

Sprouting factors for sustainable fashion businesses

Fatores germinativos para negócios de moda sustentável

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary unsustainability related to production and consumption awakens multidisciplinary discussions. From a more sustainable fashion vision by the creative economy approach, the objective of this paper was to identify which aspects contribute to the sprouting of sustainable fashion businesses from the fashion designer's perspective in the context of the city of Porto Alegre. To this end, research is carried out in an exploratory-descriptive, quality-quantitative approach, performed in three phases: (1) narrative literature review; (2) data collection; and (3) comparative analysis. Thus, it is observed that aspects such as culture, education, media, coworking and other collaborative movements, in addition to the Municipal Plan of Creative Economy of Porto Alegre and Fashion Revolution, were fundamental for the emergence of the researched businesses, which allows the conclusion that a set of elements — individuals motivated by sustainability, government, leaderships, and institutions — collaborate for the sprouting of sustainable fashion businesses.

Keywords: Fashion. Creative industry. Sustainability.

RESUMO

A insustentabilidade contemporânea relacionada à produção e ao consumo desperta discussões multidisciplinares. Conforme uma visão de moda mais sustentável e uma abordagem pela economia criativa, objetiva-se identificar quais aspectos contribuem para a germinação de negócios de moda sustentável na perspectiva do designer de moda no contexto da cidade de Porto Alegre (RS). Para tanto, procede-se à pesquisa de caráter exploratório-descritivo, de abordagem qualiquantitativa, executada em três fases: revisão narrativa de literatura, levantamento de dados e análise comparativa. Desse modo, observa-se que aspectos como cultura, educação, mídia, coworking e outros movimentos colaborativos, além do Plano Municipal de Economia Criativa de Porto Alegre e do Fashion Revolution, foram fundamentais para o surgimento dos negócios pesquisados, o que permite considerar que um conjunto de elementos — indivíduos motivados pela sustentabilidade, governo, lideranças e instituições — colaboram para a germinação de negócios de moda sustentável.

Palavras-chave: Moda. Indústria criativa. Sustentabilidade.

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INTRODUCTION

The consolidation of fast fashion as a fashion business model represents the limits of the ephemerality of consumption. The unsustainable way society deals with this exaggerated consumption and, consequently, production has raised multi-disciplinary discussions about solutions to these problems (TODESCHINI et al., 2017; NIINIMÄKI et al., 2020). An example of this is the relationship between the fashion industry and the creative economy (CEGLIA, 2020).

It is important to define that this research is based on the notion that sustainable development is understood by society that “meets the needs of present society without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (COMISSÃO MUNDIAL SOBRE MEIO AMBIENTE E DESENVOLVIMENTO, 1991, p. 41), in its various dimensions, social, cultural, ecological, environmental, territorial, economic, political (SACHS, 2009). However, this study adopts the premise of Queiroz (2014), that it is fairer and more ethical to reduce unsustainability in search of a sustainability utopia, because, even if the concept of sustainability is unattainable, this premise adheres to the objective of reaching it.

To understand the unsustainability of consumption in fashion, it is necessary to know the trajectory of the product. From the beginning, Gwilt (2014) and Salcedo (2014) delineate that the fashion clothing product, where it specifically arises with the cultivation of the textile fiber, which gives rise to the fabric. Generally speaking, while the raw material is being produced, all the aesthetics of the product are planned to then produce a pilot piece through modeling, and once the project is approved, it moves on to scale production. Some products have peculiarities, such as jeans, which go through washes, or prints, which are interfered with for the print application. Once the production phase is complete, the product is sent to retail, which then goes on to consumption. It should be noted that in the use phase, which consists of the period in which the product is purchased by the consumer until its disposal, product maintenance is carried out, such as washing for cleaning. Finally, the product goes to the post-consumer phase, which implies its disposal or reuse through recycling techniques.

