



**Following the Product: Traceability of Geographical
Association and Supply Chain Processes in Luxury Fashion**

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Abstract

This research aims to explore the traceability of geographical association and supply chain processes in the luxury fashion industry. Luxury fashion brands reinforce their exclusivity through their association to their Country-of-Origin whereas the details on origin of raw materials, production processes and locations involved in the supply chain processes are overlooked. This results in dissociation of luxury fashion brands from their geographical association as well as neglect towards supply chain processes. Since the Rana Plaza incident in 2013, traceability of geographical associations and supply chain processes has gained importance and the brands are aiming for transparency in the value chain to gain the trust of customers. Therefore, this research studies the contribution of traceability to the redevelopment of brand heritage and brand image of luxury fashion brands since the 19th century. The sample for this research constitutes of two luxury fashion brands: Harris Tweed and Dormeuil. The primary data has been collected through interviews, digital networking sites, and print advertisements. The secondary data for this research includes already published literature on each brand such as books and articles. The results of this study identify that both brands, Harris Tweed and Dormeuil, have been involved in sustainable production practices since the early years of their existence. High quality and exclusivity of the products have been found to be the reasons behind the involvement of brands in fair production practices. However, Harris Tweed is an inherently traceable fabric due to stamping of Orb Mark which indicates the provenance details of the fabric. Therefore, the brand does not feel the need to launch an electronic traceability scheme. On the contrary, while Dormeuil has been an ethically responsible company in the past, the recent launch of its electronic traceability scheme has been driven by the need for transparency by the modern-day consumer. In addition, both brands have also capitalized on their traceability schemes (inherent or adopted) to build an image of sustainable luxury through the print advertisements during 1900s and social media in the present day. Furthermore, Harris Tweed and Dormeuil often highlight their Country-of-Origin (a major geographical association) to reinforce the authenticity and skilled craftsmanship of their brands. It illustrates that brands take advantage of their brand heritage to support their genuineness in producing quality products through sustainable supply chain processes. This research concludes that the traceability of geographical association and supply chain processes of luxury fashion brands relies on the brand heritage to demonstrate that they have always been committed to fair production practices and therefore, redevelops the image of brands as ‘sustainable luxury’.

Keywords: traceability, geographical association, supply chain, brand image, brand heritage, Country-of-Origin, luxury fashion

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1. Introduction

“Many of the shoes and boots it sells for between £500 and £1800 a pair and stamped as “made in Italy” are mostly made in Transylvania, a region better known for vampires than any tradition of luxury craftsmanship”, published *The Guardian* about Louis Vuitton (LV), a global luxury fashion brand, in June 2017.¹ In 2014, the European Parliament voted for all non-food items to have a compulsory “made in” label of their Country-of-Origin (CoO).² Under this decision, the EU Customs Code defined the Country-of-Origin as the place of “the last substantial, economically justified processing” leading to a “new product” or representing “an important stage of manufacture”.³ This measure was introduced to help the consumers to trace the origin of their products in the era of globalized production. As the Louis Vuitton shoes were finished in Italy after exportation as semi-finished products from Romania, the “Made in Italy” label is aligned with the European regulations.⁴ However, the case of LV highlights the multiple, and often invisible, geographical locations and actors involved in the supply chain processes of luxury fashion goods.

Louis Vuitton had been downplaying the dissociative production work being done at its “secret” factory in Romania. According to the Guardian, the management had ensured that the factory does not appear on google search and therefore, the outside of the factory does not mention the name of LV itself either. In addition, the factory does not allow any visitors and therefore, had remained a secret which was ultimately revealed through staff selfies on social media.⁵ While the factory was not involved in any unethical production practices, it is the dissociation of the LV group from the geographical locations involved in the supply chain process of its most selling products that had raised curiosity about the labor and production ethics of the brand. However, the

¹ Alexandra Lembke, “Revealed: The Romanian Site Where Louis Vuitton Makes Its Italian Shoes,” *The Guardian*, June 17, 2017, sec. Business, <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2017/jun/17/revealed-the-romanian-site-where-louis-vuitton-makes-its-italian-shoes>.

² According to Article 24 CC: “*Goods whose production involved more than one country shall be deemed to originate in the country where they underwent their last, substantial, economically justified processing or working in an undertaking equipped for that purpose and resulting in the manufacture of a new product or representing an important stage of manufacture*”.

³ Lembke, “Revealed.”

⁴ “European Parliament Votes for Compulsory ‘made-in’ Labels,” *Reuters*, April 15, 2014, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-eu-labeling-idUSBREA3E1MB20140415>.

⁵ Lembke, “Revealed.”

brand had been successful in neatly hiding the lack of traceability of geographic locations under the “Made in Italy” label put on the sole of each shoe representing the Italian heritage of skilled craftsmanship, local tradition, and style.

The case of Louis Vuitton presents the two-sides of luxury fashion. The first side of luxury fashion brands reinforce their exclusivity through their association to the Country-of-Origin. The luxury fashion brands have realized the importance of Country-of-Origin as a hallmark of brand heritage. The brands present themselves as authentic by reinforcing their long history of successful artisanship. The Country-of-Origin also helps the customers to associate the image of a country and its manufactured products with the brand image which helps in product evaluation and value perception at the time of purchase. Therefore, luxury brands gain a competitive advantage by associating themselves with countries that are perceived to have innate fashion expertise or have a reputation for high-quality manufacturing. It highlights the historic links and image of luxury fashion brands through “Made in” labels. While the ‘Made in’ labels were initially introduced by Britain in response to the German protectionist measures, the association of brands with their Country-of-Origin and nostalgic history, today, influences the purchase decisions of the customers to a great extent.⁶

The other side of luxury fashion mostly which includes the details on origin of raw materials, production processes and locations involved in the supply chain processes is not frequently touched upon by the luxury fashion brands. Previous literature on transparency of supply chain processes has found that some luxury brands do not commit to disclosure of their supply chain practices to maintain the exclusivity of their brand.⁷ Due to the association of many luxury fashion brands with their distinct countries of origin which exhibit prestige, uniqueness and historical authenticity of the products, the places of production remain a tangled knot of the complex relationship of spaces and luxury fashion brands. However, it is not only the orientation of brands towards their Country-of-Origin but also the fragmented structure of supply chains in

⁶ Bruno Godey et al., “Brand and Country-of-Origin Effect on Consumers’ Decision to Purchase Luxury Products,” *Journal of Business Research* 65, no. 10 (October 2012): 1461–70, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.10.012>; Oliver Ibert et al., “Geographies of Dissociation: Value Creation, ‘Dark’ Places, and ‘Missing’ Links,” *Dialogues in Human Geography* 9, no. 1 (March 1, 2019): 43–63, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2043820619831114>.

⁷ Louise Crewe, “Fast Fashion, Global Spaces, and Bio-Commodification,” in *The Geographies of Fashion* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 37–65, <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781474286091>.

fashion industry that creates the possibilities for lack of transparency in geographical associations and supply chain processes.⁸

The inequality among spaces of luxury fashion industry was highlighted after the incident of Rana Plaza collapse in Dhaka, Bangladesh which proved to be a major turning point for the introduction of transparency in the fashion industry. The Rana Plaza was home to five garment factories and its collapse in 2013 killed 1138 people and caused more than 2500 injuries.⁹ While the old building of Rana Plaza was later found to be the home for precarious work for multiple fast fashion brands around the world, the incident also sparked the interest of various governmental and non-profit watchdog organizations about the ethical production and acknowledgement of production sites of all kinds of fashion brands including luxury fashion as well.¹⁰

Soon after the incident, Fashion Revolution arose to radically transform the sourcing, production, and consumption of fashion products by generating awareness through “Who Made My clothes” and other different slogans. The movement is currently active in more than 100 countries with the aim of making supply chain processes more transparent in the global fashion industry.¹¹ Its manifesto states that “*Fashion is transparent and accountable. Fashion embraces clarity and does not hide behind complexity nor rely upon trade secrets to derive value. Anyone, anywhere can find out how, where, by whom and under what conditions their clothing is made.*”¹² In 2016, a Fashion Transparency index was also launched by Fashion Revolution which ranks the global fashion brands on the basis of availability of transparent information about their supply chain processes. #whomademyclothes is one of the most renowned campaigns started by Fashion Revolution for this purpose.¹³

⁸ Yousuf Kamal and Craig Deegan, “Corporate Social and Environment-Related Governance Disclosure Practices in the Textile and Garment Industry: Evidence from a Developing Country,” *Australian Accounting Review* 23, no. 2 (2013): 117–34, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1835-2561.2012.00205.x>.

⁹ “The Rana Plaza Accident and Its Aftermath,” Document, International Labour Organization, December 21, 2017, http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/geip/WCMS_614394/lang--en/index.htm.

¹⁰ Fast Fashion refers to “*inexpensive clothing produced rapidly by mass-market retailers in response to the latest trends.*” The production model of fast fashion allows the retailers to produce large number of clothes using cheap labor. (Source: Oxford Dictionary)

¹¹ “About,” Fashion Revolution, accessed June 12, 2020, <https://www.fashionrevolution.org/about/>.

¹² “Manifesto - Fashion Revolution : Fashion Revolution,” accessed June 12, 2020, <https://www.fashionrevolution.org/manifesto/>.

¹³ “Fashion Transparency Index 2020,” Fashion Revolution, accessed June 12, 2020, <https://www.fashionrevolution.org/about/transparency/>.

A number of studies have investigated transparency and sustainability in the fashion industry.¹⁴ While the already existing literature suggests that the firms should be more transparent about their supply chain processes and geographical association, there exists a gap on how the acknowledgement of the existence of geographical associations besides Country-of-Origin and transparency of supply chain processes (traceability) affects the already existing brand image and brand heritage of luxury fashion brands. It is the gap that this study also aims to fill. In doing so, it explores the motivation behind the recent surge of the traceability phenomenon in luxury fashion brands as it will provide context to the contribution of traceability to redevelopment of brand image and brand heritage of these brands.

Research Question

As the traceability has gained importance in the fashion industry since the Rana Plaza incident, the luxury fashion brands have also started to recognize the urgency of becoming a traceable brand. The brands aim to reinforce the fundamental value of trust among customers by allowing them to see the whole value chain spanned across many different countries in the world and ensure the quality of exclusive products being produced by the brand in a sustainable manner. Therefore, this research aims to explore the central question of:

"How has traceability of geographical association and supply chain processes of luxury fashion brands contributed to the redevelopment of brand image and brand heritage since 19th century?"

This research question will be answered by studying and conducting an analysis of the traceability measures of two luxury fashion brands: Dormeuil and Harris Tweed. For more than 100 years, Dormeuil and Harris Tweed have capitalized on their French/ English (Made in England) and Scottish (Handwoven in Outer Hebrides) origins, respectively, to create an image of delivering luxurious fine quality products. However, Harris Tweed has identified its production

¹⁴ Jochen Strähle, "Green Fashion Retail," in *Green Fashion Retail*, ed. Jochen Strähle, Springer Series in Fashion Business (Singapore: Springer, 2017), 1–6, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-2440-5_1.; Hakan Karaosman et al., "Behind the Runway: Extending Sustainability in Luxury Fashion Supply Chains," *Journal of Business Research*, September 29, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.09.017>.

places since the formation of the brand and is inherently traceable in nature, whereas Dormeuil, despite being as old as Harris Tweed, has only introduced its traceability scheme in 2019. Therefore, in order to explore the impact of traceability on brand image and brand heritage of both brands, the following inter-connected sub-questions will be answered for each brand:

- What is the motivation behind traceability measures introduced by a brand?
- How does Country-of-Origin impact the image of a brand?
- How does the introduction of traceability measures impact the already existing brand image of a luxury fashion brand?
- What is the role of Country-of-Origin as a marketing tool for brand heritage?
- How does the introduction of traceability measures contribute to the brand heritage of a luxury fashion brand?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Luxury and Fashion

The concept of luxury lies on the economist and sociologist Thorstein Veblen's idea of conspicuous consumption, first introduced in 1899 in his book *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. According to his theory of the leisure class, luxury items belong only to the leisure class. Therefore, there exists social stratification and the leisure class, being the highest rank, consumes items that are beyond the basic necessities of life and are inaccessible for the lower strata. In addition, the luxury items are produced through specialization procedures to deliver high quality and personal comfort for the consumer. While luxury is associated to the extraordinary items associated with a certain social class, it is not an absolute but rather a symbolic concept and people are free to define themselves socially in a way they want.¹⁵ Kapferer and Bastien have introduced the concept of democratic luxury which has been defined as: “a luxury item that extraordinary people would consider ordinary is at the same time an extraordinary item to ordinary people”.¹⁶ The desire to

¹⁵ Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions* (Aakar Books, 2005), <http://moglen.law.columbia.edu/LCS/theoryleisureclass.pdf>.

¹⁶ Jean-Noël Kapferer and Vincent Bastien, “The Specificity of Luxury Management: Turning Marketing Upside Down,” *Journal of Brand Management* 16 (March 1, 2009): 311–22, <https://doi.org/10.1057/bm.2008.51>.

be socially significant makes the DNA of a luxury item. However, luxury does not depend on money alone as money defines the wealth of a person, but taste cannot be bought. Luxury owns the exclusivity and can convert the simple money into a social stratification through development of a novel product.¹⁷

As fashion is a phenomenon which satisfies the desire for social acceptance through the double function of being socially significant and different at the same time, it is, therefore, an important segment of luxury market. Although luxury fashion remains the same in a given circle where all members share the association to prestige, fashion of the upper class is never same as that of the lower strata of the society. In fact, fashion observes a trickle-down effect and is abandoned from the former as soon as it reaches the latter. It is one of the tools to appropriate the individual desire of differentiation. Being considered as an honorable association of an individual to own luxury items, luxury fashion performs the double function of being aligned with a particular social circle as well as highlighting that an individual stands out in a group. This double function formed by two social tendencies; need of union and need of isolation, are considered as essential elements for the development of fashion.¹⁸

2.2 Characteristics of a Luxury Brand

Fionda and Moore have associated a number of attributes to the luxury fashion brands. First, they identify brand name and image as critical elements of the anatomy of a luxury fashion brand. It includes the reputation and iconic identification of the products of a brand in consumer's mind. Second, the luxury positioning of a brand relies on the novel environment provided to its customers for the shopping experience. The flagship stores located in the international fashion hubs with niche products to offer are vital to the luxurious consumption experience. Third, brand heritage, considered as the hallmark of a luxury brand, creates credibility of the brand through its long history and is also often connected to the country of origin. Finally, strong marketing is also one of the key characteristics of a luxury fashion brand which reinforces the brand image by creating

¹⁷ Kapferer and Bastien.

¹⁸ Georg Simmel, "Fashion," *The American Journal of Sociology* 62, no. 6 (May 1957): 541–58.

an attraction for the products offered by the brand.¹⁹ The following sections explore two main characteristics of luxury fashion brands which are at the core of this research: brand heritage and brand image.

2.2.1 Brand Heritage

Brand heritage is an important feature of luxury brands which is not only grounded in the traditions of the past but also makes the brands relevant today and builds a meaningful perspective for the future. In a brand management study, Wuestefeld et al. have defined brand heritage as “a dimension of a brand’s identity found in its track record, longevity, core values, use of symbols and particularly in an organizational belief that its history is important.”²⁰

Heritage has been at the root of the success of many luxury fashion brands and is known as DNA of the brand. According to Urde et. al, the corporate heritage of a brand “clarifies and makes the past relevant for contemporary contexts and purposes.”²¹ Five main themes have been identified related to the heritage of the brand which include core values, longevity, symbolic expression of the past through communication, importance of the history of the brand and delivering value based on that history.²² The long history of skilled craftsmanship and specialized manufacturing processes set apart the luxury fashion brands from mass fashion. For example, in 1837 Hermes was founded as a small leather manufacturing business in the Grands Boulevard quarters of Paris. Relying on its skills and diversification in the market, today it has joined the list of classic luxury brands known for its fine luxury goods across the world.²³

Cooper et al. have affirmed that corporate heritage of a brand plays an important role in building the brand image and value proposition of the brand. As an important element of luxury

¹⁹ Antoinette M. Fionda and Christopher M. Moore, “The Anatomy of the Luxury Fashion Brand,” *Journal of Brand Management* 16, no. 5 (March 1, 2009): 347–63, <https://doi.org/10.1057/bm.2008.45>.

²⁰ Thomas Wuestefeld et al., “The Impact of Brand Heritage on Customer Perceived Value,” *Der Markt* 51 (February 24, 2012): 51–61, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12642-012-0074-2>.

²¹ John Balmer, Stephen Greyser, and Mats Urde, “Corporate Brands with a Heritage,” *Bradford University School of Management Working Paper Series* 07 (July 1, 2007).

²² Balmer, Greyser, and Urde.

²³ Tim Jackson, “A Contemporary Analysis of Global Luxury Brands,” in *International Retail Marketing, 1st Edition*, ed. Moore Christopher and Birtwhistle Grete (Elsevier Ltd, 2004), 155–69, <https://ualresearchonline.arts.ac.uk/id/eprint/971/>.

brand identity, the strategic management of history enhances the perception of luxuriousness of the brand.²⁴ Balmer has suggested that historic identity of the brand emphasizes the trust and authenticity of the brand.²⁵ Heritage is not an approach to marketing the past of the brand but instead is an effort to engage consumers with history of the brand. It is a depiction of the collective memory of the brand and contributes to the identity of the brand.²⁶

An interesting case of brand heritage has been found in the Japanese market as heritage was realized to be the motivation behind loyalty of Japanese consumers to luxury brands. With the strengthening of Japanese economy after 1970s, Japanese tourists had become prominent shoppers of European luxury districts. The recognition of this trend resulted in opening of luxury stores such as Gucci and Louis Vuitton in Tokyo.²⁷ It was found that Japanese consumer knew more about the history and tradition of the brand than American consumers and despite the short period of existence of these luxury brands in the market, the customers remained loyal to brands that have placed their image right through heritage management.²⁸

2.2.2 Brand Image

The term brand image originated in 1950 when David Ogilvy, known as the “father of advertising”, expressed the emotions of users linked to a specific product as “brand image”.²⁹ Brand image, an important driver of consumer behavior, has been defined as: “the perceptions of a brand reflected by the brand associations in terms of attributes, benefits and attitudes based on experiences of the

²⁴ Holly Cooper, Dale Miller, and Bill Merrilees, “Restoring Luxury Corporate Heritage Brands: From Crisis to Ascendancy,” *Journal of Brand Management* 22, no. 5 (June 2015): 448–66, <https://doi.org/10.1057/bm.2015.9>.

²⁵ John M.T. Balmer, “Corporate Heritage Identities, Corporate Heritage Brands and the Multiple Heritage Identities of the British Monarchy,” ed. John M.T. Balmer and Shaun M. Powell, *European Journal of Marketing* 45, no. 9/10 (January 1, 2011): 1380–98, <https://doi.org/10.1108/03090561111151817>.

²⁶ Bradford Hudson and John Balmer, “Corporate Heritage Brands: Mead’s Theory of the Past,” *Corporate Communications: An International Journal* 18 (August 2, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.1108/CCIJ-Apr-2012-0027>.

²⁷ Ronald Degen, “The Success of Luxury Brands in Japan and Their Uncertain Future,” *GlobADVANTAGE, Polytechnic Institute of Leiria, Working Papers*, January 1, 2010.

²⁸ Paul Husband and Radha Chadha, “Japan: An Insatiable Yen for Luxury,” in *The Cult of the Luxury Brand: Inside Asia’s Love Affair with Luxury* (Hachette UK, 2010).

²⁹ M Išoraitė, “Brand Image Development,” *Ecoforum Journal* 7, no. 1 (2018): 6.

brand.”³⁰ A positive brand image can be created by establishing a strong association of a brand with the memories of the consumer.³¹ The value of brand image varies depending upon the individual needs, social standing, personality, and value of the consumer.³²

The conceptual framework of brand image can be explained through brand concept management (BCM). According to this concept by Park et al., the image of every brand should be based on a brand concept which can be categorized into either of the two categories: symbolic or functional. While the symbolic brands meet the symbolic needs of the consumer through self-expression, prestige and honor, the functional brands meet fulfill the immediate needs of the consumer.³³ While Park et al. have stressed the importance of brand concept for creating the brand image of luxury brands, Okonkwo has considered brand image as a part of brand identity. He has defined brand image as “*consumer’s interpretation of brand personality*” whereas brand personality is “*the core personality traits and characteristics that have been consciously chosen for the brand*”.³⁴ As luxury brands are already perceived as “luxury”, it provides an edge in the image development process because brand do not have to rely on slogans to attract the consumers. However, despite the prestige, sophistication and exclusivity associated with all luxury brands, each luxury brand develops distinct personality traits as well that make them unique within the luxury sector as well, for example Burberry’s depiction of English lifestyle.³⁵

As the luxury brands seek symbolic consumers, their brand image does not only seek to set them apart from purely functional products, but also from other premium products which are not a luxury. Kapferer has argued that brand image sets a luxury item apart from other premium products which focus on product positioning. The concept of positioning relies on the unique selling proposition of a product which sets it apart from its competitors. However, the image of a

³⁰ Zhiqing Jiang, Shin’ya Nagasawa, and Junzo Watada, “Luxury Fashion Brand Image Building: The Role of Store Design in Bally and Tod’s Japan,” ed. Professor Kun-Huang Huarng and Professor Berlin Wu, *Management Decision* 52, no. 7 (January 1, 2014): 1288–1301, <https://doi.org/10.1108/MD-11-2012-0809>.

