African Cloth, Export Production, and Secondhand Clothing in Kenya

Tina Mangieri
Department of Geography
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
CB 3220 Saunders Hall, Chapel Hill, NC 27599 USA
mangieri@unc.edu

January 2006 (revised)

Abstract:

This paper examines intersecting developments of three international clothing systems in Kenya: African print cloth with its own transnational histories of design, production and trade; more recent export-oriented mass-produced clothing primarily for large Western markets; and the importation and sale of secondhand clothing. These three clothing systems and their interrelated production networks suggest new geographies of global economic and cultural integration. By taking as its focus these systems, and by stressing their interrelatedness, this paper seeks to expand discussions of production in clothing and textile research beyond an emphasis on "assembly for export" by integrating analyses of export production with both production for domestic consumption and the recent "production" of local markets for secondhand clothing. In particular, this research concerns fundamental questions in global economic geography by focusing on historical and contemporary networks of trade and production between countries of the global South. Issues of South-South trade and the role of domestic markets are greatly under-represented in the contemporary literature on global apparel. Attention to these contexts is needed to provide conceptual alternatives to normative understandings of globalization as fundamentally limited to Western practices and experiences.

This paper focuses on the parallel and intersecting development of three international clothing systems in Kenya: 'African' print cloth with its own transnational histories of design, production, and trade; more recent export-oriented mass-produced clothing primarily for large Western markets; and the importation and sale of secondhand clothing sourced from those same markets. By taking as its focus these systems, and by stressing their interrelatedness, this paper seeks to expand discussions of production in clothing and textile research beyond an emphasis on "assembly for export," by integrating analyses of export production with both production for domestic consumption and the recent "production" of local markets for secondhand clothing. Further, by focusing on these systems as they integrate in Kenya, this paper aims to place Africa in the center of discussions concerning the international trade in textiles and apparel, and, more broadly, globalization.

Cloth and clothing production, trade, and consumption are currently undergoing dramatic upheavals in Kenya. Domestic production of 'traditional' African print textiles for local consumption, once the backbone of post-independence manufacturing strategies, ceased by 2001. While I refer to this cloth, characterized by boldly-patterned designs printed in multiple colors on cotton as both "African" and "traditional," the terms belie the regional differentiations and complex global genealogies of these textiles. I will return to this discussion in the context of the East African fabrics of *khanga* and *kitenge*, below.

Significant changes in the global regulatory environment affecting Kenya, including preferential trade arrangements with the European Union (the Cotonou Convention of 2000) and the United States (the African Growth and Opportunity Act or AGOA, passed by the US Congress in 2000), resulted in tremendous growth in nascent export apparel production prior to the end of the Multifiber Arrangement (MFA) on January 1, 2005. The increasing importation of secondhand clothing, banned in Kenya until the 1990s, has likewise profoundly affected production, trade, and apparel consumption. Nevertheless, the textile industry ranks first among Kenya's manufacturing sectors in terms of both size and employment (RATES, 2003:11). Gains experienced by the sector in the post-AGOA environment include a tripling of Kenyan textile exports from USD $45 million in 2001 to USD $150 million in 2003 (Flint, 2004).

The collapse of the domestic African print manufacturing sector is linked to market liberalization in the 1990s affecting both local cotton production and the importation of secondhand clothing. Without reinvestment in cloth production facilities, Kenya will be seriously hampered by changes in AGOA requiring domestic or US sourcing of textiles for apparel production in 2007. Current export apparel manufacture in Kenya relies on comparatively cheap Asian cloth imports, which in part contributed to the cessation of local print cloth production. Preliminary research suggests these manufacturing ties to India, in particular, where many of these imports are sourced, are based on long-standing relationships between families and associates of the same regional and ethnic identities as their counterparts in Kenya.

These South-South linkages in the production, trade, and consumption of textiles and apparel in Kenya, particularly as Kenya links to India, China, and the Arabian Peninsula, are both indicative of the current structure of the global textiles and apparel industry and ignored by research that focuses exclusively on the economic aspects of these ties. Occurring 'beneath' Western-dominated analyses of the global production and trade in cloth and clothing, these geographies are illustrative of long-standing and profound economic and cultural engagements with processes of globalization throughout the Indian Ocean littoral. Like globalization itself, these South-South links are not new, but they are constantly renegotiated. Attention must be paid to the critical role played by these histories, in tandem with current cultural and economic links, to gain a better understanding of the contemporary context and future challenges facing not only Kenya, but also other countries for which present analyses of globalization continue to elide truly global integrations.