Although the fashion industry is one of the largest employers in Brazil and in the world and is representative in terms of economic turnover (ELLEN MACARTHUR FOUNDATION, 2017; ABIT, 2022), it is also one of the most polluting industries due to the generation and poor management of waste, in addition to the waste itself (ELLEN MACARTHUR FOUNDATION, 2017). On the other hand, in recent decades, there has been the spread of movements that point to more sustainable fashion. A prominent example is Kate Fletcher, creator of slow fashion, who created a business model based on sustainable development (FLETCHER, 2022).

Slow fashion is based on a slow production proposal and reviews the values of the contemporary fashion system — mass production, globalization, image, novelty, dependence, lack of awareness of impacts, costs based on labor and materials, large scale — for a slow fashion system — diversity, global-local, self-awareness, making and maintenance, mutual trust, science of impacts, cost with incorporating

social and ecological impacts, small and medium scales (FLETCHER; GROSE, 2011). This slow fashion system aims to arouse awareness of the vocation for quality, by offering a durable, ecological, ethical product, based on the appreciation of human beings, nature, community, culture and traditional techniques (SALCEDO, 2014; FERRONATO; FRANZATO, 2015).

Thus, the fashion product limited to the creative economy — which results from a creative process but which has added economic value (HOWKINS, 2002) — can contribute to a reinterpretation of the circular economy, because as Ceglia (2020) suggests, this approach can bring sustainable, practical and viable solutions to the scarcity of creativity in circularity.

In this regard, one of the Brazilian cities that stands out for the creative economy sector, especially in the more sustainable fashion scenario, is the city of Porto Alegre, capital of the state of Rio Grande do Sul. It houses several fashion businesses, in the clothing, footwear and accessories segments, with a focus on sustainable development through conscious consumption (POA: SUSTAINABLE FASHION, 2017), in addition to educational institutions that operate in the provision of teaching, research and/or extension in the fashion area.

According to the understanding of the creative economy and the movements towards a more sustainable fashion, the aspects that lead, in practice, to the development of sustainable fashion businesses by fashion designers are questioned. Thus, the aim is to identify which aspects contribute to the sprouting of sustainable fashion businesses from the perspective of the fashion designer in the context of the city of Porto Alegre.

The article is structured in six sections, with the inclusion of this introduction and the references, presented at the end. The next section provides the theoretical framework that deals with sustainable fashion, the creative economy and the role of the fashion designer. The third section describes the methodological procedures adopted in the research. The fourth section presents the results of the data collection. In the fifth section, the final considerations are organized based on a comparative analysis.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The creative economy, an evolving concept, is based on the idea of creative assets that have potential for economic growth and development, aimed at stimulating income and jobs, with social inclusion, cultural diversity and human development, covering economic, cultural and social dimensions, interacting with technology, intellectual property and tourism, through economic activities based on knowledge, with demands for innovative and multidisciplinary policies for the creative industry (UNCTAD, 2010).

In an approach referring to the Brazilian reality, Calado and Perdigão (2020) comment that the creative economy is characterized by different sectors, spraying political and financial priorities and efforts. It results in variable income, lack of inclusion and diversity. Despite this, the authors highlight the fashion sector, which,

due to the interest of users and entrepreneurs, is aligned with sustainable development through more conscious products and has generated jobs and income for peripheral groups of the creative economy.

In the city of Porto Alegre, the second most creative capital in the country (FECOMÉRCIO SP, 2012), for example, city hall recognized the innovative and transforming potential of the creative economy through a work and incentive agenda regulated by the Innovation Law and supported by the Innovation Fund (PREFEITURA DE PORTO ALEGRE, 2013). The objective of this agenda is “to develop the creative economy in the municipality of Porto Alegre, providing education for skills, as well as the logistics of creation, production, circulation, consumption and enjoyment of creative goods and services” (PREFEITURA DE PORTO ALEGRE, 2013). It is guided by four principles:

- cultural diversity: “constituting a dynamic for valuing, protecting and promoting the diversity of national cultural expressions as a way of guaranteeing their originality, strength and potential for growth” (PREFEITURA DE PORTO ALEGRE, 2013);
- sustainability: “defining what type of development is desired, what are the bases of this development and how can it be built to guarantee social, cultural, environmental and economic sustainability under similar conditions of choice for future generations” (PREFEITURA DE PORTO ALEGRE, 2013);
- social inclusion: “in addition to a process of productive inclusion, essential for social inclusion, access to creative goods and services also emerges as a premise for citizenship” (PREFEITURA DE PORTO ALEGRE, 2013);
- innovation: “assuming the creative economy as a development vector, as a cultural process that generates innovation” (PREFEITURA DE PORTO ALEGRE, 2013).

