

# FASHION AND TOURISM

Parallel Stories

Edited by **Maria Gravari-Barbas**  
and **Nadzeya Sabatini**

TOURISM SOCIAL SCIENCE SERIES

**VOLUME 26**

*Tourism Social Science Series*

*Volume 26*

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# **Fashion and Tourism**

*Tourism Social Science Series*

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In this publication, the convergence of fashion and tourism is explored from an academic perspective, shedding light on the intricate linkages and reciprocal influences between these two vibrant industries. By delving into their shared history spanning over two centuries, the different authors present a compelling hypothesis that unveils the profound impact they have had on each other. Through parallel analysis in the different chapters, readers gain a deeper understanding of the symbiotic relationship between fashion and tourism, and how their collaborative actions shape and reflect contemporary societies worldwide. This insightful work is a must-read for anyone seeking a comprehensive exploration of the dynamic interplay between these global influential forces.

Eduardo Santander, PhD  
Executive Director  
European Travel Commission

The topics of fashion and tourism have many traits in common. The academic world has yet studied them mostly separately. The important contribution of this volume lies in its ability to show their joint effect on social life. Both fashion and tourism seek to sell dreams and both rely on brand image in order to gain recognition and attract the attention of consumers. The “parallel stories” that are carefully told in this volume constitute a significant understanding of how two big industries have shaped our taste and behaviour for the last two centuries.

Paula von Wachenfeldt, PhD  
Associate Professor in Fashion  
Studies Stockholm University

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*Tourism Social Science Series*  
*Volume 26*

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# **FASHION AND TOURISM**

## **Parallel Stories**

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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## **SETTING THE STAGE**

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## Chapter 1

# FASHION AND TOURISM

## Parallel Stories of Two “Dream Marvels”

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### INTRODUCTION

Fashion and tourism are two social, cultural, and economic phenomena that have both numerous connections and surprising similarities. These are not new: they have been built and developed since the beginnings of tourism as a modern social phenomenon, emerged in Europe in the context of the industrial revolution. They consolidated in the first decades of the 21st century, in a context where both phenomena have completed their “mass” cycle and are currently seeking alternative ways of expression and development. This collaborative nature of fashion and tourism represents the guiding thread of this chapter and, beyond, of the collection of 14 texts gathered in this book.

The chapter analyzes first the common characteristics of these two phenomena, fashion and tourism, as well as the challenges they are facing in the beginning of the 21st century. What can one learn from these proximities? What does the evolution of the practices, policies, and space planning of one phenomenon say about the other? Further, what does their parallel analysis suggest about people, their desires, their wishes, their dreams, and their practices? But also what about the environmental or ethical concerns? The parallel analysis of these two vistas allows one to grasp just that: today, dreams still work well and even better. However, practices are changing, and

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massification is giving way to differentiated individual practices that integrate sustainability concerns.

The analysis of the state of the art in a cross-cutting manner shows that, surprisingly, very little work has considered the striking parallel developments between the fashion and tourism. Few researchers have sought to better understand the tourism system by examining the functioning of fashion, and vice versa.

## FASHION AND TOURISM AS COLLABORATIVE PHENOMENA

The literature suggests several parallels between fashion and tourism.

*Global Economic Importance.* The considerable economic weight of the two phenomena makes them unavoidable regulators of the world economy, as it was demonstrated, for example, for tourism during the COVID-19 pandemic. Both are important business sectors globally, where tourism accounts for 10% of the global gross domestic product (GDP) (WTTC, 2019), and fashion amounts to 2% of the worldwide GDP (Fashion United, 2021).

*Global Consumption.* Both fashion and tourism rely on the international production and consumption of their respective products. In the fashion domain, garments are mostly produced abroad, sold, and used in other countries. The same can be said about the international tourism market, where people come from abroad to access tourism products in the destination country.

*Importance of the Global Brand Image.* Both fashion and tourism rely heavily on brand image, the building and consolidation of which requires significant and continuous efforts. The former has historically relied on designers with a strong identity, often built around their persona, allowing for product differentiation, and creating a distinctive identity. Tourism destinations also develop a strong brand identity to stand out in an increasingly competitive global context.

*Dream Industries.* Fashion is more than just clothing, and tourism is conceptually constructed as mobility driven by desire. Fashion and tourism are central components of the “Dream Society” (Jensen, 2001). The development of each is based on a transformational narrative capable of radically changing everyday life. Both fashion and tourism are becoming more and more core elements of the global experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1999), as well as constitutive parts of the construction of the self and the lifestyle around it.

*Traveling for Fashion, Fashion for Travel.* According to McKinsey (2020), 20–30% of fashion industry revenues are generated by consumers making luxury purchases abroad. Asian shoppers buy luxury goods outside their home countries not only to benefit from lower prices in Europe but also

because shopping has become an integral part of the tourism experience. Buying a brand in its country of origin or where the garment was made comes with a sense of authenticity and excitement.

