

**Trendy Growth:  
Fashion as a Function for Development in Africa**

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## Abstract

This paper explores the impact fashion has on the development of countries in Africa. Since the dependent variable 'development' and the independent variable 'fashion' are both terms with ambiguous meanings, this is further explained and reconciled in the paper. Development is measured in this context by an increase in the quality of life. Fashion in this context is defined as any form of adornment used to decorate the body, in particular textiles, jewelry, and handbags. My hypothesis is that fashion can have both a negative and a positive impact on development in Africa; however, the negative outcomes can be corrected to create a positive impact from fashion leading to development in Africa. The findings are such that the hypothesis is true, particularly on a micro scale in less developed countries, moving towards a macro scale in more developed countries. The countries researched will include various African countries all across the continent with examples of fashion impacting development. The approach to viewing fashion as a catalyst for development will be viewed through the two lenses of economic and cultural implications. The pros and cons of using fashion as a mechanism to creating development will be laid out, in addition to any implications in the future for how to create development in other African countries through fashion. My values of caring, compassion, equity, respect, and love will be used to guide any concluding decisions on the application of fashion to spur development. The cases compared will be the two organizations Africa Bags and Dsenyo which are based out of the agrarian South African country Malawi. These two different fashion businesses will be compared and contrasted as to which model best suits development and how any negative results can be mitigated.

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## **Preface**

In addition to academic significance, this topic has personal significance to me. Two of my greatest passions are helping others in Africa and fashion, and it is my ultimate goal in life to be able to combine my two passions to make a positive difference in the world. I have an academic background in International Affairs and Political Science with a concentration on Africa and an extracurricular background in fashion design. I chose to conduct this research as an exploration to determine if these two passions have a real connection and if I can use my talents to justifiably make a positive change. It is with personal interest that this study was first explored. This thesis has developed into a greater sense of contributing to a topic that is seen as legitimate in the eyes of many who have already been connecting the two as a way to both understand how to and make a positive impact on our interconnected world.



## **Development as Style, Fashion as Trendy**

How does business affect development? More specifically, how does the fashion industry affect development in Africa? Through reviewing the previous academic research conducted on the topic to answer this question, the impact of capitalism on development will be explored. Support and disagreement for the free market will come with examples of where capitalism has been both successful and unsuccessful in creating development. This theory can then be applied to research on the fashion industry impacting development, and then finally towards how the fashion industry could impact development in African regions. Any suggestions will be decided using the values of caring, compassion, equity, respect, and love to determine the ethical and moral implications of any proposal as these are the values which I hold highest in my decision making.

The definitions and methods for measurement of the two variables will first be given followed by the significance of the topic. The history of development and fashion in Africa will be laid out and case examples of development through fashion will be presented next. Using the methods of a qualitative study conducted with in-person interviews to compare two fashion organizations based in Malawi, the case studies section and following analysis will conclude. I hypothesize that fashion can have both a negative and a positive impact on development in Africa; however, the negative outcomes can be corrected to create a positive impact from fashion leading to development in Africa. Before this relationship can be tested, development and fashion must first be defined and accurately measured, and an explanation for the choice of Africa over other continents must be explained.

*What is 'Development'?*

Development is a loaded term with many different viewpoints and different ways to be measured. Development can be thought of as, “a process which enables human beings to realize their full potential, build self-confidence, and lead lives of dignity and fulfilment,” as an expression of a wish for better life (Rist, 1997). Amartya Sen discusses development as “the achievement of the freedoms necessary to live a life more fully,” with his term “unfreedom” being that which arises when people have inadequate opportunities for achieving what they minimally would like to achieve (Martin & Mathema, 2010). Freedom is both the end and the means to sustaining economic life and welfare (Sen, 1999).

While development can be procedural, in Sen’s approach this is not the goal; the overall goal is having the capacity to live the lives we have reason to value (Martin & Mathema, 2010). This approach towards development is different than the approach to measure development with a focus on GDP (Gross Domestic Product) or through a process of industrialization or technical progress (Martin & Mathema, 2010). This definition sees the poor as prisoners of poverty, and development is when these people are released from this prison, making a real difference in their lives (Martin & Mathema, 2010). The reduction of poverty, besides its inherent value, is also listed among the International Trade Centre’s Millennium Development Goals (Hume, 2009). Economic growth is the foundation for true development, allowing people to escape poverty by putting the beneficiaries in charge, not dictating them, and allowing them to achieve their goals (Martin & Mathema, 2010).

While there are many different calculations for development, the measurement used in this study will be an increase in one’s standard of living, or quality of life. This measurement,

while also broad, will be defined by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 25:1 which states that:

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control (United Nations, 1948).

This definition takes into account the economic empowerment and the increase in the standard of living which Sen describes, and avoids a procedural approach which may or may not improve the quality of life for the people living in poverty. This emphasis on their experience places the value on the people and not on the system, which supports my values of caring, compassion, equity, respect, and love when implementing any plan of action. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 23:1-3 also includes the value of employment, reinforcing the importance of economic empowerment:

- (1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
- (2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
- (3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection (United Nations, 1948).

When looking at the impact fashion has on development in the following examples, the validity and effectiveness of the impact will be based on any increase in the basic human rights, as part of the Declaration of the Right to Development, through the basic necessities of “food,

shelter, health, work, education, participation, and a sustainable environment,” (Shepherd, 1994). In addition to the United Nations and the Declaration of the Right to Development, these rights have also been stated as protected under agreements of the International Labor Organization, the Covenant on Economic and Social Rights, and the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights (Shepherd, 1994). The United Nations Development Programme also includes that the basic objective of development consists of an increase in choices relating to access to income, employment, education, health, and a safe and clean environment (Rist, 1997). The wide use and justification of these rights in various international documents provides the basis to measure development as based on an increase in the quality of life determined by the factors listed above. This measurement for development thus holds ideologies which are comprehensive to the world community, allowing for inclusive and desired change in society.

In holding with my values, measuring development in this sense keeps true to my honest motivation for desiring change in Africa. This measurement takes into account actual lives of real people and does not attempt to force outside ways of life or foreign terms on a culture. This is my personal justification for defining development this way.

#### *What is ‘Fashion’?*

Fashion, like the styles it portrays, has many different interpretations. Fashion is “a prevailing custom or style of dress,” first recorded in the early fifteenth century (Fashion, 2012a); however, it was probably around 1300 that a sense of the word developed, originating from the word *modus*, meaning ‘manner’ (Kawamura, 2005). Intrinsically, fashion is characterized by change, that which is non-constant (Rovine, 2009). It is this belief that is manifested through clothing, primarily associated with dress and adding value to garments (Kawamura, 2005). It is difficult to give an exact definition because there are differing

interpretations of the concept as the meaning of fashion has changed with the social customs and habits of different societies over time (Kawamura, 2005). Today even the idea of fashion as a phenomenon is contested and disagreed upon.

Due to the nature of the word and the application in which fashion plays out in the following examples affecting development, fashion for the purpose of this study will include clothing, jewelry, and handbags which are used to adorn the body. While fashion can also encompass a range of other equally justifiable forms, such as hair styles, makeup, body paintings, tattoos, and scarification, fashion in this paper will be limited to products primarily which can be produced and purchased for wear on the body. In regards to the role fashion plays in impacting development, the most commonly found forms of fashion are clothing, jewelry and handbags, which is why the definition will tend to favor these forms as the primary sources for fashion in this study.

#### *Why Africa?*

The effect of failing global development strategies have been felt harder in Africa than in any other continent, making Africa the most susceptible to economic and social crises (Chole, 1989). The continent in the past has not seen any significant growth rate or increase in general well-being as a whole (Chole, 1989). Most of the least-developed and low-income countries in the world have been found on the continent (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2003). Africa is poorer today than in the past with the highest number of people living in extreme poverty, up to an expected poverty rate of 38% by 2015 (UNDP in Africa, 2011). Every four seconds someone dies in Africa from something preventable (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012). High birth and child mortality rates mean nearly one out of five children are killed before they turn five (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2003). According to the United Nations Development

Programme (UNDP) 75% of all HIV/AIDS victims come from sub-Saharan Africa, shortening overall life expectancy by eight years in the region (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2003).

Only one in four Africans has access to electricity (Eckes, 2011). Over one half of Africans interviewed reported having at least occasional shortages of basic goods and services and two out of three say they are occasionally short of income (Bratton, Mattes, & Gyimah-Boadi 2005). The UNDP calculates that 46.7% of Africans live on less than one dollar a day (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2003). This has meant an increase in food aid, an increased dependence on imports, and a stagnating or even declining GDP despite having the highest population growth rate of any other region in the world (Chole, 1989). Drought has resulted in food shortages, a lowering of labor productivity with unemployment and underemployment rising to almost half of the labor force, and dependence on only one or two commodities for exports (Chole, 1989). The quality of life for the majority of the African population deteriorated over the past three 'development' decades from the 1970s to 2000 (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2003). African remains underdeveloped today as the majority of failed states are in Africa (The Failed States Index, 2011).

These facts highlight not only the desire in Africa for change, but also the need for new strategies. Focusing on development with the defined measurement for this study is relevant to the continent in more ways than just need. In particular, food self-sufficiency was a goal set for Africa in the Lagos Plan of Action (Shepherd, 1994). And responses from Africans as to the most important development problems are economic problems, including unemployment, poverty, and food shortages (Bratton, Mattes, & Gyimah-Boadi, 2005). These descriptions explain why action is needed in Africa, and the desire for a new strategy shows that there are other people who also share my core values, using this as a justification for how to accomplish

development. The remainder of the paper will explain how this can be done and will justify the validity of the action.

### *Significance and Implications*

Now that definitions and measurements have been laid out for the two variables and the explanation has been given as for why this study chooses to focus on Africa, the following section will explain the relevance of development, fashion, the two to Africa, and the importance of this topic overall.

#### *Why Development is Both Out of Vogue and Chic*

The concept of development is not a new one, and as mentioned above, there are many different approaches towards development. As with most evolving processes, there are good and bad aspects and development is no exception (Martin & Mathema, 2010). Since the end of World War II, there have been efforts to try to create standards of living in poor countries that are equivalent to standards in Europe and North American (Easterly, 2001). Post-World War II produced the idea of development as a way to describe how ‘backward’ countries could ‘catch up’ with the industrialized world (Black, 2003). Attempts have included foreign aid, investments in education, efforts to control population growth, and aid loans, none of which have delivered as promised (Easterly, 2001). Prescriptions which have been laid down have been given by those already deemed as developed (Escobar, 1992). The number of people living in poverty before the concept of development began has flourished, and in many instances their poverty is a result of failed development efforts (Black, 2003). The idea is that development should combat poverty, and while this is done in the name of progress, often there are underlying motivations besides just trying to lend a helping hand (Black, 2003).

As for the negative aspects of development, the major issues deal with the fact that many development policies have been put in place, especially in Africa, and yet there still seems to be a lack of overall improvement. The theories for this failure are widespread and diverging, yet the one thing that is apparent is that the same old processes do not seem to work. Past literature reveals the conclusion that some factor is missing as to explain why development efforts have not been as successful as planned, and yet the same disappointing results (Escobar, 1992). This means some sort of change must be made, and that change is woven through the development aspect of this study starting with the definition of development and the ultimate way development will be applied.

Another problem with development is its relation to globalization as globalization can have some negative connotations. Development is often seen in conjunction with globalization, as globalization is seen as spurring development. Yet there are issues with globalization, including how globalization tends to favor the rich and the rich favor globalization (Friedman, 2003). Yet a greater flow of international trade and investment through globalization stimulates economic growth, requiring more employment and generating higher living standards (Weidenbaum, 2003). This rapid development creates a new middle class (Weidenbaum, 2003).

The other major issue with development is the concept of development itself. Edward Said described development as a mechanism for the management and production of the Third world countries (Escobar, 1992). Some critics say, “development was merely an ideological expression of the expansion of post-World War II capitalism,” yet supporters say it was the result of new knowledge and possibilities of science and technology that could aid the non-industrialized world; however, it is this use of Western science which has led to exploitative economic systems and increasing ecological crises, fueling further problems in the Third World

(Escobar, 1992). Along with this dilemma is the tendency for development to be an exploitative model that is foreign to the developing country, enacted without the people's support and negatively impacting the cultural roots of receiving countries, destroying their historical identity, and impairing any creative possibilities the natives may have developed (Escobar, 1992).

A following issue is the inherent sense of paternalism in any voluntary activity, including development (Illich, 1968). Paternalism is often meant in a well-intentioned effort to help, but can also have the negative connotation of appearing as condescending and offensive to receiving groups. This paternalism is especially intrinsic in the idea of development, which may, and has in the past, had alternative objectives besides a desire to help, such as economic and political motivations like a way to increase profits or to spread democracy. The attempt to provide service can actually result in doing more damage than good, and can also appear as pretentious (Illich, 1968). This idea of paternalism goes against my core value of respect and is necessary to avoid in constructing a development plan that stays true to my values.

There are deep contradictions and tensions built into the idea of development, starting with the fact that international control is necessary to establish local control (Paris & Sisk, 2009). The next contradiction is that "universal values are promoted as a remedy for local problems," which creates a block between actions which are based as legitimate to both the interveners and the local population and may not align with everyone's values (Paris & Sisk, 2009). Other contradictions are that short-term goals tend to conflict with long-term objectives, there is this possibility for the long duration of the intervention to cause the outsiders to outlast their stay, and there is a danger in creating a dependency by the local population on the intervener (Paris & Sisk, 2009). Coherence dilemmas arise when it is difficult to achieve full cooperation and understanding between all of the various parties involved, and footprint dilemmas exist when a

level of intrusiveness is forced on the local area as an inevitable result of the intervention (Paris & Sisk, 2009). These factors inherent in development interventions contribute to the negative aspects, and are therefore factors that I will work to overcome in this study when enacting development to stay true to my values.

Despite the plethora of research and literature against development, there is still merit afforded to considering development options. Any further plans of action must take into account all of these negative factors, and work towards a path that is distinct from past interventions. The greatest argument for pursuing development thus comes from a moral standpoint and a desire for equity. The reality that opportunities are decided upon where one is born is something that either can be accepted or can be taken as something that must be changed. The concept of development must no longer be about forcing outside concepts on a foreign land, but rather about giving the impoverished the chance to create their own opportunity. The path to development must align with internationally accepted rights, as the definition above follows in compliance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as with my values. The greatest measurement and justification for an intervention towards development is one that incorporates my core values of caring, compassion, equity, respect, and love as these are the main values inherent in my decision making. If at any point a plan is not based on these values, there is little to no justification for its merit because upholding my values is one of the best ways to determine if a proposed intervention is valid or not. The decision to achieve development by an outsider to a different place must be supported fully by the natives, and taken up by them as what they want and what they feel is in their best interest in attaining the quality of life that they desire and deserve. A path towards development is validated and rationalized through upholding my values throughout the entire process.

In working to avoid the patriarchal component of the concept of development to keep in line with my values, the development of a country or region will not be viewed for this study as in comparison to other regions, but rather as an area that is lacking the basic human needs which are justified by international law to be the right of each and every human being. Any motivations instigating the drive towards development will be solely for the benefit of the African people as a result of the moral implications that drive the desire for every human being to have the basic essentials to improve their quality of life. It is the universal human rights standard which must be the center of planning and assessment to provide a justification for action (Shepherd, 2004).

While there are a wide variety of differing consensuses over how development should be employed, one mostly agreed upon aspect is that the community should play a large part in the process (Martin & Mathema, 2010). This approach gives the control to the community, a positive outcome that development should be aimed towards, and a key idea this study will include when exploring fashion businesses in the case study section. Another general characteristic of development is to help impoverished persons attain a level of control over their economic futures and lives, another aspect this study will work to satisfy (Sachs, 2005). With these key components in mind, my values will be upheld, serving as a justification for the plan of action within this particular framework.