Among the results of the implementation of this agenda is the incubator Tecendo Ideias, which develops projects such as: Connect: Everything in one Place and Delivered at Home, Products Aimed at Income Generation, Sustainable Furniture, Trama District, Intelligent Vehicle System, Firefighting, My Pet Sofa, Talk is Cheap and Illustration and Printing Studio (PREFEITURA DE PORTO ALEGRE, 2013). Other important results are the holding of the international seminar to deal with creative territories as an alternative for revitalizing the region of the 4th District of Porto Alegre and the creation of the Porto Alegre Creative Economy Network (PREFEITURA DE PORTO ALEGRE, 2013).

Creative fashion, derived from the concept of creative economy, placed in the panorama of more sustainable fashion, represents potential for change in the sector. According to Cietta (2017), despite the hybrid character of fashion in terms of the creative industry, given that its creativity stage is linked to the styling stage, it is important to emphasize that the (de)(im)materialization inherent in the fashion product builds relationships between the user and the subjective and intangible attributes of the product. Accordingly, the potential lies in proposing creative style

ideas aimed at sustainable development in the production processes of the fashion system (CEGLIA, 2020).

However, the ephemeral nature of fashion raises the question that perhaps the movement towards more sustainable fashion is just a passing trend of the contemporary and unsustainable fashion system (LEE, 2009).

The unsustainability of the fashion system comes from several factors, including the habits of users, current legislation and business models (LEE, 2009; FLETCHER, 2010; GWILT, 2014; SALCEDO, 2014). According to Lee (2009), the fashion system establishes a relationship of desire for novelty that reflects in companies an accelerated pace of production, with a reduction in price and quality, and in users, an increase in consumption, due to the shortening of the product's life cycle.

To build a sustainability utopia, it is essential to balance the needs and desires of society and the natural limits of planet Earth. Regarding the user, it is necessary to change cultural patterns that encourage excessive consumption. After all, they lead to the depletion of terrestrial ecosystems, which can deprive a large part of society of consumption in the future (ASSADOURIAN, 2013).

To understand the sustainable fashion scenario, or as Salcedo (2014) calls it, "more" sustainable fashion — "initiatives that promote good social and environmental practices, including reducing the pace of production and consumption" (SALCEDO, 2014, p. 33) —, Lee and Mendes (2021) raise contemporary business models that deal with this proposal. They are: "more" sustainable fashion, slow fashion, ethical fashion, eco-fashion, fair trade, zero waste, circular economy, upcycling, recycling, sharing economy and collaborative consumption (Chart 1).

Also noteworthy is the Fashion Revolution movement, which is growing in number of participants, both companies and users, and, in addition to involving educational institutions, students and researchers, aims to unite individuals and organizations with the purpose of promoting real change in the mode of production and consumption of the fashion product (CAMARGO; FREIRE, 2017). The movement originated in 2013 after the collapse of the Rana Plaza building, located in Bangladesh, where several garment factories operated precariously, which resulted in the death of 1,138 women and left another 2,500 injured (FASHION REVOLUTION, 2022). According to information on the movement's page, Fashion Revolution is a global movement whose mission is to bring together people and organizations around the world.

In this context of more sustainable fashion, there is a need to consider businesses that improperly and irresponsibly appropriate the concept of sustainability, carrying out what is called greenwashing, without creating a true relationship of value aggregated through the sustainability utopia but only in the interest of increasing financial results (KOTLER; KELLER, 2012; GWILT, 2014).

