WTO), "Asia alone accounts for 58.4% of world clothing and textile exports"¹¹. As it can be deduced, this general percentage clearly comprehends not only exports from Southeast Asian countries but also from other main Asian textile producers which are for instance Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka. Asia therefore came to be known as the "clothing factory of the world". For what concerns this thesis and the area under study, the European Parliament

Research Service assumed that the textile industry is a central economic sector in Southeast Asia, as the data below can confirm.

“Textile goods amount to 15% of the value of all Vietnam's exports. The Vietnamese textile industry, with more than 3 800 companies giving employment to 2.2 million people, is the second export sector. The garment industry in Cambodia – the largest employer in the "formal economy" – has been driving GDP growth. Currently, the garment industry accounts for about 80% of Cambodia's total exports.

Indonesia's garment and clothing sector, highly concentrated on the island of Java, employs 1.1 million people, making it one of the most important elements of the country's manufacturing industry. The textile, leather products and footwear sectors combined were the fourth largest contributor to manufacturing industry”¹².

Before dealing with a deeper understanding of textile and apparel industry dynamics firstly worldwide and secondly with a focus on Southeast Asia, I want to introduce the reason why I have decided to develop my thesis on this sector and why it can be particularly relevant if studied in conjunction with environmental justice issues. I chose to investigate the textile and apparel industry particularly for the fact that it is the ultimate representation of what is and how it is constructed a global, and globalized, value chain. Because of its different stages in the production phase, from raw material to finished product, implemented in many diverse countries, at an extremely fast pace, the textile industry can really give an understanding of how the phenomenon of globalization within this specific sector has led to positive and negative consequences worldwide. This complexity that characterizes the textile supply chain, with its composite stakeholders and an intricate power balance, make this sector particularly suitable for understanding some international dynamics related also to environment and social movements. The globalization and development of textile industry in developing countries undoubtedly presents advantages and disadvantages. Even if this thesis is focused mainly on the negative consequences of this sector that brought to the emergence of environmental justice issues, there are diverse benefits that can be listed for better understanding the other side of the coin. From one side the globalization of textile value chain promotes and facilitates the exchanges with local producers in developing countries, enabling the acquisition of new skills and abilities and facilitating the access to new technologies. As already assumed, this industry is in fact a critical absorber of low-skilled workforce: for poor labourers, it is often the most attractive industry after agriculture. Garments are also an important driver of economic empowerment, with women accounting for a larger share of the workforce compared to other sectors. On the other side, because of its fast-pace

transformation, the apparel industry is often at the centre of social struggles and international debates fighting unethical trade, employment of children, excessive working hours and lacking of health and safety measures and therefore risky workplaces. For these factors, textile becomes a crucial actor in the comprehension of issues related to governance, globalization, human rights and ethical trade.

As mentioned before, the textile industry is among the industrial sectors that are contributing the most to the augmentation and worsening of environmental hazards, provoking not only a social cost as anticipated before but also an impactful environmental cost that has been generating every year higher and higher levels of pollution. The fashion industry is surely one of the most performing ones in terms of profit, at least in the last decade. In fact, generally speaking, in 2016 the multinational consulting firm McKinsey & Company reported that “the fashion industry represents an important part of our economies, with a value of more than 2.5 trillion \$USD and employing over 75 million people worldwide. The sector has seen spectacular growth over the past decades, as clothing production doubled between 2000 and 2014. While people bought 60% more garments in 2014 than in 2000, they only kept the clothes for half as long”¹³. Since fashion is growing so fast, awareness of which could be the negative environmental and social impacts is continuously growing. Particularly for what concern environmental justice issues, the IPCC Sixth Amendment Report on Climate Change of 2021 claims that “Climate change comes with widespread implications beyond the obvious planetary consequences, having an impact on everything from the economy to human health, where the consequences are not felt equally by all. The climate issue is a life issue that has begun to take hold on vulnerable communities globally, calling for immediate and widespread attention”¹⁴. In the next paragraph this social gap between “polluters” and “polluted” will be analysed through some data concerning the European Union in which the quantity of garments purchased per person has raised by 40% in less than 20 years, because of lower prices and the spreading of fast fashion. In this regard, “clothing accounts for between 2% and 10% of the environmental impact of EU consumption. This impact is often felt in third countries, as most production takes place abroad”¹⁵.

2.6 Offshoring of the textile and apparel industry in developing countries

In the previous paragraph there was a reference to the fact that during the last decades a different and new type of labour division developed worldwide. It was characterized mainly by the separation of the production chain into different phases localised in different countries, thus dividing the production modules that were formerly centralized in one site thus benefiting from the lower workforce costs. This new system does not necessarily require that the entire production chain should remain under

the control of the enterprise, on the contrary it would imply that some module would be outsourced to other firms. This was possible thanks to a series of trade agreements that will be deepened in this paragraph, with a focus on the trade relationship between Europe and East Asia.

First of all, it has been assumed how the consumption of products in European Union countries, more precisely the purchase of clothing, generates an environmental and social impact mostly in the developing countries where these garments are produced. This happens because of the huge quantities of water, chemicals and sometimes pesticides required to transform raw materials into final garments. As a matter of fact, at present an important portion of the textile and clothing value chains take place outside Western countries. For what concerns the European Union, according to the European Commission in 2015 the main exporters of textiles and apparel to the EU were China, Bangladesh, India, Cambodia and Vietnam¹⁶. More precisely, as already cited before, the 70% of European Union imports, for what concerns textiles and apparel, are from Asia. This considerable percentage, that is the result of years of decentralization of Western sites of production towards Eastern cheaper and faster supply value chains, shows how starting from 1990s European textile manufacturing began to decline. This downfall was the consequence of the stopping of quota-constrained trade and the ending of the Multi-Fibre Agreement (MFA) within the Uruguay Round that started in 1994. Since 1974, the Multi-Fibre Agreement has regulated the international textile and clothing trade worldwide through rules that limited the quantity of textile products that could be imported from developing countries to developed ones. The aim was to allow developed countries to be prepared to the managing of the ever growing imports coming from the developing world that could benefit from a comparative advantage given by the lower cost of labour. However, with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade's eight round (Uruguay Round) it was decided that the MFA would have been eliminated within ten years, abolishing all the quantitative restrictions on textile and clothing industry.

After this liberalisation from trade barriers, textile and clothing imports from developing countries to Europe started to soar from 33% in 2004 to 87% in 2012, mainly because of the relocation of production of European supply chains and the advent of a new type of retail and phenomenon known as fast fashion, characteristic of multinational retail chains. A central role in this reorganization of trade systems was played by China and its entry in 2001 in the World Trade Organization, that brought to a rapid soar of exports towards Europe in the first stage of this new free trade. Therefore, despite the MFA adjustment process that for almost ten years has tried to protect industries in developed countries, the majority of European Union manufactures were negatively impacted by the opening to global imports mainly from Asian countries. As anticipated, to keep up with these changes, European

textile and clothing industry privileged more and more the offshoring of parts of their value chains overseas. However, even if the opening towards Asia countries came mostly from 2005, it has to be said that the textile trade in some of these countries was already flourishing since the end of World War II. More specifically, already since the open-door policy of 1978, China has attracted textile and clothing producers worldwide because of the abundant supply of cheap and skilled labour. Besides, in the 1950s Japan emerged as the main producer and exporter of clothing worldwide but this primacy lasted up to the 1960s when it was penalized through the ratification of two arrangements that preceded the MFA, such as the Short Term Arrangement regarding international trade in Cotton Textiles (STA) in 1961 and the Long Term Arrangement regarding international trade in Cotton Textiles (LTA) from 1962 to 1973. With these two arrangements, the objective was to impose restrictions in order to avoid what was called “market disruption”. This definition emerged in the early 1960s when the GATT’s members agreed on limiting the trade of products imported at a cheaper price compared to those of the importing country, thus avoiding injuries to the domestic producers. This change allowed emerging countries such as Korea, Taiwan, Honk Kong and Singapore, known as the Four Tigers, to develop their textile and clothing industries, followed by a second group of exporters represented by some Southeast Asian countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand, considered the second generation of Newly Industrialized Countries. Following this historical transformation, the textile and apparel industry in Asia can be generally divided into the main territories:

1. China, which remains the largest exporter at a local and global level
2. South Asia, with Pakistan, Bangladesh and India
3. Southeast Asia, with Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar

While South Asia use mainly cotton fibers in its production, Southeast Asia tends to use mostly man-made fibers. This difference depends by the fact that in South Asia industries specialised in textile are most common and therefore have a larger possibility of producing with cotton-based fabrics because of its greater availability. Regarding exports, both regions export the majority of products towards Europe and US, just a minimal part of exports are addressed to intra-regional destinations.

The maps below, taken from the International Trade Centre¹⁷ that offers trade statistics for international business development, shows how Southeast Asian countries’ garment exports are particularly oriented and concentrated towards developed countries, in some case not only United States and Europe but also Japan and some areas of China. The concentration of developing countries’ exports are signalled through the red bubbles visible over the maps

List of importing markets for a textile product (clothing or other made-up textile articles) exported by Vietnam in 2021:

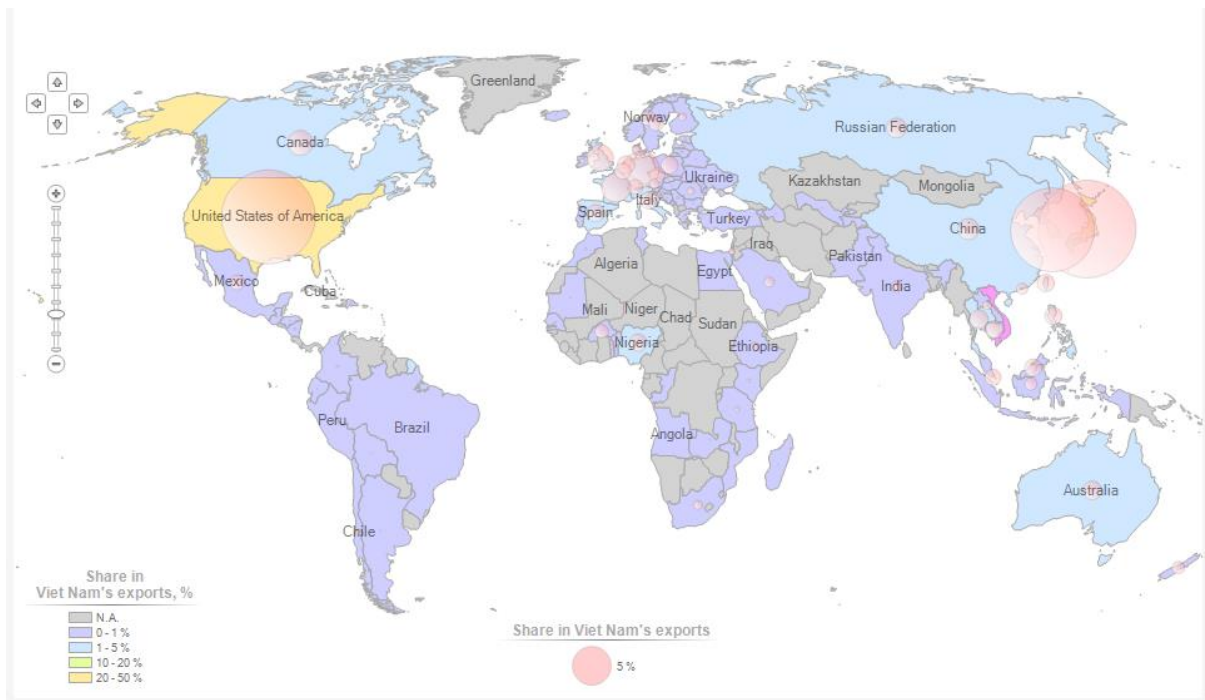


Figure 8: List of importing markets for a textile product in Vietnam. Source: International Trade Centre

List of importing markets for a textile product (clothing or other made-up textile articles) exported by Indonesia in 2021:

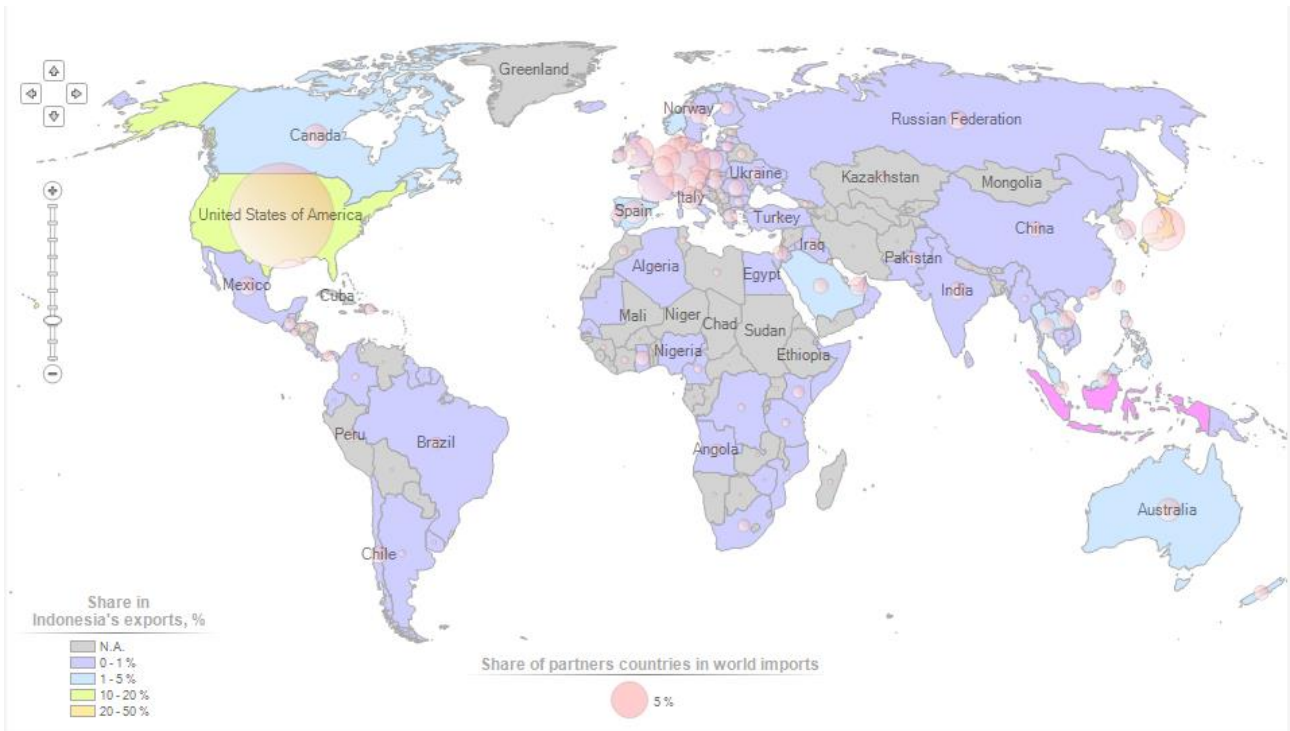


Figure 9: List of importing markets for a textile product in Indonesia. Source: International Trade Centre

List of importing markets for a textile product (clothing or other made-up textile articles) exported by Cambodia in 2021:

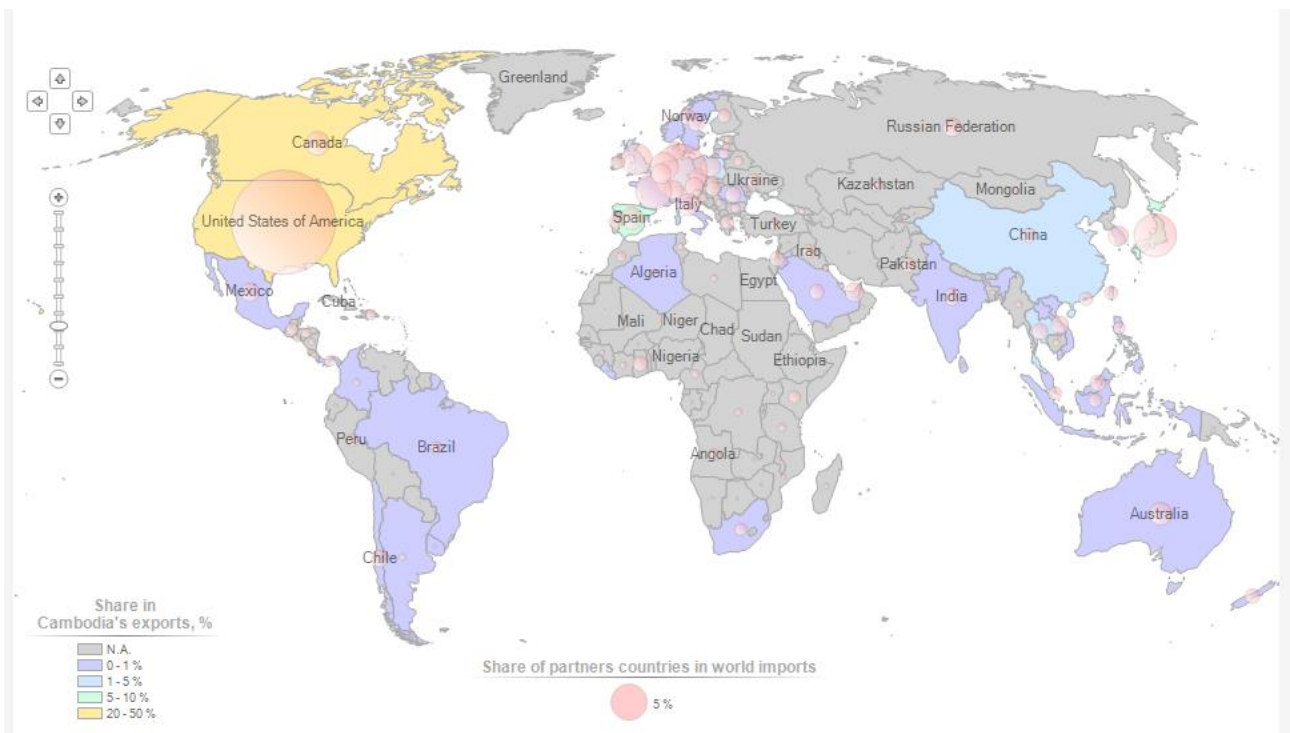


Figure 10: List of importing markets for a textile product in Cambodia. Source: International Trade Centre

As already stated, the textile and apparel industry is not just one of the most ancient trade industries, it is also one of the most spread industries worldwide, with its value chain dispersed through different manufacturing sectors and countries. It has also been considered as the largest employer of manufacturing workforce, helping both developed and developing countries to upgrade their economic development. However, the fact that this kind of industry is particularly oriented to the hiring of unskilled workforce turned it into a socioeconomically intense global battlefield¹⁸. On this matter, some regulations tried to promote economic development in developing countries in order to avoid social impacts. In 1947 the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and its thirty-eight articles were approved with the aim of reaching full employment, ameliorating the living standards, ensuring full use of the world's resources through a context of multilateral trade settings that provided the reduction of tariffs and non-tariff barriers and the abolition of discrimination in international commerce¹⁹. The GATT was implemented through eight multilateral negotiations (called rounds) that started in 1947 with the Geneva Round and ended in 1994 with the Uruguay Round, particularly crucial for the fact that it gave birth to the World Trade Organization and the Agreement on Textile and Clothing (ATC). Within these more or less 40 years a fundamental date for what concerns the involvement of developing countries is 1964, the year of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), which was conceived for implementing trade opportunities within developing nations in order to allow them to be more integrated into the global economic system²⁰. Another important moment for developing countries all along the GATT was the Tokyo Round, whose goal was again to increase the economic development of developing nations, through the broadening of globalized free trade and the insurance of a better quality of life. However, even if developing countries were actively included in the round negotiations, the round was not able to achieve an agreement in these domains. What remains now of the GATT is its successor, that is the WTO. Inside this organization there are two divisions that deal with the textile and apparel affairs, one that tackles apparel trade issues and the other that implements agreements and follows disputes. As already said, the abolition of the quota trading system revolutionized all over the world the perception of trade within the textile and garment industries. The possibility to fix trade restrictions was being abolished not only by the new agreements between nations but also because of the constant growing of new technologies allowing mobility of persons, resources, and capital at lower costs than before, and a race for greater access to cost efficiencies, creativity, emerging markets superseded the philosophy of control as the guiding principles of the major economic players"²¹.

How did Southeast Asia was impacted and reacted to this new system? First of all, it has already been assumed that the textile and apparel industry has been one of the key industries for the economic development of Southeast Asian countries (mostly among ASEAN), mainly because it is the first employer of manufactory workforce. After the emergence of the “Four Tigers” and Japan as the top producers of textiles and garments in the 1950s-1970s, and then China up to the beginning of the twenty-first century, the baton passed to the Newly Industrialized Countries of ASEAN who restructured the industry “allowing freer integration of quotas, lower financing rates, subsidized training of workers, more aggressive and organized marketing, incentives for integration and merger or increased efficiencies and investments by companies”²². More precisely after China, in Southeast Asia Vietnam and Cambodia became the most flourishing producers (together with Bangladesh in South Asia), exporting in 2015 a total of \$48 billion of clothing²³.

2.7 Environmental impact of textile and apparel industry

However, the economic development allowed by the textile and apparel industry in Southeast Asia brought also an environmental and social impacts that has been particularly felt within the region. As a matter of fact, the textile and apparel industry is considered as one of the most polluting industries in the world, representing a relevant source of greenhouse gas emissions. It has to be underlined that it is not easy to measure the environmental impacts of the textile and apparel industry because of the fragmentation of its value chain worldwide. However, according to a research made in 2017 by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, entitled “A new textiles economy: Redesigning fashion’s future”, “total greenhouse gas emissions from textiles production, at 1.2 billion tonnes annually, are more than those of all international flights and maritime shipping combined. Hazardous substances affect the health of both textile workers and wearers of clothes, and they escape into the environment. When washed, some garments release plastic microfibers, of which around half a million tonnes every year contribute to ocean pollution – 16 times more than plastic microbeads from cosmetics”²⁴. Another information that is given by this report is that in the last fifteen years the manufacturing of clothes is doubled mainly for two reasons that are interlinked: the first is the fact that the middle-class population worldwide has grown, and the second is the arrival of fast fashion, as we have already mentioned, that has guaranteed a fall in the price of clothing. With fast fashion huge quantities of non-renewable materials are used to make clothes that are worn just for a short period of time, after that garments are thrown away or incinerated. It is not easy to quantify the negative impacts of this fast-pace way of consuming, however the report “Pulse of the fashion industry” wrote by the Global Fashion Agenda in 2019 estimates that, in case the fashion industry would tackle the current

environmental and social negative impacts, the total advantage of the world economy could amount to 160 billion euros in 2030.²⁵ The production of clothes in developing countries is clearly strictly related to the changing habits of worldwide consumers. If we consider again the link with Europe, according to the European Apparel and Textile Confederation (EURATEX) in 2017 almost 5% of family expenditure in EU was towards textile products such as clothing and footwear.

Assuming that the textile and apparel industry is among the main emitters of GHG globally, where do these emissions originate? First of all from the raw materials themselves and from the chemicals used to transform the raw material into the final product. As a matter of fact, thousands of toxic substances are used already since the cultivation phases, from which natural textile fibres are extracted. As a matter of fact, transforming raw materials in yarn and then into fabrics and dyeing them required a substantial amount of chemicals. “More than 1 900 chemicals are used in the production of clothing, of which 165 the EU classifies as hazardous to health or the environment”²⁶. The European Chemical Agency in November 2020 took action to ban within European clothing production or imports a series of substances that if worn are considered harmful for human health, such as cadmium, arsenic, benzene and polyromantic hydrocarbons, chlorinated solvents, formaldehyde and others²⁷. However, the same restrictions are not applied also in developing countries where the use of dangerous chemicals is still permitted. In this case, besides being a treat to the health of workers who deal with them, chemicals also have an impact in the environment because waste substances are thrown unfiltered in freshwater systems, contaminating the soil and the waterways. What generally happens is that if industries in developed countries are obliged to respect strict environmental regulations, instead of avoiding the use of banned chemicals, they move the production in poor countries where environmental law is less strict, transforming the developing nations into a global dump. In some cases, the fairest western brands actively try to impose to producers the respect of their code of conduct and they also conduct audits to check if the code is respected, however in some cases is complicated to guarantee that labour standards are not violated, because of the difficulty to expand the regulation to the suppliers.

Concerning materials, cotton is the first fibre used in fashion industry and even if natural, its cultivation represents the 4% of the pesticides worldwide. In fact, according to a research made in 2015 by the European Clothing Action Plan (ECAP) this material is viewed as particularly controversial for the fact that it requires big amounts of water, land and fertilizers. Polyester (that originates from petroleum) is the second most used material in the production of garments after cotton, and to be produced it requires almost 93 billion cubic metres of water annually²⁸. One of the main problems of polyester is the fact that, even if it is washable at lower temperatures if compared

to cotton, once washed it releases every time thousands of micro plastic fibres that are finally thrown in the sea. In general, the majority of synthetic textiles are neither recyclable nor biodegradable and when thrown away or incinerated they contaminated the air with GHG emissions. As a matter of fact, Nylon generates nitric oxide, a greenhouse gas 300 times more damaging than the CO₂.

However, to understand where pollutions is produced it is not sufficient to look at chemicals, materials and the way they are produced or disposed; it is also necessary to analyse the entire life cycle of the product, from transport and shipping to retail. Even if it is not easy to track the level of pollution all along the value chain because of the involvement of different stakeholders in the process whose actions are not always verifiable by brands, according to the Pulse of the Fashion Industry report, the stage of transport and distribution seems to represent just the 2% of the environmental impacts caused by the industry, without considering the waste produced by the packaging, the tags and other materials related to the packing. In addition, pollution comes also within the end of life of a garment. In this regard, a research made by the European Clothing Action Plan underlines great disparities between EU countries for what concerns the gathering of clothes destined to recycle. The research highlights that “11% of used clothing and household textiles were collected in Italy in 2015 and more than 70 % in Germany”²⁹. Once garments are gathered, they can be considered as second-hand clothes or can be recycled. The issue with the first path related to the re-use of clothing, is that these second-hand garments are shipped to East Asian countries that often do not have the means to deal with this huge amount of products. Recycling too is still problematic; as stated by the report by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, “only less than one percent of all materials that are used in clothing is recycled back into clothing”³⁰.

When dealing with the climate change impacts caused by the textile and apparel industry the risk is to focus just on the consequences strictly related to the environment without considering the societal aspects of those people whose livelihood depends on the safety of the areas that surrounds them, where they work and live. The textile sector is in fact well-known for taking un-ethical decisions towards their workforce in developing countries and after Covid-19 pandemic the social and environmental justice issues have been even more overshadowed. Even if there are more and more sustainable brands engaged in promoting social justice, a great portion of the industry still do not take the responsibility to ensure the well-being of their workforce as they generally prefer to externalise all the social and climate impacts to external partners.

Before moving into the specificities of environmental justice cases in Southeast Asia in the next chapters, a global overview of the Environmental Justice Atlas with a focus on the conflicts related

to the industrial and utilities industries (and thus the manufacturing industries too) could be useful in order to understand how this sector is contributing at global level to the worsening of climate change impacts. Although the cases that appear in the map below are a lesser amount if compared to cases in Figure 1, it is in any case interesting to see how environmental justice cases related to the industrial and manufacturing sector are spread worldwide both in developed and developing countries. However, the cases that will be deepened in the next chapters related to Indonesia, Vietnam and Cambodia are not all present in the Environmental Justice Atlas.

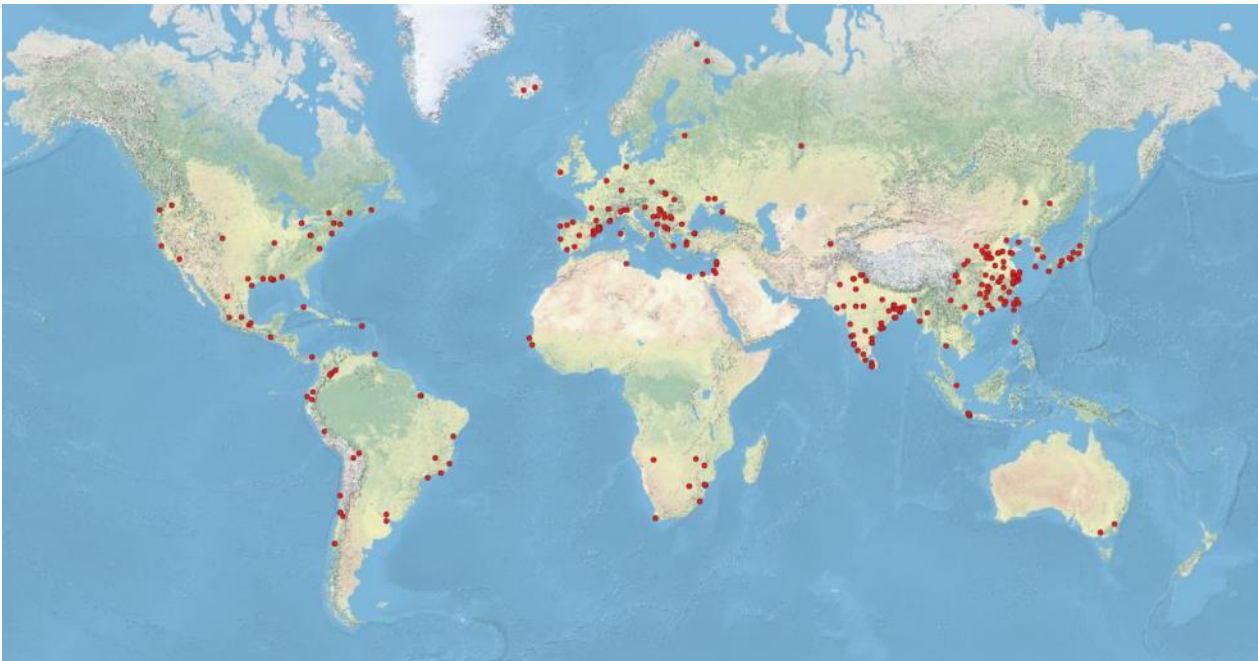


Figure 11: Global Environmental Justice Atlas – Industrial and Utilities conflicts. Source: EJAtlas

2.8 Environmental justice in Southeast Asia

If we consider Asia, despite the recent emergence of China's studies on environmental justice, this realm is still not developed as it is in the United States mainly for two main reasons: firstly, the study methodology utilized in United States could not be used to interpret the Asian contexts as in United states the research were race-based or income-based. This means that the majority of environmental justice cases in the United States are still today concentrated in those communities that are composed by a majority of people of color with low incomes. On the contrary, in China and in other Asian countries the race-based parameter is not always reliable for the fact that social inequality in these territories is principally evident between rural and urban citizens. People living in the capitals or big towns along the coasts can benefit from an easier access to healthcare services and they also find a more proactive response by authorities when asking for labour rights because of the presence of more

structured unions. Secondly, in some Asian countries, it is not always simple to recover data regarding pollution and therefore this could result as a limit for research. Concerning environmental justice and correlated social protests, scholars are still trying to conceptualize the Asian environmental movements (their causes and consequences), in an effort to find an “Asian approach” to environmental protests. This gap between American and Asian sources available is also given by the fact Asia is the biggest most extended continent on Earth and this implies a wide variety of intra-regional differences, made of numerous cultures, living standards, societies, economies and ecosystems. For this reason, it became more appropriate to study environmental movements dividing the continent into multiple sub-regions. As a matter of fact, the fight against climate change and for a fairer environment has developed in an uneven process, revealing many different nuances according to the region involved. For this reason, it can be stated that in Asia a unique environmental movement, based on the same values and roots, doesn’t exist. Another relevant factor in understanding why environmental justice in some Asian territories remains challenging, is the presence of unstable governments and precarious democracies. Actually, it has been found that allowing a public participation in politics is crucial for environmental movements to born and spread and only some Asian countries, such as South Korea and Indonesia, have seen a faster spread of environmental movements after the change of government. Furthermore, the presence and support of international organizations towards these territories has never been particularly efficient in assisting participatory and bottom-up activism. If we compare Asia, and specifically Southeast Asia, to European countries, this territory does not have mandatory rules for ensuring collective participation in the environmental policy decisions or that promotes the access to information. Therefore, environmental legislation and actions are often developed unilaterally. In general, it can be said that the development of environmental movements in Asia often matches with the political liberalization of the different countries. Some scholars in fact, emphasise how in newly independent countries the state and its policy are directly linked with the civil society and its battles for environmental protection³¹. Nevertheless, in the last decade environmental struggles are rising and environmental justice methodologies started to be used in research by many different developing countries in Asia.