While this focus forms the core of a larger study from which this paper emerged, its details lie beyond the scope of this paper. Rather, here I offer an opening discussion of the three systems of cloth and clothing in Kenya within which these linkages are forged. Following a brief introduction of textile and apparel production in Kenya, the paper presents discussions of African print cloth, export apparel in the context of changing international trade regimes, and secondhand clothing as each system links with the other. I conclude by considering globalization as a reflection of changing global interdependencies as suggested by current practices in textiles and apparel.

The information presented in this paper is based on field research conducted in Kenya in 2004 and on a variety of print materials including technical reports and newspaper articles. Several of these latter sources have been obtained via the internet. Given the fluctuating circumstances surrounding the end of the MFA and its effects in Kenya, and elsewhere, the material presented here is quickly superceded by new information. To mitigate this effect, further research, conducted throughout 2006 in Nairobi and Mombasa, aims to provide a fuller picture of this dynamism. Here I offer a preliminary discussion of the factors at play, with an emphasis on the interrelatedness of these multiple systems of cloth and clothing. This paper similarly offers some groundwork in exploring the myriad forms in which economic policies integrate with cultural practices in ways elided by state- and firm-centered approaches to the role of textiles and apparel in economic development.

Kenyan textiles and apparel: a brief introduction

Since independence in 1963, the textile and apparel sector in Kenya has been a centerpiece of economic development strategies. Import substitution industrialization (ISI) policies in the early post-independence years were a boon to cotton-growers and to the textile and apparel industries themselves, due to the imposition of a 100% duty on imported goods. Print cloth for domestic consumption was pursued as both an economic policy generating jobs and revenue, and as a cultural strategy predicated on a post-independence African pride visibly expressed by wearing "African" garments. By the early 1980s, the textile industry was Kenya's leading manufacturing sector in terms of both employment and size, involving over 200,000 households and 30% of the manufacturing labor force (EPZ 2005). In the early 1990s, due to several factors including mismanagement, lack of investment, and, notably, the availability of secondhand clothing, the local textile industry in Kenya collapsed.

Beginning in 2000, the apparel manufacturing industry in Kenya began to grow rapidly due to AGOA. Until 2005, investment, job growth, and production surged in this export-oriented apparel sector. Since the completion of the MFA on January 1, 2005, Kenya is experiencing a volatile atmosphere of factory closures, urgent policy prescriptions, and renewed calls for reinvigorating domestic textile production and consumption.

African print cloth: rise and decline

African cloth and clothing provide a productive entrée to discussions of global apparel industries, given their transnational nature. For the purposes of this paper, I will briefly focus specifically on two textiles - *khanga* and *kitenge* (pl. *vitenge*) - worn by women throughout East Africa. Despite their geographically dispersed development linking Africa with Asia, Europe, and North America, *khanga* and *kitenge* are paradigmatically East African. Both are colorful, cotton textiles. *Khanga* developed in Zanzibar and the East African coast as, initially, a clothing style of Muslim women, many of whom were slaves prior to emancipation (see Fair, 2001 for an excellent discussion). While Muslim women continue to wear *khanga*, though to a lesser degree, their popularity has spread to other groups in East Africa, and beyond.

Khanga are sold as conjoined rectangular pairs of cloth which must be cut and hemmed to form two pieces, most commonly worn in tandem as a skirt and head covering. They are characterized by a border on each side of the cloth and the inclusion of text printed in a narrow box in the bottom third of the fabric. The text, which may include a proverb, insult, flirtation, or political slogan, was printed in Arabic on the earliest *khanga* of the late nineteenth century and appears most often in Swahili today. Regional language variations include Arabic (for the Omani market), Somali, Malagasy, and other East African languages, as appropriate.

Kitenge, by contrast, is the East African version of wax cloth sold throughout sub-Saharan Africa and is fashioned into couture dresses by local tailors. The complicated, globalized histories of *khanga* and *kitenge* are beyond the scope of this paper (see Linnebuhr 1992 and Fair 2001 for additional *khanga* information). While recent works specific to *kitenge* are rare, attention to West African wax cloth is comparatively widespread (see Bickford, 1994; Mustafa, 1998; and Rabine, 2002).