"The Design Council says that 80% of a product's environmental impact is decided at the design stage" (LEE, 2009, p. 83). Based on this, another important consideration is the strategic role of the (fashion) designer in this conjuncture. This professional is a mediator in the production and consumption relationship, as

Chart 1. Sustainable fashion business models.

Business	Description
"More" sustainable fashion	"More" sustainable fashion deals with initiatives that promote better environmental and social practices in the fashion sector, including eco-fashion, ethical fashion and slow fashion (SALCEDO, 2014).
Slow fashion	Slow fashion is a proposal to revise the values of the fashion sector through a slow production mode (FLETCHER, 2010).
Ethical fashion	Ethical fashion is mainly concerned with the environment and people, whether due to working conditions or health (SALCEDO, 2014), through choices that encourage sustainable development (SCHULTE, 2015).
Eco-fashion	Eco-fashion, or green fashion, brings an ecological approach from product planning, with the use of materials and practices with low environmental impact (SALCEDO, 2014)
Fair trade	Fair trade, or fair commerce, is focused on decent work practices and wages and with attention to local communities
Zero waste	Zero waste, or zero waste, is characterized by the use of techniques in product development, from fabric planning, to avoid wasting materials (GWILT, 2014).
Circular economy	Circular fashion, based on the circular economy, presents itself as an alternative to linear models of production, through the development of a resilient production system (TODESCHINI et al., 2017; PAL; GANDER, 2018).
Upcycling	Upcycling consists of reusing discarded materials, without loss of quality of the original material in the production process, generating a value-added product (SALCEDO, 2014).
Recycling	Recycling techniques also consist of reusing discarded materials, but with loss of quality of the original material in the production process, and can occur mechanically or chemically (GWILT, 2014; SALCEDO, 2014).
Sharing economy	The sharing economy deals with sharing a product, without creating a relationship of ownership (TODESCHINI et al., 2017).
Collaborative consumption	Collaborative consumption is related to alternative means of meeting individual and collective desires and needs based on available resources, that is, sharing, exchanging or maintaining the product (TODESCHINI et al., 2017).

they manage the company's demands and the users' desires, in addition to having the responsibility of commanding the choices involved in the production process (FLETCHER; GROSE, 2011; KOTLER; KELLER, 2012; GWILT, 2014; PERINI, 2016; CEGLIA, 2020).

Niinimäki et al. (2011) argue that sustainable products should be designed with a focus on minimizing impacts and providing benefits to the user, exploring dimensions beyond the environmental one, with the purpose of achieving market requirements for equivalent conventional products. Accordingly, designers need to explore new possibilities to bring innovation to the fashion system in response to economic, environmental and sociocultural issues (HETHORN; ULASEWICZ, 2008; FLETCHER; GROSE, 2011).

In this sense, Freire and Araujo (2017) comment that the designer, permeated with sustainable values, will develop projects aligned with their way of thinking, which makes social relations and the environment paramount. Therefore, the role of the designer is decisive in promoting strategic design for consumer awareness and loyalty (ANICET; RÜTHSCHILLING, 2012; FREIRE; ARAUJO, 2017).

However, Fletcher e Grose (2011) point out that the still present passivity of the fashion designer in the face of industry transformations is explained by the (technical) complexity of the textile chain, causing these professionals to give in to formatted industry solutions, which are often unsustainable.

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

Based on the objective of identifying which aspects contribute to the sprouting of sustainable fashion businesses from the perspective of the fashion designer, this research is classified as exploratory-descriptive in nature, as it helped in the construction of the panorama about the subject studied and established relationships among the variables raised (GIL, 2021). The approach of this research was quali-quantitative, or mixed, by using content analysis as a data analysis method (VERGARA, 2008).

The study was divided into three phases. The first phase, narrative literature review, consisted of characterizing the themes: circular economy, sustainable fashion and fashion designer. In the second phase, data collection was carried out with the group of interest to the research, that is, sustainable fashion designers. The third phase, comparative analysis, was characterized by the comparison of the data obtained by the survey with that from the literature review.