³¹ Kevin Lane Keller, “Brand Synthesis: The Multidimensionality of Brand Knowledge,” *Journal of Consumer Research* 29, no. 4 (2003): 595–600, <https://doi.org/10.1086/346254>.

³² Işoraitè, “Brand Image Development.”

³³ C. Park, Bernard Jaworski, and Deborah Macinnis, “Strategic Brand Concept-Image Management,” *Journal of Marketing* 50 (October 1, 1986): 135, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1251291>.

³⁴ U. Okonkwo, *Luxury Fashion Branding: Trends, Tactics, Techniques* (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2007), <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-230-59088-5>.

³⁵ Okonkwo.

luxury product does not rely on its positioning but is rather born out of itself making a statement through its creative product features. It does not require an acceptance of the general public as a niche but in fact, it targets the clients who value its identity and can look into the authenticity of the product without comparing it with others.³⁶ The luxury brands use brand image as an important element of their marketing campaigns on the basis of which an added premium is charged resulting in enormous wealth generation for the companies.³⁷ As luxury brands are consumed to develop certain social-standing, therefore, consumers prefer only those brands whose image matches with their desire to be associated with a particular social group.³⁸ Brand image also remains an important characteristic of luxury fashion brands which when combined with exclusivity and premium price makes them more appealing for symbolic consumers.³⁹

2.3 Role of Country-of-Origin in Luxury Fashion

The Country-of-Origin effect is the effect that country of origin of a brand or product have on the consumer's perception about the product, purchase decisions and the price that they will pay for it. Roth and Romeo have defined this CoO effect as “the overall perception consumers form of products from a particular country, based on their prior perception of the country's production and marketing strengths and weaknesses.”⁴⁰

The heritage of a luxury brand is often correlated to its country of origin.⁴¹ The Consumers associate products and brands to CoO regardless of the production location and therefore, it influences the consumers' perceptions through the beliefs and stereotypes that are held about the

³⁶ Kapferer and Bastien, “The Specificity of Luxury Management.”

³⁷ Yacine Ait-Sahalia, Jonathan A Parker, and Motohiro Yogo, “Luxury Goods and the Equity Premium,” *The Journal of Finance*, n.d., 46.

³⁸ Franck Vigneron and Lester Johnson, “Measuring Perceptions of Brand Luxury,” in *Advances in Luxury Brand Management* (Springer, 2017), 199–234, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-51127-6_10.; Jennifer Edson Escalas and James R. Bettman, “Self-Constraint, Reference Groups, and Brand Meaning,” *Journal of Consumer Research* 32, no. 3 (December 1, 2005): 378–89, <https://doi.org/10.1086/497549>.

³⁹ Jackson, “A Contemporary Analysis of Global Luxury Brands.”

⁴⁰ Martin S. Roth and Jean B. Romeo, “Matching Product Category and Country Image Perceptions: A Framework for Managing Country-Of-Origin Effects [Corrected Title: Matching Product Category and Country Image Perceptions: A Framework for Managing Country-Of-Origin Effects],” *Journal of International Business Studies* 23, no. 3 (1992): 477–97.

⁴¹ Fiorda and Moore, “The Anatomy of the Luxury Fashion Brand.”

products manufactured in a particular country.⁴² The dimensions that affect the perception of the consumers towards a country's production profile include design, manufacturing quality, craftsmanship and prestige associated with the local brands.⁴³

The next section of Geographies of Fashion will present the evidence that luxury fashion derives most of its value from its association with fashion capitals, therefore, it is important to know from which country a luxury fashion brand originates. The image of France and Italy as home to majority of luxury fashion brands is the outcome of the historic fashion development in these countries which has contributed to the heritage of fashion industry. Therefore, "Made in" labels from France and Italy are associated with high quality and intricate designs. In addition, the creative heritage and tradition of luxury craftsmanship throughout the history has intensified the prestigious image of these countries.⁴⁴ According to Steele, the "Made in Italy" phenomenon arose from *la dolce vita*, a 1960 comedy-drama film meaning "the sweet life", which presented the Italian places, products and images as a symbol of glamour in the world.⁴⁵

Fionda and Moore have identified authenticity of brand as an important facet of brand heritage.⁴⁶ The concept of authenticity of a luxury brand relates to being more meaningful to its consumers. Beverland has identified five values which reinforce the authenticity of the brand: craftsmanship, commitment to Country-of-Origin (CoO), stylistic consistency, quality management and connection to brand heritage.⁴⁷ De Fanti et al. have highlighted the use of the Country-of-Origin to safeguard the authenticity of the brand in the case of Gucci, an Italian luxury fashion and leather goods brand. In 2011, Gucci had promoted its country and city of origin (Florence, Italy) through the launch of Gucci Museum in Florence to celebrate its 90th anniversary. In addition to the Italian architecture of the museum representing the Florentine Heritage of the

⁴² Bruno Godey et al., "An International Perspective on Luxury Brand and Country of Origin Effect," March 1, 2009.

⁴³ Roth and Romeo, "Matching Product Category and Country Image Perceptions."

⁴⁴ José Antonio Miranda, "The Country-of-Origin Effect and the International Expansion of Spanish Fashion Companies, 1975–2015," *Business History* 62, no. 3 (April 2, 2020): 488–508, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00076791.2017.1374370>.

⁴⁵ Valerie Steele, *Fashion, Italian Style*, First edition. edition (New Haven ; London: Yale University Press, 2003).

⁴⁶ Fionda and Moore, "The Anatomy of the Luxury Fashion Brand."

⁴⁷ Michael B. Beverland, "Managing the Design Innovation–Brand Marketing Interface: Resolving the Tension between Artistic Creation and Commercial Imperatives*," *Journal of Product Innovation Management* 22, no. 2 (2005): 193–207, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0737-6782.2005.00114.x>.

brand, Gucci has also maintained local leather workshops to ensure the authenticity of Italian produced goods.⁴⁸

Geographic association of each luxury brand reflected in the brand name also plays a role in developing image of the brand.⁴⁹ As the brand name is the first element encountered by the consumers, luxury brands use names that reflect the founder of the brand or the major designer which automatically reflect the Country-of-Origin of the brand and therefore, the image associated with it.⁵⁰ For example, Salvatore Ferragamo Group, a high-end luxury goods retailer, has been named after the founder who was renowned for his innovative shoe designs. As Salvatore hailed from Bonito, Italy, the association of the Ferragamo Group with its Italian origin can be depicted through the name of the brand.⁵¹

Country-of-Origin influences the consumers' perceptions through the beliefs and stereotypes that are held about the products manufactured in a particular country.⁵² The dimensions that affect the perception of the consumers towards a country's production profile include design, manufacturing quality, craftsmanship and prestige associated with the local brands.⁵³ The relationship between the Country-of-Origin and brand image largely affects the consumer purchase intentions as the association of a particular brand to its perceived Country-of-Origin shapes the personality of the brand as defined by Okonkwo. However, it is pertinent to understand that the Country-of-Origin is only one of the important elements of brand image as Godey et al. found out that Country-of-Origin secures fifth position among the criteria for consumer's purchase of luxury items whereas, brand image remains the most important one. Therefore, while luxury items rely on their geographic association with the Country-of-Origin, the consumers' first instinct does not

⁴⁸ Mark DeFanti, Deirdre Bird, and Helen Cladwell, "Gucci's Use of a Borrowed Corporate Heritage to Establish a Global Luxury Brand," in *Proceedings of the 16th Biennial Conference on Historical Analysis and Research in Marketing (CHARM)*, CHARM Association, vol. 12 (LC Neilson (ed.), Varieties, Alternatives, and Deviations in Marketing History, Copenhagen, Denmark, 2013), 14–23, <https://go-gale-com.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/ps/i.do?p=EAIM&u=glasuni&id=GALE|A427423500&v=2.1&it=r&sid=summon>.

⁴⁹ Uché Okonkwo, "The Luxury Brand Strategy Challenge," *Journal of Brand Management* 16, no. 5 (March 1, 2009): 287–89, <https://doi.org/10.1057/bm.2008.53>.

⁵⁰ Zoran Krupka, Đurđana Ozretić Došen, and Jozo Previšić, "Impact of Perceived Brand Name Origin on Fashion Brand's Perceived Luxury," *Acta Polytechnica Hungarica* 11 (January 1, 2014): 153–66.

⁵¹ "The History," Salvatore Ferragamo Group, accessed June 13, 2020, <https://group.ferragamo.com/en/group/group-history>.

⁵² Godey et al., "An International Perspective on Luxury Brand and Country of Origin Effect."

⁵³ Roth and Romeo, "Matching Product Category and Country Image Perceptions."

opt for the Country-of-Origin as an independent criterion, in fact, it views the CoO as a part of brand image which remains the most important determinant of luxury purchases.⁵⁴

2.4 Geographies of Luxury Fashion

Today, industrial production is linked to a wide variety of locations which are part of the supply chain process. Historically, the trend of relocation of manufacturing activities was first observed from high wage areas to low wage areas which arose after World War II.⁵⁵ For example, the U.S textile industry was located in the high-wage Northeast area since 1950 but due to increasing wages in the North and improving infrastructure in the South, the industry gradually shifted to southern states. This relocation intensified during the second wave of globalization as developed countries largely reallocated the manufacturing to developing countries, especially China.⁵⁶ The trend of offshoring, the process through which businesses move their production or activities from one country to another country, arose around 1960s.⁵⁷ The value chains were created across the world by multinationals and were, sometimes, regionally clustered which led to the intra-firm and intra-industry trade with horizontal and vertical integration.⁵⁸

As supply chain processes of various luxury fashion brands involve multiple locations across the world, today, it is crucial to understand the symbolic creation of fashion spaces. The fashion capitals remain the most important fashion space with their ability to manage production spaces through a variety of economic and political actors. The current fashion capitals of the world which showcase the symbolic presence in fashion industry include London, Milan, Paris and New

⁵⁴ Godey et al., “Brand and Country-of-Origin Effect on Consumers’ Decision to Purchase Luxury Products.”

⁵⁵ P. Collier, “The New Wave of Globalization and Its Economic Effects,” in *Globalization, Growth and Poverty: Building an Inclusive World Economy* (World Bank, 2002), 23–51, http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/954071468778196576/310436360_20050007015044/additional/multi0page.pdf.

⁵⁶ Abel M. Mateus, “Development Theory and Globalization, the Second Wave: A Reinterpretation,” SSRN Scholarly Paper (Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network, June 2, 2014), <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2444601>.

⁵⁷ U. S. Government Accountability Office, “Offshoring: U.S. Semiconductor and Software Industries Increasingly Produce in China and India,” no. GAO-06-423 (September 7, 2006), <https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-06-423>.

⁵⁸ Mateus, “Development Theory and Globalization, the Second Wave.”

York. While a formal definition of fashion capitals does not exist, Godart has defined them as: “the existence of ‘Fashion Week’ shows that are routinely covered by major international fashion magazines.”⁵⁹ As it is difficult for any ordinary city to produce fashion weeks that will gather sustained audience attention, not only the shows have been restricted to fashion capitals but also the designers who exhibit their collections through these shows.⁶⁰

The fashion capitals serve as corporate headquarters for the luxury items and the mobilization of stakeholders around these areas which give them the privileged power to be the capitals of fashion world. The *Quadrilatero d’ Oro* (Gold Rectangle) of Milan is a real-life demonstration of association of luxury goods to the fashion capitals. These retail headquarters consist of high-end fashion, jewellery and accessories stores and is exclusively targeted at elites of the world. This area is less functional than other public shopping districts as it stands above the affordability of an average income earner. The exquisite windows and interior of the huge showrooms develop the symbolic essence of a luxury fashion space in this district. The narrow streets of the district exhibit exclusivity which is further complemented by the two-story structure of almost every fashion boutique in this area. The ground floor contains windows that display the novelty of products housed inside the store and attract the shoppers whereas the other floor hosts a showroom to cater the high-profile consumers.⁶¹

As the cities from all over the world compete for global attention, the new fashion cities have also slowly emerged to be the legacy holders of symbolic fashion production.⁶² While the new fashion cities are less significant than fashion capitals, the former relies on fashion weeks for their identity development through the fashionalisation process. The fashionalisation process involves the use of fashion weeks to achieve institutional goals such as city branding as a part of urban development.⁶³ As fashion weeks are considered as distinctive events contributing to symbolic value of fashion production, they have been used as a branding technique to create an

⁵⁹ Frédéric Godart, “The Power Structure of the Fashion Industry: Fashion Capitals, Globalization and Creativity,” *International Journal of Fashion Studies* 1, no. 1 (n.d.): 39–55.

⁶⁰ Godart.

⁶¹ Johan Jansson and Dominic Power, “Fashioning a Global City: Global City Brand Channels in the Fashion and Design Industries,” *Regional Studies* 44 (August 1, 2010): 889–904, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00343400903401584>.

⁶² Saskia Sassen, “The Global City: Introducing a Concept,” *The Global City*, no. 2 (2005): 18.

⁶³ Wessie Ling, “‘Fashionalisation’: Why So Many Cities Host Fashion Weeks,” *Fashion Capital: Style Economies, Sites and Cultures*, April 29, 2012, 83–95, https://doi.org/10.1163/9781848881433_006.

identity of the city in the global market. While the fashion weeks and other fashion events may not add to the local fashion production, they serve as a branding tool to make the cities fashion capitals of the world.⁶⁴

The spaces of luxury fashion are not restricted to the symbolic expression of the brand and therefore, display the materialization of fashion as well. Flagship stores exhibit brand philosophy by creating an experience for the consumers to understand the image and personality of the luxury fashion brand.⁶⁵ They also showcase the story of the brand under one roof by offering a novel consumption experience which is complimented by mansion-like showrooms and fine architecture.⁶⁶ Often referred as “brand cathedral”, the flagship stores serve as an important site for consumption of luxury fashion.⁶⁷ In addition, flagship stores are put in fashion landscapes to have a communicative demonstration of the image of the brand. As consumers interact with the personality of the brand, it results in increased brand awareness and marketing communication of the brand.⁶⁸

The outsourcing of production due to globalization has resulted in the addition of offshore locations to the geographies of luxury production. However, the production places involved in the supply chain processes of luxury fashion do not always receive due acknowledgement which results in dissociation of geographical locations.⁶⁹ Gucci, a luxury fashion brand, which highly values its Italian heritage has outsourced its production to Vietnam, Romania and Turkey and has held complex supply chains since 1990s. Nebahat Tokatli, a researcher of economic geography in retail and fashion, has argued that Gucci has subtly shifted its marketing message from the places and processes of production towards the appealing consumption of their products and has

⁶⁴ Jess Berry, ed., *Fashion Capital: Style Economies, Sites and Cultures*, First edition (Oxford, United Kingdom: Inter-Disciplinary.Net, 2012).

⁶⁵ Jackson, “A Contemporary Analysis of Global Luxury Brands.”

⁶⁶ Karinna Nobbs, Christopher M. Moore, and Mandy Sheridan, “The Flagship Format within the Luxury Fashion Market,” ed. Stephen M. Wigley and Pammi Sinha, *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management* 40, no. 12 (January 1, 2012): 920–34, <https://doi.org/10.1108/09590551211274928>.

⁶⁷ Marie-Cécile Cervellon and Rachael Coudriet, “Brand Social Power in Luxury Retail: Manifestations of Brand Dominance over Clients in the Store,” *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management* 41 (January 1, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJRDM-01-2013-0016>.

⁶⁸ Christopher Moore and A.M. Doherty, “The International Flagship Stores of Luxury Fashion Retailers,” *Fashion Marketing: Contemporary Issues*, January 1, 2007, 277–96.

⁶⁹ Jansson and Power, “Fashioning a Global City.”

successfully concealed its production processes.⁷⁰ Louis Crewe, a professor of human geography, has presented a similar argument for Gucci that the brand has blurred the places involved in manufacturing by creating its luxurious brand image through identification of retail stores as an important geographic association of the brand.⁷¹ The reasons behind involvement of some luxury brands in similar practices may include poor environmental management, unethical labor practices, irresponsible purchasing practices or simply to maintain the exclusivity and value of high-end fashion brand such as Gucci.⁷² Hermes, a high-end French brand, obtains its animal skins from supply sites in developing countries such as Zimbabwe and has them shipped to the France to be used for the manufacturing of handbags.⁷⁴ Prada, an Italian fashion giant, also outsources the manufacturing of its handbags to Russia, Vietnam and China.⁷⁵ However, the products are sold as “Made in France” and “Made in Italy” respectively. Karpik has called it as a “strategy of super-commodity fetishism” as brands geographically dissociate themselves from the origins of raw materials and production used for the luxury fashion items.⁷⁶ Since so many brands try to obfuscate the various aspects related to the origins of their products, transparency on this issue can be a unique and effective way to establish a positive brand image in terms of quality and social consciousness.

⁷⁰ Nebahat Tokatli, “Doing a Gucci: The Transformation of an Italian Fashion Firm into a Global Powerhouse in a ‘Los Angeles-Izing’ World,” *Journal of Economic Geography* 13, no. 2 (March 1, 2013): 239–55, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jeg/lbs050>.

⁷¹ Louise Crewe, “Placing Fashion: Art, Space, Display and the Building of Luxury Fashion Markets through Retail Design,” *Progress in Human Geography*, May 3, 2015, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132515580815>.

⁷² Baptist World Aid Australia, “The 2019 Ethical Fashion Report,” April 2019, https://www.business-humanrights.org/sites/default/files/documents/FashionReport_2019_9-April-19-FINAL.pdf.

⁷³ L. Crewe and Amber Martin-Woodhead, “Looking at Luxury: Consuming Luxury Fashion in Global Cities,” *Handbook on Wealth and the Super-Rich*, 2016, 322–38.

⁷⁴ “Exposed: Crocodiles and Alligators Factory-Farmed for Hermes ‘Luxury’ Goods,” accessed June 13, 2020, <https://investigations.peta.org/crocodile-alligator-slaughter-hermes/>.

⁷⁵ Nebahat Tokatli, “‘Made in Italy? Who Cares!’ Prada’s New Economic Geography,” *Geoforum* 54 (July 1, 2014): 1–9, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2014.03.005>.

⁷⁶ *Valuing the Unique*, 2010, <https://press.princeton.edu/books/paperback/9780691137100/valuing-the-unique>.

2.5 Traceability

The origin of the concept of traceability goes back to the 1930s when some European countries aimed to prove the origin of high-quality food products such as French champagne to consumers and public sector.⁷⁷ The French government bureau *Institut national de l'origine et de la qualité* (INAO) is a public institution that identifies the origin and quality of the food products such as wines, cheeses and other agricultural product. It provides *appellation d'origine contrôlée* certification that protects the geographic origin of the products under the concept of ‘*terroir*’.⁷⁸ Terroir relates to the environmental factors that create the unique ecosystem for the growth of a specific crop. As the supply chains expanded geographically during 1990s, global standards were developed which linked traceability with the Supply Chain Management (SCM) as an essential tool for Total Quality Management (TQM) and recognized its important role as a key strategic element for managing uncertainty in complex global supply chains.⁷⁹

In 1994, traceability was first defined by the Quality Management Systems the of International Organization for Standards ISO 8402.⁸⁰ With the modification of ISO standards in 2015, traceability has been defined under ISO 9000 as “*the ability to trace the history, application or location of that which is under consideration*”.⁸¹ According to this definition, traceability relates to the origin of materials used for production and processing history across the supply chain till the distribution and final delivery of the product. The “history” element of the traceability focuses on mapping the journey of the product. Richard Blackburn has explained the definition of traceability through an example of a cotton shirt. In production of a cotton shirt, the information

⁷⁷ Asian Development Bank, *Food Safety and ICT Traceability Systems: Lessons from Japan for Developing Countries* (Asian Development Bank, 2009), <https://www.adb.org/publications/food-safety-and-ict-traceability-systems-lessons-japan-developing-countries>.

⁷⁸ “L’institut,” Institut national de l’origine et de la qualité | INAO, accessed July 26, 2020, <https://www.inao.gouv.fr/>.

⁷⁹ M.J. Cheng and J.E.L. Simmons, “Traceability in Manufacturing Systems,” *International Journal of Operations & Production Management* 14, no. 10 (January 1, 1994): 4–16, <https://doi.org/10.1108/01443579410067199>.; Sofia Garcia-Torres et al., “Traceability for Sustainability – Literature Review and Conceptual Framework,” *Supply Chain Management: An International Journal* 24, no. 1 (January 1, 2019): 85–106, <https://doi.org/10.1108/SCM-04-2018-0152>.

⁸⁰ “‘Traceability’ Quality Management and Quality Assurance — Vocabulary,” ISO 8402:1994, accessed June 13, 2020, <https://www.iso.org/cms/render/live/en/sites/isoorg/contents/data/standard/02/01/20115.html>.