Prior to Kenyan independence in December 1963, both *khanga* and *vitenge* were largely imported from Europe initially (Fair, 2001), and later, India. Following independence, the textile industrial sub-sector was identified by the government as a "core industry" with the potential for inducing rapid economic development in Kenya under national ISI strategies. Local cloth manufacturing expanded from six weaving mills in operation by 1963 to 52 weaving mills by 1983 (Republic of Kenya, 2001:3). The economic and political centerpiece of this expansion was the domestic manufacture of *khanga* and *kitenge* as both a foundation for industrial development and a powerful aesthetic symbol of independent African identity. Indeed, post-independence governments throughout sub-Saharan Africa invested heavily in domestic textile and apparel manufacture, with a particular focus on "African" prints. These local print-cloth industries, once the core of post-independence manufacturing sectors and celebrated as thriving, tangible symbols of African independence, are today in steep decline throughout sub-Saharan Africa. By 2001, domestic manufacture of *khanga* and *kitenge* ended in Kenya.

Local woven and print cloth production in Kenya was undermined, in part, by the importation of cheaper Asian *khanga* and *vitenge*, crises in domestic cotton production, poor management, the importation of secondhand clothing from the United States and Europe, and an emerging movement toward the local manufacture of Western-style clothing for export. An additional factor, and the focus of the larger on-going study from which this material is obtained, is the declining popularity of *khanga* amongst Muslim women, in particular, who have widely rejected the local *khanga* in urban areas, in favor of *buibui*, a black garment akin to *abaya* worn throughout the Near East. This fashion shift is linked to wider geopolitical and identity transformations, suggesting the paucity of assessments of domestic print cloth production decline focused exclusively on economic indicators.

The primary *khanga* and *kitenge* production facilities previously extant in Kenya, including Rift Valley Textiles (RIVATEX) in Eldoret, which closed in 1998, and Nanyuki's Mount Kenya Textile (MOUNTEX), which operated on and off through the late 1990s before closing in 2000, are currently for sale and attracting the interest of prospective investors from India, the United States, and Thailand, amongst others (East African Standard, 2003). The professed aim of potential investors is, however, production of export apparel, discussed below, rather than goods for the domestic market.

Although *khanga* are no longer manufactured in Kenya, *khanga* popularity persists in diminished form. To meet this demand, *khanga* are imported primarily from India and Tanzania. The loss of government revenue attributed to cross-border *khanga* smuggling is estimated by the Kenyan government to exceed 105 million Kenyan shillings annually or over 1.3 million USD in October 2004 rates (Republic of Kenya, 2001:4). The popularity of African print cloth, the resonance of its "African" aesthetic, and its economic importance, while not necessarily diminished, are nevertheless transformed by articulations with secondhand clothes and an emergent export-clothing manufacturing strategy.

International Trade Regimes and Kenya

Amidst the global restructuring associated with trade liberalization, parallel agreements have been enacted between regional trading blocks, including Africa, resulting in the nascent growth of export apparel productions industries in Kenya. I wish here to focus briefly on changes effected in Kenya by the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), a US response to the brokered agreement between the EU and nations of Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific, known in its current form as the Cotonou Convention. These recent agreements, particularly AGOA, resulted in a resurgence of investor interest in the textile sector in Africa, including Kenya, following a period of decline and factory closure. While textiles and apparel constituted 9% of the products imported into the US under AGOA in 2003 (second only to energy-related products which account for 79% of trade by cost), the impact on manufacturing for participating African countries has been substantial. This resurgence is now threatened by global reconfigurations following the end of the MFA.

AGOA, enacted in May 2000 after years of Congressional debate, eliminates duties on apparel and certain textiles exported to the United States by African signatory nations, of which there are currently thirty-eight. This duty-free access is nevertheless constrained by a quota, measured in Square Meter Equivalent (SME), which is set as a fixed percentage of all US apparel imports in the preceding 12-month period for which data is available. This annual limit concerns aggregate imports under AGOA and thus does not apply individually to sub-Saharan participatory countries. For the trade year October 2002-September 2003, total apparel imports from Sub-Saharan Africa to the US equaled 264,469,209 SME under AGOA for a quota fill rate of 35.94%. As of August 2004, the fill rate from October 2003 was 34.36% (AGOA, 2004). As of 2005, this annual quota had yet to be reached.