In the first phase, the narrative literature review, relevant studies on sustainable fashion and creative economy were raised. The starting point was the article "Slow fashion: an invitation for systems change", by Kate Fletcher (2010), a world reference in the field of fashion and sustainability, which addresses the contemporary fashion system and brings possibilities to a slow fashion system. Another source of data was the annals of the Colóquio de Moda, the main Brazilian academic event in the field of fashion, with articles related to the research topic available on the event's website during the five years prior to the data collection.

In the second phase, data collection, it was decided to conduct an interview using the semi-structured face-to-face interview technique, because of the possibility of conducting a line of reasoning with flexibility to explore gaps that could arise during the dialogue (GIL, 2021). The field study took place after defining the research interest group, preparing and testing the interview script, and the project by Nishimura (2018) submitted and approved by the Ethics Committee for Research with Human Beings of the Federal University of Santa Catarina, under Approval No. 2.345.889 and Certificate of Presentation for Ethical Appraisal 73330217.7.0000.0121.

The research interest group was defined by product designers who work with sustainable fashion clothing, without necessarily having formal education in the area. The definition was based on the mentions in the literature review of this type

of professional, since they are responsible for applying sustainable practices to the product, and the choice of clothing was made with the intention of restricting the research object. Initially, groups, associations, bodies or entities that brought together companies in the segment in Florianópolis (SC), the city where the research was carried out, were surveyed, but without success. Thus, it was decided to collect data in a capital with representativeness for more sustainable fashion. Thus, it was established via Facebook, the Núcleo de Moda Sustentável, a research group from the Department of Design at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, which pointed to a study of mapping sustainable fashion brands and initiatives in the metropolitan region of Porto Alegre, POA: Sustainable Fashion (2017), directed by Cariane Camargo, member of the group and responsible for the Fashion Revolution movement in that same city.

In the mapping obtained, 38 sustainable fashion businesses were found, of which only 19 operate with fashion clothing. The other 19 businesses sell footwear and/or accessories. Of the 19 businesses qualified for the research interest group, only one of them was not found. All the other 18 responded to the contact; however, three businesses had ended their activities and did not want to participate in the interview; two businesses were located outside the metropolitan region of Porto Alegre and it was not possible to conduct an interview with them; and three businesses were participating in a fair in Rio de Janeiro during the week of the interviews. Thus, 10 designers of sustainable fashion clothing products were interviewed in the metropolitan region of Porto Alegre. These designers were in town the week the field study was carried out.

The interviews were scheduled with the fashion designers according to their availability of place and time and took place as a conversation based on a script, which addressed: the interviewee's profile; the motivations for working in the area; and to what aspects do they credit Porto Alegre's prominence in the sustainable fashion scene. To enable the next phase, analysis and comparison, all interviews were sound recorded with the consent of the interviewee and later transcribed into a text document.

With the transcribed interviews, data analysis was performed based on the content analysis methodology. According to Bardin (2009), the method consists of three fundamental steps:

- the pre-analysis, phase that plans the definition of objectives, choice of material and preparation of references that serve as a support for the interpretation;
- exploration of the material, a phase that consists of categorizing the data according to rules previously determined in the preceding phase;
- the phase of the treatment of results, inference and interpretation, which deals with data analysis, either using statistical tools or interpreting texts, for example.

In the third phase of comparative analysis, parallels were drawn between the information collected in the literature review and in the data collection. Based on excerpts from the interviewees' remarks, correspondences of equal value were

found in the literature that corroborated the actions taken in practice. As for the divergent questions, they led to the detailed deepening of the subject, through more research, to allow the solid construction of considerations on the subject.

RESULTS

In this section, the results of the data collection are presented, which consist of the description of the interviews in relation to the motivations for working in sustainable fashion businesses and the sprouting factors for sustainable fashion businesses.

From the more sustainable fashion scene, it is important to emphasize that eight of the interviewees claimed that their business is guided by the slow fashion model and two of them by ethical fashion, in addition to the fact that all of them knew about the Fashion Revolution movement and/or interacted with it.