#### *Why Fashion is Frumpy Yet Stylish*

Fashion is by definition “ephemeral and elusive,” always moving, and therefore a critical component in the global clothing economy and a critical source of power (Rogerson, 2006). Fashion through this self-conscious change plays an important role in characterizing cultures, classifying people, marking affiliation, and creating a sense of belonging through cultural

attainment (Rovine, 2009). This relation between culture and fashion has implications for personal identity, bolstering the idea of fashion as more than just a superficial concept, and rather as a means of expression and importance in daily lifestyle (Rovine, 2009). Fashion is an art form in which a country's culture and identity can be expressed (Pope, 2011).

Traditionally, fashion has been viewed in opposition to tradition, the two concepts inherently conflicting. Tradition is associated with non-Western dress, that which is unchanging, while Western dress is fashion because of its ability to transform constantly and project individuality (Rovine, 2009). Yet, ironically, it is this sense of tradition that propels styles and forms of fashion into the fashion market (Rovine, 2009). It is through this association with fashion that tradition is revived and stays current in cultures and trends.

There are the practical uses for fashion in addition to aesthetic values. While fashion is adornment and can be beautiful to look at along with giving erotic appeal, it does keep us warm (Miller, 2009). Fashion through clothing protects us from the elements (What is Fashion?, 2012). Fashion also has value in research and practicality. Like art, fashion expressed through clothing can provide historical reference, and like architecture, fashion fulfills a primarily functional dimension (Miller, 2007). Fashion gives us a creative outlet (African Fashion Designers, 2012). Fashion can create physical attraction, express emotions with how we are feeling, and give an outlet for religious expression (What is Fashion?, 2012). Fashion also depicts identification and tradition, from military uniforms to the robes worn by judges (What is Fashion?, 2012). Fashion can be used as a political weapon, as with communist uniforms in the twentieth century, showing the power of fashion (What is Fashion?, 2012). And fashion is of course a business, that which employs millions of people in the buying, selling, and production of clothes (What is Fashion?, 2012).

There are also downsides to the concept of fashion as it interplays in societies today which are important to list in order to fully grasp any negative results that can come from using fashion as a variable for development. Critics classify fashion as vanity and folly, as philosopher Immanuel Kant did (Miller, 2007). Kant described fashion as a social custom pertaining to the imitation of others, resulting in a fickle comparison which leads to vanity (Miller, 2007). Fashion through this lens has no inner value, giving into the folly of trying to compete against others in society (Miller, 2007). Fashion also fuels this vice of consumerism while creating an anxiety over what one possesses (Shah, 2003). This causes a concern over whether these things are “up-to-date” or “new” enough and how this compares to what others have (Shah, 2003). Fashion pressures us to buy not for style but for a pulsing desire to conform to what others view as “fashionable” (Shah, 2003).

A feminist argument against fashion stems from how personal appearance defines a woman’s social position and influences how she views herself (Kawamura, 2005). The belief is that personal adornment through fashionable dress is construed as oppressing women because the desire to be beautiful was created by men in a male-dominated society (Kawamura, 2005). The counterargument to this claim is that fashion actually denaturalizes the body; removing all essentialism and therefore transgressing gender boundaries, inverting stereotypes, and acknowledging the masque of femininity (Kawamura, 2005). Fashion, therefore, is a tool in which women shift from nature to culture as a source of power controlled by women (Kawamura, 2005). This view of fashion as a tool for women is important to addressing women in development, which will be further discussed in the case studies in Malawi.

More affirmative views of fashion interpret the concept much more differently, exploring all of the positives that result from fashion. On the opposite side of vanity there is the happiness

that ensues from appearing attractive to others. Philosopher Curt John Ducasse places appearance at the center of human happiness, because personal happiness is derived from the attitudes of people we interact with (Miller, 2007). These attitudes are based on “likeableness” and a fascination that derives from how we appear, igniting imagination and creating the phenomenon of falling in love, central to the state of human happiness (Miller, 2007). Clothing in the form of fashion is an embellishment, that which creates this fascination, and therefore this state of happiness (Miller, 2007). This link between fashion and happiness can be an important value that arises from fashion to improve quality of life.

A different negative depiction of fashion is derived from another philosophic viewpoint. Beauty is more often seen as positive; however, the way one dresses can be viewed philosophically as “worse than worthless” and therefore negatively, despite the connection fashion can have to beauty (Hanson, 1990). There are also moral, economic, and political concerns against the demands and effects of fashion, such as the use of animals, the exploitation of workers, the use of limited resources, the possibility of economic colonialism, the preservation of class differences, the enforcement of social distinctions with regards to wealth, heritage, and gender, and the struggle between Western fashion and tradition as a form of imperialism (Hanson, 1990). These concerns all unravel fashion as a false sense of beauty used to cover up human misery and economic abuse (Hanson, 1990). They are important to note for how fashion can negatively impact development.

These unsettling aspects of fashion can after all be readdressed as political and economic problems, realizing that improvement in the fashion business is tied to improvement that is equally needed in any other sphere of human activity (Hanson, 1990). This does mean though that these considerations must be taken into account with fashion, and mitigated in some way. It

is in this realization that we can see vices and responsibilities surrounding fashion, and a recognition that these possibilities for wastefulness and injustice also arise in other subjects (Hanson, 1990). It is with a conscious mindset that fashion is approached, being aware always of the possibilities for destruction, but remembering to value the positive outcomes while working to control the negative ones. In best serving my values, the positive sides to fashion will be exemplified while working to diminish the negative aspects. Viewing fashion as a power tool with cultural significance in support of my values helps to rationalize using this contested topic in working towards development in Africa.

#### *African Development and Fashion*

Africa has a recent history and ongoing connection with past development efforts as mentioned before, which have failed thus far to lift the continent out of poverty, even worsening conditions through its failure (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2003). The African crisis has been referred to as “a crisis of underdevelopment,” tying the region’s problems to a need to develop (Chole, 1989). This does not mean that development as it has existed in practice is the correct remedy, as this study explores, but the notion has been connected to Africa for quite some time with a lasting impact.

Fashion insiders have been taking nontraditional steps to make a lasting impact in Africa (Hume, 2009). These examples will be explored more in detail in this paper. Fashion is inherently part of the culture in Africa and vital for development by creating jobs and providing resources (Guigny, 2008). Some countries in Africa do not necessarily want to become “modern” in the Western sense, but other countries do wish to progress and grow in their own terms, and African modernity exists in fashion (Guigny, 2008). Embellishing African design is one way to embrace the culture and heritage of Africa (Pope, 2011). One example is the

Ghanaian kaba, a style of a dress, which sustains and expresses African culture (Gott & Loughran, 2010). In the past clothing has stereotyped this vision of an African 'other', yet African designers have used clothing to offer a counterclaim to this racist undertone, emphasizing the cultural aspect (Rovine, 2009). This shows how fashion can affect the cultural aspect of traditional African societies. Depending on how the implementation of fashion would impact these differing cultural aspects from region to region, this will determine using my values whether or not fashion is feasible to be used towards development. Any negative impact on cultural values would be a case where fashion would not be applicable for development. As far as production goes, Sub-Saharan African countries have great potential to be competitive in producing cotton textiles and inputs for apparel, deriving implications for how this could affect Africa and explored more in detail in a subsequent section (Aranoff, 2009). In approaching sections fashion as capitalism will be explored in greater detail, illuminating how this approach of development through a capitalist framework will help serve the interests of the Africans and serve development by increasing quality of life. The support for capitalism will be in the form of small capitalism endeavors rather than mass retail and manufacturing nations.

#### *Why This Topic is of Importance*

There is a scholarly debate about whether business should be used to create development. This is extraordinarily important for any future interventions that may take place to try to develop underdeveloped areas. The pros and cons for applying a business model to spur development will dictate whether or not the intervention should be used. In addition, any values associated with the intervention are critical to determining the validity of a proposed intervention. The implications for whether or not business can be used to spur development could lead to whether or not future regions will be more or less easily developed. This also

brings up the question of whether or not these regions would choose to be developed in this sense, and upon knowing this if any proposed intervention would be feasible. These questions and stipulations demonstrate the significance of this topic.

Clothes are something in most of today's culture that are a necessity; they are part of typical modern custom and are needed by the great majority of the world's people. The fashion industry therefore is a large component of the economy. By utilizing such a large and impacting sector, greater change can be made in places where it is desired. Through tying this huge money-maker to aiding those in need, more people can benefit. Tapping into the fashion industry could mean a spur in development which is a goal that is the academic focus of International Affairs and Political Science studies.

### **Designing a Pattern for Development and Crafting Fashion**

#### *Historical Background*

The history on development and how it has impacted Africa, including the history of capitalism, are important for understanding the situation today. To get a good grasp of the past allows educated guesses to be made for how development and the free market will impact Africa in the future. The history of African fashion can also lend invaluable information about fashion playing a role in the continent today and what any fashion possibilities may or may not be as a result of the past.

#### *Designing Development*

As mentioned in the definition, the concept of development initiated after the end of the Second World War (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2003); however, the belief of development from the Western viewpoint has ancient roots (Rist, 1997). Development was launched as a strategic geopolitical and geo-economical project which promoted free trade and democracy in the Cold

War era when the United States was not yet a secure hegemony (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2003). Harry Truman in 1946 launched the development strategy as a method for “backward” nations to escape the grasp of communism, trying to prevent its spread (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2003). The concept was applied to countries or regions where the economies were not at the level of those of more industrialized states like North America and Western Europe (Rist, 1997). The goal of the process was to create economic and social development through economic growth (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2003).

Development first appeared in the form of overseas development assistance (ODA) which through the policies of the rich industrialized governments supplemented resources from agencies like the World Bank (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2003). The ODA became the largest resource flow in the 1970s between richer countries in the North and the poorer countries in the South (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2003). Foreign aid appeared in the form of bank loans, resource transfers, and foreign direct investments, while the world capitalist system crisis in the mid-1970s resulted in a questioning of the current development practices (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2003). A total of thirty-seven African countries accepted World Bank and IMF loans over this period, with little attention paid to the incentives laid out for economic expansion (Bratton, Mattes, & Gyimah-Boadi, 2005). Despite ODA the world was seeing a divergence instead of the desired convergence between the industrialized and non-industrialized countries (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2003). The development project was failing with the conclusion that liberal reform paired with government policies which ensured growth and equity while satisfying of the basic needs of the poor were necessary (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2003).

In the 1980s Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) were used to try to stimulate new methods for refinancing and conditioning repayments on existing debts accumulated from

foreign aid from the 1970s (Shepherd, 1994). By 1992 Africa as a whole had complied up to \$290 billion in debt, which had gone up two and a half times since 1980 (Shepherd, 1994). Opponents of SAPs criticize their ability to correct failed production methods while supporters praise their ability to improve equity opportunities (Shepherd, 1994).

Development methods particular to Africa with assistance from the World Bank took place in the form of loans to sub-Saharan Africa with the objectives to assist in strengthening administrative institutions and to ensure success with development activities (Adamolekun, 1989). Other aid agencies holding the debt in addition to the World Bank are the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the African Development Bank (Shepherd, 1994). Long-term development plans to try to improve the economic situation in Africa have included Regional Food Plan for Africa (AFPLAN), the Industrial Development Decade (IDDA), and several other similar programs which all attempted to break away from the obstacles restraining Africa from development (Munu, 1989).

Other economic reform policies included Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery (APPER), the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UNPAAERD), and the Economic Recovery Programme for the West African Sub-region (ECOWAS) (Munu, 1989). The Lome Declaration on Economic Recovery in West Africa convened to adopt a common strategy for economic development (Munu, 1989). These plans were initiated to move towards sub-regional economic recovery in West Africa which had been one of the sub-regions hit the hardest from the economic crisis in the beginning of the 1980s (Munu, 1989). These various plans each identified steps of action that needed to be taken to address lists of short and long-term socioeconomic problems, including addressing food and agricultural issues and achieving national economic recovery programs (Munu, 1989). As with

other forms of development, these plans did not play out as desired, giving the same disappointing results of leaving Africa worse off than before and development at a standstill.

Development strategies today have varied in consensus as to which ones are effective, if any, as many criticisms blame development for the increase in the developing world's problems. One rejection of the development path has turned instead to direct action against government policies in an effort towards social transformation (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2003). Alternative methods to development have focused on grassroots movements and the local community bottom-up approach which will be covered in the comparative case studies section. Development also can take the form of monetary aid, considered a hand-out to underdeveloped countries, or assistance, which is viewed as a "hand-up" from the most developed countries. These two forms relating to fashion will be compared in the case example section. The past precedence for development has dictated what is now acceptable or not, constantly changing views and decisions made on development policies.

By incorporating lessons learned from the past, I have concluded that it is not feasible nor in alignment with my values to use previous methods for development. Instead, a new method or modification on existing methods for development is necessary in order to achieve success and not create further despair. This new approach towards development, focusing on a hand-up rather than a hand-out and on the community level, will be advanced and integrated in the case studies section.

### *Capitalist Theories*

Capitalism is a form of economics which in theory is meant to bring improvements to areas of human existence through economic, political, and social dimensions, strengthening with technological advances (Dowd, 2000). Industrial capitalism and the classical political economy

were put in place by Adam Smith, Thomas Robert Malthus, and Jeremy Bentham in the early 1800s (Dowd, 2000). Capitalism was driven by efforts to expand, exploit, and thrive under oligarchic rule, later being strengthened by colonialism, then imperialism, and now globalization in conjunction with industrialization and nationalism (Dowd, 2000). Capitalism has survived by means of exploitation and ownership by a small group that controls a majority required to work for wages simply to survive (Dowd, 2000). Industrial capitalist nations have exploited labor sources to the degree of satisfying capitalism's need for inequality of income, wealth, status, and power, replacing workers of the early industrial revolution with those in developing countries (Dowd, 2000). A system which enforces this type of dynamic would not be consistent with my values and therefore not a system to directly incorporate into my intervention, but as will be described below there are some positive aspects from capitalism which can be derived and implemented.

While this study does not attempt to elaborate on the role government plays in development for purposes of simplicity, most research found in regards to market theories heavily includes the role government plays and how government affects these processes. The World Bank stresses that the exercise of political power over a country's affairs is a precondition for sustainable economic development; good governance has been stated as a precondition for sustainable economic development (Nasong'o, 2004). Data suggests that Africans find political freedom to be central to an individual's quality of life, and democracy delivers this fundamental human need, including the ability to conduct business free of extortion (Bratton, Mattes, & Gyimah-Boadi, 2005). The importance of government should not be overlooked, and should be remembered as an additional factor important for development, particularly in the increase in quality of life. The following theories highlight the role of government and are useful for

making the connection between economic development and overall development based on increasing quality of life.

The theories surrounding capitalism stem from a belief that the free market leads to greater political freedom. There are two ways in which economic arrangements play a role in promoting a free society (Friedman, 2009). The first way is that “economic freedom is an end in itself,” where “freedom in economic arrangements is itself a component of freedom broadly understood,” (Friedman, 2009). Historical evidence in regards to economic systems shows a relation between a free market and political freedom (Friedman, 2009). There are no known examples of a society that measures having some degree of political freedom and also not using a system comparable to a free market for economic activity (Friedman, 2009). The conclusion is that political freedom comes along with the free market and the development of capitalist institutions and as history has shown, capitalism is a necessary condition for political freedom (Friedman, 2009); however, opponents to this relationship say there is no clear and necessary connection between the free market system and democracy, only that the free market does not work with the “weak” state (Shepherd, 1994).

