

Street fashion in Yerevan:
globalization tendencies in the years of 2021-2023 among young adults
focusing on economic changes and the influx of Russian and Ukrainian refugees

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Abstract

This research explores the globalization tendencies of Yerevanian street fashion in the years 2021-2023, especially emphasizing young adults and their fashion choices. For this matter, there are considered other country's examples and experiences because Armenian fashion lacks the needed academic research. Globalization is viewed from the scope of recent economic changes in Armenia, thrifting and second-hand emergence through social media, and refugee influx from Russia and Ukraine. Additionally, I observed what the opposing tools to globalization in Yerevan are, if there are any, and whether Armenians nowadays give importance to using Armenian elements in their everyday apparel.

Introduction

The world of fashion is a vibrant reflection of changes in society, as well as cultural shifts, which its individuals and their experiences create. Style becomes a powerful means of expression and reflects the collective consciousness of a society. It is both critical and exciting to look at how global and local influences of fashion intertwine. Hence, this capstone aims to explore how street fashion has evolved among Yerevan young adults (aged 15 to 24) in response to both global trends and local events happening to and in Yerevan (the capital city of Armenia) between 2021 and 2023. When talking about street fashion, it is important to note that it describes the clothes and accessories used by people in casual, day-to-day settings, especially in cities. It is also influenced by subcultural movements, urban culture, and individual expression. Street fashion frequently takes inspiration from a variety of media, such as global trends, music, art, and young culture. It is dynamic, always changing, and provides a visual understanding of an

individual's identity as well as the cultural influences prevalent in a particular city or neighborhood.

Armenia overall is a fascinating location for this exploration because of its rich historical tapestry and dynamic contemporary culture. The country is in between Europe and Asia and has always been there for thousands of years. This makes Armenia's young adults have complex influences from both the West and the East, to which, in recent years (2021-2023), there were added economic shifts, a global influx of refugees, and a more (or no) highlighted desire to preserve Armenia's unique cultural identity as opposed to globalization.

Moreover, the country's capital city, Yerevan, is the perfect case for research. Armenia itself is very diverse, and whatever is happening in the regions outside Yerevan is pretty much different from the capital city and very similar to one another. That is why a question might arise on how Yerevan is the perfect place for this research. The thing is that as of the beginning of 2023, the population of Yerevan is 1,098,900 out of 2,977,100 people living in Armenia (Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia, 2023). This makes the Yerevan population around 37% of the whole country's population. This is a significant number to understand the tendencies of the country's fashion choices. And that only talks about the population that lives in the city, meaning that it does not include people who, almost every day, commute to Yerevan for work or study purposes. These are people mainly from the neighboring cities and villages, and other people from other regions live in Yerevan without registration. So the actual everyday population of Yerevan is even more than the official numbers, also taking into account the fact that all the major universities, legal buildings, the biggest and busiest airport, and all the bank

head offices of the country are in Yerevan. That is why the city is the ideal place to observe the cultural interchange, globalization tendencies, and new emerging trends between these people.

Another aspect of this research that must be explained is why young adults of Yerevan are chosen; why are the 15-24-year-olds being targeted? The first reason is its demographic relevance to my research. According to Erik Erikson's theory of human development stages, identity vs. role confusion appears among people aged 12-24, and in this stage, adolescents try to develop a sense of self and personal identity (Erikson, 1994). This makes it easier to observe changes in style due to behavioral, social, and psychological changes, which are not necessarily individual but also affected by the general public, global tendencies, and if we go more deeply, economic and political shifts of the given country. Another reason is this age group's high adaptability to new styles and trends and their diverse and very specific tastes, which create the mosaic of street fashion in Yerevan.

The final aspect that should be discussed is the choice of the recent three years, 2021-2023. The reason for doing this research in those years is actually pretty simple and logical. Given the fast-paced nature of the fashion industry, concentrating on the last two years guarantees that the study presents the most recent and relevant trends in street fashion that, as mentioned earlier, change very quickly. Also, this time frame allows examining recent factors that may have a more direct impact on the street fashion shifts, including the emergence of second-hand trends, economic shifts, and refugee influx, which happened after February of 2022 (Russian invasion of Ukraine), as well as more rapid globalization after the quarantine period of Covid-19 (2020).

So, three major things are being studied while talking about the influence of street fashion in Yerevan. Firstly, this capstone will explore Armenia's economic landscape with regard to the street fashion choices of young adults. It is a powerful influence that shapes consumer behaviors not only in Armenia but also in the whole picture of street fashion. These economic changes are not necessarily bad or negative; they differ from individual to individual, however it is essential to look at why people would willingly spend more money on clothing nowadays and how this tendency is driven. Ultimately, this research will show how economic changes in Armenia, and in Yerevan particularly, have controlled young adults' purchasing patterns and stylistic choices. As mentioned before, understanding the financial circumstances and shifts provides a better understanding of young adults' practical motivations.

Still, the economy is not the only force providing insights into young adults' fashion choices in Yerevan. The growing popularity of second-hand and thrifting clothing, in addition to vintage pieces, offers another element of contemporary fashion. The study goes beyond sustainability to understand how second-hand culture intersects with the individual's cultural understanding. Again, this can become one of the economic aspects of fashion choices by young adults, showing how these tendencies became more acceptable and popular in society by salary decrease or inflation. However, of course, there is another aspect to this trend, which is merely based on second-hand or thrifting becoming a trend itself, where the individual should be "proud" to seek beautiful and cheap findings while thinking about ecology and sustainability, being praised by their peers.

Finally, this research will also explore the increasing interconnectedness of the world and how geopolitical events have a direct influence on fashion. More specifically, the influx of

Russian and Ukrainian refugees will be studied to understand how young Yerevantsis (people in Yerevan) negotiate this. Especially in the era of rapid globalization, it is important to examine how cultures embrace or reject specific trends and styles and why. Usually, local identities and cultural expressions continue to assert their significance, which, in this case, creates a dynamic tension that shapes the fashion choices of the youth. It is exciting to look analytically at why young adults made these or those precise decisions and how they are driven - more locally or globally.

This study is not just about what young adults in Yerevan wear; it is about understanding the subtle language of their style that communicates their response to globalization, the economy, and the unexpected intimate interaction of the cultures. Hence, this research connects street fashion to the larger picture that the country is in, creating a microhistory on its own.

Literature Review

Street fashion, especially among young adults, is a multifaceted and very intriguing topic to explore. It serves as a microhistory for the global and more extensive picture of the world and the specific country/city, in this case, Yerevan. Studying this makes it possible to look at the country's economic development, fashion and stylistic choices and culture, the resistance to embracing global trends, and the reverse process, globalization.

It is crucial to look at this through the lens of street fashion, how these people dress in their everyday lives when they are with their peers or going somewhere to hang out, study, or work. Fashion here should be considered an everyday phenomenon, a daily practice that, in some

cases, can be done subconsciously, without much thought or effort. In one of their articles called “Conceptualizing Fashion in Everyday Lives,” Buckley and Clark mention, “...scholarship in fashion studies and fashion history has tended to focus on the avant-garde, the extraordinary, and the unusual, especially regarding its origination and design. Indeed, within fashion’s discourses, the truly “ordinary” remains elusive” (Buckley & Clark, 2012, p. 18). This, once again, emphasizes the importance of looking at fashion as ordinary, regular, and daily, as opposed to its extra implications, such as haute couture, which in this study can only be discussed if it has “simpler” and everyday implications by regular people, trying to be in the trend without breaking their bank accounts. That is especially why it should be looked at through “ordinary” people like teens, doing their ordinary daily tasks. Additionally, this adds to the research on fashion as a social phenomenon, which changes its implications through time and the relationship with other cultures.

Teens are the best indicator of change with their fashion choices and decisions, which can be made due to global or local trends, social pressure, or frequent ideology shifts while looking for the perfect one for their lives. This has been discussed in the introductory part of this essay as well. So, the question, in that case, would be if teens are the dictators of their own fashion taste, referring to the fact that they usually do not have an impact: that aspect will be discussed in my research and survey results, where I specifically put emphasis on who chooses and buys these teens’ clothing, regardless their financial situation. In the same article, Buckley and Clark also mention:

Groups of people-teenagers being an obvious example-refused fashion per se to create their own "identities" in opposition to an increasingly homogenous consumer

marketplace, while in parallel the fashion system appropriated and redefined the ordinary as extraordinary with the annexing of sub-cultural street styles (Buckley & Clark, 2012, p. 23).

