CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS OF FAIR TRADE:

ALIGNING INTENT WITH IMPACT

A CASE STUDY OF GHANAIAN BASKET WEAVING

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The modern fair trade movement and resulting network emerged during the twentieth century as a strategy to alleviate extreme poverty through creating equitable trading initiatives and markets. Since its emergence, fair trade has grown tremendously to include initiatives across the globe, particularly within the Global South. Although the intent to do good is present amongst fair traders, the impact of these initiatives remains rather ambiguous, especially in regards to culture. Using a case study approach, this thesis aims to identify the cultural implications of fair trade activities and initiatives on Ghanaian basket weavers and their local communities, and then determine the effectiveness of the fair trade movement in aligning intent with impact within this context given these findings. From there, specific policy recommendations are provided for future initiatives.

Katherine Badertscher, PhD, Chair

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INTRODUCTION

0.1 Research Overview and Purpose

The fair trade movement emerged during the middle of the twentieth century as a strategy to alleviate extreme poverty by creating equitable trade initiatives and markets. Acknowledging the unbalanced power dynamic between producers, organizations, and consumers, fair trade aims to create a more fair process through promoting equitable relationships within international trade. Furthermore, fair trade aims to establish a sustainable model for all parties involved in the trading process. There are a myriad of components to the fair trade movement; however, at its core, the driving force behind fair trade is equity.

Fair trade initiatives can be found throughout the world but are particularly present within indigenous communities of the Global South. Products of the movement are diverse, ranging from agricultural goods, such as coffee and chocolate, to handicraft items, such as textiles and home decor. Because of the varying nature of the products and the people that produce them, each fair trade initiative is unique; thus allowing for the development of their own strategies and practices (as long as they meet fair trade standards). Nonetheless, to meet the fair trade standard, fair traders must consider and adopt a set of core principles and goals. These guiding principles incite the fundamental values of fair trade, establishing the economic, social, and cultural aspirations of the movement. With the establishment of these commonly cited principles and goals, the question arises as to whether fair trade is actually delivering on its core principles and accomplishing its goals. The intent to do good is clearly present; however, the actual impact is, in many ways, unclear. The dilemma on intent versus impact is still relevant in regards to the fair trade movement.

The primary objective of this research project is twofold: to identify the cultural implications of fair trade activities and initiatives on Ghanaian basket weavers and their local communities, and then to determine the effectiveness of the fair trade movement in aligning intent with impact within this specific context. From there, I will recommend specific policies involving fair trade (and alternative practices) for future initiatives in hopes of improving the system, so that fair trade initiatives will more closely align intent and impact. Although final determination of larger, overarching questions is not plausible given the parameters of the project, this research hopes to provide a foundation for future inquiries of whether the fair trade movement is delivering on its core principles, and whether fair trade is an effective vehicle for philanthropy, considering all life aspects (e.g. economic, political, social, cultural, etc.).

Like most research in the humanities, context is significant to these findings. Fair trade producers are not all the same, and therefore, they do not necessarily see the same implications as one another. For example, Ghanaian basket weavers could, and likely do, differ from Peruvian coffee growers. Although the fair trade movement aims to promote a more equitable trading system, the implications of these efforts within a particular context does not suggest that all producers experience the same implications. Rather, the case study illuminates the impact of fair trade within a specific environment. Nevertheless, the implications found within this environment can arguably demonstrate the potential implications found elsewhere, allowing us to better understand the implications of the greater movement. Through this greater understanding, we can begin to grasp whether the fair trade movement is, in fact, accomplishing its core set of principles in practice. Ultimately, even though the implications outlined within this case study will be from the

narrow focus of Ghanaian basket weavers, the overall findings can, and should be, considered in the broader fair trade movement. The research in and of itself will not fully address or determine the effectiveness of the entire fair trade movement, but rather set up the framework for contemplating and evaluating the movement within its specific context, allowing for further research on the broader movement to be conducted at a later date.

0.2 Argument

The findings of this case study illustrate the complexity of the fair trade movement and network, particularly in regards to the implications these initiatives have on producers and their communities. Based on the connection of literature themes and the findings from personal interviews, the argument of this study is twofold: that fair trade initiatives involving Ghanaian basket weavers produce both positive and negative implications surrounding culture, and that the negative implications, specifically those involving ethnocentrism and power dynamics, must be considered and addressed in order for fair trade to accomplish its full mission and purpose. Overall, this study concludes that fair trade generates many positive impacts on producers and their communities; however, the movement and network can be improved further by incorporating certain practices and policies which would mitigate these negative implications and reinforce positive ones.

0.3 Methodology

The research process began, as it often does, with reviewing existing research and connecting themes of literature, which indicated gaps between fields of study. Specifically, I explored the following fields: philanthropy and nonprofit management, anthropology and cultural studies, and history. The topics explored include: the fair trade movement, philanthropy and civil society, cultural developmentalism and ethnocentrism, and Ghana

and West Africa. In addition to these topics, I also briefly explored related topics, such as social entrepreneurship and microfinance loans. By reviewing literature in various fields, I was able to analyze the findings presented and available, and recognize the need for additional research to address areas not considered in the bulk of existing research. The majority of fair trade research focuses on agricultural goods and/or economic impact. While there is a wide range of research on handicrafts available, there is an apparent gap in research on the cultural impact of fair trade initiatives, specifically in regards to handicrafts.

The question of the effectiveness of the fair trade movement and the cultural implications of these activities is a massive project and best explored through a case study. In hopes of providing substantial insights, this case study utilizes personal interviews as the primary method of data collection, with documents/records adding supplementary information to explore these questions. The nature of these interviews is qualitative with open-ended questions and a semi-structured format. Furthermore, snowball sampling expands the data sample. An initial list of prospective interviewees quickly multiplied when those interviewed suggested and recommended additional individuals to contact at the conclusion of the interview. This method allowed for new connections, which might not have been possible otherwise.

To gain a more complete understanding of the fair trade movement and network, the study engages numerous individuals by engaging in a multiple case analysis, rather than a singular case analysis. Through conducting a multiple case study, constituents shared numerous points of views; therefore allowing a more encompassing understanding of the complex process, structure, and impact of fair trade. By obtaining numerous

perspectives, the case study can aggregate insights and highlight trends and themes among the entire interview pool.

The case of Ghanaian basket weavers was quickly chosen for a variety of reasons, notably interest, feasibility, and credibility. First, a personal interest of handicraft items, specifically ones originating from Africa, impacted the decision to focus on Ghanaian basket weavers. This interest in African handicrafts has been present much of my life, and was furthered into a particular interest in basket weaving after learning of the practice and craft in my previous studies. The ability to tailor this research to this specific craft and setting was appealing. Second, the feasibility of the project was important in this decision. Specifically, the availability of existing research surrounding relevant themes and the accessibility of interviewees played a role in the decision. I could not locate much research and literature on Ghanaian basket weaving in fair trade initiatives. That being said, research and literature surrounding inter-related topics that can be applied (to form a basic understanding of such) is plentiful. This balance creates a situation where the literature is not too substantial, which would prevent additional research from adding to the field, yet not too scarce, which would hinder research due to time and resource constraints. Moreover, accessibility of interviewees was crucial in this decision. Given the size of the potential interviewee pool, this focus was feasible within the timeline and resource parameters. Existing connections aided in this process through identifying and, in some cases, introducing prospective interviewees. Third and finally, credibility of findings was considered in the designation of the case study setting. The ability to have access to multiple viewpoints from different constituencies is essential to the soundness of this research. By interviewing individuals from a variety of backgrounds that have differing

affiliations with the fair trade movement, a more encompassing understanding of the issues, activities, and implications of the movement is possible. Furthermore, by exploring numerous cases within the study, the findings are, in theory, more likely representative of the broader movement, rather than a sole example. Collectively, these factors suggested a case study on fair trade implications on Ghanaian basket weavers was warranted.

Over the course of six months, I interviewed nine individuals. These interviews included a diverse pool of stakeholders, ranging from workers of local import shops to representatives of global organizations. These interviews varied in forms of communication, including written and verbal, as well as in methods of communication, including in-person, phone, and email. I documented the information shared and discussed in these interviews throughout the course of these interviews. After the completion of the interviews, the findings were connected and themes were developed. I present these findings in later chapters, ultimately using the perceptions of individuals and organizations to determine the impact fair trade has on the artisans and their communities and to evaluate the effectiveness of fair trade initiatives in aligning intent with impact. The argument is inherently formed through my own personal perceptions of this multi-faceted research; however, the ultimate argument is supported by the findings presented in the existing literature and research, as well as the information and viewpoints shared in the conducted interviews. Although certain components of this research could be considered to be social constructions, the findings and arguments are supported by numerous sources, both primary and secondary.

0.4 Structure

       The structure of this thesis is as follows: First, a review of key literature surrounding the themes of philanthropy, culture, fair trade, and Ghana/West Africa is provided. It should be noted that while a plethora of works can be related to this research, only works directly relevant to the answering of the proposed questions are included in the review. Second, a chapter on Ghana and West Africa is presented, outlining key interview and documentation/record findings in relation to this topic. Specifically, this chapter explores the Ghanaian context, discussing the current environment and landscape, as well as opportunities and challenges for the country moving forward. Next, a second chapter on key findings is presented. This chapter particularly focuses on fair trade within Ghana, illustrating the current scene and the implications artisans and their communities are seeing from such. Finally, this research concludes with analysis and recommendations.

CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Philanthropy

Definition and Meaning

The concept of philanthropy has more and more become of interest to scholars and the public in contemporary society. Although the general public has increasingly used the term within recent years, there is still a question of what philanthropy actually means. This vagueness is present in many scholarly works, as well. The actual word "philanthropy" derives from the Greek word philanthropia (adjective philanthropos) with philos meaning loving and anthropos meaning humankind. Therefore, "philanthropy" etymologically translates from Ancient Greek to "love of humankind." Although still utilized, scholars and practitioners have amended this definition, creating an array of new definitions. The variety of these definitions suggests that the term is rather ambiguous and complex; many have claimed that philanthropy could be considered what British philosopher W.B. Gallies called an "essentially contested concept": referring to concepts that are, in fact, opaque in their actual meaning, and therefore, the understanding of the term remains unclear and unaccepted by the masses.[1] As such, numerous definitions of philanthropy have been developed, discussed, and debated by scholars and practitioners alike.

While there is no single definition that is accepted by the general public, several common themes have emerged from historic and modern definitions. In many of these definitions, the descriptions suggest that philanthropy is for the betterment of humankind and society. One definition in particular, which is commonly cited by scholars and

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[1] Robert Payton, "Philanthropy as a Concept," Payton Papers (1987): 1-2, 5-6, http://www.paytonpapers.org/output/pdf/0081.pdf; Robert L. Payton and Michael P. Moody, *Understanding Philanthropy: Its Meaning and Mission* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 29.

practitioners, has also alluded to this. In *Philanthropy: Voluntary Action for the Public Good* (1988), leading philanthropic studies intellectual, Robert L. Payton defined philanthropy as just that: "voluntary action for the public good."[2] However, the crucial element to this definition is not only that philanthropy is for the betterment of society, but also that philanthropy is done so freely and willingly.[3] Payton and Moody built upon this idea in *Understanding Philanthropy: Its Meaning and Mission* (2008), stating that philanthropy requires both intention and action. Therefore, according to Payton and Moody, philanthropy is equal parts voluntary, intentional, and actionable.[4]

Although Payton's definition is often utilized within the field, individuals have critiqued the definition (as well as similar ones) given it is inherently based on Western society, particularly American society. Copeland-Carson stated, "philanthropy also includes informal social networks, practices, and traditions that foster mutual aid and reciprocity that have existed throughout history in all societies among people of varying financial means."[5] Moreover, many other scholars have supported the contextual nature of philanthropy through their research, showcasing how history and culture (amongst other

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[2] Robert L. Payton, *Philanthropy: Voluntary Action for the Public Good* (New York: American Council on Education, 1988).

[3] Payton, *Philanthropy*.

[4] Payton and Moody, *Understanding Philanthropy,* 27-61.

[5] Jacqueline Copeland-Carson, "Promoting diversity in contemporary black philanthropy: toward a new conceptual model," *New Directions for Philanthropic Fundraising*, no. 48 (2005): 78.

factors) shape the sense and the activities of philanthropy within societies.[6] Atibil noted, "[p]hilanthropy is shaped by the social, economic, historical, and culture conditions of a people."[7] Simply stated, philanthropy is contextual.

The concept of philanthropy is simultaneously simple and complex. It can be easily defined and yet easily contested. As Anheier stated, "[d]efinitions are neither true nor false, and they are ultimately judged by their usefulness in describing a part of reality of interest to us."[8] Collectively, these varying definitions suggest that philanthropy includes a broad range of activities, informal and formal, which can, and often do, differ from culture to culture. Within the context of this research, I consider philanthropy to encapsulate these varying definitions. Philanthropy requires both benevolent intentions and voluntary actions; it can take the form of many activities, both informal and formal, within the various societal sectors (private, nonprofit, public, and family); and finally, it is contextual, including indigenous components, such as the traditions of self-help, mutual aid, and reciprocity, as well as foreign components, including the professionalization and institutionalization of these activities and initiatives.

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[6] Helmut K. Anheier, *Nonprofit Organizations: Theory, Management, Policy* (Oxon: Routledge, 2014), 196-225; Helmut K. Anheier and Lester M. Salamon, *The Nonprofit Sector in the Developing World: A Comparative Analysis* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1988); Christiana Lariba Atibil, "Philanthropic Foundations and Civil Society in Sub-Saharan Africa," in *The Handbook of Civil Society in Africa,* ed. Ebenezer Obadare (New York: Springer, 2014), 457-474; Copeland-Carson, "Promoting diversity in contemporary black philanthropy," 77-87; Steven Feierman "Reciprocity and Assistance in Precolonial Africa," in *Philanthropy in the World's Tradition,* eds. Warren F. Ilchman, Stanley N. Katz, and Edward L Queen II (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998), 3-24; John A. Grim, "A Comparative Study in Native American Philanthropy," in *Philanthropy in the World's Tradition,* eds. Warren F. Ilchman, Stanley N. Katz, and Edward L Queen II (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998), 25-53; Lester M. Salamon and Helmut K. Anheier, *Defining the Nonprofit Sector: A Cross-Sector Analysis (*Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1997).
[7] Atibil, "Philanthropic Foundations and Civil Society in Sub-Saharan Africa," 459.
[8] Anheier, *Nonprofit Organizations*, 61.