The way in which to coordinate the economic activities of a society, other than through coercion, is through the voluntary cooperation of individuals, which is the technique of the market place (Friedman, 2009). The characteristic of the free market involves cooperation that is strictly individual and voluntary, meaning individuals are free to enter or not to enter into any particular exchange, with every transaction being strictly voluntary (Friedman, 2009). This allows economic power to be widely dispersed, not forcing the development of new centers of economic strength to be at the expense and destruction of existing centers (Friedman, 2009).

The free market system, by its nature and relation to freedom, has implications for how this can impact development. There is an increase in income with an increase in economic freedom according to the Heritage Index (Statistics on Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Correlations, 2011). While there are issues with the Heritage Index, there is the realization that in order for a society to advocate their political freedom, they must in the first be able to earn a living (Friedman, 2009). With this knowledge, it is therefore evident why using a capitalist system in the form of a free market would benefit regions that are less developed. By implementing a free market system, these regions can gain political freedom, leading to a rise in income and therefore an increase in the opportunity to improve one's quality of living. The implementation of this free market system can be in the form of a fashion business, giving societies the economic freedom they need to gain political freedom and an increase in income, improving their chances to increase their quality of life and therefore leading to an increase in development.

Another theory around capitalism is called neoliberalism, which is a shift in ideas surrounding economic policies that began around 1980 to deregulate business, privatize state enterprises, and return to free market economic theories that had previously been rejected (McDonough, Reich, & Kotz, 2010). The neoliberal model of capitalist development saw the world market as the engine for growth in the sphere of globalization (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2003). The share of the world product of the low-income countries, mostly found in Africa, was declining along with concessional flows, terms of trade, and income levels (Fasholé-Luke, 1989). This resulted in the market being seen as the one way in which to obtain resources, economic growth, and high employment, and resulted in a shift towards neoliberalism in Africa (Fasholé-Luke, 1989). This shift, referred to as the Washington Consensus, was decided with the goal in

mind for Africa to be able to adjust to the international economic realities (Fasholé-Luke, 1989). It proceeded with reforms to the definition of the role of the state, attention to the needs of the rural population, and the encouragement of private business activity in Africa (Fasholé-Luke, 1989). Yet these reforms created conditions which marginalized the poor in Africa (Nasong'o, 2004). Tanzania was one of the countries following independence to commit to socialist reforms of self-reliance, but by 1980 the country had the second-lowest per-capita income in the world (Rivoli, 2009). This resulting evidence validates the need to take caution when applying an existing economic theory to African countries in order to uphold my values. Other impacts from capitalism will continue to be laid out in an effort to determine what may or may not be the most suitable strategy to approach fashion as a business for development.

Tied to neoliberalism is the concept of Social Structure of Accumulation (SSA), which is a way to relate fluctuations in capitalist history to changes in the structure of capitalism (McDonough, Reich, & Kotz, 2010). SSA facilitates profit-making (Wolfson & Kotz, 2010), and is equivalent to global neoliberalism in the ways that both entail the free movement of capital, goods and money across borders and weaken of the power of labor (McDonough, Reich, & Kotz, 2010). These institutions represent profit-making and accumulation yet have contradictions which have led to economic crises (McDonough, Reich, & Kotz, 2010). Structural adjustment involved shrinking the size of the state (Bratton, Mattes, & Gyimah-Boadi, 2005). Globalizing the labor process has allowed corporations to choose multiple locations for their businesses, yet this is also a way in which to weaken and control labor with the threat of relocation (McDonough, Reich, & Kotz, 2010). In South Africa evidence proposes that SSA led to the economic crisis at the end of apartheid (McDonough, Reich, & Kotz, 2010). This has resulted in abuses in labor standards, the race to the bottom towards cheap labor, and the

exploitation of workers as seen often in textile factories. These abuses are all clearly negative factors which any proposed intervention cannot incorporate in order to stay true to my values.

In the early 1980s Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) were put in place as a response to the economic despair of African countries (Nasong'o, 2004). SAPs liberalized pricing and market systems, relaxed government control and regulation of aspects of the economy, and divested certain public services to the private sector (Nasong'o, 2004). This economic liberalization imposed on Africa had destructive economic consequences and resulted in Africa losing the economic policy initiative to the World Bank and IMF (Nasong'o, 2004).

Another concept following neoliberal thinking came the new political economy theory (NPE) which tried to explain why Africa was still failing in the 1980s and 1990s (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2003). NPE focused on government corruption and the misuse of foreign aid, rejecting development and instead focusing on globalization (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2003). NPE placed the blame on faulty African governments, and prescribed a solution of greater reliance on the market with less state intervention (Chole, 1989). This criticism aligned with the view that government control of the economy through central planning leads to a danger of tyranny and an abandonment of individualism, classical liberalism, and freedom (Hayek, 1944). This move towards socialism or fascist oppression results in the serfdom of the individual (Hayek, 1944). African inefficiency was blamed, suggesting African trade as a way out of poverty along with a reform of the international trading and financial system (Shepherd, 1994). NPE favors terms of trade on producing for export rather than consuming imports (Chole, 1989). This led to the changing of development management in Africa in the 1980s with 28 countries enacting major reform programs (Fasholé-Luke, 1989).

Another economic explanation is the Marxist view which comprehends capitalism as a force that creates conditions of economic progress and underdevelopment at the same time (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2003). Marxist economists explain Africa's economic demise as due to the history of colonialism, as African economies were instantly thrown into the capitalist framework following independence (Chole, 1989). Growth rarely exceeded the economic expansion and did not outpace the population boom following independence, causing living standards to stagnate (Bratton, Mattes, & Gyimah-Boadi, 2005). This situation automatically caused African countries to depend on the previous ruling states, preventing any auto-centric development (Chole, 1989). The development of African countries only followed as a form of dependent development, with the state as part of the problem, unable to be a solution (Chole, 1989).

In addition to these failed efforts by economic policies in Africa, there are more negative realities. By the 1990s the validity of capitalism was in crisis as the debt levels of sub-Saharan African countries soared and those countries whose economies had been structurally adjusted were experiencing deteriorating economic conditions and increased social inequalities (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2003). Sub-Saharan Africa at this time was most affected by the crisis of the world capitalist system; however, countries that were not given World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) reforms were experiencing decreases in inequalities and higher growth rates (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2003).

Some further criticisms note that the nature of the capitalist system is to push beyond ecological limits with the economic processes of industrialization and modernization (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2003). The discussion of equitable distribution and limited resources comes into play, along with the question of how to improve access to these as resources tend to be

concentrated by the rich and powerful who are less likely to relinquish their control of productive resources or share their power (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2003).

One solution to these failures of the capitalist system is to strive for sustainable development which incorporates resource management and realizing the environmental limits to economic growth and industrialization (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2003). Another solution is to control for other factors that cause capitalism to fail, including the social and political failings of poor management and a lack of leadership (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2003).

### *Capitalism in Africa*

When exploring the role of the free market in regards to Africa, it is important to note that “rural accumulation processes and rural class formation, even when there is a tendency *towards* capitalism, do not map into universal or standard paths that can be replicated and found elsewhere,” (OYA, 2007). African capitalism is the result of the distinct combination of the late stage in the global history of capitalism and the special characteristics of Africa’s pre-capitalist societies (OYA, 2007). It has been shown though that reconciling structural, historical and cultural factors can mould specific capitalist paths found in different locations at different times (OYA, 2007). This can have an impact on certain values being served, in particular my values, in addition to impending on cultural and ethical relativism. Any strategy that jeopardizes or impinges on the culture of the country is not in line with my values and therefore not a justifiable tactic.

Economic reform in Africa from the 1980s started out as closed economies that opened at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in a move towards market economies where private actors interacted without intervention by the state; however, for the most part economic liberalization was flawed with resources going to politics rather than towards investment in the economy

(Bratton, Mattes, & Gyimah-Boadi, 2005). Proponents of free trade argue that resources are used efficiently and a higher standard of living results, but there must be free and open competition (Friedman, 1980). Yet the quick transition to trade liberalization harmed African farmers and manufacturers, losing their jobs as they could not keep up with subsidized and cheaper goods from outside the continent that began to take over local markets (Bratton, Mattes, & Gyimah-Boadi, 2005).

Phases of African economy development started from the establishment of heavy industrial plants, to a switch from industry to agriculture, from trickle-down to a redistribution of benefits and a focus on population control (Nasong'o, 2004). Focus then shifted to social equity and targeting groups such as women (Nasong'o, 2004). The limited economic growth from economic stagnation and then a reversal of growth paired with high debt led to the era of structural adjustment, and the overall shift from state-centered to market-centered approaches for economic management (Nasong'o, 2004). The focus on women aspect will be incorporated in the case studies section as an important component for development.

Only ten African countries, which included just 17% of sub-Saharan Africa's population, made concrete policy efforts towards genuine market economies, and now less than a quarter of all Africans live under a market regime (Bratton, Mattes, & Gyimah-Boadi, 2005). Formal markets in African countries do not generate enough well-paid positions to meet employment demands or sustain the standards of living (Bratton, Mattes, & Gyimah-Boadi, 2005). One opinion is that the traditionally held African values of collective property ownership and equal distribution of wealth are not consistent with neoliberalism, and thus getting to a market economy poses inherent problems, particularly in relation to the roles of individual versus community (Bratton, Mattes, & Gyimah-Boadi, 2005). A Gambian study shows that only a

small minority rely on the formal market economy alone, where most people depend on a plurality of market and non-market practices, suggesting the reconsideration of economic transition and future alternative economic futures beyond capitalism in sub-Saharan Africa (Sallah & Williams, 2011). However, differing beliefs hold that sub-Saharan Africa is more market oriented than several advanced countries, as market transactions remain the main allocation mechanism (Fafchamps, 2004).

The most commonly used form of privatization in Africa is deregulation stemming from the belief that private ownership leads to greater efficiency and effectiveness (Nasong'o, 2004). This market-loosening strategy removes controls on foreign exchange, international trade, and decontrols prices (Nasong'o, 2004). The free play of the market allocates available resources as state enterprises are a drain on resources (Nasong'o, 2004). Economist Milton Friedman argues that economic policies made under free markets develop quicker and meet the needs of citizens better than centralized planning and control of the economy (Friedman, 1980). 18<sup>th</sup> century economist Adam Smith discussed how free market economies permit individuals to pursue their own self-interests, serving the interest of the whole society, while central planning policies do not yield as high of economic development (Friedman, 1980).

Today the African market economy is made up of lots of small businesses with not much big market employment (H. Kassa, personal communication, February 2, 2012). Africans are doing their own things in a specialized and efficient manner, dependent on each other for support as the government makes it difficult for those who are not in the capital or in more urban areas to get government support (H. Kassa, personal communication, February 2, 2012). There is a lack of communication with the government on political issues and lots of possibilities to get taken

advantage of, also meaning that taxes are not paid on every type of work as there are many informal economies (H. Kassa, personal communication, February 2, 2012).

The history of a capitalist system and its impact on Africa has connotations for any interventions involving a market-based system. Since Independence there has been a close connection between development and capitalist economic strategies. The literature indicates that a market system may not be possible or probable in Africa; however, this does not necessarily mean that a system generating income for Africans is unreasonable. A system that takes these facts and realities into account while meeting the needs of Africans would be the best desired situation as this would align with my values. This will be explored further in the case study section.

### *Fashion as a Culture*

Part of the history of the idea of fashion was described in the definition section; however, here are some additional facts about the origins of the word and the history of fashion in relation to Africa. The word 'fashion' in English came from the Latin word *factio*, meaning 'making' or 'doing' and the Middle English word 'fashion' meaning "to make or a particular make or shape," (Kawamura, 2005). The French word for fashion first appeared in 1482 and referred to a "collective manner of dressing," (Kawamura, 2005). By the late 1480s fashion had accumulated a meaning in reference to dress or lifestyle, particularly in the upper circles of society (Kawamura, 2005). Fashion was an indicator of class status and court privilege around this time period (Kawamura, 2005). The more modern view of fashion as a way to make clothes arose in the early sixteenth century (Kawamura, 2005). In the nineteenth century the aristocracy no longer solely led fashion as the wealthy began to also set the trends (Kawamura, 2005). And in

the twentieth century fashion became democratic (Kawamura, 2005). Everyone regardless of rank or status has the right to wear fashion and look fashionable (Kawamura, 2005).

Few books focused on African dress, textiles, or fashion in general until the second half of the twentieth century (Eicher & Ross, 2010). Although evidence of dress from the earliest periods is nonexistent, at some point early humans began to dress themselves (Eicher & Ross, 2010). Rock art from the northern and southern parts of the continent are the earliest source of information on African dress, but from the seventeenth century on various depictions of African dress was published (Eicher & Ross, 2010). The origins of fashion in Africa are revealed in some of the earliest clothing, which was made from treated animal hides, furs, and feathers (African Fashion Designers, 2012). Marine shell beads dating back to at least two hundred thousand years have been found in Africa along with a forty-thousand-year-old ostrich eggshell bead workshop that was excavated in Kenya (Eicher & Ross, 2010). From prehistory to colonialism African men's clothing was minimal, and women's dress was basic and simple for the most part (Eicher & Ross, 2010).

The presence of textiles in Africa date back to Phoenician times when the colorful clothes were spread to different regions of the world through migration, integration, and trading (Stitched With History: African Textile And Fashion, 2008). Traders used strip cloth as a form of currency, thus spreading African textiles worldwide (Stitched With History: African Textile And Fashion, 2008). In the 1400s African fabrics were preferred over European fabrics by traders in the European coastal trade, and into the 19<sup>th</sup> century African cloth was used in the triangular trade (Stitched With History: African Textile And Fashion, 2008). This world trade created a ruling class in Africa which resulted in a need for luxury items, and the quality and color of African textiles became a way to express wealth, knowledge, and social hierarchy in the

African society (Stitched With History: African Textile And Fashion, 2008). Today African apparel is made from cotton, camel, sheep wool, and fibers such as flax and silk which can be dyed with vegetable and mineral dyes (African Fashion Designers, 2012).

Weaving is a tradition in African society that has been passed down with style, color, and thread type determining the value of the fabric (Stitched With History: African Textile And Fashion, 2008). In earlier periods bark cloth was produced and hand-spun and hand-dyed locally grown cotton was the main resource for weaving (Eicher & Ross, 2010). By the end of the nineteenth century, imported dyes, threads, and fabric became more and more available (Eicher & Ross, 2010). This increase in imports greatly increased local cloth industries throughout West Africa with much of the production done by women (Eicher & Ross, 2010). Today, locally spun threads enhance the value as imports are believed by some to have no ancestral link and therefore less value (Stitched With History: African Textile And Fashion, 2008). Batiks and wax prints are more commonly used in African clothing and the color of the cloth is used to highlight different meanings (Stitched With History: African Textile And Fashion, 2008). There are differences across ethnic cultures in the naming of different types of clothing while the same customs of dress have also been shared and adapted (Stitched With History: African Textile And Fashion, 2008).

The practice of covering the body with local materials that were easily constructed and kept the body cool or warm emerged early in African dress (Eicher & Ross, 2010). Attire ranged from barely clothed and just wearing beads, chalk, body paint or leaves and donning scarification to being heavily dressed, but under the tenets of various colonial administrations Africans began to cover themselves more to comply with the foreign belief systems (Eicher & Ross, 2010).

