

# 3 US Denim Products Trade<sup>1</sup>

## OVERVIEW

If Levi Strauss, who was born in Bavaria in 1829 and landed in the US in 1847, had failed to notice the miners' potential demand for strong and sturdy pants, then the denim would, probably, not have developed into a historic legend. In 1873, Levi Strauss made up the first jeans in San Francisco for California miners from a heavy brown canvas. The 1960s and 70s witnessed the rapid development of denim production, rising from 270 million square yards in 1968 to approximately 700 million in 1977 [1]. With continuous technological innovation and product development since the 1980s, the denim family has grown larger, covering tops and bottoms as well. And denim apparel is now viewed less as workwear than as a fashionable item by current consumers.

Today, the US, which is the home of denim and jeans, is the most important denim market in the world. In 1999, the entire US denim market amounted to US\$ 17 billion, with jeans accounted for 63% of the total market. Denim is the biggest consumer of US cotton with about 25% of the share [4]. According to a survey on world denim production [2], the US accounted for 41.7% of the global denim fabric consumption, estimated to be 3.0 million linear meters in 1996. Brands such as Levi's, Wrangler, and Lee have dominated the world denim market. The average American has seven pairs of denim jeans and nine other denim items [3]. Jeans are the largest segment of the apparel industry with annual unit sales of approximately 500 million units, or average two pairs of jeans per US citizen [5]. In the view of Cotton Inc., US retail sales of denim has enjoyed continuous growth since 1990 at the average annual rate of 10.8% [3].

The agreement between the Levi Strauss company and the American Ministry of Defense to manufacture the off-duty uniform of the US Navy Marines has, to some extent, promoted the spread of Jeans worldwide. American surplus stores began to sell jeans unused by American soldiers after WWII, starting the expansion of American brands in other continents and direct exports as well.

With the entry of more and more new competitors, the US began to import more denim products due to the comparative advantages in most developing countries. The trading volume has increased in the past few years, creating an enlarging trading deficit which was US\$ 886 million in 1995 and up to US\$ 1.1 billion in 1997, as shown in Figure 3.1.

Men's or boy's denim apparel has been the most important category of US imported or exported denim products, and occupied one half of US total imported

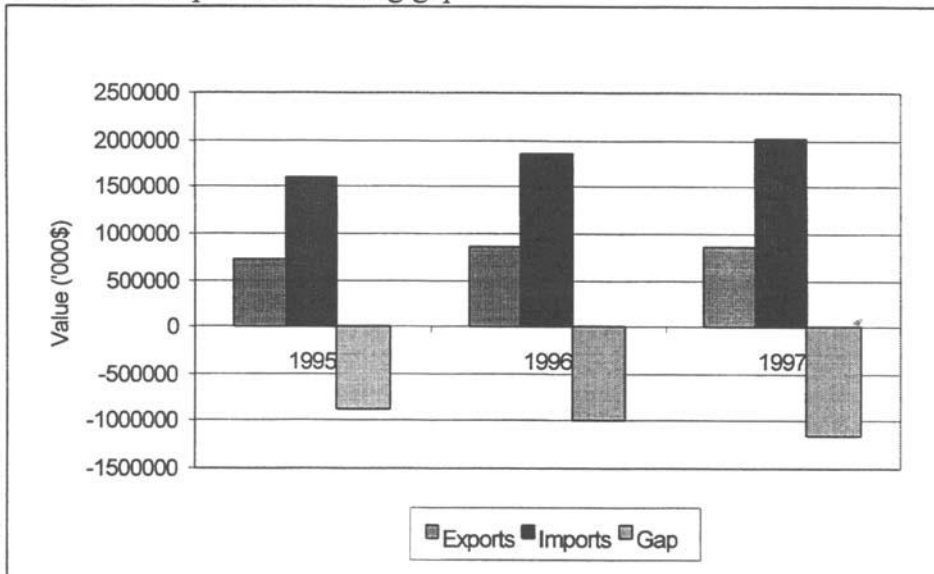
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<sup>1</sup> All the data in this section was from STAT-USA, US Department of Commerce, the access time was December 1998 to March 1999.

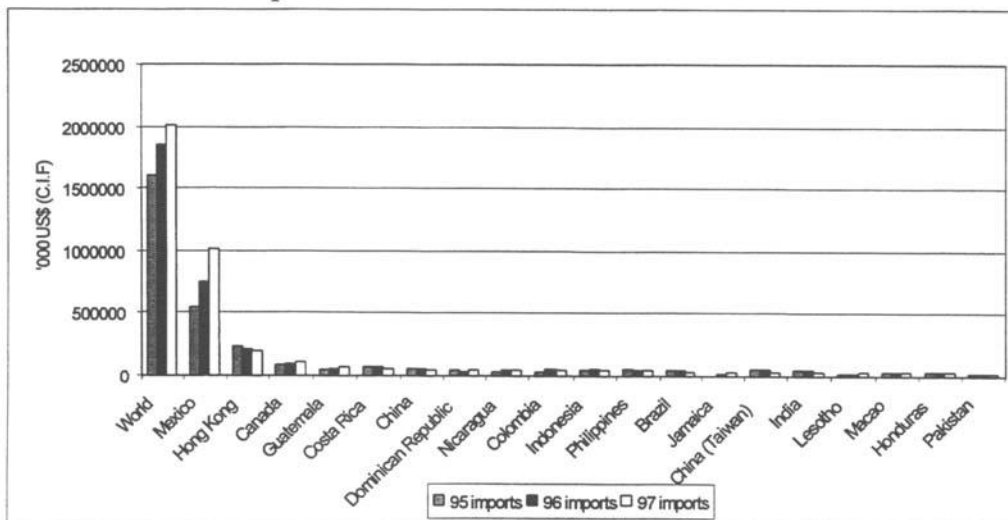
denim products and 46.0% of US total exports. Female's denim apparel was not as important as men's or boy's denim apparel in both US imports or exports. Denim fabric had a small share in US imports but was a major category of US exports. US imported a lot of denim yarns, but exported no denim yarns in recent years.

Denim product imports were mainly from American and Asian countries. The major export destinations for US denim products were American and European countries. Mexico was the most important supplier and consumer of US denim products. American countries have emerged as very important trading partners in US denim products trading during recent years.