*Destinations Boost Fashion Brands, Fashion Boosts Destinations.* Tourism destinations are being used by fashion houses as recognizable shooting locations, as places to stage fashion shows, and to build up their flagship stores. At the same time, fashion designers get their inspiration from certain geographical areas and dedicate their collections to them while then encouraging their fans to visit those locations in the future.

The interdependence of fashion and tourism has been clearly seen since 2020 and the outbreak of the pandemic when international tourism was almost frozen. Fashion companies could no longer rely on foreign tourists coming to Europe’s shopping streets to boost their sales (Financial Times, 2022). Before the pandemic, many luxury retailers defined the shopping experience around foreign tourists. Their unexpected absence forced Europe’s luxury fashion retailers to rethink their business strategies in working with the tourism industry.

After the pandemic, both fashion and tourism are facing new challenges that will have a lasting impact and call for reinvention. Voices are being raised increasingly to remind both that a paradigm shift is needed. Fashion and tourism have been historically characterized by seasonality, which plays an important role in how industries are structured, namely a clear differentiation between winter and summer destinations and two major seasons in the fashion industry with fashion weeks staged around them. However, in the last decade, the situation changed considerably. On the one hand, fast fashion companies have evolved the traditional seasonality of garment production from twice a year into a continuous delivery of new collections. On the other hand, the increasing importance of low-cost airlines offers cheaper tourism opportunities, consumed more often, by a higher percentage of the market in any season. This, however, has considerable social and environment impacts. Fashion and tourism are among the highest polluting industries globally. The latter produces 8% of the world’s carbon emissions (Sustainable Travel, n.d.). The former is responsible for 10% of annual global carbon emissions, more than all international flights and maritime shipping combined (World Bank, 2019).

Fashion and tourism are undergoing major transformations to adapt to changing markets and new sustainable, ethical, and digital paradigms.

*Breaking with “Fast” Fashion and “Fast” Tourism.* In both sectors, there is a shift toward “slow tourism” and “slow” or “local” fashion production and consumption (Štefko & Steffek, 2018). The rise of fast fashion (Binet et al., 2019; Niinimäki et al., 2020), which relies on cheap manufacturing, frequent consumption, and short-lived garment use, has become a worldwide problem. “Fast tourism” or “hit and run” tourism (Ruoss & Alfarè, 2013), highly visible in cities that are cruise or day trip destinations, has also become a

major issue. Such discussions were strongly expressed in the 2010s with the rise of tourismophobia (Ghidouche & Ghidouche, 2019; Simas, Oliveira, & Cano-Hila, 2021) in several destinations worldwide.

*Rethinking the Working Conditions.* Both industries have harsh labor conditions. They are not the easiest ones to work in, and ethical issues are increasingly emerging (Miotto & Vilajoana-Alejandre, 2019). Today, there are roughly 40 million garment workers, 85% of whom are women; many of these are among the lowest paid workers in the world, and they do not share the same rights or protections as workers in Western societies. Conditions are also poor for workers in tourism and hospitality in terms of pay, working hours, gender equality, and sexual harassment (Baum & Hai, 2019; Poulston, 2009).

*Take the Digital Turn.* The digital shift is crucial for both fashion and tourism. In Europe, they are two main product categories currently being sold online. Fashion and tourism are adapting themselves to digital transformation (Buhalis, 2020; Buhalis & Law, 2008; Kalbaska, Sádaba, & Cantoni, 2018), particularly seen in the COVID and post-COVID contexts. Digital transformation in both sectors implies innovative knowledge management (Fuchs, Fossgard, Stensland, & Chekalina, 2021), a human-oriented approach to the e-dimension of fashion and tourism based on ethics, societal impacts, sustainability, and human value dimensions (Gretzel et al., 2020; Nobile, Kalbaska, de Oliveira, & Cantoni, 2021). This transformation is not mainly about technology but about people who consume them, as well as ethics, values, and social structures (Cantoni et al., 2020; Pesonen, 2020).

Fashion and tourism impact people and businesses, but also culture, art, and the whole lifestyle ecosystem. They are closely linked with the latest trends, social practices, and innovative and disruptive technologies. As dynamic industries, in constant evolution, they need critical understanding, particularly concerning influence and independence. Few studies, as discussed below, analyze the emergence, evolution, and current transformations of these two fashion and tourism in a joint and articulated manner.

### *The Relationship Between Fashion and Tourism*

Until recently, studies of fashion and tourism have been suffering from a blurred identity, which is typical for subjects “searching for a discipline” (Tseñlon, 2001). There are striking similarities in how academic research approaches these two topics. Both are wide-ranging and diverse fields of study, which are infused not only with contributions from various domains of inquiry within the “traditional” disciplines like sociology, communication, marketing, and digital media (Cantoni et al., 2020; Rocamora, 2017) but also with more closely related areas such as hospitality, leisure, art and dress history, fashion design, and museum and curatorship (Błaszczuk, 2008;

Kirilenko & Stepchenkova, 2018). In fashion and tourism research, there is no common and unique set of ideas, single conceptual frameworks, or unique methodologies with which they might be defined, analyzed, and critically explained. Despite the interdisciplinarity of tourism and fashion, disciplinary paradigms remain dominant.