Colonization had a large impact to a certain degree on African fashion. One result was the enforcement of dress codes on Africans by colonial administrators, which was sometimes met with compliance and other times with resistance (Eicher & Ross, 2010). Some Africans governed by the French grew an admiration for French clothing and even haute couture (Eicher & Ross, 2010). Even after independence this trend continued as African leaders felt their citizens should dress like the French and wear “modern” clothes as a way of showing that the country was modern, as the Tunisian president insisted (Eicher & Ross, 2010). Other governments would enact campaigns that called for a particular ethnic group’s abandonment of their dress practices to end nudity and “social backwardness,” such as Tanzania’s Operation Dress-Up, which forced Massai pastoralists to abandon traditional dress and wear more modern Western-style dress (Eicher & Ross, 2010). An opposite response following independence was the resurgence of indigenous dress styles that flourished in rebellion to the suppression of those indigenous styles during colonialism (Eicher & Ross, 2010).

The relation between Western influence and African dress shows how much outside influence has affected fashion in Africa. This tie depicts the challenges to linking development with fashion, as there are inherent connotations that result from outsiders trying to intervene. This has significance for any results that could occur through tying development to fashion today, and in order to stay true to my values, caution must be taken to not repeat mistakes from the past nor allow further tribulations to ensue. This relationship also illustrates the need to be wary of the reactions of natives to outside proposed interventions. In order to prevent this, knowing the interests of those the intervention is intended to impact is essential to any involvement in Africa with fashion and development.

African fashion today cannot be described in just one way, as with all types of fashion. The industry tends to describe African fashion with condescending characterizations, such as ‘ethnic’, ‘tribal’, and ‘exotic’ (Oliver, 2011). These descriptions reveal the reality that often African fashion has not been valued as a serious source of fashion; African designers however with their unique and diversified designs are proving the stereotypes incorrect (Oliver, 2011). Fashion as an art is an important element to a country’s identity and culture, and one way to adorn African culture and heritage is to embrace African attire (Pope, 2011).

African fashion has both influenced and been influenced by other cultures (Stitched With History: African Textile And Fashion, 2008). Post-Renaissance Europe admired African clothing and placed it among its European treasures and famous French painter Matisse was inspired by Raffia designs from Africa (Stitched With History: African Textile And Fashion, 2008). African design today can include a mixture of African and Western cultures, where African designers will blend the two (Stitched With History: African Textile And Fashion, 2008). While traditionally adorned warriors, chiefs, and brides are seen, new traditions are being made with solid uniforms, politicians dressed in suits, and fashion models (Eicher & Ross, 2010). African dress influences fashion around the world, from clothes worn by Diaspora to designs modeled on the runway (Stitched With History: African Textile And Fashion, 2008).

African Diaspora make African attire part of their daily lives, and the beautiful styles are becoming more appealing to those all around world (Pope, 2011). This is evident with the increase in African fashion shows featuring many African designers (Pope, 2011). World famous shows include African Fashion Week New York for the second year in a row and a new African Fashion Week in London (Pope, 2011). The African company African Fashion International (AFI) sponsors African Fashion Week in Cape Town, South Africa which is the

largest gathering of fashion talent in the continent (Pope, 2011). And other major fashion weeks are held in Senegal, Ghana, and Nigeria (Pope, 2011). AFI will be highlighted in more detail below.

In cities there is a greater choice in fashion options and Western garments are preferred often for government and office work (Eicher & Ross, 2010). Western and Muslim styles are found together in many North African cities, and men appear to wear more Western clothing than women, although the white wedding dress is making appearances (Eicher & Ross, 2010). The worsening economies of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have substantially affected African dress (Eicher & Ross, 2010). As economic conditions have changed in many countries for the worst, formerly abandoned textiles are reappearing as fashionable choices (Eicher & Ross, 2010).

But despite the economy, fashion in Africa today still flourishes, demonstrating its long history of creativity in the continent (Eicher & Ross, 2010). African fashion shows a participation and connection to global networks, providing a view of political, economic, and social changes which have been to varying amounts influenced by Western-dominated fashion systems (Eicher & Ross, 2010). Dress has a close association still to indigenous cultures, and emerges from political and cultural movements, giving African fashion an exceedingly important role in the continent today (Eicher & Ross, 2010).

### *Gaps in the Literature*

There is extensive literature on using business, particularly in the form of capitalism, to create development. There are pros and cons, both in support of and against using business methods as interventions. There is minimal literature though detailing specifically how the fashion industry as a business creates development. There are many examples of companies that

are incorporating fashion business with the goal to spur development, as will be described in the following section, but there is no scholarly literature on this. There is also no research comparing one developed country in Africa with another area based on the result of having fashion used as the mechanism to develop the region. There is no comparison study comparing and analyzing the impacts of two different fashion business models on a specific area. This thesis will be the first scholarly attempt to compile research on the interaction between fashion and development while also executing a study to better analyze this relationship. It is my goal with this thesis to work towards filling these gaps and exploring this research in an effort to have a better explanation and overall understanding of the results of using fashion as a cause for development.

#### *Case Examples: Development through Fashion*

Now that the context has been laid down for the concepts of development and fashion, this next section will go into detail about the real examples of the interplay between the two variables. Various organizations and areas will be discussed to get a greater understanding of the connection and impact of fashion on development which can then be used to compare and contrast the positive and negative implications of this relationship.

#### *Impact of Capitalism on Development: Microfinance*

There are various different types of capitalism in the form of business that can impact development, and through my research I have found that microfinance is heavily used, particularly in my case study of Malawi. There are pros and cons of using microfinance to create development. Uganda demonstrates an example of the disadvantages to using microfinance. Data shows that only marginal well-being gains can be achieved by micro-finance clients, but that there are gains for social emancipation from a gender analysis, which has strong

implications for empowering women as I suggest is important to development (de Haan, L., & Lakwo, A., 2010). One of the issues is that this business intervention is only geared towards urban areas and large-scale export-led projects, which is a common error when implementing business solutions that must be avoided (de Haan, L., & Lakwo, A., 2010). Microfinance therefore tends to alienate a majority of the population by only employing from and focusing on certain areas (de Haan, L., & Lakwo, A., 2010). In this business example microfinance accounts for greater poverty reduction but also lacks the institutional sustainability, which results in not reaching the poorest of the poor (de Haan, L., & Lakwo, A., 2010). And motivations from profits strip away any competitive advantage of reaching the poorest people (de Haan, L., & Lakwo, A., 2010).

On the other hand, one positive aspect of this business intervention is the use of private sector funding to relieve the inadequate donor aid funds by making markets work for the poor in giving a boost of credibility to microfinance in commercial markets (de Haan, L., & Lakwo, A., 2010). This led to government change in Uganda with the popularization of savings and the development of credit cooperative organizations (de Haan, L., & Lakwo, A., 2010). Some gains came from those who were clients versus those who were not in the form of human and political assets, showing that microfinance can provide a favorable opportunity to improve assets for those also not directly involved as well (de Haan, L., & Lakwo, A., 2010). Despite the positive aspects, the conclusion from the microfinance intervention in this Ugandan example is that microfinance has not improved the well-being of clients any more than those who are not involved in microfinance (de Haan, L., & Lakwo, A., 2010). This example from Uganda demonstrates both the positive and negative effects of the business intervention microfinance on

development, and these effects must be taken into account with any future microfinance interventions.

There is however an example of microfinance in Ghana which helped women to accumulate savings, as short-term loans are a temporary substitute for savings, bringing purchasing power through the loan (Martin & Mathema, 2010). Another example of successful microfinance in Kenya is in the form of fashion through the program Jamii Bora. Jamii Bora's mission is to assist members in getting out of poverty with the ability to build a better life for their family (Jamii Bora, 2012). Jamii Bora uses microsavings rather than microlending, and there is growing evidence that the most powerful element of microfinance is not microlending but microsavings (Kristof, 2011, p. A29). A woman named Jane from Nairobi, Kenya borrowed a loan through Jamii Bora. Jane was able to then learn how to sew, used her savings and a small loan to buy a sewing machine, and was able to quit prostitution (Kristof, 2011, p. A29). Jane's sewing business flourished, and she used her profits to buy a small home in a safe suburb and can now afford to keep her children in school (Kristof, 2011, p. A29). Jane's example demonstrates that overcoming poverty is a difficult and uncertain task, but it is possible (Kristof, 2011, p. A29). And in this case, overcoming poverty and improving quality of life were done with microfinance in the form of a fashion business.

Jane's example from Kenya has a different outcome from the study of microfinance in Uganda, showing how microfinance has differing impacts across different interventions. These two examples imply that business can have diverse results in different areas in Africa, highlighting a central component to this study that there are differences among African countries which can certainly affect the outcome of using fashion for development. This means that any application of a fashion business must research the characteristics of an area well before

implementation. Perhaps micro-savings paired with credit guarantee rather than microlending is the preferred method, as the most successful programs stagger credit to members over time and credit guarantee allows a partial guarantee of credit against default for the supplier, a recent innovation in Africa (Fafchamps, 2004). This, as proven through Jane's example, can be done through fashion.

### *Impact of the Fashion Industry on Development*

After looking at fashion through the business form of microfinance, another form of fashion business is the fashion industry itself. Famous African male designer Seidnaly Sidhamed Alphadi believes that fashion is vital to the development of a country, yet the reality is that African governments are not always positive towards the fashion industry for unstated reasons, and this makes it difficult to get funds for investment in fashion (Guigney, 2008). Alphadi believes that those who can afford to must invest in the fashion sector to prevent the continuation of Africans and outside buyers leaving Africa to prefer Western brands (Guigney, 2008). Fashion creates jobs and provides resources for the country which can be used to further the interests of Africans through imagination, creativity, willpower and endurance while stopping the mistakes of the past and the problem of victimization (Guigney, 2008). Alphadi believes Africans should "become more open to culture, provide grants in this field, create jobs, organize shows and give a chance to African artists" in order to stop the brain drain to European countries (Guigney, 2008). This demonstrates how fashion can create not only development for Africans but can also empower them, ending the cycle of being subjected to outside forces and competition with other countries for their peoples' jobs (Guigney, 2008).

This global relation in the fashion industry has big implications for how African countries can interact and be a part of this international market. Studies show "the importance of

understanding the uneven nature of power relationships in the global clothing economy, in particular between the dominant players of the world's largest retailers and brand marketers on the one hand, and of geographically dispersed manufacturers on the other hand," (Rogerson, 2006). In regards to uneven power relationships, they can exist in the form of a monopoly or monopsony power, which can affect supply and demand and the pricing of labor, land, rents, and supplies. This can generate a difficulty in therefore creating fair business players with an equal chance at generating profits, and results in an even greater inequity for buyers who must be controlled by the business instead of being able to control the market with their buying power. Studies also reveal that, "for clothing producers in peripheral places in the global economy, including Africa, upgrading is often inhibited by these existing power relations around fashion and branding," (Rogerson, 2006).

In regards to power relationships, it has been observed that understanding global commodity chains comes from being able to analyze changes in the global clothing economy via networked relationships (Rogerson, 2006). The reality is that large retailers and manufacturers without factories are able to control global networks through their capacity to shape consumption with mass brand names (Rogerson, 2006). Internationally the branded market is extremely competitive, offering little chance for the launch of new brands to compete with existing labels, and not to mention the enormous resource demand attached to the international promotion of new brands (Rogerson, 2006).

With these power struggles, it can be difficult for the ones on the losing side to gain any sense of power. Fashion plays a significant role in this through its association as "a critical element in the global clothing economy and a crucial source of power," (Rogerson, 2006). Linked to this power are fashion chains which are associated with cultural products and creative

industries; however, there is little that has been explored in regards to fashion chains in Africa (Rogerson, 2006). Understanding the dynamics of the global fashion system and how Africa can interact with the system has strong implications for how this immersion could affect development.

This competition with outside forces is visible through the relation China has to Africa. The rise of China as a major player in the global economy has resulted in an additional hundred million low-wage workers in the labor force of global capitalism (McDonough, Reich, & Kotz, 2010). China is investing in Africa, using the continent “as a market where they can sell their products, even if that leads to the asphyxiation of local production,” (Guigny, 2008). The dominance of Asian products including textiles in Africa takes away the few jobs from Africans that they have created (Guigny, 2008). There is the connotation that Africa is viewed as “chump change land” where these big Chinese firms buy out local businesses by buying out the land and building big factories in their place (H. Kassa, personal communication, February 2, 2012). This does come with an opportunity for new jobs for locals though, showing the pros and cons to China’s invasion (H. Kassa, personal communication, February 2, 2012).

The African fashion industry is competing with inexpensive products made from the cheap labor of China that is supplanting the few African textile and garment industries left that once employed the urban poor (Eicher & Ross, 2010). The inexpensive products from the cheap labor of China are replacing the few African textile and garment industries that had once employed the African urban poor (Eicher & Ross, 2010). It does not help when government policies have not done much to deal with this problem (Guigny, 2008). Outsiders are hesitant of foreign direct investment as the majority of African governments do not build their own local economies or work with people on the ground (H. Kassa, personal communication, February 2,

2012). This demonstrates the way in which outside forces can have a large impact on the development of other countries, particularly in a negative way. This shows that the role the government plays can also affect development, in this case in a negative way through a lack of involvement and structure. My values used to construct an argument for whether or not to implement an intervention come into play when discussing the role of outside countries and what impacts they may have on other countries. This section has shown the role the fashion industry can have on development in Africa, including when outside countries impact the industry. The next section will look at China as a past example for the implications that can arise from using capitalism, in particular textile factories.

### *The Example of China and Capitalism*

While China and Africa are separate and may not accurately be compared because of differences in characteristics and circumstances, particularly the fact that China is a country and Africa is a continent, it is important to examine the impact capitalism has had on China as precedence specifically in regards to textile factories. China's experience with capitalism can be used to derive possible future positive and negative effects to African countries. In Asia the state plays a predominant role, working to incorporate the economy globally with capital markets and production (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2003). China rose to the top using public agencies for policy development and relying on export markets rather than domestic markets to generate growth (Fasholé-Luke, 1989). Innovations in cotton textile production gave China the push to "takeoff" and the continuance of economic growth that is seen today (Rivoli, 2009).

While capitalism has given China millions of new jobs, there has been an upsurge in inequality since the mid-1980's (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2003). Outsourcing, as one reason for the increase in jobs, has the potential to give the manufacturer the ability to make products to a high

standard but in reality outsourcing can be grossly exploitative, as seen in textile factories in China as well as India (Martin & Mathema, 2010). In China in particular, workers are allowed to travel to urban areas to work in textile factories but are not allowed to stay, having to return back to the rural towns after work ends (Rivoli, 2009). This limits their rights as workers, in addition to being denied rights to adequate healthcare and housing with exploitative work conditions (Rivoli, 2009). Skeptics point out that even if these factory jobs are a step up from other job options, this does not justify that workers should have to work in these poor conditions with horrendous hours, low wages, and limited rights (Rivoli, 2009). These factory jobs may involve forced labor, slavery, and debt bondage in addition to unpaid overtime in some of the worst working conditions (Eckes, 2011). These are all characteristics of textile factory jobs that I would not want present in African factories as they all go against my values.

On the other side, there is support for sweatshops. While these are not “dream” jobs, they are not the worst jobs possible (Kristof, 2009). Being in a factory is better than crime, prostitution, or picking through garbage (Eckes, 2011). Laboring over a sewing machine is not at the bottom of the hierarchy of jobs in poor countries, and sweatshop jobs have increased living standards (Kristof, 2009). Many firms report paying wages that are higher than the local wage rates and maintaining higher than average working conditions (Weidenbaum, 2003). Wages for Chinese workers rose 19% in 2008 and 16% in 2009 (Eckes, 2011). Sweatshops are an integral part of economic well-being, and people with limited job opportunities line up outside factory gates seeking a job, and protests have ensued from workers when sweatshop jobs have been cut (Eckes, 2011).