### 3.1 US denim products trading gap



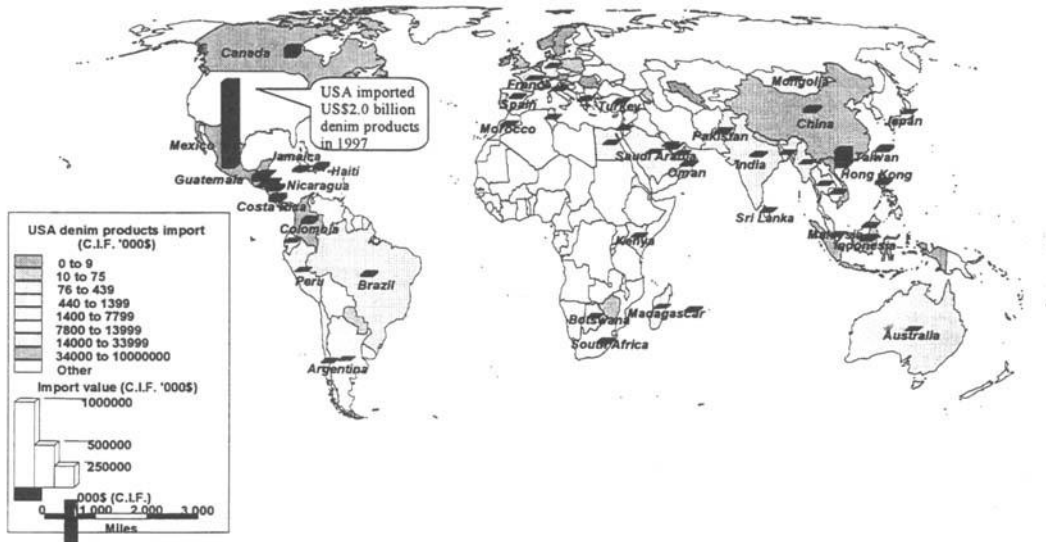
### 3.2 USA total denim products



**Table 3.1 USA denim products imports by categories**

	USA imports of denim products (C.I.F., '000\$)									
	1995	1996	1997	JanNov 97	JanNov 98	1995%	1996%	1997%	JanNov 97%	JanNov 98%
Denim Yarn	321011	351294	313557	289885	261284	20.00%	18.95%	15.65%	15.61%	11.25%
Denim Fabric	6	7157	9137	7830	31109	0.00%	0.39%	0.46%	0.42%	1.34%
Men's or boy's denim	791747	928218	993132	923747	1109327	49.33%	50.07%	49.56%	49.75%	47.76%
Women's or girl's denim	492203	567005	687965	635193	920943	30.67%	30.59%	34.33%	34.21%	39.65%
<b>Total denim products</b>	<b>1604967</b>	<b>1853674</b>	<b>2003791</b>	<b>1856655</b>	<b>2322663</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**3.3 US denim products imported by region**



**3.1 IMPORTS**

**3.1.1 Denim products imports**

The import value of denim products has been on a continuous rise from 1995 to 1997 (Figure 3.2), growing from US\$ 1.6 billion in 1995<sup>1</sup> to US\$ 1.8 billion in 1996 and US\$ 2.0 billion in 1997. The average annual growth rate was 12.4% from 1995 to 1997. The year 1998 registered a sharper increase; In the first eleven months of that year, the import value reached US\$ 2.3 billion, up by 25.1% comparing with the same period in 1997.

As shown in Figure 3.3, US denim products imports were mainly from American and Asian countries or areas. The most important supplier was Mexico, which supplied one third of the total imports in 1995. Between 1995 and 1997, Mexico's denim products exports to the US increased by 42.8% per year, mainly due to NAFTA and currency devaluation. Mexico contributed 52.3% of the US denim products import market from January to November 1998.

Hong Kong, one of the world leading textile and apparel exporters, was the second most important supplier after Mexico. Hong Kong accounted for 11.6% of US imports in 1995. However, Hong Kong's share has decreased in the past few years. Its market share became just less than 10% in 1997. The market size of Hong Kong

<sup>1</sup> The import value is calculated on a CIF basis.

denim products in the US shrank by 6.8% per year between 1995 and 1997. From January to November in 1998, Hong Kong accounted for 9.4% of US denim products imports.

Canada was the third most important supplier. Canada exported US\$ 78.7 million worth of denim products to the US in 1995. In 1997, the value increased to US\$ 104.3 million, the average growth rate being 16.3% per year. Canada held 5.2% of US denim products imports in 1997.

Among other countries, Guatemala provided 2.8% of US denim product imports in 1997, Costa Rica (2.7%), China (1.9%), Dominican Republic (1.9%), Nicaragua (1.9%), Colombia (1.9%), Indonesia (1.7%), Philippines (1.7%), Brazil (1.3%), Jamaica (1.2%), China (Taiwan) (1.2%), India (1.2%), Lesotho (1.1%), Macao (1.1%), Honduras (1.0%) and Pakistan (1.0%). These nineteen countries or areas (including Mexico, Hong Kong and Canada) together accounted for 91.2% of US denim products imports.

The suppliers of US denim products can be divided into two groups. One group consists of American countries, such as Mexico, Canada, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Colombia, Brazil, Jamaica, Lesotho and Honduras. Another group is comprised of non-American countries or regions, such as Hong Kong, China, Indonesia, Philippines, China (Taiwan), India, Macao and Pakistan. In recent years, the market share of the first group has increased quickly at the expense of that of the non-American countries except for Pakistan and Indonesia.

Table 3.1 lists US denim products import categories and their value from 1995 to November 1998. About one half were men's or boy's denim apparel and about one third were women's or girl's denim apparel. In 1995, one fifth of denim products imports were denim yarn, while this figure dropped to one sixth in 1997. The US did not import much denim fabric between 1995 and 1997.

### **3.1.2 Denim yarn imports**

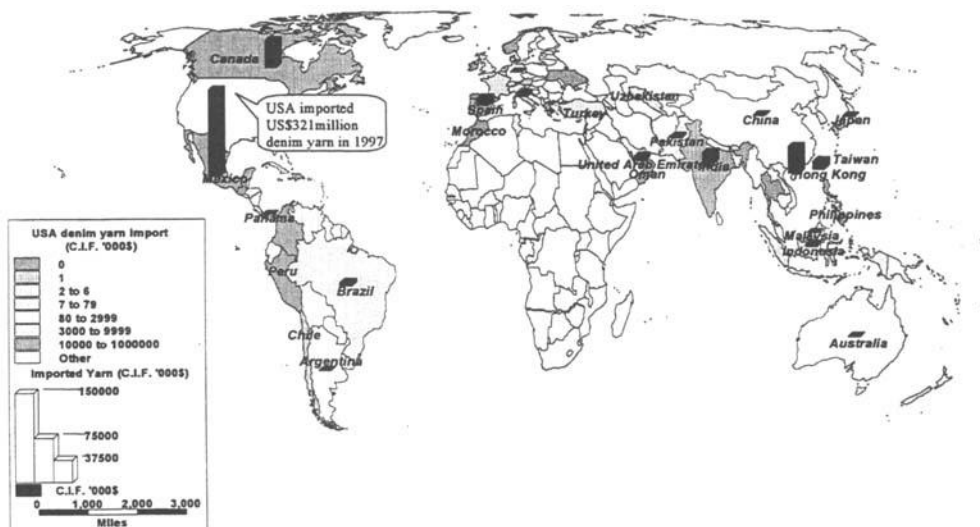
As shown in Fig 2.5, the US imported US\$ 321 million worth of denim yarn in 1995, peaking in 1996 with US\$ 351 million and dropping to US\$ 314 million in 1997. Mexico has been the most important supplier since 1996.

In 1995, Mexico contributed 10.2% of US denim yarn imports as the fifth most important denim yarn supplier. Increasing by 172.3% each year, its export value topped US\$ 146 million, accounting for 46.5% of US denim yarn imports in 1997. Canada was the second most important foreign supplier to the US. It exported US\$ 38.8 million worth of denim yarns to US in 1995. With an annual growth rate of 9.1%, the export value reached US\$ 45.9 (14.6% of US imported denim yarn) in 1997.

