**Fashion Discrimination - Homepage**

*Motivations*

In 1904, German sociologist and philosopher Georg Simmel published an essay about fashion, not only about clothing but about the whole phenomenon affecting all modern societies. It is a cultural process integrating the individual and the economy. Fashion is about identity and a need for individuality favoring novelty. It is a way to establish social difference either by being “in”, indifferent or rejecting it. Any object, clothes, idea and habit can represent fashion according to Simmel. In essence, it is any field of social action where the process of individual formation and collective integration is conspicuous. It holds a strong cultural meaning behind it that is worth the analysis. The fashion industry, as we refer to on this website, is the global enterprise of making and selling clothes. Its market value is estimated at 3 trillion dollars which is 2% of the world’s GDP. Fashion involves each and every individual and has a powerful impact on our society and economy.

*Inclusivity in fashion*

Representation matters, we say. What we see on the covers of magazines, on TV screens and on the internet is a reflection of reality. Beauty, defined as a combination of shapes, colors or forms that pleases the aesthetic senses, especially the sight, is portrayed in the fashion industry more than in other industries. It reflects, in a way, our society’s expected beauty standards. We know that beauty is undefined and yet, its definition resorted to maintain the European domination in terms of beauty standards. There is no need to call the others ugly when the exclusion and underrepresentation is sufficient to convey the message and to reproduce racist ideologies. Representation matters as magazines, the avatars of the fashion industry, aspire to picture and define beauty. In 2013, Naomi Campbell along with Iman and fashion activist Bethann Hardison formed the Diversity Coalition and launched a campaign to end racism on the runway. In an open letter to major fashion houses such as Chanel and Saint Laurent, they blasted them for casting only white models and contributing to racism. This was one of the first calls to action aiming at ending discriminations. More recently, events going from the Black Lives Matter protests, charges of cultural appropriation to outright racism shed the light more than ever on the fashion world issues. We decided to investigate on this topic by analyzing 18 years of Vogue covers from the US edition and focusing on colorism, one facet of discrimination.

**19 Years of Vogue US covers**

*Vogue Brief History*

Vogue magazine, one of the most successful magazines to have ever been published, was created in 1892. The magazine has a total readership of 1,398,00 and is accessible to all ages. It is considered as one of the most influential publications in the world. Now owned by Conde Nast, the magazine is specialized in fashion and lifestyle for women and has 26 international editions. It is depicted as both a mirror and a shaper of modern life.

“Diversity and inclusion are not a trend, but the way we should all be operating going forward.” - Steven Kolb, head of the Council of Fashion Designers of America, New York Fashion Week, January 2019

Fashion press plays a determining role in this evolution. Condé Nast announced “Vogue Values” in December 2019 a pretty major ideological rebrand for its most famous title. The statement aims to act as a guide for editorial teams globally.

In 2001 already, the Belizean-American former world champion track and field athlete and a former professional basketball player for Tulsa Shock in the WNBA, Marion Jones, was on the cover of the Vogue US magazine. A way to take a step forward and change their editorial line. In May 2017, the cover was called : “Women Rule, Fashion's fearless females”. New rules claimed by seven diverse models, with colored skins or kinky hair. The subtitle "The beauty revolution, no norm is the new norm" is a stark contrast with most publications featuring in majority skinny white models.

If non-white models are chosen on US Vogue covers after such a long time in the world of fashion, the evolution of beauty standards is starting to become widespread. Even if this is far from rewriting the traditional diktats of fashion, diversity is appealing to fashion magazines, which do not hesitate to show clear improvements year after year. Despite this awareness, there is still a lack of different profiles. Except few colored women, most of the chosen ones have a medium-light skin tone.**Retrospective**

*Fashion week statistics*  **Application

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*Vogue Bad Press*

Vogue has a long relationship with scandals and diversity issues as the the famous catchphrase “More issues than Vogue” is taking a new turn. The New York Times published in 2020 an article entitled “The White Issue” following the magazine’s September issue celebrating Black culture and the employee’s uprising saying the editor fostered a workplace that sidelined women of color. This is a surprise coming from the editor who decided to put Beverly Johnson on the front page of the 1974 August issue and had Vogue become the first American magazine featuring a black model on a cover.

“Vogue has not found enough ways to elevate and give space to black editors, writers, photographers, designers and other creators” – Anna Wintour

In 2021, in reaction to the Black Lives Matter protests and amid the outbreak of racist incidents in the fashion sphere, The New York Times released their own investigation. They asked a set of companies the same questions about the percentage of black people in their teams and boards and there was no consistent answer.

*Fashion week statistics*

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**Models Race**

*Going Further*

Cover of magazines, collection campaigns, photoshoots etc. are only appearances. Even though the change of mentality is showing more and more in the industry, the concrete changes are still cosmetic. As stated in a Business of Fashion study, when looking at the chief executives and C-suites of the biggest fashion companies, white males are in a majority.

“Diversity is being invited to the party; inclusion is being asked to dance.” – Verna Myers

**DATES**

In 1974, Vogue became the first magazine to feature an African American model the cover.

In 2018, Tyler Mitchell became the first black photographer to shoot for a cover of Vogue US

In 2017, Edward Enninful become the first black Editor-in-Chief for Vogue British