Governments of developing countries see any outside complaints against these factories as hidden forms of protectionism to keep their products out of the international markets, blocking

these developing countries from receiving the benefits of globalization (Weidenbaum, 2003). Opposition to giving African countries even limited duty-free access to United States apparel markets despite higher working standards in the African trade bill aligns with this protest from developing governments (Weidenbaum, 2003). Factory jobs also do not go to the poorest countries but to the countries with better infrastructure (Kristof, 2009). While labor standards can improve wages and working conditions without much affecting the cost of retail goods, labor standards and wages have a larger impact on the production costs, resulting in the choice to operate in more capital-intensive factories in better-off nations like Malaysia rather than Ghana or Cambodia (Kristof, 2009). These standards add to production costs and have resulted in the closing of some factories (Kristof, 2009). The best way to help poor countries is to set up manufacturing factories in the poorest countries (Kristof, 2009).

The face of fashion businesses in Africa are not the same as the businesses thought of in Asia, though. Many factors, including difficulties with transportation and a lack of mechanization infrastructure means production in Africa costs roughly four times as much as in Asia (Hume, 2009). It is key to realize that “fashion's usual lines of credit don't work in Kenya,” (Hume, 2009). More than 30% of the globe's population lives in slum conditions, and new ways must be found to work with them, even if that means using different rules of business (Hume, 2009).

#### *Development through Fashion in a Country: South Africa*

South Africa, one of the most developed countries in Africa, is a great example of fashion increasing development despite the power struggles within the global fashion market. Power struggles link to the fact that the South African clothing industry has been strongly affected by globalization and trade liberalization since the early 1990s (Rogerson, 2006). But through the

government and the growing presence of democracy in South Africa the clothing sector has been transformed into a protected domestic market that today is dominated by domestic manufacturers while still increasing exposure to international competition (Rogerson, 2006). The importance of the clothing industry on development in South Africa is supported by the fact that South Africa's Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) targeted the fashion sector as one of the priority sectors to focus on for implementing new strategies (Rogerson, 2006).

To improve the fashion industry and increase the greatest returns on development, the encouragement of new clothing design and fashion products is one of the most important aspects for clothing production and for leading to a successful outcome from incorporating a fashion business into an area (Rogerson, 2006). For these reasons policies need to be directed to stabilize the fashion sector and provide for its growth in the future (Rogerson, 2006). With this goal the Economic Development Unit of the City of Johannesburg recognized the role and potential of creative industries for contributing towards the future goals of economic development in the city over the next three decades and launched a creative industries support initiative (Rogerson, 2006). Development programming for Johannesburg also emphasizes "the importance of targeted sector support for key industries with the greatest potential for growth as well as labor absorption," listing among the priority of targeted sector plans "for sustainable and shared growth" creative industries including the fashion sector (Rogerson, 2006). In order to establish Johannesburg as the fashion capital of Africa, the high possibility for economic contribution of the fashion industry must be recognized by city authorities and explicitly integrated into other creative industries (Rogerson, 2006). By establishing the city as the fashion capital, the goal has been to generate economic programs that create "sustainable shared growth" by supporting the fashion district (Rogerson, 2006).

Among the characteristics that distinguish the establishment of the fashion cluster in South Africa is the variety of races that make up South African designers (Rogerson, 2006). It is this diversity that could lead to a future of further uniting a country with a history of inequality. The result of reintegrating after apartheid has been a wave of new immigrant movements and refugee flows who are often well-educated and globally-connected entrepreneurs who bring new skills, particularly embroidery, along with new networks and designs into the clothing economy (Rogerson, 2006). The goal is to provide an infrastructure and a support system “to grow and develop the area so that it becomes a sustainable environment that is safe, clean, economically viable and generates continued growth and prosperity for the fashion industry,” (Rogerson, 2006). The fashion sector is as developed to the point of having established fashion trade journals, training institutions, and trade shows including South African Fashion Week, established in 1996 (Rogerson, 2006). Research in South Africa with the development of a fashion industry has led to a renewed national confidence that South Africans can become leaders of international fashion trends as opposed to followers (Rogerson, 2006).

Some established fashion businesses in South Africa include The Fashion Shack which showcases young designers and The Business Place, which encourages business plans, both with the intent and ability to preserve the creativity of the designers (Rogerson 2006). There is also the current project SewAfrica House which discourages the production of mass clothing and instead seeks to encourage designers to market themselves and link in with producers working in the inner city (Rogerson, 2006). The emphasis is to encourage an individual and localized Pan African look that cannot be threatened by imported clothing (Rogerson, 2006). SewAfrica House is in a partnership with the Economic Development Unit of the City of Johannesburg and the Johannesburg Development Agency (Rogerson, 2006). In regards to spurring development,

these fashion businesses represent the major source for household income, with reasons for start-up including the desire for self-employment and the goal to be a fashion designer (Rogerson, 2006).

These programs and the goal of establishing the fashion capital in South Africa create an income for residents and crafting a path towards development, in addition to satisfying a mixed post-apartheid country, meeting the wishes of potential desiring designers, and building up the country again. South Africa is an example of how fashion can bridge past conflict, sustain culture, and continue to develop a more developed country on a macro scale. The example of South Africa gives insight into how fashion can positively impact a more developed country on a larger scale. Later sections will examine how fashion affects less developed communities on a micro level.

#### *Development through Fashion in a Region: East Africa*

In East Africa, research and execution of implementing a fashion industry into villages across the region have shown an increase in development. Global fashion executives are creating ties with artisans in East Africa, resulting in an increase in employment and building local businesses that have the potential to impact many lives (Hume, 2009). The idea is to teach locals managerial responsibilities while “bringing in the big names of fashion and interior design at the top of the value chain, where people will pay premium prices,” (Hume, 2009). This approach gives some responsibility to Africans, working to improve their chance for a self-sustaining future while also giving them a chance initially by bringing in opportunities that have the likelihood of bringing back money. This is in conjunction with my values associated with interventions.

This infusion of fashion businesses into East Africa's societies is surrounded not on the concept of credit, which does not necessarily exist in slums such as Korogocho in Nairobi, but about the ability to empower local artisans and poverty-stricken individuals (Hume, 2009). This effort to empower individuals for development rather than simply giving aid lines up with my values. This implementation of a fashion business into the area has shown "how fashion can be much more than just bling and status; it can be a vehicle for global improvement," (Hume, 2009). Fashion executives from all over are reaching out to crafts workers in Africa and helping build businesses there to fuse African talents with those of designers who have access to the market (Hume, 2009). An example of this is the Italian company Max Mara Fashion Group which works with the United Nations' International Trade Center (ITC) to empower the skills of local artisans and use them in collections of accessories (Hume, 2009). Another high-fashion line, Suno, works to fuse African talents with those of designers in New York City (Hume, 2009). This access to the market as a hand-up rather than a hand-out will be important in the case study section.

#### *Development through Fashion: Fashion Industry Examples*

Several major components of the African fashion industry including its impact on development are mentioned in previous sections, and this section will continue to elaborate on the industry and explain the major facets through examples of organizations and existing structures. This will construct a framework to understand how developed fashion actually is in Africa and then from there give a background for what is possible to be implemented in the industry.

The nonprofit Ethical Fashion Forum (EFF) is dedicated to sustainable fashion and works to support thousands of fashion professionals globally, recognizing that "every single fashion

professional ... has the capacity to influence and change lives for thousands of people behind fashion supply chains, and address environmental challenges, through sourcing decisions,” (Ethical Fashion Forum, 2012). EFF’s goal is to transform social and environmental standards in the fashion industry within a decade (Ethical Fashion Forum, 2012). EFF launches expos to bring fair trade and ethical suppliers together, trains industry professionals to be sustainable, and highlights ethical fashion businesses to follow the motto of “fashion business success without compromise” with ethical sourcing and the promotion of ethical fashion (Ethical Fashion Forum, 2012). EFF works through the fashion industry to reduce poverty, create sustainable living, and reduce environmental impact (Ethical Fashion Forum, 2012). EFF recognizes that the global fashion industry generates one trillion dollars annually, and works to change the poor working conditions, low wages, and environmental damages that exist as a result (Ethical Fashion Forum, 2012). Most workers in the global fashion industry earn less than two dollars a day; however, leading fashion designers, entrepreneurs, and businesses are working to change this by caring about those behind the products and reducing environmental impact (Ethical Fashion Forum, 2012). EFF pairs up with Africa Inspires in partnership with the United Nation’s International Trade Centre to source sustainably from Africa growing the market for ethical fashion by raising wages for women workers in Ghana (Ethical Fashion Forum, 2012). Africa Inspires links African designers and communities to international fashion designers and retailers to facilitate sourcing from Africa within mainstream collections (Ethical Fashion Forum, 2012). EFF and Africa Inspires aim to reduce poverty with sustainable trade relationships for Africans through ethical fashion (Ethical Fashion Forum, 2012).

The Poor Communities and Trade Programme (PCTP) of the International Trade Centre (ITC) work in conjunction to reduce global poverty through the Ethical Fashion Approach which

allows international fashion businesses to source from Africa allowing marginalized groups of artisans to become part of the global industry (Ethical Fashion, 2012). The dynamic is structured to empower women by raising their daily income, another example of focusing on women in development (Ethical Fashion, 2012). Through the ITC Ethical Fashion Programme a collection of handbag designs are ethically produced in Kenya and expected to increase exports to \$5 million dollars, impacting 5,000 communities (Ethical Fashion, 2012). Ethical fashion has “proved to be an effective vehicle for poverty reduction, empowerment of women and improvement of the environment, thus contributing to several of the United Nations’ Millennium Development Goals,” (Ethical Fashion, 2012). This program keeps fashion buyers aware of the skills and capacities available in Kenya, incorporating skills from Kenyan communities (Ethical Fashion, 2012). The expected results are the creation of employment opportunities in Kenya, a reduction in poverty, an improvement in the quality of life as a result of higher standards of living, increase in trade, and a reduction of crime as a result from higher incomes (Ethical Fashion, 2012).

There is also the International Festival of African Fashion (FIMA) which was launched in 1998 and brings together fashion creators from all over Africa to showcase African culture (International Festival of African Fashion (FIMA), 2007). FIMA is a way to encourage investment and sustainable development in Africa and get African fashion more involved at the international level (International Festival of African Fashion (FIMA), 2007). Recognizing fashion as a part of cultural industries, FIMA is “a framework to express beauty, as well as assert the leading cultural values in Africa and the world,” (International Festival of African Fashion (FIMA), 2007). As Africans should be the greatest promoters of African creations, they do not typically buy the designs, and FIMA is working to change this by celebrating African fashion

vivaciously while encouraging economic and social progress (International Festival of African Fashion (FIMA), 2007).

One more organization involved in the African fashion industry is African Fashion International (AFI), the fashion events and promotions company in Africa that provides venues to showcase African talent with the mission to expand African fashion to the world (African Fashion International, 2012). Realizing how fashion and the clothing industry can play a large role in developing small businesses and promoting entrepreneurship, AFI hosts Fashion Weeks and uses fashion for social change with Corporate Social Investment initiatives (African Fashion International, 2012). AFI produces Johannesburg Fashion Week, Cape Town Fashion Week, and Africa Fashion Week and is in connection with the Cape Town Fashion Council (CTFC) (African Fashion International, 2012). One of the largest Fashion Weeks in Africa is Nigeria Fashion Week, which began in 1997 and became internationally held in 2000 (Nigeria Fashion Week, 2012). Nigeria Fashion Week was endorsed in 2008 by the World Fashion Organization, which is the regulatory body of the international fashion industry (Nigeria Fashion Week, 2012). South Africa, as mentioned previously, also hosts an extremely large Fashion Week with New York and London shows and offers internships in design (Haute Fashion Africa, 2012). Also under AFI is the Design for Life project which uses fashion to communicate positive change in regards to breast cancer with designing apparel to create awareness of the disease (African Fashion International, 2012).

#### *Development through Fashion: Organization Examples*

The previous section described the overarching organizations in the African fashion industry to get a better understanding of the fashion structure. This section will list various fashion organizations from all over the continent and globally and how they are impacting

development to get an idea of what is already happening with fashion and development.

Differentiating between the various types of organizations and understanding the pros and cons will set the framework for the desired structure of fashion organizations, which will be further explored in the case studies section.

Global Girlfriend is an organization which through fair trade sells handbags, jewelry, and apparel and gives a charity royalty from each purchase to the nonprofit Camfed's (Campaign for Female Education) micro-grant and micro-credit program which works to eradicate poverty in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Ghana and Tanzania by educating girls and empowering young women (Global Girlfriend, 2012). Another organization is Cambodian Threads, a fair trade fashion company that sells scarves and bags made in Cambodia by local artisans and returns 40% of the profit to fund educational development projects in Cambodia such as donating school supplies (Cambodian Threads, 2012). OmniPeace is a humanitarian fashion brand that asks the question "Can Fashion Save Lives?" and works to break the cycle of poverty with peace and education by using fashion and culture for the greater good (OmniPeace, 2012). OmniPeace "has raised close to half a million dollars for charities and built six schools in Africa with its seventh on the way in 2012, helped raise funds and awareness for the City of Joy (a safe community and rehabilitation center for women and children rape victims of violence in Congo), and sent two convoys into Somalia with the NY Giants to feed over 5,000 families with The Global Enrichment Foundation," (OmniPeace, 2012).

This effort by big time businesses to reach out to poorer individuals on the other side of the world employs enlightened self-interest (ESI), or the idea of doing well by doing good.

Businesses will put resources towards expenses that may not necessarily initially help the profits

at first but will most likely increase profits in the future. By using ESI, businesses also follow the values used to guide what action should be taken.

There are several other examples of organizations acting with ESI working to facilitate development in Africa through fashion. While shoes were not included in the definition of fashion in an effort to narrow down what would be an even larger topic, there are examples of fashion organizations producing shoes and working to create development. TOMS is a for-profit social enterprise that pairs up with nonprofits and NGOs, mixing business and philanthropy with the “one for one” model: “for every pair of shoes TOMS sells, the company gives a pair away to a needy child,” and has given one million pairs of shoes to children in twenty five countries (Fifield, 2010). This same model has been incorporated by other fashion organizations with the same shoe model, with shirts sold to donate books, and with pairs of glasses (Fifield, 2010). TOMS won the Award for Corporate Excellence in 2009 “which recognizes companies’ commitment to corporate social responsibility, innovation, exemplary practices and democratic values worldwide,” with the approach of entrepreneurship and not charity to the developing world’s problems (Fifield, 2010). However, criticism for TOMS stems from the business addressing a symptom of poverty but not a root cause (Timmerman, 2011). People need jobs to buy shoes, not a handout of shoes that will eventually wear out with no way to replace them (Timmerman, 2011).

A different shoe company, soleRebels, is based out of Ethiopia and employs marginalized local people with the goal to “make the world a better place, one step at a time” by rejecting the aid model of development and allowing developing nations to be producers and create their own global brands to build up the country (soleRebels, 2012). All materials are local and include old car tires used to make shoes, using the eco-sensible craft heritages and artisan talents of Ethiopia

(soleRebels, 2012). SoleRebels pays three times the average Ethiopian wage and employs one hundred people (Timmerman, 2011). While criticisms against the apparel industry include the complaint that the industry is part of the problem of global poverty, giving someone a job is one of the best ways to fight poverty (Timmerman, 2010).