*The Societal Sector*s

Many scholars have claimed society has four sectors: the private (business), the public (government or state), the nonprofit (third, voluntary, or civil society), and the family. These sectors, formal and informal, play a vital role in philanthropy. In fact, philanthropy translates into many different activities within these four societal sectors. Furthermore, philanthropy can be seen in a variety of fields, ranging from arts and culture to health and human services.

Although philanthropy is present in all of the societal sectors, it is most closely aligned with the nonprofit or third sector. Scholars have developed many theories to suggest why the third sector exists. The majority of these theories center around economics; however, a few focus on politics and other aspects of life. While there are countless examples, three notable theories – especially in relation to this research – are the three failures theory, the entrepreneurship theory, and the social origins theory. The three failures theory, also referred to as the public good theory, focuses on the demand-side of the sector. Stemming from Burton Weisbrod's work, the public good theory suggests that nonprofit organizations are essentially gap fillers between the private and the public sectors, offering goods and services that would be neglected from the two other sectors.[9] The entrepreneurship theory, on the other hand, focuses on the supply side of the sector. Economists James and Rose-Ackerman (amongst others) state the nonprofit sector exists to create and provide new opportunities, which then in return maximizes non-monetary

[9] Anheier, *Nonprofit Organizations*, 196-225; Richard Steinberg, "Economic Theories of Nonprofit Organizations," in *The Nonprofit Sector: A Research Handbook,* eds. Walter W. Powell and Richard Steinberg (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 117-139.

returns.[10] Finally, the social origins theory uses a comparative-historical approach of the sector. Developed by Anheier and Salamon, this theory contextualizes the existence of the sector in its setting by considering how historical accounts have influenced the social and economic shape of the nation.[11] Collectively, these, and the many other, theories explain the existence of the sector. As Anheier implies, "[t]o a large extent, the various theories are complementary rather than rival, and, taken together, offer a convincing answer in terms of demand and supply conditions."[12] This conclusion applies to this research, with numerous theories explaining, at least in part, the presence and purpose of fair trade. These theories are complementary, offering a more solid explanation of the existence of fair trade when taken together rather than separately.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness is difficult to define and measure in the nonprofit sector. Unlike the private and the public sectors where performance metrics are more commonly accepted and utilized to measure and evaluate organizations, effectiveness in the nonprofit sector is still rather ambiguous and consequently difficult to measure. According to Tschirhart and Bielefeld, "[i]n the simplest terms, effective organizations are the ones that accomplish their missions."[13] However, less simple is the method organizations use to measure and evaluate their work. There is often uncertainty and difficulty in doing so, as many issues involving nonprofit organizations are ambiguous in their approach. Some organizations might not be able to quantify their achievements and accomplishments, or if they can, they

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[10] Anheier, *Nonprofit Organizations*, 196-225; Powell, "Economic Theories of Nonprofit Organizations," 117-139.

[11] Anheier, *Nonprofit Organization*, 196-225.

[12] Anheier, *Nonprofit Organizations*, 215.

[13] Mary Tschirhart and Wolfgang Bielefeld, *Managing Nonprofit Organizations* (Hoboken, N.J.: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 13.

might not capture the entirety of their work. Furthermore, nonprofit organizations are often ambitious in their missions. An organization with the mission of ending world hunger does not realistically believe it can be accomplished in a short period of time. Many of the issues that nonprofit organizations attempt to solve are complex and often systemic. These realities have created confusion and debate on how to appropriately measure and evaluate a nonprofit organization's effectiveness. They illustrate that there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach or method to effectiveness in the nonprofit sector.[14]

Kim Cameron argues that organization effectiveness is essentially a paradox in "Effectiveness as Paradox: Consensus and Conflict in Conceptions of Organizational Effectiveness."[15] She states, "[o]rganizational effectiveness is inherently paradoxical. To be effective, an organization must possess attributes that are simultaneously contradictory, even mutually exclusive."[16] Herman and Renz build upon this argument, stating that effectiveness is essentially a social construct, dependent on the individual measuring and evaluating it.[17] Given this, numerous scholars have recommended a multidimensional approach to measuring and evaluating effectiveness in nonprofit organizations. This can include mission fulfillment, goal achievement, impact measurement, and performance assessment, amongst other components.[18] Nevertheless, scholars still do not have a clear recommendation on how to best measure and evaluate effectiveness of nonprofit organizations in part because of the varying nature of the organizations within the field.

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[14] Tschirhart and Bielefeld, *Managing Nonprofit Organizations*, 11-32.
[15] Kim Cameron, "Effectiveness as Paradox: Consensus and Conflict in Conceptions of Organizational Effectiveness," *Management Science* 32, no. 5 (1986): 539-53.
[16] Cameron, "Effectiveness as Paradox," 544-545.
[17] Robert D. Herman and David O. Renz, "Multiple Constituencies and the Social Construction of Nonprofit Effectiveness," *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, no. 26 (1997): 185-206.
[18] Anheier, *Nonprofit Organizations*, 272-323; Cameron, "Effectiveness as Paradox," 539-53; Herman and Renz, "Multiple Constituencies and the Social Construction of Nonprofit Effectiveness," 185-206; Tschirhart and Bielefeld, *Managing Nonprofit Organizations*, 11-32, 301-326.

Within this research, I acknowledge that effectiveness is subjective, or as Herman and Renz eloquently stated, a social construct. The definition I use for this research is the ability to align intent with impact, considering all principles and components, but particularly ones involving culture. My perception of the effectiveness of fair trade is formed through reviewing existing literature and conducting personal interviews; thus, my perception is supported by the perceptions of many others shared in literature and interviews.

1.2 Culture

Definition and Meaning

Similar to philanthropy, one could consider the word culture an "essentially contested concept" with individuals developing and utilizing numerous definitions. Culture, as a concept, is pertinent to a myriad of fields, creating an additional layer to the ambiguity, as most fields have their own understanding of the concept. Nevertheless, the field of anthropology has provided a core set of frameworks on culture, clarifying the meaning of culture within non-academic, real-life contexts.

One of the earliest accounts of the word was in Edward Burnett Tylor's *Primitive Culture* (1871), where Tylor described culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."[19] Clifford Geertz expanded this original thought and established what is now considered the core framework of culture within the field of anthropology in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (1973).[20] He states, culture is "a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men

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[19] Edward Burnett Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches Into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art, and Custom* (Gloucester: P. Smith, 1871), 1.
[20] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life."[21] Furthermore, Geertz added to this understanding in *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (1983), where he argues the importance of local knowledge and shared cultural symbols, including art and craft (amongst many others).[22] In accompaniment to other scholars, both Tylor and Geertz would agree that culture is, in fact, learned and acquired over time, rather than natural and innate.[23] Despite the fact that numerous definitions have been developed since, Geertz's definitions remain the core foundation within the field and therefore will also be utilized within this research.

Developmentalism versus Preservationism

One of the core debates in the field of anthropology involves the role culture plays within society. Specifically, scholars have debated how culture shapes and influences other societal sectors, such as the economy and politics. *Who Prospers: How Cultural Values Shape Economic And Political Success* (1992), written by Lawrence E. Harrison, discusses this topic, arguing that culture does play a crucial role in the economic and political position of a nation. Moreover, Harrison suggests that the economic and political success, or lack thereof, is heavily influenced by cultural factors. Highlighting various accounts, Harrison supplies examples to his argument that the cultural values, beliefs, customs, and so forth impact economic and political performance.[24] Similarly, *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress* (2000) features a collection of essays written by economists, political scientists, anthropologists, and others, which outlines conflicting viewpoints on

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[21] Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 89.

[22] Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge: Further Essays In Interpretive Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

[23] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*; Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge*; Tylor, *Primitive Culture*.

[24] Lawrence E. Harrison, *Who Prospers?: How Cultural Values Shape Economic and Political Success* (New York: Basic Books, 1992).

the effect culture has on development and performance. The authors provide comparisons, such as the economic development of Ghana and Korea, as evidence to illustrate the influence culture has (or does not have) on development. While the book itself presents various perspectives, the argument that culture impacts development and performance, at least on some level, is compelling given the featured comparisons.[25]

With acknowledgement that culture does influence other aspects of life (e.g. economy and policy), scholars have begun questioning whether societies that are not thriving in these regards should develop and change its culture. Within anthropology, scholars have increasingly used the term cultural developmentalism to describe this idea. The term essentially states that undeveloped cultures, particularly indigenous ones, must develop and adapt to the modern world. Furthermore, the concept ultimately implies that cultures must change in order to survive. The idea is unsurprisingly controversial, with many arguing that societies should preserve their culture rather than develop it. Those in favor of cultural developmentalism state that adaptation is needed in order for the preservation and survival of a culture, while those against cultural developmentalism state that development is, in fact, altering or changing the culture rather than preserving it.[26] These conflicting viewpoints – both arguably valid in some way – is why the concept is so controversial.

At the heart of this debate are the ideas of ethnocentrism and relativism. Anthropologist Ken Barger states that ethnocentrism means "making false assumptions about others' ways based on our own limited experience" while relativism "usually means

[25] Lawrence E. Harrison and Samuel P. Huntington, *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress* (New York: Basic Books, 2000).
[26] Harrison and Huntington, *Culture Matters*.

not judging others' ways and accepting them as equal to our own."[27]   Regardless of our intentions and efforts, ethnocentrism is rooted within us.[28] The primary issue with this is that it promotes judging cultures based on your own, which often leads to a misbelief that one is more superior to another.[29] Furthermore, this mindset perpetuates a hierarchy of cultures based on ideas such as power and authority.[30] In specific regards to Africa, Curtis Keim argues in *Mistaking Africa: Curiosities and Inventions of the American Mind* (2013) that ethnocentric viewpoints are embedded in American society. This reality perpetuates misconceptions and stereotypes, resulting in an even more construed view of the culture.[31] To illustrate such, he shares an example in which he asked a college class to comprise a list of words that come to mind when thinking of Africa. Students generated a list that included dismissive words, such as native, hut, savage, cannibals, tribalism, wild animals, safari, poverty, ignorance, famine, and tragedy. Additionally, the list includes words suggestive of change, including missionary, development, and foreign aid.[32] This exercise, along with countless other examples, demonstrates the ethnocentric nature of our society, even if unintentional. Based on this, Barger and Curtis claim that everyone is ethnocentric simply because our perspective, including biases, assumptions, and stereotypes, are formed through our own experiences and culture. In many cases, we are not even aware that we are being ethnocentric, and that they argue is the problem.[33] Although we can never rid ourselves of ethnocentric views, we can and should be aware of this and practice relativism

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[27]   Barger,   "Ethnocentrism,"   Indiana   University   Indianapolis,   September   29,   2018, http://www.iupui.edu/~anthkb/ethnocen.htm.
[28] Barger, "Ethnocentrism."; Curtis A. Keim, *Mistaking Africa: Curiosities and Inventions of the American Mind* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2014), 3-34.
[29] Barger, "Ethnocentrism."; Keim, *Mistaking Africa*, 3-34.
[30] Barger, "Ethnocentrism."; Keim, *Mistaking Africa*, 3-34.
[31] Keim, *Mistaking Africa*, 3-34.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Barger, "Ethnocentrism"; Keim, *Mistaking Africa*, 3-34.

when contemplating and engaging with other cultures. This school of thought should be considered in this research. While the intentions of these activities and initiatives are benevolent, the impact of these activities during implementation and execution might not be as straightforward and simple given the ethnocentrism of the movement and network.

1.3 Ghana and West Africa

Philanthropic Context

The philanthropic landscape and environment within Ghana, and West Africa, is more generally different from the ones seen in the United States and other Western and Northern countries. As Anderson declared, "each tradition or culture has its own characteristics and each its own manner of setting the parameters for the occasion for giving, for what is to be given, who is to give, and who is to receive."[34] As stated in *The Poor Philanthropist: How and Why the Poor Help Each Other*, "African philanthropy isn't something that needs to be introduced by anybody because Africans have strong traditions of self-help, self-support, voluntary institutions, rotation credit and associations."[35] The philanthropic landscape and environment in Ghana reflects these unique characteristics, but also incorporates other imported characteristics. It includes informal and formal activities, ranging from indigenous traditions to foreign institutions. Regardless of these activities, certain components are valued: reciprocity, face-to-face interaction, connection to people and place, independence, mutual assistance, and self-help.[36]

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[34] Leona Anderson, "Contextualizing Philanthropy in South Asia: A Textual Analysis of Sansknit Sources," in *Philanthropy in the World's Tradition,* eds. Warren F. Ilchman, Stanley N. Katz, and Edward L Queen II (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998), 57.

[35] Susan Wilkinson-Maposa, Alan Fowler, Ceri Oliver-Evans, and Chao F.N. Mulenga, *The Poor Philanthropist: How and Why the Poor People Help Each Other* (UCT Graduation School of Business: The International Business School in Africa, 2005), 1.