This quote especially sheds light on how fashion can also become a starting point to create or shift an identity, which is, again, about the microhistory of the city and brings up a new question on why these teens "need" to create or change an identity, in response to what or during which sociopolitical processes. In some countries, this is very obvious, and teens shape how the whole society, no matter the age, perceives fashion, even in their everyday lives. For example, in Japan, this is usually done via subcultures, where professional fashion designers have no more significance in street fashion than they had before. Instead, teens have more impact on trends, as they hugely affect the demands of the market with their own specific taste purchases. In the article "Japanese Teens as Producers of Street Fashion," Yuniya Kawamura discusses:

Fashion in postmodern times emerges out of youth culture and is then commercialized by the industry to reach a wider audience to spread it as 'fashion.' There is a strong social connection and a sense of belonging among those youngsters who dress themselves in unique and original outfits, some of which may be outrageous, radical and extraordinary (Kawamura, 2006, p. 799).

Now, this comparison to Japan may not seem right or suitable in the Armenian, and specifically Yerevanian context however as Armenian fashion lacks any academic studies for now, the best way to delve into these tendencies is to look at other countries' examples, which will be repetitive during my literature review. That is ultimately why I also initiated a survey in Yerevan so that the research question about Yerevan will not revolve around other countries'

examples. In this case, nevertheless, we have to look at other studies and tie them to Yerevan's case while generalizing and drawing parallels to this capstone research question.

Additionally and ultimately, if we look at other countries, we will notice the same tendencies slightly changed and adapted to the country's culture. For example, in Colombia, this happens especially via social media. In one of the research connected with these trends, Eileen Delgado explored the global trends that get glocalized by Colombian teens. What is important from her studies is her view on fashion as a microhistory, which was mentioned above once again. She mentions:

An individual's participation in fashion is a personal experience and depends on factors such as purchasing power, culture, and attitude towards change, to name a few. If one looks at some fashion trends adopted by young people and communicated on different popular platforms, one can identify the relationship with popular art, music, and a particular philosophy or thought related to these fields (Delgado et al., 2023, p. 189).

This viewpoint on street fashion implicated by teens could not be said better. It is, of course, vital to look at social media as well in this day and age while talking about teens and street style, however my research will not go deep into social media, as it concentrates on the economic and globalizing aspects of fashion *beyond* social media, in real life, in response to what is happening in the society, whether political, cultural or just seasonal. The importance of social media would emerge if this study was about how teens want to *show* themselves and their "aesthetic," but this is mostly about what they really are, what they really want or do, where Yerevan is an excellent field of study, about which there is no much research or information, shedding light on how all these concepts apply in the city. Moreover, there was one research

done in Armenia in 2022 about fashion and social media, from a student of the American University of Armenia, Alice Arabian, who, through her survey found out:

In addition, when the participants were asked whether or not social media influenced their fashion choices, around 65% of the participants answered yes. A lot of the participants claimed that social media was one of the biggest influences of fashion in their lives, along with other forms of media such as movies, TV shows, etc. (Arabian, 2022, p. 19)

Of course, it is more proof of how important social media is to look for trends; however, as mentioned above, social media does not necessarily show the reality of society but the way it shows itself in social media (to feel good, to get more likes and admirers).

If I continue to talk about Colombia (the example before this last source on Armenia), another study from there mentions that the Colombians incorporate their fashion silhouettes with ideas from returning migrants and personalize their apparel, turning ordinary goods into one-of-a-kind creations using paintings and embroidery. They are more inspired by one another's sense of style than by certain magazines (Brownie et al., 2012). While these tendencies can be driven by many various reasons, such as religion, geographic area, and climate, these are good indicators of how teens somehow shape each other's apparel choices and are not necessarily globalized (at first sight). However, I believe that even if the fashion is specific, glocalized, or highly unique, it still can consist of some globalization elements, which are mostly done subconsciously. That is why it is, once again, important to look at fashion as a way of self-expression but, at the same time, consider its relationship to the existing world and traditions and how it navigates the given circumstances.

As the importance and the existing research on street fashion among teens, especially in Armenia, and the communication of globalization and street fashion are covered, we can also look through the aspects of this that should be examined, considering the past studies on these and their limitations.

Firstly, as mentioned earlier, fashion should be considered as a way to show economic shifts on an individual and national level. This not only shows the person's revenues and income but also how they manage and spend that, how important the clothing is, and what prices they prefer no matter how much they earn. Especially for young adults aged 15-24, this is much harder and more interesting to study, as most of them either get their finances from family members or have just started to work/work-study and should be considerate of their personal finances. This adds another dimension to this topic, as it brings another question on how teens choose to spend on their clothing, if it is even important to them, or what are some ways to fight this scarcity of financial resources to get their desired outfits (this topic will be discussed separately).

An important condition for fashion to exist is defined by German sociologist and philosopher Georg Simmel in his "Fashion," where he describes that people must be given the chance to make decisions and choices, and they must also be economically capable of acting (Simmel, 1957). This depicts that only what you want to purchase and how you want to look is not enough, but the economic conditions are to be considered to complete your wants and needs. This statement seems pretty logical, however most of the time, economic powers are overlooked in fashion studies, where fashion and style are seen as mere aesthetics, imagination, and creativity. It is exciting to see some placements of fashion in the economy, such as in the case of

Werner Sombart, who said, "Fashion is the favored child of capitalism. It stems from the latter inner characteristics and expresses its uniqueness unlike any other phenomenon of our social life in our time" (Sombart, 2018, p. 225). With this statement, Sombart locates fashion in the economic world, especially in capitalism, and gives it a unique characteristic that no other "child" of capitalism has. I believe that this characteristic is fashion's ultimate essence to symbolize something, create identity, and rebel against or accept new trends, all with materials and not with words or thoughts.

As you can notice, Sombart concentrates on capitalism, however Armenia was a socialist country for around 70 years; it was part of the Soviet Union and has been independent for only 32 years. This part about the country's history and teen street style trends should not be overlooked but should not be given the highest importance, as it can just be considered a historical background, which still might have an impact on young adults' street style. In the Soviet Union, fashion was not perceived as it is now in the Republic of Armenia. Fashion mostly met function, especially during and after the Second World War, where there was no time for aesthetics but to survive and "rebuild" the country. In the book "Fashion Meets Socialism," the authors explain that the plans made for fashion led to shortages, quality issues, and a limited variety of clothing. The Soviet fashion professionals had autonomy in matters of taste, setting beauty standards for the citizens (Gronow & Zhuravlev, 2015). Besides that, even if the USSR appeared in history for an extended amount of time and included 15 republics, fashion studies were not that prominent there. They were mostly limited to fashion collections and designs for the proletariat (often unisex) that should have been utilitarian, simple, and easy to mass produce (examples are Varvara Stepanova and Liubov Popova). That is why street fashion for teens as a whole was not that crucial in dictating their taste or accepting new trends, as trends by

themselves were almost always set for them already, and they had to adapt to them. Nowadays, we do not see that in Yerevan or most post-Soviet societies.

It would be logical to think that Armenia would still organize its fashion practices according to the system set by the Soviet Union, however surprisingly, Armenia, now a mixed economy country, implements the best practices to have its own fashion economy without any plans but with a free market. However, as opposed to Soviet Armenia, the country now has a scarcity of resources, which leads to higher prices of local fashion goods and less mass production, hence less consumption of local clothing and accessories, especially by young adults, who mostly are not stable or developed financially yet. These people opt for cheaper, less quality items, which they can usually wear for one season and then pass it to their sibling or make a house cleaning material out of it. That is why the issue of sustainability, as an emerging global problem, is not that sharp of a problem in Armenia or Yerevan.