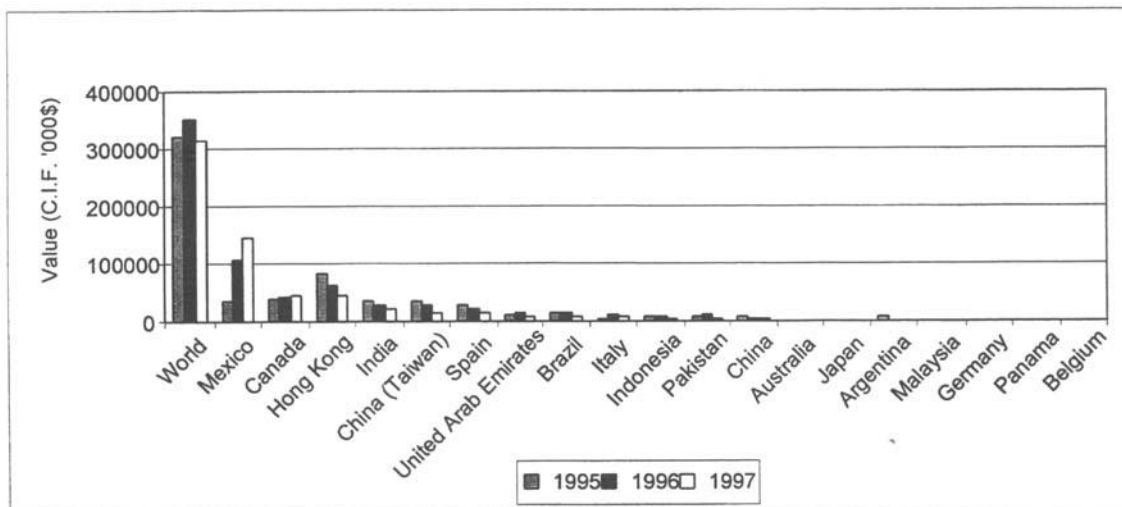
Hong Kong used to be the most important overseas supplier for US denim yarn imports before 1995. It exported US\$ 82.6 million worth of denim yarn to US in 1995, accounting for 25.7% of US denim yarn imports. However, with a reduction rate of 23.0% per year, Hong Kong exported US\$ only 44.6 million worth of denim yarn to the US in 1997, or 14.2% of US denim yarn imports. It is now the No. 3 foreign supplier to the US market.

India exported US\$ 33.3 million of denim yarn to US in 1995, accounting for 10.4% of US imports. However, with an annual decreasing rate of 21.1%, India just held 4.4% of US imports in 1997.

### 3.4 US denim yarn imports by region



### 3.5 US denim yarn imports



China (Taiwan) and Spain each accounted for approximately 4% of US imports in 1997, a sharp contrast with their 1995 figures, which were 10.3% and 8.6% respectively.

United Arab Emirates and Brazil exported US\$ 7.8 million and US\$ 6.5 million worth of denim yarns to US in 1997. Their market shares have also experienced a downward trend in the last few years. United Arab Emirates' market share fell from 3.6% in 1995 to 2.5% in 1997, while that of Brazil reduced from 4.7% in 1995 to 2.1% in 1997.

Italy provided 1.7% of US denim yarn imports in 1997. Indonesia accounted for 1.4%. Other countries, such as Pakistan, China, Australia, Japan, Argentina, Malaysia, Germany, Panama and Belgium, each contributed less than 1% of the US denim yarn imports.

Among these suppliers, Mexico experienced the fastest growth, followed by Canada. Other countries' market shares reduced sharply. Their average depreciation rates reached two digits annually.

The higher value added denim yarns imported into US were mainly from developed countries, such as Canada (US\$ 2.6/ton), Italy (US\$ 3.3/ton), Japan (US\$ 3.7/ton), and Germany (US\$ 3.1/ton). The low priced denim yarns came from Hong Kong (US\$ 1.7/ton), China Taiwan (USD 1.3/ton), Brazil (US\$ 1.8/ton), Indonesia (US\$ 1.4/ton), Pakistan (US\$ 1.3/ton) and China (US\$ 1.4/ton).

### **3.1.3 Denim fabric imports**

In 1996, the US imported US\$ 7.2 million of denim fabric, and this increased to US\$ 9.1 million in 1997. Before 1996, US denim fabric imports were negligible. However, in the first eleven months of 1998, US imported US\$ 31.1 million worth of denim fabrics, an increase of 297% on a year-to-year basis.

Mexico was the most important exporter to the US denim fabric market (Figures 3.6 and 3.7). Mexico exported US\$ 1.2 million and US\$ 4.3 million worth of denim fabric to US in 1995 and 1997, hitting US\$ 22.4 million from January to November in 1998, an increase of 578% on a year-to-year basis. Its market share grew from 16.8% in 1996 to 46.5% in 1997 with an average export price of US\$ 2.0 per square meter.

Hong Kong was the second most important denim fabric supplier to the US. It exported US\$ 3.4 million worth of denim fabric to US in 1996 and US\$ 2.1 million in 1997, a reduction of 19.6%. As a result, its market share slumped from 47.9% in 1996 to 22.8% in 1997 and further dropped to 7.7% in the first eleven months of 1998.

India was the third most important denim fabric supplier. It exported US\$ 0.5 million worth of denim fabric in 1996, accounting for 7.4% of US total denim fabric imports. In 1997, it enjoyed a favorable growth with an export value of US\$ 0.9 million, occupying 10.2% of US total denim fabric imports.

Mexico, Hong Kong and India together contributed 79.6% of US total denim fabric imports.

The average US import price of denim fabric was around US\$ 2 per square meter. The higher priced denim fabrics were from Italy (US\$ 4~5 per square meter), Australia (US\$ 4~6 per square meter), Spain (US\$ 8~10 per square meter), Germany (US\$ 4 per square meter) and Belgium (US\$ 6~7 per square meter).

### **3.1.4 Men's or boys' denim apparel imports**

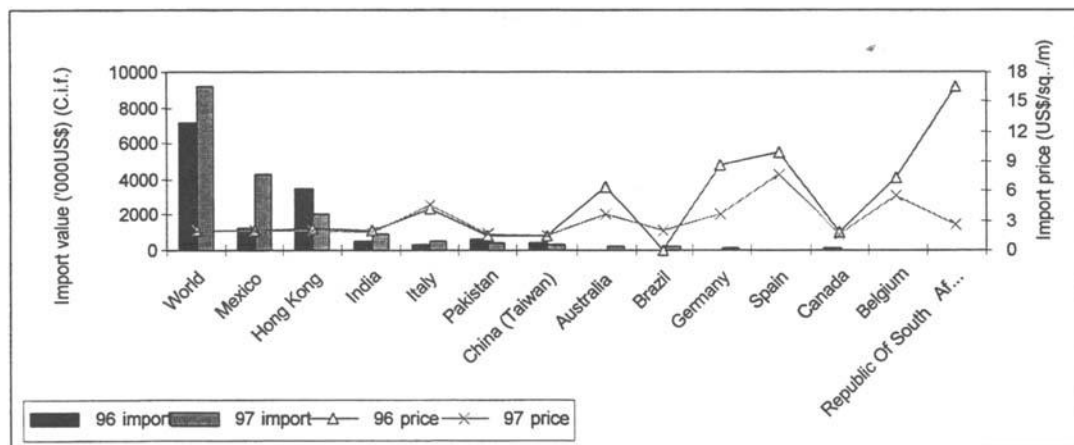
Men's or boy's denim apparel was the most important product category of US denim products imports. Figures 3.8 and 3.9 show that US\$ 792 million worth of men's or boy's denim apparel was imported into the US in 1995. With an annual growth rate of 12.7%, the import value reached US\$ 993 million in 1997. Compared with the same period of 1997 between January and November, US imports of men's or boy's denim apparel increased by 16.4% in value, reaching US\$ 1.1 billion during the first eleven months of 1998.