AGOA is predicated upon a governance structure whereby the status of African nations, and their associated ability to participate in the agreement via certification, is determined. A series of political and economic conditionalities are required for inclusion within the agreement, targeted at countries broadly defined to comprise those "that work to open their economies and build free markets" (AGOA, 2004). Further distinctions demarcate Lesser Developed Countries (LDCs) and non-LDCs, with the former enjoying preferential access and the ability to utilize third-country fabrics in apparel production for export to the US. These categories are based on a consecutive series of 'stage rules' whereby a single-stage requirement mandates the country of origin to assemble and finish a product for export, while a three-stage rule, by contrast, requires yarn spinning and/or fabric weaving, in addition to assembly and finishing, to be performed in the country of origin. Many African countries, including Kenya, rely on the import of Asian textiles for apparel production following the collapse of the cotton sector after market liberalization permitted secondhand clothing imports (Kelley, 2003). While this preference system was to be phased out in September 2004, requiring African nations to use textiles domestically produced or imported from the US only, the exception has been extended for an additional three years (until 2007) under the more recent provisions of AGOA III, signed by George W. Bush on July 14, 2004. While the original AGOA was slated to end in 2008, AGOA III has extended normal apparel benefits from 2008 until 2015.

For Kenya, trade agreements have perceptibly altered the manufacturing landscape in terms of the production of textiles, apparel, and the growth of a clothing export sector. Factories previously devoted to the domestic manufacture of African print cloth have either ceased to produce or are being re-opened as export apparel facilities. Kenya has established and is currently increasing the number and scope of Export Processing Zones (EPZs) (RATES, 2003:79). A new development begun in 1990, EPZs are growing primarily by opportunities afforded through AGOA. While prior to the end of the MFA, factories located in the EPZs had spawned a USD $163 million textile manufacturing industry and created over 30,000 jobs (The Nation, 2004; United Nations, 2005), this growth has not been without controversy. Labor conditions in these zones have been likened to "the sweatshops of South East Asia" (The Nation, 2004; Kenya Human Rights Commission, 2004), resulting in labor unrest and manufacturing shutdowns.

Despite these and other serious human rights contentions, Kenya continued to expand its export market in cloth and clothing to the US through 2004. As a testament to this expansion, Kenya surpassed Mauritius in 2003 and South Africa in 2004 to place second behind Lesotho for apparel exports to the US under AGOA measured as SME (AGOA, 2004). Of the 25 garment manufacturing firms operating in Kenya's EPZs in 2005, the majority produce, in descending order of importance: jeans, trousers/pants, shorts, shirts (including t-shirts), and blouses and dresses for women (EPZA, 2005). While Kenya's apparel exports increase under AGOA, Kenya's (used) apparel imports have similarly grown – a paradox returned to below.

Gibbon's work on clothing manufacture in South Africa and Mauritius indicates that the supply response by African nations to the provisions offered by AGOA have been "substantially and reasonably broad in geographical terms' (Gibbon, 2003:1821), but, on closer investigation, more narrowly confined to certain types of industrial enterprise. Of the firms which have increased production for the US market under AGOA, the majority is East Asian-owned, specializing in the assembly and finishing of basic garments (ibid). The reasons for the greater perceived expansion in East Asian-owned enterprises in South Africa and Mauritius are numerous and speculative (including greater access to capital, longer experience with the type of production pursued under AGOA, etc.).

In Kenya, a view of the current ownership and management of textile mills and apparel manufacturing indicates a majority Indian investment (RATES, 2003:98-122). Given the deeply implicated histories of South Asians in Kenya, as elsewhere in East Africa, attention must be paid to their role in establishing and indeed expanding textile production under the current AGOA regime. India is currently lobbying East African nations, particularly Kenya, to form partnerships under AGOA by which India would provide manufacturers in Kenya with the raw materials for textile production – a provision provided to Kenya and other designated LDCs until September 2007.

How the integration of clothing into the WTO on January 1, 2005 will ultimately affect the nascent textile-for-export concerns emerging in Kenya and throughout sub-Saharan Africa in the long-term remains to be seen. The proposed extension of duty-free export to the US until 2015 may mitigate some of the immediate detrimental effects of direct competition with the low-wage and low-cost cloth and clothing manufacturing sector in Asia. Nevertheless, the factory closures anticipated by the conclusion of the MFA are occurring throughout Kenya and elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa, reversing the few years of AGOA gains - a devastation Kenyans refer to as the "Chinese tsunami." By May 1, 2005 – international labor day – Kenya had lost 6,000 jobs in apparel-for-export manufacturing with the closure of four major, well-established, factories (Mulama 2005).

One likely impact will be a decreased investment by Asian firms in African manufacturing. China, in particular, as well as India, established offshore production facilities throughout sub-Saharan Africa as a way of circumventing country-based quota restrictions placed on garments under the MFA. As these restrictions ended on January 1, 2005, Africa may prove less attractive to Chinese textile investors, in particular, given that the cost of producing apparel (including such variables as raw material inputs, electricity, and worker wages) is higher throughout sub-Saharan Africa than in China. Despite this assumption, investment by China in sub-Saharan Africa, including Kenya, is increasing as China's economic and political clout rises (Otieno, 2005).