2.9 Social justice within the textile and apparel industry

In the following paragraph the environmental justice debates and protests of three main countries will be deepened, with a particular focus of debates related to textile and garment production in those territories. Before giving an overview of related issues in Indonesia, Vietnam and Cambodia, it is important to underline that there is an episode that worldwide has become the emblem of social

injustice in the textile field, towards developing countries and vulnerable communities: this episode is the collapse of the Rana Plaza building in Bangladesh, that occurred the 24th April 2013. After China, Bangladesh can be considered as the second biggest exporter of garments in the world, counting almost 4 million of people working in this industry. On that occasion, an entire textile factory containing different production sites of Western brands felt down completely killing more than a thousand workers and injuring more than 2500 workers, mostly women. Even if the danger of the building was already known and numerous cracks were evident in the walls, employers decided to guarantee to workers that the building in which they were working was totally safe, however, few days after having discovered riskiness of the building, it collapsed. Five months after this tragedy, almost 100 workers died because they found themselves blocked in a burning fashion factory nearby Dhaka. This tragic episode raised the awareness of the fact that Western countries are more and more responsible of ensuring the well-being and safety of workers in developing countries. On that occasion, the International Labour Organization acted to set up the adoption of an Arrangement together with local and global stakeholders that could support the injured workers and compensate the families that lost their loved ones, in line with the Employment Injury Benefits Convention of 1964. Concerning the International Labour Organization (ILO) it is important to underline that already in 1996 the World Trade Organization recognized in Singapore the ILO as the competent body that can negotiate labour standards at a global level. Born in 1919 and represented by 187 member states, the ILO has the aim to ensure the promotion of social justice in the field of labour, setting standards and principles to guarantee workers' rights around the globe. The labour standards have been set within eight main fundamental conventions, covered by the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work of 1998. The eight fundamental conventions are:

1. Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise
2. Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining
3. Forced Labour
4. Abolition of Forced Labour
5. Minimum Age
6. Worst Forms of Child Labour
7. Equal Remuneration
8. Discrimination (Employment and Occupation)

The fundamental ILO conventions were not ratified by all Asia countries, in fact working conditions are quite diverse depending on the country. Generally, almost all Asian apparel exporting countries

guarantee minimum wage and regulate working time, however these regulations are often violated. Another common problem is the one related to infrastructure and machinery. It is in fact estimated that, due to the lack of protective equipment or to the low quality of the building, in the last two decades almost 1500 workers died and 3000 more were injured because of fires or destruction of textile factories³². In this context, the three countries located in Southeast Asia and selected to be analysed more in depth have been chosen for three main reasons, which are the fact that they present a different level of compliance with labour rights as well as a distinct type of textile and garment production and a multitude of facts and causes that led to environmental justice related issues. Meanwhile these three countries (Indonesia, Vietnam and Cambodia) have also a relevant common ground, based on the shared primacy that all three countries have in the export of garments and footwear products and on the fact that the majority of garment industries located there depends on, and work for, Western fashion brands.

2.10 Case of Indonesia

The first country to focus on is Indonesia. Indonesia is the largest country in Southeast Asia and the fourth most populous one in the world. It became a Republic after four years of struggles for independence from the Netherlands that lasted from 1945 to 1949. At present Indonesia is characterised by a Presidential system, whose candidates are nominated by political parties and elected by people for a maximum of two consecutive five-year terms. The government is composed by 38 ministers elected by the president while the Parliament is a bicameral one and it is named the People's Consultative Assembly. Indonesian territory is divided into 34 provinces, one of each has a local governor with autonomies in fields such as education, healthcare and environment. In the last 30 years, the country has been characterized by a rapid economic development that, besides leading the society (in particular people living in the city centres) to a wealthier status, has also brought to the exploitation of natural resources as well as to the cultural degradation of local communities. This neglect towards the environment and the local communities caused the spread of different conflicts between local citizens and the national law of the state; this happens because from one side the state tries to impose the official law in order to exploit natural resources to promote economic development, on the other side local communities try to enforce their customary law to protect the environment in which they live and depend on. Concerning the environment and the environmental regulations implemented at present, already in the Indonesian Constitution of 1945 presented an article that underlines the importance of protecting the environment and the communities, specifically Article 33 paragraph 3 that states: "Land and water and the natural resources contained therein shall

be controlled by the state and be utilized for the greatest welfare of the people”³³. After 1945, the major source of inspiration for Indonesian environmental law came with the United Nations Conference on Human Environment held in Stockholm in 1972, in which Indonesia participated as a delegate with the aim of improving human environment within the country, as article 2 of the conference states: “The protection and improvement of the human environment is a major issue which affects the well-being of peoples and economic development throughout the world; it is the urgent desire of the peoples of the whole world and the duty of all Governments”³⁴. This conference and the relative statement were followed by the 1982’s Basic Human Environment Management Act and by the 1997 Human Environment Management Act. The Basic Human Environment Management Act of 1982 aimed at regulating the protection of the environment for the benefit of the health and safety of people. Besides, this act also promotes a concept which is at the base of the sustainable development, that is to say the desire to balance harmoniously the environment as well as the economic development of the region taking into consideration the needs of future generations. The Human Environment Management Act of 1997 was based on the principles promoted during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, in which it was affirmed that to achieve sustainable development countries would have to ratify environmental protection regulations. This act was particularly focused on environmental justice principles, as the first the principle of the Conference states: “Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature.”

Concerning economy and trade, the economic development promoted by the state in the last decades has brought in Indonesia the spread of industrial sectors among which also the textile and apparel ones, that are still contributing to ensuring the country’s wealth, given the fact that Indonesia is among the ten most important producer in this field. More precisely, Indonesia’s textile sector born in the seventies and developed during the eighties, during a period of fast growth of the industry that brought to a relevant export-oriented trade and a consequent increase of new job positions, especially for women and low-skilled labour. However, with the conclusion of the Multi Fiber Agreement in 1994, Indonesia found in the near region of Vietnam a competitor that offered a lower labour costs. Because of the increasing in labour costs that from the 1990s in Indonesia have risen up to the 40%, industries decided to move the production in other territories such as the one in central Java where the labour costs were lower. According to the Clean Clothing Campaign, in Indonesia foreign brands that placed their production there are about 170³⁵, of which most of them work directly with suppliers that provide them with full services and that manage big orders, also known as CMT factories (Cut, Make, Trim).

In 2013, the textile and garment sector (including also leather and footwear) was considered the fourth biggest producer within the manufactory industry; and the garment industries in the countries were almost 3000, employing a total of more than 2 million of workers, especially women³⁶.

Concerning the ILO eight fundamental conventions, Indonesia ratified all of them, and as a matter of fact, it has demonstrated to be compliance in different field, from achieving international standards to the strict prohibition of child and forced labour and the promotion of freedom of association. Up to now the weak point of Indonesian companies is related to health and safety of workers, especially for the fact that employees are largely exposed to chemicals and other dangerous materials. In addition to health and safety issues related to the dangerous substances workers are in contact with, there is also the issue of safety, threatened by the presence of poor infrastructures. Local rules still do not have imposed a regulation and a standard for ensuring the quality of the buildings. This is followed by the presence of low wages and the difficulty of respecting a maximum of working hours per day. The main factor that often causes the prolonging of working hours is the fact that fast fashion is dramatically fast paced as big quantities of low quality products has to be produced faster and faster. Concerning the points of most compliance within national and international standards of labor regulations, as anticipated Indonesia is considered particularly in rule within themes like forced and child labour as well as in the field of freedom of association, allowing the development of trade unions. Concerning salaries, according to the International Labour Organization and the ILOSTAT, in the last years they have risen with an average of more or less the 10-15% every year³⁷.

Even if Indonesia is one of the most compliant countries in Southeast Asia in terms of working regulations, environmental justice problems within the field of the textile and apparel industries are present and spread across the country. What will be reported in the next contents are two of the main environmental justice disasters in the field of textile industry that happened in Indonesia. The first case dates back to 2017, when some textile factories polluted the Citarum River in West Java, while the second case dates back to 2006 and is related to a specific material which is viscose. Concerning the first case dedicated to the Citarum river, it has to be said that before the 1970s it was still full of aquatic life and fishermen considered it as a source of livelihood. After the seventies, due to the fact that many industrial activities started to be located along this site, the Citarum river began to be considered one of the most polluted river in the world. Among these industries, 447 of them are part of the textile and apparel sector that for years, due to the lack of governmental regulations, have polluted the river with contaminated wastewater resulting from the production of garments. The problem of the pollution does not stop at the river itself as the contaminated water has affected the

near villages of Linggar, Jelegong, Suka Mulya and many more. What was evident in these territories was the huge concentration of heavy metals such as chromium, copper and arsenic that were highly disrespectful of safety standards. Chromium, the main substance thrown into the river by the industries, is deployed as a colour dye and it is used also in the procession of fiber for perfecting textiles. This contaminated water, besides being harmful for the environment and the aquatic life, was also particularly dangerous for the health of people whose livelihood depends also on this river. This episode reported by the Environmental Justice Atlas under the classification “Industrial and Utilities Conflicts”³⁸ offers an example of a statement made by a local that clearly testifies and represent the notion of environmental justice: "I'm afraid of what's in the water...but I'm poor. So what can I do?"³⁹. More specifically, the main consequence of the textile industrial presence all along the river were related to the human skin that started to be irritated and scratchy, concerning agriculture the crops started to die soon after the new seeds were planted.

How did social movements react in response to this episode? Local organizations together with the Wahana Environment Indonesia and Greenpeace Southeast Indonesia, sued a lawsuit to the decision of the State Administrative Court Bandung Sumedang Regent's to allow the discharge of waste effluent to the three textile mills in the territory. What these organizations were sustaining was that environmental and social controls had not been considered before deciding to issue the effluent permissions. Organizations involved in this process were claiming that the absence of formal regulations that manage industrial waste was continuously impacting the daily life of local populations not only in the proximity of the river but also in neighbouring territories, as a local farmer said: "Our life has changed, our river and air is polluted, our paddy fields have become unproductive. Hundreds of hectares of rice fields are polluted, which affects the quality of the rice"⁴⁰. This contamination did not provoke only an economic damage but also a reduction of the quality and quantity of clean water for people living in the region. Eventually on May 2016 the court stated that the textile companies involved in the pollution of the Citarum river had to stop to throw their polluted effluent inside it because there had been evidence that permissions to do that had not been granted or had been given without considering the social and environmental impact. Despite the case ended successfully from a legal point of view, there is still no evidence on how these companies are discharging their wastewater and furthermore restoration is still lacking. An important factor to be underlined is the fact that the three main companies accused of having polluted the river are known for producing mainly for Western fashion brands and this is a first evidence that the offshoring of textile and apparel industries from Western to Eastern countries and the raising of fast fashion has

brought to the ever growing phenomenon of climate and environmental justice in developing countries.

The second environmental justice episode that happened in Indonesia is related to a specific material, which is viscose. This material, also known as rayon, has always been known and presented to consumers as a more sustainable version of polyester as it originates from cellulose and not from petroleum. Besides, compared to cotton which is another natural fiber, viscose is often preferred because of its lower need of water during the production phase. For these reasons, this material is one of the most common ones, used by almost every fashion brands worldwide. Despite the indisputable fact that originally viscose is a natural material, the problem lies in its production, which is commonly an unsustainable one. Viscose is first of all extracted from wood, whose pulp, through a chemical process that involved the use of carbon disulphide, turns into a yarn. This common process causes three main consequences that can be summarized as follows: the spread of deforestation in the areas where viscose is extracted, the contamination caused by factories during the waste disposal and the health hazards to which workers, as well as nearer communities, are exposed when dealing with this type of material. Concerning the amount of viscose production, Indonesia is one of the first producer in Southeast Asia and in 2016 it produced up to 439 billion tonnes of it⁴¹. The specific episode cited in this thesis involved a garment factory located in Cambodia that since the year 1982 has been producing viscose in Indonesia for an Austrian company. This plant is located near the Citarum River and near other villages, towns and crops that surrounded the factory. From January 1999 local citizens started to protest against the plant, destroying some furniture of the property. What residents were asking was a compensation for the health damages resulting from the inhalation of heavy sulphur gas odours. In 2006, the near town of Purwakarta asked to move their home to another area because of the chemical smells coming from the plant producing viscose. The toxins produced threatened residents that began to show signs as skin itchy skin, nausea, dizziness and lung-related problems. From an environmental and health point of view, citizens of the near villages started to avoid fishing in the river because of pollution and were also unable anymore to maintain other forms of activities including agriculture. What happened was that the textile company involved started to grant some credits to the population in order them to focus on other activities, but instead of generating a better welfare this action was perceived as a way to create even more dependency from this sector.

2.11 Case of Vietnam

The second country to focus on is Vietnam, a country that occupies the eastern part of Southeast Asia. Populated by almost 90 million of people, it is the country with the highest population density in Southeast Asia. In 1980 Vietnam adopted its first constitution and at that moment a Council of State and a Council of Ministers were elected. In 1992 the Council of State was replaced by a President elected by a National Assembly and the political structure was reformed, outlining a shift mainly in the economic sphere. From 1980 the majority of economic sectors started to be developed and privatized, allowing also the presence of foreign investors in the country. This economic development that rocketed in the last decades in Vietnam brought thousands of people out of poverty but at the same time the rapid industrialization brought many challenges in the field of climate and environmental justice. Concerning the environmental sphere, as affirmed at the 13th Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC in Bali in 2007, Vietnam is one of the most threatened countries in the world for what concerns the sea-level rise, because of its three miles of coast lines that every year are more and more eroded. This statement was reinforced by the Ong Germanwatch during the COP24 in Katowice, placing Hanoi as sixth in the global ranking referred to the countries most exposed to natural disasters. The threat comes not only for the populations and the crops located along the coasts but also for the ones that live on the banks of the Mekong delta. The rapid industrialization has been causing not only the sea-level rising but also dangerous pollution that conditions the health of the communities and their livelihood. Concerning regulations implemented at present in the field of environment, in 1992 Vietnam signed the United Nations Framework on Climate Change. It also signed the 1998 Kyoto Protocol and the Hyogo Framework for Action in 2005. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) is the body that in Vietnam implemented these international conventions at a local level. In 2013, this commitment towards the environment has been demonstrated also in 2013 within three articles of the Constitution:

Article 43: “Everyone has the right to live in fresh environment and has the duty to protect the environment.”

Article 50: “The Socialist Republic of Vietnam constructs an independent and sovereign economy which shall promote its internal resources, internationally cooperate, and closely connect with cultural development; practices social progressiveness and equality; protects the environment; and exercises industrialization and modernization of the country”

Article 63: “The State has a policy to protect the environment; manages, and effectively and stably use natural resources; protects the nature and biodiversity; takes initiative in prevention and resistance

against natural calamities and response to climate change. The State encourages all acts of protection of the environment, development and use of new energy and recycled energy. Organizations and individuals who cause environmental pollution, debilitate natural resources and weaken biodiversity shall be strictly dealt with and must be responsible for remedy and compensation for damage”⁴².

In addition to the articles drafted in the Constitution, that was updated in 2013, Vietnam has implemented different national initiatives and strategies to promote the reduction of climate change and the environmental protection. In 2008 the National Target Program to Respond to Climate Change was promoted with the aim of measuring the impact of climate change and of structuring action plans to fight it. Therefore, it had the objective of ensuring sustainable development also through the implementation of a green carbon economy. Three years later, the National Strategy on Climate Change was promulgated with a main focus of guaranteeing food security as well as energy, water and social security and public health, reducing poverty and promoting inclusivity in the gender field. The National Strategy on Climate Change also has to include the promotion of a low carbon economy and the improvement of citizens awareness for what concerns the environmental protection and most specifically the measures to adopt on a daily basis to reduce our footprint in household. On this occasion a National Committee on Climate Change was created as a key body for monitoring policies on climate change. This body is managed by the Prime Minister together with the the MONRE minister and other institutions, bodies and agencies also related to the National Assembly. The assignments drew up in the National Strategy comprehend the implementation of laws and mechanisms on climate change compliance with the specificities of the country together with global regulations and international conventions signed by Vietnam as a member. In 2012, the National Strategy on Environment Protection to 2020 With Visions to 2030 was signed with the main target of reducing GHG emissions and improving the resistance and adaptability to climate change. In the same year, the National Green Growth Strategy was approved too, with the aim of reducing GHG emissions by at least 1.5% every year up to 2030. This measure also was centred also on improving transportation and augmenting the amount of renewable energy sources and the expansion of biological agricultural. Concerning agriculture, an Action Plan Framework for Adaptation and Mitigation of Climate Change of the Agriculture and Rural Development Sector for the years 2008 up to 2020 has been implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture in 2008. The health and safety of citizens was at the core of this strategy, as well as the food security deriving from crops such as rice cultivation. It is particularly relevant to cite this Action Plan for the fact that in the following contents it will be underlined, through the presentation of two episodes, how the development of the textile

and apparel industry in Vietnam can also present dangerous consequences for the farmers and the agricultural sector.