⁸¹ “‘Traceability’ Quality Management Systems — Fundamentals and Vocabulary,” ISO 9000:2015(en), accessed June 13, 2020, <https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/fr/#iso:std:iso:9000:ed-4:v1:en:term:3.6.13>.

about production of cotton as raw material, making of fabric, sewing, labeling, buttons, packaging, shipping, retail and environmental and social impact of all of these manufacturing processes identify the history of the cotton shirt through the supply chain.⁸² Therefore, traceability relates to the availability of transparent history of the production processes.

2.5.1 The Role of Traceability in Sustainable Production

The United Nations (UN) has also recognized the importance of traceability for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Agenda 2030. SDG 12 (Ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns) aims to promote responsible consumption and production through transparency of supply chains in order to develop sustainable business ecosystems for the future.⁸³ Similarly, SDG 8 (Sustainable economic growth and provision of decent work) has been designed to foster social sustainability through decent work and economic growth. It stresses upon the occupational health and safety and working conditions of the labor employed in the informal sector.⁸⁴ This sustainability orientation towards traceability has been summed up in United Nation's Global Compact's definition of traceability: "The ability to identify and trace the history, distribution, location and application of products, parts and materials, to ensure the reliability of sustainability claims, in the areas of human rights, labor (including health and safety), the environment and anti-corruption."⁸⁵

With the recognition of sustainability as a global goal, the environmental and social impact of products and services have become a major concern of business stakeholders and customers. Businesses face the continuous pressure from consumers, public watchdog organizations and

⁸² Richard Blackburn, ed., *Sustainable Apparel: Production, Processing and Recycling*, 1 edition (Waltham, MA: Woodhead Publishing, 2015).

⁸³ "Goal 12 .: Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform," Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platform, accessed June 13, 2020, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg12>.

⁸⁴ "Goal 8 .: Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform," Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platform, accessed June 13, 2020, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg8>.

⁸⁵ "A Guide to Traceability: A Practical Approach to Advance Sustainability in Global Supply Chains | UN Global Compact," accessed June 13, 2020, <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/library/791>.; *The UN Global Compact is the world's largest corporate sustainability initiative which calls companies to align strategies and operations with universal principles on human rights, labor, environment and anti-corruption, and take actions that advance societal goals.* (<https://www.unglobalcompact.org>)

governments to become more transparent towards social and environmental aspects of their production procedures. Closs et al. have suggested effective implementation of sustainable strategies can result in high profits caused by operation efficiency (reduction in global waste), sustainable communities through provision of decent work (similar to SDG 8), and long-term viability due to decreased dependence on scarce environmental resources such as water. Therefore, the effective management of *triple bottom line*, which is a sustainability framework focusing on the social, environmental, and economic impact of a business, will not only increase the profitability but it will also enhance shareholder value through the availability of transparent information and traceable supply chain processes.⁸⁶

2.5.2 Traceability and Sustainable Production in Luxury Fashion

Being an industry with global roots and geographical links, the fashion industry has also provoked concerns about environmental policies and product and labor safety. The biggest societal challenge of the textile sector lies in the opaque supply network and unknown actors involved at various stages of clothing production.⁸⁷ Therefore, traceability as an important process of supply chain management aims for the cohesion of all actors involved in the process to meet the goal of sustainability.⁸⁸

Historically, the structure of the fashion industry was based on *haute couture*. This was challenged with the arrival of a large number of competitors in the industry due to globalization.⁸⁹ The new model for the fashion industry was built on the idea of mass consumption which

⁸⁶ John Elkington, “25 Years Ago I Coined the Phrase ‘Triple Bottom Line.’ Here’s Why It’s Time to Rethink It.,” *Harvard Business Review*, June 25, 2018, <https://hbr.org/2018/06/25-years-ago-i-coined-the-phrase-triple-bottom-line-heres-why-im-giving-up-on-it.>; David Closs, Cheri Speier, and Nathan Meacham, “Sustainability to Support End-to-End Value Chains: The Role of Supply Chain Management,” *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* 39 (February 1, 2011): 101–16, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-010-0207-4>.

⁸⁷ Vijay Kumar, “Exploring Fully Integrated Textile Tags and Information Systems for Implementing Traceability in Textile Supply Chains,” n.d., 228.

⁸⁸ Karan Khurana and Marco Ricchetti, “Two Decades of Sustainable Supply Chain Management in the Fashion Business, an Appraisal,” *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management* 20, no. 1 (January 1, 2016): 89–104, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JFMM-05-2015-0040>.

⁸⁹ Marie-Laure Djelic and Antti Ainamo, “The Coevolution of New Organizational Forms in the Fashion Industry: A Historical and Comparative Study of France, Italy, and the United States,” *Organization Science - ORGAN SCI* 10 (October 1, 1999): 622–37, <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.10.5.622>.

transformed the trendy designs into affordable clothing articles which had a shorter store life than luxury clothing items.⁹⁰ Today, this new model is widely recognized as “quick fashion” or “fast fashion” which is characterized by low-cost production (mostly outsourced) with shorter lead times and high buyer orientation.⁹¹ However, the outsourced low-cost production has faced major ethical concerns after the Rana Plaza incident in Bangladesh in 2013 which killed 1127 people involved in precarious work of fast fashion items production.⁹² Hence, traceability has emerged as a vital tool to foster the sustainable apparel production through scrutiny of social and environmental issues faced during production processes.⁹³

Similar to fast fashion, luxury fashion has also observed the concerns of ethical production and environmental responsibility. Therefore, the changing social norms and consumer expectations have led to the rise of sustainability in luxury fashion.⁹⁴ Stella McCartney launched the first sustainable luxury brand in 2001 in a joint venture with Kering.⁹⁵ She has preached sustainability by using organic materials, faux leather, vegetarian leather and by going fur-free along with other materials and innovations.⁹⁶ In July 2019, she was joined by LVMH which highlights the increasing orientation of luxury brands towards growth through sustainable practices.⁹⁷ Prior to LVMH x Stella McCartney collaboration, LVMH also launched its LIFE

⁹⁰ Donald Sull and Stefano Turconi, “Fast Fashion Lessons,” *Business Strategy Review* 19, no. 2 (2008): 4–11, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8616.2008.00527.x>.

⁹¹ Peter Doeringer and Sarah Crean, “Can Fast Fashion Save the US Apparel Industry?,” *Socio-Economic Review* 4, no. 3 (September 1, 2006): 353–77, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ser/mwl014>; David Tyler, Jo Heeley, and Tracy Bhamra, “Supply Chain Influences on New Product Development in Fashion Clothing,” ed. Liz Barnes and Gaynor Lea-Greenwood, *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal* 10, no. 3 (January 1, 2006): 316–28, <https://doi.org/10.1108/13612020610679295>.

⁹² Ian M. Taplin, “Who Is to Blame? A Re-Examination of Fast Fashion after the 2013 Factory Disaster in Bangladesh,” *Critical Perspectives on International Business* 10, no. 1/2 (January 1, 2014): 72–83, <https://doi.org/10.1108/cpoib-09-2013-0035>.

⁹³ Annamma Joy and Camilo Peña, “Sustainability and the Fashion Industry: Conceptualizing Nature and Traceability,” in *Sustainability in Fashion: A Cradle to Upcycle Approach*, 2017, 31–54, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-51253-2_3.

⁹⁴ Andrew Winston, “Luxury Brands Can No Longer Ignore Sustainability,” *Harvard Business Review*, February 8, 2016, <https://hbr.org/2016/02/luxury-brands-can-no-longer-ignore-sustainability>.

⁹⁵ “Sustainability Timeline,” Stella McCartney, accessed June 13, 2020, <https://www.stellamccartney.com/experience/en/sustainability/sustainability-timeline/>.

⁹⁶ “Sustainability,” Stella McCartney, accessed June 13, 2020, <https://www.stellamccartney.com/experience/en/sustainability/>.

⁹⁷ “LIFE - Initiative LVMH,” LVMH, accessed June 13, 2020, <https://www.lvmh.com/group/lvmh-commitments/social-environmental-responsibility/life-initiative-lvmh/>.

(LVMH Initiatives for the Environment) program in 2012 to launch innovative environmental management tools which are being used across the supply chain.⁹⁸ However, soon after the launch of the LIFE program, Louis Vuitton's footwear articles were found to have the highest concentration of hazardous chemicals as compared to eight other clothing brands studied for Nonylphenol ethoxylates (NPEs). The brand was found to be contributing to water pollution and hormone disruption in individuals.⁹⁹ LVMH had made an attempt to justify its greenwashing effort by recognizing hazardous abilities as an intrinsic property of chemical. However, the brand failed to hide its opaque supply chain processes. Therefore, traceability and transparency remain crucial not only as a part of a marketing message but also to enact the sustainable practices in luxury fashion.

The traceability in the luxury fashion seeks to provide full information on the sustainable (environmental and social) execution of supply chain processes. Transparency of information and awareness of customers provide a competitive advantage to the brands by strengthening consumer's confidence and building a strong brand image.¹⁰⁰ Another important advantage of traceability in luxury fashion is a reduction in counterfeit products. As the rise of e-commerce has been accompanied by an increase in fraudulent products, traceability technology helps protect the brands from unfair competition. The blockchain technology is commonly used for the traceability by the brands as it records the information at each step of the value chain including date of action and the stakeholders involved. In order to integrate all actors involved in the supply chain process, the block chain extends from the origin of raw materials to the end consumer. It assigns digital "tokens" for the goods and documentation passing from one actor to another.¹⁰¹ The token contains the digital history of the item from the country of origin of raw materials. QR codes are an example of blockchain traceability application which allow the customers to scan the code on the mobile

⁹⁸ Laura Macchion, Andrea Furlan, and Andrea Vinelli, "The Implementation of Traceability in Fashion Networks," 2017, 86–96, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-65151-4_8.

⁹⁹ Kevin Brigden et al., "Hazardous Chemicals in Branded Luxury Textile Products on Sale during 2013," n.d., 32.

¹⁰⁰ Ling Li, "Technology Designed to Combat Fakes in the Global Supply Chain," *Business Horizons*, Special Issue: Protecting Your Intellectual Property Rights, 56, no. 2 (March 1, 2013): 167–77, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2012.11.010>.

¹⁰¹ Kristoffer Francisco and David Swanson, "The Supply Chain Has No Clothes: Technology Adoption of Blockchain for Supply Chain Transparency," *Logistics* 2, no. 1 (March 2018): 2, <https://doi.org/10.3390/logistics2010002>.

phones and view information and images of the product's production chain.¹⁰² The information received through this process is secure and reliable, as this technology does not allow any entity or group of entities to change the information within blockchain. Therefore, it reinforces the trust among the customers while simultaneously acknowledging the suppliers of the brands present at various locations across the globe.¹⁰³ However, the side-effects of this technology with respect to the customer's traceability with a QR code on the possessed item has as yet not been explored. Furthermore, while the luxury fashion brands can claim to have a technologically advanced traceability scheme, the brand is not obliged to disclose the traceable information to the end consumer. Therefore, there exists ample opportunity for misrepresentation if all stakeholders do not receive equal access the supply chain information.

2.5.3 Traceability and Geography

Traceability has also emerged as a tool for gaining market power due to its ability to identify the geographic locations involved in supply chain process. Traceability has been deemed significant when it links the product to a specific country of origin. For example, if an industrial producer or a brand from a specific country is renowned for its abilities in certain product sector or category, it can provide competitive advantage to the company. The recognition of Country-of-Origin during traceability process can create positive or negative perceptions led by stereotypes associated with a particular product from a specific country.¹⁰⁴ The association to Country-of-Origin in consumer's mind is significant in luxury products as major luxury brands are concentrated in few countries.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, in consumer's mind, the luxury fashion industry is identified with certain countries and cities, and provenance information is used to gain the bigger market share.

¹⁰² Kumar, "Exploring Fully Integrated Textile Tags and Information Systems for Implementing Traceability in Textile Supply Chains."

¹⁰³ Tarun Agrawal, Ajay Sharma, and Vijay Kumar, "Blockchain-Based Secured Traceability System for Textile and Clothing Supply Chain," 2018, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-0080-6_10.

¹⁰⁴ Paul Chao, "Partitioning Country of Origin Effects: Consumer Evaluations of a Hybrid Product," *Journal of International Business Studies* 24 (June 1, 1993): 291–306, <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.jibs.8490851>.

¹⁰⁵ Jackson, "A Contemporary Analysis of Global Luxury Brands."

Traceability plays a vital role in the recognition of the complex relationship among spaces through which a luxurious commodity travels during its creation, transformation and consumption phases. As luxury fashion brands identify themselves with their Country-of-Origin, which are mostly distinct fashion hubs with marked geographical boundaries, it results in a dissociation from the geographical origins of production. Due to the focus of industry in wealth generative countries and the power position of global brands, the desire and value of prestigious goods and high revenues take control over the other spaces involved in supply chain processes. The acknowledgement of places of production due to the traceability phenomenon thus helps reduce the unequal global geographies of the luxury fashion industry.¹⁰⁶

Based on the literature studied above, it has been established that Country-of-Origin is an important element for the purchase of luxury fashion items when represented through brand heritage and brand image. It may not create a strong impact individually but contributes in shaping the perception of brand in the consumer's mind based on the prevailing reputation and stereotypes associated with products of a particular country. Therefore, a brand originating from the countries with a prestigious fashion history may find it easy to attract a large customer base. But, as luxury brands have relied mostly on a single geographic association in the past, the neglect towards acknowledging the places of production has resulted in geographical dissociation of the brands. The places of production include both the original location of the production or extraction of raw materials and the places where the manufacturing process takes place for each brand. The literature has identified that the places of production may not hold an image as valuable as Country-of-Origin, which results in this dissociation from geography of production. In addition, the offshoring of manufacturing processes is also pursued in order to take advantage of varying regulatory frameworks in different locations which can allow dissociative work at lower costs. However, with the rise in discussion on transparency of supply chain processes in luxury fashion, brands are now oriented towards relaunching themselves as traceable brands.

¹⁰⁶ Crewe, "Fast Fashion, Global Spaces, and Bio-Commodification."

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This thesis uses a qualitative approach combined with an applied case study research method. The analysis is based on comparative case studies as they have helped to understand the similarities, differences, and patterns in the traceability phenomenon of the selected luxury fashion brands. Two analysis techniques; narrative analysis and discourse analysis were considered for the qualitative data gained for this research. The discourse analysis approach focuses on the analyzing the written and spoken communication to understand the deep-rooted meaning conveyed through language. The discourse analysis requires digitizing the tabulating the data in the form of key words and examines the frequent occurrences to interpret the discourses. However, since the two case studies considered for this research share different stories of traceability, tabulating the data as generalized keywords did not seem feasible.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, narrative analysis has been chosen because it provides a thorough understanding in the form of stories. The generalization of thinking and actions through narrative building has helped to study two different cases of traceability in luxury fashion without restricting the scope of understanding to the tabulated key words.

In order to understand the geographical association of luxury fashion brands and the consequent effect of traceability on the brand image and identity heritage in the consumer market, the sample constituted of two luxury fashion brands. The sample size was restricted to two brands only because a larger sample size posed the risk of large chunks of information that could not have been analyzed effectively within the time frame of this research. The brands were selected on the basis of three major selection criteria. First, the brand had to be associated with the luxury fashion segment. Second, each brand must have been in existence since 19th century, as for the purpose of this study it is crucial to understand the historic roots and heritage of each brand. Third, the brand must have introduced traceability scheme at some point of time, since its presence till the beginning of this thesis. The second selection criterion was also intended to complement the third selection criterion as the time frame has aided the understanding of development of traceability patterns over

¹⁰⁷ Mariana Souto-Manning, "Critical Narrative Analysis: The Interplay of Critical Discourse and Narrative Analyses," *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 27, no. 2 (February 7, 2014): 159–80, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2012.737046>.

the years and its impact on brand heritage and brand image. Therefore, two of the brands that fit these criteria are Dormeuil and Harris Tweed which were used as case studies for this research. Dormeuil and Harris Tweed are two heritage brands with the image of fine quality fabrics in luxury fashion industry but share stark differences in their traceability schemes, they present an interesting comparison to explore the impact of traceability on redevelopment of brand image and brand heritage.

3.2 Case Studies: Dormeuil and Harris Tweed

In 1842, Dormeuil was created in France as a fine luxury clothing business. Jules Dormeuil, the founder of Dormeuil, based his business on importing English cloth to France. In 1871, Dormeuil opened its first boutique outside France which was based in the renowned tailoring district, New Burlington Street, of London. By 1907, the brand had crossed borders to Asia and the United States as well. With the continuous diversification in brand's portfolio and expansion of production functions, Dormeuil had reached Australia by 1990. In addition to the geographic expansion of boutiques, the brand has focused on innovation in improving the quality of its cloth partly, this is done through the application of new techniques and partly through the use of new or better-quality raw materials. In order to obtain high quality wool, taking care of sheep and management of land where the herd is raised are considered of utmost importance. The spinning and finishing processes take place in manufacturing facility of the company in Leeds, UK resulting in the fabric sold under 'Made in England' label. Dormeuil claims to be involved in sustainable production practices since the early years of the company, however its first Green policy document surfaced only in 2008.¹⁰⁸ In order to promote itself as traceable brand with ethical production practices, Dormeuil has recently launched its QR code-based traceability scheme in 2019. The company states that it believes that traceability approach will show their genuine commitment to animal welfare, an efficient use of resources and the best possible working conditions for the craftsmen.¹⁰⁹

Harris Tweed, a luxury brand from Scotland, dates back to 1846 when the weavers of Harris replicated the family tartan of Catherine Murray, Countess of Dunmore and the widow of

¹⁰⁸ "History - Dormeuil," accessed June 12, 2020, <https://www.dormeuil.com/en/heritage/history/>.

¹⁰⁹ "Dormeuil Sustainability," accessed June 12, 2020, <https://content.jwplatform.com/previews/yMebsvHI-QUuJVFES>.

the Earl of Harris, in tweed. After the death of Earl of Dunmore, the Duchess made several trips to London to settle his estate and took some of the woven cloth from local peasants to raise money for them. This was followed by the funding of two local girls to go to Paisley, a town nearby Glasgow, to learn the art of spinning and weaving and bring it back home to cascade that knowledge to fellow Islanders. The gain of spinning and weaving skills among local people laid down the foundation of Harris Tweed Industry followed by the formation of the Harris Tweed Association in 1906. Harris Tweed Association was a voluntary body which was formed to protect the Orb Mark and regulate the cloth produced under the name of Harris Tweed. As Tweed became popular in elite circles, the inspection and stamp certification procedures of Tweed were discussed in 1906 to tackle the counterfeit products which posed a threat to perceived quality and genuineness of the Harris Tweed cloth. The trademarks were applied for in 1909 and the stamping of tweed under the name “Harris Tweed” had begun in 1911. In 1993, the Harris Tweed Association was replaced by Harris Tweed Authority and an Act was passed to specify the definition of Harris Tweed and to prevent the sale of any material which does not match the given definition. This Act was named as Harris Tweed Act 1993 which is a comprehensive document that acknowledges as well as restricts the geographical association as well as supply chain processes of Harris Tweed production to the standards defined in the document. According to this, Harris Tweed cloth must be a) produced in Outer Hebrides, Scotland b) handwoven by the weaver at home, and c) made from 100% pure virgin wool from Scotland.¹¹⁰

The choice of both brands represents some similarities and differences which will be the foundation of this research analysis. The origin of Dormeuil and Harris Tweed is more than 150 years old. Both of the brands have relied heavily on brand heritage for creation of value, trust, and authenticity among consumers. In addition, both brands have enjoyed good brand image among consumers due to their reportedly fine product quality which was created through specific production processes at specific locations such as England for Dormeuil and Outer Hebrides for Harris Tweed. Therefore, geographic association has remained quintessential to the success of both brands in the consumer market.

¹¹⁰ “Our History,” The Harris Tweed Authority, accessed June 12, 2020, <https://www.harristweed.org/our-history/>.

While both of the brands are currently represented as traceable, the difference lies in the origin of traceability in both companies. Harris Tweed from Scotland is an inherently traceable luxury brand as its production activities and their geographic locations have been clearly identified since the early years of the brand. Currently, Harris Tweed products contain an Orb Mark which is the oldest certification mark of United Kingdom. It certifies that the wool for Harris Tweed is collected from the Isles of Scotland, the wool is handwoven by the weavers in their homes and spun and processed at the manufacturing facilities of Harris Tweed mills in Scotland.¹¹¹ Therefore, the Orb Mark on Harris Tweed states “Handwoven in Outer Hebrides”. On the contrary, even though most of DORMEUIL products inscribed a “Made in England” label since the 19th century, there was a lack of complete traceability of geographical locations and supply chain processes. A huge focus of the company advertisements remained on the British quality products that were produced in the manufacturing facilities located in Yorkshire, but the information of some other supply chain processes remained missing. However, in 2019, DORMEUIL has launched its blockchain traceability scheme which provides complete traceability information of certain DORMEUIL fabrics to the customers. With end-to-end encryption, the customers can view the production process from the sheep to the fabric. However, the level of information shared varies depending on the type of the customer (*further discussed in chap 4.2 DORMEUIL findings*).