Mexico again was the most important supplier of men's or boy's denim apparel to the US. It exported US\$ 328 worth of men's or boy's denim apparel to the US in 1995. With a growth rate of 23.6% per year, the export value reached US\$ 483 in 1997. Its market share increased from 41.4% in 1995 to 51.5% in the first eleven months of 1998. Mexico has become the most important source of US men's or boy's denim apparel imports.

### 3.6 US denim fabric imports by region



### 3.7 US denim fabric imports

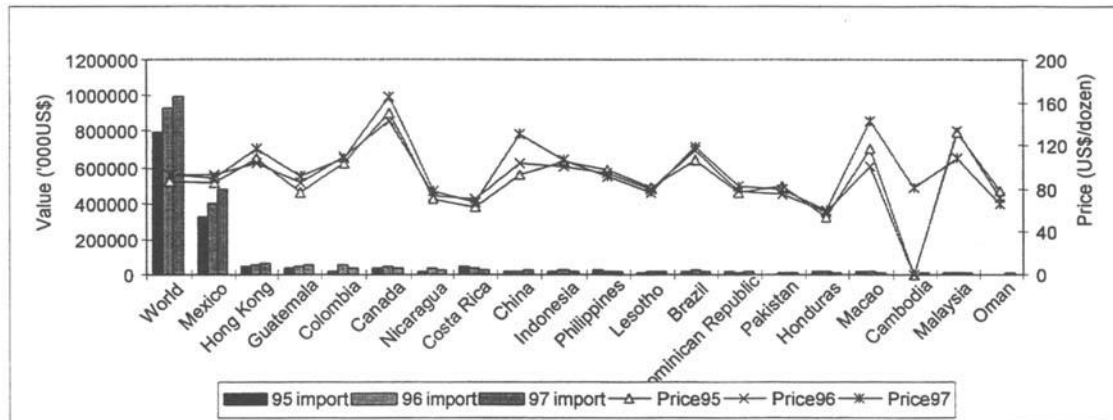


Hong Kong was the second most important supplier of US men's or boy's denim apparel imports. Based upon an average growth rate of 15.6% per year, its export value grew from US\$ 49.6 million in 1995 to US\$ 65.1 million in 1997, with an increasing market share from 6.3% to 6.6%.

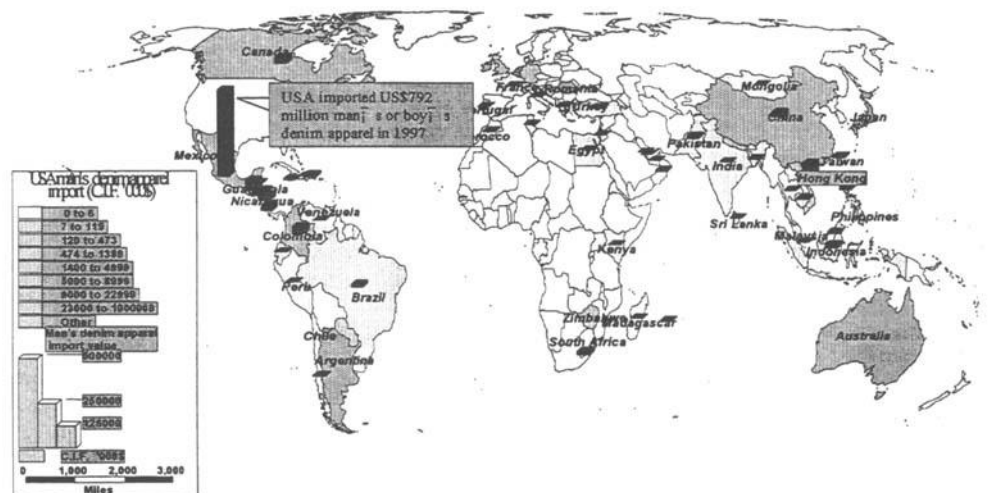
Another important supplier was Guatemala, who exported US\$ 57.0 worth of men's or boy's denim apparel to the US in 1997, accounting for 5.7% of US total imports. The average growth rate was 34.9% each year between 1995 and 1997.

In 1997, Colombia and Canada contributed 4.7% each to US man's or boy's denim apparel imports. The Colombian export value was US\$ 20.8 million in 1995, peaking at US\$ 50.7 million in 1996 and falling back to US\$ 36.6 million in 1997. Canadian exports peaked in 1996 with US\$ 43.7 million, accounting for 4.7% of US men's or boy's denim apparel imports. They reduced to US\$ 36.2 million in 1997. In the first eleven months of 1998, they picked up some growth momentum, reaching US\$ 38.8 million and accounting for 3.5% of US imports.

### 3.8 US men's or boy's denim apparel import



### 3.9 US men's or boy's denim apparel imports by region



Nicaragua, Costa Rica and China exported US\$ 28.4, 27.2 and 26.0 million of men's or boy's denim apparel, accounting for 2.5-2.9% of US imports in 1997. Nicaragua enjoyed a growth rate of 17.8% each year, and that of China was 7.2%. Costa Rica's exports, on the contrary, decreased at a rate of 14.2%.

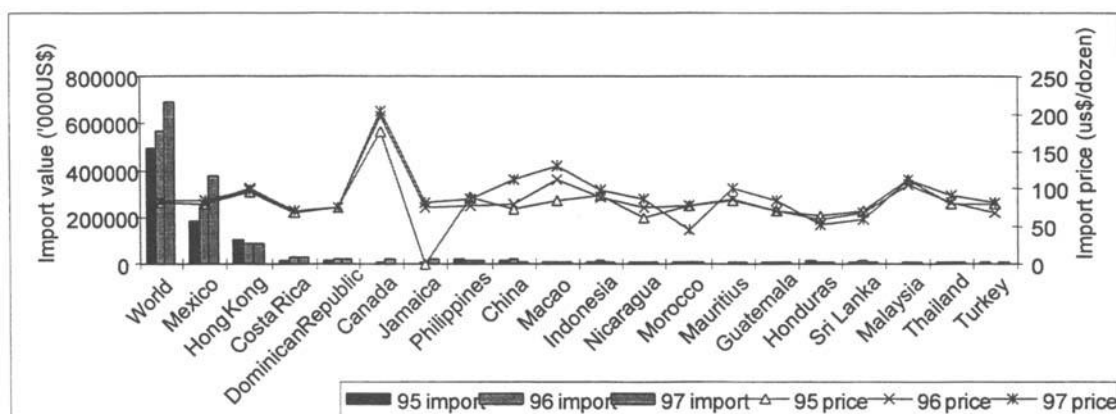
Indonesia, Philippines, Lesotho and Brazil exported US\$ 21.6, 20.0, 19.5 and 19.1 million of men's or boy's denim apparel respectively, accounting for 2.2-1.9% of US imports.