[36] Atibil, "Philanthropic Foundations and Civil Society in Sub-Saharan Africa," 457-474; Feierman, "Reciprocity and Assistance in Precolonial Africa," 3-24; John A. Grim, "A Comparative Study in Native American Philanthropy," 25-53; Wilkinson-Maposa et al., *The Poor Philanthropist.*

The nonprofit sector (often referred to as civil society in its own context) within Ghana has developed throughout its history, but especially since its independence in 1957. The colonial period saw an increase of craft and trade associations, unions, religious societies, and charitable initiatives through the formalization and institutionalization of philanthropy.[37] Since gaining independence, the civil society sector within Ghana pushed for local associations to promote self and community help, as well as for public partnership initiatives to advance the sectors of education, poverty alleviation, health and human services, and infrastructure.[38] Furthermore, drawing on Atingdui, Anheier suggests that three recent developments have shaped the philanthropic sector within Ghana: First, international funding and support has increased, which has simultaneously prompted autonomy and dependency within civil society; Second, the government focus on poverty alleviation and rural development has resulted in the enactment of government policies and the allocation of government resources within fields where civil society often exists, such as health and human services, education, and social welfare; Third, the push for poverty alleviation and rural development creates a space for civil society and encourages cross-sector partnerships.[39]

In addition to these developments, another area of growth is the recent focus on entrepreneurship as a way for economic, and consequently social, development. In fact, the informal sector, which includes most social entrepreneurs, has grown rapidly, likely in part

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[37] Anheier, *Nonprofit Organizations: Theory, Management, Policy*, 51-53; Lawrence Atingdui, Helmut K. Anheier, S. Wojciech Sokolowski, and Emmanuel Laryea, "The nonprofit sector in Ghana," in *The Nonprofit Sector In the Developing World: A Comparative Analysis* eds. Helmut K. Anheier and Lester M. Salamon (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1998): 158-197; Lawrence Atingdui, "Ghana," in *Defining the Nonprofit Sector. A Cross-National Analysis* eds. Helmut K. Anheier and Lester M. Salamon (New York: Manchester University Press, 1997): 369-400.
[38] Anheier, *Nonprofit Organizations*, 51-53; Atingdui, Anheier, Sokolowski, and Laryea, "The nonprofit sector in Ghana," 158-197; Atingdui, "Ghana," 369-400.
[39] Anheier, *Nonprofit Organizations*, 51-53.

due to it being framed as an opportunity for development and growth.[40] While many

scholars have suggested that the focus on entrepreneurship is one of foreign influence,

Chamlee-Wright argues:

> The capitalist ethic and the entrepreneurial mindset at work within the
> southern Ghanaian context is not the result of Western imperialism, but
> rather an outgrowth of indigenous culture. Thus, economic development is
> not necessarily tied to becoming more Westernized, with diminished
> reliance upon indigenous culture. Rather, the reverse might be the more
> promising solution, by taking advantage of the cultural resources inherent
> within an emerging economy.[41]

Given the economic, social, and cultural potential of entrepreneurship, particularly social

entrepreneurship, Ghana should consider it as an opportunity for the future.

Within the entrepreneurial sphere, the handicraft market, which includes handicraft

fair trade initiatives, has recently gained attention from scholars and practitioners.[42] The

market appeals both to domestic and international audiences. According to the Global

Market Assessment for Handicrafts, "[c]onsumers buy handicrafts because they like to feel

connected with indigenous traditions and cultures in a global and increasingly

commoditized world."[43] This appeal has led many throughout the globe to enter the market,

as consumers and producers.

In 2006, Barber and Krivoshlykova estimated the global home goods market to be

over $100 billion.[44] Although countries like China, Vietnam, and India are the primary

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[40] Information on informal sector growth: O. Boeh-Ocansey, *Ghana's Microenterprise & Informal Sector Bedrock for National Development?: Perspectives In Education, Training and Other Support Services* (Ghana: Anansesem Publications Ltd., 1997), 2-20; Information on entrepreneurship: Alicia Robb, Alexandria Valerio, and Brent Parton, *Entrepreneurship Education and Training: Insights From Ghana, Kenya, and Mozambique,*(Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 2014), 17-29.

[41] Emily Chamlee-Wright, *The Cultural Foundations of Economic Development: Urban Female Entrepreneurship In Ghana* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 131.

[42] Ted Barber and Marina Krisvoshlkova, *Global Market Assessment for Handicrafts*, Development Alternatives, Inc. 2006, accessed July 2018, https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADN210.pdf.

[43] Barber and Krivoshlykova, *Global Market Assessment for Handicrafts*, 1.

[44] Barber and Krivoshlykova, *Global Market Assessment for Handicrafts*, 17.

exporters in this market, Ghana producers have been successful as well, and currently rank towards the top of African markets. In fact, "Ghana's handicraft exports increased significantly, from $2 million in 1995 to $14.9 million in 2001, with buyers in Europe and the United States."[45] Although the handicraft and home good markets offer many opportunities, there are still many challenges that artisans face in Ghana. Particularly, producers must adapt to the demands of Western and Northern consumers. Without doing so, their products do not align with the tastes and lifestyles of consumers, and unfortunately, this has been the case. "In 2002, handicraft exports dropped to $11.3 million."[46] Still, the field is one of promise for Ghanaians, especially for those residing in rural areas. This opportunity is further explored within this research.

Basket Weaving

Literature on the craft and art of basket weaving in Ghana is relatively limited. While the general form of basket weaving has received a fair amount of attention, research on the form within the Ghanaian, or even West African, context is seemingly less so. Still, references are made throughout literature about basket weaving in Ghana with one of the more detailed accounts of the art and craft being provided in Brittany Anne Sheldon's *Visualizing Culture: Women's Artistry in Northeastern Ghana and Southern Burkina Faso*.[47]

As an art historian, Sheldon vividly explains the process of basket weaving in Ghana (as well as Burkina Faso). She notes that two primary forms of basketry are present within the area: the pio and the bolga. Both forms use twining techniques to shape the grass

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[45] Barber and Krivoshlykova, *Global Market Assessment for Handicrafts*, 20.
[46] Ibid, 20.
[47] Brittany Anne Sheldon, "Visualizing Culture: Women's Artistry In Northeastern Ghana and Southern Burkina Faso" (Ph. D. diss., Indiana University, 2016), 125-132.

into the basket form – the pio into a square bottom and the bolga into a round bottom.[48]

Although materials vary based on location, local and imported grasses are utilized depending on availability. If the weaver adds color to the basket, commercial dyes and coloring are often used.[49]

Basket weavers typically create the baskets for varying reasons: the pio baskets usually for domestic use, and the bolga baskets usually for trade within local, regional, and beyond markets. In regards to the latter, Sheldon shares:

> Weavers decorated their trade baskets with elaborate designs in order to make them look good, thereby increasing their value and attracting buyers by enhancing their aesthetic impact (Smith 1978, 79). This remains true today: often, baskets intended for domestic use feature muted hues and subtle designs while those intended for sale feature bold, brightly colored patterns. Bolga baskets, in particular, continue to be produced primarily for sale to local, foreign, and tourist markets and are therefore almost always elaborately decorated.[50]

Still, even with baskets varying based on their market, Sheldon states tradition has not been lost. She states:

> The specific details reveal a key truth: tradition is not monolithic or static. When asked about their traditional artistic practices, women describe the standard procedures taught to them by their mothers and reinforced through decades of experience. In practice, women make choices based on personal proclivities and specific circumstances; exceptions are made, rules are bent and broken. Far from undermining the authenticity of contemporary artistic practices, such exceptions demonstrate women artist's flexibility, creativity, and ingenuity, an ability to adapt passed down to them through the generations.[51]

Another fundamental resource on Ghanaian basket weaving is the *Fair Market Report on The Straw Basket Industry in Bolgatanga*, produced by G-lish Foundation,

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[48] Sheldon, "Visualizing Culture," 125-132.
[49] Ibid, 125-132.
[50] Ibid., 129.
[51] Sheldon, "Visualizing Culture," 132.

Ghana.[52] The report, which was supported by the Australian High Commission in Ghana and the Australian Government's Director Aid Program, explores the basket weaving market and profitability in the Upper East region of Ghana. The study interviewed 120 weavers from six villages on the basket weaving process, market, and impact. Additionally, the report surveyed 67 international buyers and traders on the production and supply chain to gauge the awareness and understanding of buyers and traders. The report concludes that basket weavers do not profit from their work in an appropriate and fair way. Instead, the report argues that middlemen and other supply chain entities benefit from the production of baskets in this type of market. It states, "[a]fter completing this research it is difficult to conclude that selling straw baskets in the central Bolgatanga straw basket market serves straw baskets weavers' interested in any form whatsoever."[53] Although the report provides the most detailed account of basket weaving initiatives within Ghana, it should be noted that the report was ultimately unable to distinguish between the typical market and the fair trade market due to a lack of response from fair trade organizations and entities. Research on the impact of fair trade in these basket weaving efforts is seemingly nonexistent, illustrating the necessity of this research.

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[52] G-lish Foundation, Ghana, *Fair Market Report on The Straw Basket Industry in Bolgatanga*, G-lish Foundation, Ghana 2014., accessed March 2019, https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0356/5021/files/Fair_Market_Report_G-lish_Foundation_07b24e30-a09d-46db-9faa-08c57cae20a0.pdf?1004.

[53] G-lish Foundation, Ghana, *Fair Market Report on The Straw Basket Industry in Bolgatanga*, 89.

Definition and Meaning

Within the last several decades, the fair trade movement and network has become a prominent force within the development field. Despite this, fair trade remains relatively ambiguous to consumers and the general public. In *The Fair Trade Network in Historical Perspective* (2004), Fridell explains "[t]he fair trade *network*, which connects peasants, workers, and craftspeople in the South with partners in the North through a system of rules and principles, has been part of a broader, unofficial fair trade *movement*."[54] While there are numerous historical influences on the fair trade movement, the origins of the modern fair trade network stem from the "trade not aid" philosophy. In North America, this effort was led by alternative trade organizations and nonprofit (or nongovernmental) organizations, such as the Mennonite International Development Agency (now Mennonite Central Committee), SELFHELP (Ten Thousand Villages), and Sales Exchange for Refugee Rehabilitation and Vocation (SERRV International) during the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s.[55] Since then, fair trade efforts have developed and expanded both in size and scope.

Today, fair trade is often recognized, but not necessarily fully understood by the general public. Scholars and practitioners describe fair trade in a variety of ways. Recent definitions of fair trade revolve around the principles and goals of the movement, often highlighting the positive social and economic impact on producers. Arguably, the most commonly recognized and used definition of fair trade is as follows:

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[54] Gavin Fridell, "The Fair Trade Network in Historical Perspective," *Canadian Journal of Development Studies/Revue Canadienne Détudes Du Développement* 25, no. 3 (2004): 413, accessed July 1, 2018, doi:10.1080/02255189.2004.9668986; Isolina Boto and Camilla La Peccerella, *Does Fair Trade Contribute to Sustainable Development?* Brussels Rural Development Briefings 2008, accessed July 2018, https://brusselsbriefings.files.wordpress.com/2012/10/br-5-reader-br-5-fair-trade-eng.pdf.

[55] Fridell, "The Fair Trade Network in Historical Perspective," 411-28; Boto and La Peccerella, *Does Fair Trade Contribute to Sustainable Development?*, 1-35.

Fair Trade is a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency and respect, and which seeks greater equity in international trade. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading condition to, and securing the rights of, marginalised producers and works - especially in the South. Fair Trade organizations (backed by consumers) are engaged actively in supporting producers, awareness raising and in campaigning for changes in the rules and practice of conventional international trade.[56]

In the most simple of words, fair trade seeks sustainable development through providing an equitable trading system for all participants. It puts people before business.

Impact

Literature on the implications of fair trade is rather extensive; however, collectively, the literature has gaps. Seemingly, the majority of research centers around the economic impact of fair trade, with a particular focus on the agricultural products. Within this literature, researchers cite economic growth for producers and their communities, indicating a successful initiative. It should be noted that there is research suggesting non-economic benefits, such as the gender equality, preservation of culture, and life satisfaction, along with others; however, even in this research, which explores quality of life components, economic inputs are one of, if not the solo, driving factor of analysis.[57]

Perhaps the most notable literature that discusses the cultural impact of fair trade, particularly including handicrafts, is in the *Handbook of Research on Fair Trade* (2015).[58] Within the handbook, the authors present case studies to illustrate implications surrounding many of the core components of fair trade. In regards to cultural impact, case studies on Indian and Guatemalan textile initiatives are presented, arguing that the initiatives

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[56] Fridell, "The Fair Trade Network in Historical Perspective," 411-28; Boto and La Peccerella, *Does Fair Trade Contribute to Sustainable Development?*, 1-35.

[57] Leonardo Becchetti, Stefano Castriota, and Nazaria Solferino, "Development Projects and Life Satisfaction: An Impact Study on Fair Trade Handicraft Producers," *Journal of Happiness Studies* 12, no. 1 (2009): 115-138.

[58] Laura T. Raynolds and Elizabeth A Bennett, *Handbook of Research On Fair Trade* (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2015).

"illustrates how production and design can be modified while retaining a distinct cultural identity for the artisans and their products."[59] However, the examples fail to illustrate how mainstreaming and globalization would impact these culturally significant and meaningful products. Numerous scholars have argued this point, stating that mainstreaming and globalization could degrade the fair trade market and consequentially its impact.

Another noteworthy resource in regards to the cultural impact of fair trade is the collection of articles edited by Sarah Lyon and Mark Moberg in *Fair Trade and Social Justice: Global Ethnographies* (2010). Several chapters, particularly Lyon's "A Market of Our Own: Women's Livelihoods and Fair Trade Markets," Wilson's "Fair Trade Craft Production and Indigenous Economies: Reflection on "Acceptable" Indigeneities," and M'Closkey's "Novica, Navajo Knock-Offs, and the 'Net: A Critique," note the potential dangers of fair trade initiatives regarding culture. Specifically, Wilson argues, "…the inability of indigenous artisans to control representational forms and the meanings and interpretations attached to their products can potential lead to disjunctures between local and nonlocal constructions of indigeneity."[60] She cites examples presented in previous chapters, such as the appropriation and utilization of designs by others that Navajo weavers face and the pressure to appeal and consequently adapt to consumers that Guatemalan Mayan weavers face.[61] Through these examples, scholars demonstrate the potential negative implications of the well-intended fair trade movement and network. This research furthers these existing arguments, outlining the cultural implications of fair trade initiatives

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[59] Raynolds and Bennett, *Handbook of Research On Fair Trade*, 464-465.
[60] Patrick C. Wilson "Fair Trade Craft Production and Indigenous Economies: Reflection on 'Acceptable' Indigeneities," in *Fair Trade and Social Justice: Global Ethnographies*, eds. Sarah Lyon and Mark Moberg (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 179.
[61] Wilson "Fair Trade Craft Production and Indigenous Economies," 176-198.

involving Ghanaian basket weavers and drawing similarities and differences to the examples presented by other scholars.