Sporadic academic studies in different fields, such as event management, place branding, geography, and communication, were undertaken to understand and explain the interconnectedness of fashion and tourism. In the two main volumes that research the history of vacationing and modern tourism (Löfgren, 1999; Zuelow, 2015), the clothing of travelers and fashion-related practices and how the two are interconnected were noted. However, this discussion has been marginal.

Several scholars have investigated the role of fashion in the destination choice by tourists (Lewis, Kerr, & Burgess, 2019; Lysikova, 2012). They suggest that tourism is an industry in which fashion and the desire for novelty play a major role. Corneo and Jeanne (1999) similarly confirm that the choice of holiday destination is an example of behavior affected by the fashion industry.

The role of fashion as city branding has been investigated in several studies (Bada, 2013; Jansson & Power, 2010; Skivko, 2016). Denissa, Widodo, Adisasmito, and Piliang (2015) discussed city rebranding in Jember (Indonesia), from the production of tobacco to a city that hosts catwalks for fashion carnivals. Capone and Lazzeretti (2016) analyzed the perception of Florence as a fashion city among the tourists visiting this well-known Italian destination in 2015. The study results demonstrate the significant role that fashion plays in the attractiveness of Florence as a fashion city. Lazzeretti, Capone, and Casadei (2017) focused on the role the fashion industry plays in cultivating the image of the city while fostering local competitive advantage, improving its reputation, and increasing its appeal as a destination.

Martínez (2007) presented the case of Antwerp whose status as a fashion capital was created not by hosting traditional fashion weeks, as in cities like Paris or London, but within the logic of organized tourism and mega-cultural events. The intertwining of both public and private networks of influence resulted in fashion becoming absorbed by the local institutions and it has created Antwerp's most characteristic creative industry, which is now extremely attractive for international tourists.

Tourism destinations have been extensively used as recognizable shooting locations (Jung & Childs, 2020). At the same time, fashion companies have recently started developing printed guidebooks and mobile apps about tourism places. The tourist guides produced by fashion houses (Jacquemus, Louis Vuitton, Yves Saint Laurent, and more) became a compelling example of possible cobranding and comarketing activities between fashion houses, city attractions, and tourism destinations (Biondo, 2021).

Indeed, fashion is inextricably associated with urban spaces that mark history and society (Frisch, Sommer, Stoltenberg, & Stors, 2019). This includes the evaluation of the places and spaces of fashion (Beward & Gilbert, 2006; Potvin, 2009), the role of luxury fashion players in city development (Paris, 2018, 2020), or the understanding of the activities of fashion players, such as independent fashion designers, in the development of a fashion city (Heim, Ferrero-Regis, & Payne, 2021).

The impact of fashion weeks on tourism development and destination branding has been studied as well. Liberato, Mendes, Liberato, and Alén (2022) investigated the effects of the realization of a fashion week on the sustainable development of a city and a tourism destination. They discuss the case of the city of Porto in Portugal. The main conclusion of their empirical research shows that Portugal fashion adds value to the city of Porto and contributes to sustainable development both from the economic and socio-cultural perspectives.

Online connections between fashion weeks and tourism destinations have also been examined. Kalbaska et al. (2018) investigated four primary destinations holding major fashion weeks: New York and “New York Fashion Week,” London and “London Fashion Week,” Milan and “Milan Fashion Week,” and Paris and “Paris Fashion Week.” Their research identified the role of destinations in the online presence of the four primary “fashion weeks.” Two converging analyses were carried out. On the one hand, the websites and online presence of the fashion weeks were analyzed to assess tourism-related content; on the other hand, the websites of the destination management organizations at the city level were inspected, to assess the presence and relevance they provide to fashion weeks. This research suggests that the four destinations do not leverage enough in their online communication practices on the potential such popular events as fashion weeks could bring.

Jennifer Craik in 2013 did the first structured exploration of the linkages between fashion and tourism, while presenting a historical overview and illustrating this through the case of Louis Vuitton. In the same work, she proposed 10 different forms of fashion tourism, some closely related to fashion and others more generic, but they all aimed at demonstrating how fashion exists within tourism, be it through the adoption of national dresses or the purchase by tourists of garments in local designer boutiques or souvenir fashion. However, the sphere analyzed by Craik leaves the cultural part uncovered. For instance, fashion museums or exhibitions, archives or fashion foundations, and creative tourism are represented by intangible cultural heritage offers, which also play an important role in fashion tourism and are crucial to attract tourists.

According to Calinao and Lin (2017) and Laing and Frost (2013), fashion exhibitions, especially those presenting contemporary designers, attract an audience that generates a significant entrance revenue and a high number of