Dominican Republic, Pakistan, Honduras and Macao accounted for 1.5%, 1.3%, 1.3% and 1.2% of US imports in 1997 respectively. The market shares of the rest suppliers were less than 1% in 1997.

Men's denim apparel exports from Colombia experienced the fastest growth among the major suppliers (38.0% per year on average between 1995 and 1997), followed by Lesotho and Guatemala whose annual exports increased by 34.9% and 34.1% respectively. Except for Costa Rica, Philippines, Brazil and Canada whose export value fell by 21.4%, 5.8%, 3.4% and 0.1% per year on the average from 1995 to 1997, the rest of the major suppliers registered a positive growth.



### 3.10 US women's or girl's denim apparel imports



The average import price of man's or boy's denim apparel was US\$ 87.9 per dozen in 1995, US\$ 93.3 per dozen in 1996 and US\$ 92.6 per dozen in 1997. Among the major suppliers, the average import price was close to Mexico's export price, which was US\$ 84.2 per dozen in 1997, because of its significant market share in this import market. The export prices of Hong Kong, Colombia, Canada, China and Indonesia were higher than US\$ 100 per dozen. Among these countries or regions, the Canadian export price was the highest (US\$ 165.9 per dozen) in 1997, followed by China (US\$ 131.0 per dozen) and Hong Kong (US\$ 117.0 per dozen). Colombian and Indonesian export prices were US\$ 107 per dozen. Other major suppliers' export prices were lower than the US average import price.

### 3.1.5 Women's or girls' denim apparel imports

Figure 3.10 shows that US women's or girl's denim apparel imports increased from US\$ 492 million in 1995 to US\$ 688 million in 1997. In the first eleven months of 1998, the import value reached US\$ 921 million.

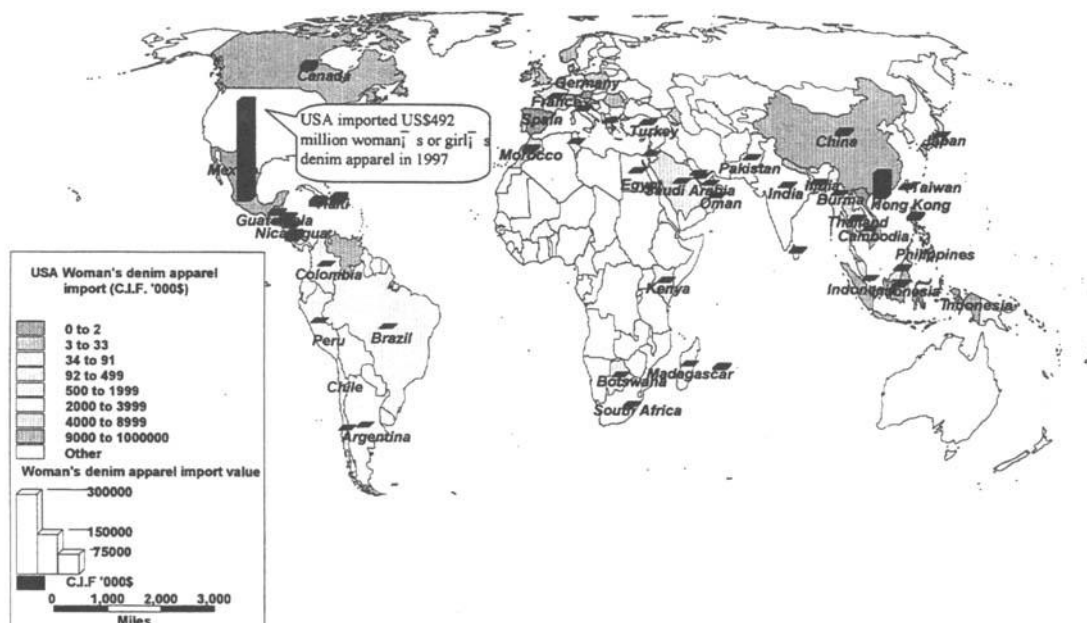
Again, Mexico was the most important supplier of US women's or girl's denim apparel, exporting US\$ 181 million worth to the US in 1995. With a growth rate of 53.1% per year, the export value topped US\$ 373 million in 1997. In the first eleven months of 1998, Mexico exported US\$ 512 million worth of women's or girl's denim apparel to US. It accounted for 36.8% and 54.3% of US imports in 1995 and 1997 respectively.

The second most important supplier was Hong Kong. In 1995, Hong Kong exported US\$ 99.6 million worth of women's or girl's denim apparel, accounting for 20.2% of US imports. By sharp contrast to the rapid penetration of Mexican exports in the US market, Hong Kong's exports reduced to US\$ 88.6 million in 1997, declining at an annual average rate of 5.6% with a share of 12.9% of the US denim apparel import market.

Costa Rican and the Dominican Republic's exports increased in the past few years. In 1997, Costa Rica contributed 3.8% to US imports and the Dominican Republic 3.3%.

Canadian women's or girls denim apparel exports to US grew fast from 1995 to 1997. With the growth rate of 256.3% per year, the exports increased from US\$3.6 million in 1995 to US\$22.2 million in 1997, accounting for 3.2% of US imports in 1997.

### 3.11 US women's or girl's denim apparel imports by region



Jamaica, Philippines and China exported more than US\$ 10 million of women's or girl's denim apparel to the US in 1997. Jamaica accounted for 2.9% of US imports in 1997, Philippines 2.0% and China 1.5%. While Jamaica's exports increased from 1996 to 1997, Philippines' and China's exports reduced by 20.0% and 18.0% per year from 1995 to 1997 respectively. Other countries' exports were lower than US\$ 10 million, contributing less than 1.5% to the total US imports.

The average import price was US\$ 82.7 per dozen in 1995, US\$82.0 per dozen in 1996 and US\$ 85.4 per dozen in 1997. The Mexican export price was US\$ 80.7 per dozen in 1995, US\$79.2 per dozen in 1996 and US\$84.2 per dozen in 1997. The price of exports from Hong Kong was about US\$ 96~101 per dozen, which was higher than the average.