Motivation

The interviewees, when asked about their motivation to work in sustainable fashion businesses, supported their preferences on two issues, personal or professional. The four interviewees who chose to undertake a business of this nature for personal preference pointed out that they had a previous negative experience with the fast fashion industry and sought to resignify their relationship with fashion, given a slow fashion proposal. In the same direction, the seven interviewees who mentioned professional preference also commented that more sustainable practices in fashion are a prerequisite, due to consumer demands, or a differential in this competitive market.

To exemplify personal preference, arising from a previous negative experience, two of the interviewees said that they did not identify with the fast fashion production chain and wanted to do fair and meaningful work, in line with their personal values.

I have worked my whole life in industry, in the factory and in production. And I was very worried about being able to do something that would give more personal fulfillment, you know? [...]. So, the collective inside a factory was not cool, because we had exploitation of our work and also working alone was something that was very unsettling (E1).

I started to get more involved with fashion, but at the same time I started to see that it wasn't what I wanted, I was working on something I didn't believe in, I was working a lot with always the same return and that frustrated me a lot, like that. And then I started to develop the idea and project of opening my own business, I was still thinking about what I wanted, I wasn't sure if it was going to be fashion, but I wanted to work with something awesome or a social project or something sustainable (E7).

Another interviewee explained that, due to the dissatisfaction of working with fast fashion, he reached the point of wanting to change professions, but after a sabbatical period abroad, he had contact with more sustainable fashion companies and saw an opportunity to carry out a more ethical work:

My last formal job was at a fast fashion chain, so I got to the point, so, faster, let's say, right? [...] I reached the limit of what I thought [...] could be done with fashion. [...] When I left that last job, I went traveling, because I was no longer interested in working that way and I was questioning whether I was really going to continue working with fashion. [...]. And that's when I started to have contact with some brands and other ideas and other ways of making clothing products that had more to do with what I believed in (E9).

In terms of professional preference, one of the interviewees reported that involvement with more sustainable fashion businesses was casual, because he dreamed of developing a successful business, but did not believe in the fast fashion business model.

Initially, it was based on, of course, wanting to be a big chain, you know, a giant brand, and when researching the market, it came across this situation, which is one of the most polluting industries in the world, the whole environmental issue of fabrics, pollutants, dyeing, in short, soil, water and air pollution. And also the social issue, you know, the use of slave labor, a matter of benefiting big brands and a few people, right? Rather than strengthening an entire chain. And it she moved onto sustainable fashion. (E8).

In addition, another interviewee said that he already had a life purpose aligned with sustainability, so it was a natural process.

We already had some life choices, which was not to use anything of animal origin and everything, so we brought this to the brand, and I already had several fights with the college in the sense of, bah, having to create a collection, because I'm going to have to create it six months in advance, and then I'd go crazy, then it launches, then it has six months to sell and then it launches another one, then it's at this frenetic pace. Then I said: "Okay, if we are going to launch the company, we will not have a collection". So, little by little, we sort of unwittingly fit into the sustainable universe, like that, right? (E10).

One of the interviewees commented that he believes in the need for a business to develop a responsible and conscious role in its essence, both in the mission and in the product's identity.

And then, when we started talking later about the brand concept, what did we think? That had to..., well, sustainable was..., zero requirement, you know? Primordial today because of everything we know about where humanity is heading (E5).

Still, another interviewee explained their motivation for the differential that sustainability represents in contemporary times, through the added value.

Sprouting factors

Two important factors that were drivers for the establishment of a more sustainable fashion scene in the metropolitan region of Porto Alegre was the implementation of the Plan Municipal of Creative Economy (PREFEITURA DE PORTO ALEGRE, 2013), in 2013, which recognizes fashion as an integral part of the municipality's

creative industry, and the emergence of the Fashion Revolution in 2016. In addition, the interviewees approached the municipality's potential for aspects such as culture (E4), education (E3), media (E1) and coworking (E1), in addition to collaborative movements (E5).

For some interviewees, the gaúcho state has a vocation for slow (fashion) culture. This is justified by the agricultural potential of Rio Grande do Sul in a national context, where this slow culture develops, either by getting closer to nature, or through manual production, or through the reuse of materials.