3.3 Data Collection

This research is based on primary as well as secondary data sources. It is important to mention here that during the data collection time period of this thesis, March – May 2020, the world was hit by global pandemic COVID-19 which has severely impacted the whole world in multiple ways. From health to economics and politics, all human beings have been facing challenges in terms of their physical and emotional well-being. Most parts of the world underwent locked down during the third week of March 2020 and currently, most parts of the world are still under some kind of lockdown. Therefore, COVID-19 has been the major challenge during the data collection procedure of this research. As many businesses and individuals have been working from home due to the required practice of social distancing, not all targeted data collection sources were accessible.

¹¹¹ Kapferer and Bastien, “The Specificity of Luxury Management.”

The global pandemic has restricted the ability to travel or even leave home for the data collection and physical archives have become inaccessible. In addition, many individuals could not be reached due to health crisis, poor emotional well-being, lack of willingness to use modern technology (online meetings etc) for interviews, and chaotic situation for survival, especially for small businesses.

The primary data has been collected through the interviews and the interviewees included the organizational representatives and agents of Harris Tweed Authority (HTA) and Dormeuil. The interviews allowed the respondents to share their experience of working with each brand and their knowledge of traceability practices. The interviews were conducted remotely so as to conform to the government’s mandated rules on social distancing due to the global pandemic. In total, the author was successful in arranging four remote interviews. Table 1 shows the details of each interview conducted.

Interviewee	Organization/ Affiliation	Position Held	Interview Medium	Approx. Interview Duration
Lorna Macaulay	Harris Tweed Authority	CEO	Online/ Skype	57m 17s
Mik Chung	Harris Tweed – South Korea	Agent	Written via Email	N/A
Alda Roque	Dormeuil	Director Operations	Online/ Skype	57m
Roel Wolbrink	New Tailor – Dormeuil	Sales Agent in The Netherlands	Online/ Skype	55m 18s

Table 1: Interviews

The interviewees were selected on the basis of their role in each brand’s supply chain process and therefore, their connection to the traceability process. While the upper management of each brand is involved in strategy formulation for traceability scheme, the weavers and mills

experience the consequences of the traceability scheme during the supply chain process in the form of sustainable production, labor ethics and acknowledgement of their contribution to the final product. Furthermore, as brands position themselves in the luxury market, agents of each brand ensure the accessibility of the products of each brand to the customers. Therefore, they provide a useful link to understanding the role of brand heritage in launch of traceability practices and redevelopment of brand image. Most interviews lasted for over 50 minutes and were recorded with the permission of the interviewees.

The interviews were arranged as both structured and semi-structured for the purpose of this research. A standard interview guide was not developed for the interviews; however, four online interviews were semi-structured so as to allow space for probing any relevant interesting detail that may arise during the discussion. The initial questions about a respondent's history and experience with the brand, brand heritage and production networks were meant to guide the respondent to storytelling about historic changes in the acknowledgement of geographic association of each brand and the use of this traceable information for redevelopment of brand image and brand heritage. As each respondent held a different role in the supply chain process of each brand, the interview questions were customized for each interview. The focus of interviews of senior management of each brand remained on the motivation behind the launch of traceability scheme whereas the questions for brands' agents enquired more about the advertisement and use of the traceability scheme in the consumer market. Only one of the respondents could not participate in an online interview as he was dealing with the chaotic Coronavirus situation in South Korea, a structured interview guide was prepared for him in order to receive a written response to the questions.

Due to limited availability of interviews, this thesis has in large part also been based on digital networking sites as they have become an important point of contact between brands and the consumer. Social media accounts, especially Instagram, Pinterest and Twitter, were explored for any relevant images, text or a combination of both that may help to understand the changes in brand image and brand heritage of both brands due to the evolution of traceability phenomenon in luxury fashion. In addition, advertised content and/or any published materials from the past which depict the possible links of each brand to their producers or production sites are used to analyze the "brand image" and "brand heritage" variables of the research. The magazine archives of Royal

Library of Netherlands (*Koninklijke Bibliotheek*) and Bloomsbury Fashion Central were used to find the advertisements of Harris Tweed and Dormeuil from the 19th century onward.

In order to compliment the findings from primary data as well as to avoid the unidimensional analysis, it was pertinent to obtain the secondary data. The “traceability” aspect of research was sourced through strategic documents such as company sustainability policy and environmental policy which were obtained from online resources such as company website. In addition, some interviewees had also provided a few support documents which included user guide for traceability technology and guidebook for picking the right wool for luxury cloth.¹¹² However, as most of the company documents were stored in physical archives, they could not be obtained due to travel restrictions. Therefore, already published literature on each brand was utilized for the analysis. The already existing literature (books, articles and so on) from the past have also been used to trace any factors that may have served as the driving force behind strengthening the traceability approach by Dormeuil or Harris Tweed.

4. Findings

4.1 Harris Tweed

The geographical association of Harris Tweed with the Outer Hebrides in Scotland dates back to the origin of the industry. However, in 1993, the legal status of Harris Tweed’s geographic association was approved with an Act of Parliament which enshrined the legal status of the Harris Tweed’s geographic association. This resulted in Harris Tweed Act 1993.¹¹³ Under the act, Harris

¹¹² As some of these documents have been obtained from Roel Wolbrink, Sales agent of Dormeuil in Netherlands, it has been understood that these documents were prepared for promotional purpose and the target audience includes sales agent and business clients. The end-consumers might not have received the documents but the information through word-of-mouth from the seller.

¹¹³ Harris Tweed Act 1993 is “An Act to make provision for the establishment of a Harris Tweed Authority to promote and maintain the authenticity, standard and reputation of Harris Tweed; for the definition of Harris Tweed; for preventing the sale as Harris Tweed of material which does not fall within the definition; for the Authority to become the successor to The Harris Tweed Association Limited; and for other purposes incidental thereto. [20th July 1993]”

It can be accessed at: https://www.harristweed.org/wp-content/uploads/harris_tweed_act_of_parliament_1993.pdf

Tweed cloth must “*be handwoven by the islanders at their homes in the Outer Hebrides, finished in the Outer Hebrides, and made from pure virgin wool dyed and spun in the Outer Hebrides*” and “*possesses such further characteristics as a material is required to possess under regulations from time to time in force for it to qualify for the application to it, and use with respect to it, of a Harris Tweed trademark*”.¹¹⁴

The Act has defined the Outer Hebrides as the islands of Harris, Lewis, North Uist, Benbecula, South Uist and Barra and their several surrounding areas.

According to the Harris Tweed Act 1993, any piece of tweed fabric that does not contain an Orb Mark has not been produced and validated by Harris Tweed Authority. The Orb Mark is the oldest certification mark of United Kingdom and is recognized all over the world. In 1910, the Harris Tweed Association Ltd applied to Board of Trade to register the company trademark which incorporated the Orb Mark and was approved in October 1910. The registered design of Orb Mark contained a *globus cruciger* (globe surmounted by a cross) with words “Harris Tweed” in first line followed by “Made in Harris” or “Made in Lewis” according to place of manufacture in the second line. Today, the second line contains the words “Handwoven in Outer Hebrides” due to the updated definition of Tweed under The Harris Tweed Act 1993 as described above. As an additional step towards protection, Harris Tweed Authority has also certified the characters of the Orb Mark in Japanese and Chinese as well. It is literal translation of these words in Chinese and Japanese scripts. The Harris Tweed Authority has trademarked its cloth in categories for garments, hats, bags, shoes and even interiors in around 72 countries in the world; however, Harris Tweed still faces the challenge of counterfeit products. More often than not, any tweed which is hairy and often bright in colors is considered as Harris Tweed. However, Lorna Macaulay, the CEO of Harris Tweed, explained during the interview that as Harris Tweed Authority contacted other sellers of Tweed and delved into an discussion, it was found that it was not the malicious intention but ignorance of the other sellers, that had called for the authenticity validation of Harris tweed cloth. The simple translation of words “Harris Tweed” in Mandarin and Japanese was also just another tactic to field off the counterfeit products especially in Japan, the largest export market of Harris

¹¹⁴ Harris Tweed Authority, “Harris_tweed_act_of_parliament_1993.Pdf,” May 20, 2020, https://www.harristweed.org/wp-content/uploads/harris_tweed_act_of_parliament_1993.pdf.

Tweed with the largest share of garments followed by accessories and interiors. Mik Chung, the agent of Harris Tweed in South Korea, revealed that the certification mark is very important for the perceived authenticity of the Harris Tweed cloth in South Korean market as well.

The supply chain of Harris Tweed industry stands on the three distinctive pillars: the Harris Tweed Authority, the mills, and the weavers.¹¹⁵ These pillars function through a cooperative approach as each of them cannot function individually. The Harris Tweed Authority owns and regulates the brand but does not assume a hierarchical position over the weavers. Weavers are self-employed and receive their work from the mills. In addition, Lorna Macaulay explains the importance of sustainable raw materials for Harris Tweed as

“you know, as that's important to us ... the sort of buying at arrangements for wool and how the sheep has been sheared and how that the farmer has been paid for or his fleece... we must make sure that the way they're sheared, the way the animals are, are looked after and the way the farmers paid for the material and that all has to be really equally on par with all the other brand values”.

Traceability was under consideration at Harris Tweed authority in 2010 when the industry strategy document 2010 – 2013 of Harris Tweed aimed to realize the true potential of Harris Tweed as a well-known brand by introducing one of its key activities as *“Develop Electronic traceability scheme throughout the supply chain to embed brand provenance”*.¹¹⁶ The scheme was put in place in 2011 as a three- year feasibility study which was conducted by a graduate of the Glasgow School of Art who later joined Harris Tweed Authority as its youngest board member for a short period of time. The feasibility study was based on the concept of traceability in the food industry. As the label on the box of a shellfish can be scanned to see which sea it came from, the feasibility study explored the similar opportunities to provide transparent information for the Harris Tweed. The aim was to reveal the story behind each piece of cloth made under the name of Harris Tweed by providing rich details about the weaver, his or her location, spinner, and other supply chain processes. However, the feasibility study revealed three reasons for why Harris Tweed did not

¹¹⁵ For details on value chain, please refer to Pg 38

¹¹⁶ “Harris Tweed Industry Strategy” (Sustainable Development Committee, August 25, 2010), <https://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/media/CommitteeArchive/OldCommitteeDocs/sustainable/agendas/august2010/ED%20-%20Harris%20Tweed%20Industry%20Strategy.pdf>.

need a traceability scheme. First, the ironing of Orb Mark on to the cloth indicates that Harris Tweed Authority has ensured that who prepared the yarn, wove, and finished each piece and the product meets the definition of authentic *Harris Tweed*. Second and more important reason is that while Harris Tweed cloth is inherently traceable, all Harris Tweed manufactured products cannot be traced to their origin. As the cloth goes to manufacturing facilities to be produced as jackets, bags, gloves, cushions, and other products, it involves third-party brands. Therefore, while Harris Tweed wanted the consumers to be able to scan the label on their products and have lovely story of the journey of the product, it could not completely control the access to provenance details from the third-party manufacturing brands. Third, Harris Tweed has a huge fandom which includes consumers with emotional commitment to the brand. The Authority has been encountering numerous requests from consumers who want to know about the journey of Harris Tweed products. In some instances, people traveled all the way to Outer Hebrides with their grandfather's jacket to find the weaver who wove that jacket. However, in Lorna's words

“Weavers don't want that. They are by very nature the individuals who choose to work alone. They live quietly in their village communities and it was proving really problematic for us that people were just arriving and wanting a selfie with the weaver....that's just not what we are and until we think of a better way of doing it, we're going to just stay back from the end consumer traceability”.

Harris Tweed worked in collaboration with Stone Island, an Italian luxury men's clothing brand, and launched a Polymorphic Ice Capsule Collection. Traceability was offered for this project by developing social media content about six weavers who wove the entire collection of *Stone Island x Harris Tweed*. From the stories of weavers to pictures of loom shades, the information was used for the launch and advertising of the collection. However, it did not provide end-to-end consumer traceability. Harris Tweed Authority acknowledges that the opportunity to undertake the feasibility study on electronic traceability scheme provided some interesting insight for the future traceability scheme but has decided to go slow with it. This will buy time for Authority to devise a suitable strategy that deals with privacy concerns of weavers and maximizes the value added.

While Harris Tweed does not actively pursue any traceability scheme for its geographic association and supply chain processes, the Orb Mark and transparent supply chain of Harris Tweed provide an inherent traceability to the brand. However, this traceability has not been

consciously motivated by the goals of sustainable production. Lorna Macaulay, the current CEO of Harris Tweed Authority stated that:

“We didn't know it was important either. We were just doing it because that's the structure of Harris Tweed industry. That's the values of our brand...We didn't really realize that until sustainability became cool and sexy and important.... I don't think we knew that we were particularly ahead of the game in that way”.

Harris Tweed Hebrides, founded in 2007 in Shawbost village on Isle of Lewis, is one of the mills responsible for the design and manufacture of Harris Tweed.¹¹⁷ In April 2019, Harris Tweed Hebrides took part in the #FashionRevolution week organized by the Fashion Revolution, a non-profit global movement for transparency in fashion supply chain networks (illustration 1). Harris Tweed Hebrides published four films on its Instagram page for four days, each of which showed one of the four processes of the value chain of Harris Tweed (illustration 2). As the films show, the supply chain process of Harris Tweed begins with dyeing of wool and moves on to blending, carding and spinning of the yarn at one of the Harris Tweed mills. The spun yarn is taken to the weaver's home for handweaving. The handwoven yarn is then returned to the mill for sourcing and finishing purposes. The finished cloth is inspected by Harris Tweed Authority and each length of Harris Tweed cloth is stamped with the Orb Mark (certification label). As shown below, the caption for each film contained the minor details of the process as well so as to make the audience aware of the details of the production processes. The background music of these films contained Scottish tunes which can serve as an unconscious cue to remind the audience of Scottish origin of the brand.

¹¹⁷ Fiona Anderson and Linda Welters, *Tweed* (London, United Kingdom: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2016), 155–74, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/gla/detail.action?docID=4697899>.



harristweedhebrides · Following



I made
your
fabric

#WHOMADEMYCLOTHES
FASHIONREVOLUTION.ORG



harristweedhebrides ~ We've been showcasing the different processes involved in making Harris Tweed this #fashionrevolution week ~

● Lots of hands are involved in producing Harris Tweed and our series of films only show some of them

● Take a look at our page for all 4 of our films 🎬

#fashionrevolutionweek #harristweedhebrides
#harristweed #whomademyclothes #imadeyourfabric
#imadeyouryarn

View all 4 comments

26 April 2019

Illustration 1: Harris Tweed Hebrides' Instagram Announcement of Participation in Fashion Revolution Week 2019



harristweedhebrides · Following



1.284 views

harristweedhebrides It's Fashion Revolution week so we're going to show all the stages of producing Harris Tweed, let's start at the beginning!

It's the dyehouse 🐑🔪 #fashionrevolution #whomademyclothes #fashrev



harristweedhebrides · Following



856 views

harristweedhebrides ~It's day 2 of @fash_rev week and the spotlight is on blending, carding and spinning at the mill 🐑🐑🐑~ #fashionrevolution #whomademyclothes #fashrev



harristweedhebrides · Following



875 views

harristweedhebrides 🌐 We're onto weaving, this stage must be done outwith the mill at the weaver's home. It's day 3 and the yarn which has been carefully dyed, blended, carded, spun and warped into position at the mill is ready for the weaver 🌐 #fashionrevolution #whomademyclothes #fashrev



harristweedhebrides · Following



837 views

harristweedhebrides ~Now to the final stages, woven tweed comes back to the mill where it is scoured and milled. Every metre is darned and picked by hand for a smooth and perfect finish. The last step is inspection by the @harristweedauthority and each length is stamped with the Orb trademark ~ #fashionrevolution #whomademyclothes #fashrev

Illustration 2: Harris Tweed Hebrides Instagram: 4 Films of Value Chain Processes of Harris Tweed Released During Fashion Revolution Week 2019

In addition to the films, Harris Tweed also supported #whomadeyourclothes campaign by Fashion Revolution by encouraging the consumers to think about the people behind Harris Tweed cloth in one of its Instagram post. Similarly, Mark Hogarth, the Creative Director at Harris Tweed Hebrides, posted a picture of his 10-year old Harris Tweed tux to promote the cause of sustainable fashion by buying less and better and wearing more (illustration 3). He wrote about his tux “*There is at least ten occasions a year that merits its use and it gets an annual dry clean with occasional brush down. It’s luxury that will last a lifetime.*” The commitment of Harris Tweed to the Fashion Revolution Week and social media awareness through films, images and written posts does not only exhibit the inherent traceability of supply chain processes and geographic association of the brand but also the support towards policy that this information reaches its target audience.



hogarthism Over the next week an admirable campaign led by @fash_rev will highlight the importance of ethics and transparency in the supply chain of the fashion industry. One of the most sustainable things we can do is to buy less, buy better; wear more. It is an inconvenient truth but it is the best way to ensure that your wardrobe is an investment which is not an expense to yourself or the planet. Photographed here is a ten year-old @harristweedhebrides tux with felted trim by #deryckwalker. There is at least ten occasions a year that merits its use and it gets an annual dry clean with the occasion brush down. It’s luxury that will last a lifetime.... or two. #harristweed #sustainablefashion #sustainability #sustainable @fash_rev_scotland #fashionrevolution #whomademyclothes #earthday

View all 13 comments

22 April 2019

Illustration 3: Instagram: Mark Hogarth (Creative Director at Harris Tweed Hebrides) Participates in Fashion Revolution Week 2019

The brand image of Harris Tweed is built around its geography and authenticity. “*Handwoven in Outer Hebrides*”, its Scottish origin is the most prized possession of Harris Tweed. While Harris Tweed happily sits under the umbrella of being ‘British brand’, Harris Tweed is a distinctively Scottish heritage brand. However, as its cloth is sold to third party brands, there exists a risk of misunderstood brand story and heritage. In order to explain the uniqueness of Harris Tweed, the Authority makes efforts to bring companies which are potential buyers to the island and help them recognize the difference between Harris Tweed wool and other commercially available cloth. Almost three years prior to the Brexit, Harris Tweed Authority had attempted to achieve a Geographic Indication (GI) for *Harris Tweed* due to its strong geographic association to Scotland (Outer Hebrides). As Geographic Indications¹¹⁸ currently exist for the most agricultural or food and drinks products only, the introduction of GIs for non-agricultural products could have been revolutionary for Harris Tweed. However, as United Kingdom has decided to leave the European Union, the UK government does not prioritize to introduce non-agricultural GI scheme in the near future, thus leaving the efforts of Harris Tweed Authority in waste.

Apart from its image of a Scottish quality product, Harris Tweed has also held the symbolic representation of anti-fashion in the past. A British designer, Vivienne Westwood, launched her Harris Tweed collection in 1987 as a part of the punk movement and later her 1993 – 1994 collection as a historic celebration of traditional craftsmanship. Her collection was named as “Anglomania” which characterized the designer’s interest in English and Scottish fashion tradition as she made use of tweed and tartan for the garments. The “Anglomania” collection was based on the French passion for English things during 1780s and was presented as a tribute to the designer’s home country. The pieces were developed by mixing the masculine tailoring with feminine fashion as she created sexy mini kilts, glamorous jackets and pencil skirts combined with masculine Edwardian style ensembles. Westwood showed the versatility of cloth in fashion by dressing the members of the punk group the Sex Pistols in Harris Tweed which threw away the traditional and gender-based associations of Harris Tweed.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ A geographical indication (GI) is a distinctive sign used to identify a product whose quality, reputation or other such characteristics relate to its geographical origin.

¹¹⁹ Hayley-Jane Edwards-Dujardin, “Vivienne Westwood, ‘Anglomania,’ Fall/Winter 1993–1994,” *Fashion Photography Archive*, 2015, <<http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/10.5040/9781474260428-FPA015>>.

In 2012, Harris Tweed had considered every opportunity to transform the image of being an old-fashioned to a High Street brand. During 1980s and 1990s, Harris Tweed industry had suffered due to a shortage of skilled weavers, lack of investment, poor sales, and rapid shifts in fashion. However, during the early 2000s, a five-year initiative was started by Labour and Energy Minister Brian Wilson which was aimed at transforming the brand image of Harris Tweed to a “young fabric” in order to attract the youth segment of the customers. Wilson explained

*“The objective was to create a new generation interested in it. The great thing is you’re selling something which is truly genuine. It’s not like spinning a story around something that doesn’t exist. It’s completely genuine: the distinguishing features of Harris Tweed are both quality and heritage.”*¹²⁰

A rapid rise in the production and sales of handwoven fabric was observed in 2012 as the production jumped from 500,000 meters to more than a million meters during last five years and contributed about £10 million per year to the local economy. Therefore, in order to transform the image of Harris Tweed, collaborations with each fashionable designer was considered. The newly formed at the time, Harris Tweed Hebrides mill, focused on targeting fashion shows and retailers to change the image of Harris Tweed from an old-fashioned “grandad” jacket to a hip, High Street piece of clothing. Jaggy Nettle produced a hi-top sneaker with Harris Tweed which were displayed in the stores in New York, Tokyo and Italy alongside other luxury brands such as Prada and Louis Vuitton. The inspiration for Jaggy Nettle-designer Lee to use tweed for the trainers and Chelsea boots was his Harris Tweed coat that was bought from a charity store in Hawick eight years earlier and did not require washing even once. The fabric was reported to repel water and dirt.¹²¹

¹²⁰ Severin Carrell and Scotland correspondent, “Harris Tweed Returns to Global Boutiques after Islands’ Renaissance,” *The Guardian*, November 9, 2012, sec. Fashion, <https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2012/nov/09/harris-tweed-industry-scotland-renaissance>.