The collapse of domestic production of *khanga* and *kitenge*, including the complete closure of the factories involved, has put Kenya in a precarious position under AGOA provisions to utilize domestic cloth for apparel export by September 2007. Underlying the diminished capacity for textile (as opposed to apparel) manufacturing in Kenya, and the collapse of the domestic cotton industry which preceded the factory closures, is the overwhelming popularity in East Africa of secondhand clothing.

Alongside the expanding export sector, the local production of African print cloth struggles to persist. Government agencies, manufacturing associations, and local designers in Kenya are advocating a return to post-independence movements advocating a consciousness of African identity by "wearing Kenya, buying Kenya" in an attempt to further encourage pride in and popularity of African prints. In 2004, these efforts included a nation-wide contest to select Kenya's National Dress. The competition results reflected re-emerging ethnic differences, as Kenya's myriad social groups found little common ground in selecting garments that would adequately represent and appeal to Kenya's diverse populations - with one exception. Despite the inability to choose one form of representative clothing, wry commentators writing in the national papers agreed that Kenya does have a national dress – *mitumba*, or secondhand clothes.

Global and local secondhand

Recent international agreements on export manufacture and trade have prompted considerable research on African production, particularly that of Gibbon (2000a; 2000b; 2002; 2003). Secondhand clothing for consumption in these same markets is mentioned, however, only tangentially. An increasing interest in secondhand clothing research in Africa has appeared in the anthropological literature (Hansen, 1994; 1995; 1999; 2000), although by Hansen's own admission "little research has been done [in anthropology] on clothing production issues" (2004:369). These two contrasting approaches indicate the present gulf in studies integrating economic analyses within a cultural framework – part of my larger interest in textiles and apparel. In the remainder of this paper, I will focus on a brief description of the rise in secondhand clothing in Kenya. How did the secondhand clothing trade in parts of sub-Saharan Africa achieve such prominence, in a relatively short period of explosive growth (since the 1980s, as indicated above)?

Cloth and clothing were among the primary historical commodities linking Africa with an increasingly globalizing economy and gradually altering the subjectivities of the population, creating consumers. The nineteenth and early twentieth century presence of colonial administrations and missionaries prompted a profound shift in the clothing worn in communities throughout the continent - particularly in areas where the predominant coverage came from skin, hides, and barkcloth (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1997). Both voluntary and forced migration brought men, in particular, together in urban and other concentrated settlements where new clothing and the wearing of western fashions became increasingly the norm, particularly in Southern and East Africa (Hansen, 2000).

The secondhand clothing trade in colonial Africa began in the immediate post-World War I period with an influx of surplus military uniforms shipped by used clothing dealers in Europe and from production areas in the United States (Hansen, 2000:66). The amount of clothing appearing as cast-off articles increased throughout the industrial states of the North in the twentieth century with the initial success of Fordist policies and concomitant increases in disposable income. The countries of sub-Saharan Africa now form the world's largest secondhand clothing destination, receiving 30% of total world exports in 2001 with a value of USD $405 million, up from $117 million in 1990 (United Nations, 1996, 2003).

The post-independence period throughout much of sub-Saharan Africa was characterized by an increased emphasis on domestic production of textiles and finished apparel for local consumption. Governments turned to clothing as a visible and potentially lucrative expression of pride and solidarity in new nations. African print cloth was the focus of campaigns encouraging or otherwise imposing ‘dress codes’ or national dress, using domestic print cloth from these new industries. The importation of secondhand clothing was banned in Kenya, and elsewhere throughout much of sub-Saharan Africa, as import substitution policies were adopted to strengthen domestic manufacture. Despite the ban, secondhand clothing began entering Kenya in the 1970s and 1980s as a consequence of regional political crises.

The first post-independence shipments of secondhand clothes into Kenya were linked to geopolitical upheavals in Eastern Africa. Conflict in neighboring Uganda, Sudan, and Ethiopia resulted in increasing populations of refugees in Kenyan camps. Charitable organizations working with displaced persons were able to import used clothing to serve the needs of these impoverished communities during this period, with some of the donations reportedly finding their way into surrounding villages and later urban areas as commodities for resale (Kimani, 2002:4). Protectionist measures implemented after independence to foster domestic industrial growth were eliminated under trade liberalization policies begun in Kenya in 1991. Previously banned imports of used clothing were now legally allowed into the country for resale, and at prices far below that of new, domestically manufactured apparel.