This does not mean that Yerevan or Armenia as a whole does not have some problems with its sustainable practices; rather, it means that the country "fights" these issues naturally on its way. What is significant here for this research is if the "I have no money" problems impact young adults' purchasing of much-wanted fashion products. It is also logical that inflation and salary decreases in Yerevan, especially in the recent years, 2021- 2023, affect the purchases of fashion items by these people. Moreover, in one of the studies in Spain about how customers opt for sustainable or unsustainable fashion options, the authors mention that "Consumers perceived SF (sustainable fashion) as more expensive and, since the price is one (if not the one) of the most important criteria in purchasing decision-making, they would opt for cheaper options" (Riesgo et al., 2022, p.4). The economic conditions of the country, hence the individual, is an essential

aspect in fashion decisions, however this study is based in Spain. This topic has yet to be researched in Yerevan or even Armenia and is stuck in its opinions and theories phase. Those research gaps will be asked and answered during this study in order to find the correlation between fashion and the economy in Yerevan as well.

The topics of sustainability and the economy's role in fashion lead us to quite predictable discussions about second-hand and thrifting cultures. Not surprisingly, these cultures have been developing in Yerevan in recent years. The first reason for this is highly anticipated by scholars, who connect this development (not in Yerevan but overall in the globe) with the economy again. We have to look at other country's examples and bring it to the Armenian environment, again, because of the scarcity of academic resources on Armenian fashion. But interestingly enough, these resources provide a better global understanding of our research question. An example of this is a study done in the Philippines, where Veronica Isla studied and compared the second-hand culture of the country with Zambia. She concluded, "Need, affordability, and thrift are reasons that figure prominently in the used clothing consumption behavior in both countries; reasons which are almost, if not completely absent from the motivations that emanate from developed countries" (Isla, 2013, p. 236). This distinction between the developed and developing countries is very good and vital here, as the logical aspects of choosing second-hand and thrifting can be a lot but necessarily apply to every country. That is why, even though there are rising discussions about the sustainability concerns of the consumers, I do not believe that this is what mainly drives Yerevanian young adults to make a purchase from a second-hand shop.

Finally, along with the economic aspect of buying used clothing, a significant impact, in my opinion, is the "trend" to thrift, whether spread by social media or via friend interactions.

Thrifting is cool; finding perfect deals by thrifting is cooler. A study about second-hand fashion business model development notes:

In addition, Factor 4 (one of the study factors) also believes that second-hand clothing can yield rare finds and fulfills the "joy of the hunt." ...many second-hand stores locate themselves around college campuses to attract college students who want brand-named products at low prices. At these stores, consumers can find affordable prices and unique assortments. Excitement can also be found due to the "thrill of the hunt" when shopping in second-hand stores (Gopalakrishnan & Matthews, 2017).

This brings the psychological and social aspect of thrifting, especially among young adults, which, in my opinion, is one of the two reasons (along with the economy) to thrift in Yerevan. However, this concept is recent in Yerevanian culture and is not accidental. The recent influx of refugees and immigrants from Russia and Ukraine caused by the Russian-Ukrainian war brought new, "never done or said before" ideas to the country. This, of course, does not refer to only fashion but also lifestyle, food, and music. However, I will be concentrating on the fashion effects of this influx in my studies. Not only was the cultural and dressing mosaic changed, but so were the ideas on what fashion is. Fashion is also thrifting, second-hand, and upcycling nowadays in Yerevan. Immigrants from other countries have successfully created online and offline shops to thrift or buy upcycled clothing. Moreover, becoming a self-entrepreneur in a host country is a wide practice in the whole world. For example, a case study about how migrants become entrepreneurs themselves highlights:

...immaterial labor offers opportunities for migrants and refugees to (re)invent their way of life in the host country. The mobilization of migrants and refugees in a cooperation

network highlights the vernacular references and the migration/refugee situation itself, making these individuals entrepreneurs of themselves, which is consistent with the notion of immaterial labor, specifically in the case of foreigners, advancing the understanding of this concept and expanding the theoretical perspective of autonomy of migration. In this process, a movement of singularization is observed, creating a labor market for migrants and refugees that is connected to affection and politics (Scherer & Grisci, 2022, p. 16).

This prevalent practice of opening new stores (not necessarily offline), bringing your culture to your host country, and making what is considered your "normal" become the new country's "normal" has also been very noticeable in Yerevan in recent years. The motifs are usually highlighted in social media, but they have already reached a new level of discovery in offline space as well, by the opening of these online stores, usually in the capital city, as studied.

Armenians usually embrace these new shifts, even if they are cultural; that is why the emergence of these new values brought by other nations is developing rapidly. Moreover, this does not necessarily imply the settlers of the city but also the refugees and immigrants who come and have to somehow adapt themselves to the new environment. Research done about Pakistani and Indian women settled in the USA states that rather than interpreting immigrant attire exclusively via a transnational perspective, we should have a more sophisticated comprehension that considers the individualized character of people's clothing experiences. In addition, the authors imply that immigrants may redefine their identity and sense of belonging as a result of changing how they dress to fit in with their new surroundings (Brownie et al., 2012).

Furthermore, in a recent article about the UK and its immigrants, the author concludes:

Fashion, which is situated and at the same time transcending boundaries, has the possibility to add something relevant and unique to current debates on national and cultural identity, tradition, and sovereignty, by addressing the central role of immigrants and contributing to re-thinking identity as open and multi-layered. Fashion holds an important political valence indeed in times of global cultural confrontations and, on the other hand, of surging nationalistic and protectionist tendencies (Loscialpo, 2019, p. 648).

It is essential to situate fashion like this in the political and social context, where it plays a huge role and can become an excellent tool to symbolize something, mainly applied by a country's immigrants. However, my main focus is to look at how young adults of Yerevan respond to these processes and if they utilize these new practices on themselves in their street style, as accepting the new culture and new norms is different from implying it in their daily lives. It is exciting to research how certain groups react to fashion trends and why, as well as how this reaction is connected with immigrants in the city. In research associated with the cities of London and New York, the authors write, “Young women, immigrants and recently enfranchised sections of the working classes and middle classes negotiated the newness and diversity of the city, while other groups were more tentative, more inclined to recourse to established routines and follow traditional patterns” (Buckley et al., 2017, p. 58). The separation of young women and immigrants is genuinely new and interesting in this context, as we do not usually see a clear connection between certain fashion choices and these age groups in the existing research, even though, in theory, we know or assume that the connection exists.

Moreover, the changing circumstances of the country and city have huge implications on everyday attire, as indirectly mentioned before. The same research from New York shows how

the economic crisis in the town led to the rise of artists and self-expression. Buckley et al. (2017) write:

In this changing context, fashion was increasingly a means of ‘producing’ an individual identity, not only for those in the public eye – designers, musicians and other performers – but also for ordinary people. The media provided the role models, consumption the means, and going out, be it to clubs or simply appearing on the streets, provided the onus for fashion to make an imprint on everyday life. (p. 200)

Now, this does not mean that Yerevan or overall Armenia is in a substantial economic crisis nowadays, even with high inflation that is not compatible with low salaries, but this surely can give a good understanding of how we can see some tendencies rising regardless of the financial conditions, and how some other tendencies are more likely to appear during the shifting periods.

As you can notice, fashion in Yerevan is not well-researched, let alone its specific aspects, like street style or certain age groups. Again, the examples I have brought from different countries are not necessarily well suited for this exact country or city, however they are the only ones that can give us a broader understanding of this research matter. To fill this gap and see how all those mentioned above apply to the Yerevanian culture, I will concentrate on the city’s fashion preferences and delve deep into recent years’ practices, as that is when we saw massive changes in society, both in population and economically. Additionally, this research will not only present how Yerevan adapts to certain trends and shifts but also get a better understanding of how a city can change its preferences in fashion due to some globalization tendencies beyond social media. So, this research will be a good resource to realize the impact that the economy,

refugees, and other global and outer tendencies have on street fashion, hence on how young adults behave and evolve (since I connected street fashion with individual perceptions and identity creation).