I imagine that one issue is that, as we come from the countryside, you know, we have a lot of this connection with origins, we come from Italian migration and German migration, Santa Catarina too, right? [...] We always want to do everything right, you know? And we take care of our things, we always want to do the right thing, the thing within the standard of what you imagine, what you idealize. [...] And I don't know, it's funny because here there are many sustainable fashion initiatives, but I sell a lot more to Rio and São Paulo than here, because I think that the gaúcho consumer is still very closed, very reserved, he still prefers to go for the traditional one, for the brand he trusts than for the dubious one. And this is something that I hope that maybe the people, they will open up more like this, the gaúcho consumers, they will open their mind more to these new proposals, right? And I'm curious to see why... maybe entrepreneurship, maybe people want this more..., the pursuit of satisfaction with something that generates much more value and meaning for you (E8).

In this sense, there is an expectation of the interviewees for the highlight of Rio Grande do Sul in relation to more sustainable fashion in Brazil, after all other states of the country already had/have their exponent in fashion market segments and now it is the turn of the extreme south. Despite agreeing with all the previous statements, one of the interviewees did not consider the gaúcho market as having potential for more sustainable fashion, as its largest audience is found in the Rio-São Paulo axis.

It's really a phenomenon, because we're betting everything that now it's Rio Grande do Sul's turn, for God's sake. [...] Because in fashion it has always been there in the triangle Rio, São Paulo, Minas, in the Southeast, and Santa Catarina providing service to others, which is a very strong pole, but creators, brands, it is a pole that works, that even make for brands outside, right? From Brazil. [...] Let's say, Rio Grande do Sul is an agricultural state. So we are already slow by birth, you know? [...] So we more or less detect, let's say, Rio de Janeiro beachwear, São Paulo street wear, Minas is party fashion, Santa Catarina is clique and Rio Grande do Sul will now be slow fashion, it will be sustainable fashion (E2).

Other outstanding aspects of the capital of Rio Grande do Sul are formal education and the representativeness of fashion courses. The interviewees highlighted the entrepreneurial profile of the students and the direct involvement of institutions and professors with movements, initiatives, projects and research in favor of sustainable development in fashion: *"But we have a lot of demand here for people who graduated, want to launch a brand and come here to get it, they buy the fabric, they make the new pieces"* (E1).

I don't know if it's a function of training, because, well, the question that the universities themselves are with this... They are working a lot with this, with sustainability, right? So I don't see if this public, you know, these students who graduated and went to industries didn't take this knowledge with them, right? Or are the industry owners themselves aware of this... This new theme that is so in vogue, right? (E6).

And then I think the sweetest thing is that the following year, like, in 2016, it was the first Fashion Revolution that we actually had something physical here, so I think that also moved a lot, and all the professors that I know from faculties at the UN003 university, at the UN002 university, at the UN007 university, at the UN006 university, are very engaged in this issue of wanting to change the student's mindset and make them look at sustainability (E10).

Furthermore, local media is also an important aspect. In addition to establishing partnerships with educational institutions, there are several fashion sections in newspapers that are interested in the region's more sustainable fashion scene. For example, one of the interviewees reported frequently receiving an invitation to talk about the subject and his brand.

It's just that the media here in Rio Grande do Sul favors new creators a lot, they are always very open to showing the work of those who are doing it. [...] It's called RE003 magazine, it's a very important vehicle for gaucho fashion, I've been out there a few times and they really have a very big opening for those..., for those who are doing their own fashion (E3).

Coworking spaces, or collaborative spaces, as well as collaborative movements, promote the exchange of knowledge and experiences, in addition to creating and boosting a network between individuals who develop similar and also different works. With that, there is a growth of the creative fashion industry that mobilizes the metropolitan region of Porto Alegre, such as the Fashion Revolution and its calendar of events. One interviewee reported that in the past, the gaucho music scene had this collaborative profile and today it is the most sustainable fashion scene.