1.5 Contribution to Literature

Through reviewing and analyzing various literature surrounding themes related to fair trade, it is evident that there is a sufficient amount of writing on each area; and yet, there is an overall lack of connecting these interrelated themes, especially in regards to the fair trade movement and network. By connecting the fields of anthropology, philanthropy, nonprofit management, and policy in regards to the fair trade movement and network, this thesis attempts to generate new insights and understandings relevant to all of these fields.

Specifically, this thesis aims to close some of the gaps in literature on fair trade. This will primarily be done in two ways. First, the majority of literature on fair trade centers around agricultural products. Literature focusing on handicrafts tends to be either extremely narrow or extremely broad in its scope. By conducting a case study, the field can gain a more encompassing picture of the impact of these initiatives; then by relating the findings to existing literature, the field can also gain a better understanding on these initiatives as a whole. Second, fair trade literature often focuses on the impact of fair trade in an economic standpoint. If other principles of fair trade are mentioned, it is often value oriented rather than impact oriented. By understanding the cultural implications of these initiatives, the field can begin to see whether the movement is incorporating and accomplishing all of its principles, including those involving culture. Exploring these gaps through the following case study will allow for a more encompassing outlook on the fair trade movement and its impact.

CHAPTER 2: GHANAIAN CONTEXT

2.1 Overview

The modern day country of Ghana has experienced periods of pre-colonialism, colonialism, and post-colonialism within its history, prompting change for the country and its people as it moved from one period to another. In 1957, Ghana became the first colonial Sub-Saharan African country to gain independence, merging the Gold Coast British Colony with the Togoland Trust Territory to form the country. In the decades following, Ghana went under a period of transition – politically, economically, and socially.[1]

Politically, the country went through an intense period of turmoil with coups and corruption occurring until 1981 when Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings overthrew the government and took control of the country. At that time, Lieutenant Rawlings banned political parties until 1992 when the country approved a new constitution and established a multi-party democracy. Since then, the controlling party has changed frequently through elections.[2] Today, many consider Ghana to be one of the more stable and vibrant democracies in Africa, even though there are still discussion surrounding potential mismanagement and inefficiencies of the political and governmental systems within Ghana.[3]

Economically, the country has also seen immense development. As a market-based economy, there are relatively few regulatory obstacles and government interventions.[4] Ghana has several strong industries, including agriculture, manufacturing, construction, oil and other natural resources – with agriculture and oil/natural resources gaining recent

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[1] *The World Factbook*, "Ghana," Central Intelligence Agency, February 01, 2019, accessed January 14, 2019, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gh.html.
[2] *The World Factbook*, "Ghana."
[3] Participant C. Face-to-face interview with the author, 2018.
[4] *The World Factbook*, "Ghana."

attention from experts for their promise and performance.[5] As one of the leading producers of cocoa, Ghana has a strong agricultural presence globally. The country is, arguably, most known for its cocoa production, as the country is the world's second largest exporter of the crop.[6] According to the *Consumer News and Business Channel* article "Ghana is 'about to have an oil boom,'" Ghana, along with the Ivory Coast, supplies around 60% of the world's cocoa. Within Ghana, cocoa dominates the agriculture sector, with the crop amounting to 25-30% of the agricultural gross domestic product.[7] In total, the *World Factbook* estimates that the entire agricultural sector accounts for approximately 20% of the country's gross domestic product and employs over 50% of the country's workforce.[8] With Ghana trending towards urbanization, the oil and natural resource industries have begun to thrive, as well. Natural resources, particularly gold, have been a strong industry for the country throughout much of its history.[9] In fact, according to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa Country Profile on Ghana (2016), Ghana is the second largest producer of gold in Africa.[10] More recently, the oil industry has seen rapid growth and expansion after the country discovered several large oil deposits approximately a decade ago.[11] Together, these industries present many opportunities for the future in terms of economic growth. According to a recent *New York Times* article titled "What's the World's Fastest-Growing

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[5] *The World Factbook*, "Ghana"; Economic Commission for Africa, *Country Profile: Ghana*, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa 2017, accessed March 2019, https://www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/uploaded-documents/CountryProfiles/2017/ghana_cp_eng.pdf.
[6] Economic Commission for Africa, *Country Profile*, 3.
[7] Justina Crabtree, "Ghana is 'about to have an oil boom,'" *Consumer News and Business Channel*, March 16, 2018, https://www.cnbc.com/2018/03/16/ghana-is-about-to-have-an-oil-boom.html.
[8] *The World Factbook*, "Ghana."
[9] Tim McDonnell, "What's the World's Fastest-Growing Economy? Ghana Contends for the Crown," *New York Times*, March 10, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/10/world/africa/ghana-worlds-fastest-growing-economy.html; *The World Factbook*, "Ghana."
[10] Economic Commission for Africa, *Country Profile: Ghana*, 3.
[11] *The World Factbook*, "Ghana."; Crabtree, "Ghana is 'about to have an oil boom,'" *Consumer News and Business Channel*; McDonnell, "What's the World's Fastest-Growing Economy?"

Economy? Ghana Contends for the Crown," Ghana "is likely to have one of the world's fastest-growing economies this year, according to the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Brookings Institution."[12]

Socially, the country has changed in several ways since it gained independence decades ago. One of the areas of most prominent change is within the rise of urban areas. A 2015 report from the World Bank declared, "[o]ver the last three decades, Ghana's urban population has more than tripled, rising from 4 million to nearly 14 million people, and outpacing rural population growth."[13] Furthermore, the United Nations Economic Commission of Africa shares, "[t]he proportion of the population living in urban areas [in Ghana] has more than doubled in the last five decades, expanding from 23.0 per cent in 1960 to 51.0 per cent in 2010."[14] This development has impacted a plethora of social issues, particularly those involving poverty, education, food and water security, and equality. According to the 2015 World Bank report, "[r]apid urbanization in Ghana over the past three decades has coincided with rapid GDP growth, helping create jobs, increase human capital, decrease poverty, and expand opportunities and improve living conditions for millions of Ghanaians."[15] In many areas, the impact of urbanization has been a positive one, and yet, not all citizens have benefited in proportion – urban populations arguably see more benefits from this growth rather than their rural counterparts. The resources and opportunities that emerge from urbanization more generally stay within the urban areas,

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[12] McDonnell, "What's the World's Fastest-Growing Economy?"
[13] The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and The World Bank, *Rising through Cities in Ghana: Ghana Urbanization Review Overview Report*, The World Bank 2015, http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/613251468182958526/pdf/96449-WP-PUBLIC-GhanaRisingThroughCities-Overview-full.pdf.
[14] Economic Commission for Africa, *Country Profile*, 15.
[15] The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and The World Bank, *Rising through Cities in Ghana*, 8-22.

meaning individuals within these areas tend to benefit from the development over individuals within rural areas.[16]

As the first Sub-Saharan country to gain independence with one of the more stable democracies and economies within Africa, the public perceives Ghana in various ways - some seeing the country as a leader and some seeing the country as a laggard. As stated in one interview, Ghana is caught between the developing world and the industrialized world.[17] This presents both opportunities and challenges for the country, as it continues to develop politically, economically, and socially.

2.2 Western Influence

Like many other Global South countries, the industrialized Western world has tremendously influenced Ghana. As the country continues to develop, Western societies have pushed their own beliefs, practices, and concepts onto the country. These Western ideologies and philosophies have, in many ways, been incorporated into Ghanaian society as it attempts to transition from a developing country to a developed one. These principles and practices are present in all sectors of life, including the economic, political, social, and philanthropic spheres.[18]

The integration of Western concepts occurred throughout the country's existence, but especially within the periods of colonialism and post-colonialism. Before the colonization of Ghana, the country functioned in a much different way, with its own political, economic, and social structures. Each community developed its own governance hierarchies, often involving kingships and chiefdoms; its own economic systems through

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[16] The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and The World Bank, *Rising through Cities in Ghana*, 8-22.
[17] Participant B. Face-to-face interview with the author, 2018.
[18] Participant C. Face-to-face interview with the author, 2018.

trade and exchange; and its own social constructions with everyday norms and behaviors.[19]

Similarly, strong philanthropic values and concepts existed during this time. Concepts such as self-help, mutual assistance, and reciprocity were present in many areas of life, including informal and formal indigenous philanthropy.[20] Ghanaians, like many other African societies, incorporated these strong philanthropic concepts into their society through informal family and community norms, as well as through more formal societal networks, such as voluntary institutions and associations.[21]

During the colonial period, the country changed immensely. According to historians and citizens alike, it was not that these indigenous ideas and practices disappeared during this time, but instead that new foreign ideas and practices appeared. These ideas and practices were imported from elsewhere and were inherently based on differing experiences and cultures. In this sense, individuals from the Western world acted in an ethnocentric manner, judging Ghanaian society based on their own experiences in the industrialized world. This ethnocentric lens resulted in Western individuals believing Ghana needed change in order to thrive based on the industrialized standards of the West. As Barger points out, this mindset can lend itself to the belief that cultures must adapt to

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[19] Immanuel Wallerstein, "Ethnicity and National Integration in West Africa," in *Perspectives On the African Past,* eds. Martin A. Klein and G. Wesley Johnson (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1972), 129-139.

[20] Christiana Lariba Atibil, "Philanthropic Foundations and Civil Society in Sub-Saharan Africa," in *The Handbook of Civil Society in Africa,* ed. Ebenezer Obadare (New York: Springer, 2014), 457-474; Steven Feierman "Reciprocity and Assistance in Precolonial Africa." In *Philanthropy in the World's Tradition,* eds. Warren F. Ilchman, Stanley N. Katz, and Edward L Queen II (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998), 3-24; John A. Grim, "A Comparative Study in Native American Philanthropy," in *Philanthropy in the World's Tradition,* eds. Warren F. Ilchman, Stanley N. Katz, and Edward L Queen II (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998), 25-53; Immanuel Wallerstein, "Ethnicity and National Integration in West Africa," in *Perspectives On the African Past,* eds. Martin A. Klein and G. Wesley Johnson (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1972), 129-139.

[21] Susan Wilkinson-Maposa, Alan Fowler, Ceri Oliver-Evans, and Chao F.N. Mulenga, *The Poor Philanthropist: How and Why the Poor People Help Each Other* (UCT Graduation School of Business: The International Business School in Africa, 2005).

the great powers of the modern world in order to survive and thrive.[22] Although the

individuals of the Western world intended to help and benefit the people of Ghana by

incorporating their own ideas and practices into Ghanaian society, the effort was

ethnocentric rather than relativistic, and therefore, generated implications surrounding

stereotypes, power dynamics, and exploitation.

After the colonial period, Ghana continued to adapt many Western beliefs,

practices, and concepts into the various sectors. Economically and politically, structures

and systems shifted and have, at least in part, started to resemble those of Western society.

This has also been the case philanthropically, with the country seeing a recent progression

to institutionalizing the field. Furthermore, Western influence has increased through the

involvement of international individuals and organizations. These influences have created

a new reality for the country, blending indigenous beliefs and practices with imported

beliefs and practices.[23] Ghanaian philanthropy has expanded and developed in meaning,

size, and scope throughout its history – it represents many of the components scholars and

[22] Barger, "Ethnocentrism," Indiana University Indianapolis, September 29, 2018, http://www.iupui.edu/~anthkb/ethnocen.htm.

[23] Helmut K. Anheier, *Nonprofit Organizations: Theory, Management, Policy* (Oxon: Routledge, 2014), 196-225; Helmut K. Anheier and Lester M. Salamon, *The Nonprofit Sector in the Developing World: A Comparative Analysis* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1988); Christiana Lariba Atibil, "Philanthropic Foundations and Civil Society in Sub-Saharan Africa," in *The Handbook of Civil Society in Africa,* ed. Ebenezer Obadare (New York: Springer, 2014), 457-474; Copeland-Carson, "Promoting diversity in contemporary black philanthropy: toward a new conceptual model," 77-87; Steven Feierman "Reciprocity and Assistance in Precolonial Africa," in *Philanthropy in the World's Tradition,* eds. Warren F. Ilchman, Stanley N. Katz, and Edward L Queen II (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998), 3-24; John A. Grim, "A Comparative Study in Native American Philanthropy," in *Philanthropy in the World's Tradition,* eds. Warren F. Ilchman, Stanley N. Katz, and Edward L Queen II (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998), 25-53; Lester M. Salamon and Helmut K. Anheier, *Defining the Nonprofit Sector: A Cross-Sector Analysis (*Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1997).

practitioners highlight in definitions and theories, including that philanthropy and the third sector are contextual and inherently based on the cultures' historical and modern events.[24]

Numerous individuals I spoke to alluded to this blending of indigenous and foreign beliefs and practices, noting several examples of such within the realm of philanthropy. These included: corporate social responsibility, social entrepreneurship, microfinance loans, unions and associations, social enterprises, and foundations. Additionally, these individuals acknowledged that many ethical and social movements, like fair trade, are imported systems. The overwhelming majority of these individuals saw these initiatives and movements as promising opportunities for positive growth and development. Still, individuals also noted that these initiatives and movements can have detrimental effects, which should be considered and monitored moving forward. Because many of the initiatives and movements highlight positive implications and omit negative implications, the full impact of these initiatives and movements is uncertain and unclear to many. Several individuals I spoke with questioned whether intent and impact were in alignment.[25]

These individuals, including several residing in Ghana and West Africa, also raised the question of whether these Western ideas and practices can be successfully adapted into a Global South country. These individuals expressed that just because something is effective and successful in one setting, like the United States, does not mean it would be effective and successful in another setting, like Ghana. These individuals noted that many

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[24] Ghanaian philanthropy and civil society demonstrates the social origins theory of the third sector. The social origins theory argues that the third sector is contextual and shaped by the historical events of the country. Anheier and Salamon developed the theory. Helmut K. Anheier, Nonprofit Organizations: Theory, Management, Policy (Oxon: Routledge, 2014).