As a matter of fact, as in Indonesia, in Vietnam too one of the economic sectors that has developed most rapidly in the last decades has been the garment sector, in particular from the early 2000s and initially promoted by companies in United States that started to invest and create partnerships with this country. As a matter of fact, the apparel and textile sector is one of the largest industries in the country and a fundamental actor of the recent economic growth. Within this sector, Vietnam has become a major exporter particularly for what concern sport and footwear products, which represent a low-margin and high-volume type of production. In 2017 textile industry was the largest export sector in Vietnam, with 2 million employees and more or less 6000 fashion firms that operate in this country, and almost half of them are export oriented. The main countries towards which Vietnam exported its products are Western ones, including both United States and Europe⁴³. As a matter of fact, if we consider the total of Foreign Direct Investment in Vietnam in 2015, businesses represented the 63% of the while Vietnam's export value, and the portion of FDI represented by apparel is even bigger, with 76,6%⁴⁴. Almost all the companies (70%) produce final products while the rest is specialized in support functions such as dyeing, spinning, weaving, and trimming. The reason why the country is particularly specialized in garment production rather than textile is given by the fact that, even if it invested in the development of textile activities, the majority of raw materials are still produced in China and imported to Vietnam to be transformed into finished products.

Before focusing on the two specific case studies that well represented the environmental justice in Vietnam, the following lines will give some highlights about the working situation and conditions in the textile and apparel sector within the country. According to the International Labour Organization, the areas in which industries located in Vietnam are most compliant are the ones of child labour and discrimination. On the contrary, it is more difficult to find conformity in fields like collective bargaining and compensation. Nevertheless, the majority of issues are concentrated within the areas both of security of infrastructures as well as the management of working time. This non-compliance explains why Vietnam the textile industry, according to an analysis made by the ILO, is the sector that generates more strikes (the 40% of national strikes are organized to protest against textile and apparel factories). For what regards the wages, even if Vietnamese workers are experiences a rise in salaries, this augmentation cannot sustain the expenses caused by inflation and the general augmentation of the cost of living. Regarding the working time, as anticipated before this is one of the biggest problems in Vietnamese fashion industries whose working rhythms often brought workers

to do overtime. A research commissioned in 2017 by a German Association has shown how the problem of overtime is particularly present during the peak seasons, where workers exceeds their schedule reaching up to 75 hours of work every week⁴⁵. Concerning the problems related to infrastructure, Better Work, an association that partners with the ILO found that in more than a half of the factories analysed there are issues related to the storage of dangerous chemicals that are missing, emergency exits are not adequately reported, or they are not working as they should, fire alarms are often lacking. In Vietnam a major problem is also the gender gap. In garment factories the majority of manager are men while most of workers are women. More specifically, women represented the 80% of the entire workforce but they often do not have the possibility to benefit from maternity leave for an adequate period.

From an environmental justice point of view, as anticipated the spread of the textile and apparel industry in Vietnam has generated a series of problems that put at stake not only the neighbouring lands and water but also the livelihood of communities whose life and subsistence depends on these resources. Given the fact that citizens in Vietnam are particularly active in strikes and protests against this sector, episodes of protests that testify the dangerous consequences of fashion productions are quite common. One of these episodes that has testified the reactivity and determination of Vietnamese population when protesting for environmental justice took place in 2017 in a city near Hanoi (Hai Duong), where workers of a textile factory producing for big fashion brands, decided to promote a blockade with the aim of closing it down, blocking the entrance of the factory. Protests began for the fact that the factory, that was operating since 2015 in Hau Duong, started to disperse smokes and bad smells that were bothering to be beard by the nearer communities. After some searching it was discovered that the smell came from the wastewater resulting from the factory's production. What was found from analysing the water was that its chemicals composers weren't respecting the standards imposing a limit on acidity and alkalinity present, as well as on colour and other chemical substances. For this reason, the factory was fined with 30 thousand dollars by the Hai Duong authority. Nevertheless residents, still worried by the unhealthy methods of production that continued to be pursued by the company, decided to organize a blockade and they remained inside the factory even if the authority gave them an ultimatum to abandon the structure within three days. The company, accusing the workers of lying, stated that in the previous months there had been just one discharge of water and that it even didn't reach the river nearby. From an economic point of view, the factory affirmed to have lost the 10% of its sales because of this closure. After the 30 thousand fine in December, the company was hit by another fine of almost 15 thousand dollars for having failed to provide the documents requested by the authority.

Another protest that represents the fight for environmental justice in Vietnam in the field the textile industry is a more recent one as it took place in 2020 because of the Covid-19 pandemic. As a matter of fact, the textile and apparel industry has particularly been affected by the pandemic and more specifically their supply chains located in developing countries. During 2020, brands worldwide, particularly the ones producing fast-fashion garments, suspended their production and started cancelling orders to affiliated factories in developing countries. This phenomenon clearly brought to high unemployment, for the fact that companies in developing countries do not have orders to produce and therefore workers were fired. Besides, those who weren't dismissed, they continued to work in unsafe conditions, as social distancing couldn't be respected as health and safety measures were lacking. Workers that caught Covid weren't allowed to benefit from sick leave and access to hospital and social services was difficult to obtain. Those who fall sick may not have insurance or sick pay coverage and struggle to access services in sourcing countries where medical infrastructure and public health systems were already weak even before the pandemic. In developing countries, the category who suffered the most was surely the one of women. As a matter of fact, thousands of women that are employed in this sector were threatened more than men by the cut of wages but also but gender-based racism actions such as the difficulty to access to health services. But, having said that, which is the link between the Covid-19 pandemic and the environmental justice issues? Recent studies, particularly developed in USA, has demonstrated how the most vulnerable communities in terms of pollution and health issues are also the one that are hit and impacted the most by coronavirus. Research done are mostly focused on the communities of colour in the United States while data about the interconnection between Covid-19 and environmental justice are still lacking in developing countries such as the ones located in Southeast Asia. However, before focusing on Covid-19 impacts in Vietnam and more specifically within workers in the textile and apparel industries, it could be interesting to understand how this interconnection is perceived in US in order to have a starting point of reflection for future reasoning. In the United States, the environmental health scientist Sacoby Wilson has explained why it is useful to analyse the pandemic through the concept and the lenses of the environmental justice⁴⁶. Professor Wilson makes reference to a research developed by the University of Harvard whose results proved that territories with a high level of air pollution present an higher Covid-19 mortality rate. In the case of United States, the highest mortality was seen in community of colour where communities were particularly exposed to air pollution: "in places where air pollution is a chronic problem, we have to pay particular attention to individuals who may be more exposed or vulnerable than others to polluted air, such as the homeless and those with chronic medical problems. These individuals may need more support than they did even before coronavirus came

along”⁴⁶. Researchers of the Harvard University analysed also 120 cities in China, where they found an even more relevant connection between air pollution and Covid-19 infection. More specifically, Chinese people affected severely by Covid-19 were also the ones that presented correlated diseases such as lung diseases caused by air pollution. They also found out that the territories that presented the highest level of air pollution in the 5 years that preceded the Covid-19 were also the territories with the most frequent coronavirus infections (22% more if compared to nearby territories). Last but not least, Harvard researchers assumed that nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) was linked with the ease of transmitting the infection⁴⁷. From a chemical point of view, the term nitrogen oxides (NO_x) makes reference to the group of NO, NO₂ as well as other sulphur and nitrogen oxides. Many of these substances are produced and dispersed in the atmosphere during the production of garments and they affect both the ozone layer as well as human health. Assumed that Harvard research was focused on China and China is not Vietnam and assumed the fact that such data and analysis on Vietnam and other Southeast Asian countries are not available now, in any case it could be said that the proximity of China and the fact that Vietnam is one of the biggest producers of textile and garments in the world, made us think that also in this country the presence of nitrogen oxides has accelerated the spread of the virus. For what concerns the strikes in 2020, in the month of February workers in a garment factory promoted a strike to ask the company to implement safety measures inside the working spaces in order to limit the risk to catch coronavirus, such as providing personal protective equipment (such as face masks or visors, sanitizing gel, disinfection sprays) and implementing additional measures to prevent the spread of the infection inside the workplace. On that specific occasion on February 2020, Vietnamese workers went on strike because one of their colleagues returning from China was not isolated even if he had coronavirus. In response to this protest, the authority decided to order to the factory the 14 days of isolation for this employee affected. Just one month after this episode, two workers in another garment factory passed out because they were not able to breathe due to a lack of oxygen. This led to a strike organized by the other employees during which they were asking for being permitted to stay at home if they were showing symptoms of Covid-19. After a first refuse by the factory, they deciding to take a step towards workers through the provision of masks and other personal protective equipment as well the creation of a healthier and safer environment and the permission of sick leave in case of illness. Another main strike of 2020 in Vietnam happened the 22 and 23 May 2020 and involved around a thousand workers that started to protest in order to ask for having their overtime paid and for implementing social actions related to the access of healthcare as well as retirement and unemployment support. All these labour rights were in fact granted before the spreading of the Covid-19 pandemic, however they stopped with the begging of the crisis in the garment sector due to orders cancellation. As a matter of fact, one of the factory towards which the

strike was addressed states that because of the fact that they were experience huge economic difficulties, all these measure would have been granted at small portions in the following months, but that they could not afford to retake all the workers back to work and that the ones unemployed wouldn't have received any compensation. Even if workers continued to protest, no substantial measures were taken by the factory involved.

2.12 Case of Cambodia

The third country to focus on is Cambodia. Located in the Indochinese mainland of Southeast Asia, it presents a population of almost 17 million of inhabitants. Cambodia entered the United Nations in 1982 and in 1991 a new national government was created, after an accord between the previous communist government and the opposition. In 1993, under the monitoring of UN, a coalition government was formed under the control of the prince. From that moment on Cambodia became a constitutional monarchy and a multiparty liberal democracy. In 1999 the political system became bicameral, with the National Assembly and the Senate. The executive power is exerted by the prime minister elected by the king. Concerning the economy, it can be said that during the last two decades Cambodia went through an important development, holding out the lower middle-income status in 2015 as stated by the World Bank. Pushed especially by tourism and the apparel industries, the annual growth of economic development presented a rate of 7.7% in 2019, transforming Cambodia into one of the fastest-raising economies worldwide⁴⁸. However, as it was the case in Indonesia and Vietnam, Cambodia too experienced this fast growth in economic sectors through a rapid exploitation of natural resources. As a matter of fact, as outlined by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), “Cambodia is ranked 145 out of 178 countries for the Environmental Performance Index with the overall score of 35,44 out of 100 points”⁴⁹. Furthermore, these results are exacerbated by the fact that Cambodia is, like Vietnam, among the most vulnerable countries in the world, often hit by rising sea level as well as by floods and storms. The exploitation and misuse of natural resources conditions mainly citizens such as old people, women and youngsters because of their dependency on natural resources for their subsistence and for the wellbeing of the ecosystems. This shock has been felt not only in natural and agricultural areas but also in urban ones, where acoustic pollution and waste represented the fact that regulations in the sphere of environment are still missing effectively.

Nevertheless, even if the situation from an environmental point of view in quite dramatic, the 1993 Cambodian Constitution laid the foundation for the drafting of a national environmental law. What follows are the three articles of the constitution that stipulated the commitment to protect and manage the environment in a sustainable way:

Article 58: “State property comprises land, underground mineral resources, mountains, sea, undersea, continental shelf, coastline, airspace, islands, rivers, canals, streams, lakes, forests, natural resources, economic and cultural centres, bases for national defence and other buildings determined as State property. The control, use and management of State properties shall be determined by law.”

Article 59: “The State shall protect the environment and the balance of natural resources and establish a precise plan for the management of land, water, airspace, wind, geology, ecological systems, mines, oil and gas, rocks and sand, gems, forests and forestry products, wildlife, fish and aquatic resources.”

Article 61: “The State shall promote economic development in all sectors and particularly in remote areas, especially in agriculture, handicrafts and industry, with attention to policies on water, electricity, roads and means of transportation, modern technology and credit systems.”

Besides, since 2013 the Royal Government of Cambodia is involved in a series of environmental reforms that are planned and managed within the Environmental Governance Reform for Sustainable Development Project. The aim of the project was basically to support the Royal Government to develop environmental-oriented reforms so as to implement a legal policy for safeguarding natural resources at risk and for carrying out sustainable development with a focus on the innovation of the Ministry of Environment.

As stated before, one of the most productive industries in Cambodia is the garment one. The country is in fact known for being a low-cost manufacturing point of reference for many countries and industries across the globe. Cambodian garment industry is in fact particularly export-oriented and is an integrated part of a different structured global supply chains. The fact that it is strategically positioned within the corridor of the Greater Mekong Sub region made it a market easy to access for Asian markets as well as for western ones. As a matter of fact, given also the fact that Cambodia entered the World Trade Organization in 2004, the main partner is European Union that represent the biggest market for Cambodian exports (40% of the whole apparel production), followed by United States and Japan. Since the ninetens, on the heels of the Multi-Fiber Arrangement, the state has started to implement some actions in order to push the industry growth in the international market in order to attract foreign investors. Up to 2020, Cambodia was part of the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) and thus it could take advantage, as a least developed country, of the European Union “Everything but Arms” system, that consists in permitting to some developing countries to enter EU markets through a duty-free system. From August 2020, some garments produced in Cambodia started to be subjected to EU customs regulations. As Phil Hogan, the EU Commissioner for Trade stated: “We have provided Cambodia with trade opportunities that let the country develop an export-

oriented industry and gave jobs to thousands of Cambodians. We stand by their side also now in the difficult circumstances caused by the pandemic. Nonetheless, our continued support does not diminish the urgent need for Cambodia to respect human rights and labour rights. I stand ready to continue our engagement and to restore fully free access to the EU market for products from Cambodia provided we see substantial improvement in that respect.⁵⁰”

Concerning our field of study, today the textile and apparel sector in Cambodia counts among 600 000 workers and the apparel companies located there are almost 600⁵¹. These companies, as the ones in Indonesia and Vietnam, usually work with cut-make-trim principle, this means that the raw material as well as the design of the product are finalized abroad and in Cambodia there is just the phase of assembling the final product together, cutting, sewing and dyeing it, mostly concentrated in factories in the proximity of the capital city Phnom Penh. Concerning the workforce, people employed in this kind of industry are generally low-skilled and poor, particularly women (the 90%). On this regard, gender discrimination is diffused, especially for what concerns pregnancy related issues. As a matter of fact, it is a common habit not to hire pregnant women or to review the contracts once a women become pregnant. In many other cases though, even if pregnant women are able to maintain their work, they can't proceed due to the lack of adequate workplace accommodations. Cambodia is one of the cheapest countries where to produce in Southeast Asia together with Myanmar and Laos. In fact, if we consider the minimum wage, in 2017 it was 153 US dollars, compared to the 300 dollars of Indonesia and 166 dollars of Vietnam. Besides giving lower wages, one of the main problems in Cambodia is the fact that, due to rapid rhythms of production, workers are often required to work overtime without an extra pay. Another issue is child labour violation, that besides being illegal for the fact that they are not adult, children are also required to work overtime. Another common problem is the prohibition of government to allow the creation of unions, as the lack of government controls and audits don't allow unions to implement labour rights. After the decision of EU to withdraw Cambodia from the EBA system, in 2019 the Cambodia Ministry of Labour is making significant changes. In January 2019, the Ministry of Labour introduced several labour law reforms. Among these was the introduction of bimonthly salary payments and seniority payments: compulsory, periodic payments made to employees with long term contracts. The government also introduced severance payments, which require employers to pay fixed-term contract employees at the end of a contract. Many people in the Cambodian garment industry face labour rights violations due to a lack of enforcement of labour laws. However, the Cambodian government and international fashion retailers are taking measures to improve working conditions. These measures are the first step to creating better environments and living wages for Cambodian garment workers.