¹²¹ Clio Padovani and Paul Whittaker, “Collaborative Leadership, Provenance, and the Power of Place,” in *Sustainability and the Social Fabric: Europe’s New Textile Industries* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017), 65–81.

The heritage of Harris Tweed relies on the structure of Harris Tweed industry which requires weavers to be based in their homes (in Outer Hebrides) by law. The islands of Outer Hebrides host to a network of villages on the coast and a single main town, Stornoway. While most of the economic activity takes place in Stornoway, Harris Tweed works to retain the jobs in the fragile and depopulating villages on the Islands of the Outer Hebrides. According to Lorna Macaulay, CEO of the Harris Tweed Authority, the Harris Tweed Authority considers it an “enormous responsibility” to sustain the population of the most important, in fact, the only geographic association of the brand. She has explained that

“I think in terms of the heritage of our industry, we are not naive to think that we cannot innovate with everybody else, we've had to introduce new looms and a new technology and all of that. That are out some risk becoming monolithic but hand-woven will never ever be sacrificed.”

The weaving of Tweed depends on the type of material used in the cloth. While other Tweeds can be woven on mechanical looms, under the Harris Tweed Act 1993, Harris Tweed can be hadwoven as 100% pure wool only. Harris Tweed Authority understands that introduction of other materials such as Cashmere, Silk or Lycra may make the brand more friendly or popular, however, the brand will no longer remain exclusive and dedicated to its point of difference. Harris Tweed Authority emphasizes that uniqueness of the Harris Tweed cloth that it is different from other products in the market and if customers wants a soft thread or stretchy fabric, they are not looking for the Harris Tweed. In Lorna Macaulay’s words *“There's too many livelihoods and nearly 200 years of island history behind it and that's what the Harris Tweed Authority exists to do is to protect our story and our heritage.”*

Mik Chung, the South Korean Harris Tweed agent, mentioned that the most important element of brand heritage in the South Korean market is *“In only one area, local people, wool produced in that area, insist on traditional methods, fabric produced by hand, fabric with tradition and history”*.

The strong connection of Harris Tweed to its geographic origin and Scottish heritage is also evident through the Instagram account of @harristweedauthority attracts 33.8k followers from

all over the world (illustration 4).¹²² The Instagram account emphasizes the importance of geographic association of Harris Tweed cloth to Outer Hebrides and its landscape through images, be it the blue northern skies, lavender heaths, mountains, rocks, crystal clear blue water of the sea and the lochs, seashore, pebbles, the green and purple moss. From 2012 till today, each photo has been accompanied by a creatively crafted story of the tweed cloth which has strongly built the brand image of Harris Tweed as a brand which is true to its roots. The post in the image below contains one of the earliest posts when Harris Tweed Authority had just joined the Instagram. The post, as a combination of picture and text, depicts the island landscape (Harris rock, natural sheep and cut peat) as an inspiration for the colors of Harris Tweed in the cloth in the picture. This trend has been observed in the later posts as well, as Harris Tweed Authority pens down the caption for this image from 2015 as “*it’s little wonder we take our inspiration from the land, sea and sky*” (illustration 4). The tweed in the picture is referred as “Hebridean sunset” reinforcing the geographical link of the cloth to Outer Hebrides. Louise Crewe, a professor of human geography, has also argued that while the designs of the tweed are adapted to the changing needs of fashion, the Outer Hebridean landscape is always reflected in the color and texture of the Harris Tweed cloth which speaks of its place of origin and interweaves the fabric and place together.¹²³

¹²² Instagram is a modern-day social media networking site. While the print advertisements have been used to study the brand image and brand heritage of each brand during 1900s, the Instagram posts help to understand the shift (if any) in brand image and brand heritage by looking at present day advertisement of the brand. Both print advertisement and Instagram combine image with texts. However, Instagram targets wider audience of more than 100 million people worldwide whereas print advertisements remain limited to the buyers of Harper’s Bazaar magazine during 1900s only.

¹²³ Padovani and Whittaker, “Collaborative Leadership, Provenance, and the Power of Place,” 65–81.

< **harristweedauthority** 🌐 ⋮



284
Posts

33,8 k
Followers

137
Following

Harris Tweed Authority
Brand

✍️ Stories behind the Cloth #harristweed 👉
 Handwoven by Outer Hebrides islanders, Scotland
🏠 Guardians of the Orb: Harris Tweed Authority ❤️
 #loveharristweed
www.harristweed.org/journal/
 2 cromwell street, Stornoway, Eilean Siar, United Kingdom

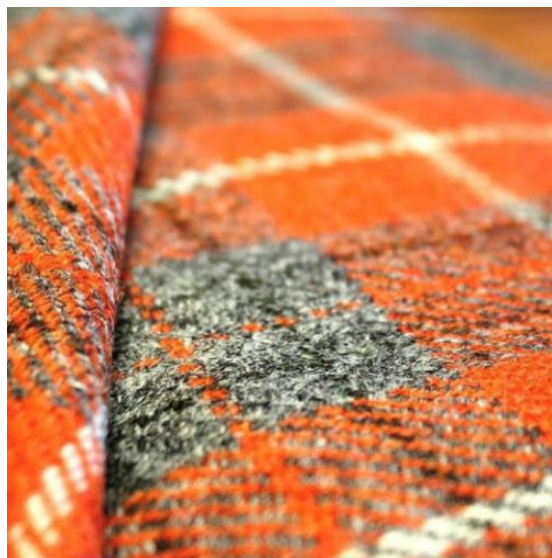


50 likes

harristweedauthority Amazing to see vertical stripes on a herringbone weave, this is and old one of Harris rock grey, natural sheeps wool white and that freshly cut peat black all tied in with a base of deep blood-orange red.

[View all 3 comments](#)

28 November 2012



316 likes

harristweedauthority A Hebridean sunset. It's little wonder we take our inspiration from the land, sea and sky. #harristweed #visitscotland #outerhebrides

[View all 10 comments](#)

20 August 2015

Illustration 4: Instagram Profile Bio and Posts by Harris Tweed Authority 2012 - 2015
Source: Harris Tweed Authority Instagram

Another interesting observation in this post is the use of the hashtag #visitscotland which is the official hashtag of Scotland's National Tourist Organisation (illustration 5). A single click on hashtag helps the users to see all the photos and videos uploaded on the Instagram with the same hashtag provided that the privacy of these posts is set to 'public'. Therefore, use of #visitscotland is a marketing tool for Harris Tweed to maintain its Scottish brand image by appearing in the public search of all Scottish tourism photos. Upon clicking the #visitscotland hashtag, the frequently posted images of Tweed cloth by Harris Tweed Authority can be found on Instagram. In 2016, Harris Tweed celebrated the World Heritage Day on Instagram by sharing a beautiful story of a community gathering for traditional Scottish dance to Scottish Fiddle Orchestra. The spirit of the night is carried on by playing various Scottish folk songs until the sunrise to celebrate the loved ones or simply waulking of Tweed. The last line of the caption states "*This is our heritage*" underlining the importance of its Scottish origin for Harris Tweed as a brand.



Illustration 5: Instagram - Harris Tweed on World Heritage Day
Source: Harris Tweed Authority Instagram

Pursuing its Scottish roots, Harris Tweed has become the official formalwear partner of Scottish Rugby team in 2019 for the next two seasons. Scottish Rugby has announced this initiative as a collaboration between Harris Tweed Hebrides x Walker Slater. The Chief Operating Officer of Scottish Rugby said that “*Harris Tweed is recognised globally as a quality product, so we’re pleased extend develop a shared international dimension and awareness of our brands around the world.*” (illustration 6) The handwoven cloth of Outer Hebrides is blended with the colors of national rugby team and the governing body to present a bespoke collection.¹²⁴

harristweedhebrides Scottish Rugby confirm Harris Tweed Hebrides and Walker Slater as new formalwear partners

@scotlandteam today announced @walkerslater in conjunction with Harris Tweed Hebrides, will be the Official Formalwear Partner for the next two seasons.

The historic fabric, handwoven, dyed and spun in the Outer Hebrides of Scotland from pure virgin wool, has been applied to a bespoke tweed in keeping with the rich rugby heritage and colours associated with the national team and governing body.

Ken Kennedy, head designer at Harris Tweed Hebrides in Shawbost, Isle of Lewis, created the custom tweed to incorporate navy, purple and green in an exclusive design launched in 2016.

The range of garments was a collaboration between Scottish Rugby, Harris Tweed Hebrides and the retailer Walker Slater, with a tailored blazer designed to be worn by the Scotland national team, Council and Board at official post-match functions.

Scottish Rugby’s Chief Operating Officer, Dominic McKay, said: “Scottish Rugby is delighted to continue our work with an iconic, world-renowned Scottish brand. “Harris Tweed is recognised globally as a quality product, so we’re pleased extend develop a shared international dimension and awareness of our brands around the world.”



harristweedhebrides · Following



Illustration 6: Harris Tweed Hebrides Announces Partnership with Scottish Rugby Team 2019

Source: Harris Tweed Hebrides Instagram

¹²⁴ “Harris Tweed Scottish Rugby,” accessed June 12, 2020, <http://www.hebrides-news.com/harris-tweed-scottish-rugby-16819.html>.

The traceability, brand image and brand heritage of Harris Tweed were collectively explored through the advertisements published in the Harper's Bazaar magazine during 1940 – 1950.¹²⁵ In 1945, a Harris Tweed advertisement was titled as “Handwoven Harris Tweed” (illustration 7). The imagery of the advertisement shows a woman and a man who are spreading the washed wool to dry. The use of word “handwoven” depicts the image of the brand built on authenticity of its raw material (wool) and combined with the image and its caption “*Wool for Harris Tweed is washed and spread to dry*”, it also illustrates one of the most important processes in the supply chain of Harris Tweed production. In addition, the ad (illustration 7) contains the provenance details of Harris Tweed production. It mentions that Harris Tweed can only be handwoven of Scottish virgin wool by the weavers in their homes “in the islands of the Outer Hebrides off the coast of Scotland”. Although done to ensure the brand authenticity, these details provide the traceability information of geographic origin and production processes of the Harris Tweed cloth. Furthermore, the text of the advertisement stresses the importance of traceability information reinforcing the understanding of the authorized label as “Look for the trademark on the cloth”. The advertisement also contains the image of the Orb Mark at the bottom of the ad as well to build the cognitive awareness of the Orb Mark among consumers. However, it is important to note that the purpose of the trademark and authorized label was to endorse the authenticity of the cloth and the brand had not realized its use for the traceability phenomenon in 1945.

¹²⁵ Many of the Harris Tweed advertisements that are available online do not contain the actual source and correct date of publishing. Therefore, advertisements from Harper's Bazaar archive were taken as their source and date could be clearly identified. These ads were only available for the years 1940 – 1950.

Wool for Harris Tweed is washed and spread to dry.



hand woven
HARRIS TWEED

To protect the wearer, the authenticity of Harris Tweed is established by a double identification.

The authorized label is sewed in every garment made of genuine Harris Tweed — and the "Harris Tweed" trade mark is stamped every three yards on the reverse side of the cloth.

• • •

Under rulings of the British Board of Trade and the Federal Trade Commission, Harris Tweed refers only to tweed, hand-woven by the crofters in their own homes in the islands of the Outer Hebrides off the coast of Scotland.

Issued by The
HARRIS TWEED ASSOCIATION, Ltd.
Salisbury House, London Wall, London, E.C.2

Look for the trade mark on the cloth.
Look for the label on the garment.



Illustration 7: *Harris Tweed Advertisement: 1945*
Source: Harper's Bazaar Archive

In 1946, another advertisement of Harris Tweed was published in Haraper's Bazaar magazine which contained the word "handwoven" in the headline of the Harris Tweed advertisement (Illustration 8). The advertisement was published in New York and the image of the brand was presented as "*ideal travel and outdoor cloth*" which is unique, fashionable that can be enjoyed in all "American climates". The image of the advertisement presents the fashionable aristocratic look which signifies a certain class. A golfer can also be seen at the right bottom of the image who is not wearing a tweed jacket but depicts the characteristic of men who wear Harris Tweed. This advertisement was intended to create the wider audience appeal in United States. In a 2013 Hollywood movie, Argo, Ben Affleck is seen wearing Harris Tweed while playing the role of a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) agent in 1979. Tony Mendez, the real-life inspiration behind the movie revealed in an interview about the secret language of cloth among the US Spies during the Cold War era. He mentioned that a Harris Tweed jacket was considered equivalent of the uniform of CIA and was a secret code for the detectives in the field. According to Mendez, "*if you were in the field during the Blitz, you wore a trench coat. If you were tracking Ivan [the Soviet Union and its allies], you had Harris Tweed*".¹²⁶ Therefore, Harris Tweed is not only beautifully crafted but also represents the toughness, character and multi-purpose use that is carried by the fabric.

Similar to the previous one (illustration 7), this ad (illustration 8) also provides the traceability information by highlighting the geographic associations of the brand during its supply chain processes of Harris Tweed cloth. In addition, it also contains the image of the Orb Mark at the bottom to encourage the customers to look for the label or trademark on the product to ensure the authenticity of the tweed as Harris Tweed.

¹²⁶ Ewen MacAskill, "CIA Agents Look Better in Harris Tweed: How Argo Revived a Scottish Classic," *The Guardian*, April 9, 2013, sec. Film, <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2013/apr/09/harris-tweed-argo-cia-tony-mendez>.

hand woven
HARRIS TWEED

Reg.
 Trade
 Mark



*The ideal cloth for
 travel and outdoor wear*

Harris Tweed tailors beautifully and holds its shape. It is youthful, distinctive, and can be enjoyed the year-round in many American climates—hence the ideal travel and outdoor cloth.



Under rulings of the British Board of Trade and the Federal Trade Commission, Harris Tweed refers only to tweed, hand woven of Scottish virgin wool by the crofters in their own homes in the islands of the Outer Hebrides off the coast of Scotland.

Issued by The
HARRIS TWEED ASSOCIATION LTD.
 Salisbury House, London Wall, London, E.C. 2

Look for the label on the garment
 —look for the trade mark stamped
 every three yards on the cloth



Illustration 8: *Harris Tweed Advertisement: 1946*
 Source: Harper's Bazaar Archive

In 1949, Harris Tweed published another advertisement titled “Ease and Elegance” of Harris Tweed (illustration 9). The advertisement presented a strong brand image of exclusivity and uniqueness of Harris Tweed as it clearly states, “*Harris Tweed combines color artistry with individuality (no two pieces being exactly alike)*”.

The image in the advertisement shows a female weaver engaged in the process of handweaving the wool used for the production of Harris Tweed. It depicts that each piece of cloth produced as Harris Tweed is crafted with great care which brings elegance to the products. Similar to illustration 7 and 8, the lower half of the advertisement encourages customers to look for the Orb Mark as it will help them to identify the origin, quality and Scottish wool used for the products. The identification of the origin draws attention to the Scottish heritage of the brand whereas the use of Scottish wool from the islands of Outer Hebrides provide a traceable link to the sourcing of raw materials as a supply chain process. In addition, the quality adds to the brand image of Harris Tweed as it promotes itself as an authentic brand. However, this advertisement does not contain the image of the Orb mark.

*the ease and
elegance of*
HARRIS TWEED

HAND WOVEN
Harris Tweed
REGISTERED TRADE MARK
HARRIS TWEED
FACTORIES OF THE HEBRIDES APPEAR
ON THE CLOTH
HALL MARKED PURE WOOLLEN WOVEN

Tweeds that adapt themselves smartly to any scene. Handwoven by the crofters in the Isles of the Outer Hebrides, Harris Tweed combines color artistry with individuality (no two pieces being exactly alike).

Look for the Harris Tweed* mark on the cloth or in coats, suits and sport jackets to certify origin, quality and pure Scottish wool. The mark "Harris Tweed" is owned and administered by the Harris Tweed Association, London Wall, E. C. 2, England.

HARRIS TWEED | Salisbury House,
London E. C. 2, England
*Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.

Illustration 9: *Harris Tweed Advertisement: 1949*

Source: Harper’s Bazaar Archive

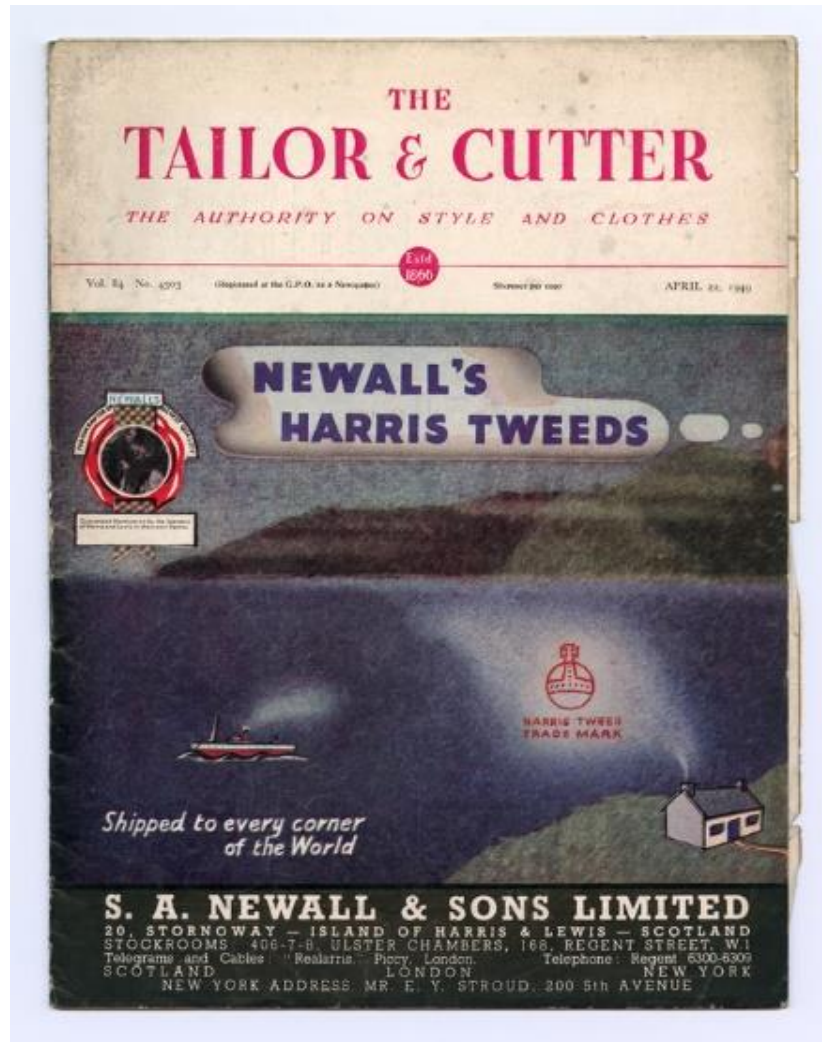


Illustration 10: *S.A Newall & Sons Limited Advertisement: 1949*
 Source: *Tweed* by Fiona Anderson

Newall & Sons Limited, a Harris Tweed mill, was featured on the front cover of *The Tailor & Cutter* in April 1949 (illustration 10). The advertisement depicts the landscape of Outer Hebrides showing the port of Tarbert at the Isle of Harris. This imagery is known to be made from the shapes cut out of Harris Tweed cloth. This visual representation of Harris Tweed highlights the geographical association of Harris Tweed to the small rural areas of Outer Hebrides.¹²⁷

¹²⁷ Fiona Anderson and Linda Welters, *Tweed* (London, United Kingdom: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2016), 85, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/gla/detail.action?docID=4697899>.

4.2 Dormeuil

New Tailor, the agent of Dormeuil in Netherlands, revealed that as an agent or a salesman, a background story tells customers why a fabric is worth buying. While all the customers may not be interested in the stories, they are helpful in convincing those who might be interested. Roel Wolbrink, the co-founder of New Tailor, said that Dormeuil also has the spirit of “*showing where it comes from*”. In his words,

“if you want to have my opinion why Dormeuil is succeeding or are already there for hundred and eighty years, it's the family tradition and it's precisely this that they are communicating about the background.”

The idea of traceability briefly came up during the discussions of Dormeuil with its agents long before the launch of traceability scheme. Roel recalled ordering wine from the drinks list and remembering the place of origin of that wine during a meeting with Dominic Dormeuil and other organizational representatives. The group underwent a discussion on introducing something similar to food traceability in their clothes as well, however, the discussion remained only a mere idea and it took a long time to develop a formal traceability scheme.