The absence of foreign exchange controls, eliminated restrictions, and reduced tariffs resulted in a rise in value of Kenya’s imports by nearly half between 1996 and 2000 (McCormick et al., 2002). The garment industry was the most noticeably affected by the surge in imports, particularly the widespread availability of secondhand clothing, or *mitumba* (ibid). *Mitumba*, literally “bales” in Swahili, denoting the form in which the secondhand clothing arrives in East African ports, were cheaper than Kenyan products and rapidly gained favor with consumers (Ongile and McCormick, 1996). This popularity was achieved despite the stigma of the garments being associated with "dead Europeans" or "*kafa Ulaya*" – an earlier term for *mitumba*. The changing market was reflected in the clothing production index, which plummeted from a high of 378.6 in 1989 to only 154.8 in 1999, a drop of 40.9% (McCormick et al., 2001).

The increasing volume of used clothes entering Kenya throughout the 1990s corresponded with the closure of the vast majority of clothing and textile factories creating products for local consumption in those sub-Saharan African countries which legalized imports. By 2001 in Kenya, as noted above, all domestic manufacturing of African print cloth for the local market ended with the closure of the last remaining producer, MOUNTEX. While multiple factors are necessarily involved, including problems with outmoded equipment, lack of investment, corruption, and the unavailability of consistent inputs including electricity, secondhand clothing is seen as a primary cause for factory closure. While the importation of *mitumba* is viewed as a fundamental contributor to the cessation of domestic textile and apparel manufacture throughout the 1990s, the rise in the current export apparel market complicates this scenario. Many of the world's largest importers of secondhand clothing are also among the top exporters of textiles and garments, including Pakistan and Hong Kong (Hansen, 2004:4). Under the current changes in AGOA, Kenya has likewise shifted to high imports of secondhand clothing for domestic consumption and an increasingly large volume of apparel for export.

Articulations, Globalization, and the Outlook Ahead

The past decade has been dominated by discourses of "globalization." Generally accepted as indicative of a degree of global economic integration that is new in intensity if not altogether novel in practice, economic globalization has succeeded in supplanting the buzzwords of the past few decades of economic policy formulation in East Africa, as elsewhere. Rather than import substitution, the dominant discussion in Kenya now is one of Export Processing Zones. Instead of paring back regulation (in the form of state power) to a bare minimum as was the strategy under structural adjustment programs at their height, there is increasing discussion of the ways in which regulatory policies might support increased global integration as expressed in the shorthand of globalization. This regulation may take the form of regional or more often "global regulatory meta-narratives" (Amin 2004:219).

Economic globalization is perhaps less meaningful as a development strategy then a spatial ontology (Amin 2004) or a disabling discourse (Hart 2002). As such, globalization may be best viewed as a product rather than a condition, such that limits are placed upon "the explanatory power of these processes in the absence of other necessary preconditions and contingent factors: (Yeung 2002:301). In other words, globalization as a term is itself rather meaningless in the absence of critical historical and contemporary contextualizations detailing its specificities. Rather than a paralyzing global phenomenon, globalization itself must be broken down into its component parts to have any coherence or explanatory power. In the last ten years, during which globalization has generated such discursive momentum, interdependencies between places are being reshaped, as is evidenced by the articulation of the three international clothing systems discussed herein. In East Africa, this is reflected not only in changing state relations with places as far-flung as Gujarati *khanga* factories, *buibui* markets in Dubai, Wal-Mart production negotiations in Bentonville, and *mitumba* from Rome, but at scales as intimate as the clothed body and as supranational as the WTO.

While local production of cloth and clothing for domestic consumption in Kenya declined (or altogether ceased in the forms of *khanga* and *kitenge*), the three systems of textiles and apparel that are my focus bind together producers and the fast-changing fashion whims of consumers in the Global North; Asian and Middle Eastern entrepôt profiting from the resale of imported secondhand to Africa; national tax revenues generated from the income produced by the importation of *mitumba*; the declining popularity of indigenous *khanga* and concomitant rise in international Islamic fashions among East African Muslims; the establishment of large secondhand markets; street sellers; and the unexpected and evolving fashions of East African communities making *mitumba* their own.

Are these three systems compatible or contradictory? For me, the question is less one or the other but rather one of relations. How do the three intermingle, negate, or build on one another? In this case, I view each of these systems, in tandem, as offering unique bases for rethinking regional and global systems relationally. Their compatibility or contradictory characteristics cannot be measured on the basis of the brief treatment they have received here, but instead, they suggest ways to view the processes associated with each form of production as necessarily articulated.