Concerning environmental justice, one main problem in Cambodia that is threatening both the welfare of the population and the environment itself is the phenomenon of the fabric scraps. As a matter of fact, when analysing the environmental consequences of textile industry, a common oversight is to consider just the pollution generated during the effective phases of the production of a garment. However, where does all the extra textile that is no longer needed by the factories end up? One of the main problems resulting particularly from fast fashion is the consumers' idea that, as garments cost less you can afford to buy more. Within this mind-set, it is normal for a Western consumer to buy at least an item for month. The fast fashion industry that generates this mechanism is therefore ready to multiply its production with the awareness that a relevant portion of that production could be thrown away very soon by consumer (because it is not intended to last both for its low quality but also for the speed at which fashion trends change), or even worse could never been sold because of the massive quantity that is produced to maximise the production costs. The increasing request for fast fashion in Western world keeps on growing and this continues to generate the waste deriving from textile scraps: big quantities of garments are thrown into incinerators and landfills and, due to their synthetic composition mostly characterized by petroleum, they are not compostable, and they remain into the landfills for years.

Concerning textile waste in Cambodia, a 2022 specific research⁵² made by the lecturer in Human Geography Laurie Parsons of the University of Holloway, deep dive into this theme of the pre-consumer garment waste to show where these scraps actually finish when the factories conclude their production. This report is focused on Cambodia because it is in this country that, not too far from the capital, some textile and apparel factories burn garment waste, such as offcuts of fabric left during the production process, as a fuel for the functioning of electricity of the garment industry itself. Normally what happens is that for making electricity running, industries in developing countries used thousands of tonnes of wood causing the increasing deforestation of Cambodian lands. As a matter of fact, according to a report published by Disaster Trade⁵³ in 2021, almost 200 western garment factories use wood as a fuel for maintaining their infrastructures running. More specifically according to Parsons one third of the 558 companies that form the Garment manufacturers Association of Cambodia (GMAC), are using wood illegally as a fuel. This explains why in the last 20 years Cambodia has been touched by one of the toughest rates of deforestation, if we consider that in the seventies its territory was covered by 13 million hectares of forests and in 2019 the hectares left are just 2.7 million⁵⁴. According to the report, the garment industry is substantially contributing to deforestation as garment companies in Cambodia seems to burn more or less 562 tons of wood on a daily basis, which means an average of a thousand every year. On this regard, a research published

by the German government's international development agency (GIZ)⁵⁵, states that in Cambodia there are factories that produced even more than 60 tons of textile cut waste each month, some of them throw this residual product in landfills while some other as already anticipated burn it in order to produce electricity and therefore avoiding to have a cost for its disposal. This process, besides causing environmental damages to the natural ecosystem, it brought health disorders to the local communities that live nearby the factory. As outlined different times throughout the thesis, the garment factories using garment waste as a fuel in Cambodia produce mainly for Western companies, and in particular for fast-fashion retailers. This "dirtiest open secret" by the fashion industry, as the Fashion Revolution co-founder Orsola De Castro defines it, is a phenomenon particularly impactful in a time where because of Covid-19 many orders by Western brands has been cancelled, causing an increase of useless garments that turn into source of fuel, causing an increase also in environmental and health damage. As stated before, the use of garment as a fuel and its burning process causes and evident negative impact on citizens health but also on workers whose job consists of incinerating those garments inside the brick kiln. To give a deeper insight, a special report on global exposure to air pollution and its disease burden⁵⁶ highlights how in India the smokes coming out from the kilns was one of the principal cause of deaths related to respiratory complications. Unfortunately, this report does not focus on Cambodia too but the lecturer Laurie Parsons in its research has reported some data concerning the composition of the garments burned as well as some interviews made to the workers and citizens that live near these factories. During the analysis of garment composition, it has been found, as it was expected, that those garments contain a high quantity of toxic materials, from formaldehyde to ammonia, from heavy metals to polyvinyl chloride. One of the most dangerous substances analysed were the particles inside the classification PM2.5, known for causing huge respiratory risks and blood diseases. PM10 were also present, whose main consequence are the risk of eyes and throat irritation. Another frequent risk was the possibility of an unprompted fire break, caused by the high temperatures and the constant emission of gases registered inside the kiln.

Factories using garments are highly more polluting than the ones burning timber to produce electricity, however it has to be highlighted that deforestation doesn't present consequences just from an environmental point of view but also from a social and environmental justice one. This is because deforestation caused by the textile industry draws on the bigger problem of the illegal trade of wood which is present in Cambodia and creates harmful consequences to local and indigenous populations that inhabit the territories ravaged by deforestation, that are persecuted if they try to protect their lands. As stated in a research by the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime: "laws, regulations and policies designed to afford protection for Cambodian forests and the local and

indigenous people” are not being respected⁵⁷. As a matter of fact, illegal trade carries on at present in the area of Prey Lang which from 2016 has been designated as a wildlife protective territory. This protected area is controlled by different association such as the Prey Lang Community Network, a group that tries to monitor all the illegal actions within that area. This Prey Lang Community Network affirms that at present the deforestation in the area continues without any controls and that Indigenous peoples are feeling the impacts as they lose natural resources and the cultural importance of the forest. Moreover, if this hypothesis is still under study, it seems that deforestation is also one of the factors that is causing more and more drought episodes in Cambodia. The country has gone through different long periods of drought, and one of the toughest was in 2016 during which between 2 and 3 million people were touched by this lack of water resources.

In conclusion of this overview of Indonesia, Vietnam and Cambodia, what can be assumed is that, even if labour rights achievements in the garment industry are quite different across the three countries, there is a common factor that connects these three countries as well as the other developing countries in Southeast Asia. This point in common is referred to the fact that environmental damages as well as violation of human rights are difficult to track by Western brands that offshore their supply chains in the territories overseas as, either they do not have a direct and constant control, or they ignore the problem attributing the fault to affiliated third-party companies to which they assign the garment production. Therefore, even if domestically in Western countries regulations are strict and respected by the headquarters and their stakeholders, once abroad these regulations don't exist anymore, or if they exist, they are often not respected. This happens also because Western brands, besides not having direct control in factories overseas, they also rarely have environmental teams on site that can monitor the respect of production standards, and therefore what normally happens, particularly with fast fashion, is that problems are placed somewhere else where it is difficult to have scope for action. This lack of compliance of labour rights caused by the absence of an effective and well-functioning system of inspection confirms the fact that we are still far from the achievements of the environmental justice principles. Nevertheless, as it will be deepened in the next chapter, the fight against climate change and the protection of human rights in the most vulnerable countries are themes that are more and more at the centre of the international agenda and different trade regulations are being implemented in order to promote environmental justice worldwide and in Southeast Asia too.

CHAPTER 3 – RELEVANCE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE DEBATE WITHIN THE FASHION INDUSTRY FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

3.1 How the fashion industry became globalized

Before focusing on the relevance that the environmental justice debate presents within the field of the international relations, it is important to underline that the importance of this subject within the international politics has been accelerated over the last two centuries by the phenomenon of globalization, intended in this case as “the process by which the experience of everyday life, marked by the diffusion of commodities and ideas, is becoming standardized around the world”¹. The connection between the debate about environmental justice, the textile industry as well as the phenomenon of globalization is relevant to be underlined as a premise to the next paragraphs because, in an increasingly globalizing world, the environmental and social consequences of climate change are more likely to be felt in every part of the world, not only within the territories from where they usually originate. Therefore, with its strong influence and impact on the global scale, the fashion industry has the duty to contribute to the prevention of climate change and to the improvement of workers’ rights as an active stakeholder. But when and how this industry has reached the global scale?

From an historical point of view, the world of textile and fashion has undergone a significant transformation since the beginning of the globalization phenomenon. Globalization in fact started to impact the textile industry already since the eighteenth and nineteenth century in Europe, at the moment when the first industrial revolution started (from the year 1769) and the second industrial revolution followed (from the year 1821). During those two crucial periods, the economic system started to be revolutionized thanks to the introduction of unusual materials for that time such as coal and iron, and the arrival of steel and electricity that changed forever the production in many industrial sectors as well as the world of transports. Indeed, one of the starting point of globalization can be considered the building and inauguration of the first railways in Europe in the mid-nineteenth century. This new type of transport in fact, enabled the different countries to be more interconnected particularly from an economic point of view. Countries began to realize the huge possibility they had for exchanging goods in a faster and smoother way, improving their markets and reducing the time and the logistics cost related to transfers.

Besides, the arrival of internet and social networks allowed societies to develop a faster and more international communication and at the same time businesses has been able to spread even more their supply chains: production is not anymore concentrated in one industrial area, on the contrary its functions are decentralized across different countries or continents. In particular from 1980s when the economy started to become global, for what concerns the fashion industry the professor Joanne

Eicher coined the term “world fashion”² symbolizing the fact that this sector was reaching and influencing the global scale not only from the point of view of the production process but also for what concerns the distribution channels and the marketing campaigns. As a matter of fact, thanks to the impact that globalization has had on this industry, consumers all over the world are now constantly informed about the latest fashion trends and collections through a massive global advertisement promoted by social media. If we think for example to the shift that has happened starting from the twenty-first century, young people showed their openness to globalization and to a more open world also through a specific outfit mainly composed by jeans, sweatshirts as well as sneakers. This trend didn’t just symbolize a new Western kind of dressing, but it was also one of the first moment when globalization in fashion really became visible: youngsters around the world were dressing the same garments produced by the same big brands. If we consider in fact the words by Professor Leslie W. Rabine “globalization means an abundance of fashions sold by giant retailers who can update inventory, make transnational trade deals, and coordinate worldwide distribution of goods at the click of a computer. Consumers are purchasing the fantasy images of sexual power, athleticism, cool attitude, or carefree joy these brands disseminate in lavish, ubiquitous, hyper-visible marketing on high-tech electronic media. But much less visible is the effect of globalization on the production of fashion”³. In other words, what professor Leslie W. Rabine states is that the birth of a global style that breaks the national boundaries, heavily promoted by media and characterized by an homologation of dressing habits, hides a globalized and capitalistic system that depends on poorer countries.

This historical overview of globalization in the textile industry can be useful to understand from where the fashion industry started to become global and from which moment on this ecosystem required the advancement of international law and international relations in order to be driven and settled. As a matter of fact, as already seen in chapter 2, with the spreading of globalization, the fashion industry and its multinational enterprises offshored their production from their home country to subcontracted companies in developing countries. Because of the process of globalization and also the advancement of technology in the digital era, consumers started to approach a new type of market, easy to reach, with a wider offer and at a lower price. As a matter of fact, as a consequence of globalization the fashion industry significantly changed its connection with consumers, though a revolution in methods of production and sales approach, with handy fashion trends available to almost every segment of the population in developed countries. As it can be deductible, Western world is the one that apparently has benefited the most from globalization in general and within the fashion industry, for the fact that the Western consumer has the possibility to choose among a different variety of fashion trends that are sold by large global retailers, both in store and online, paying an affordable

amount of money that enable him or her to buy something else also the following months when a new trend comes out. Behind this change in consumption habits what resides is an enhancement of the globalized supply chain, through a faster and cheaper production process, enabled particularly by globalization that has guaranteed a cheaper workforce and the overture of international markets fundamental to create a worldwide diffused value chain. As a matter of fact, as a result of globalization, the production process can be offshored in an easier way to third-party companies around the world that often do not respect environmental and social standards for the fact that, being independent entrepreneurs, they are often not obliged to respect the legal standards and responsibilities to which fashion brands are submitted in developed countries. Hence, the offshoring to third-party companies enable fast fashion to maintain production's costs lower and to avoid any sort of negative direct implications.

To conclude, it can be stated that globalization has played and it is still playing a crucial part within the development of the fashion industry worldwide, deeply influencing its fast industrial change. Globalization allows the fashion industry to approach an infinite variety of new influences, cultures and styles and thus it has revolutionized the manner through which trends are spread and clothes are produced. The complex connection between globalization and the fashion industry underlines how this relationship comprehends both advantages and disadvantages: from one side, globalization permits to this sector first of all to minimize their costs of production in order to be competitive in a globalized market, and secondly it gives the possibility to different segments of the population to access to styles apparently abolishing social differentiation. On the other side globalization in the fashion industry and its capacity to reach every part of the world has also generated environmental as well as social issues in developing countries, for the fact that in a globalising world the effects of climate change are likely to reach every part of the world, beyond the areas where they have started. Climate change is a transboundary issue that, no matter the borders, can menace human rights worldwide.

3.2 Policy implications deriving from environmental justice

The following subchapters will be constructed with the aim to try to answer one main question that is: are policies that address environmental pollution delivering outcomes in line with the environmental justice issues? To analyse this question, I have chosen to deepen some of the initiatives implemented worldwide, at national and international level, both by state and non-state actors. By reading the following policies, it will be clear that the cases cited behind and the related environmental

policies implemented, testify that there is a growing tendency by state and non-state actors to implement a more and more integrated approach: the social and the environmental dimensions are closely interlinked, therefore, at least in theory, policies that address environmental pollution are surely trying to implement initiatives that respond also to the debate about environmental justice. In practice, in order to understand if a policy that addresses environmental pollution also responds to environmental related issues, there are two questions that could help to comprehend to what extent these types of policies implement an integrated approach. These questions are:

1. Does the environmental policy under consideration try to address the social inequalities experienced by those developing countries involved in the production of garments?
2. Is the environmental policy under consideration intended to pay for the eventual loss and damages experienced in developing countries and resulting from the negative impacts that this environmental policy is trying to address?

Even if the concept of environmental justice is a more and more fundamental theme for politics, sometimes it is still considered as a nebulous and abstract term that is complicated to define in practical terms⁴. Part of this issue can be related to the fact that the concept of environmental justice is a complex one and it is not always easy to be defined. For what concern environmental justice within the textile industry, throughout the previous chapters it has been underlined how the textile and apparel industry (and therefore the fashion industry) is one of the most spread in the world in terms of the distribution of the supply chain worldwide and also one of the most growing and profitable one from an economic point of view. This primacy, that has evolved worldwide together with the development of globalization, has led to a boost in the economic development of poorer countries but brought also to an environmental and social negative impact in those same countries and worldwide too. Therefore, assumed that textile industry is one of the most globalized one, its international dynamics (in particular the relations between developed and developing countries) are today relevant in shaping the international arena and the international politics. Besides, giving the fact that this industry (particularly the field represented by the fast fashion sector) is characterized by highly polluting production processes that directly involved mostly low-skilled workers, highlights how the developing countries where this sector has been offshored are negatively impacted from an environmental justice point of view. As a matter of fact, the examples of environmental justice debates presented in the previous chapter as well as the inherent violation of climate and human rights these debates embody, emphasize the assumption that we are dealing with a topic that is relevant for

the international relations and therefore that derives policy implications that should aim at reducing environmental pollution as well as eliminating social inequalities through the implementation of social and ecological standards.

Assumed the global relevance of the fashion industry and the necessity to implement international regulations, it can be stated that the only way to guarantee the respect of environmental justice principles where these principles are, or risk to be, violated is through the implementation of laws and policies by states and governments, whose involvement is fundamental for the creation of effective guidelines and local, national as well as international standards. However, the globalisation of the economy that developed in the last decades and that brought to the establishment of multinational corporations, made it difficult for states to assert their own power because of the growing influence that these multinational enterprises have when taking decisions in the social, economic and political spheres. Therefore, even if it should be the role of state to protect people from what can be considered business violations, they find it often difficult to do it in practice because they could easily fail in front of the bargaining power of companies. In the last decade a leading part in pushing the role of the state has been played directly by consumers. Being more and more attentive and aware from a social and environmental point of view, consumers are increasingly asking for products that are sustainable and that present a transparent and accountable value chain. This call for accountability has reached those governments that are willing to improve regulations in the field of corporate social responsibility within the industrial sectors. The importance of consumers' tendencies and thoughts on this theme have been underlined and tracked by the global movement Fashion Revolution in the 2020 Consumer Survey Report⁵. Around 5 thousand European citizens from the main European markets (such as Germany, France, Italy and Spain) were asked to complete the survey in order to measures at which level transparency and sustainability in the fashion industry impacted their purchasing preferences. An interesting data is the one concerning the perception of consumers about the role of the government in promoting sustainability within the fashion industry:

How consumers view the role of the government...