While the traceability in the food and drink sector remains the inspiration behind the traceability in other industries, there are many differences in wine and fabric production. For wine, the soil for grapes is identifiable and the method for producing wine remains the same more or less. However, for fabrics, there is no average size or quality of sheep to produce a specific kind of cloth. In addition, wool is bought in bulk by the clothing companies, therefore, the wool for the same piece of cloth can come from more than one sheep, which can be of different sizes and wool of two different types can be blended. Moreover, customers lack awareness on the background of cloth making and cloth in general, and do not have a thorough understanding of quality of raw materials. Hence, it is not easy for brands to be traceable about their geographic links or supply chain processes. However, if a learning approach is taken towards traceability by teaching customers about the production process and quality, it can be used as a tool for the marketing of durability of the cloth. Roel Wolbrink used the example of Dormeuil and H&M to explain the

importance of customer awareness for traceability purposes. In his view, a Dormeuil fabric is more affordable than H&M because it can be worn some 200 times whereas an H&M garment is worn only seven times on average. Therefore, it is argued that the cost per day of a Dormeuil suit is far less than a piece from H&M and only a customer who is made aware of the production processes and the resulting quality for the products produced by each brand will invest in the durable cloth.

Alda Roque, the Operations Director at Dormeuil, unfolded the story of launch of traceability scheme of Dormeuil. According to her, two years before the launch of the traceability scheme in 2019, Dormeuil observed a nervousness in consumers due to scandals in the fashion industry about unfair production processes. Therefore, with heightened consumer awareness of ethical and sustainable production, the brand received an increasing number of inquiries about the production process of Dormeuil fabrics, which led to the idea of traceability. Alda said, *“we have absolutely nothing at all to hide. On the contrary, we would like to show everyone what we do and how we do things, because as I said, we are extremely proud of the way we do things.”*

As Dormeuil aimed to explore the technological options, the use of blockchain technology in food industry seemed to fit the vision of becoming a traceable brand. At the same time, Dormeuil was getting into a partnership with a big French group which is a supplier of wool. The French supplier had the same philosophy as Dormeuil and sold wool to its clients with traceability certificates. The project started as the supplier group, working with Patagonian farms, installed, and implemented blockchain technology which included all actors involved in the supply chain process of Dormeuil fabric. Therefore, information could now be traced back to all steps of the supply chain process starting from the shearing of sheep at Patagonian farms.

The blockchain platform was prepared by the collaboration of the IT departments of Dormeuil, a wool supplier group and a partner company which sells yarn. The collective effort of Dormeuil and its suppliers was to ensure input from all different stakeholders which was important in order to take into consideration all processes and steps of the supply chain process of Dormeuil fabric production. In addition, this led to increased understanding of how to update the information in blockchain as soon as any event happens, for example, if a dispatch of wool has been made, and its use as a collaborative information sharing tool for efficient production processes.



Illustration 11: Dormeuil's Traceable Fabric with QR code
Source: Dormeuil India's Instagram

The label of the traceable fabrics of Dormeuil comes with a QR code which can be scanned to obtain the information about the supply chain (illustration 11). The following image was taken from Dormeuil India's Instagram feed (was originally uploaded on Instagram by Dormeuil's official Instagram page) which presents the label of ECHO wool with the QR code.

However, the blockchain is mainly intended for B2B clients. After the purchase of traceable wool fabric from Dormeuil - the client receives an email containing relevant information (certificate number, user ID, password, link to traceability system) to enter Dormeuil's traceability system in order to trace the fabric. Once the credentials have been entered, the system provides information about the date at which data has been entered in the blockchain, production stakeholders, name of each stakeholders, certificate number, a unique traceability number and a graph or table to access the traceability details. The table (illustration 12 A-B) contains every detail of information of production of wool to fabric production including geographical locations and

actors involved. The graph option provides a network picture of the supply chain with each color identifying a different step in the production process (illustration 13).

While the Dormeuil website heavily advertises the two traceable fabrics of the brand, as *“innovative fabric with guaranteed traceability”*, it does not clearly state that the traceability information for B2C consumers provided through the QR code is not same as B2B clients.¹²⁸ While B2B clients have access to complete supply chain information, end consumers can only access general communication and advertisements through the QR code. However, end consumer can always approach the Dormeuil agent, tailor, or supplier to gain the detailed information through blockchain. The brand has not clearly identified the reason for these two different levels of traceability information set for its products.

Chain details: TR_1548251309109_yeLmJcBU

Trace id	Trace type	Date	Author	Action
TR_1548251309109...	FM-TR032: Fabric - Production Tracking	23 Jan 2019 14:48	DML IT Departmen...	Show
TR_1548250623585...	FM-TR030: Fabric - Production	23 Jan 2019 14:37	DML IT Departmen...	Show
TR_1548250496553...	FM-TR010: Yarn - Lot Details	23 Jan 2019 14:34	DML IT Departmen...	Show
TR_1548233178142...	SM-TR050: Yarn - Lot Shipping	23 Jan 2019 09:46	Marco Vesipa	Show
TR_1548233089532...	SM-TR030: Yarn - Production	23 Jan 2019 09:44	Marco Vesipa	Show
TR_1548233062389...	SM-TR020: Wool Top - Lot Details	23 Jan 2019 09:44	Marco Vesipa	Show
TR_1548233047495...	SM-TR010: Wool Top - Purchase Transaction	23 Jan 2019 09:44	Marco Vesipa	Show
TR_1547816837841...	CM-TR080: Wool Top - Lot Shipping	18 Jan 2019 14:07	Admin Organica	Show
TR_1547816481509...	CM-TR050: Wool Top - Lot Production	18 Jan 2019 14:01	Mariano Real	Show
TR_1547816458259...	CM-TR040: Greasy Wool - Blend	18 Jan 2019 14:00	Mariano Real	Show

Navigation: < 1 2 3 >

Illustration 12 – A: Demonstration Table of Traceability Information in Dormeuil’s Electronic Traceability System

Source: Dormeuil User Guide for Blockchain Traceability

¹²⁸ Dormeuil, “Welcome to the Summer Brunches 2020 Bunches!,” Dormeuil, 2020, <https://www.dormeuil.com/en/news/article/welcome-to-the-summer-2020-bunches/>.

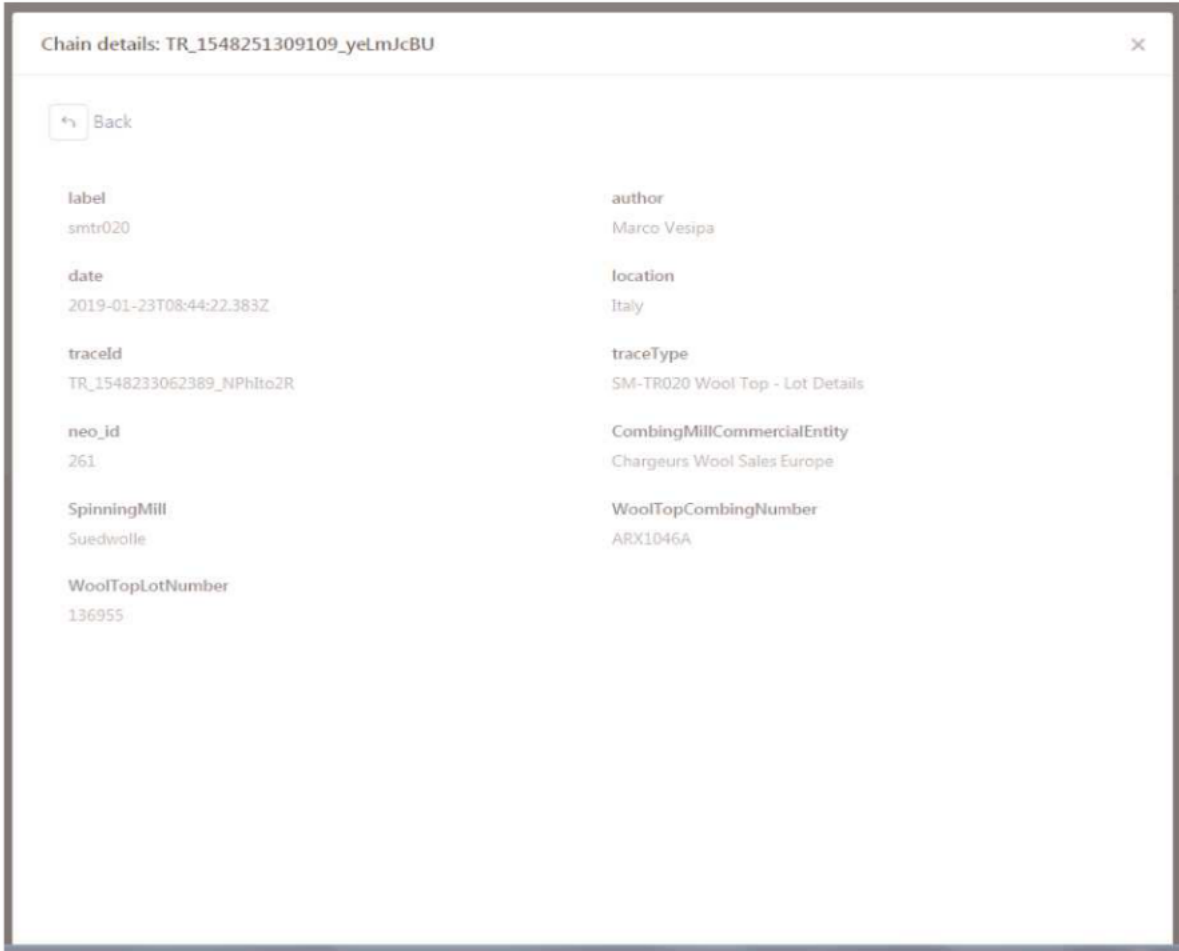


Illustration 12 – B: Demonstration Table of Traceability Information in Dormeuil’s Electronic Traceability System
 Source: Dormeuil User Guide for Blockchain Traceability

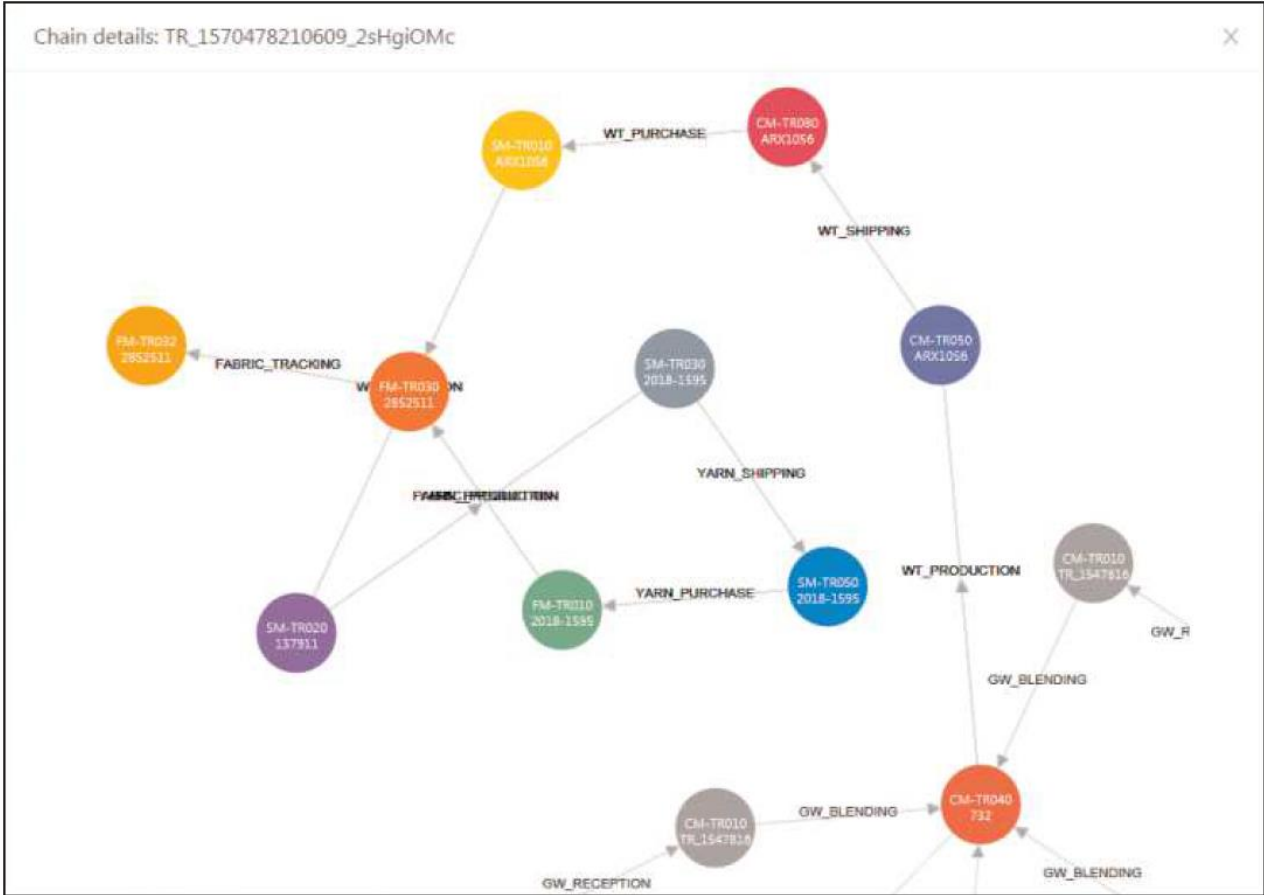


Illustration 13: Demonstration Network Graph of Traceability Information in Dormeuil’s Electronic Traceability System
 Source: Dormeuil User Guide for Blockchain Traceability

Currently, the whole fabric line of Dormeuil is not entirely traceable because, according to Alda Roque, *“there is not enough traceable wool at the moment to be able to produce only traceable fabrics. So, we have decided to each season introduce new fabrics.”*

The first completely traceable cloth of Dormeuil was launched in early 2019 and is known as “Tonik Wool”. It is produced in Yorkshire, United Kingdom and is sold under the label of “Made in England”. Tonik Wool was followed by ECHO in the summer 2020 collection. ECHO is produced in Italy. Both Tonik Wool and Echo are produced using Natvia Precious Wool because it is non-mulesed wool and guarantees Responsible Wool Standard (RWS) and Oeko-Tex Standard 100.¹²⁹ The Illustration 14 identifies the distinct characteristics of Dormeuil’s Tonik Wool and ECHO which includes RWS certified wool which meets the Oeko-Tex Standard 100.

The Natvia Precious Wool used for the traceable fabric embodies the respect for animals and the land where they are raised. In order to ensure animal welfare through best practices in sheep breeding, RWS certification is used. RWS is an independent and voluntary standard which ensures that sheep are treated with respect and the best practices are followed for the effective protection and management of the land. In addition, Natvia Wool also checks the textiles for any harmful substances. The Oeko-Tex Standard 100 label confirms that the tested articles are harmless for human ecology. The Oeko-Tex tests are conducted by independent institutes and the testing criteria are updated every year according to recent scientific modifications and regulatory requirements. Moreover, the Natvia Precious Wool provides complete traceability and transparency through the Natvia blockchain. The blockchain technology provides complete information about the supply chain of both of the traceable fabrics. Dormeuil has currently planned to introduce one traceable fabric each season and hopes to have its complete fabric collection as traceable within next five years i-e by 2025.

¹²⁹ Mulesing is a common practice in wool industry to create smoother skin for sheep. As sheep develop more wool with time, it becomes an unnatural load which can cause many sheep to die due to exhaustion during hot months and the wrinkles can contain moisture such as urine. This extra skin is removed with a pair of metal blades. It is a painful process and is often performed without any pain killers. While the smoother skin does not collect moisture anymore, the wounds from the skin removal procedure often become infected and lead to slow and painful death of sheep. (Source: PETA <https://www.peta.org/issues/animals-used-for-clothing/wool-industry/mulesing/>)

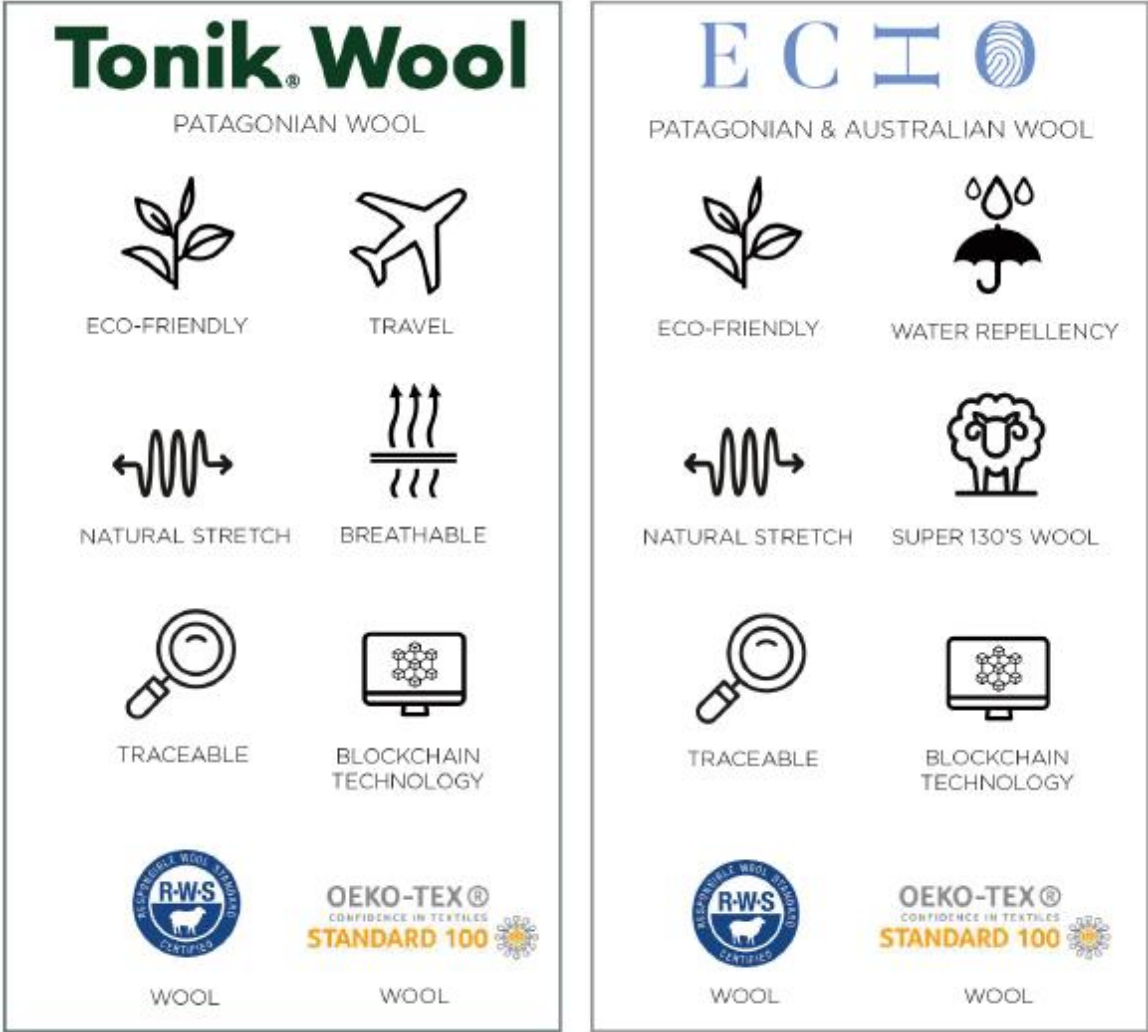


Illustration 14: Dormeuil’s Traceable Fabrics – Tonik Wool (2019) and ECHO (2020)
 Source: Dormeuil Eco Responsible Collection Document

The traceability of Dormeuil is not restricted to “which” supply chain processes are being undertaken and “where”, but also pays attention to “how” those supply chain processes are being conducted. As Alda Roque explains, “*we cannot inspect every kilo of yarn or a wool we buy - it’s impossible.... but of course, we do random checks*”. Dominic Dormeuil, the heir of the Dormeuil family and the current President of the Dormeuil brand, has visited the farms of Mongolia and Patagonia to talk to famers and to inspect the consideration for animal welfare.

In a document obtained from 2008, a decade before the introduction of its traceability scheme, Dormeuil published its green policy and introduced itself as an ‘*environmentally friendly company*’.¹³⁰ Dormeuil explained that it uses only natural fibres for its fabrics which include Vicuna, Qiviuk, Linen, Cashmere goat, Australian Merino sheep, Cotton, Pashmina goat and Kirgыз wool. They are sourced from the places with ancestral traditions and knowledge of these rare fibres which are then, carefully hand-picked by combing the coat of young animals or gathering the naturally shed wool to prepare extremely soft yarn. Dormeuil had engaged with REACH regulation (Registration, Evaluation, Authorization and Restriction of Chemicals) to improve the protection of environment and human health by using non-toxic dyes or chemicals in the fabric production proves. Dormeuil had also claimed to replace its plastic packaging with new paper packaging and to reduce the number of its carbon emissions by utilizing the maximum capacity of its order shipments without compromising on its customer service. In 2017, two years before the launch of blockchain traceability, Dormeuil had published another Green policy brochure which re-emphasized the policies put forward in Green Policy 2008.¹³¹

The company philosophy mentioned in Corporate Social Responsibility document 2020 stresses the importance of traceability as a natural fit for Dormeuil and claims that Dormeuil could not exist without its commitment to animal welfare (illustration 15).¹³² It further adds that transparency is a requirement of Dormeuil’s modern day client and aligns with company’s core vision. Dormeuil aims to build its future on the foundations of its core values combined with traditional know-how and new innovations and technologies.