Although Kenya has "risen" to second place behind Lesotho for apparel imports to the US under AGOA, and is set to further expand this market share in the short-term, the global effects of a quota-free China remain a major threat to the thousands of jobs recently created in the export apparel sector. Under AGOA, there is nevertheless room to grow, as only a fraction of the collective African quota has yet to be met. Kenya now relies on the importation of cloth from Asia to meet its export apparel manufacturing needs – a third-county fabrics allowance that was slated to end in September 2004. AGOA III extended this "quota within a quota" another three years, after which fabric must be sourced from the US or AGOA-compliant countries to receive duty-free access. Current cloth production in Kenya cannot satisfy the demands for export apparel inputs, nor are other AGOA countries poised to fill this need. The collapse of this domestic cloth industry in the 1990s was related, in part, to the influx of *mitumba*.

The closure of African cloth manufacturing centers has resulted in a physical landscape of abandoned factories. While devastating to local community economies, these same sites are now attractive to foreign investment interested in restarting these plants to produce export apparel, rather than textile inputs. While *mitumba* is often blamed for problems in manufacturing in Kenya, its appeal and cost-effective popularity likely preclude the reinstatement of bans on secondhand clothing, although this strategy remains in effect in Ethiopia, and elsewhere. The creation of large wholesale/retail markets for *mitumba* sales, and the thousands of legal and illegal kiosks whose vendors rely on the trade, reveal both the concrete changes to Kenya's urban landscape (poised to increase with even more *mitumba*) and the cultural effects of the shift from 'traditional' clothing styles, represented in part by *khanga* and *vitenge*, to an embrace of *mitumba*.

In the midst of these challenges and transformations, one new trend in Kenya is actually among the oldest – a strengthening of trade networks and relations throughout the Indian Ocean. The reliance on trade between India and Kenya, in particular, linked to shared colonial histories, export-apparel production, *mitumba*, *khanga*, and changing domestic fashions in Kenya, may be poised to expand in a post-quota environment as attention turns to China and its relations with the major markets of North America and the European Union. The discussion above may be seen as an effort to draw attention to this possibility, as changes in industrial production are linked to national consumption patterns and regional transformations occurring "beneath" Northern-oriented analyses of globalization.

Acknowledgements. I wish to thank the organizers of the workshop "Clothing Europe: Comparative Perspectives on Trade Liberalization and Production Networks in the New European Clothing Industry," University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, October 15-16 2004, for the invitation to present this paper, and the attendees for their insightful questions and suggestions. In particular, I thank John Pickles for his helpful comments.

References

AGOA, 2004, "Apparel Trade Under AGOA" http://www.agoa. info/index.php?view=trade_stats&story=apparel_trade&valuation=sme

Amin A, 2004, "Regulating Economic Globalization" *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* **29**:217-233

Bickford K E, 1994, "The ABC's of Cloth and Politics in Côte d'Ivoire" *Africa Today* **41**(2) 5-24

Comaroff J L and Comaroff J, 1997, "Fashioning the Colonial Subject: The Empire's Old Clothes" in *Of Revelation and Revolution, vol. 2, The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier* Eds J L Comaroff, J Comaroff (University of Chicago Press, Chicago) pp 218-73

East African Standard 2003, "Indian Investors Eyeing Kenyan Textile Plant", 30 October

Export Processing Zones Authority, 2005, *Kenya's Apparel and Textile Industry 2005* http://www.epzakenya.com/news.php?type=press&itemno=45

Fair L, 2001 *Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community, and Identity in Post-Abolition Urban Zanzibar, 1890-1945* (Ohio University Press, Athens, OH)

Flint H, 2004, "AGOA Update: Why AGOA III is vital for Africa?" Standard Bank African research, Economics Division http://www.sarpn.org.za/documents/d0000808/index php

Gibbon P, 2003, "The African Growth and Opportunity Act and the Global Commodity Chain for Clothing" in *World Development* **31**(11) 1809-1827

Gibbon P, 2002, "South Africa and the Global Commodity Chain for Clothing: Export Performance and Constraints." CDR Working Paper 02.7, April 2002. Working Paper Subseries on Globalisation and Economic Restructuring in Africa no. xix

Gibbon P, 2000a, "Global commodity chains and economic upgrading in less developed countries." CDR Working Paper Subseries no. viii. 00.2

Gibbon P, 2000b, "'Back to the Basics' through Delocalisation: The Mauritian Garment Industry at the End of the twentieth Century." CDR Working Paper 00.7, October 2000 Working Paper Subseries on Globalisation and Economic Restructuring in Africa no. x