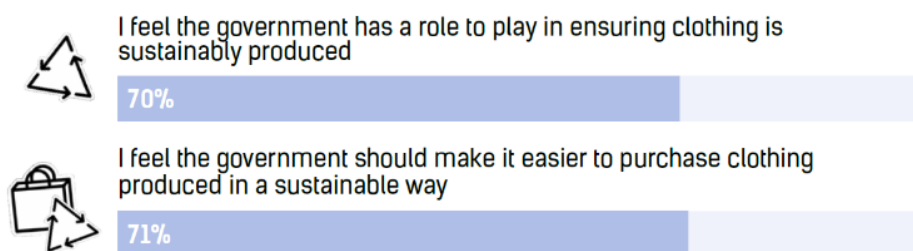


Figure 12: Data from the Fashion Revolution report “Consumer survey key findings” of December 2020

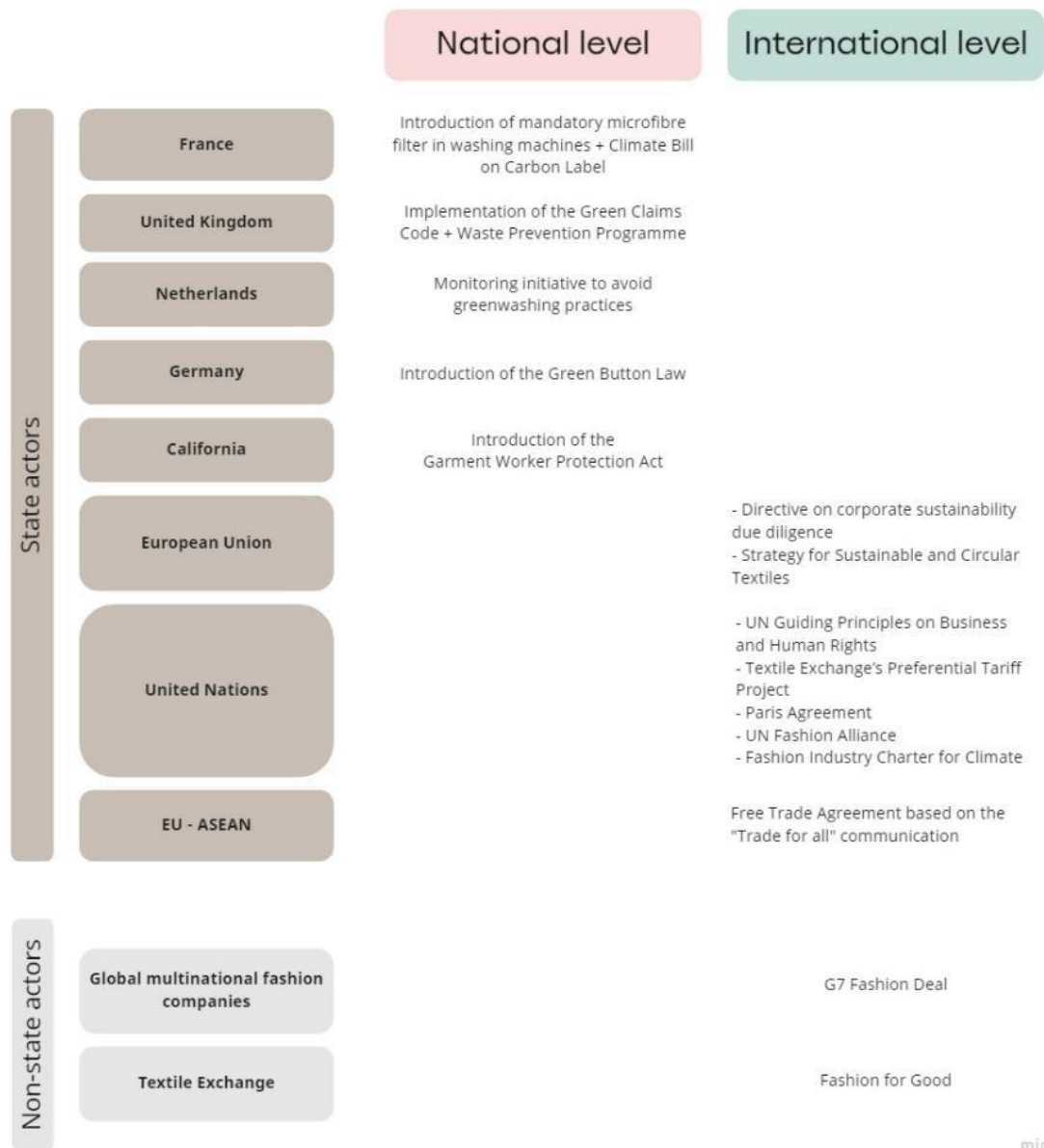
Source: Fashion Revolution

As it can be read in the two bar charts above, more than a half of the consumers interviewed within the report by Fashion Revolution agreed about the fact that governments have to enforce their role of ensuring sustainable practice in garments production, and at the same time more than a half of them think that consumers would need more support by governments for better choosing what to buy.

Governments not only have the possibility and the potential to influence consumers to approach more sustainable habits of purchasing goods, they also have the obligation under international law to ensure that human rights as well as labour rights are respected. For instance, ILO conventions, already cited and generally presented in the previous chapter, are the ones that establish constraints to national governments. What these conventions actually do is to demand to states to monitor and control the actions of private companies in order to make sure that these companies respect human rights. As cited also in the Maastricht Guidelines of 1997, “the obligation to protect includes the State's responsibility to ensure that private entities or individuals, including transnational corporations over which they exercise jurisdiction, do not deprive individuals of their economic, social and cultural rights. States are responsible for violations of economic, social and cultural rights that result from their failure to exercise due diligence in controlling the behaviour of such non-State actor”⁶.

What derives from this information is that governments, both at national and international level, need to respect their duty to safeguard environment and human rights. We have seen that what often happens is that private companies have been allowed by governments to decide their regulations and to control by themselves their activities. Therefore, a more active role of government could be beneficial just as a monitoring body that could help prevent tragedies such as the one of Rana Plaza in Bangladesh. However, it has to be said that despite the diffused opinion that sovereignty is facing difficulties when confronting with market systems, it keeps on delineating the background of human rights. This proximity between businesses and states combines the possibility to use human rights as a mean to face climate change issues.

The table below resumes some of the initiatives that are trying to address the environmental both also social issues, all initiatives cited in the table will be deepened in the following contents.



miro

Figure 13: Summary of all initiatives developed by state and non-state actors at national and international level analyzed in Chapter 3. Source: Author’s own elaboration.

Before entering into the specificities of every case, it can be said that, at national level, states are involved in national action plans that aimed at creating regulations on this field. An interesting example of policy implication of environmental justice debate within the fashion industry comes from France and more specifically from the Ministry for the Ecological and Inclusive Transition. In 2020, Brune Poirson, former secretary of state within this Ministry, was surnamed by the journal The New York Times as the “unofficial minister of fashion”⁷, for the fact that even if her role was not directly linked with the waste generated by the textile and apparel industry, she worked in order to promote sustainability practices among fashion brands, trying to avoid the destruction of unsold merchandise

and drafting a law to make the filters in the washing machines mandatory in order to prevent the dissemination of micro-plastics, dangerous for human health. The question that can be raised is: why governments worldwide don't have a minister of fashion? Given the measure in which politics is implicated in the environmental justice related issues within the textile and apparel industry, a national body that monitors this specific field specifically related to the fashion industry could be appropriate. Maybe one of the reasons that can explain why this figure hasn't existed yet is because the extent of the industrial sector's social and environmental footprint is quite a recent issue. If we think for example that the EPA was established in 1970, at that time the fashion industry in its global dimension was not so developed as it is today, for the fact that it started to spread worldwide when the offshoring of Western industries and development of fast fashion became more common. Being inspired by this French case, in which a special figure was assigned to this specific role within the government or within the EPA system would support the fight against climate change and the monitoring of human rights abuses within the fashion sector.

Beyond this specific example that I wanted to cite because it gives the idea of how such a central industry and its huge and global impacts are still perceived as something additional to the ordinary work, it is important to notice that the pollution at global level created by this sector is an issue that has to be regulated by nations and governments, which are needed to regulate the reparation for recovering efforts after natural disasters. As happened in France, governments should create new laws on how the fashion sector should build its economic development. In that case the now ex-minister Poirson took the lead of a legislation to prohibit to companies to burn garments. In addition to this measure, there could be many other regulations and initiatives to be promoted. Even if France is one of the homes of fashion and therefore the efforts to avoid pollution caused by fashion industry are more likely to start from this area, the global dimension and impacts of the problem are so spread that also the other governments around the world have to take action in order to minimize the problem. Before focusing on actions taken in Southeast Asia it could be interesting to have a general overview on how some other developed countries in the world are facing the environmental problem.

In the United States for instance, despite the previous Trump administration, governments in some of the federal states such as California is implementing a system to make emission standards in fashion industry higher than the one recommended by the central authority. Los Angeles in fact is contemplated as the hub of apparel production in the United States, with more than 40 000 employees working in this industry or in the related retail sector. At the end of 2021 a law, the Garment Worker Protection Act, was signed in California with the aim of ensuring a minimum salary to workers. This law is particularly important in California for the fact that during the peak of Covid-19 immigrant

workers and women of colors were exploited for ensuring the fastening of the production before the outbreak. New York too is trying to eliminate the use of single plastics and to promote the use of mandatory micro plastic filters in washing machines.

Another example of involvement of developed countries in environmental justice issues is the one of Netherlands. In 2021, the Netherlands Authority for Consumers and Markets examined around 70 businesses working in the fashion industry. These businesses started to be monitored for the fact that they were publicly claiming to having included in their value chain sustainability practices, however this turned to be an episode of greenwashing. Companies involved were asked to pay a fine for having declared them sustainable even if they were not. In United Kingdom too the Competition and Markets Authority through the release of the Green Claims Code tried to support companies to respect the regulations related to environmental and social standards. The aim of this code is also to raise the awareness of consumers about greenwashing practices when buying products from fashion companies. Another measure promoted by the UK government has been the Waste Prevention Programme: a programme that includes action plans to be implemented in seven central branches of the industry including the textile one. Germany too developed measures to promote sustainability in the textile industry, one example is the Green Button Law, considered as the first government-run textile certification label⁸. Inaugurated in 2019 by the German Ministry of Development, it aims at protecting people and environment all along the entire value chain. Through a label visible in the packaging or in the label of the product, the Green Button supports consumers in understanding which garments can be considered sustainable from an environmental and social point of view. In order to be considered sustainable for the Green Button Law, a garment must respect certain standards such as the fact that it doesn't have to be manufacture through forced or child labour, in manufacturing it, workers should have worked in safety and healthy spaces, its production doesn't have to be made with dangerous chemicals and the product composition needs to be characterized by natural fibers coming from organic farming. Again, in France in 2021 the French Parliament approved a climate bill to allow the introduction of "carbon label"⁹ to be added on garments in order to support consumers during their purchases to understand which products are more sustainable.

Within the Europe Union, in 2022 the European Commission adopted a proposal about the ratification of a European law aimed at supervising the compliance towards human rights and environmental standards inside the companies located both in the European Union market but also abroad. This regulation, called "Directive on corporate sustainability due diligence", will allow European Union to identify and control impacts of business activities on human rights, from exploitation of workers to child labour and environmental pollution. An important point about the due diligence regulations

is the fact that companies involved need to certify that their business is in line with the Paris Agreement's targets that will be deepened later. This regulation reminds once again the importance of the relationship and cooperation between the private businesses and the states, in line with the international commitments.

Again in March 2022, a set of Green Deal proposal was introduced by the EU Commissioner Frans Timmermans in order to promote the production of sustainability products inside the EU and to set the target of achieving zero emissions of GHG gasses before 2050. One of the most central and fundamental part of this EU proposal is linked with the Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP). Among this plan one of the proposals was the EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles¹⁰. With the awareness of what it means to face a global crisis such as the one of Covid-19, this strategy is intended to create a greener and more competitive EU market, able to resist to global crisis, to promote innovation within the industry as well as driving new business models. This vision foresees that:

- All textile products imported in the EU market should be more resistant and realised with recyclable fibers,
- Fast fashion trend would have to be passed over, turning into higher quality products at accessible prices
- Companies should ensure that they are aware of the entire value chain of their products, monitoring working conditions in third parties companies

Besides, two important areas towards which the EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles is working are the textile waste and the phenomenon of greenwashing. For what concerns the textile waste produced by the fashion industry, through the promotion of recycling practices the Commission will tackle this issue by contributing to give a direction to companies in order to attain high standards of separate collection of cloth garbage, to be achieved by 2025. Under this guidance, businesses will probably have legal obligations on the condition of the product after its use. For what concerns greenwashing activities, the Commission will provide a guide (the EU Taxonomy) to delineate what is the meaning of "sustainable". Providing this information, the consumers can better understand which products are reliable or not in terms of sustainable requirements.

To conclude this first part, it can be said that the environmental initiatives and strategies proposed above, as well as the other initiatives and regulations promoted worldwide, are clearly not to be intended as the final achievement and resolution of social and environmental related problems. However, it is anyway relevant to see how states and not states actors at national and international

levels are oriented towards an ever-increasing integration between social and environmental issues, responding thus to the debate about environmental justice. If we consider for example one of the initiatives cited above about the Green Button Law implemented in Germany, it has been seen that a garment in order to be considered sustainable has to respect some standards that are not only aimed at reducing environmental pollution through the limitation for instance of the use of petroleum-based materials, but that are aimed also at respecting social standards: the petroleum-based material is not recommended to consumers also for the fact that, its disposal through waste water would result in health-related issues for the communities in developing countries that manufacture it.

3.3 UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights

At the international level, for what concerns the call for social regulations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948 still offers a potent framework for the promotion of human rights and today governments and businesses are increasingly adopting regulations and taking actions on this field. More specifically if we are going to consider worker's rights, the document that incorporates them is the International Bill of Human Rights, formed of the just mentioned UDHR, the International Covenant on Economic and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). In this thesis these Conventions will not be deepened because more space will be dedicated to other agreements in the following subchapters. One of the documents that can be defined as an ultimate frame of reference for what concerns the relationship between states and private business in the field of human rights is the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights¹¹, endorsed unanimously by the UN Human Rights Council in 2011. These guiding principles are an ensemble of guidelines addressed both to states and companies and aimed at preventing the abuses of human rights perpetrated during business operations. They are grounded on three main pillars which are:

- First pillar: State Duty to Protect
"States' existing obligations to respect, protect and fulfil human rights and fundamental freedoms"
- Second pillar: Responsibility to Respect
"The role of business enterprises as specialized organs of society performing specialized functions, required to comply with all applicable laws and to respect human rights"
- Third pillar: Access to Remedy
"The need for rights and obligations to be matched to appropriate and effective remedies when breached"

With regard to states, they have to prevent everyone in their territory or in places under their jurisdiction from the risk of human rights abuses implemented by businesses. How states can do that? Through investigation and effective laws and regulations. With regard to enterprises, they have the responsibility to observe regulations on human rights in every operation they do, no matter where they are located or which is the type and size of their business. Therefore, whatever the context is, states and businesses have “distinct but complementary responsibilities”¹² to respect human rights, independently from their capacity or desire to do that.

3.4 UN Guiding Principles on Businesses and Human Rights in Southeast Asia

For what concerns the application by governments and companies of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights in Southeast Asia, it can be said that some progress still needs to be done. On this field, the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, a non-profit organization that shares data on businesses’ human rights impacts to the global public, made a specific research published in 2016 on fashion and textile businesses located in Southeast Asia in order to measure their compliance with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. What is evident from this report, called “Development for all, or a privileged few? Business & Human rights in Southeast Asia”¹³ is that up to 2015 just few governments and companies were undertaking actions and plans to ensure the respect of human rights and environment within their operations. More specifically, before 2015 no government in Southeast Asia had yet implemented a National Action Plan (NAP) in order to have a process that would support them to implement the Guiding Principles. The NAPs are policy documents where are enunciated the government arrangements to endorse in order to implement the international and national obligations specific of a territory or subject. However, in 2014 ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) published a research on Corporate Social Responsibility and human rights¹⁴, in order to analyse and re-evaluate regional actions related to the Guiding Principles, thus promoting the drafting of NAPs all over the Southeast Asian territory.