Globalization as a concept is certainly not new and is very well-researched right now, with some gaps to be filled when something changes in it. That is why I avoided talking about it as a whole that much, as my research is mostly connected with street fashion, Yerevan, and young adults, and those things are more important to be defined and explained in this scenario. Nevertheless, it is crucial to note that whatever was discussed before has a tie with globalization and how it works in Yerevan, so this research will be looked at from that lens but will not be limited to it and will cover and pay attention to cultural aspects and analysis, as the city has been and is primarily monoethnic and watching how new cultures are adapting to this is very fascinating.

Research Question

The research question for this capstone is the following: How does globalization influence street fashion among Yerevanian young adults (aged 15 to 24), particularly focusing on economic changes, the influx of Russian and Ukrainian refugees, and the growing popularity of second-hand and thrifting trends between 2021 and 2023?

Methodology

This capstone project adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research techniques. The first and foremost research method is a survey of young adults aged 15 to 24 in Yerevan. The second method is secondary literature research, which provides a better understanding of three things I want to focus on. These methodological choices offer a non-biased, comprehensive knowledge of how Yerevan street fashion evolved.

The survey aimed to collect quantitative data on the fashion choices, preferences, and influences of young adults in Yerevan. This has been done by a detailed questionnaire addressing key aspects such as clothing preferences (styles like classic or streetwear), style influences (social media, family, friends, work, school/university), economic factors affecting fashion choices (monthly income, if there is no income, then who chooses and buys their clothes), engagement with second-hand and thrifting trends (because it is cheap or because of their friends/sustainability concerns/social media/beautiful and unique findings), and the impact of global influences (influx of refugees/fashion magazines/fashion weeks/looking at what people wear outside, using Armenian cultural elements in their apparel).

The questions were primarily multiple choice (10 questions) with some open-ended ones (4 questions), where the respondents can provide more insight into how they look at fashion and their style (these were not required, so not every respondent actually responded to the open-ended ones). The survey was both in English and Armenian, making it easier for more people to fill it out. Only 15-24-year-old people could fill in the survey, and after they mentioned whether they live in Yerevan, visit every day, sometimes, or never, it would continue according to their choice. More specifically, for the people who never visit Yerevan, the survey would

close, as they are not applicable to my research. For the rest of the respondents, the survey would continue with some demographic information and, later on, the questions I have been referring to about their styles and fashion choices.

According to the Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia's Demographic Handbook of 2023, at the beginning of 2023, there were 112,098 people permanently populated in Yerevan aged 15-24 years old. This makes the sample size for the survey 165 people, with a 99% confidence level and approximately 6% margin of error, and the population proportion of those aged people is 10.2% of the whole Yerevan population (112,098 out of 1,098,900 people).

Respondents were informed about the purpose of the survey, as it was distributed through Google Forms, where they read about how I would use their responses later on. The survey was anonymous, hence even I was not able to see their names, and they were informed about the confidentiality of their answers. Google Forms makes it easier to analyze quantitative data obtained from the survey, which will assist me in identifying patterns, correlations, and trends.

As of now, I have received 220 responses for my survey, providing great insights into my research matter. 165 of them are living in Yerevan, which makes my survey trustworthy and eligible to use while making claims. The remaining 55 respondents visit Yerevan every day or sometimes, which is also very important to my research, as the Yerevanian street fashion does not only consist of people living there but also young adults who come to study or work there almost every day. For the sample size matter, I calculated it with Yerevan's population, as it gives me more specific data on the age-based population, which I used in the “population proportion” part to understand my sample size. This is what made the confidence level 99% and the margin

of error 6%. For the other people who do not actually live in Yerevan, I will still be considering the 55 remaining responses.

The second method used in this research is qualitative. As Armenian fashion needs more research (there are almost none) and studies I can use, I mainly concentrate on foreign studies about the correlation of economy and globalization with street fashion. Even though it seems, at first glance, that those foreign articles are not relevant to this environment, I find similarities in the patterns of fashion choices and how they change. Regardless, it is important to mention that the secondary literary research is less specific than the survey results because it gives a general understanding and helps to observe how similar these shifts can be in different cultures.

The survey and secondary research results are mixed and analyzed critically to provide a complete understanding of how street fashion has evolved among young Yerevanian adults between 2021 and 2023. This mixed-methods approach captures both the breadth and depth of information necessary to answer the research questions.

Survey findings and analysis

The survey's demographic data, although not crucial to this research matter, still provides interesting insights about overall respondents. All the 220 people who filled in the survey are aged 15-24.

Most indicated their gender as female (69.1%), male participants were 30%, and non-binary 0.9%. The survey was distributed evenly through my network and every platform possible, and, in this case, it is unclear whether more females got to see the study or more of

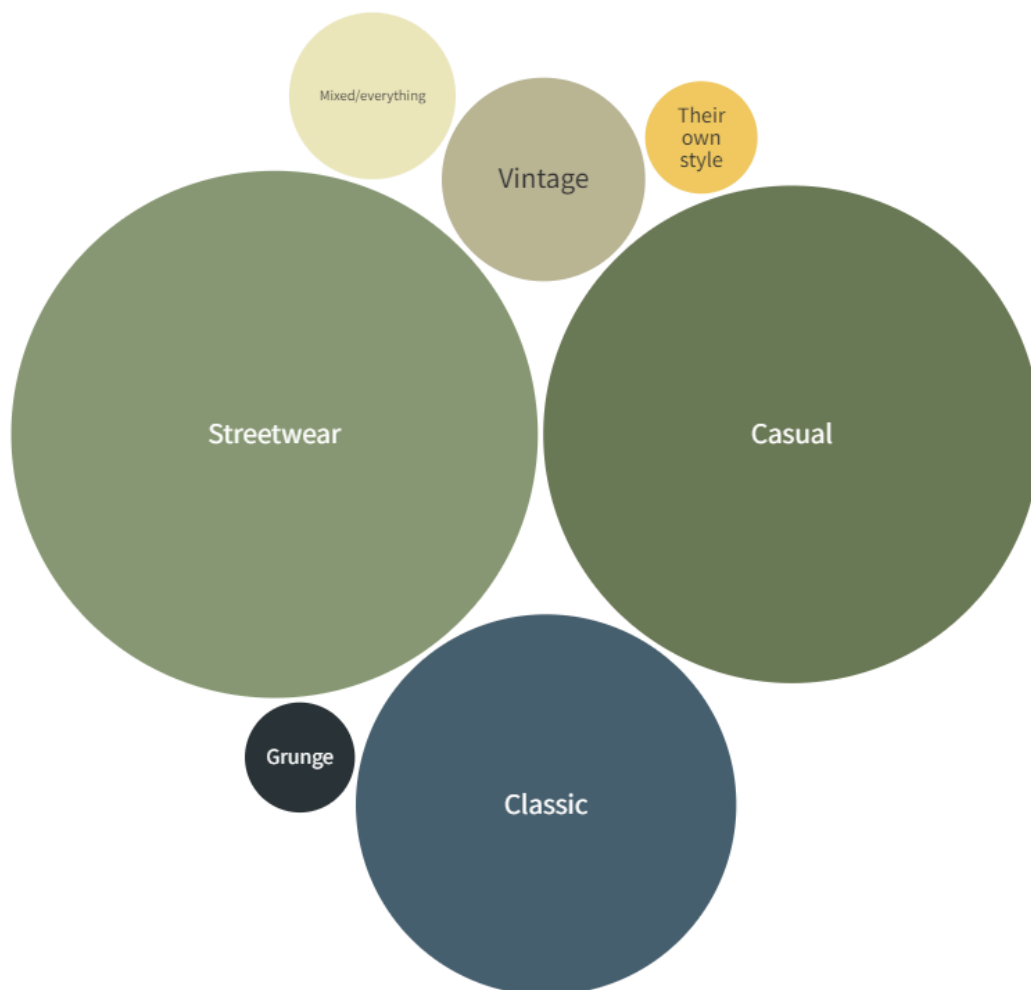
them just filled it out. Men in Armenia usually do not pay much attention to clothing or fashion, and that could be a reason for the lower percentage of male respondents to my survey, however it should not be a problem, as the survey is still representative and it is more important to get the opinions of people who care about their fashion choices and are attentive to what is going on in the city in this regard.