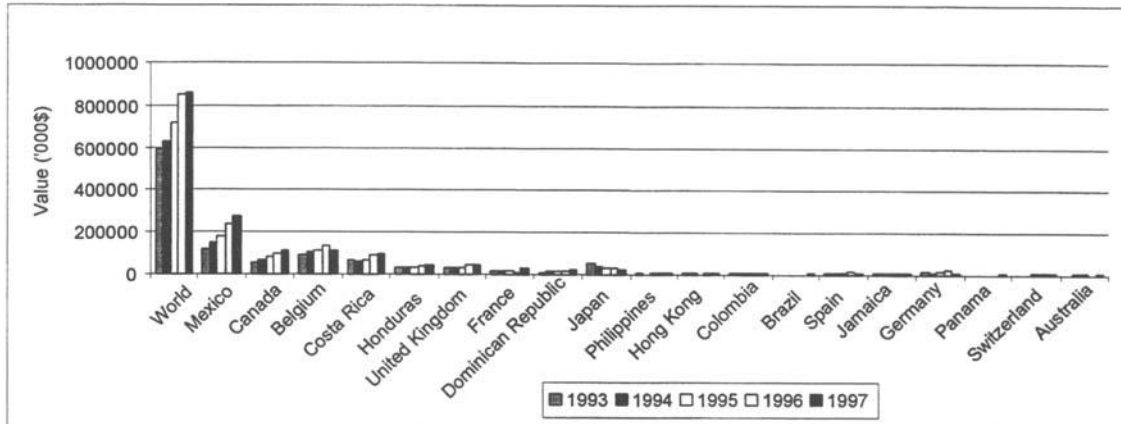
Among other major exporters, the Canadian export price ranked the highest, and was US\$176 per dozen in 1995, US\$196 per dozen in 1996 and US\$204 per dozen in 1997. Canada focused on the high value added market niche and its market size has grown quickly. As regards other important suppliers, the export prices of China, Macao, Philippines and Indonesia were US\$111.5 per dozen, US\$130.1 per dozen, US\$86.5 per dozen and US\$97.8 per dozen respectively in 1997. Costa Rica, Dominican Republic and Jamaica's export prices were lower than the average.

## 3.2 EXPORTS

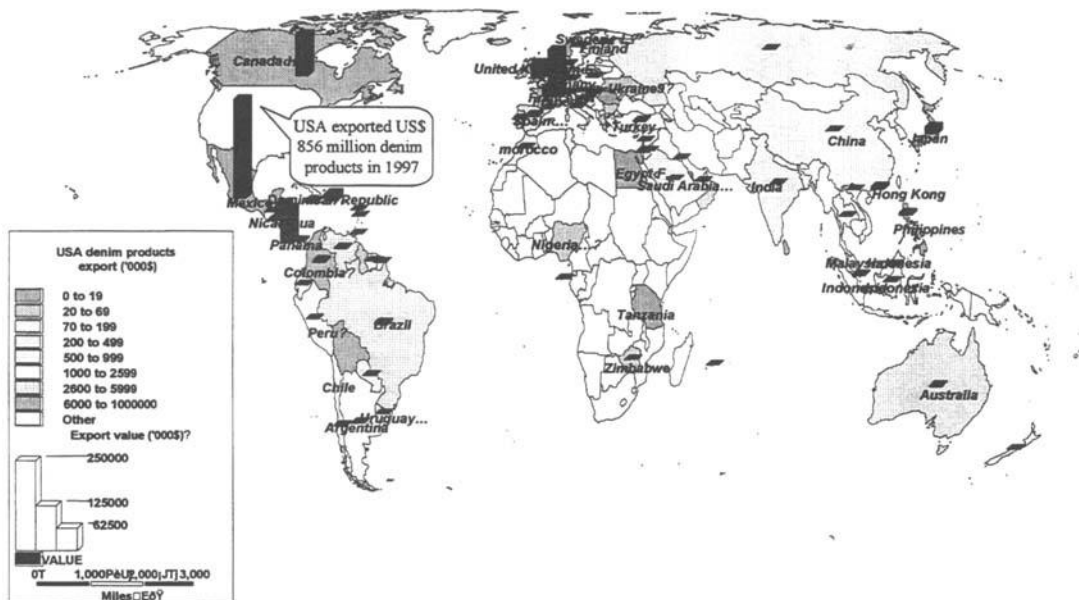
### 3.2.1 Denim products exports

Table 3.2 shows that the US exported much less denim products than she imported. She exported US\$ 591 million worth of denim products in 1993 and, in 1997, the figure reached US\$ 856 million, increasing by an annual average rate of 11.2%.

### 3.12 US denim product exports



### 3.13 US denim product exports by region

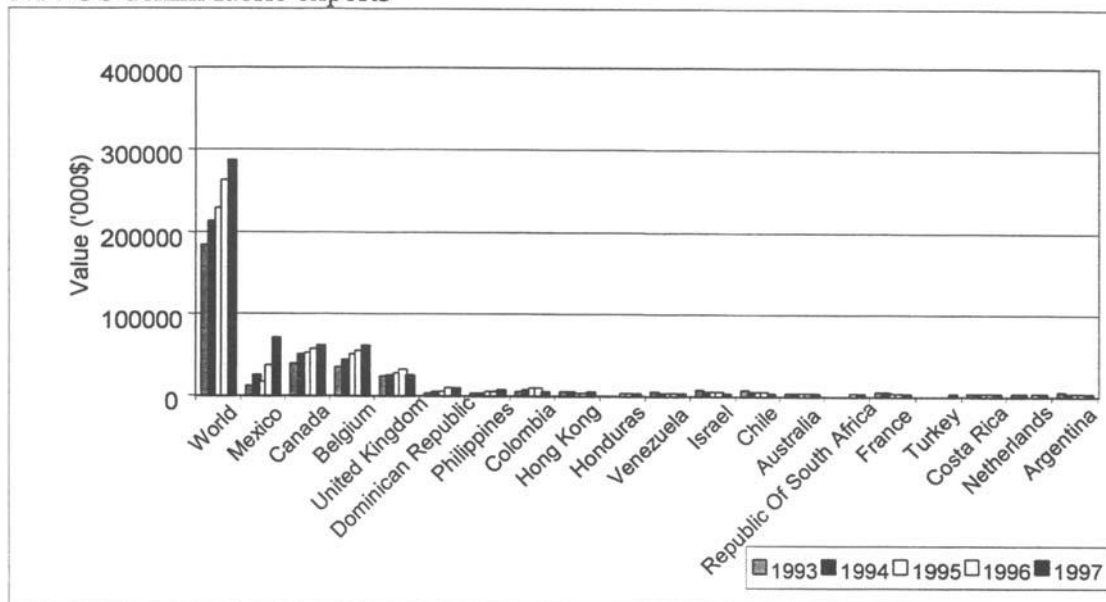


### 3.2 US denim product exports by categories

	USA denim product exports ('000\$)					Growth % 1-8 98	1-8 97
	1997	1996	1995	1994	1993		
Denim Fabric	287205	262245	228501	212574	182379	14.37%	217104
Man's or boy's denim apparel	393327	432939	355568	313787	322868	5.46%	273516
Woman's or girl's denim apparel	175235	158718	135296	99317	86428	25.69%	114822
Denim Products	855767	853902	719365	625678	591675	11.16%	605442

In 1993, about 30.8% of US denim product exports were denim fabrics, and the ratio increased to 33.6% in 1997. Women's or girl's denim apparel also enjoyed a favorable growth, from 15.9% in 1993 to 20.5% in 1997. In contrast, the share of men's or boy's denim apparel exports reduced from 50.2% in 1993 to 46.0% in 1997. Crucial foreign markets for US denim products were American and European countries as shown in Figures 3.12 and 3.13. To be more specific, the major