We consider ourselves part of a generation of brands that came very strong precisely because we started a series of movements in the capital like this, you know, like... There started to be a movement in relation... The relationship with public space, with alternative transport, a series of movements that were allied like this, right? [...] My generation, it was maturing from there, in fact, and as the city began to concentrate a lot of street events, a lot of occupation of buildings and many old buildings, right? A lot of relationships between colleges, as they are now, with the brands that were opening and many people who did work with us and with other brands opened their brands as well. [...] So, like, they are a junction of a series of trends, like that, and that what enhances the city is precisely that it is a capital, things get here, but it is not big. [...] It's just like a music scene like that, in Porto Alegre it's not anymore, but for a long time it was like that, all the bands knew each other, they played in the same places [he-he-he] (E4).

The presence of the company EM001 here, I think it gave leverage, you know? [...] They wouldn't have done so much alone, I think there was a desire on the part of people, which I also can't explain where that desire came from here in Porto Alegre, it was so fervent. [...] I also think that the Fashion Revolution here had a very strong movement (E9).

In 2015, which was when we started planning the company, it was kind of a boom, so, we looked around, there were a lot of companies, we were like, "wow, what do you mean?". So I can't explain why, I'm still trying to understand, but I think it's wonderful (E10).

Many of those interviewed also credit the presence of a textile cooperative guided by principles of more sustainable fashion as a lever for the development of the sector in the capital of Rio Grande do Sul, as it brought the production of raw materials closer to the fashion designer, as well as to clothing.

We looked for that too, to know why. When we started the company EM001 we thought that the last place in the world that would be successful would be in Porto Alegre. I think, and the answers that we've found so far and also that we've asked, is because the people here are very critical. So I think that sometimes it starts here, because what happens here, you happen in the rest of Brazil. [...] Here, too, you have a very diverse audience. I also think it's a public that has a little more purchasing power, so you can also do that, you know? It ends up being more..., more demanding, and then I think people do it here as a test, you know? (E1).

Some interviewees were impressed with the revelation of the Porto Alegre metropolitan area for more sustainable fashion businesses, which go beyond clothing and include accessories, footwear and even other business models, such as thrift stores, due to the fact that they are not familiar with or involved with the Municipal Plan of Creative Economy and the network established in the region.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The present study aimed to identify which aspects contribute to the sprouting of sustainable fashion businesses from the perspective of the fashion designer. It was noticed that the creative economy, represented by the Municipal Plan of Creative Economy (PREFEITURA DE PORTO ALEGRE, 2013), the Fashion Revolution movement and the integration of teaching institutions of fashion and design are key factors for the sprouting of sustainable fashion businesses in the metropolitan region of Porto Alegre. Concomitantly, culture, education, media, coworking and other collaborative movements were also brought up as aspects that boosted the businesses analyzed.

Based on the narrative review of the literature and data collection, a relationship between theory and practice was found where it was possible to observe a change in the fashion scenario in the region studied. Conventional businesses began to coexist with more sustainable fashion businesses, which are generally motivated by the sustainability utopia and make change happen through creativity, collaboration and activism, thus fostering the creative economy.

The fact that the interviewees had experienced fast fashion and were aware of its consequences, thereby reframing the value of fashion in their lives and seeking to do the same in the lives of other individuals, reinforces their commitment to the pillars of sustainability in an ethical manner. However, it is necessary to consider that many of the analyzed businesses were recent and facing the same difficulties

as a conventional business. Added to this are the difficulties imposed by sustainable development itself. Therefore, monitoring more sustainable fashion businesses and determining their motivations and actions in favor of the sustainability utopia over time are essential for not cultivating a greenwashing.

It should be noted that this research was delimited by the data collection region and by the fashion designer's vision. With this, it is considered that the data may present particularities of a region, and not represent the reality of other sustainable fashion businesses in the country or in the world. In the same way that the fashion designer's point of view can be limited according to the context in which he is inserted.

Thus, it is suggested for future studies to use the elements of this research to instrumentalize a quantitative study to expand its perimeter and reach other players involved in the sustainable fashion scenario. In addition, deeper relationships between fashion, creative economy and circular economy will also be an important contribution to the area.

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