Another important aspect of the survey was how the respondents connected with Yerevan. As I mentioned before, when I look at the street fashion of the city, I look not only at the people who live in the city but also who come and go, becoming a part of the whole fashion mosaic. This also gives me an opportunity to look at my research on a broader level; although I am doing it in the capital city, Yerevan only, I still can understand some country-wide tendencies, especially thanks to the respondents who visit Yerevan every day or sometimes. This being said, I also know that the people who come to Yerevan live near it, like in the Kotayk region or other bordering cities and villages, and that may leave out further regions of Armenia (like Syunik or Shirak), that is why I will not focus on the whole country but can bring some general understanding about the people who are somehow connected with Yerevan frequently. So, 75% of 220 respondents actually live in Yerevan, 17.3% of them visit Yerevan every day, and 7.7% visit the city sometimes.

Interestingly, there are no responses about never visiting Yerevan (the survey would close after recording that answer). Even if this can be biased because my network where the survey was shared most probably has some connection with Yerevan, I also tried to go beyond that and share it with people in other regions as well (Syunik, for example, where I am originally from). Another noteworthy thing is that even though I do not live in Yerevan, my network does not

necessarily live in Yerevan either; the fact that there are 0 responses to never visiting Yerevan is another fascinating thing to research. This proves my earlier statement on how important the capital city of Armenia is for the whole country. It has one-third of the whole population, the biggest and busiest airport in the country, and all the central branches and offices not only for the financial institutions but also for governmental structures and all the big universities of the country. This, of course, should not be considered a way to devalue other regions of Armenia as every region is equally important and culturally significant rather, it should be looked at the way Yerevan, as the capital city, has the huge power to influence and impact the country and become a cradle for various individuals and cultures.

The last demographic feature from my survey is directly related to my research subject, fashion. I asked the participants about their overall fashion style. In this case, I allowed the respondents to choose multiple options from which I provided (classic, streetwear (I explained this in the Armenian translation as “comfortable and light,” as there is no word for streetwear in Armenia), casual (translated as “everyday” in Armenian), and vintage). In addition to my provided options, they could also write their own response, which, while data coding, I categorized by repetitive keywords.



So, most of the people (55%) said that their overall style is streetwear, which is very interesting in the way that importance is given to more comfortable clothing that they can wear every day. Similarly, 49% of them indicated that their style is casual, which has very tight connections with streetwear, so it is understandable how it worked here. Then, we also have people who would describe their style as classic (28.7%), vintage (8.2%), mixed/everything (5.5%), grunge (2.4%), and the more interesting part-their own style (2.5%). It is worth mentioning that most of these people are not, as a matter of fact, stylists or professionals in the

fashion field, and they do not always have the needed vocabulary to speak their mind on fashion or even their own style, that is why while they mention that they have their own style or in the further cases that will be discussed, that nothing influences them, they might not have observed the existing fashion tendencies or styles enough to make that claim. Of course, I will not be completely eliminating the fact that those people really have their own style (even though there are nowadays terms for almost every aesthetic and style) or that they are their own inspiration and influence, however, people as social creatures are almost always influenced by something or another, be it their family, environment or childhood.

Finances and young adults

As the demographic part of the survey is analyzed and represented, I can now move on to the financial situation of Yerevanian young adults aged 15-24 years. This age group, as mentioned earlier, is fluctuant and unstable in the matter of personal finances, as most of them have no job or salary, and some of them work and study at the same time or have just started working or getting internships. That is why it was crucial for me to gain knowledge about their financial situation and who chooses and buys their clothing, as even when they might not have personal finances, they still could be the ones to choose what to wear. Hence, I asked the question about their income, and not surprisingly, the two major groups are people who have no income and the ones who get more than 100,000 Armenian drams every month (note that the minimum monthly wage in Armenia since January 2023 has been 75,000 AMD).

Even with these numbers of not having income and having a less than minimal salary (most probably because they work part-time or have an internship, as it is illegal to work with

less than 75,000 AMD monthly for full-time), the numbers of those who choose and buy their clothes highly contrasts. 96.9% of the respondents mentioned that they themselves choose and buy their clothing, however I created this question in a way that they could mention several options, as it should not necessarily always be them who buys their clothing but family or other people as well. That is why 26% of people also mention that their family chooses and buys their clothing. Only 1.4% mentioned that their friends buy their clothing too and, finally, one person mentioned that they get clothes mostly as gifts. This is significant in a way that even though young adults do not always have the means (specifically, the finances) to buy their clothing, they still get to choose the apparel according to their own needs, wants, and tastes. This proves that the financial situation of young adults is not necessarily an obstacle to buying whatever they want while being influenced by several factors that are not limited to the people in their environment but also can include the people outside it, such as tourists, social media, celebrities, and overall global trends. I also discussed in my literature review that people not only make fashion choices but also should have the means to act upon these choices. In this case, they do not necessarily need to have the means but can make these choices and act accordingly while borrowing money from their parents and shopping alone or shopping with them while still dictating their style. In this case, studying young adults is once again a good choice, and even the financial circumstances are not a factor in considering them an inefficient age group to research street fashion in Yerevan.

Economic changes and street fashion

I have covered the important part of the finances, but I also want to show how recent economic changes have affected young adults and their fashion choices, as it is the central topic of my research, considering globalization tendencies and high inflation in Yerevan and how these people navigate through that all, to show identity but also choose cost-effectiveness. The question in my survey arose from that: How have the economic changes in Armenia influenced their fashion choices and purchases? This was an open-ended question and not a required one, so out of 220 people, only 90 answered that, writing their thoughts and experiences on the recent economic changes. 36.7% of respondents said that they had not seen any significant changes in their fashion choices after these changes. This is interesting and can be looked at through various lenses. One was that there were actually no significant changes in the Armenian economy in recent years; the other was that these people did not change specifically their fashion practices regardless of the economic shifts, and finally, maybe, they did not pay much attention to what was changed. The first one can be immediately rejected, as there are solid facts about the Armenian economy in the last years, most importantly on the average national retail prices (tariffs) for some goods/services. For example, according to the Armenian Statistical Committee, the average price of men's jackets in 2020 was 25,772 AMD; meanwhile, in 2023, it was up to 30,539 AMD, which is a 15% rise in price (Darmstadt). Similarly, for women, an example would be jackets' and jumpsuits' average price being 11,807 AMD in 2020 and 14,851 AMD in 2023 (20% increase). Moreover, the minimum monthly wage of Armenia that changed from 68,000 to 75,000 AMD in January 2023 would not be enough to cover the inflation and new costs of garments efficiently, as the wage increase is hardly 10% (considering the housing inflation as well), so the difference between inflation rates and a small increase of minimum monthly wage is

not complementary, which, logically, creates a financial crisis and cannot be overlooked or avoided.

The second possible reason why this many people saw no change in their fashion choices after the recent economic changes is that they just did not pay attention. This is a very legitimate reason, which appears in not only this question but also other questions about their surroundings and environments. Another reason is that even though these economic changes have appeared, people still allocate the same amount of money or buy the same amount of things no matter the price. While talking about these aspects, there were actually some responses that mentioned changes and specific actions they took. So, 23.4% of respondents said that they started buying online more, specifically from other countries, and even if the store has an Armenian branch, they still choose to buy from its international branches due to lower prices for the same item. This information is significant in the way that these Yerevanian young adults found a coping tool with high inflation, which is international trade, changing the country's international trade roadmap as well. This is also due to globalization, which makes it easier to find and order clothes in Armenia and gain them very quickly, which changes not only the trading practices but also purchase patterns inside the country and the city, promoting foreign trade over local goods. As a matter of fact, this can be connected to the statistics on the imports of the Republic of Armenia. In 2020, textile clothes and clothing accessories' import to Armenia was 60 037.2 (calculated by 1000 US dollars), while in 2022 (the most recent official data), it became 108 272.1, which is a considerable change and does not only concern to textile clothes but also footwear, headwear and other made up textile articles, worn clothes (every each has its own separate data that I will not go deep into now). Some respondents also mentioned the platforms from which they buy their clothing: "Asos and China prices are always the best," and "Wildberries was a big change in our

fashion, I would say.” So, the globalization tendencies are not connected merely with the economic changes but also to what is brought to the country (Wildberries started its direct sales in Armenia at the end of 2022); somehow this globalization can be seen as forced, however it would not work if there was no demand in the country.