### 3.14 US denim fabric exports



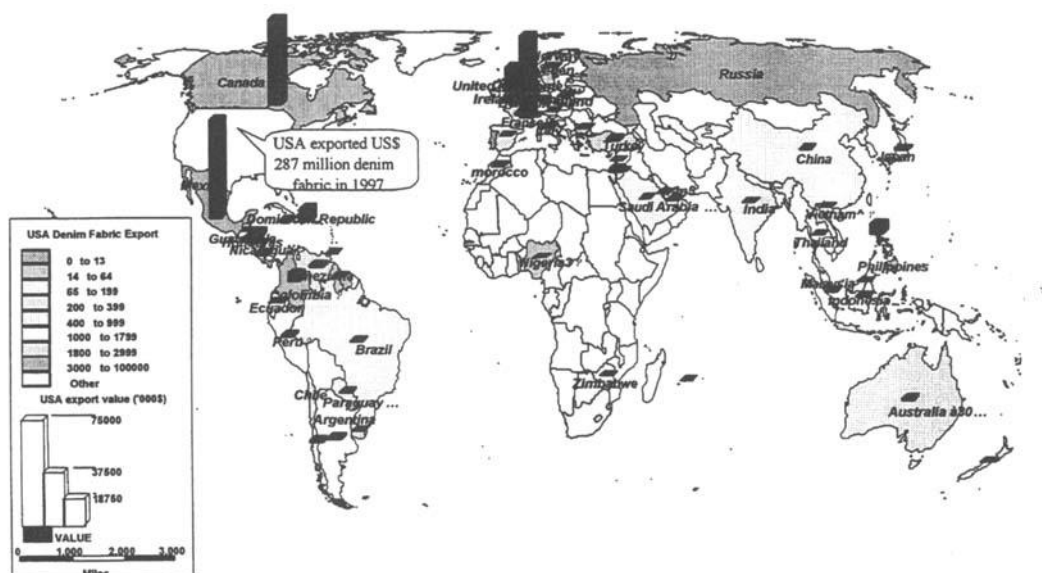
importers were Mexico, Canada, Belgium, Costa Rica, Honduras, United Kingdom, France, Dominican Republic, and Japan. Of these countries, Mexico was the most important destination for US denim products with an average annual growth rate of 31.0%. The export value to Mexico increased from US\$ 122.5 million in 1993 to US\$ 274.4 million in 1997, accounting for 32.1% of total US exports. Canada was the second most important importer of US denim products. It imported US\$ 115.4 million (13.5% of US exports) of denim products in 1997 with a similar growth rate to that of Mexico. Following Mexico and Canada, Belgium was the third most important consumer of US denim products and imported US\$ 110.0 million of (12.9% of US total exports) denim products in 1997. Costa Rica imported US\$ 97.3 million worth of denim products in 1997, accounting for 11.4% of US exports. Honduras and the United Kingdom each imported about 5% of US exports respectively in 1997. About 2.0% of US exported denim products went to France and 1.7% to Dominican Republic. US denim product exports to Japan continuously declined from 1993 to 1997. Japan imported US\$ 48.9 million of denim products in 1993 and the figure dropped more than a half to US\$ 20.5 million in 1997.

### 3.2.2 Denim fabric exports

In contrast to the import product mix, denim fabric is a major category of US denim product exports. About one third of the exports were denim fabrics. The US exported US\$ 182 million worth of denim fabrics in 1993 and US\$ 287 million in 1997, increasing by 14.4% per year on the average.

Figure 3.15 shows that US denim fabrics were mainly exported to Mexico, Canada, Belgium, United Kingdom, Dominican Republic, Philippines, Colombia, Hong Kong and Honduras. Mexico was the most important US denim fabric consumer in 1997. It imported US\$ 70.7 million worth of denim fabric, accounting for 24.6% of US exports. However, US denim fabric exports to Mexico in 1993 were only US\$12.2 million with a market share of 11.2%. It merits special attention that the annual growth rate for US denim products to the Mexican market was as high as 119.5%, which far exceeded its overall 11.5% export growth rate.

### 3.15 US denim fabric exports by region



Canada and Belgium were the other two important foreign markets for US denim fabric. More than 21% of US denim fabric exports went to Canada in 1997, which represented over US\$ 62 million in value. Another 20.9% went to Belgium in 1997. Both Canada and Belgium witnessed a relatively strong import penetration for US denim fabrics with annual growth rates of 16.5% and 19.5% respectively from 1993 to 1997.

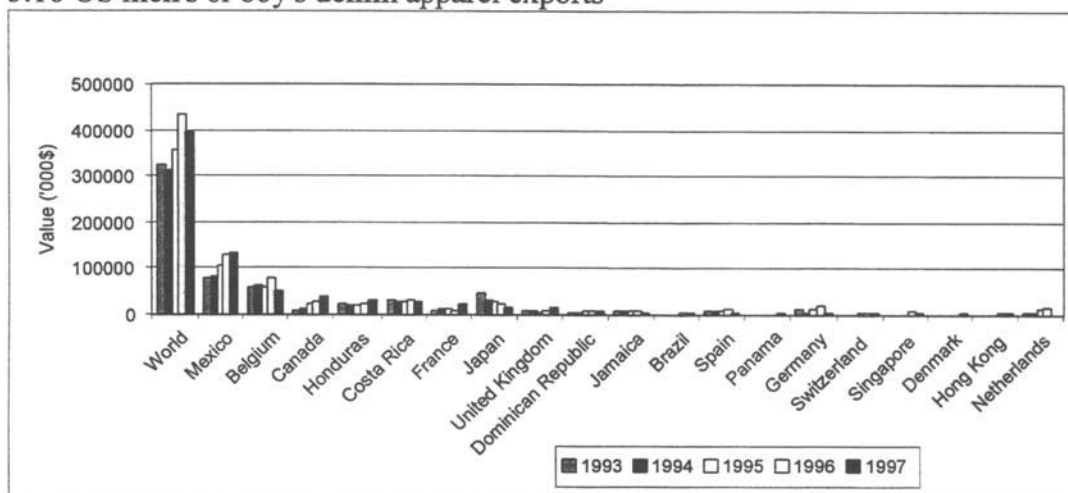
The United Kingdom imported US\$ 25.5 million worth of denim fabric from the US in 1997, accounting for 8.9% of US denim fabric exports. Other countries imported less than US\$ 9 million.

### 3.2.3 Men's or boys' denim apparel exports

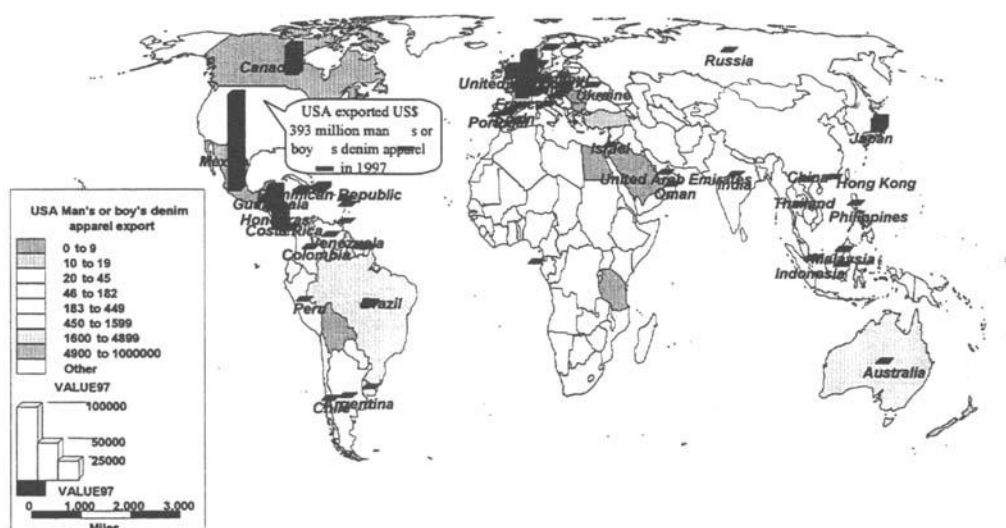
Figure 3.16 shows that the US men's or boy's (MB) denim apparel exports increased slowly in the past few years. They were US\$ 322.8 and US\$ 393 million in 1993 and 1997 with the annual average growth rate of 5.5%. The growth rate was much less significant than that of denim fabric and woman's or girl's denim apparel exports.