Another African company is Lalesso, which is based in Kenya and takes inspiration from the East African piece of fabric 'khanga,' also known as 'lesso,' to create designs using the creative talent of Kenyan artisans (Lalesso, 2012). Lalesso designs promote development both in the local fashion and garment industry (Simple! Sexy! Cool!, 2009). Lalesso recognizes that Kenya is full of raw talent, incredible design aesthetics, and rich resources and yet over 50% of the population lives below the poverty line (Lalesso, 2012). Lalesso was started to create employment and provide fair wages to allow Kenyans to improve their standard of living (Lalesso, 2012). The Lalesso line supports the African textile industry by being 100% made in Africa, improving the quality of life for textile workers in Kenya and Tanzania and giving back to the African community (Simple! Sexy! Cool!, 2009). Lalesso produces all of its apparel through SOKO, an independent, charity-based, and eco-ethical factory that creates quality garments for export, increasing the number of jobs by employing Kenyans while supporting local talent (Lalesso, 2012). SOKO is now also used by other international designers for their garment production (Lalesso, 2012). Lalesso also addresses environmental concerns by being one of the first totally carbon zero fashion brands in the world, working with companies that take measures to reduce the impact on the environment and make a social impact on East African communities (Lalesso, 2012). Lalesso shows the empowerment of a local African business reaching out to other parts of Africa to improve development.

An additional organization is BeadforLife which is a nonprofit from Colorado through which impoverished Ugandan women make handmade beads from recycled paper which are then used to make jewelry (BeadforLife, 2012). The goal is for the women be independent from BeadforLife within a year and a half of joining, launching their own small business with assistance provided (BeadforLife, 2012). BeadforLife also sponsors community development projects in health, job training for impoverished youth, affordable housing, and business development, and keeps track of how many people have been impacted, which is over 7,000 people (BeadforLife, 2012).

Trashy Bags is one more example of a fashion enterprise that employs Africans. Trashy Bags is based in Ghana and makes recycled eco-friendly bags from plastic trash found in Ghana (Trashy Bags, 2012). Trashy Bags employs over sixty locals to transform the plastic trash into fashionable bags and is leading in sustainable development by collecting the waste and therefore helping the environment, tackling environmental pollution (Trashy Bags, 2012). Another environmentally-conscious organization is Carmina Campus Bags which also makes bags 100% in Africa from recycled products in Kenya and Uganda and donates to the Italian NGO Aidos which campaigns against female genital mutilation (Carmina Campus Bags, 2012). Carmina Campus Bags depict the work of African people while emancipating them from poverty through work instead of donations thus breaking the dependence on the West with the slogan “not charity just work,” (Garoffolo, 2011). Carmina Campus Bags pairs with the Ethical Fashion Programme of the International Trade Centre through the United Nations mixing ethics and fashion with fair trade and allowing the poor to collaborate with those at the top of the fashion value chain (Garoffolo, 2011). Carmina Campus Bags is closely connected to fashion as Ilaria Venturini Fendi of the famous Fendi design family started Carmina Campus Bags (Bianco, 2011).

In addition to employing locals to create fashion pieces, another way fashion businesses try to reduce poverty and spur development in Africa is through foreign fashion businesses that return a percentage of their proceeds to help combat major issues, including the spread of HIV/AIDS (Hume, 2009). An example of this is Bono's Project Red where companies including Emporio Armani and the Gap send a percentage of their proceeds to East Africa (Hume, 2009). Yet a closer look at the organizations which are giving aid shows that this approach is not as effective as the approach that gives empowerment and job opportunities, as the following section explains.

*Aid is Truly Faux Pas*

While these examples of outside fashion organizations working to help Africa sound promising, there has been a high level of controversy over the effectiveness of aid in general. Aid is often ineffective, and the globalization that spurs aid efforts can actually make matters worse (Collier, 2007). In the past fifty years more than \$1 trillion in aid for development assistance has been sent to Africa, and yet the continent still is in despair and arguably worse off because of aid handouts (Moyo, 2009). Some of the motivations behind aid have good intentions particularly to reduce poverty and spur growth, but the opposite effect has taken place (Moyo, 2009). One of the strongest pieces of evidence to support this reality is the growth seen in countries that did not receive aid versus those African countries that have received aid and still do (Moyo, 2009). Aid has thus resulted in dependency, corruption, and market distortion (Moyo, 2009). A huge reason why aid has failed is because those giving aid act as colonists did, assuming the role of knowing what is best for other nations without accountability or feedback (Easterly, 2006). By not accomplishing much with the trillions of aid dollars given and instead increasing the suffering of the poor, it is time to stop giving handouts (Easterly, 2006). The

focus of any fashion businesses that are implemented will not be to give aid, but to find sustainable practices that empower Africans without causing an inherent dependency. The organizations which empower with a hand-up rather than a hand-out fall in line with my values and are the organizations that will be explored in the case studies.

Fashion examples from Ethiopia show African people breaking away from this cycle of aid and working to help themselves. Hellen Kassa, an Ethiopian native, is working on a documentary to showcase the positive development taking place in Ethiopia through what locals are doing to develop their communities. Through meeting with Hellen I was able to learn about some examples from Ethiopia that involve fashion. The first example is Ethiopian designer Fiker who is working to grow the fashion industry there through her passion (H. Kassa, personal communication, February 2, 2012). Fiker learned to sew on her own growing up, bought a machine, and opened her own store where she merges modern styles with tradition, a pioneer in her field (H. Kassa, personal communication, February 2, 2012). Fiker gets rid of the middleman in her production, employing local sewers and using eco-friendly natural dyes such as mud to color fabric, importing nothing (H. Kassa, personal communication, February 2, 2012). Hellen predicts that twenty years from now Fiker will have set up the systems in Ethiopia for a fashion industry; however, right now there is not the infrastructure to support this industry as this takes both time and an economy that can sustain teaching skills to artisans (H. Kassa, personal communication, February 2, 2012). Hellen notably added that people are also not concerned so much with style but with trying to live and obtain the basic necessities, something that fashion clearly and necessarily takes a backseat to (H. Kassa, personal communication, February 2, 2012). Through my values driving this intervention I desire that every human being can obtain

the basic necessities and then also have the opportunity if desired to care about fashion and enjoy the benefits that come with it.

The second example is Entoto Outreach Center headed by coordinator Eden (H. Kassa, personal communication, February 2, 2012). Entoto Outreach Center was created as a mechanism to give jobs to members of an AIDS colony. On an Ethiopian mountain AIDS victims had gathered to die until Eden and others came along and felt compelled to help (H. Kassa, personal communication, February 2, 2012). Eden bought jewelry materials and gave them to the colony to create jewelry, then selling the finished pieces and returning all of the proceeds to the people on the mountain (H. Kassa, personal communication, February 2, 2012). Today a church on the mountain is rented out where the AIDS victims go to work and design bracelets, now having daily jobs (H. Kassa, personal communication, February 2, 2012). This is a business which funds itself, giving the workers around \$10,000 a month (H. Kassa, personal communication, February 2, 2012). American designers have traveled to Ethiopia to teach better techniques to increase the successful production of these bracelets (H. Kassa, personal communication, February 2, 2012). This is the extraordinary story of people who were ready to die and now work and live, given another chance through the avenue of fashion. Hellen's examples reveal how people are willing to help, and that there are hardworking people with innovative and creative initiatives which can and should be put to use through fashion interventions.

The examples of various fashion organizations and Africans using fashion to improve development in Africa show that this relationship between fashion and development is anything but uncommon. They also demonstrate that the structure of the organization impacts how successful development will be. Following the structure of organizations like Lalessa and

BeadforLife that give employment rather than give hand-outs like TOMS and Project Red are important for future fashion interventions as will be especially inherent in the case studies section.

### *Impact of Used Clothing on Africa*

Another form of aid specific to fashion is the donation of used clothing to African countries. Unable to sell the clothing domestically, charities will sell used clothing to exporters who send it low-cost to developing countries, particularly in Africa (Frazer, 2011). Provided as a donation, used clothing can be compared to food aid which helps consumers at the time of need, but harms producers in the end (Frazer, 2011). African policymakers have stated how used clothing donations harm the domestic garment industries, hurting the apparels sectors of poor countries (Frazer, 2011). Used clothing imports have a negative impact on apparel production in Africa, explaining about 40% of the decline in production and 50% of the decline in employment from 1981 to 2000 (Frazer, 2011). In 1995 about 16% of the containers in United States exports to African were full of used clothing donations (Frazer, 2011). There has been a dramatic increase in the donation of used clothing in the past twenty years, as used clothing is one of the top ten exports from the United States to African countries (Frazer, 2011).

An example of the aversion to used clothing by Africans is seen in Tanzania. Despite the poverty, Tanzanian women adorn themselves in the rich-colored native cloth, but the men wear *mitumba*, clothing that has been thrown away by Americans and Europeans (Rivoli, 2009). Used clothing was initially banned under leader Julius Nyerere immediately followed independence, but after the reversal of this ban the United States' third-largest export to Tanzania to 2007 was used clothing, increasing 50% since 2006 (Rivoli, 2009). Over thirty countries ban the import of used clothing, from outright prohibitions in Botswana and Malawi to bureaucratic blocks in

Ethiopia and Morocco (Rivoli, 2009). These bans stem from threats to the local textile industry, as 87 textile factories closed in the period from 1990 to 1998 in Kenya and 30,000 textile industry jobs were lost in Zambia (Rivoli, 2009). Similar trends have been occurring in Uganda as well as Tanzania (Rivoli, 2009).

While used clothing imports have caused issues, there is little evidence that African textile industries would otherwise be prospering even without used clothing donations (Rivoli, 2009). Quality and management are among some issues, and will be discussed further in the following section on the African textile industry (Rivoli, 2009). The Tanzanian textile industry appears to have been declining prior to used clothing imports, and is recovering now even with continued clothing imports, as producing for export is more effective for industrial development than domestic production (Rivoli, 2009). Used clothing, while destroying some jobs, also creates others such as traders, importers, sorters, launderers, and tailors who transform the old clothing into new (Rivoli, 2009). This shows the entrepreneurial spirit and resourcefulness of Africans, and has given those who do not have factory alternatives a chance to move up economically (Rivoli, 2009). Used clothing has also become a significant mode of dress in various African countries, particularly as an affordable way to purchase clothing and dress well even during periods of economic crisis and decline (Eicher & Ross, 2010). This secondhand clothing has become a valued resource which meets the needs of poorer Africans while also meeting desires to be fashionable and engaged in Western modernity (Eicher & Ross, 2010). A term used is “clothing competence” in which Africans will carefully select used clothing and combine these secondhand garments to create a new and fashionable look (Eicher & Ross, 2010).

While the donation of used clothing does have some positive effects on Africans, there are negative effects which can outweigh the positive results. Used clothing donations are

another form of aid which can create dependency rather than empowerment, and do not fully serve the development sector. Donations can harm the local sector, preventing economic development. Used clothing does not help contribute to African culture through fashion, being neither fashionable nor fully increasing quality of life in a sustainable way. Used clothing donations do not serve either of these two purposes and therefore do not meet my values, and for these reasons I suggest a move away from used clothing donations and a move towards empowering and sustainable fashion practices. This will be seen in the case studies from Malawi. Another facet of fashion in Africa that has implications for affecting development is described below. While the following example is not based around aid, it can also have negative connotations for development through fashion.

#### *Impact of African Textile Business on Development*

A final aspect of fashion in Africa is the textile business. Sub-Saharan African countries have the greatest potential to be competitive in the production of cotton textile, apparel inputs, and certain niche textile items (Aranoff, 2009). South Africa, Mauritius, and Nigeria are the largest textile-producing countries, exporting mainly to the United States and the European Union (Aranoff, 2009). Cotton is the primary fiber produced in certain regions in Africa, grown easily in large quantities (Aranoff, 2009). Yet in the past five years textile production has been declining, especially as it is becoming harder to stay cost-competitive compared to large Asian producers like China, India, and Bangladesh (Aranoff, 2009). China is the largest buyer of cotton, and is expected to produce more than 40% of the world's cotton textiles (Rivoli, 2009). The phase-out of quotas in 2004 by the United States and the European Union led to an even greater increase in competition (Aranoff, 2009).

Challenges to increasing textile production in African countries include an insufficient apparel base and lack of infrastructure such as inadequate power and water supplies and inadequate transportation networks and old machinery and equipment (Aranoff, 2009). These challenges raise the cost of production and deter any new investment into the capital-intensive industry (Aranoff, 2009). Additional concerns are the lack of a relatively stable apparel manufacturing sector which is considered an important factor for the successful production of textile and apparel inputs, lack of regional and international market opportunities, and a lack in demand for products in the region (Aranoff, 2009). A major issue is that contamination diminishes the quality of cotton produced, thus making the textiles below the quality expected in the United States market, and tying into this problem is a scarcity of trained and skilled laborers (Aranoff, 2009). In summary, corruption, low education, lack of secure property rights, economic instability, and political risk are all barriers to successful factories in general in Africa, stemming from bad governance (Rivoli, 2009).

Production could be expanded through new and increased investment, increasing exports as well as allowing the production of new products (Aranoff, 2009). Other measures include support from USAID to foster market opportunities, outside government support for infrastructure development, and assistance in training and advisement on firms; however, these suggestions revolve around aid and raise the issues proposed above in connection to aid efforts (Aranoff, 2009). Other less dependent solutions could be to merge investment and trade policy, addressing development aspects, and creating a greater coordination between international agencies and institutions (Aranoff, 2009). The government of Mauritius suggested the United States provide a line of credit for private sector firms to expand in the textile and apparel sector in addition to making an equity fund available for co-investment with local and foreign firms in

textile and apparel projects (Aranoff, 2009). Listening to the suggestions of African countries themselves in lieu of coming up with outside solutions is much more feasible and prevents a patriarchal approach by an outside country (Aranoff, 2009).

As for how the apparel industry affects development, past precedence shows that countries that have grown to income levels above \$11,000 have had at least one percent of the workforce in apparel production (Frazer, 2011). Britain's textile industry led to the region's economic development through the use of this single industry through the 1800s (Rivoli, 2009). This stresses the importance of using apparel as an initial stage of manufacturing, with unskilled labor that is found most commonly in low-income countries, to shift resources to more sophisticated manufacturing sectors as capital and skill accumulate over time (Frazer, 2011). This trend occurred in Asia as the highest growing Asian countries first began with production in the unskilled labor-intensive industries of textiles and apparel, shifting to skill-intensive and capital-intensive industries with an increase in growth (Frazer, 2011). Every developed nation has made a transition to an industrial economy, improving living standards of workers (Eckes, 2011). Those working in development believe that one of the best prospects for the poorest countries is to build the manufacturing industries (Kristof, 2009). Manufacturing can provide millions of jobs, and should be encouraged by promoting manufacturing through encouraging African imports with the United States' African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) (Kristof, 2009). Tanzania's textile industry has been improving, as the country achieved duty-free access for its exports to the United States through AGOA, increasing exports by more than 300% between 2003 and 2007 (Rivoli, 2009). The apparel sector creates greater employment in Africa, and the growth in income levels of African countries creates greater opportunities for there to be an increase in the quality of life (Frazer, 2011).

As with used clothing donations, the textile industry in Africa can have both positive and negative effects on development. After exploring the example of China with regards to the issues with textile factories and the inherent concerns that have resulted in the past from trying to implement a capitalism system in Africa, fashion is better implemented through small capitalist endeavors. These small businesses work on a micro level to sustainably empower impoverished Africans by giving them a hand up without significantly changing the structure of small communities and avoiding the inequalities that can result from large capitalist systems. The structure of small businesses will be explored and analyzed in greater detail in the remainder of the paper.

### **Hypothesis**

The fashion industry as a form of capitalism can have both a negative and a positive impact on development in Africa; however, the negative outcomes can be mitigated to create a positive impact from fashion leading to development in Africa.