Hansen K T, 1994, "Dealing with used clothing: salaula and the construction of identity in Zambia's Third Republic" *Public Culture* **6**(3) 503-523

Hansen K T, 1995, "Transnational Biographies and Local Meanings: Used Clothing Practices in Lusaka" *Journal of Southern African Studies* **21**(1) 131-145

Hansen K T, 1999,"Second-hand clothing encounters in Zambia: Global discourses, western commodities, and local histories" *Africa* **69**(3) 343-365

Hansen K T, 2000 *Salaula: The World of Secondhand Clothing and Zambia* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL)

Hansen K T, 2004a "The World in Dress: Anthropological Perspectives on Clothing, Fashion, and Culture" *Annual Review of Anthropology* **33** 369-392

Hansen K T, 2004b "Helping or hindering? Controversies around the international second-hand clothing trade" *Anthropology Today* **20**(4) 3-9

Hart G, 2002, *Disabling Globalization. Places of Power in post-apartheid South Africa* (University of California Press, Berkeley, CA)

Hyvärinen A, 2001, "Implications of the Introduction of the Agreement of Textiles and Clothing (ATC) on the African Textiles and Clothing Sector", UNCTAD http://www.intracen.org/mds/sectors/textils/actafric.htm

Kenya Human Rights Commission, 2004, *The Manufacture of Poverty: The Untold Story of EPZs in Kenya* (Nairobi)

Kimani M, 2002 "The Textile Industry in Kenya" Ministry of Trade and Industry working paper (Nairobi) http://www.intracen.org/worldtradenet/docs/whatsnew/atc_lesotho_november2002/country_paper_kenya.pdf

Linnebuhr E, 2004, "Zawadi ni tunda la moyo" [A gift is a fruit from the heart] Form+Zweck http://www.formundzweck.com/eng/themen.php?D+Kleidersprache

McCormick D, Kimuyu P, Kinyanjui M, 2001 "Kenya's Garment Industry: An Institutional View of Medium and Large Firms" *IDS Working Paper No. 531* (University of Nairobi, Institute for Development Studies, Nairobi)

McCormick D, Kimuyu P, Kinyanjui M, 2002 "Weaving through reforms: Nairobi's small garment producers in a liberalised economy," paper presented at the East African Workshop on Business Systems in Africa, Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi, and the Centre for Development Research, Copenhagen http://bij.hosting.kun.nl/iaup/esap/publications/nairobi/Nairobi_garment_paper_%204.pdf

Mulama J, 2005, “International Labour Day-Kenya: A Murky Future for Textile Workers” Inter Press Service News Agency http://www.ipsnews.net/interna.asp?idnews=28520

Mustafa H N, 1998 “Sartorial Ecumenes: African Styles in a Social and Economic Context” *The Art of African Fashion* (Prince Claus Fund, Den Haag, The Netherlands) pp 13-45

Nation [Kenya] 2004, “Kenya: Let Locals Reap AGOA Gains”, 14 April

Ongile G, McCormick D, 1996, “Barriers to Small Firm Growth: Evidence from Nairobi’s Garment Industry”, in *Small Enterprises: Flexibility and Networking in an African Context* Eds. D McCormick, P O Pedersen (Longhorn, Nairobi) pp 40-62

Otieno J, 2005, “Move Over Uncle Sam, the Chinese Are Now in Town” *The Nation* [Kenya] 23 August

Packer G, 2002, "How Susie Bayer's T-Shirt Ended Up on Yusuf Mama's Back" *The New York Times* 31 March

Rabine L, 2002 *The Global Circulation of African Fashion* (Berg, New York)

RATES, 2003, “Cotton-Textile and Apparel Value Chain Report for Kenya” April (Regional Agricultural Trade Expansion Support Program (RATES), Nairobi)

Republic of Kenya, 2001, “Position paper on the textile industry” http://www.tradeandindustry.go.ke/documents/di_report_textile.pdf

United Nations, 1996 *1995 International Trade Statistics Yearbook*. Vol. 2: *Trade by commodity* (United Nations, New York)

United Nations, 2003 *2001 International Trade Statistics Yearbook*. Vol. 2: *Trade by country* (United Nations, New York)

United Nations, 2005 *TNCs and the Removal of Textiles and Clothing Quotas* (United Nations, New York and Geneva)

Yeung H, 2002, "The limits to globalization theory: a geographic perspective on Global Economic Change" *Economic Geography* **78**(3): 285-305