[25] Participant A. Face-to-face interview with the author, 2018; Participant B. Face-to-face interview with the author, 2018; Participant C. Face-to-face interview with the author, 2018.

of these initiative and movement have potential within Ghana, but argued that context should be acknowledged and considered in order for it to be successful.[26]

2.3 A Country Divided

The country of Ghana can be, and often is, classified into various groups based on characteristics of the land, such as geographic location, environmental landscape, and urban-suburban-rural setting. Additionally, the people of Ghana are also often classified into various groups based on certain characteristics of individuals, including gender and ethnicity. The categorization of such suggests unique realities of the people and the land of the country. These groupings are pertinent to additional economic, political, social, and cultural characteristics, as well. Of particular relevance to this research is the relationship that geographic location, environmental landscape, and urban-suburban-urban setting have with economic status, as well as the significance ethnicity has on social and cultural presence and identity.

In terms of geography and topography, the country is often divided by location and landscapes. Although the country can arguably be classified into a plethora of categories based on these factors, it is often broken into two groups: the North and the South. In fact, this divide was referred to in the majority of interviews, with one individual stating "Ghana is, in many ways, two countries: one being the North and one the South."[27] This divide is likely based on the landscape and environment of the areas. Within the South, the landscape is either coastal land or lush forest and agricultural land. This allows for opportunities for urbanization along the coast and for farming throughout the plateaus. Within the north, the

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[26] Participant A. Face-to-face interview with the author, 2018; Participant B. Face-to-face interview with the author, 2018; Participant C. Face-to-face interview with the author, 2018.
[27] Participant B. Face-to-face interview with the author, 2018.

landscape is mostly plains, which does not present as many opportunities to use the land as it does in the south. With the majority of cities being along the coast (in part due to colonialism which naturally settled around waterways), many other areas of the country remain more rural. Therefore, the reliance on land is important to the individuals who reside there. While there are crops being grown in the northern areas, the majority of rich, fertile lands used for agricultural purposes are in central and southern parts of the country. The environment has led to many industries gravitating towards the coast and plateau areas of the south. This presents a challenge for the northern regions, which does not have as many stable markets and thriving industries. The individuals living in these areas face competition for limited job opportunities, resulting in the need to create alternative employment opportunities.

In regards to the demographics of the people, individuals are often grouped by gender and ethnicity. In terms of gender, the Ghanaian population generally reflects the world's population, with females accounting for just over half of the population.[28] When considering gender equality in Ghana, the country faces many of the similar issues of other non-industrialized countries. Based on the *United Nations Human Development Reports* (2017), Ghana ranks 140 out of 189 countries in the gender human development index and the gender inequality index.[29] While this ranking aligns with other developing countries, particularly those within Africa, it does not seem to correlate to Ghana's recent developments in the economic and political spheres. The ranking, along with other statistics on gender, illustrates Ghana still faces a division in gender equality. Through

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[28] *The World Factbook*, "Ghana."

[29] United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Reports: Ghana*, United Nations 2018, http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/GHA.

reports like the *United Nations Human Development Reports*, it is evident that women in Ghana do not have access to the same resources and opportunities as men in Ghana. This reality causes women to have much different experiences than men – in many ways, females face more social challenges and harsher living experiences than their male counterparts.

The Ghanaian population is also classified into groups based on ethnicity. As Wallerstein states, "membership in an ethnic group is a matter of social definition, an interplay of the self-definition of members and the definition of the other group."[30] Given the diversity of the country, Ghanaians could be classified into hundreds of ethnic groups and subgroups. Major ethnicities of the country are: Akan (including Ashanti, Abbe, Abidji, Ahafo, Tchama, and Wassa), Mole-Dagbon, Ewe, Ga-Dangme, and Gurma. These ethnic groups, while often sharing similarities, are distinct from one another. This uniqueness is particularly relevant to socio-cultural aspects of life, such as art, craft, clothing, communication, ceremonies, and traditions. In one interview, a Ghanaian resident stated that this uniqueness is extremely apparent to Ghanaians.[31] For example, when going through several photographs, the individual could identify the ethnicity and home of certain individuals based solely on appearance (notably through the dress and accessories of the individual). The person I spoke with mentioned that certain designs and products are associated with certain ethnicities and cultures. He argued that this is the case with baskets, as well, given it is the case with many other traditional craft products. Through this

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[30] Immanuel Wallerstein, "Ethnicity and National Integration in West Africa," in *Perspectives On the African Past,* ed. Martin A. Klein and G. Wesley Johnson (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1972), 131.
[31] Participant C. Face-to-face interview with the author, 2018.

example, the individual validated Wallerstein claim that "ethnicity plays a complex role in the contemporary West African scene."[32]

Ghana is a diverse country. Although one nation, the Ghanaian people and land are many. This reality adds complexity and complication to many of the issues the country currently faces economically, politically, socially, and culturally.

2.4 A Challenge and an Opportunity

Ghana faces another great divide as a country: that of wealth. This polarizing divide is a major challenge for the country despite its recent progress in poverty alleviation. According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the "Millennium Development Goal 1 target of halving extreme poverty was achieved as far back as 2006, after the extreme poverty rate dropped consistently from 36.5 per cent in 1991 to 18.2 per cent in 2006 and further to 8.4 per cent in 2013."[33] Still, even though the national poverty level, including extreme poverty, decreased by more than half from this time period, not all citizens have benefited equally, according to *The Ghana Poverty and Inequality Report – 2016*.[34] Rather, the divide between the "haves" and "have-nots" remains.[35] With the gap between the poor and the wealthy still being present, the impact of the decline in poverty levels is disproportionate. The wealthy arguably receive more benefits from this development than the poor. Another report, *Poverty Reduction in Ghana 2015: Progress and Challenges*, mentions the severity of this, stating "[t]ackling inequalities in outcomes and opportunities is a longer-term development challenge, but it is key for consolidating

[32] Wallerstein, "Ethnicity and National Integration in West Africa," 139.
[33] Economic Commission for Africa, *Country Profile*, 15.
[34] Edgar Cooke, Sarah Hague, and Andy McKay, *The Ghana Poverty and Inequality Report*, UNICEF 2016, accessed March 2019, https://www.unicef.org/ghana/Ghana_Poverty_and_Inequality_Analysis_FINAL_Match_2016(1).pdf
[35] Wilkinson-Maposa et al., *The Poor Philanthropist*, 122-124.

the country's middle-income status" and eliminating the gap between the wealthy and the poor.[36] Many individuals, especially those from Ghana and West Africa, alluded to the divide in wealth status, indicating it as an issue for the country in its efforts in promoting economic growth and development.[37]

Although there has been tremendous economic progress, the poverty within rural Ghana is of such a high magnitude that it is often not relatable to other industrialized countries. Individuals of rural Ghana, notably within the Upper East and Upper West regions, experience poverty so severe that they lack access to the most basic needs. Within the majority of interviews, individuals shared destructive accounts of extreme poverty. Some of these examples include: a woman not being able to keep her land, a family suffering from curable health issues, and a community not having access to safe and sanitary drinking water. Although these accounts were distinct, the concept that this level of poverty is interconnected to other societal issues was present. These stories frequently revealed that extreme poverty correlates to additional problems for the communities, such as a lack of education, poor healthcare, gender inequality, and conflict.

Given the interconnected nature and the severity of the issues, poverty alleviation and wealth equity have been a primary focus of African societies for several decades. Although Ghana has progressed in these areas, poverty still remains at the forefront of domestic and international conversations.[38] Within Ghana (and elsewhere in Africa),

[36] Vasco Molini and Pierella Paci, *Poverty Reduction in Ghana 2015: Progress and Challenges*, World Bank Group 2015, accessed March 2019, https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/22732/K8485.pdf?sequence=5&isAllowed=y.

[37] Participant A. Face-to-face interview with the author, 2018; Participant B. Face-to-face interview with the author, 2018; Participant C. Face-to-face interview with the author, 2018.

[38] Reports like The Ghana Poverty and Inequality Report – 2016 and Poverty Reduction in Ghana 2015 illustrate the magnitude of poverty and income inequality within the country.

numerous approaches, both domestically and internationally, have been taken by individuals, organizations, and government in attempts to lessen the extreme poverty and the divisive wealth gap that the country faces. These efforts have failed to eradicate extreme poverty and wealth inequality, and therefore, a space for the third sector has emerged.[39] As Payton and Moody explain, there are four responses to human problems: self-help, mutual aid, government assistance, and philanthropy. In this case, Ghana uses a combination of responses; however, philanthropy is needed because individuals, community, and government are unable to solve the issues of extreme poverty and income inequality without it.[40]

Within the third sector, some of the approaches taken to tackle the issues of extreme poverty and income inequality include microfinance loans, social entrepreneurship, equity programs, and assistance programs. The collective interview base cited these approaches, along with others, as opportunities for poverty alleviation. Although many of these tactics have long existed within Ghana and Africa, these approaches have recently seen increased attention as potential solutions to poverty alleviation and economic development within the area. Furthermore, fair trade initiatives, which incorporate numerous aspects of these approaches, have grown recently. Individuals also cited fair trade as an opportunity for poverty alleviation and economic equity within Ghana and Western Africa.

The individuals and communities who may benefit from these types of initiatives (fair trade, microfinance, social entrepreneurship, equity programs, and assistance

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[39] Ghanaian civil society, particularly efforts involving extreme poverty and income inequality, illustrates the three failures theory. Despite expectations, the public and private sectors in Ghana failed to provide goods and services involving these issues; therefore, the third sector fills the gap and provides these goods and services.

[40] Robert L. Payton and Michael P. Moody, *Understanding Philanthropy: Its Meaning and Mission* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 29.

programs) face severe poverty due to income insecurity, volatility, and inequality. When asked about the life conditions and quality of life of these individuals, regardless of whether discussing agricultural workers or handicraft artisans, interviewees stressed the severity of poverty that these individuals face. Individuals explained that the workers typically live in conditions that make it difficult to attain basic needs; therefore, the individuals typically use the wages earned from this sort of work for basic needs and services, such as buying food and household needs or paying for school fees for their children.[41] Within one interview with a fair trade worker, the individual shared numerous examples of the impact of fair trade initiatives on artisans, noting that in most cases the earned income allowed for the individual and their family to receive goods and services that residents of industrialized societies often take for granted.[42]

Additionally, many noted that this work is frequently done as a form of supplemental income for the artisan, their families, and in some cases, even their community. This is true for many of the fair trade basket weaving initiatives found within Ghana. For example, within one interview, a fair trade importer shared that most of the artisans that their organization partners with are subsistence farmers, growing only enough for their community and not selling any agricultural products for a profit. The profits received from these basket weaving initiatives provide additional income for other needs that are not covered by farming, like clothing and housing.[43] Numerous fair trade organizations confirmed that artisans often use these initiatives as an additional form of income. Baskets of Africa states on its website that "handicraft activities such as basket

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[41] All interviewees implicitly or explicitly mentioned this.
[42] Participant D. Phone call with the author, 2019.
[43] Participant E. Email correspondence with the author, 2019.

weaving, leather work, and pottery are undertaken mostly by women to supplement their

incomes since they are primarily subsistence farmers."[44] Additionally, African Market

Baskets' notes on its website that "[l]ocal women supplement the family income by

weaving the baskets..."[45] Still, in many ways, this income is critical for the individual's

and their family's livelihood. As *The Fair Market Report on The Straw Basket Industry in*

Bolgatanga states:

> Basket weaving is considered a secondary activity to help augment family
> income. It has, however, become the main stay of many families as most
> men in this area are unemployed and women, generally, carry the burden of
> getting ingredients such as dry fish, salt and money for milling the maize or
> millet in order or provide a meal for the family.[46]

Although the general public often views these initiatives as supplemental or secondary

work, the income received through these efforts serves an important purpose. As many fair

traders shared, the women weaving these baskets are doing so in order to support

themselves, their families, and their communities.[47]

In addition to generating immediate funds for basic goods and services, these

initiatives can provide an avenue for longer-term financial success. Within one interview,

a microfinance worker shared that many individuals living in rural communities have

difficulty finding work and consequently have difficulty generating a steady income. This

results in individuals not being able to save much, if anything at all, for the future.[48] Fair

trade initiatives can create a more stable flow of income, allowing producers to not only

attain short-term basic needs, but also attain longer-term financial sustainability. Given the

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[44] Cael Chappell, "Ghana, West Africa," accessed on March 2019, http://www.basketsofafrica.com/ghana-bolgatanga/ghana-bolga-baskets.html.
[45] Cael Chappell, "Our Story," accessed on March 2019, http://www.africanmarketbaskets.com/our-story/.
[46] G-lish Foundation, Ghana, *Fair Market Report on The Straw Basket Industry in Bolgatanga*, 8.
[47] All interviewees implicitly or explicitly stated this.
[48] Participant A. Face-to-face interview with the author, 2018.

potential short-term and long-term benefit of these initiatives, a variety of constituents, including Ghanaian, Western African, and American citizens, suggested that these initiatives, particularly ones within the fair trade network, provide an opportunity for both immediate poverty alleviation and lasting economic development.