In 1993, Mexico, Belgium and Japan were the three most important destinations for US men's and boy's denim apparel. The former two imported US\$ 77 million (17.6% of US exports) and US\$ 57 million (24.0% of US exports) respectively in 1993. Japan imported another US\$ 45.8 million (14.2% of US exports). However, in 1997, Canada replaced Japan as the No. 3 importer for US men's or boy's denim apparel. The top three accounted for 34.0%, 12.52% and 10.2% of US exports respectively. Canada was the fastest growing market for US man's or boy's denim apparel, and grew by 83.7% per year between 1993 and 1997. Exports to Mexico were also up by 18.1% per year on the average. But those to Belgium were down by 3.4% each year in the same period.

### 3.16 US men's or boy's denim apparel exports



### 3.17 US men's or boy's denim apparel exports by region



Honduras imported US\$ 31.8 million worth of men's or boy's denim apparel in 1997, accounting for 8.1% of US exports. Costa Rica accounted for 6.9%, France 5.9%, Japan 4.4% and the United Kingdom 4.0%.

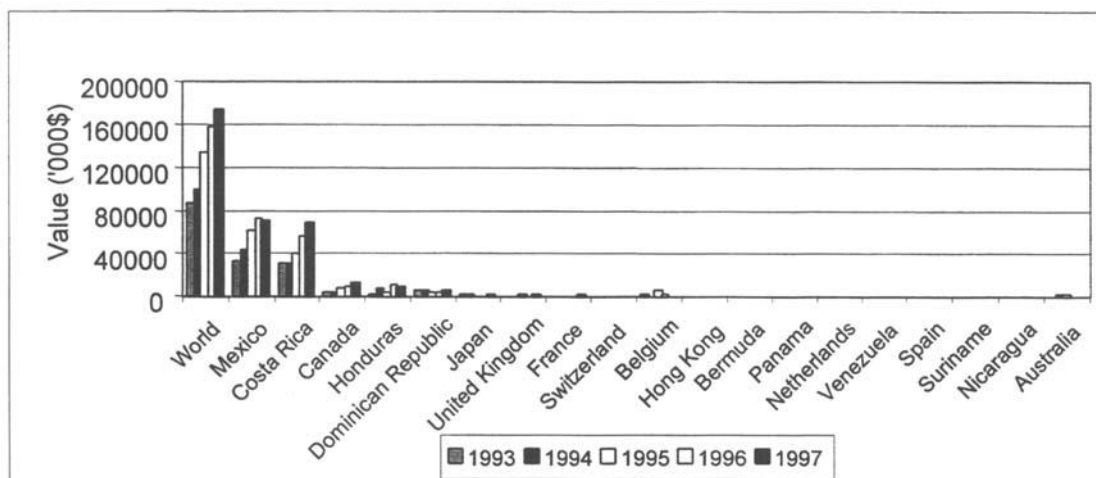
In view of the above analysis, it is clear that US men's or boy's denim apparel exports were concentrated on American countries, while the non-American markets became less attractive for the US men's or boy's denim apparel exports.

### 3.2.4 Women's or girls' denim apparel exports

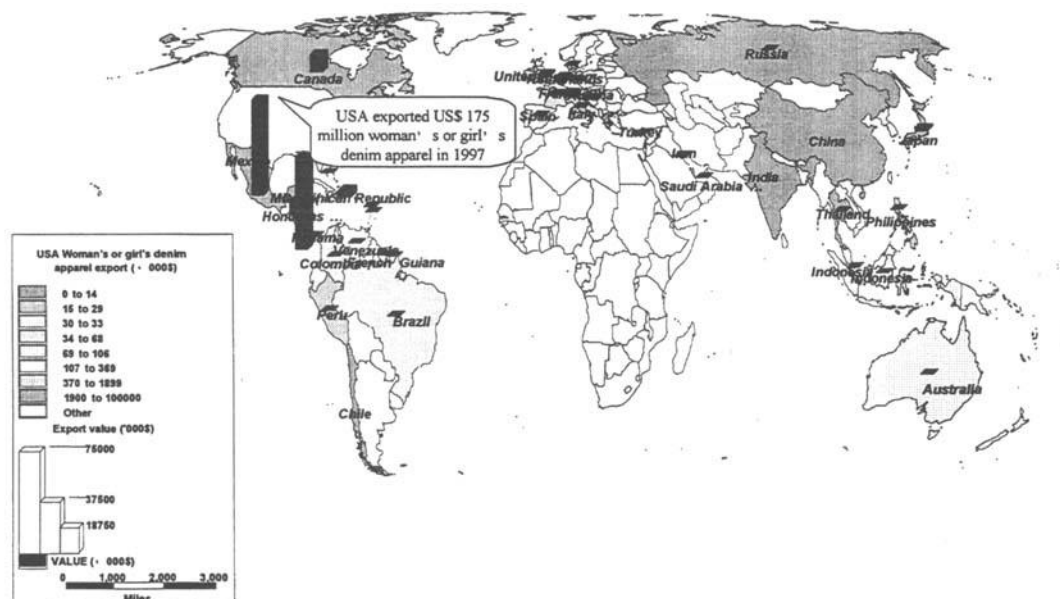
US women's or girl's denim apparel exports grew significantly in recent years. According to Figures 3.18 and 3.19, the export value amounted to US\$ 86.4 million in 1993 and it doubled by 1997, recording US\$ 175 million at an annual average growth rate of 25.7%.

Parallel with the situation of men's or boy's denim apparel exports, American countries took a remarkable share of US women's or girl's denim apparel, notably Mexico, Costa Rica, Canada and Honduras. The first two accounted for 78.9% of US exports.

### 3.18 US women's or girl's denim apparel exports



### 3.19 US women's or girl's denim apparel exports by region



Mexico was the most important importer. It imported US\$ 32.9 million worth of women's or girl's denim apparel from the US in 1993. The value jumped to US\$ 70.1 million in 1997, or 40.0% of US total exports. The growth rate was 28.4% per year on average from 1993 to 1997.

Costa Rica was the second most important consumer, and imported US\$ 68.1 million of goods from US in 1997, accounting for 38.9% of US exports. Its imports grew at an average rate of 29.1% each year from 1993 to 1997.

As regards other important importers, Canada imported 7.6% of US women's or girl's denim apparel exports, Honduras 5.1%, Dominican Republic 3.1% and Japan 1.1%) in 1997.

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