On the other hand, the economic changes also brought up a new idea: thrifting, the controversy of fast fashion and ethical fashion practices. 12% of the respondents mentioned that they started buying less or being more conscious about their clothing, and 10% of them said that they started thrifting. More specifically, some of them mentioned: “I buy only high-quality clothing now so that I won't need to buy something else for a long time,” “I buy relatively less clothes now than I did before, I pay more attention to sustainability and long-lasting fashion,” “My style slightly changed due to shopping in thrift stores.” It is also interesting to discover the connection between thrifting and globalization when that idea is mostly prominent because of its cost-effectiveness rather than its sustainability in Yerevan.

Thrifting and street fashion

The emerging thrifting tendency and the normalization of second-hand clothing are highly connected to globalization in Yerevan. It is a process and not a singular event that happens not only in Armenia but also worldwide due to social media, foreign exchange of goods, tourism, and international relations. If we look at thrifting exclusively, it is easier to assume that its increase in popularity has to do with the economic changes mentioned above or, more logically,

sustainability concerns. Nevertheless, my survey results show a more interesting approach to this in Yerevan.

Even if we talk about thrifting and second-hand culture as a newly-born trend in Yerevan, 59.1% of the survey participants said that they never thrift. This is not surprising in Armenia, as the concept itself is not widely accepted. It is usually done between the relatives or the family itself when the older siblings give their used clothes to the younger generation, and it is considered normal. However, wearing someone else's used clothes is not that popular or attractive to Armenians. There, fortunately, is prior data from Yerevan on how people looked at second-hand clothing. The comparative research done by Newton et al. in 2011 on Armenian and the US second-hand market discovered:

The second question asked whether the interviewee has shopped, does shop or would shop at a second-hand store. Of the 40 polled, 38 or 95% stated they had never shopped and presently do not shop at second-hand clothing stores because of the very nature that the garments are pre-worn. Eight of the 40 polled, or 20% said that they would consider shopping at a second-hand clothing store if new-clothing purchases were also an option.
(p. 47)

To understand this phenomenon among Armenians, I can also bring another example from the same authors, who did their research in 2001, and it explains the topic very well. This research shows how the picture of second-hand culture differs greatly from that of the US. Despite the economic troubles of that time (2001), their survey revealed a high enough negative prejudice against used clothing to drive away customers and force second-hand retailers (that started to open around 1993 or 1994) out of business. According to the authors, residents may be

reluctant to wear or acquire used clothing out of concern that their neighbors will notice the apparent labels and assume that the clothing was bought from these shops, hence the family is poor (Newton et al., 2001). These two very good examples from Armenia show very negative behavior toward thrifting and second-hand shopping. The fact that these numbers have decreased to 59.1% (seen in my survey) is already a good indicator of how the young adults in Yerevan treat the second-hand culture. It already shows a change and, as these people are the younger generation, it is more probable that the future generations will be raised this way too and maybe even treat this culture extremely positively.

Nevertheless, my topic is about the reasons for second-hand popularity rather than its potential in Yerevan, and with 40.9% of people stating that they somehow thrift, I also want to know what impacted it. My following question was exactly to understand why people thrift in Yerevan. The majority of the participants mentioned getting unique findings in these stores as the core motivation. Other important aspects are cost-effectiveness and trends. Only a very few people (18 participants) mentioned that they do thrift shopping because of sustainability concerns or peer influence.

UNIQUE FINDINGS



COST-EFFECTIVENESS



TRENDS



SUSTAINABILITY



PEER INFLUENCE



The idea of finding rare things in thrift shops is not extraordinary. Usually, fast fashion brands sell the same item with slight changes for that season, and if you want to get something that no other store has, it could be very difficult as the market is filled with mainstream apparel. That is why it is logical to find a one-of-a-kind piece for that period of time, also considering that fashion is cyclical and trends usually come back after 20 years. In fact, one of the respondents mentioned: “There are things that you can only thrift and can't find anywhere else because the style is already old.”

What is more prominent is that the second-hand trend does not go hand in hand with the latest sustainability tendencies in Yerevan, as its cost-effectiveness and trending aspects are put above it. Of course, this is connected with recent economic changes in the whole country. However, the question arises: What made these people become fine with second-hand clothing when, in 2001, Armenia was in a worse economic condition, and people treated it highly negatively at that time? My answer to this question is within the answers of the respondents; not only is it cost-effective, but it is also trendy to thrift due to the global influence.

It has been mentioned before that the popularity of the internet and social media usage has changed many things in young adults' fashion choices. In fact, according to a recent estimate, the global market for fashion resale is predicted to rise by 127% by 2026, which is three times faster than the overall retail clothes sector. According to the same report, when it comes to buying second-hand clothing, the younger generation is mostly in charge, and 62% of Gen Z and Millennials say they search for used items before buying new ones. Additionally, 58% of customers feel that shopping for pre-owned goods has helped them during the inflation.

Online marketplaces are another reason why more people are purchasing used clothing, making it easier for customers to find what they want (Hughes, 2022).

Many researchers and online articles connect the emergence of thrifting with some social media platforms, and rightfully so. Like how Anjali Kota writes, “The rise of thrifting began on TikTok in response to the reemergence of the past fashion trends...TikTok was good because it started pushing others to go to the thrift store as they began seeing videos on thrift store finds” (2022). Another interesting statement from the article from “Her Agenda” shows that TikTok had a major role in thrifting to become a fashion trend throughout the epidemic. The app's thrifting hauls have gained so much engagement that a whole subculture known as "ThriftTok" has emerged (2023). There are no studies concerning how this impacted Yerevanian young adults, however as of 2022, 48% of businesses in the sphere of wholesale and retail trade use social media to sell and represent their goods or services in Armenia. The number is especially high for Yerevan separately (57% for every sphere of business using social media) (ArmStat, 2022). There are no official numbers on how many people actually use social media, however the most popular social media app downloaded is TikTok as of 2024, and, in the case of shopping, it is Temu and Wildberries (SimilarWeb, 2024). Most importantly, if there was no demand from the consumers to see these businesses in their preferred social media, they would not open their accounts at all, so I logically connected them together.

Moreover, if we go back to thrifting tendencies, they are not only promoted by these shops but also by influencers, who, for example, do vlogs during thrifting, creating thrift haul videos and proudly announcing that their unique apparel is thrifted, connecting it with the fact that they could get such good clothes with such low prices. This mostly happens in global social

media (the US and Europe), which is very easy to reach through TikTok and affects Yerevan's behavior toward thrifting. Another critical thing to look at in Yerevan for this exact period of time is the influx of refugees, a globalization element that brings in new trends and behaviors toward fashion.

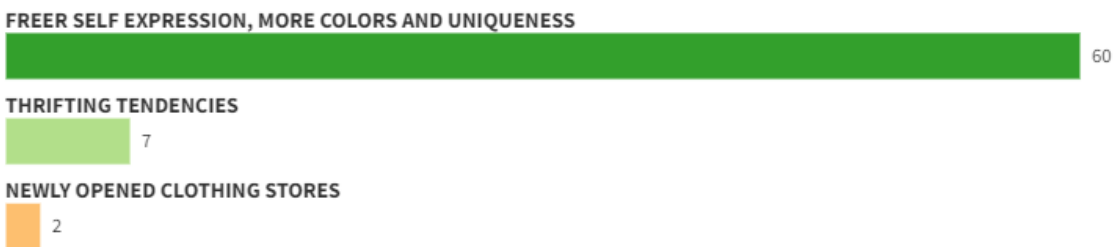
Refugees and street fashion

The Russian-Ukrainian war, starting in February 2022, brought new geopolitical issues and a refugee influx that could not leave out Armenia and, especially, Yerevan as its capital and the busiest city. According to official statistics in 2022 1,129,829 Russian citizens visited Armenia and 1,064,680 left, making the saldo of 65,149 people staying in. The same report shows that the saldo in the case of Ukrainian citizens is 339 people (RA Ministry of Internal Affairs: Migration and Citizenship Services, 2022). For the next year, the number of Russian citizens increased by 23,484 people, and the number of Ukrainian citizens saw slight changes (RA Ministry of Internal Affairs: Migration and Citizenship Services, 2023).