2.5 Basket Weaving Initiatives in Ghana

Handicrafts, including those found in fair trade initiatives, have become a massive market spanning all across the globe. Furthermore, "[h]andicraft production is a major form of employment in many developing countries and often a significant part of the export economy."[49] Although countries like China, Vietnam, and India have dominated the handicraft market, many African countries, including Ghana, have tapped into this market and found early success. According to the *Global Market Assessment for Handicrafts* (2006), market experts believe Ghana, along with South Africa, have the most competitive products, and therefore, the most potential for export capacity in Africa. Ghanaian exports within the handicraft market has increased from $2 million (1995) to $14.9 million (2001); however, a year later, the exports decreased slightly to $11.3 million (2002).[50] Even with such a decline, a recent CNN article estimates that "Ghana's non-traditional export sector, which basket weaving falls under, contributes about 20% to the country's export trade."[51] The size and scope of the handicraft market within Ghana suggests that the market might be an opportunity for the country in regard to economic growth and development.

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[49] Ted Barber and Marina Krisvoshlkova, *Global Market Assessment for Handicrafts*, Development Alternatives, Inc. 2006, accessed July 2018, https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADN210.pdf.

[50] Barber and Krisvoshlkova, *Global Market Assessment for Handicrafts*, 18-20.

[51] Aisha Salaudeen, Rachel Wood and Sandy Thin, "How these Ghanaian women have made basket weaving into a million dollar industry," CNN, April 26, 2019, https://www.cnn.com/2019/04/25/africa/ghana-bolga-basket-weavers-intl/index.html.

Although there is promise in the market, experts are unsure of how handicrafts will actually impact the Ghanaian economy in the near future. They share, "Ghanaian producers still have difficulty keeping up with market trends and designing products for Western tastes and lifestyles."[52] Given the fluctuation, it is unclear the role handicrafts will play in the Ghanaian economy in future years. Nevertheless, the country has shown interest in the market, likely due to its ability to engage the rural populations that tend to experience extreme poverty.

Within Ghana, baskets dominate the handicraft market.[53] In fact, "in 2017, Ghana exported roughly $800,000 worth of baskets to the international market," more specifically the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand.[54] According to Sheldon, there are two primary forms of basketry within Ghana: the square based pio basket and the round based bolga basket.[55] The aesthetics of these baskets are wide-ranging. The design of basket is often dependent on the purpose of the basket: economic, social, or cultural. Baskets in Ghana serve many purposes and roles, including ones involving social, cultural, and economic aspects. Economically, Ghanaians sell baskets commercially as a form of income. Ranging from smaller informal initiatives to larger formal initiatives, Ghanaians sell these baskets both domestically and internationally to markets including locals, tourists, and foreigners. These baskets, however, are not solely for commercial activities. Socially, Ghanaians use baskets for a variety of life activities, including as shopping bags and containers. Whether made or purchased by the individuals, these baskets serve multi-

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[52] Barber and Krisvoshlkova, *Global Market Assessment for Handicrafts*, 20.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Salaudeen, Wood, and Thin, "How these Ghanaian women have made basket weaving into a million dollar industry."
[55] Brittany Anne Sheldon, "Visualizing Culture: Women's Artistry In Northeastern Ghana and Southern Burkina Faso" (Ph. D. diss., Indiana University, 2016), 125-132.

purposes within everyday life. Culturally, Ghanaians use baskets for traditions and rituals. While these traditions and rituals differ per each community and culture, one individual shared the example that baskets play a very significant role in funerals and burials within her particular community and culture. In this specific case, baskets are important, in both a spiritual and cultural sense, to the rituals and ceremonies occurring. The use of baskets within Ghana is diverse. Still, basket productions is often associated with economic purposes, given the size and scale of these initiatives, especially within the Northern rural areas. For example, in most cases, baskets produced for sale differ aesthetically from baskets produced for social or cultural purposes. Sheldon explains:

> Weavers decorated their trade baskets with elaborate designs in order to make them look good, thereby increasing their value and attracting buyers by enhancing their aesthetic impact (Smith 1978, 79). This remains true today: often, baskets intended for domestic use feature muted hues and subtle designs while those intended for sale feature bold, brightly colored patterns. Bolga baskets, in particular, continue to be produced primarily for sale to local, foreign, and tourist markets and are therefore almost always elaborately decorated.[56]

Although the overall aesthetics of baskets vary tremendously, certain aspects are common within the craft.

In commercial settings, baskets are often dyed vibrant colors, rather than the natural straw. Similarly, patterns and designs vary with ban, checker, and zig-zag patterns being prominent. As Sheldon shared, "These [baskets] typically feature alternating bands of bright colors, including magenta, yellow, blue, and green, woven in patterns such as stripes and zig-zags."[57] Although baskets can have round and square shape, the majority of baskets

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[56] Sheldon, "Visualizing Culture," 125-132.
[57] Sheldon, "Visualizing Culture," 128.

for sale feature the rounder basket shape. Sizes range from small, medium, and large with most being medium or large. Several examples from Baskets of Africa can be found below.

Numerous fair trade organizations have described basket weaving as a traditional and cultural process. For example, African Market Baskets explains, "the traditional skill which has been handed down from generation to generation provides employment to approximately 10,000 people, mostly women."[58] The process of production varies based on the product and the producer; however, the simplified process of creating a basket includes the following steps: traveling to markets to gather materials (straw, color, dye, etc.), dyeing the straw, splitting bundles into strips and twisting into twine, weaving the basket design, and traveling to markets for sale. Sheldon describes this process in detail:

> A Bolga basket is typically started by laying groups of plain, undyed twisted strands across one another, layered in perpendicularly arranged sets, to create a bulging one-inch square that forms the center of the basket's base. From here, small bundles of the twisted strands form the weft pieces, which are tightly woven together to create the rounded base and sides.[59]

Numerous fair trade organizations, as well as the G-lish Foundation report, outline a similar creation process. For example, Baskets of Africa explains that straw is first collected from grass stalk and divided into sections; then these sections are rolled and twisted together; if

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[58] The Overseas Connection, Ltd. African Market Baskets, "Our Story - A Passion for African Market Baskets," African Market Baskets, accessed March 2019, http://www.africanmarketbaskets.com/our-story/.

[59] Ibid., 131.

color is desired, the bunches are dyed next; and finally, the straw is then weaved from the base to the rim.[60]

According to the G-lish Foundation, women can create a medium to large size basket in approximately 19 hours.[61] It should be noted that 19 hours is a minimum time commitment and does not include the entire creation process (for example, it does not include transportation or purchasing time). When accounting for the complete process, it often takes women three days to produce a medium to large sized market basket.[62] African Market Baskets confirms this, stating that women can typically weave two baskets a week in addition to other household work, such as cooking for the family, taking care of children, and collecting firewood and water.[63] Baskets vary in price. According to an international buyer survey produced by the G-lish Foundation, individuals purchased the medium to

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[60] Cael Chappell/Baskets of Africa, "Ghana, West Africa."
[61] G-lish Foundation, Ghana, *Fair Market Report on The Straw Basket Industry in Bolgatanga*, 76.
[62] G-lish Foundation, Ghana, *Fair Market Report on The Straw Basket Industry in Bolgatanga*, 76; The Overseas Connection, Ltd. African Market Baskets, "Our Story - A Passion for African Market Baskets."
[63] The Overseas Connection, Ltd. African Market Baskets, "Our Story - A Passion for African Market Baskets."

large size basket for $12-26.[64] Within fair trade markets, these prices tend to be much higher and in some cases more than double; however, the prices still vary per organization.[65] When accounting for the time commitment, the profitability of baskets in Ghana (within all markets) is surprisingly low. The G-lish Foundation estimated these initiatives provide earnings less than the minimum wage. Furthermore, the report concludes, "[a]fter completing this research it is difficult to conclude that selling straw baskets in the central Bolgatanga straw basket market serves straw baskets weavers' interested in any form whatsoever."[66]

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[64] G-lish Foundation, Ghana, *Fair Market Report on The Straw Basket Industry in Bolgatanga*, 34.

[65] The prices of fair trade were determined through the browsing and search of organizational websites. The organizations, Baskets of Africa, Bolga Baskets, African Market Baskets, and others, were included in this search.

[66] G-lish Foundation, Ghana, *Fair Market Report on The Straw Basket Industry in Bolgatanga*, 89.

With the recent focus on producing commercial baskets, several individuals I spoke to voiced concern regarding the effect it would have on more traditional baskets. Specifically, these individuals noted that it could negatively impact the quality and the quantity of the baskets produced for domestic social and cultural purposes. Artisans could shift their focus to profit and consequently adapt their products according to market demand (i.e. a desirable color, shape, technique, design, and so on). The focus on economically profitable designs could potentially cause other more traditional designs (like the ones used for social and cultural purposes) to be less available or of less quality. Ultimately, while these individuals encourage these profitable initiatives, they expressed concern on how these initiatives might negatively affect the traditional craft form. The individuals I spoke with desired a balance between innovative and traditional designs. Sheldon suggests this balance is obtainable in contemporary basket weaving:

> The specific details reveal a key truth: tradition is not monolithic or static. When asked about their traditional artistic practices, women describe the standard procedures taught to them by their mothers and reinforced through decades of experience. In practice, women make choices based on personal proclivities and specific circumstances; exceptions are made, rules are bent and broken. Far from undermining the authenticity of contemporary artistic practices, such exceptions demonstrate women artist's flexibility, creativity, and ingenuity, an ability to adapt passed down to them through the generations.[67]

Although traditional techniques and practices might not be lost from the commercialization of baskets in Ghana, it is still unclear if product development based on market demand will impact the availability and accessibility of certain designs.

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[67] Sheldon, "Visualizing Culture," 132.

CHAPTER 3: FAIR TRADE

3.1 Overview

The term fair trade has many meanings throughout the world. This is likely, in part, because fair trade can refer to both an informal movement and a formal network. The fair trade movement is the broader belief and concept that individuals should utilize equitable trading practices in order for greater economic, social, and cultural justice.[1] The Fair Trade Federation (FTF) describes the fair trade movement as global effort in "building equitable and sustainable trading partnerships and creating opportunities to alleviate poverty."[2] The fair trade network is the formal system established to carry out this movement through the institutionalization of fair trade principles, standards, and strategies. The network provides the infrastructure of fair trade. Although distinct, the fair trade network and movement are very much interrelated and interconnected. According to Fridell, "[t]he fair trade *network*, which connects peasants, workers, and crafts people in the South with partners in the North through a system of rules and principles, has been part of a broader, unofficial fair trade *movement*."[3] With this distinction, there is greater clarity on fair trade – both as a movement and as a network.

Still, there is a lack of uniformity in the definition of fair trade. Even within the formal fair trade network, numerous definitions are used. Scholars and practitioners alike have developed these definitions often providing a general description of the network and the movement by highlighting the intentions and principles of fair trade. Although these

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[1] Gavin Fridell, "The Fair Trade Network in Historical Perspective," *Canadian Journal of Development Studies/Revue Canadienne Détudes Du Développement* 25, no. 3 (2004): 411-28.
[2] Fair Trade Federation, "Code of Practice," last modified November 1, 2017, https://www.fairtradefederation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/FTF-Code-of-Practice-last-revised-11.1.17.pdf
[3] Gavin Fridell, "The Fair Trade Network in Historical Perspective," 411-28.

definitions differ in wording, the majority still share the same general idea: fair trade is an alternative trading approach and system in which equitable relationships are valued and established through various principles and standards. Additionally, many of these definitions highlight that the alternative trading approach and system are a solution to extreme poverty (as well as other related economic, social, and cultural issues) in developing areas, particularly within the Global South.

In 1998, four of the core fair trade organizations formed an informal umbrella group called FINE, with each of the letters standing for one of the represented organizations: the Fairtrade Labelling Organization (FLO), International Federation for Alternative Trade (IFAT), the Network of World Shops (NEWS!), and the European Fair Trade Association (EFTA).[4] Through this collaboration, FINE established the following definition of fair trade, adding consistency and continuity to the fair trade movement and network:

> Fair Trade is a trading partnership, based on dialogue transparency and respect that seeks greater equity in international trade. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and security the rights of, marginalised producers and workers – especially in the South. Fair Trade organisations (backed by consumers) are engaged actively in supporting producers, awareness raising and in campaigning for changes in the rules and practice of conventional international trade.[5]

Although other definitions still exist within the fair trade network and movement, many fair trade constituents use this definition regularly. The common utilization of this definition is likely because individuals view the organizations within FINE (FLO, IFAT, NEWS!, and EFTA) as legitimate and respected leaders within fair trade, and also because

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[4] The International Federation for Alternative Trade (IFAT) is now the World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO).

[5] Gavin Fridell, "The Fair Trade Network in Historical Perspective," 411-28.

the definition encapsulates many of the core values, components, and strategies of fair trade.

Similar to the definition of fair trade, there is a general lack of acceptance on the core principles of fair trade within the network. The majority of fair trade constituents allude to similar values and components; however, not everyone uses the same set of principles. Some of the overlapping components include: opportunities for economically disadvantaged, fair and prompt pay, safe working conditions, transparent and accountable relationships, and non-discriminatory practices (including those against gender, age, culture, and ethnicity etc.). These shared ideas revolve around the central purpose of equity. However, even with these shared values, many fair trade organizations list unique sets of principles. In fact, even some of the core entities within the fair trade network indicate different principles on their websites. For example, two of the more well-known verification organizations, FTF and World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO), have unique sets of principles, according to each organization's website. These principles can be compared in the following table:

Principle	FTF (2019)[6]	WFTO (2017)[7]
1	Create Opportunities	Creating Opportunities for Economically Disadvantaged Producers
2	Develop Transparent and Accountable Relationships	Transparency and Accountability
3	Build Capacity	Fair Trade Practices
4	Promote Fair Trade	Fair Payment
5	Pay Promptly and Fairly	Ensuring no Child Labour and Forced Labour
6	Support Safe and Empowering Working Conditions	Commitment to Non Discrimination, Gender Equity and Women's Economic Empowerment, and Freedom of Association
7	Ensure the Rights of Children	Ensuring Good Working Conditions
8	Cultivate Environmental Stewardship	Providing Capacity Building
9	Respect Cultural Identity	Promoting Fair Trade
10		Respect for the Environment

The table illustrates that the two organization's core principles share many of the same general ideas. These key components are often present within the fair trade movement and network regardless of how it is articulated by the organization. By sharing a general set of principles, fair trade gains legitimacy among producers and consumers.