As a matter of fact, if we analyse the map behind, taken from the site of the National Action Plans on Business and Human Rights¹⁵, it can be seen that from 2016 and 2022 every country in Southeast Asia is developing or has already published a NAP. If we analyse the countries under this study, we can find different information about environmental and social action plans developed within the NAP by national governments.

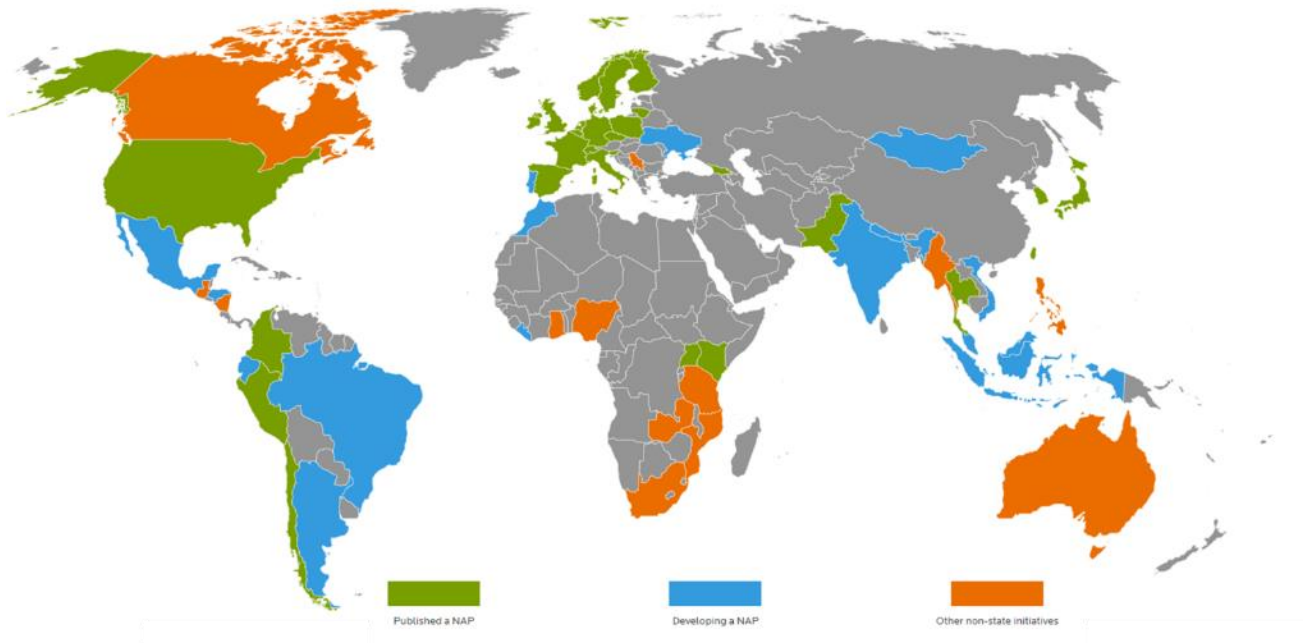


Figure 14: National Action Plans on Business and Human Rights. Source: The Danish Institute of Human Rights

3.4 Business and Human Rights in the Fashion Industry

As stated in the previous chapter, the disaster of Rana Plaza happened in 2013 has opened to an era of more awareness of what is the dark side of the fashion industry, characterized by environmental and social related issues. Although some progresses within the textile and apparel industry still needs to be done, there are some actions that have been developing in the last few years. Concerning for instance the relationship between the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights with the debate on environmental justice and the textile industry, an important step ahead was promoted during the G7 in 2019 in Biarritz, when a group of about 30 fashion enterprises from all over the world launched the G7 Fashion Deal¹⁶, with the aim not only to be involved on the protection of the environment and the prevention of climate change but also with the desire to align their interests with the regulations adopted by the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Indeed, according to Ben Vanpeperstraete, Advocacy Coordinator of the global network Clean Clothes Campaign, underlined that “Despite many fine promises, both the ecological and human rights footprints of the fashion industry has increased dramatically over the last decades. Therefore, the implementation of environmental and social standards in the supply chain requires a coherent set of accountable and enforceable measures. This should happen within a legal framework for companies’ human rights and environmental due diligence”¹⁷. As a matter of fact, in this sense the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights can offer an existing legal framework that enterprises can

follow in order to become more transparent and accountable. In order to be compliant with these guiding principles, the G7 Fashion Deal must set challenging access conditions to businesses that wants to enter the pact. To these companies, the Fashion Deal asks to:

- Put in place proper measures to prevent all sector hazards in conformity with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Guidelines for environmental and human rights within the global textile supply chains. This requirement comprehends the actions promoted by the International Labour Organization in the field of labour standards (reaching minimum wage, assuring working time limits, avoid gender violence and child labour).

- Convert and adapt companies' business models and supply chains to ensure that human rights and environmental standards are in line with UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

The Fashion Deal presented at G7 in 2019 is still in progress to transform the fashion industry despite the global pandemic that broke out from 2020.

3.6 To what extent agreements on trade are addressing environmental justice-related issues

“Scaling preferred materials, and driving the innovation of next generation materials, is pivotal in meeting the industry’s ambitious, but necessary, climate goals. Policy instruments, notably preferential tariffs are key levers to incentivize the industry to increase the uptake and accelerate the development of materials that can significantly decarbonize the industry”¹⁸. With these words Katrin Ley, Managing Director of the global initiative Fashion for Good has commented on the request for trade policy by Textile Exchange at the COP26 hold in Glasgow in 2021. Textile Exchange is a non-profit global organization that analyses data about the fashion sectors in order to inspire and help businesses to convert their production through the introduction of new fibers and sustainable materials. During the COP26, more than 50 fashion businesses and international organizations sustained the Textile Exchange’s claim to governments for a trade policy to stimulate the utilization of environmentally preferred materials. With environmentally preferred materials, it has to be intended all the materials, from raw materials to final products, that are traceable and certified, and whose sustainable composition and accountable value chain can guarantee and are connected to data about the minimization of climate change impacts. To make an example, organic cotton can be considered a material that presents a reduced carbon footprint if compared to the conventional one. At the same time, also recycled polyester if compared to virgin polyester is considered a material with a lower impact on environment. More specifically the request by Textile exchange, emerged within

the Textile Exchange's Preferential Tariff Project, asked for favourable tariffs on fabrics and yarns like organic cotton and textile fibers. What this request underlines is the assumption that through more sustainable trade policies, greener practices in choosing raw materials could be implemented in order to minimize environmental and social impacts. When considering the possibility to transform the supply chain through the so called environmentally preferred materials, the costs are clearly one of the main limits for business that decide to confront themselves with these new types of materials. Therefore, what Textile Exchange claimed during COP26 was that by minimizing surcharges trade processes could be utilized for encouraging the embracement of environmentally preferred materials.

The request presented by Textile Exchange mentioned above can be considered as one of the numerous key initiatives implemented in the last few years by global organizations devoted to sustainable fashion and aimed at reviewing trade policies on this field. As a matter of fact, as outlined in chapter two, trade agreements throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have had a fundamental part in shaping the fashion industry and its global value chain. The decentralization of the textile and apparel industry was mainly derived and caused by two important trade restrictions which were the Multi-Fibre Agreement and the Agreement on Textile and Clothing. If from one side the MFA limited import competition from developing countries in order to promote US and EU internal markets, on the other side the ACT gradually eliminated textile quotas imposed by the MFA in order to give the possibility to developing countries to promote their trade. In setting trade relations between countries, these and other trade agreements implemented in the previous century did not take into account the necessity and the urge to include in their accords measures to prevent climate change and to promote human rights. On the contrary, in the last decades the rise of pollution levels as well as the augmentation of climate hazards worldwide brought nations to review and update their trade agreements with the integration of green regulations aimed at protecting the environment and human rights. Therefore, it can be stated that international trade has more and more an essential role in building sustainable development.

For what concerns the Southeast Asian countries analysed in this thesis (Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia), during the last years different regulations have been ratified by these states and their trade partners in order to address sustainable development and environmental justice dimensions. The next paragraphs therefore analyse the current situation regarding the trade relations established between Southeast Asian developing countries and European Union developed countries, which a focus on environmental and social oriented initiatives developed by these trade relations.

From a general point of view, it can be said that at least from 2016 with the negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement between EU and Indonesia, the EU in the last few years has explored the opportunity to make agreements on free trade with Asian countries, given the increasing centrality of Asia for the European market and the fact that Asia is the largest trading partner for Europe. To establish these agreements, the EU opted for a country-by-country relations for the fact that although ASEAN exists and represents the majority of Southeast Asian countries, the variety of political systems and the difference in the economic development of the different countries of the region would make it difficult to promote a single unique free trade agreement for the entire region. No matter the individual state agreement, generally it can be said that the EU trade policy is based on the current EU 2020 Strategy whose main aim is to turn EU trade policy into the mean by which sustainable growth and a low-carbon economy can be ensured. Despite the multitude of bilateral agreements and negotiations with Asian countries, the aim of the EU 2020 Strategy is to ensure that social and environmental standards are respected. As a matter of fact, the current strategy is based on the 2014 “Trade for All” Communication inaugurated to promote the importance of human rights as well sustainable development and ethical trade.

For what concerns Indonesia, to deep dive into trade agreements implemented between this country and the EU that take into consideration environment and human rights, it has already been underlined that in 2016 negotiations between the two parties began in order to settle a system of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) aimed at reducing tariffs on manufacturing goods and not only. The relationship between EU and Indonesia is tightened by the fact that Indonesia is the 5th trading partner of EU within ASEAN within ASEAN countries¹⁹. Besides, the relationship between EU and Indonesia over the years was also characterized by a collaboration within the social and environmental sphere. Regarding the FTA negotiated in 2016, the European Commission together with Development Solutions (a European consultancy which supports the development of cooperation in areas of trade policy and environment) drafted in 2019 a Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA)²⁰ to analyse the development of negotiations between the two parties. For what concerns the social impacts of the FTA between EU and Indonesia, the salaries of unskilled workforce as well as the quality of life are supposed to increase. Besides, the rise in GDP should reflect positive consequences in the field of education. With regards to the textile and apparel industry, employment is supposed to rise by more than 10 per cent²¹. Besides, to give additional support to the most defenceless part of the population such as children, women and indigenous people, the assessment advocates the parties to respect the UN Guiding Principles on Human Rights. Regarding the interpretation of environmental impacts, the elimination of barriers would result in an increase of trade exchanges between the two countries and

therefore an increase in the emissions of GHG gasses. For what concerns textile, the increase in production in such a water-consuming industry would lead to a worsening of water quality. Nevertheless, the introduction of new sustainable technologies as well as the spreading of new green standards would result in positive consequences for the environments, that have to be in line with environmental agreements promoted by UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement that will be deepened later.

To resume it can be stated that on one hand the FTA between Indonesia and EU from one side would bring a positive effect in economic terms in the textile and apparel sectors, increasing foreign investments as well as import/export relationship between the two countries. This would lead to a significant augmentation of job positions in both countries and also to a modernization of the supply chain techniques, with greener and safer machines and technologies. On the other hand, the increase in production of garments may raise further issues about the respect of labour standards and workers' rights for the fact that if labour law is not respected, it could lead to an augmentation of illegal child labour and worsening of workers' conditions. Besides, problems of water waste and pollution could be worsened by the increasing production. Therefore, the only way to respect social and environmental rights within the Indonesia-EU FTA would be to reduce at minimum the negative effects through the sharing of best practices between the two countries and the collaboration to ensure that environmental and workers' rights are respected, also through the control of labour inspections and the promotion of the sharing of skills in order to promote education.

For what concerns Vietnam, this country is considered as the second EU biggest partner in trade within the ASEAN, representing almost the 14 per cent of Vietnamese worldwide exports of 2018²². To enhance this strong partnership, in February 2020 the European Commission endorsed the Parliament decision to set the EU-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement, entered into force in the same year. Besides eliminating all the tariffs on the goods exchanged between the two countries, the agreement was aimed at strengthening long-term responsibilities and commitment to protect the environment as well as human rights, as stated by Phil Hogan, the former commissioner for trade: "The EU-Vietnam agreement has a huge economic potential, a win for consumers, workers, farmers and businesses. And it goes well beyond economic benefits. It proves that trade policy can be a force for good. Vietnam has already made great efforts to improve its labour rights record thanks to our trade talks. Once in force, these agreements will further enhance our potential to promote and monitor reforms in Vietnam"²³. Through the FTA in fact the idea is to develop simultaneously economic and sustainable development, as well as consumer protection and labour rights. By signing the agreement,

the two countries agreed on endorsing the ILO Conventions and the relatively rights to works these conventions contains, as well as respecting and enforcing the international agreements on environment as well as Paris Agreement that will be deepened later. This commitment is indeed defined in Chapter 13 of the Agreement on “Trade and Sustainable Development”²⁴ which focuses on biological diversity, sustainable forest management, trade and sustainable management of living marine resources and aquaculture products, and other main points.

For what concerns textile and garments, all European exports of textiles towards Vietnam will be subjected to tariffs elimination as soon as they have entered into force. On the contrary, EU duties on textile products present dismantling times that go from 5 to 7 years based on the sensitivity of goods. Therefore, the textile and garment industry is one of the less touched by the EU-Vietnam FTA, for the fact that it could not benefit from the elimination of tariffs from as soon as they enter into force. More specifically, “77% of Vietnam’s apparel exports to the EU will be subjected to tariffs for at least five years after the EVFTA enters into force”²⁵.

The aim of this specific agreement for textile underlines the European objective to reduce Vietnam’s dependency from China for what concerns the textile and apparel industry, preventing the imports of apparel products from third countries. More specifically, in order to take advantage of the preferential tariffs, clothing and other textile products would need to be produced with fabrics made in Vietnam. Because of this settlement, even if the EVFTA has already entered into force for other categories, it could result to be difficult to comment on its application for the fact that changes in textile and clothing trade would be measurable in the next years. What is certain is that since the entry into force of the agreement, Vietnamese-based textile and garment industries will be expected to be prepared to respect the environmental and social standards outlined in Chapter 13 of the agreement.

For what concerns Cambodia, before 2020 as it was considered a Least Developed Country, it has benefited from the quota-free access to the European Union no matter the type of products but except arms, because of the “Everything But Arms” (EBA) system. This system was clearly the most efficient mean through which Cambodia had developed the textile and apparel industry in its territory. However, as this favourable relationship with EU requires the adherence to human rights standards and workers’ rights, in 2020 the European Commission choose to end the system of preferential tariffs with Cambodia because of tough violations of human rights principles promoted by the ILO Conventions. The causes of this withdrawal could be related mainly to the fact that, since 2017 when the Cambodia People’s Party won the elections, episodes of oppression towards the political

opposition and to the media became increasingly frequent at the point where the European Commission decided to investigate three main fields of rights: political rights, labour rights and related conflicts. However, even if EU tried to negotiate with Cambodian sovereignty in order to ask them to respect human rights standards, eventually it withdrew. Consequently, new tariffs were imposed, causing the reduction of the competitiveness of Cambodian markets, also for what concern the textile and apparel sector. Unfortunately, the withdrawal by EU from the EBA system with Cambodia happened when the Covid-19 pandemic was still at its peak, resulting in difficulties for Cambodian workers. For instance, within the ILO Working Paper 54 it is highlighted that from March to August 2020, “98 per cent of surveyed garment workers experienced work suspension”²⁶.

Despite this recession in the political and economic relations there is still some space for improvement. Firstly, it has to be remembered that from 2014 to 2020 EU spent about 500 million euros in potential spheres of Cambodian system, from agriculture to education and some sectors of the industry.