### *Methods*

The two cases, Africa Bags and Dsenyo, two fashion organizations based out of Malawi, will be compared using a qualitative approach. The organizations are both located and reachable from Boulder, Colorado and thus have been interviewed and asked the same series of questions. These responses have been incorporated in the data section below and are used to determine which case has the most positive effects from fashion on development in Malawi. This is established based on the stipulations given surrounding development in the definition section and on the efforts taken to mitigate any negative outcomes from an intervention. Data has been collected on Malawi from the year when both organizations started to the present year 2012, attempting to measure a change in the quality of life of Malawians. The greatest positive

changes along with the least negative changes in the quality of life determine which organization is superior to use as a model for fashion impacting development. The conclusion reached on which organization has the most positive impact on development in Malawi must align with the values of caring, compassion, equity, respect, and love. The conclusion will then be analyzed to derive implications for how fashion could create development in other regions of the world.

## **Case Studies**

### *Justification for Choice of Cases*

While a typical approach for International Affairs academia is to compare two states against a set of evaluations in an effort to derive trends and conclusions, this study will compare two examples within in one country. As mentioned previously, this study is taking a different approach to defining and measuring variables and will do the same with this case study in order to adhere to my core values which ultimately shape any of my decisions. Working to uphold these values, the two organizations of Africa Bags and Dsenyo, with connections to different villages in Malawi, will be qualitatively compared and contrasted with the positive and negative implications on development that fashion is attempting to impact. This example from Malawian villages will be then viewed on a national scale and applied to the larger context of Africa and ultimately the world.

The first justification for choosing these two cases is practicality, availability, and luck. Originally I had intended to compare two different countries or regions, but through my research I was connected to Todd and Holly Petitt of Africa Bags, who then referred me to Marissa Saints of Dsenyo. I was fortunate that both parties were in the country and living near Boulder so I was able to meet them both and conduct interviews in person. I was not finding in my research anywhere else where two organizations were based out of the same country and within easy

access. These two organizations also have similar features along with different aspects, a good platform for being able to compare and derive conclusions about the better approaches from both types of organization.

The second justification is the characteristics of Malawi. Malawi popped up in various other examples in my research, often in the context of food security and agriculture. As a state heavily dependent on agriculture, there are interesting connotations to observe for how fashion can play a role in improving the quality of life through food security. This paints a similar image to apply lightly to other states as many African economies today remain agrarian, with one third to one half of countries' populations earning a living off of agriculture, including Malawi (Bratton, Mattes, & Gyimah-Boadi, 2005). Almost all of the rural population practices subsistence farming in Malawi (Eicher & Ross, 2010). Countries with large agrarian populations are the most common to mention poverty paired with food shortages, hunger, and famine, stressing the importance to address the vulnerability of agriculture and therefore food, a basic human need (Bratton, Mattes, & Gyimah-Boadi, 2005). There is also the unfortunate state of Malawi, as rests one of the justifications in choosing Africa for this study. The characteristics of Malawi paired with these two different fashion organizations lay the foundation for the case study portion of the thesis. I will begin by giving the background on development and fashion in Malawi.

### *History of Malawi*

Settlement of Malawi dates back to the first millennium C.E. (Malawi, 2012). Outside involvement by Europeans began in 1875, and in 1915 a short uprising was held against the British colonists (Malawi, 2012). The economy over the next half century barely prospered, work was in short supply, and the view arose that the economy can only grow if there is close

union with colonial neighbors (History of Malawi, 2012). The British government installed an odd form of government with a self-governing colony among federations to derive the largest economic benefit; however, African voice was lost in the political process despite some economic benefits initially (History of Malawi, 2012).

The region achieved internal self-government in 1963 prior to independence in 1964, and declared a republic in 1966 led by Prime Minister Banda (Malawi, 2012). Under Banda the country began a rigorous program of economic development, but was performing slowly in the early 1990s, burdened by foreign debt and an influx of Mozambique refugees along with human rights violations (Malawi, 2012). In the latter half of the 1990s the new President Muluzi, who replaced Banda, made progress in controlling inflation along with increasing foreign aid (History of Malawi, 2012). Today Malawi is a multiparty democracy with an agricultural economy where even urban homes have a small plot of land (Malawi, 2012). In the last decade the economy has declined and the rate of inflation is high, relying heavily on food aid from the West (Malawi, 2012).

Malawian clothing and appearance prior to the nineteenth century centered around the Maravi people and included jewelry made from metals and grown cotton that was spun into thread and cloth that was then traded (Eicher & Ross, 2010). Imported calico later destroyed economic incentives to produce cotton, and weaving was abandoned as a result in the early 1900s (Eicher & Ross, 2010). The Ngoni, a tribal culture in the Malawian region in the nineteenth century, wore clothing made of animal pelts and twisted bark cloth. Ngoni men wore head-rings as a sign of manhood for warriors who demonstrated distinction in combat until interethnic warfare was abolished by the British (Eicher & Ross, 2010). The Yao and the Arabs in the nineteenth century brought Muslim style of dress to Malawi, including thin patterned

colored cloth and close-fitting white caps and long tunics (Eicher & Ross, 2010). The British missionaries in the nineteenth century affected fashion by educating Malawians and partaking in interethnic marriage which resulted in natives adopting European clothing and customs (Eicher & Ross, 2010). Prominent Malawian women wore Victorian gowns and Malawian men in leading positions wore suits and ties (Eicher & Ross, 2010). The influence of European clothing has transcended into the twenty-first century (Eicher & Ross, 2010).

Until the late nineteenth century, personal appearance in Malawi reflected ethnic and status distinctions by region, modified based on climate (Eicher & Ross, 2010). The history of fashion in Malawi has been influenced by outside contacts for centuries with the influx of migration by trade routes that surround the region (Eicher & Ross, 2010). Following colonization by the British most Malawians have adopted European clothing through primary education (Eicher & Ross, 2010). Malawi fashion in the twentieth century diversified further with foreign ethnic groups joining the already mixed population, including dress from Indian migrants and foreign clothing from England and South African settlers (Eicher & Ross, 2010). By the 1960s men and women were wearing European-based clothing and male African professionals were still dressing in suits (Eicher & Ross, 2010). Some government officials still wore the belted tunic from the East African military model (Eicher & Ross, 2010).

This transformation of Malawian fashion towards Western dress due to the influences from colonization shows the fragile balance between fashion and culture that can be broken as a result of outside pressures. The history of Malawi highlights the tension that can arise between fashion and development if the interests of the Africans are not upheld. This history is important to keep in mind when designing an intervention for Malawi that involves both fashion and development.

Under Banda, strict rules around dress were enforced to honor conservative values that women's thighs were erotic so any tight clothing including shorts and skirts that revealed women's curves was not allowed in public as this was viewed to be obscene (Eicher & Ross, 2010). Banda also ended the importation of used clothing to Malawi and in doing so revived the cotton industry, opening a textile mill that produced beautiful home-grown cloth dyed and designed by local artisans (Eicher & Ross, 2010). To support the new mill a National Fashion and Fabric Exhibition was held in the 1960s where Malawian University women modeled the clothing in bright new colors and sophisticated prints including khaki school uniforms in different hues (Eicher & Ross, 2010). This improved the appearance of rural communities, and near the end of the twentieth century Banda's restrictions were lifted on the importation of outside clothing (Eicher & Ross, 2010).

In African society dress typically signifies the status of the individual, and Malawi, where fashion has been subjected to constant change, is no exception (Malawi Fashion, 2012); however, ethnic mixing and Westernization has not eroded the indigenous cultures completely (Eicher & Ross, 2010). During holidays chiefs adorn themselves with traditional dress to mark their rank and ethnic identity (Eicher & Ross, 2010). The emergence of new techniques and the improvement in the supply of materials has developed Malawi fashion (Malawi Fashion, 2012). But the enthusiasm for imports has hindered Malawi's revival of the textile industry (Eicher & Ross, 2010). Malawian youth have adopted the fashion of contemporaries around the world, and urban elders are influenced more and more by international clothing (Eicher & Ross, 2010).

### *Africa Bags*

Africa Bags was started by Todd and Holly Petitt five years ago to address the issue of poverty in Malawi and to help the environment in the United States. The idea the couple had

after living in Malawi was to create reusable grocery bags that could be sold in the United States market with the proceeds going back to people in Malawi, helping here and there (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012). Todd and Holly wanted to empower Africans to fight their own battles and not give them another hand-out by creating business over there (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012). They wanted to eliminate government at the same time since funds do not trickle down and often get caught in bureaucracy (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012).

The Petitts were able to connect with the Malawians since they had spent time there, and recognized the stability of the country and the surplus of missionary development projects taking place (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012). The initial reaction was doubt, as most Americans leave and never return, so this effort took faith on part of both parties to see the project through (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012). The couple taught villagers from seven different villages how to design and sew a model of a bag in a production line which was then taken back to the United States to see how well it would sell. If it sold then more of the same designs were created with 100% of the money going directly back to Malawi (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012). The model here gives back 100% while fair trade may give back only 20% (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012). Each bag was signed with the name of the village it was created in to make a connection from producer to wearer (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012).

At this point, the reusable bag movement had not yet exploded, but by the time they got their project off the ground they were competing with bags from China being sold for less than \$2 (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012). The start was slow as this

is a grassroots movement, and the best way to sell the bags is to tell the story that comes with them (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012). It costs \$2-\$3 to make a bag and \$1 to ship, and selling the bags for \$10 apiece means most of the money from the purchase is going back to the producers (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012). The money sent back each year adds up to between \$30,000 and \$40,000 which equates to about \$200 a person and \$30-\$40 a day where most Malawians live in less than \$1 a day (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012). The workers can make bags in as little as ten minutes to a couple hours and do not sew everyday (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012). Africa Bags would like to sell its bags in more retail stores as this would sell more bags overall, but these stores often require a percentage and this would mean less money would be going back to Malawi (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012). Some stores have offered to sell the bags without taking back a percentage; otherwise the bags are sold by word-of-mouth and at events (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012).

When asked about the impact Africa Bags has had on development, the response was that one expects to see this surge in development, but with how poor the people are only the basic needs are met like food, clothing, and shelter (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012). There were no baseline surveys given to quantitatively measure development, but after Africa Bags Todd and Holly see people who are now fully dressed, children being sent to school when before they were not able to afford it, access to regular food, and metal roofs instead of grass (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012). The Petitts do not tell the workers what to spend their earnings on. Instead they give it

back for whatever uses the villagers' desire (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012).

Some examples of what workers have used money on is to start small businesses, invest in livestock, take in group savings, and purchase fertilizer to improve crops (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012). One village invested in a chicken coop, but this failed from characteristics inherent to the culture (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012). There is not a norm to think long-term there, but rather a necessity to live day by day like there is no tomorrow. This is why saving a chicken to produce eggs was hard to conceptualize when it could be eaten for a meal today (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012). The same idea pertains to savings, as there was no concept of this prior to Africa Bags. Yet, unlike the chicken coop attempt, now villagers are saving a percentage of their income in a bank (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012).

An unexpected outcome from the organization was the empowerment given to women through the jobs offered by Africa Bags (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012). Women are being trained as tailors now which was initially a job only the men were doing, giving them an opportunity to gain power as there are different jobs that workers can move up in (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012). Women are treated horribly in the culture from a Western viewpoint and are the ones expected to carry stuff while the men walk beside them carrying nothing (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012). One of the women workers was able to stand up to her husband and have him help her carry the bags, no longer being forced to be the only one doing the hard work (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012). The Petitts

also included that the women there save the money better than the men who typically waste it on drinking (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012). The sewing also gives women a social time to talk and laugh while they produce bags (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012).

Another unexpected outcome from the organization is the need to closely patrol the villages because there is no business sense or sense of urgency in meeting deadlines (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012). There is this donor mentality that outsiders coming in are in charge and will handle everything, but by allowing the villagers to run the organization and oversee production, Africa Bags hopes to change this mentality (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012). Todd and Holly would like to see the people take this idea on as their own and spread it to other villages to the point where one day there will be no need for Americans to help lead the project (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012). The Petitts do not stay in Malawi as they appoint a local to lead production, but they are still helping and in charge from the outside.

Africa Bags would give the advice that the no profit model has aided in the success of this organization, making it easier to sell the product along with not reinventing the wheel but looking at the wheel differently (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012). Technology has also aided in the success because without cell phones and computers it would have been impossible to coordinate these efforts due to a lack of communication (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012). More advice is to focus on leadership and the power the coordinator of each village has in creating the success of the project (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012). This power and good leadership are central to overcoming corruption and failure along with understanding that

American standards do not work because of cultural differences which must be recognized (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012). While Todd and Holly admit it would be easier to have an American on the ground heading the project, this would completely undermine any empowerment and demoralize the whole goal of the organization (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012). Africa Bags would like to become more of a fashion statement to sell more bags and send more money back as well as expand to more villages but is waiting to grow the current villages more (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012). After meeting with Todd and Holly, I have agreed to design bags for Africa Bags which will be produced in Malawi with the goal for them to be marketable in the United States in order to be able to send more money back to the producers.

As for fashion in Malawi, the Petitts believe that the more the country develops, so will the fashion scene, which already emulates American hip hop styles (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012). Where people are better off there is a demand for fashion, and clothing is important in the sense of “looking smart” even if the importance of functionality comes before appearance (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012). Name brand is not important so much as newness, a clean look, and being able to buy new things (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012). Women wear extensions and care about their looks, and Western ideals brought in a hundred years ago still are present, showing the lasting impacts on fashion from colonization (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012). Another aspect of fashion that is important to point out is that the Malawians in local markets selling fabric are not making that much money, as the fabric comes from Tanzania where most of the profit is collected there (H. Petitt, & T. Petitt, personal communication, January 27, 2012).

*Dsenyo*

Dsenyo is a fair trade organization that sells handbags started by Marissa Saints five years ago after living in Malawi for a year (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012). Marissa studied economic development and microcredit lending and used this knowledge as her framework for coming up with Dsenyo (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012). After living there on the ground, Marissa saw the reality of flawed aid and creative people who believe they are unable to do anything for themselves, waiting for white people to come along (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012). She saw lots of young people unemployed and unable to find jobs (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012). Even past high school education, there are not many opportunities and this leads to high brain drain (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012). Marissa wanted to address the two issues of the aid crisis and the lack of jobs in addition to working on collaboration as there are many international organizations in Malawi all trying to do the same thing and overlapping (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012). She reached out to microcredit organizations to make connections and thus began her model of development through business (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012).

When asked about the implications of using capitalism for development, Marissa replied that culturally the concept of money is different and it is hard for people there to save because safety nets are the social network, not the government (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012). There are challenges to business but there are also the good sides; it is about finding a balance (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012). Marissa feels it is a system that cannot be ignored, so you figure out how to do well with it (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012). The approach to give the government money was enacted

and failed because of corruption, and therefore it is time to try a different method (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012).

So Marissa coordinated with existing microcredit organizations already in Malawi that had started a sewing school and were teaching the women to sew and start their own businesses (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012). The problem was that each one was creating their own business and this meant no diversity and greater competition against one another in the market (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012). Marissa saw these women already trained to sew and wanted to offer them a job creating bags that she would sell in the United States that would pay fair trade wages (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012). The guidelines of fair trade wages are vague, stating that the wage must be fair in the local context to support the cost of living (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012). Marissa pays the workers a high enough wage to support themselves (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012). The government minimum wage is a little over \$2 a day and she pays the workers at least double this price (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012). The pay rate varies based on efficiency and how many bags are made in one day to decide a fair price to pay for each piece (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012). The salary ends up being around \$125 per month and up to \$1,500 a year as a production manager (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012). Dsenyo also donates three percent of the revenue from all sales back into nonprofits in Malawi that she has seen are doing good work (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012).

Marissa has qualitative data and interviews to measure the impact Dsenyo has had on development, and is working to use a more internationally recognized survey that is used by microfinance organizations to collect data (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29,

2012). In two years there are kids being sent to schools now, money available to purchase fertilizer, the ability to grow food, and money for medical costs like medication such as HIV treatment (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012). Marissa personally sees people gaining weight and looking visibly healthier with more disposable income (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012).