Even if statistically the numbers do not seem that huge, their impact is, especially when we talk about such a small country, let alone a city. I look more at how they impacted the Yerevanian street fashion rather than how Yerevan impacted their personal style. It is noteworthy that I put the emphasis on refugees shifting the street fashion narrative because, in this case, the difference is huge. It was a theory of mine that even if we come from the same historical context, which is the Soviet Union, Yerevanian street fashion is still not as developed in the matter of showing personality as the Ukrainian is. Almost the same goes for the Russian street style,

especially for people coming from Moscow or Saint Petersburg. That is why I asked in my survey if people noticed any changes in Yerevan street fashion after the influx of refugees from Russia and Ukraine to prove my theory. 72% of the respondents mentioned that they noticed a change, 26.5% of them did not notice any changes and approximately 1.5% of people said that they did not pay attention to it.

The next question was an open-ended one about the specific changes people have noticed after the refugee influx. It was not a required question, and only 84 people stated their opinions. During data coding, I noticed the following keywords mentioned mainly by the respondents: more colors, more authenticity, self-expression and freer style, thrifting, and opening of new stores. The others mentioned here also said that they had not noticed anything or were not observant.



Some interesting remarks are:

- “More free-form fashion style. More engagement with unorthodox styles and fashion that has always been considered amot (*shame*) in Armenia. These include tattoos, piercings, shorter skirts and shorts, crop tops. Overall greater freedom of expression,”

- “People now are less afraid to wear grunge style in Yerevan, I myself feel more comfortable now to express myself via fashion as I know there are Russians or Ukrainians who will appreciate it, also saw many upcycling and thrifting stores opened by them, so I mostly shop there,”
- “Because Russian and Ukrainian people tend to dress more flexible, that goes beyond what the local markets provide, people who are in central parts of Yerevan can be encouraged to also be loose in their outfit choices as they will not be judged for "standing out", because it's not a rare occasion to see someone dressed "unconventionally Armenian" in the streets nowadays,”
- “I've noticed an emergence of traditional Russian and Ukrainian clothing styles, patterns, and motifs in the local fashion market, providing opportunities for individuals to experiment with different styles and aesthetics.”

Of course, not all the comments were positive and some people also mentioned that people “got naked” after the refugee influx or that the street fashion has become vulgar (actually, there were only these 2 negative comments). This is still understandable because you can already see that the shift is pivotal and fast, so there will be people who will not accept that quickly or any time soon.

The fact that so many people see changes not only around them but also in their own styles, talks about the refugee influx in Armenia being a significant globalization catalyst. Additionally, the prior discussions about thrifting increase and emergence as a trend is well-noticed here, as many people mentioned not only noticeable second-hand style but also upcycling trends. So, adding to the previous point about social media playing a huge role for

thrifting to be normalized, we also see the importance of refugees in this matter. There is no data on how many thrift/resale/vintage stores there are in Yerevan, unfortunately, however I can bring the most popular ones that started their business online on Instagram after the refugee influx (many of them by the refugees themselves):



ragegarage_vintage

Follow

Message



83 posts

3,022 followers

17 following

Community

Resale project space with sustainable fashion, selective vintage, local designers, coffee and art

Delivery

Wed—Sun/12-21

Rafael Lemkin, 14, backyard

t.me/ragegaragestore



street.version

Follow Back

Message



103 posts

770 followers

4,418 following

Thrift Store Based In YVN <3

New Items Every Week

Reuse - Reuse - Reuse

No Returns

Free Delivery in the Centre ✨

Shipping to Regions



zrt.u.prt

Follow

Message



131 posts

759 followers

92 following

Upcycled Clothing Brand

@gdemoicoffee

♻️ Turning Old Into New

📦 Vintage/Resale

📍 @ragegarage_vintage



samosty.vintage

Follow

Message



96 posts

531 followers

1 following

ONLINE SECOND-HAND YEREVAN AM

second hand/vintage & sustainable fashion

Many more Armenian stores got most of their engagement and sales after 2022 and started to look at it as a serious business rather than a side hustle. Two famous market events in Armenia, Ket Market (started in 2022) and Kap Market (started in 2023), were created after the refugee influx because of high demand. Now, around 20% of the businesses presented by these markets are Russian or Ukrainian, according to my own observations (they present all the businesses on their Instagram) and informal data. Moreover, another that kind of market, Move2Market, has been opened by refugees.

If I move on from the thrifting aspect normalized by these businesses and refugees, I should talk about the new styles brought into Yerevan, creating a beautiful fashion mosaic in the capital city. We often tend to see globalization as a process connected with the internet, however I want to emphasize how important the geopolitical situation can be in these seemingly minor processes as well. I see the changes in street fashion as a microhistory of the whole larger globalization picture. Hence, along with thrifting, Russian and Ukrainian refugees also brought an understanding of style as a self-expression that needs to be different, creative, and unique. The responses that I got from my survey mostly talk about how colorful the city's style has become and, even in some cases, Armenians are not afraid to dress differently as there are people that will understand them or they will not be differentiated that much nowadays. Even if fashion is originally functional, rather than serving aesthetic or moral purposes, it is widespread in other countries like France, Italy, the US, and Japan to use fashion for specific ideologies or as a personal authenticator. Armenia was not that much into this idea, which led fashion to be an everyday functional object where there is not much effort or thought put into it; colors are usually limited to black and white, and the prominence of fast fashion provides one type of

design for all. The changes among young Yerevanian adults are now apparent, and the refugees are now added as change makers or at least catalysts.

Globalization and the Armenian identity

One thing is how globalization elements are coming to Yerevan, but another thing is how this is adapted in Yerevan for Armenians. I believe that young Yerevanian adults are very accepting of new changes and ideas, especially in fashion and street style. In order to understand this concept, I tried to know what are the most popular global influences of style for Yerevanian young adults, if there are any. Only 12.7% mentioned that they never get inspiration from global sources; the rest use global sources frequently or at least occasionally. Additionally, to my other question, which was not a required one, I got 75 responses mentioning specific sources. Social media was the dominant one, where apps like TikTok and Instagram gained 35% of responses and Pinterest on its own had 31% of popularity. Some other sources that were also prominent enough were fashion magazines (Vogue, Elle), streets, people, fashion weeks, runways, TV shows, books, and celebrities. As you can see, social media is still the most popular way of getting inspiration in fashion, and there is no resistance to using global sources.

Nevertheless, global sources are not enough to understand the communication between local and global influences. I had another question in my survey, specifically on the importance of using Armenian elements in their style, to which only 4.1% of people responded that it is very important for them to use those elements. The overwhelming majority, 73.2%, said that it is not important at all to use Armenian elements. I had already predicted that outcome, which is why I

also asked what kind of elements they use, if any. The question was not required and there were 67 responses, where the vast majority mentioned Armenian traditional jewelry and the rest also mentioned cross, Armenian writings and alphabets and other accessories (scarves, bags, flag, pagan gods, films, pomegranate). Very interesting inputs were:

- “I don't use because they're not suitable with any style, they don't look good,”
- “I mostly like Armenian texts but they don't usually go with the clothes I wear, sometimes it is interesting to match these ethnic elements with global trends, but I do this out of pure interest and uniqueness, rather than "keeping the armenian traditions and culture,”
- “If I use those kind of things, I try to stay away from colors as armenian colors (flag for example) are very bright and not that good looking,”
- “As I'm not Armenian, I don't find it too important, but I often wear my Armenian initial silver necklace "Ի" because it matches many of my outfits and it helps to feel a sense of belonging here in this country that's my second home. Oh, I also often bring an Old Dilijan tote bag around; I used to bring an Armenian alphabet tote bag as well but the Dilijan one is more suited to my needs (and again it makes me proud to be living here),”
- “If I'm in Armenia, I don't incorporate those elements in my style but when I'm abroad, I might want to use some details for uniqueness.”

