

**SUSTAINABILITY**

Science, Practice, Policy

an open access journal edited by  
Taylor and Francis

Special Issue

# SUSTAINABLE REDESIGN OF THE GLOBAL FASHION SYSTEM

Exploring the Organizational, Technological,  
and Socio-cultural Dimensions of Transformation

• call for papers •

**DEADLINE**

for Submission  
of **EXTENDED**  
**ABSTRACTS**

JAN  
• 15  
2021

# OVERVIEW

Global fashion, as part of the cultural and creative industries (CCI), represents a rich and advanced manifestation of contemporary culture and simultaneously embodies a complex and layered set of sociotechnical relationships.

On one hand, fashion is a sophisticated expression of society that is a melding of different languages and artistic disciplines, widely perceived as a **“cultural medium”**, and pervading and informing social practices and dynamics. Indeed, it has been an important component of societal evolution and costumes have always been important elements of acculturation processes of all communities. In its contemporary manifestation, fashion is a **“tool” of cultural mediation between the individual and the social environment, contributing to defining subjective and collective identities.**

On the other hand, fashion is one of the oldest manufacturing sectors in Western countries, part of their industrial roots, and still a **critical component of economies** with a globally significant scale of impact. The industry has been at the core of consecutive technological revolutions, contributing to— and sometimes accelerating — globalization processes, producing various deleterious effects through concurrent processes of cultural homogenization and impoverishment, as well as deeply **affecting the quality of the environment** to the point where today it is the second most polluting industry in the world.

These two dimensions of fashion are currently colliding because of **the rise of digitalization** and the increase in **access to information**. Electronic communication

channels have been amplifying the friction between fashion narratives, the extensive and pervasive impacts of the industry and its allied activities, and the search for authenticity. The public has begun to demonstrate heightened awareness and these new sensibilities have begun to change customers’ attitudes toward consumption choices, thus increasing the demand for transparency on the part of commercially visible brands. In the face of these challenges, the established pillars of the global fashion industry have struggled to reinvent their business models and related modes of storytelling and the prevailing situation has given rise and legitimacy to alternative voices.

These novel expressions are emanating from a **lively ecosystem of start-ups** that are organized around new sets of values informed by sustainability. Further disruption is being driven by the activities of a growing community of **“fashion activists”** and **nongovernmental organizations** (NGOs) which are reframing the global discourse. The COVID-19 pandemic has quickened ongoing transformation and overturned pre-existing commitments. The global fashion system—comprising both its facets of production and consumption along with its negative social and environmental consequences—is being critically questioned even by authoritative figures at the center of some of the most iconic and successful labels.

Given these circumstances, this Special Issue strives to take advantage of this momentum and to link several disciplinary domains with the objective of exploring the organizational, technological, and sociocultural dimensions of transformation.



# FOCUS OF THE SPECIAL ISSUE



This Special Issue of **Sustainability: Science, Practice, and Policy** aims to devote attention to the **organizational, technological, and sociocultural dimensions of system change**. In this sense, the initiative is meant to serve as a call to action by various disciplines to disseminate work on theoretical and conceptual frameworks and results from empirical experimentation that can assist the global fashion system in the process of identifying environmentally tenable and socially equitable business models. Specifically, we invite contributions that focus on the following:

## REDESIGNING THE FASHION SYSTEM

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This section addresses **the organizational dimensions of fashion and its systemic transformation**. ● Are there organizational strategies and supply chain-management models that offer especially effective pathways toward sustainable system change? ● What is the evidence that an emphasis on circularity holds relevance for the global fashion industry? ● What role is the re-shoring of production operations likely to have? ● To what degree are evolving business models and emerging best practices informed by a robust understanding of sustainability?

## INNOVATING FASHION PRODUCTS AND PROCESSES

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This section welcomes contributions that **examine innovation and technological transformation of fashion products and processes**. ● Which are the most effective design methodologies, approaches, and practices for encouraging innovation of fashion products and processes? ● What is the role of design in promoting sustainability? ● What new-generation products demonstrate the most promise from a sustainability perspective? ● Are there emerging technological innovations that can propel sustainable system change? ● What is the role of digital transformation in reducing the social and environmental impacts of fashion?