The sets of principles devised by WFTO and FTF are frequently cited by other fair trade organizations (i.e. importers, distributors, vendors, and retailers), especially those that are members of either or both organizations. Still, according to one individual, who works in a fair trade membership organization, organizations outside the membership base even refer to these guiding principles. When I asked about the potential issue of fraud within the

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[6] Fair Trade Federation, "Fair Trade Principles," accessed March 2019, https://www.fairtradefederation.org/fair-trade-federation-principles/#1548272538487-283b0126-efeb.
[7] World Fair Trade Organization, "10 Principles of Fair Trade," last modified November 2017, https://wfto.com/fair-trade/10-principles-fair-trade.

sector, the individual explained, "we have no problem with people adopting our principles, but they are not a part of [our] membership." The individual further explained that entities can adopt the fair trade principles and align with the fair trade movement without being part of the formal fair trade network.[8] While this inclusivity allows more individuals and organizations to align with the fair trade movement, it also creates a space for exploitation and confusion. Some producers and consumers argue the ability to informally align with the formal network lessens the legitimacy and effectiveness of fair trade, while others argue it allows for more individuals and organizations to incorporate the principles of the formal network, which therefore increases the impact of fair trade.

In theory, fair trade is straightforward and simple; however, in practice, fair trade can be rather complex and complicated. The concept behind the fair trade movement is relatively easy to grasp and understand, and yet the system and structure of the fair trade network is not. The supply chain of the fair trade network consists of many parts.[9] A plethora of fair trade entities, including ones with differing roles and purposes, can, and often are, involved in the labeling and the commercialization of fair trade products. There are two primary methods of labeling and commercializing within the fair trade network: verification and certification.[10]

According to one individual, who works at one of the more well-known fair trade verification organizations, the difference between certification and verification is often misunderstood, especially within the United States.[11] The individual also noted there are

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[8] Participant F. Phone call with the author, 2019.

[9] Isolina Boto and Camilla La Peccerella, *Does Fair Trade Contribute to Sustainable Development?* Brussels Rural Development Briefings 2008, accessed July 2018, https://brusselsbriefings.files.wordpress.com/2012/10/br-5-reader-br-5-fair-trade-eng.pdf.

[10] Fair Trade Federation, "The Difference: Verification & Certification," last modified February 2018, https://www.fairtradefederation.org/verification-certification/.

[11] Participant F. Phone call with the author, 2019.

key differences in the strategies and operations of these processes. The verification process focuses on the retailers and wholesalers.[12] Through the process, verification organizations, such as FTF and WFTO, assesses retail and wholesale organizations within their membership base, ensuring the retail and wholesale organizations are following fair trade principles and achieving fair trade standards set by the verification organization. FTF explains the verification process as "an evaluation of a wholesale or retail organization."[13] According to a 2015 Brussels Rural Development Briefing, the verification process often involves handicraft and home good products.[14]

The certification process focuses on the producers.[15] Through this process, certification organizations, such as Fairtrade International and Fair for Life, examine producers and production sites.[16] FTF explains, stating that "[c]ertifiers perform in-person audits of a producer organization or site of an ingredient, product, or product line according to the fair trade standards set by each organization."[17] The certification process often involves agricultural and food products. Having these two routes for labeling and commercializing products creates confusion and even doubt in some.[18] Instead, these individuals believe that a single process would create a system with which producers can more easily comply and a process that consumers can fully understand.

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[12] Participant F. Phone call with the author, 2019; Fair Trade Federation, "The Difference: Verification & Certification."

[13] Ibid.

[14] Boto and La Peccerella, *Does Fair Trade Contribute to Sustainable Development?*, 1-35.

[15] Participant F. Phone call with the author, 2019; Fair Trade Federation, "The Difference: Verification & Certification."

[16] Participant F. Phone call with the author, 2019; Fair Trade Federation, "The Difference: Verification & Certification."

[17] Fair Trade Federation, "The Difference: Verification & Certification."

[18] Participant F. Phone call with the author, 2019.

In regards to the supply chain of fair trade, there are a myriad of ways to get a product from the producer to the consumer within the fair trade network. Within this process, a plethora of individuals and organizations can be and often are involved. These include: producers, importers, distributors, vendors, wholesalers, retailers, and consumers. Furthermore, these organizations can take the form of a for-profit business or a non-profit organization. The distribution process is not always the same. It can be as simple as having two parties (producer to consumer), or it can be as complex as having countless parties (producer to importer, importer to distributor, distributor to retailer, retailer to consumer). For example, a local fair trade retail shop shared that they often purchase items from a larger, national fair trade vendor and distributor, who purchased the goods from a fair trade importer, who initially bought the products in bulk from the local artisans. Two examples of this varying supply chain are represented in the illustration below:
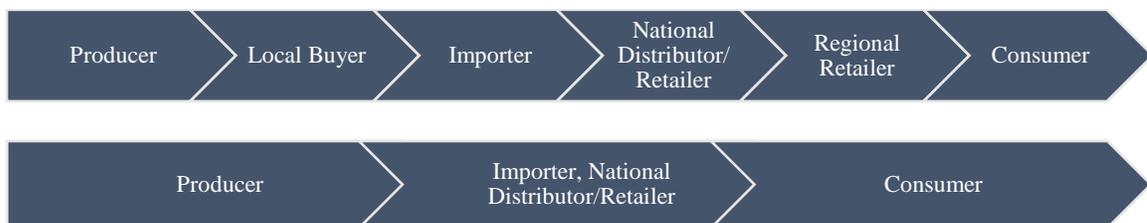
Both supply chains are effective in getting the product from the producer to the consumer; however, both supply chains are not necessarily efficient in doing so. The supply chain with less participants involved has a streamlined supply chain, which is likely more efficient than the more prolonged supply chain.

Many of the individuals I spoke with confirmed the varying nature of the fair trade supply chain process. For example, one individual noted that importers often identify potential producers to work with, while another individual noted that artisans often identify potential importers to work with. These individuals also mentioned word of mouth is a

commonly used practice to identify and connect with potential partners.[19] One individual noted "[i]f we are in a position where the organization is in need of more artisans, we use word of mouth in the existing network."[20] The other individual shared similar practices, sharing, "[s]ometimes I also get recommendations for a group from a group I already know well, so often I can vet them first through groups I already know."[21] This varying supply chain inevitably impacts the producers in a variety of ways, including those involving the product, such as price and volume, and those involving the relationship, such as power and influence. For example, if a producer sells a product directly to a consumer, the producer simplifies the supply chain and in some ways, lessens of the power dynamics; however, in doing so, the producer also likely does not sell as many baskets for as high of a price as the individual artisan lacks the resources and connections that importers and retailers often have. The producers, realistically, faces advantages and disadvantages to any route they choose to pursue.

3.2 The Cultural Component

In attempts to provide a holistic approach to equity, fair trade entities, particularly network membership associations and organizations, have incorporated culture (along with social and economic aspects) into their principles, standards, and practices. However, within these various sets of principles, it is evident that fair trade entities have differing views on the cultural component and its role. While many organizations incorporate culture into their principles, standards, or practices, it is not always to the same magnitude or

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[19] Participant E. Email correspondence with the author, 2019; Participant G. Email correspondence with the author, 2019.
[20] Participant G. Email correspondence with the author, 2019.
[21] Participant E. Email correspondence with the author, 2019.

degree. The examples of WFTO and FTF are presented herein to illustrate the inclusion of culture within fair trade.

The WFTO's third principle, Fair Trade Practices states, "Fair Trade recognises, promotes and protects the cultural identity and traditional skills of small producers as reflected in their craft designs, food products and other related services."[22] Furthermore, WFTO's Code of Practice, which was approved in 1995, lists the following standards for membership organizations, including a base of product suppliers, importers, and retailers located all across the globe:

1. Commitment to Fair Trade
2. Transparency
3. Ethical Issues
4. Working Conditions
5. Equal Employment Opportunities
6. Concern for People
7. Concern for the Environment
8. Respect for Producers' Cultural Identity
9. Education and Advocacy[23]

Within four out of the nine practices, culture is implicitly suggested or explicitly mentioned. These practices are: Equal Employment Opportunities, Concern for People, Education and Advocacy, and naturally, Respect for Producers' Cultural Identity.[24] Arguably, the two practices most strongly related to culture are: Education and Advocacy and Respect for Producers' Cultural Identity. The Education and Advocacy principle argues for "awareness of cultural and traditional values of the South in order to promote intercultural understanding and respect," while the Respect for Producers' Cultural Identity principle advocates for "production and development of products based on producers'

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[22] World Fair Trade Organization, "WFTO Code of Practice," accessed March 2019, https://wfto.com/our-path-fair-trade/wfto-code-practice.
[23] World Fair Trade Organization, "WFTO Code of Practice."
[24] Ibid.

cultural traditions and natural resources" and aims "[t]o promote producers' artistic, technological and organisational knowledge as a way of helping preserve and develop their cultural identity."[25]

Similarly, FTF features culture within its principles and practices. FTF's ninth principle, Respect for Cultural Identity, states,

> Fair Trade celebrates the cultural diversity of communities, while seeking to create positive and equitable change. Members respect the development of products, practices, and organizational models based on indigenous traditions and techniques to sustain cultures and revitalize traditions. Members balance market needs with producers' cultural heritage.[26]

Within its Code of Practices, FTF explains how membership organizations meet these principles by outlining the standards in detail. Within the handmade product section, businesses who buy directly from producers must "work with artisans/producers to both preserve traditional techniques or elements of cultural identity and ensure that products are marketable outside of the artisan/producer community, so that employment is viable, particularly in regard to product development and design."[27] Furthermore, FTF states that members (product suppliers, importers, and retailers) and workers (producers) must work together on all levels, including product development and design. To balance cultural traditions and market profitability, FTF encourages product development, but only if there is an open discussion with and approval by the artisans. Moreover, FTF states the product's value and the culture's heritage should not be degraded by the product development. The significance and role of the product within its local setting and context should be considered in these decisions. In addition to this, FTF also requires its membership to

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[25] World Fair Trade Organization, "WFTO Code of Practice."
[26] Fair Trade Federation, "Code of Practice."
[27] Fair Trade Federation, "Code of Practice."

understand the origins of the products (in part to combat exploitation whether intended or unintended) and to educate consumers about the products and artisans (in part to promote cultural awareness and understanding).[28]

FTF describes its holistic approach as 360 degree, claiming it generates equity in various areas of life, including economic, social, environmental, and cultural aspects. FTF states, "[f]or small farmers and artisans, it means they get long-term buying partners they can trust" and "[f]or consumers, it means you get high, quality authentic products, grown and made in the traditional way."[29] Although culture is very much a part of this holistic approach, it is unclear how most of the fair trade organizations put these good intentions into practice. Through the incorporation of culture into the various principles, standards, and practices of fair trade, it is evident that fair trade entities, as a whole, believe culture is an important factor to fair trade.

In several of the conversations I had with fair trade professions, individuals alluded to the uncertainty of incorporating culture into fair trade efforts. While fair trade initiatives are incorporating values and practices involving culture into the organization, several individuals stated it can be difficult to act upon these values and practices for a variety of reasons, including the nature and structure of fair trade. Still, these individuals recognize the importance of doing so. Individuals suggested that when fair trade initiatives fail to consider and incorporate these cultural aspects into its practices, serious issues can arise.[30] Some of these concerns include: power dynamics, cultural developmentalism, and market

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[28] Fair Trade Federation, "Code of Practice."
[29] Fair Trade Federation, "The Difference: Verification & Certification."
[30] Participant D. Phone call with the author, 2019; Participant E. Email correspondence with the author, 2019; Participant G. Email correspondence with the author, 2019.

influence. These issues, as well as the relevance it has to Ghanaian basket weaving initiatives, are outlined in detail in the following sections.

3.3 Power Dynamics

The fair trade movement, and resulting network, was developed by those in the Western world in attempts to benefit those in the Global South. Like many other benevolent initiatives, the individuals and organizations within the developed world saw an issue within the developing world and decided a change was needed for its benefit. In this case, the solution was a trading network with ethical principles and standards. This network was inherently based on Western society and its trading practice, models, and networks (with the addition of incorporating economic, social, and cultural principles and standards).

Through this network, those in the Global South have seen many benefits, most notably providing economic opportunities for rural workers and consequently creating overall economic development for areas facing extreme poverty. The movement incorporates values and norms often found within indigenous philanthropy, such as self-help, mutual assistance, reciprocity, and associations. Still, fair trade, while aimed to benefit Southern producers, is a Western strategy based on its own society. One of the primary issues with incorporating foreign beliefs, practices, and concepts into another setting is that ethnocentrism exists and can be exploited. In the case of fair trade, individuals and organizations of the Western world develop perceptions on the quality of life of those living in the Global South. These individuals and organizations then make additional assumption on how best to increase the quality of life within these areas. Furthermore, this philosophy suggests that cultures of the Global South must develop in order to meet the standards and realities of the Western world. This inevitably results in

implications involving influence, power, and control. Although unintended, fair traders must consider the implications on artisans and communities in order for fair trade to fully accomplish its mission and purpose of creating an equitable and just trading system between those in the Global South and those in the West.

Regardless of the intent and goal of fair trade, Western individuals and organizations still hold the majority of power over the producers in the Global South. The fair trade model, although aiming to create a more equitable trading system, does not produce entirely equitable relationships. Although the relationships are, in many cases, more equitable than alternative solutions, producers and organizations within the fair trade network still do not have completely fair relationships, in part due to the nature of the fair trade system. Given the supply chain and business of fair trade products, fair trade organizations hold the majority of power and control over artisans. This creates an imbalance of power among the artisans, the fair trade organizations, and the consumers.