It is true that there is an urge for uniqueness mostly when different cultures surround you, and there emerges a need to show your identity. It would be pretty logical to assume that Armenians do not need to use Armenian elements in their style because they are in their own country surrounded by mostly Armenian people. However, as you can see from some of the

answers, people do not use those elements widely because they cannot incorporate them into their daily lives. That is why the most prominent Armenian elements used are accessories (especially silver ones), and the most famous brand, Pregomesh, was mentioned several times. Also, Yerevan is not completely inhabited by Armenians anymore, but the abovementioned Russian and Ukrainian refugees also play an important role in the city's life and fashion. In addition, post-war Armenia is quite different from what was before, as nowadays, Armenian identity is somehow endangered.

It is evident that there are almost no tools to resist globalization in Yerevan among young adults, and the new wave of it is very quickly and easily adapted in the city. Talking about fashion and street style, most importantly, Yerevan lacks the means to oppose globalization tendencies, as seen in the years 2021-2023, even if it went through war in 2020 and saw ethnic cleansing of Nagorno Karabakh in 2023. The embracing of Armenian traditional culture, elements, and style is becoming more challenging because of those not being appropriately represented and not being organic in people's street fashion, creating a clash between traditional and new, where traditional is seen negatively and out of trend. Globalization in the Yerevanian atmosphere happens naturally and without prominent resistance.

Conclusion

Globalization in Yerevan happens very quickly, and it is mostly seen in Yerevanian young adults, where several factors were considered. The fact that the chosen age group is not financially stable to act on their clothing needs is not an obstacle to looking at their fashion

choices as their own, as seen from my survey. The economic changes in Armenia and, more specifically, the inflation and increase of apparel prices also made these people use online platforms to buy their clothing, making it easier to diverge into global fashion trends and international trade. However, online shopping is not the only outcome of economic changes, as people have also started to think about sustainability for their own good and make conscious fashion decisions, which has led to second-hand, vintage, upcycling, and thrifting popularity.

The admiration of second-hand clothing refers not only to economic changes but also to social media, which is the most prominent and influential tool of globalization in Yerevan. The emergence of social media influencers leads to the embracing of this culture not only locally but also globally. Additionally, the Russian and Ukrainian refugees had to play a huge role in this process. They not only changed the behavior toward this culture positively but also brought new colors, styles, and meanings of fashion and everyday apparel to the city, inspiring many to use fashion not only as a function.

The refugee influx, however, did not meet resistance in Yerevan, as there are no means for Armenians to use traditional elements organically in their styles. There might be an opposing opinion that Armenians do not need to use ethnic elements in their own environment. Nevertheless, it is very debatable as the number of foreign refugees is high in Yerevan, and Armenia has undergone a war and ethnic cleansing in Artsakh.

The ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine, the influx of refugees, and some economic changes leading to finding affordable apparel are the current means of globalization in Yerevan. As seen earlier, the chosen age group, which is people aged 15-24, embraces and

accepts global tendencies freely and adapts to them quickly and easily. The process in the Yerevanian atmosphere happens naturally and without prominent resistance.

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Appendix

Survey form

*-indicates a required question

Տարիք/Age*

- 15-24

Կապը Երևանի հետ/Connection with Yerevan*

- Ապրում եմ Երևանում/I live in Yerevan
- Այցելում եմ Երևան ամեն օր/I visit Yerevan every day
- Այցելում եմ Երևան ժամանակ առ ժամանակ/I visit Yerevan sometimes
- Երբեք Երևան չեմ այցելում/I never visit Yerevan

Սեռ/Gender*

- Իգական/Female
- Արական/Male
- Non-binary

Ինչպե՞ս կանվանեիք ձեր հագուստի ոճը/How would you describe your overall fashion style?*

- Դասական/Classic
- Սթրիթվեր (հարմարավետ և թեթև)/Streetwear
- Անօրյա/Casual
- Վինտաժ/Vintage

- Other:

Ի՞նչն է ամենաշատն ազդում ձեր հագուստի ընտրության գործում/**What influences your fashion choices the most? ***

- Սոցիալական մեդիան/Social media
- Հնոսանիք/Family
- Հնկերներ/Friends
- Աշխատանք/Work
- Դպրոց, համալսարան/School, university
- Other:

Որքա՞ն է ձեր ամսական եկամուտը/**What is your monthly income?***

- Չունեն եկամուտ/No income
- 50,000 դրամից քիչ/Less than AMD 50,000
- AMD 50,000 - 100,000
- AMD 100,000 - 200,000
- 200,000 դրամից շատ/AMD 200,000 and above

Ո՞վ է սովորաբար ընտրում և գնում ձեր հագուստը/**Who usually chooses and buys your clothes?***

- Ես ինքս/Myself
- Հնոսանիք/Family
- Հնկերներ/Friends

- Other:

Ինչպե՞ս են Հայաստանում տեղի ունեցող էկոնոմիկ փոփոխություններն ազդել ձեր հագուստի ընտրությանն ու գնմանը/**How have economic changes in Armenia influenced your fashion choices and purchases?**

Կատարում ե՞ք գնումներ սեֆնդ հանդ (օգտագործված հագուստների) խանութներում/**Do you engage in second-hand or thrifting shopping?***

- Հաճախ/Frequently
- Ժամանակ առ ժամանակ/Occasionally
- Հազվադեպ/Rarely
- Երբեք/Never

Ի՞նչն է ձեզ մոտիվացնում գնել օգտագործված հագուստ/**What motivates you to shop second-hand or thrifting? (Select all that apply)***

- Մասշեղիությունը/Cost-effectiveness
- Թրենդները/Trendiness
- Էկոլոգիական գործոնները/Sustainability concerns
- Հասակակիցների ազդեցությունը/Peer influence
- Եզակի իրեր գտնելը/Unique findings
- Երբեք չեմ օգտվում/I never thrift
- Other:

Որքան հաճախ ե՞ք ստանում նորաձևության ոգեցնչում համաշխարհային աղբյուրներից (ամսագրեր, նորաձևության շաբաթներ, օնլայն հարթակներ)/**How often do you seek fashion inspiration from global sources (e.g., fashion magazines, fashion weeks, online platforms)?***

- Հաճախ/Frequently
- Ժամանակ առ ժամանակ/Occasionally
- Երբեմն/Rarely
- Երբեք/Never

Նշե՛ք որոշ ազդեցիկ աղբյուրներ՝ ձեզ համար/**Mention some of the most influential sources for you.**

Ռուսաստանից և Ուկրաինայից փախստականների հոսքից հետո՝ նկատե՞լ ե՞ք փոփոխություններ Երևանի փողոցային նորաձևության մեջ/**Have you noticed any changes in Yerevan street fashion after the influx of refugees from Russia and Ukraine?***

- Այո/Yes
- Ոչ/No
- Other:

Ի՞նչ փոփոխություններ ե՞ք նկատել ձեր և ձեր միջավայրի նորաձևության մեջ ռուս և ուկրաինացի փախստականների հոսքից հետո/**What changes have you noticed in your and your environment's fashion choices after the influx of Russian and Ukrainian refugees?**

Որքանով է՞ ձեզ համար կարևոր ձեր սեփական մշակութային տարրեր ներառելը (օրինակ՝ հայկական աֆսեսուարներ, մշակութային և կրոնական խորհրդանիշներ, այբուբեն, հայերեն տեքստեր)/**How**

important is it for you to incorporate Armenian cultural elements into your style? (e.g. Armenian accessories, cultural and religious symbols, the alphabet, Armenian texts)*

- Շատ կարևոր է/Very important
- Կարևոր է/Important
- Այդքան էլ կարևոր չէ/Not very important
- Ընդհանրապես կարևոր չէ/Not important at all

Նշե՛ք այն հայկական տարրերը, որոնք դուք ներառում ե՛ք ձեր ոճում/Mention the Armenian elements that you incorporate in your style.