¹³⁰ Dormeuil, “Dormeuil - An Environmentally Friendly Company” (Dormeuil, 2008).

¹³¹ Dormeuil, “Dormeuil’s Green Policy” (Dormeuil, 2017).

¹³² Dormeuil, “Dormeuil Cloth - RSE 2020” (Dormeuil, 2020).

In 2019, the company produced 20,000 meters of traceable cloth with blockchain technology. Six percent of the wool used in the total production of Dormeuil was certified by RWS and Oeko-Tex. The company has reduced seven percent of its electricity consumption by using solar panels. A reduction in power consumption for heating the water for scouring the fabric was also achieved by using an efficient heat exchange on the exhaust of the steam boiler which reduces the discharge of gases into the atmosphere.

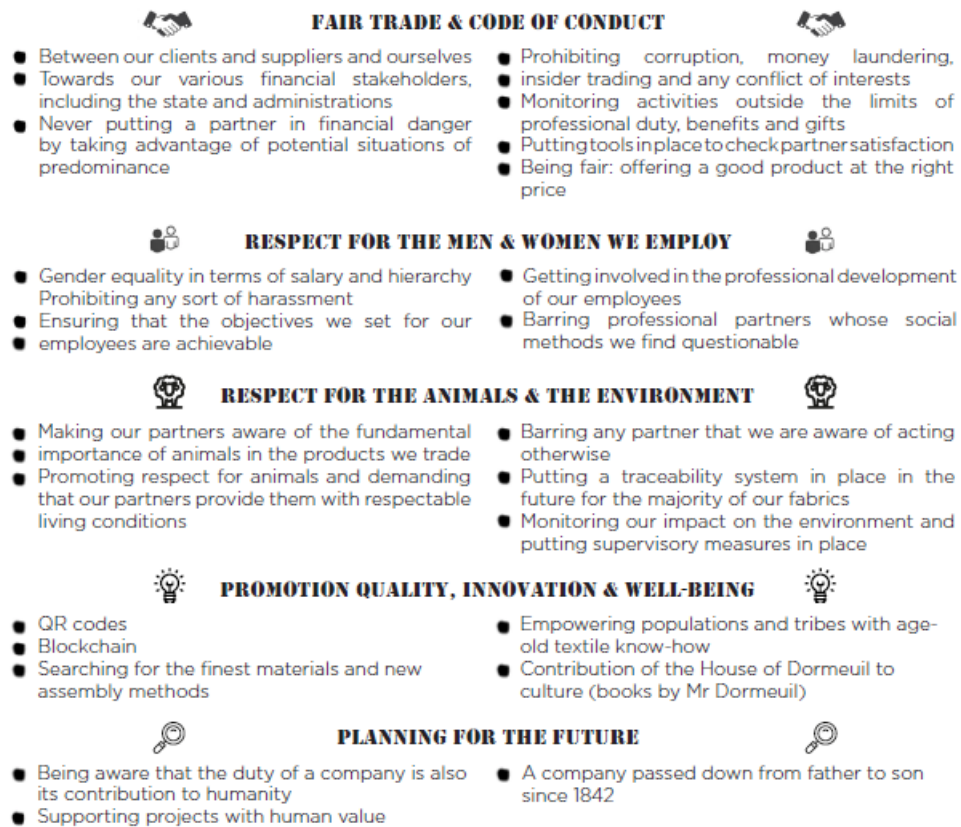


Illustration 15: Dormeuil’s Company Philosophy 2020
Source: Dormeuil

Similar to Harris Tweed, the brand image of Dormeuil also immediately sends a message of quality and authenticity to the consumer. In Alda's words,

"I don't think it would be right, you know, for us to tell people "we are luxury please look at us". No, it's up to the people to decide whether we are luxury or not."

Dormeuil has developed an image of a passionate brand which uses fine raw materials to produce its fabrics. It places the most importance on building a partnership of trust and confidence with the consumers. She further explained,

"Whatever you want to know about this product, we want to accompany you (consumers) and we want to let you know as much you want to know about it but the most important thing for us is that you feel very happy once you buy this product, that you feel you are feeling comfortable well at ease in your garment, with your fabric and that this fabric and this garment are really bringing you something in terms of comfort, self-confidence and what you are expecting."

Roel Wolbrink, a Dormeuil agent, highlighted that Dormeuil has long enjoyed an image of making durable, well-behaving and crease resistant fabrics. The long wool fibres of wool that are used, and the density and finishing of the cloth are reflected in the quality of final product, therefore, carrying the legacy of Dormeuil's brand image that has been created since its early days. However, as formal clothing trends have shifted from business suits to a combination with other styles, Dormeuil has lagged behind other brands in the market, who may or may not be its direct competitors. New Tailor in Amsterdam and Utrecht have also experienced that telling a beautiful story about the cloth interests the audience similar to a story about wine.

The official Twitter page of Dormeuil presents an interesting blend of brand image, brand heritage and traceability. As the picture below presents, the official description/ bio on the company profile says *"The world's best #luxury #cloth since 1842. Made in England with the finest fibres sourced across the world"* (illustration 16).



Illustration 16: DORMEUIL's Official Twitter Profile Bio
Source: Twitter

In the Twitter profile bio, the brand explicitly presents itself as a part of luxury clothing segment. This contradicts with the idea of not telling customers that DORMEUIL is a luxury brand as it uses the hashtags of #luxury #cloth repeatedly in the bio and posts updated on the page. Genuineness and authenticity are displayed as the heritage of the brand backed by its long history of existence i-e since 1842. The brand also uses a “Made in England” label to instill the idea of finest British quality fabrics in the consumer’s mind. Therefore, Country-of-Origin creates an impact on the brand image of DORMEUIL. Finally, and most importantly, the brand shows an orientation towards traceability by acknowledging its geographical associations and mentioning that it is sourcing the finest fibres from all over the world to produce the high-quality luxury clothes. This is further complemented by the cover image of Tonik wool placed right above the bio on the Twitter profile which acknowledges Patagonia as the origin of Tonik wool.

This trend can be observed on the Instagram page of the brand as well which states “welcome to the universe of Dormeuil, luxury cloths since 1842”.¹³³ The luxury image of Dormeuil is further intensified through other photos updated on the brand’s Instagram profile. One such photo is from the launch of Dormeuil’s Japan office in Tokyo Aoyama district in 2015 (illustration 17). Aoyama is one of the wealthiest districts of Tokyo which houses the flagship stores of many international fashion houses. Dormeuil’s show room has a VIP fitting room in addition to a VIP meeting room to offer its exquisite services to Japanese customers in a completely luxurious manner. The post also uses the hashtag #luxurycloth.



Illustration 17: Opening of Dormeuil’s Luxury Store in Tokyo, Japan - 2015
Source: Dormeuil Instagram

¹³³ Dormeuil, “Dormeuil’s Japan Office,” Instagram, December 2, 2015, <https://www.instagram.com/p/-y60BiATK4/>.

In the past, Dormeuil has also used its Country-of-Origin to develop its image of fine quality products. In 1955, Dormeuil published an advertisement with the tagline “*The Seal of Finest British Quality*” (illustration 18).¹³⁴ The image accompanying the text consists of bundles of fabric with quality seals hanging from each bundle. The seals represent that the cloth was produced in Great Britain and is of high quality. Moreover, a sophisticatedly dressed, grey hair man is taking a look at seals drooping from each bundle. His fine dressing sense presents the image of a man who would buy a high-quality cloth for himself and his grey hair can be associated to his wise decision-making skills that come with years of experience. Therefore, Dormeuil capitalizes on its British origin to demonstrate the exceptional quality of its fabric.



Illustration 18: *Dormeuil Advertisement 1955*
Source: Dormeuil Official Pinterest – Vintage Collection

¹³⁴ Due to inability to access the physical archives during the global pandemic, virtually available data was utilized for this research. The advertisements for Dormeuil have been obtained from the official Pinterest page of Dormeuil. The audience for these advertisements remains unknown as there is no clear information/ source about the platforms where these advertisements were published.

This image was used again in 1959 when an advertisement was published with the seal of Dormeuil Freres on Dormeuil cloth and the text mentioned “*ce sceau garantit l’authenticite d’un tissu*” which is literally translated to English as “the seal guarantees the authenticity of the fabric” (illustration 19). While there were no actual seals, the advertisement was also used to endorse that a stamp of Dormeuil on the fabric identifies the authenticity and exclusivity of the cloth.



Illustration 19: *Dormeuil Advertisement 1959*
Source: Dormeuil Official Pinterest – Vintage Collection

The brand image of Dormeuil was further developed by developing a strong recognition of brand name in the future advertisements. However, in 1980s, the advertisements of Dormeuil did not see the stamps of finest British quality but witnessed a fine dressed Dormeuil Man which represented class and character. The brand hired Mr. Rene Gruau, a renowned fashion illustrator to develop the portraits of Dormeuil Man as paintings which were used for advertising (illustration 20 – 21). This collaboration was followed by a series of illustrations which presented a neatly dressed gentleman displaying a sense of style of men’s fashion. The advertisements were followed by the caption “*Les Tissus qui portent un Nom*” which translates as “*fabric with a name*”.

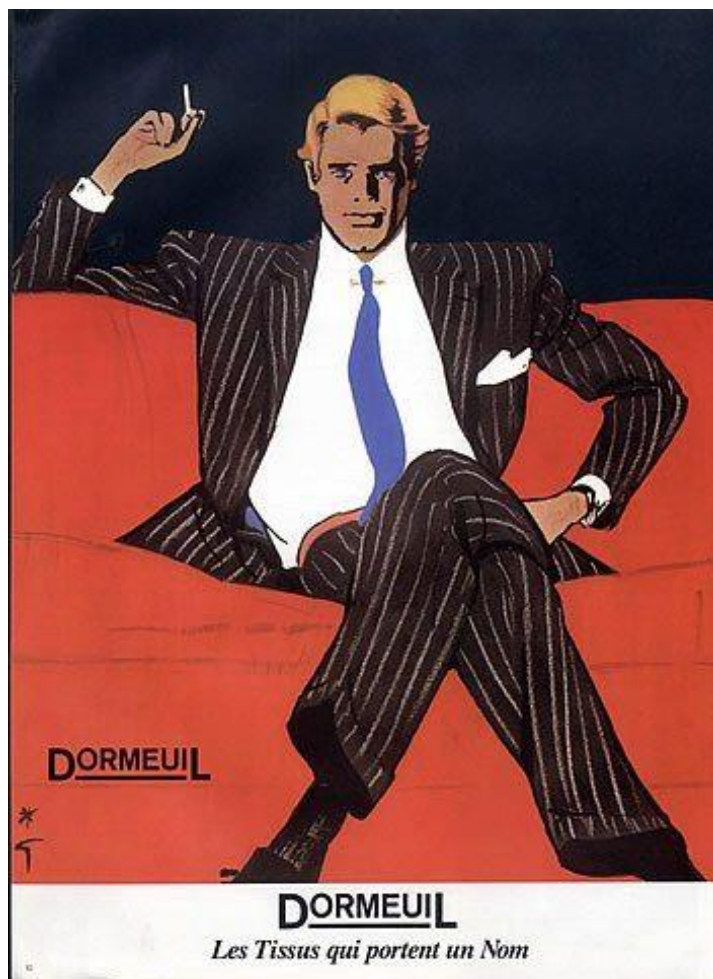


Illustration 20: *Dormeuil Advertisement 1982*
Source: Dormeuil Official Pinterest – Vintage Collection

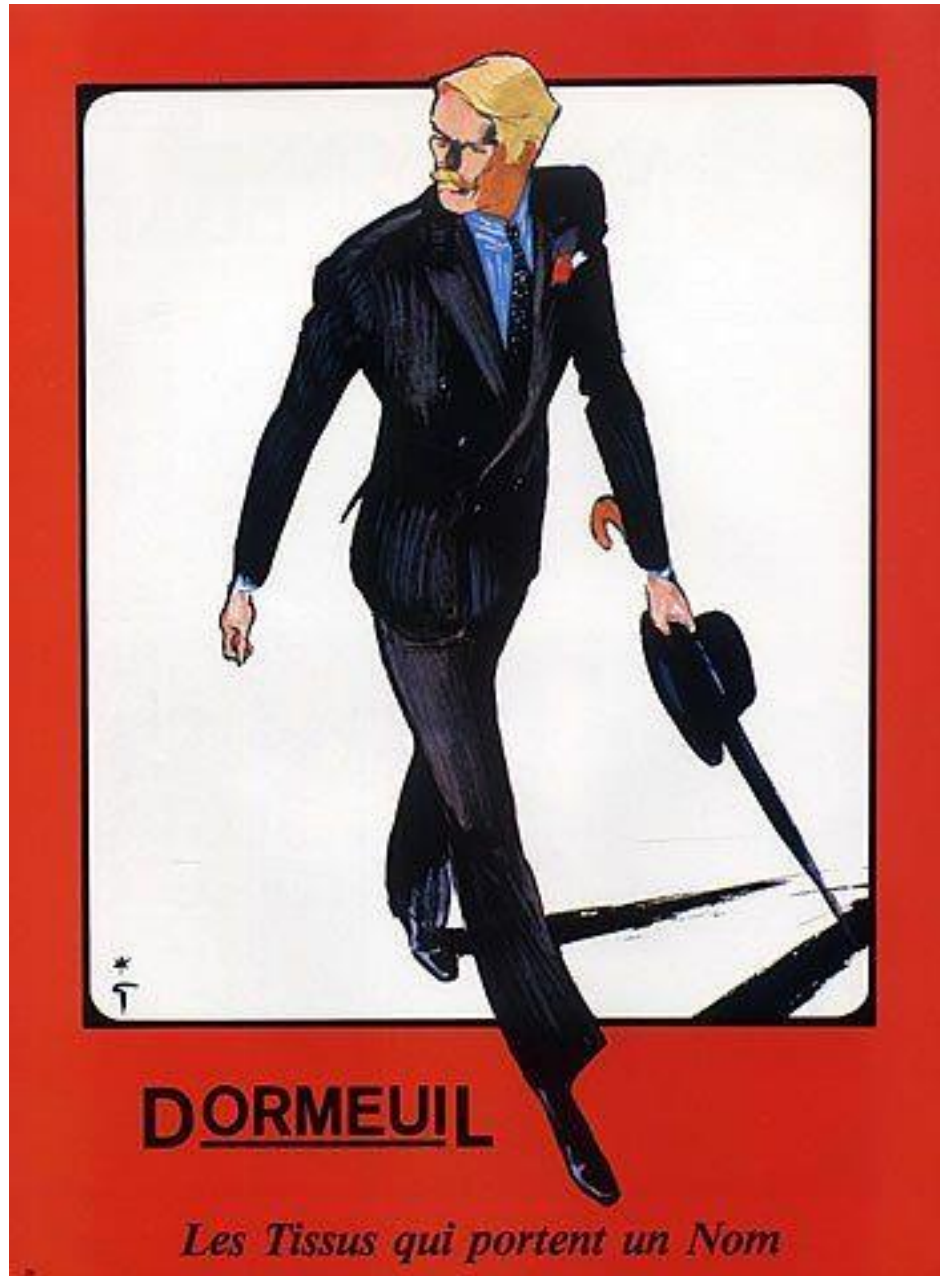


Illustration 21: *Dormeuil Advertisement 1986*
Source: Dormeuil Official Pinterest – Vintage Collection

Recently, Dormeuil has started to embrace the image of being a sustainable luxury as well. While the brand advertising is not aggressively pushing traceability into the market, the brand is slowly trying to communicate it by publishing the Corporate Social Responsibility policies of the company. As Green Responsibility document 2008 identified the company values of socially and environmentally ethical production, the same values are reflected in the company’s philosophy 2020. Therefore, with the launch of its traceability scheme, the company printed its CSR policy in black and white with an added aspect of traceability and block chain and communicated the origin of cloth to its customers. The company is also using its social media to communicate the ‘sustainable’ or ‘traceable’ image of the company. In 2019, with the launch of traceable Tonik wool, the company’s Instagram account witnessed a post providing intricate details of Tonik wool cloth. Most importantly, the brand has also introduced the hashtag #traceable on such posts to secure the image of a traceable brand in the luxury fashion industry (illustration 22).

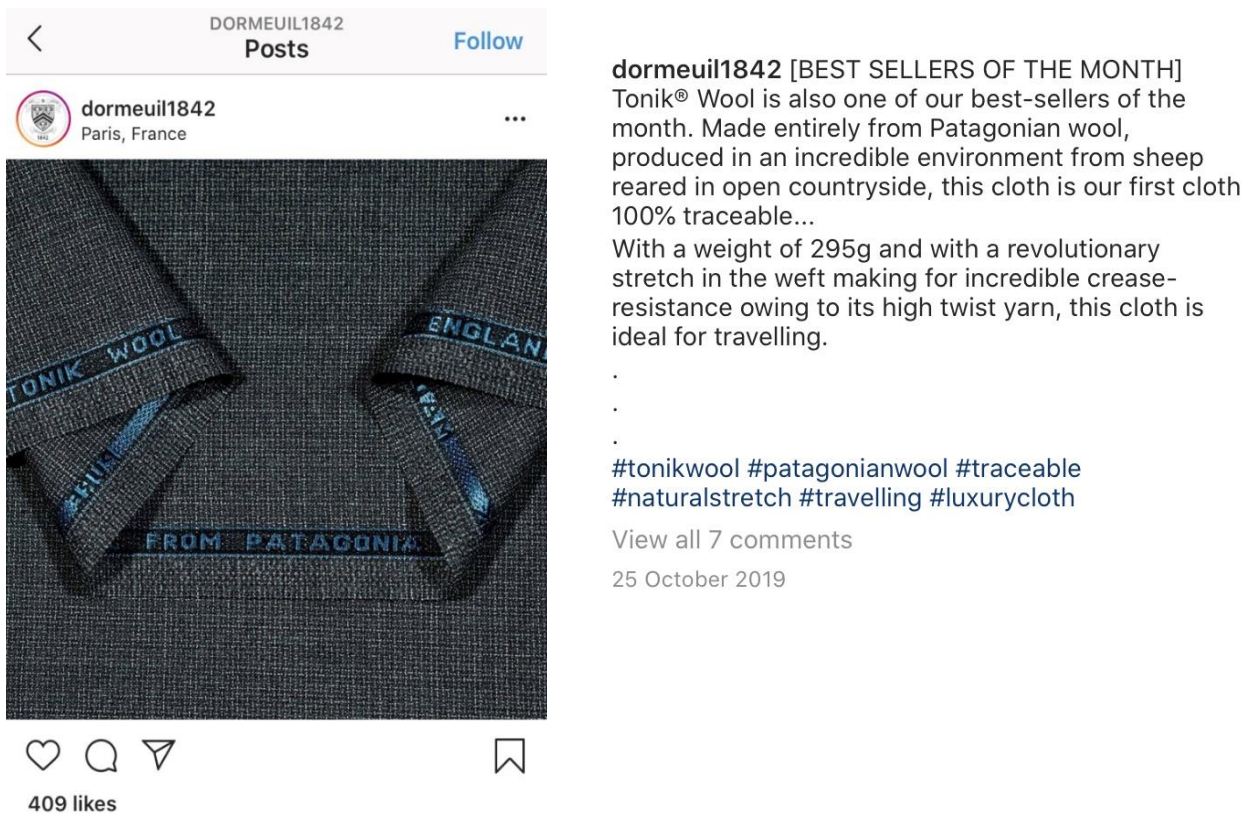


Illustration 22: Tonik Wool (Traceable Cloth) Featured as Best Seller of the Month – Few Months After the Launch (2019)

Source: Dormeuil Instagram

Contrary to Dormeuil's effort to build an image of sustainable luxury, Roel Wolbrink has observed that traceability or sustainability is not a distinctive feature of the present brand image of Dormeuil. The main preference of the customers remains the features of the cloth such as quality, shine, resistance to creasing, beautiful colors and designs. Once the customers have shown interest in some of the clothes, sales agents then talk about the traceability and origin of the cloth afterwards, for example, "*it's from Patagonia and you should have a look at the QR code,*" to spike the interest of the customers. Therefore, the brand image of Dormeuil relies heavily on the expertise used to prepare a fine quality product which have been identified as essential elements of Dormeuil's heritage in *Dormeuil and England – A love story since 1842*.

In 2015, Dormeuil Australia published a post on Twitter which contained images of a promotional handbook named "*Dormeuil and England – A love story since 1842*" which presented the added benefits of Dormeuil fabrics which are "Made in England" (illustration 23). According to the handbook, the production of Dormeuil fabrics "Made in England" is led by the expertise and innovation by capitalizing on the past and present learning of Dormeuil's presence in luxury clothing segment. The cloth is processed and finished by using the combination of new and old techniques which brings soft handling and drape to the fabric which is preferred by the tailors due to its ease and elegance. The long experience of Dormeuil in weaving and spinning and the "*English savoir-faire*" in fabric making result in the accurate density required for the fabric. In result, a high-quality fabric is produced in Dormeuil's own facility in England which satisfies customer demands by meeting highest standards of being a luxury. As the handbook says,

*"With continued investment into research and development, Dormeuil is already working on tomorrow famous fabrics and continued of its **Made in England** cloth."*¹³⁵

¹³⁵ Dormeuil Australia, "Dormeuil & England A Love Story since 1842," Twitter post, March 18, 2015, <https://twitter.com/dormeuilau/status/577987044523130880?lang=en>.

