**Louie Ridge – Review of Broken**

This documentary was released in 2019 and discusses the issues with producing cheap furniture in particular by Swedish company Ikea.

It talks about how furniture making was a skill and used to last a lifetime. The documentary featured a family owned furniture maker in America that had generations of their family learning the trade and making furniture.

Towards the end of the 20th Century many American furniture production companies were forced to close or significantly reduce in size due to new competition in the form of Asian countries offering cheap furniture in both price and looks. Huge job losses followed including people had who had worked in that industry for years. Fast furniture was born and the leader in this market was Ikea.

Ikea wanted to sell cheap furniture that could be kept for a while but then be changed for something else when consumers felt like it. Ikea has over 400 stores in over 50 countries selling cheaper self-assembly goods and they make over $43m a year in sales. They believe in producing affordable home furnishings for the many and their business model is based on high volume and low cost.

The documentary talked about Ikea’s marketing strategy including having very large brightly coloured stores that can be seen from far away and having endless walkways inside that make you walk through the entire store and view all their merchandise. It’s like the shop ‘sucks you in’ and you then leave with goods that you had no intention of going in to buy.

The documentary went on to give background on the founder of the company who claimed he had given ownership of Ikea to a charity but that was a lie. It is believed he did this to avoid paying the correct amount of tax.

Other issues raised including where the company sourced its wood. It uses several companies around the world but how it sources its wood has also been under question and raised environmental issues. One of the companies it sourced wood from was Romanian but their government was corrupt and allowed companies to come in and take more wood than they could actually offer. There have also been many instances of illegal logging which is a massive environ

Ikea aimed to be ‘Forest positive’ by 2020. I wonder if they achieved that.

Asian manufacturers were selling products cheaper than it cost to make which was against trade law.

The production of low-cost furniture has led to

The documentary included an interview with a family whose son was killed by an Ikea dresser. They found out this wasn’t the first death caused by cheap furniture. The statistics of furniture injuries and deaths was astounding. Ikea ended up having to issue a recall for the product(s) that had caused injury but only a small number were actually returned. The family featured agreed to a £50m lawsuit settlement split between them and two other families, the documentary, saying the amount reflected how much guilt Ikea felt. The documentary went on to show more families who had experienced death due to unsafe furniture.

The documentary is interesting as it explains what can happen in businesses and what the company will do in order to achieve more profit. It also covers globalization, sustainability and the environment although I’m a bit confused as to the exact purpose of the documentary – is it about the hazards of producing cheap furniture or the issues around getting the goods required to produce the products in the first place?