One unexpected outcome is the request from groups on the ground to want to be a part of Dsenyo as the word has gotten out about the organization (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012). Like with Africa Bags there are cultural issues that arise, such as a struggle between a wife and her husband as far as the wife being more in control and this being difficult for the husband to handle (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012). This was resolved by including the husband in decisions, showing that it is imperative to work with culture and never negate this key factor. Another cultural dilemma has been the difference between understanding what is 'quality' in the Western sense which has made it difficult to be as productive (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012). Like Todd and Holly described, it would be simpler to have an American on the ground but this would defeat the purpose and goal at hand (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012). Like Todd and Holly, Marissa also mentioned how women are more responsible with money and the stereotype of a drunk African man sadly is true because of the unfortunate circumstances (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012).

Marissa is thinking of expanding beyond Malawi, and suggests always building on relationships and keeping in mind the cultural barriers that will be a challenge anywhere (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012). Marissa also advises to not reinvent the

wheel, to collaborate with existing relations, and to build partnerships as this makes the community stronger (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012).

When asked about the pros and cons to fair trade, Marissa described this as a great movement as too many marginalized populations have been abused and taken advantage of by bigger companies (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012). She believes it is completely legitimate and fair to run the organization as a business and make a profit as there are overhead expenses (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012). She also included how the women are receiving free training and free services (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012). There are two major fair trade bodies in the United States, and Dsenyo is a member of Fair Trade Federation which lays out labor practices and environmental pacts (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012). One challenge is knowing where the materials are coming from for the bags, as most fabric is now printed in China, and lots of textile mills in Africa have old equipment with poor quality that are being bought out by China (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012). As mentioned with Africa Bags Tanzania produces organic cotton but most of this is already bought out by international organizations (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012). It is just a guess where exactly the fabric comes from when it is purchased from Malawian vendors who cross the border to Tanzania to buy the fabric (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012).

As for her experience with fashion in Malawi, fashion is a huge part of lives everywhere as a sense to express ourselves and interact with each other (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012). There is African Diaspora all over the world that is connecting and reconnecting to their cultural roots, expressing fashion in this form (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012). Fashion for development would be in the form of a

business and Africa is a potential market for production yet there are the increased transportation costs that come along with this (M. Saints, personal communication, February 29, 2012).

### *Data*

The previous two sections laid out the basis for each organization based on responses to interview questions, giving an idea of how these organizations impact development and what the positive and negative aspects may be. Initially I had wanted to compare data for each village impacted by the two organizations before and after implementation. While this would not be especially reliable because it would be difficult to set controls on what other variables may have caused any changes in development besides the organization, it would give some quantitative measure since both organizations only have qualitative data to present. However, this data for each village was not able to be obtained and so I have obtained data for the country as a whole to compare before the start of the organizations and five years after the organizations have been in production to the present day. Conveniently both organizations began around the same time in 2007. This will be the starting year to look at for data prior to each organization being implemented, and 2012, the current year, will be the ending year to compare the starting data with. While this data does not control for multiple other factors that could impact development, this is a starting point for analyzing the possible impact by these organizations on development in Malawi. After viewing this comparison, factors will be used from my research to compare and contrast each organization, concluding with the positive aspects of fashion for development, mitigating any negative aspects, and using this conclusion to apply on a more international scope.

Looking at the data from the World Factbook for Malawi, the first area that overlapped in giving both sets of data relevant to looking at a change in the quality of life was the infant

mortality rate which has decreased from 92.1 deaths/1,000 live births to 79.02 deaths/1,000 live births (Central Intelligence Agency, 2007, Central Intelligence Agency, 2012). Life expectancy at birth rose from 42.98 years to 52.31 years, and actually increased greater for women than for men, so women today have a longer life expectancy than men when in 2007 men had a higher life expectancy (Central Intelligence Agency, 2007, Central Intelligence Agency, 2012). The labor force increased from 4.5 million to 5.747 million; however, the industrial production growth rate decreased from 6.4% to 5.9% (Central Intelligence Agency, 2007, Central Intelligence Agency, 2012). I wanted to compare relevant data for the population below the poverty line, but the same data (both from 2004) was all that was available.

After looking at these comparisons, it is evident that in some measurement quality of life is improving for Malawians. This is of course an average estimate, which does not mean that everyone necessarily has an increase in quality of life, and this could even mean that some people are experiencing a decrease in quality of life. Based on my values, I do not want to just rely on numbers to calculate changes for this reason. There is also the issue that there are multiple factors that affect the changes in these measurements as mentioned above, and the data is for the entire country and not just for the primary areas where the organizations are having their greatest impact.

Taking a qualitative approach, I now examine several fashion organization characteristics found in both case studies which are important methods in using fashion for development. These factors have been reoccurring in my research and are geared towards increasing development through fashion. The factors are grassroots approach, community focus, women in development, and role of nationalism.

The first factor, the grassroots bottom-up approach, is a response to development that emerged in the 1970s initiating development “from below and within civil society rather than from above and the outside,” (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2003). Grassroots approaches acknowledge the ability of the poor to contribute to the solutions to the problems that face them (Ellis & Biggs, 2001). The World Bank has adopted principles connected to bottom-up rural development approaches through the participatory poverty assessments and the publication of *Voices of the Poor* (Ellis & Biggs, 2001). This approach must be socially inclusive of gender, indigenous people, ethnic groups, and the poor, while drawing on the sustainable livelihoods approach (SLA) in which the poor use social capital to organize and change their future with their own resources (Petras & Veltmeyer, 2003).

Encouragement for grassroots participation in the development process has been growing. Particularly to Africa, the private sector should embody self-reliance, innovation, entrepreneurship, local sourcing of materials, and inter-African trade (Balogun, 1989). The grassroots approach is actually beginning to reorient development strategies through leadership by middle-class educated youth, intellectuals, and professional people who work with sizeable groups of impoverished persons using novel methods (Escobar, 1992). Grassroots movements are localized and directed at the day-to-day experience to give power to people so they can have greater autonomy over the decisions affecting their lives (Escobar, 1992). They are motivated not necessarily by economic reasons but also by cultural, artistic, and communal aspirations that express the rights of the poor (Escobar, 1992). Grassroots movements are creating a new way to approach development that provides new possibilities for satisfying human needs like food, nutrition, and health (Escobar, 1992). Africa Bags and Dsenyo both base their models off of grassroots approaches.

The second factor, community focus, is closely linked to the grassroots approach. The community approach is important because it focuses on the local population which is necessary in order to give a voice to rural producers and workers when trying to create development through the market (Ghimire, 2005). These community-driven projects are not necessarily the simple approach, but they are necessary in order to give the poor the right to decide what they want for sustainable and effective development (Martin & Mathema, 2010). The number one way out of the poverty trap is to bring money into the community followed by increasing the rate of return on labor, maximizing local income, and increasing employment in manufacturing to expand markets (Martin & Mathema, 2010). This is seen particularly in fashion by bringing in international designers to link producers to marketing opportunities, helping poor entrepreneurs achieve potential productivity and profitability (Martin & Mathema, 2010). With community focus approaches it is important to remember that communication is imperative, as the larger the community, the greater the chances are for conflict and disagreement (Martin & Mathema, 2010). But this also allows for a greater opportunity to learn from each other and value contribution, developing a sense of responsibility (Martin & Mathema, 2010). Africa Bags and Dsenyo are based on community focus by employing locals and operating village by village.

The third factor is focusing on women in development, a concept that has gotten much support and has shown up in various places in this paper. Gender equality is critical to the alleviation of poverty and intrinsic to security and development (Ndulo & Grieco, 2009). The culture of Malawi shows this inequality through the way women are expected to carry the burdens and serve the men food, often on their knees (Malawi, 2012). The importance of focusing on women for development projects is evident in what both Africa Bags and Dsenyo say about the responsibility African women have with money over men.

The final factor is the role of nationalism. I propose this factor as a possible justification for viewing fashion as spurring development on a micro level. Typically development is aimed at the state level, and is certainly viewed internationally for International Affairs. I suggest pursuing development on an initially micro level instead of the traditional macro level approach since this is how fashion appears more frequently and more effectively at creating development. Literature creates the impression that Africans are still associated with solidarities of ethnic and kinship identities which constitute a principle obstacle to nation building (Bratton, Mattes, & Gyimah-Boadi, 2005). One survey showed that Africans are unsure of placing trust in their fellow citizens, especially those outside of their immediate group (Bratton, Mattes, & Gyimah-Boadi, 2005). This also followed with the reality that in areas where social capital is scarce, people devise individualistic strategies for surviving over others; however, a different survey question did reveal that almost all Africans feel a sense of pride in being a national in their respective country, desiring that their children think of themselves as national citizens (Bratton, Mattes, & Gyimah-Boadi, 2005). There is also the argument about the way in which African states were established. Artificial boundaries were drawn at random with little attention to cultural and ethnic boundaries by colonial rulers as they divvied up ownership over African land (Shah, 2010). This history supports the suggestion that building up Africa by state boundary may not be as effective as building up by village boundary. Moving away from the typical method to construct development country by country to enacting development village by village is what Africa Bags and Dsenyo are doing.

The four factors just described are my suggestions for the characteristics of successful fashion organizations in order to lead to greater positive effects on development in Africa. The two case studies will be compared using these factors to analyze which organization ultimately

has the greater positive impact on development in Malawi. This in turn can be used to apply to other African countries and to other parts of the world.

### *Analysis*

The two case studies of Africa Bags and Dsenyo in Malawi show the pros and cons to using fashion for development. They also both incorporate the factors listed for successful development. Both organizations work to empower the community at the grassroots level, focusing on the impact women are having on the success of the organization and using development on a micro level through villages rather than on a macro level with the country as a whole. The key difference is the percentage of money sent back to the workers. Africa Bags has followed a model of complete empowerment, and Dsenyo has established a sustainable practice of offering employment.

While both organizations have good intentions, they present this dilemma of outsiders coming in, dictating a path, and offering a hand up. Both groups had mentioned in some form for the desire for Africans to be able to create this source of development on their own. Throughout my research I have still had a difficult time completely resolving this and mitigating this inherent sense of paternalism that is found in outside interventions. Whether resulting from colonialism, corrupt African leaders, or negative impacts from globalization, Africa is at a disadvantage. Perhaps the only way to reconcile this is to accept that an initial hand needs to be given, and if past precedence is not sufficient to justify this help, then perhaps the moral code of humans to aid each other in our survival is basis enough to support outsiders giving Africans a starting hand.

In this case, keeping with my core values, I conclude that Africa Bags presents the closest model for offering a hand up and leaving Africans with this jumpstart to continue development

on their own. Both organizations give access to the market which would be otherwise unavailable. Hopefully with time the market will be accessible to Malawians without any direct connection or presence of an American. Only time will tell if this is probable or even possible. In relating this analysis and the case studies to my initial hypothesis, the pros and cons of fashion on development are plentiful, but these cons can be mitigated by instilling the factors of grassroots approach, community focus, focus on women, and role of nationalism in fashion development interventions. And of course the best way to prevent and resolve the negative effects of fashion on development is by staying true to one's core values.

### *Conclusions*

Now I will look at the micro level where individuals have seen a growth in development from fashion businesses, as appears to be the trend thus far and use this to discuss how to recreate these trends on a more macro level scale. Fashion in many of the examples researched is taking place on a micro level. The textile industry is an example of a more macro role fashion is taking, but the places where fashion has impacted people the most through increasing quality of life is on the micro level. It is this discovery that leads me to suggest that fashion will have a greater effect on development on the macro level in a more developed country, like in South Africa.

This has connotations that fashion on a smaller scale can begin the process of development and over time can be transferred to a larger scale. The model of these fashion organizations in Malawian villages can be replicated in more villages and in other countries. From here once development has been improving, fashion can be implemented at the macro level of a country. This country model for African countries can be applied to other developing regions of the world. The factors present in development from the case studies of the grassroots

approach, community focus, women in development, and the role of nationalism can all be applied in a broader context to the future of development for developing nations around the globe. It is this example from small villages in Africa that can transcend across borders to shape the future for a more developed world where each human being has the capacity to control their quality of life, including their fashion choice of the day.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has been a collaboration of the discussion within the academic community of the literary articles answering the question of “how does business affect development?”. The more specific question has then been to look at the impact of the fashion industry on development in Africa. The research indicates there are various differing opinions, both in support of and against using business to spur development. Through researching organizations around the continent, those which empower communities rather than bestowing aid are the most effective. Fashion best creates development when it is focused around the factors of grassroots approaches, community orientation, focus on women, and role of nationalism. Fashion creates development on a micro level for developing regions and has a macro scale impact once a country is more developed. The fashion business model can be replicated across villages and countries to spur an opportunity for an increase in the quality of life not only in Africa but in other developing regions so long as the core values and the interests of the natives are upheld are. This study has been inspired by the realization that I wake up in the morning with the pressing choice of what color shirt I will wear today, while someone across the world wakes up and wonders if they will have a choice of food to eat today or not. It is in alignment with my core values that we all have a choice in food, and hopefully a choice in fashion as well. Fashion

“does for materials what the Romantics did for words,” and now hopefully fashion can do for development what Fendi did for purses (Miller, 2007).

### *Further Research*

Further research could involve comparing more organizations and more regions on a larger scale. This could include obtaining first-hand research by speaking with Africans and understanding what they want and how they feel about development and about the impact fashion may have on their lives from both an economic and cultural standpoint. More research could also involve interviewing more fashion organizations like the two interviewed for this study, such as BeadForLife. More research needs to be conducted to understand how these various fashion organizations are affecting the lives of Africans, specifically through taking data and analyzing impacts. More theoretical literature needs to be done on the basis behind fashion for development and the implications. Research could also be conducted to further examine the relationship between Western constructs and requirements and how this continues to affect African fashion.

For a larger international emphasis this same study could be researched in different regions of the world and then applied if replication is valid in an effort to spur development. There are organizations in different regions using fashion for development. An example is Un Mundo which is a nonprofit that holds Ethical Fashion Shows using “Fashion for a Better World” to fundraise with ecological and fair trade practices to facilitate access to education, health care and sufficient wages in marginalized Honduran communities (Un Mundo, 2012).

It is important to take into account the differences between different regions, particularly differences between African countries and countries in other regions. Based on Africa’s history,

focusing on villages rather than on countries is reasonable; however, this may not be the case for different regions with different historical backgrounds.

### *Limitations*

Limitations include the inability to travel to any of these mentioned regions and conduct first-hand research on the impact of using fashion to create develop due to time constraints and costs. The only available research is to look at what current fashion businesses are doing and the impact they are having or have already had on the area or surrounding areas. Further limitations include the time and content constraints indicative and innate to an undergraduate honors thesis. Given more time, more research opportunities, and more flexibility in research and paper length, more regions and organizations could be explored and compared and more facets of the fashion industry could be included.

### *Gaps in My Research*

Gaps in my research have stemmed from the various limitations listed above that additional research will fill. As always more research can be done to gather data and further develop the ideas presented in this thesis, particularly on the impact the fashion business model will have on other developing regions taking into account different characteristics and cultures.

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## Appendix

### Interview Questions for Organizations

How did you develop the idea for the organization?

How did you connect with the people to make this cause happen?

Have you taken any data or have a way to measure how the organization has impacted development?

What differences are there in the country after the implementation of the organization?

Are there any unexpected outcomes from the organization?

Are there any negative outcomes from the organization?

Are there any improvements that can be made to the organization?

What has made the organization successful?

What advice would you give to future organizations trying to do similar work?

Would you say that the success is based on characteristics of the region?

How important is the region when implementing the organization? Could this same organization model be implemented elsewhere or would there need to be changes made? What would they be, and how would you change them?

What would you say about how fashion can impact development in African countries?