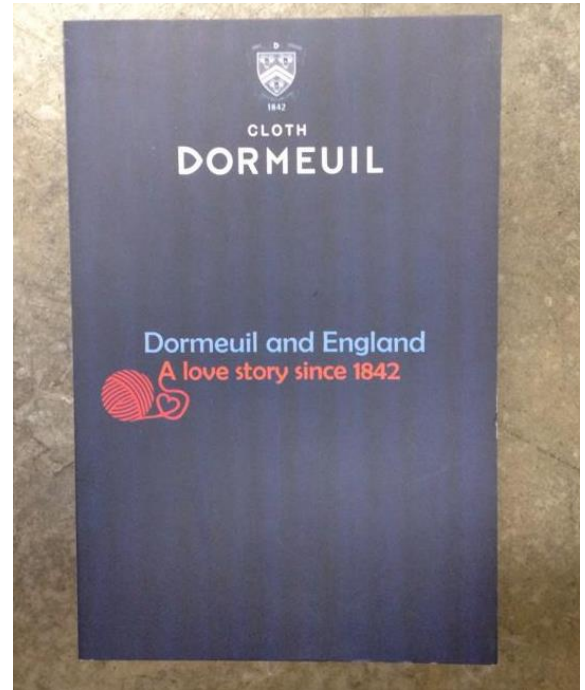


Illustration 23: Dormeuil and England – A love story since 1842
 Source: Dormeuil Australia’s Twitter

Despite being promoted as “Made in England” fabric, Dormeuil considers itself a heritage brand from both, France and England. In 1846, Jules Dormeuil, the founder of Dormeuil, decided to import English fabrics to France whereas the first boutique of Dormeuil was set up in New Burlington Street, a renowned tailoring district, of London in 1871. Today, Dormeuil houses its manufacturing and logistics facilities in Yorkshire, England. Therefore, while the main production of Dormeuil remains in England, the brand capitalizes on its French style as well. The brand connects its heritage with its President, Dominic Dormeuil, who holds both French and English nationalities, can speak French and English very well, and maintains that he has no preference between the two countries. The brand presents it as

“it is English cloth with a touch of French elegance and French concept”

The heritage of Dormeuil provides support to prove its authenticity and quality in the market. The brand considers its existence since 1842 as a certification of genuineness to show its customers that it has been fair in its production and client dealings. The 150 years of experience of the brand reflect good know-how of its industry, market, products and production processes, and customers.

5. Discussion

Luxury fashion is synonymous to fine quality products, the main reason behind the commitment of luxury fashion brands to sustainable practices and becoming traceable is to ensure the quality of the products.¹³⁶ The Harris Tweed Act 1993 has clearly identified the supply chain processes and geographic association of Harris Tweed products to authenticate the quality of the fabric produced. While Harris Tweed wanted its products to be identified through its geographical association (Outer Hebrides) and supply chain processes (handwoven), the luxury fashion industry lacked the concept of traceability in during early 20th century. Therefore, the Orb Mark was initially introduced by the Harris Tweed Association to gain protection against replica models in the market. Similarly, in order to guarantee the genuine raw materials and traditional craftsmanship for the production of the fabric, Dormeuil had also been making the provenance details and sustainable production processes of its fabric public through policy making since the early 21st century. The brand provided details on the most types of wool (raw materials) and the geographical sites for obtaining that wool. However, despite the introduction of sustainable policies, brands face pressure from customers, stakeholders, and changes in sustainability trends in the industry to become more transparent as well in order to maximize the shareholders' value.¹³⁷ Dormeuil's launch of its electronic traceability scheme in 2019 was motivated by a need for transparency by

¹³⁶ Simone Guercini and Andrea Runfola, "The Integration between Marketing and Purchasing in the Traceability Process," *Industrial Marketing Management*, Organizing and Integrating Marketing and Purchasing in Business Markets, 38, no. 8 (November 1, 2009): 883–91, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2009.03.016>.

¹³⁷ Francesca Romana Rinaldi, "The Relevance of Responsible Innovation in Fashion," in *Fashion Industry 2030: Reshaping the Future through Sustainability and Responsible Innovation* (EGEA spa, 2020).

the modern day consumer and the company's core vision to combine the traditional knowledge with innovative technologies for sustainability practices.

While quality production remains the foremost priority of luxury fashion brands, however, they are learning to use their already existing sustainability policies in order to be recognized as traceable brands. In 2019, Harris Tweed participated in the #whomadeyourclothes campaign and launched four films to demonstrate all four supply chain processes of Harris Tweed fabric. The participation of Harris Tweed in the campaign identifies the realization that communication of sustainable policies to the audience is necessary to receive the wide acknowledgement for the traceability measures that have been held by the brand since the beginning. Likewise, as Dormeuil has also widely accepted its geographical associations since the beginning through advertisements, social media, and other channels, the blockchain traceability scheme of Dormeuil capitalized on the existing Green policy and the Environmental Policy of the brand.

The blockchain traceability scheme allows the information to be traced back to all steps and stakeholders involved in the supply chain process. The blockchain technology records the progress of events in the value chain immediately and shares the information with other stakeholders to ensure smooth production process.¹³⁸ The traceability system records the date, activity, geographical location and name of stakeholders involved in the process which is displayed in the form of table or graph as a network of supply chain processes of Dormeuil's fabrics. By scanning the QR code labelled inside the cloth, blockchain of Dormeuil's traceable fabrics provides traceability from shearing of the sheep to the testing of raw materials for any harmful effects for mankind and nature till the manufacturing of cloth at Dormeuil's facilities. However, the scope of electronic traceability scheme remains limited as each piece of fabric is produced through multiple types of wool and each fibre of wool cannot be traced for each piece of fabric produced. Therefore, traceability details cannot be provided for each type of fabric produced by the brand and remains limited in its scope. In addition, the access of detailed traceability information is restricted to business clients and available only on special request to the end consumers, which adds a grey area to the transparency purposes of the traceability scheme.

¹³⁸ Agrawal, Sharma, and Kumar, "Blockchain-Based Secured Traceability System for Textile and Clothing Supply Chain."

Harris Tweed had also considered the launch of an electronic traceability scheme in 2010 to provide transparency about the supply chain processes and geographical associations of the brand. However, unlike Dormeuil, Harris Tweed did not feel the need to prove the origin of its products and processes to its customers and clients. The stamping of Orb Mark on the cloth has been providing the provenance details of the fabric to the consumers since the beginning. However, the Harris Tweed Authority cannot trace the fabric after it has been passed on to the third-party manufacturer for production of clothes, jackets, and so on as it involves a value chain outside of Harris Tweed and these products are sold under the third-party's brand label. Therefore, the Harris Tweed Authority fulfills its responsibility of providing the traceability information of the fabric to the consumers but is not liable to trace the fabric after it has been sold to other brands for further manufacturing. Moreover, as weavers prefer to work in isolation, the Authority works to ensure their privacy and therefore has chosen to opt out of end consumer traceability. Thus, the electronic traceability system of Dormeuil and inherent traceability of Harris Tweed provide the traceability details only until the manufacturing of cloth by each brand but does not extend to the third-party manufacturers. However, Dormeuil's electronic traceability system provides added advantage by providing the minute details – location of each production process, crew member who conducted each process and so on.

Since the new image of sustainability is built from a deep understanding of the story of the product, brands make an effort to beautifully narrate the story behind each fabric as it increases the interest of customers in the sources and methods of production that result in the quality product.¹³⁹ Therefore, the blockchain technology of Dormeuil is an important technological and communication tool to tell the tale behind each traceable product of the brand. In addition, Dormeuil uses advertising platforms including social media, sustainable company philosophy, dedicated sustainability campaign page on its website and highlights of traceable products during the launch of its seasonal collection to communicate the image of sustainable luxury to the consumers. However, the brand image of being a sustainable luxury by becoming a traceable brand successfully conceals the fact that the actual transparent information accessible by the customer remains limited in the first interaction and can be viewed as incomplete traceability. Unless detailed traceability information is demanded from the agent, supplier, or seller of the cloth, it will

¹³⁹ Joy and Peña, "Sustainability and the Fashion Industry."

not be accessible to the end consumer. Therefore, it raises a question about why a brand that wants to present itself as a traceable luxury does not provide the traceability information to everyone and only to the customers genuinely interested in knowing the origin of their products.

Similar to Dormeuil, Harris Tweed has promoted its production and manufacturing locations in its advertising campaigns to tell the story behind each piece of Harris Tweed fabric that is produced. While the sole purpose of this advertising was to ensure the authenticity of products and avoid the counterfeit products, the brand was also becoming traceable at the same time. Therefore, the perception of Harris Tweed being an inherently traceable brand developed by chance, as a byproduct of Harris Tweed Authority's Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to produce a Harris Tweed product.

The print advertisements of Harris Tweed from the past have also demonstrated the traceability of the brand by encouraging consumers to look for the Orb mark. However, the primary purpose of these advertisements has been to create a character of Harris Tweed products by advertising their exclusivity, creative manufacturing of no two pieces being alike, and identifying the characteristics of people who choose and wear Harris Tweed. While the brand markets itself in a conventional way, the mention of provenance details and the Orb Mark in the advertisement describe the geographic location and processes involved in value chain processes of Harris Tweed products. Therefore, traceability, may not be the foremost priority, but it has become an important element of the brand image of Harris Tweed since the early years of brand's evolution.

While the luxury fashion brands acknowledge their geographical association of supply chain processes in order to build a sustainable image, the Country-of-Origin is also crucial to the brand image of the luxury fashion brands. The general perception of the consumers about the manufacturing abilities of the home country of the luxury fashion brand tend to affect the evaluation of luxury fashion products by the consumers.¹⁴⁰ Both luxury brands studied under this research hold immense importance for their Country-of-Origin. The attempt by Harris Tweed Authority to gain a Geographical Indication for Harris Tweed brand demonstrated the importance of the image of CoO for a luxury fashion brand. The Geographical Indication for a brand can build a specific perception about the brand based on its specific geographical origin and reputation

¹⁴⁰ Kapferer and Bastien, "The Specificity of Luxury Management."

associated with that origin.¹⁴¹ The Geographic Indication of Scotland for Harris Tweed could have served as a sign of pure wool, handwoven, homemade, and high-quality image associated to the Scottish Islands for the production of tweed products.

As CoO affects the perceptions of the consumers based on beliefs and stereotypes held about the products that are manufactured in a country, the brands are using dual advertising to build a strong image.¹⁴² Therefore, brands are not only communicating their association to CoO but also the plus factors that originate from this association, for example, Dormeuil's "*Dormeuil and England – A love story since 1842*". The "*Made in England*" label of the brand is synonymous to the high quality of the products which according to the book is obtained through the traditionally acquired experience and knowledge of English fabric making. The brand had realized the importance of communicating the association of its English origin with the high quality of products since its early years. During 1950s, the advertisements of Dormeuil carried the seal of "*British quality*" to demonstrate the geographical association of its fine quality of products to England (CoO).

With the modern-day technology, the luxury brands are using social media networking channels to communicate and to build strong perceptions of customers based on the association of the brand with its Country-of-Origin. The use of "*Made in England*" as a headline for Dormeuil's social media site and Harris Tweed's "*Handwoven in Outer Hebrides*" signifies the importance of CoO for the image of both luxury brands. Despite the failure to receive a geographic indication for Harris Tweed, the Harris Tweed Authority also actively builds the Scottish image of the brand through social media. The luxury fashion brand is promoting its CoO (Scotland) by using the official hashtag #visitscotland of the National Tourism Organisation of Scotland on the social media networking site, Instagram. As a result, Harris Tweed connects the audience to its Scottish origin by appearing under the public hashtag #visitscotland which contains touristic photos of beautiful Scotland.

However, the brand image of luxury fashion brands does not solely rely on its Country-of-Origin. In fact, Country-of-Origin remains only one of the important elements of the brand image.

¹⁴¹ Tereza Kuldova, "Producing Cosmopolitanism Hierarchy and Social Cohesion," in *Luxury Indian Fashion: A Social Critique* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016), 63.

¹⁴² Krupka, Ozretić Došen, and Previšić, "Impact of Perceived Brand Name Origin on Fashion Brand's Perceived Luxury."

Other foundational elements that have an impact on the brand image of a luxury fashion brand include the novel products, high quality and authenticity.¹⁴³ For example, the foremost element of Dormeuil's brand image has been its luxury reputation since 1842 and the brand image is formed through the elements that are essential to any luxury item. This includes high quality products and comfort for the consumer, a sense of high self-esteem and prestige after purchasing a luxury product and self-confidence of being socially significant and socially acceptable at the same time. In addition, as the luxurious showrooms in the international fashion districts of global cities are symbolic to the luxury fashion, Dormeuil's showroom in Tokyo further intensifies the brand image as a 'luxury' brand. Other important elements for brand image include quality and features of the product. In case of Dormeuil, long wool fibres, density, and finishing of the cloth demonstrate its high-quality image in the business suiting or formal clothing segment.

Similarly, the deep-rooted Scottish image, Harris Tweed has also emphasized the quality of its products. In order to build the contemporary image of the brand during recent years, the brand has opened itself to the new designers and fashion shows. However, one of the important reasons behind the preference of designers to collaborate with Harris Tweed and prepare luxury fashionable pieces is the strength and quality of fabric which are essentials of any luxury fashion product.

Traceability of geographical locations and supply chain processes is strongly rooted in the brand heritage as well. The introduction of traceability measures by a brand and its communication to the consumers does not alter or redevelop the brand heritage but in fact, it capitalizes on that brand heritage to guide the consumer decision-making process.¹⁴⁴ Therefore, the luxury fashion brands often rely on the reputation of the expertise and craftsmanship that are considered as a part of their country's heritage to prove their genuineness.

The heritage of a brand relies on its long history, craftsmanship and Country-of-Origin which reinforce the authenticity of the products of a luxury fashion brand by engaging the

¹⁴³ Godey et al., "Brand and Country-of-Origin Effect on Consumers' Decision to Purchase Luxury Products."; Gaetano Aiello and Raffaele Donvito, *Global Branding and Country of Origin: Creativity and Passion* (Routledge, 2016).

¹⁴⁴ Cathy Hopley, Paul Mahony, and Paul Mahony, "Marketing Sense of Place in the Forest of Bowland," *Local Heritage, Global Context* (Routledge, December 5, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315250304-11>.

customers with the longevity of the traditions of the brand.¹⁴⁵ The literature suggests that Country-of-Origin has an impact on the overall perceptions of the consumers about the products manufactured in a particular country based on their general perception of the legacy of the high quality or highly skilled products manufactured in a particular country.¹⁴⁶ Harris Tweed is an exemplar of its Scottish heritage and the Outer Hebrides, the place of origin of Harris Tweed, helps to establish that the brand produces unique products that can only be produced through the production methods that are native to the Outer Hebrides, the Isles of Scotland. All Harris Tweed products labeled as ‘Handwoven in Outer Hebrides’ depict that throughout its existence of more than 150 years, the legacy of handwoven wool from the home-based weavers of the Outer Hebrides has been the source of the exclusivity of Harris Tweed products.

The heritage of Dormeuil dates back to 19th century and dwells on both the English origin and French style and elegance of the concept. The “*Made in England*” label promotes the British heritage of the company which lies in the expertise of processing and finishing the cloth under unique conditions, long experience in spinning and weaving the rare fibres and the *English savoir-faire* to produce exquisite pieces of fabric. In addition, brand heritage of 150 years of experience in luxury fabric making also depicts the authenticity and quality of Dormeuil’s products. Therefore, long years of existence and history of skilled craftsmanship of a luxury fashion brand are often seen as synonymous to genuineness. In Dormeuil’s case, brand reinforces that long success of the brand means shows the involvement of the brand in fair practices of production long before the launch of its traceability scheme. However, while brand heritage offers some support, it cannot be the only factor serving as the basis for always being a sustainable brand.¹⁴⁷

Brands also rely on the CoO to emphasize the brand origin without depending on the perceptions developed about the manufacturing abilities of a CoO. While Harris displays its

¹⁴⁵ Cooper, Miller, and Merrilees, “Restoring Luxury Corporate Heritage Brands.”

¹⁴⁶ Stoenescu Roxana-Denisa, Capatina Gabriela, and Adina Cristea, “The Impact of Country-of-Origin on Brand Positioning for Luxury Goods,” vol. 1 (Entrepreneurship, Business and Economics, 2015), 467–83, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-27570-3_35.

¹⁴⁷ The other factors involved in this process remain unknown due to unavailability of sufficient primary data for this purpose. According to Alda Roque at Dormeuil, the existence of the brand since 1842 manifests that Dormeuil has always followed fair production practices and therefore, has always been a sustainable brand. However, this is only a company view and does not highlight any other factor that might have been the reason behind the involvement of brand in ethical production practices long before the launch of its traceability scheme.

Scottish heritage through its production methods, it also presents an interesting case of use of national heritage (CoO) which is not based on perceptions about the production strengths and weaknesses of a country. The brand is using the beautiful Hebridean landscapes as an inspiration which is reflected in the color and texture of the Harris Tweed products. The stories behind these products are communicated to the customers through social media which cherish the Scottish heritage of Harris Tweed by referring to the local art and culture of Scotland. In addition, the appearance of national Scottish Rugby team in Harris Tweed also displays the interest of local bodies to promote a native brand around the world. These examples, therefore, connect the audience with the most important geographical association of Harris Tweed (CoO) through the cues of national heritage which aim to resonate with Harris Tweed's criteria of being handwoven in Outer Hebrides only.

6. Conclusion

This thesis deals with the impact of traceability of geographical association and supply chain processes on the redevelopment of brand image and brand heritage of luxury fashion brands since 19th century. As many studies have previously explored the role of traceability in the supply chain networks of fashion industry, the purpose of this thesis was to enhance the academic literature on the patterns observed between brand image and brand heritage in relation to the increasing trend of traceability in luxury fashion industry. Two luxury heritage brands that have been in existence since 19th century, Harris Tweed and Dormeuil, were used as comparative case studies for this research. However, Harris Tweed is an inherently traceable brand since 1846 with clear identification of its production locations and supply chain processes whereas, Dormeuil has introduced its traceability scheme in 2019 despite the brand existing since 1842.

The findings from primary and secondary sources and the analysis conclude that the increasing trend of traceability in luxury fashion industry is not entirely driven by sustainable motives and quality production remains the foremost priority of the luxury fashion brands. The brands that already had existing sustainable production policies are now learning to use them for the launch of traceability schemes in order to build the image of sustainable luxury in the fashion industry. Furthermore, it has been found that the association of a brand with its Country-of-Origin

plays an important role for the brand heritage of a luxury fashion brand. Country-of-Origin contributes to the brand heritage by endorsing the skilled craftsmanship associated with the specific country as well as other cues that validate the authenticity of the products. However, the introduction of traceability measures does not redevelop the brand heritage, in fact, brands capitalize on their heritage of genuineness and authenticity to promote their new or old traceability measures. The long existence of the brand and production of quality products without any proven unethical practices in the past support the aim of brands to become sustainable as well as acknowledges the need to become traceable sooner or later.

The brand image of luxury fashion brands also realizes the importance of Country-of-Origin as the most crucial geographical association; however, CoO remains only one of the important elements of the brand image. Quality, durability, product features and the design are the other important characteristics of the brand image. In addition, introduction of traceability measures does not alter the brand image of a luxury fashion brand altogether, however, it amplifies the existing brand image by adding the element of sustainability to the product quality and authenticity. The effective use of blockchain technology has been realized to maintain the traceability chain from sheep to fabric and end consumer, however, the extent of information shared with each stakeholder of the supply chain process remains questionable.

It can be concluded that since the 19th century, the traceability of geographical association and supply chain processes of luxury fashion brands have taken advantage of the brand heritage to amplify the already existing brand image of producing high quality and unique products.

Limitations of the Study & Recommendations for Further Research

While this research analyzes the impact of traceability of geographical associations and supply chain processes in luxury fashion, this study has a limitation in that it is based largely on limited number of interviews and the virtually collected information due to lack of access to archives and restricted mobility to obtain primary data due to COVID-19. The interviews have been mainly collected from the organizational representatives of both brands. Therefore, this study is limited in its understanding of the traceability schemes as weavers or other personnel directly involved in the production process could not be consulted for the interviews. In addition, the

findings have revealed that Harris Tweed has been a traceable brand since its origin and Dormeuil has been long committed to sustainable practices despite being a non-traceable brand for most part of the existence of the brand. Therefore, the results for redevelopment of brand image and brand heritage cannot be generalized for any other luxury fashion brand that has been held accountable for unethical practices in the past and has resultantly introduced traceability to justify its actions and build a new image of being a sustainable luxury or to modify its existing one. This research also observes that while there has been an on-going debate on transparency in fashion industry in the past, it was not until the Rana Plaza incident that consumers and watchdog organizations demanded traceability and transparency. It proves an interesting topic for further research on origin of traceability in luxury fashion and its specific link to rise in demand for traceable information after the Rana Plaza incident.

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