3.8 Paris Agreement and environmental justice

One of the landmarks for what concerns multilateral agreements that focuses on climate change is the Paris Agreement. On 12 December 2015 the Paris Agreement was adopted by 196 Parties during the UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) held in Paris. The aim of the agreement, that entered into force on 4 November 2016, was to limit the global warming below the 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to the preindustrial level. To accomplish this ambition, every nation should arrive at the peak of GHG emissions as early as possible so as to attain by the mid-century a climate neutral earth. If we consider the fact that among these 196 parties there are both developed and developing nations, the Paris Agreement surely has stood as an ambitious treaty because every nation up to 2015, and still today has presented very different levels of emissions and thus has contributed differently to the rising of global warming. However, for the first time a legally binding agreement laid the foundations of a common international objective towards the fight of climate change and the adaptation to its impacts. After the ratification of the agreement in 2016, in December 2018 during the COP24 the Paris Rulebook was adopted as part of the Katowice Climate Package, with the aim of including detailed steps, procedures and operative guidelines on how to implement the Paris Agreement and within the areas of transparency and finance.

Working on a five-year cycle as decided by governments, in 2021 during the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) held in Glasgow, the 196 countries that adopted the agreement in 2015 were

asked to give an update about their action plans implemented for preventing climate change and reducing GHG emissions through adaptation measures. These plans, known as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), were focused in general on promoting low-carbon models and zero-carbon objectives and targets. More specifically 143 of 196 parties that ratified the agreement, they have estimated that by 2030 their GHG emissions would be almost 9% below the levels they reached in 2010, while almost 70 parties declared an objective of carbon neutrality before 2050. However, a report published in September 2021 by the United Nation Climate Change press release²⁷ state that even in countries' GHG emissions could decrease by around the 83% in 2050 if compared to 2019, a global increase of 16% of emissions within 2030 is anticipated if compared to 2030 and if we take into consideration the totality of parties that ratified the treaty.

In this context, in addition to comprehend how the Paris Agreement works, what is particularly interesting to be underlined in this thesis is the relation that developed and developing countries are requested to entertain in the fight against climate change. As a matter of fact, developed and developing country parties are asked to structure and develop nationally determined contributions (NDCs) to be pursued in line with their common by differentiates responsibilities. As a matter of fact, the Paris Agreement asserts that developed nations should be the first to grant financial assistance to developing and least developed countries. This financial assistance would be needed mostly for implementing mitigation measures, as huge and substantial investments are needed in order to minimize emissions. Financial assistant would be equitably critical for promoting adaptation measures, in order to reinforce the assets required to climate hazards. Besides, with the Paris Agreement, nations define an enhanced transparency framework (ETF) through which they have to inform about the activities undertaken and about the progress on mitigation and adaptation plans in a transparent way. Therefore, the idea is that countries' progresses can be traced and checked under an accountable and transparent system. For what concerns adaptation, mitigation and loss and damage measures, governments have agreed to empower communities' capacity to confront with the climate change's impacts, providing international support to developing countries. They also emphasize the attention towards the reduction of loss and damage associated with climate hazards highlighting the necessity to cooperate and to support actions to mitigate emissions in developing countries.

Regarding the implication of environmental justice debate within the Paris Agreement, it can be said that this treaty is not only the first binding multilateral agreement that has taken the lead for a common international objective towards the fight of climate change, but it is also the first binding multilateral climate agreement that refers to human rights. However, what will be argued is that even if the

agreement makes reference to human rights, specifically in the Preamble, this reference is not comparable with the effective need to promote environmental justice in developing countries. Therefore, the incorporation of human rights in the Preamble is an advancement but not commensurable to the global need to fight climate change and human right abuses.

Thus, if we take into consideration those vulnerable communities particularly exposed to climate change because of their geographical position, for example the ones in Southeast Asia, how is the Paris Agreement impacting these communities from an environmental justice point of view? Is the Paris Agreement addressing measures to mitigate or to adapt to the industrial footprint of the fashion sector in these territories? To answer to this question, from a textual point of view, if we start analysing the Preamble of the Paris Agreement we will see that it refers to the protection of “biodiversity, recognized by some cultures as Mother Earth” and therefore it includes reference to human as well as environmental rights. What follows are some of the statements listed in the Preamble²⁸, the ones that could be particularly useful for understanding how the Paris Agreement addressed the issue of environmental but also climate justice:

“In pursuit of the objective of the Convention, and being guided by its principles, including the principle of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances”

“Also recognizing the specific needs and special circumstances of developing country Parties, especially those that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, as provided for in the Convention”

“In pursuit of the objective of the Convention, and being guided by its principles, including the principle of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances”

“Acknowledging that climate change is a common concern of humankind, Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity,”

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What can be said is that in the preamble there are different reference to the concept of climate justice and environmental justice with reference also to the fact that developed and developing countries have common but differentiated responsibilities. As the concept of environmental justice is intrinsically and inherently related to the one of human rights, and since human rights are a fundamental mean for fighting the injustices generated by anthropogenic global warming it can be useful to understand how this treaty emphasize the importance of human rights before focusing on the related actions implemented in the fashion industry in Southeast Asia within the sphere of the Paris Agreement.

As stated in the beginning of this thesis, in 2013 the IPCC besides predicting that there would have been a worsening of climate change hazards, also stated that human rights, first of all the right to life, would be threatened by increasing severe weather phenomena (heatwaves, floods, droughts, storms, hurricanes), that would cause emergencies in infrastructure, water availability, diseases, malnutrition and other irreversible damages.

From one side, arguing that the Paris Agreement does not face appropriately the degree of the menace presented by climate hazards to human beings, some researchers states that even if in theory in the Paris Agreements human rights are cited (particularly in the Preamble) in practice it has not been able to translate into effective regulations and actions the problem of human rights abuses caused by climate hazard. This statement is represented for example by British researcher Sam Adelman who in the article “Human Rights in the Paris Agreement: Too Little, Too Late?”²⁹ affirms that “since human rights are distinguished from other rights on the basis of their universality, they would seem to be an appropriate means of dealing with climatic harm, but state practice indicates that sovereignty regularly takes precedence over rights”. To give proof of his assertion Adelman refers to Article 13 point 3 of the Paris Agreement that says that “the transparency framework shall build on and enhance the transparency arrangements under the Convention ... and be implemented in a facilitative, non-

intrusive, non-punitive manner, respectful of national sovereignty, and avoid placing undue burden on Parties”³⁰.

From the other side, the ratification of the Paris Agreement has offered to countries worldwide the possibility to address climate and social related goals in a structured way, positioning itself as the institutional framework through which in the next decades climate change will be addressed. Regarding the textile and apparel industry, the Paris Agreement can be pursued as the instrument that has opened the way to new sustainable initiatives within the fashion industry at the global level. As a matter of fact, the fashion industry is collectively trying to set action plans in order to respect the Paris Agreement objective to reduce the carbon emissions. The system par excellence that guides and collects fashion industry specific targets are the Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action as well as the UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion, both deepened in the following subchapter.

3.9 Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action

The Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action was first introduced in 2018 during the COP24 in Katowice, and then renovated three years later at the COP26 with the proposal of a decarbonisation plan in line with the standards settled in the Paris Agreement. This charter and the importance that it aligns to the Paris Agreement testifies the assumption that the fashion industry, because of its global presence, has the duty to ensuring an active role in the fight to climate change and human rights abuses. Inspired and guided by the Paris Agreement, the Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action is formed by 130 private businesses together with 41 international organizations that sustain the Charter in its commitment to fight climate change within the fashion industry. It symbolizes the fact that more and more brands are taking into account the negative and irrevocable impacts that the textile and apparel industry are having towards environment and human rights. It also makes the assumption cited before about the necessity of a constant cooperation between governments and private enterprises.

The key objectives settled by the UN Fashion Charter for Climate Action are the following:

- Reaching a zero level of GHG emission before the year 2050, and go back to the levels of emissions present in 2019, before 2030
- Some materials such as cotton and polyester before 2030 should be manufactured through sustainable practices
- The use of coal should be banned by 2030.

These key objectives mentioned above are related to 3 main key areas of work:

- Implementing roadmaps for private business in order to support them in reducing GHG emissions
- Smoothing the policy involvement
- Promote a 100% electricity produced by renewable sources

For what concerns the progress made up to present time, according to the review published by United Nations in 2020 in their report cycle, almost the 60 per cent of parties who signed the charter claimed to have reduced their emissions since 2018³¹. Besides, what has been stated according to the reports submitted by the companies to UN is that there has been a reduction of more than 3 metric tonnes of carbon dioxide, and that 33 per cent of total power used by companies came from renewable sources³².

3.10 UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion

Another main initiative promoted since 2018 by UN in this field has been the Alliance for Sustainable Fashion, aimed at coordinating the fashion industry through the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals. This Alliance involved both UN agencies and private organizations working in the field of sustainable fashion, intended as the improvement of labours' standard of working as well as the reduction of pollution and the improvement in environmental standards. For the Alliance the fashion industry comprehends not only clothing both also footwear and leather products, and its objective is to renovate the entire processes in which these products are involved: from the production of raw materials up to its transformation in garments, its distribution and consumption.

Thus, the aim of the Alliance can be resumed as followed: "Through the Alliance, the UN commits to changing the path of fashion, reducing its negative environmental and social impacts; and turning fashion into a driver of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals"³³. This commitment is based on four main pillars:

- Develop the cooperation through coordinated activities
- Ensure harmonization and the reinforcement of already existing activities
- Promote the exchange of knowledge and expertise
- Attain assistance through a coordinated UN voice, to encourage the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals

For what concerns the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) the interesting thing about the UN Fashion Alliance is that it tries to connect these Goals with the fashion industry, developing ad hoc action plans for the different nations at global level. For example, SDG number 3 (Good health and wellbeing), is directly linked with the use of chemicals in the textile industry and the related health issues they can cause. In this case the UN Alliance with the support of organizations specialized in this field, is promoting the Chemicals in Products (CIP) project, that aims at informing employers, workers and consumers about the risks related to the different chemicals' component present textiles, in order to better understand how to manage them. Another example comes from SDG number 10 (Reduced Inequalities), based on the safe and regular migration and mobility of communities and indigenous people especially in developing countries. As stated in chapter two, fashion industry is known also for the social inequalities. The UN Alliance together with the CREST (Corporate Responsibility in Eliminating Slaving and Trafficking in fashion) tries to address the risk of worker's exploitation and to avoid the spreading of human trafficking particularly within the supply chain of Southeast Asia, thus contributing to the minimization of inequalities.

CONCLUSION

To summarize the contents emerged in this thesis and the related reasoning that made it possible to link these contents together, it can be stated that the notion of environmental justice, born at the beginning of the 1980s in the United States, in the decades that follows it has spread worldwide emerging in particular among the poor and vulnerable communities located mostly in developing countries. It has been seen that the phenomenon of environmental justice mostly occurred when human activities, generally economic ones, enter into conflict with the livelihood and the health of the people where these economic activities are settled. As a matter of fact, what has been analysed in this thesis is the strict correlation between the industrial development and the consequent worsening of climate hazards as well as the worsening of living conditions of the populations involved. Regarding this thesis the correlation has been studied in particular between Southeast Asian countries and Western countries, specifically the ones included in the European Union. The fact that Southeast Asia is a territory particularly subjected to cases of environmental justice is indeed not only linked to its delicate geographical conformation that makes this area vulnerable to severe climate impacts, as the data from the IPCC, the Asian Development Bank as well as the IMF Climate Change Dashboard and other instruments have shown. On the contrary, this subjection is also due to the fact that Southeast Asia has become one of the main hubs of the textile and apparel industry, offshored there from the 1960s when its global value chain started to be delocalized by Western companies.

Three Southeast Asian Countries (Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia) considered by the WTO among three main exporters of garments of that area, have been analysed to better argue and motivate the correlation between the economic development brought by the textile and apparel industry and the environmental and social related effects. Some example of environmental justice debates for each country have been deepened, underling the idea that this phenomenon can take different forms according to the diverse causes and contexts in which it generates. It is for this reason that besides sharing real episodes of cases happened in these countries; also their political structure, the historic economic development and key environmental and social regulations implemented at present were mentioned, in order to understand in which context the debate on environmental justice has evolved.

Even if the textile and apparel industry's environmental and social impacts are considered a problem that has arisen recently in a massive way, their effects in terms of worsening of pollution and of human rights abuses are so relevant that national governments and international organizations are called to cooperate at local and global level in order to make this industry more and more sustainable.

However, it has been seen that the partnership with private companies is fundamental in order to ensure the effective implementation of environmental and social regulations. It is for this reason that a consistent part of this thesis has been dedicated to the analysis of the different conventions and agreements stipulated worldwide and in particular within the developed countries in Southeast Asia and the European Union. Both the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the Free Trade Agreements between developing and developed countries have been analysed always with a focus on environmental justice within the textile and apparel industry and on how these measures could affect and bring positive changes in this field. The final chapter close with an insight into the Paris Agreement and on how this agreement has addressed not only the environmental discourse but also the related human rights that are violated because of cases of social injustice emphasized by climate change. Besides, it has been underlined how the Paris Agreement has opened the way to a series of new international instruments and systems that support the fashion industry to convert their production into a more sustainable one, thus raising the awareness of both businesses and consumers.

The intention of this thesis has been to consider the impact of the fashion industry not only from the point of view of the environmental impacts but also taking into consideration the human rights-related consequences. The phenomenon of environmental justice has been thus the ideal area of study to be deepened for the fact that it links together these two spheres. Even though research on the relations between developed and developing countries in the field on fashion industry and environmental justice already exists, they often do not offer a complete picture of the theme, rather they are more focused on specific subjects or debates that do not offer a wider view. Besides, given the fact that the society is used to think to China as the one and only new producer of garments, the fact that Southeast Asian countries have been presented, also offers a different way of considering the international relations and the derived policy implications that the relationship between EU and Southeast Asian countries in this field generates. Given that the subject of the sustainability in the fashion industry is fortunately becoming more and more in vogue, and consumers, brands as well as governments are increasing their awareness towards environmental and social related issues, there will surely be an increase not only in the local and international instruments available to fight climate change and human rights abuses in the fashion industry, but there will be also a constant increasing of literature dedicated to this theme both in developed and developing countries.

In this thesis the two final international instruments that have been analysed are indeed the Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action as well as the UN Fashion Alliance. Having analysed their action plans as well the way they are trying to address the environmental justice debate at international level

can open the way to new considerations about how this debate will influence the international arena and politics in the near future. If the strategies of the two systems mentioned above would be implemented in the coming future, from the point of view of the international relations I assume there will be a growing development of North-South relations, not only from the point of view of trade partnerships but particularly for what concerns the implementation of sustainable best practices within the entire fashion global value chain. More specifically, I think that the growing importance given to the environmental justice debate will not in any case bring to the decrease of the industrial presence of the fashion sector in Southeast Asian countries in order to relocate it in Western countries, because this would not solve the environmental justice problem. On the contrary, considered that the fashion sector in Southeast Asia is one of the most profitable industries that ensure the employment of thousands of people, international relations could act to further promote the implementation of free trade agreements that would not only smooth trade barriers but also raise even more the awareness among states and non-state actors in establishing fair agreements, aimed at protecting environment and human rights. The bilateral Free Trade Agreements between European Union and Southeast Asian countries mentioned in chapter 2 are indeed a first example of how trade agreements are more and more oriented towards the promotion of fairness and equity. This trend towards the strengthening of fairer partnerships would be, as already assumed, particularly pushed by consumers and civil society that, particularly after Covid-19 pandemic, are more inclined to buy less and more durable products. If this trend will continue, states and non-state actors would need to promote a constant cooperation in partnership with some of the main organizations working on labour rights such as ILO.

If international relations in the field of environmental justice within the fashion industry will continue to be guided by the Paris Agreement as well as by the Fashion Industry Charter of Climate Action and the UN Fashion Alliance, according to the contents developed in this thesis I assumed that there will be more policies aimed at obliging private companies to better monitor third-parties companies in developing countries, as well as policies between states that will reduce more and more the use of high-polluting materials (such as polyester) or that will adopt strategies to rethink the way cotton is produced, guaranteeing the saving of huge amounts of water. Raise the awareness about the environmental justice debate would also help to enlarge the action range of state and non-state actors within international relations: in order to protect the environment and reduce inequalities worldwide caused by the fashion industry, is not indeed sufficient to reduce GHG emissions. On the contrary, after understanding what environmental justice is, it can be more easily understood that policies that need to be implemented at international level have to be aimed also at regulating textile landfills or at managing the way waster waste is disposed. Thus, through a comprehension of environmental

justice, the range of possibilities of actions to be implemented goes beyond the common idea that only way to minimize fashion pollution is through the reduction of emissions.

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