## RESHAPING FASHION CULTURES

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This section seeks proposals that **focus on the sociocultural dimension of fashion and its transformation towards sustainability**. ● Are there trends that can be regarded as laying the foundations for a reflexive consumer society that questions fashion-impelled models of mass consumption? ● Are there social practices/behaviors and institutional adaptations promoting fashion sustainability? ● How can the cultural dimensions of fashion be preserved while raising awareness of appropriation and impoverishment? ● Are there strategies that could foster sustainability-oriented innovation on the part of designers?

# CO-EDITORS OF THE SPECIAL ISSUE

Co-editors of the Special Issue are **Paola Bertola** and **Chiara Colombi**.

● Paola is Professor at the School of Design, Politecnico di Milano (Italy) where she is the Director of the PhD Program in Design and Coordinator of the Fashion in Process (FiP) laboratory. Her research focuses on creative processes, design management and planning, and design-driven innovation within culture-intensive industries, with a specific focus on fashion.

● Chiara is Associate Professor at the School of Design, Politecnico di Milano (Italy) and co-founder of the Fashion in Process (FiP) laboratory. Her research interests concern knowledge-creation processes, trends research, and design-merchandising processes in culture-intensive industries, with a specific focus on fashion.

In addition to the contributions solicited through this Call for Papers, **the co-editors will be inviting as part of the Special Issue shorter commentaries in the form of Policy Briefs**, “conversations” with leading figures in the global fashion industry, and reflections by prominent visionaries from the realms of sustainable design and innovation.

## SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Extended abstracts should be sent by December 18 to both ● **Paola Bertola** ([paola.bertola@polimi.it](mailto:paola.bertola@polimi.it)) and ● **Chiara Colombi** ([chiara.colombi@polimi.it](mailto:chiara.colombi@polimi.it)).

Please put ● **“SSPP Special Issue”** in the subject line. Preliminary inquiries and encouraged.

# DEADLINES AND PEER-REVIEW PROCEDURES

The project will be guided by the following deadlines:

**JAN  
15  
2021**

## DEADLINE

for Submission of Extended Abstracts (approximately 750 words)

**FEB  
12  
2021**

## NOTIFICATION

of invited papers

**APR  
16  
2021**

## SUBMISSION

of full paper drafts (approximately 8,000 words)

**MAY  
21  
2021**

## COMPLETION

of first round of peer review

**JUN  
30  
2021**

## SUBMISSION

of revised drafts

**JUL  
15  
2021**

## COMPLETION

of second round of peer review

**SEP  
01  
2021**

## SUBMISSION

of final drafts

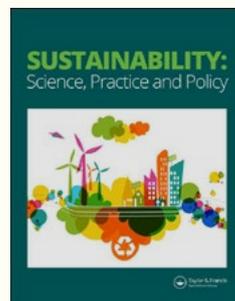
**NOTE:** Publication of accepted papers will occur on a “rolling” basis as they are accepted and proceed through the production process.

## FINAL CAVEATS

This Special Issue of Sustainability: Science, Practice, and Policy will be an **open-source publication** and authors of invited papers will be able to participate without the need to pay an author publication fee (APC).

**All contributions will be sponsored by the Fashion in Process Research Laboratory (FiP) at the Politecnico di Milano which is a neutral platform for knowledge exchange and dissemination.**

## ABOUT THE JOURNAL



**Sustainability: Science, Practice and Policy (SSPP)**, is a refereed, open-access journal which recognizes that climate change and other socio-environmental challenges require significant transformation of existing systems of consumption and production.

Complex and diverse arrays of societal factors and institutions will in coming decades need to reconfigure agro-food systems, implement renewable energy sources, and reinvent housing, modes of mobility, and lifestyles for the current century and beyond.

These innovations will need to be formulated in ways that enhance global equity, reduce unequal access to resources, and enable all people on the planet to lead

flourishing lives within biophysical constraints.

The journal seeks to advance scientific and political perspectives and to cultivate transdisciplinary discussions involving researchers, policy makers, civic entrepreneurs, and others. The ultimate objective is to encourage the design and deployment of both local experiments and system innovations that contribute to a more sustainable future by empowering individuals and organizations and facilitating processes of social learning.

The journal is owned by the Taylor & Francis Group and the Editor is Professor Maurie J. Cohen. Additional information is available at <https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/tsus20/current>.