In numerous interviews, fair trade professionals acknowledged and recognized that these dynamics are exist. One individual, who currently serves as the president of a fair trade network organization that connects artisans with consumers, stated:

> There are definitely residual power dynamics from colonialism – not just from local artisans to the NGO, but also just generally between artisans and management level leaders. In our case, we have seen artisans evolve from a position where they feel they have to do as they are told by managers to a place where the artisans shift to a mindset of equality where they are questioning decisions/requests. We believe one of the ways we have helped to shift this dynamic is by continuing to focus on the fact that "we" is the collective of [the organization]. It is not the "us" of American or European representatives of the brand and the "them" of the producers…but the "we" of all of us together who make-up and create the impact of [the organization]. It is important to the organization that everyone impacted by decisions be brought to the table, and this helps to foster the mindset of equality and the fact that we are all in this together – sink or swim.[31]

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[31] Participant G. Email correspondence with the author, 2019.

Another individual, who works for a small fair trade organization that imports African baskets, shared similar views, but also argued the dynamic of the relationship is heavily shaped by the organization:

> Some "Fair Trade" Organizations and NGOs will actually keep the producers under contract to deliver certain designs (often designed by Westerners) at certain quantities at a certain time and locked in at a certain price. This is a terrible practice for the producers – to lock them in to a longer term contract when they can't predict their costs accurately for supplies, or exchange rate fluctuations…. I do hear a lot of complaints about that in Africa. However, we let them set their own prices, we don't have contracts with them, we don't have deadlines, they can sell what they want, when they want, how they want, and for whatever price they want. Some organizations and the way they work with producers can definitely have a power dynamic that the buyer is in control of everything. We are the opposite, the producers are in control of everything.[32]

A third individual, who works for one of the more well-known trade associations within fair trade, acknowledged the power dynamics embedded in these sorts of activities. The individual shared examples of how organizations can mitigate these undesirable power dynamics, including avoiding using individuals and cultures as a marketing tool, as this can cause issues involving culture, such as fueling misunderstandings and perpetuating stereotypes.[33]

For the most part, as demonstrated through these examples, fair trade suppliers, importers, and retailers attempt to empower the artisans and communities by incorporating them into the process as partners. According to a 2005 article in the *Cultural Survival Quarterly Magazine* titled "Fair Trade and Indigenous Peoples," this partnership is critical for indigenous peoples. As the article explained, "[w]hen fair trade is examined from an indigenous rights point of view, the empowerment of indigenous peoples becomes the key

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[32] Participant E. Email correspondence with the author, 2019.
[33] Participant F. Phone call with the author, 2019.

concern."[34] Although the power dynamics cannot be equitable given the model and system, this organization is making strides to mitigate the unfair and unequal dynamic between artisans and fair traders. As Camp and Goodman argued in the *Cultural Survival Quarterly Magazine* article, "fair trade was started by concerned business people in the North to give poor producers in the South a system by which they could make sustainable livelihoods. It is time for fair traders to allow producers to become full partners and to control their own fair trade businesses."[35]

3.4 People over Profit, or Profit over People?

Regardless of the incorporation of its principles, standards, and practices, the reality is that even when intending to put "people over profit," it is difficult to accomplish such when the premise is so heavily connected to the market. After all, as the Fair Trade International Charter asserted, "Fair Trade is not charity but a partnership for change and development through trade."[36] As fair trade is a trading practice, organizations involved in the selling of fair trade products must function (at least in some part) as a business in order to survive and thrive. This reality causes fair trade to have some challenges in achieving and delivering its core principles, particularly those involving cultural authenticity and preservation.

Just like other businesses and trading networks, fair trade is subject to the market. As such, businesses must meet the demands of consumers. This means fair trade entities must appeal to consumers, even with their socially responsible business strategy.

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[34] Mark Camp and Jenna Goodman, "Fair Trade and Indigenous Peoples," *Cultural Survival Quarterly Magazine* 29, no.3 (2005), accessed October 28, 2018, https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/fair-trade-indigenous-peoples.

[35] Camp and Goodman, "Fair Trade and Indigenous Peoples."

[36] World Fair Trade Organization, "International Fair Trade Charter," accessed March 2019, https://wfto.com/fair-trade/charter-fair-trade-principles.

According to a 2001 article in the *Cultural Survival Quarterly Magazine*, "[a]ctivism is a business. Fair trade organizations are learning that their movement for fair and sustainable labor practices requires good business sense – not just good intentions."[37] For example, it is not likely for a consumer to purchase a basket just because it comes from an equitable system. Rather, the consumer must first be interested in the basket. Once this interest is established, the basket might be purchased based on a variety of factors, including whether the consumer is willing to pay a premium. If the interest and willingness are not present, the consumer is not likely to purchase it. Therefore, the power is in the consumer's hands. As Fridell (2004) stated, "[t]he price for fair trade goods and the size of the fair trade market niche (and by extension the number of producers that can get access to fair trade standards) are entirely dependent on the whims on Northern consumers."[38] Ghanaian basket weavers confirm this imbalance of power, sharing, "[t]he man with the purse is the powerful person so he decides the final price of my basket but that does not mean that I'm happy with it. I take the money because if I don't, my children will not eat that day."[39] In many cases, consumers are unaware of the time and resources of production. An international survey of buyers, conducted by the G-lish Foundation, illustrates that buyers and consumers do not fully understand the complexity of the creation and distribution of baskets. This unawareness results in consumers, in many cases, not being willing to pay a higher price or premium for the basket. As the report states, "[b]asket weaving is a highly skilled craft

[37] Tara Tidwell, "The Business of Fair Trade," *Cultural Survival Quarterly Magazine* 25, no. 3 (2001), accessed October 28, 2018, https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/business-fair-trade.

[38] Gavin Fridell, "The Fair Trade Network in Historical Perspective," *Canadian Journal of Development Studies/Revue Canadienne Détudes Du Développement* 25, no. 3 (2004): 426, accessed July 1, 2018.

[39] G-lish Foundation, Ghana, *Fair Market Report on The Straw Basket Industry in Bolgatanga*, 44.

form, but baskets are marketed as cheap products. This perception devalues the work of the weaver, and everyone else involved, and lowers price."[40]

Like other businesses, these initiatives are ultimately accountable to consumers. Therefore, fair trade suppliers, importers, and retailers must be selective with their inventory to ensure it will continue to exist. In some cases, this leads suppliers, importers, and retailers to encourage, or even persuade, artisans to produce certain designs and products based on consumer interest and demand. While this often results in economic success for the business, it does not necessarily translate to more economic benefit for the artisan. Furthermore, it can also translate to cultural concerns about authenticity.

By encouraging or even persuading artisans to adapt their designs and techniques based on market pressure, the authenticity of the product is at risk of being lost. Although this practice is found within fair trade, it is not always the case. Several of the individuals I spoke with stated this practice can have serious implications. One individual I spoke with, who works for a smaller fair trade import organization, recognized the importance of supporting culturally authentic products, sharing his experience in traveling to and working in Africa. The individual shared that artisans are responsible for developing the designs to preserve cultural authenticity, stating:

> We don't design products. All our products are indigenous design. Most are traditional, some are newer, but invented in Africa by the people we source from…. We help to preserve culture by encouraging creativity and indigenous design. Some other groups use Western design and repeating patterns which crush the spirit of the creative person making items. One of our primary missions is preservation of culture, that's why we don't have items with hearts on them, shamrocks, school names and logos, and on and on. We don't encourage or purchase things which are not appropriate in the local context of the producers.[41]

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[40] G-lish Foundation, Ghana, *Fair Market Report on The Straw Basket Industry in Bolgatanga*, 90.
[41] Participant E. Email correspondence with the author, 2019.

Another individual, who works for an organization that connects artisans with consumers, shared that feedback on market trends is shared with the artisans, but in a strategic manner, so that negative implications can be avoided. The individual commented, "[w]e have an in-house design team made up of both Ghanaians and Americans. The team does market and trend research before developing designs. This research is also presented to the artisans who submit ideas for consideration."[42] These strategies illustrate that even though fair trade is connected with the market, there are ways to mitigate the negative implications surrounding culture. As the individual working for the small fair trade import organization pointed out, "It's not up to them [the artisans] to develop a profitable product.... It's up to us [the fair trade organization] to try to make it profitable."[43]

Still, the pressure of the market is, arguably, in artisans' minds as they develop products for economic purposes. Even in situations where organizations do not provide feedback, artisans could be tempted to adapt their products to market demand in order to see the highest return. After all, these individuals are facing extreme poverty and often lack the most basic needs. The attraction to create profitable products, even if not culturally authentic, is likely great given income is crucial to obtaining these basic needs and improving quality of life. In theory, there would be an ideal balance between economic development and cultural preservation in these initiatives; however, in practice, one component tends to outweigh the other.

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[42] Participant G. Email correspondence with the author, 2019.
[43] Participant E. Email correspondence with the author, 2019.

CONCLUSION

The fair trade movement, and resulting network, was developed by the West in attempts to benefit those in the Global South. Specifically, individuals and organizations within developed nations viewed the extreme poverty of developing nations as a global issue and were motivated to combat the issue through developing a trading network that incorporates ethical principles and standards. This socially responsible network enacts a premium for businesses and consequently consumers to ensure producers experience better social conditions and generate higher economic wages in their work.

As a trading network, fair trade is not a form of charity; however, fair trade is, in many ways, a form of philanthropy. Fair traders voluntarily associate with the movement and network for the benevolent purpose of uplifting producers. This alignment features both intent and action – the intent to help the producers of developing countries, and the action of committing to fair trade principles and standards. Furthermore, fair trade initiatives often incorporate philanthropic values, particularly self-help, mutual aid, and reciprocity, that are important to many cultures through promoting philanthropic activities, such as social entrepreneurship. Through this movement and network, fair trade is filling a gap that the other societal sectors (public/government, family/community, private/business, and nonprofit/civil society) have not yet fully addressed or fulfilled. Fair trade connects and combines these sectors in attempts to alleviate extreme poverty and income inequality.

Like all philanthropic efforts, fair trade initiatives do not always align intent with impact. The intended implications do not always match the actual implications. Fair trade can, and often does, produce many intended positive implications, especially those

involving economic development. Through these initiatives, producers can earn higher, more stable wages, therefore improving their overall quality of life. Still, fair trade can, and often does, simultaneously produce some unintended negative implications, especially in regards to culture. Within the network and movement, power dynamics and market ties can result in limitations of achieving the fair trade principles in a culturally aware and sensitive way. While fair trade produces many positive implications, it also produces some negative ones. The fair trade network generates greater economic development and produces better working conditions for producers compared to many of the alternative practices; however, the fair trade network can still be improved by considering its unintended implications on culture.

Because each fair trade initiative is unique in its approach, operations, and context, these implications, whether the intended positive ones or the unintended negative ones, vary in degree and magnitude across fair trade. Given the distinct nature, each initiative should develop strategies to enhance the intended positive implications and to mitigate the unintended negative ones. While these strategies should be tailored to each initiative, I recommend that fair traders consider and incorporate the following given the findings of this research involving power dynamics and market relationships: 1) incorporate producers into all areas of operations, 2) simplify the supply chain and create a more unified process, and 3) educate and inform consumers about products and culture.

Incorporate Producers into All Areas of Operations as an Equitable Partner

In attempts to lessen the unbalanced power dynamics that automatically result from fair trade, fair traders should seek to more consciously incorporate producers into the various areas of operations. Moreover, fair traders should view the producers as equitable

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partners in these various areas of operations, instead of solely in the beginning stages of the supply chain.

While producers are very involved in the initial stages of the fair trade process, the producers are seemingly less involved in the later stages. In fact, the producers are one-step removed in many of these later phases. By incorporating producers into all operational areas (i.e. certification/verification, distribution, retail, etc.), fair traders can be more aware of the realities of producers and consequently more intentional about the decisions that affect the producers. Often times, individuals and organizations make a decision thinking it was the best decision for all involved; however, they are unaware of the nuances of the other parties involved, and therefore, the decision is not necessarily the best for everyone. Those making the decisions hold the power and control, and they are making assumptions about what is best for the others based on their own understanding and experiences.

On the contrary, it should be noted that the producers should not be forced to participate if the producer does not have the interest or ability to do so. If forced to participate, the producers could see even more unintended negative implications, particularly ones involving capacity. Producers should be incorporated more generally into the process on a voluntary basis. In more specific cases, producers should be invited to participate, allowing their perspective and opinions to be considered, but not forced to participate if unable or uninterested. Furthermore, the impact should be mutually beneficial to both the producers and the fair traders, allowing producers to share their perspectives and views and allowing fair traders to hopefully further their impact on the producers.

The relationship between producers and other fair traders (certifiers/verifiers, importers/distributors, vendors/retailers, etc.) should be an equitable partnership with

producers having power and control throughout the process – much like the original intent of fair trade. Currently, fair trade is creating a more equitable trading network for those involved; however, it is not resulting in producers being fully equitable partners. By incorporating producers into the entire operational process, fair trade is positioning producers to be equitable partners; therefore, increasing the movement and networks effectiveness in aligning intent with impact.

Simplify the Supply Chain by Eliminating Unnecessary Participants and Steps, and Create a More Unified System and Process

The fair trade movement's mission of alleviating poverty amongst producers through establishing a fair and just trading network is heavily dependent on connecting producers and consumers in an intentional manner. This includes reducing the involvement of unnecessary middlemen within the network, so that the producers can receive higher compensation, and that the fair trade organizations either break even or generate a profit (depending on business model). Yet, the current fair trade supply chain still very much features numerous individuals and organizations, including some that do not serve a clear purpose. While the supply chain can vary from as simple as producer to consumer to as complex as producer to distributor, distributor to vendor, vendor to consumer, the general network includes many unnecessary participants and steps. In order for fair trade to be more effective and impactful, the network should simplify the supply chain. In many cases, the middlemen serve a vital role in the supply chain, so that the products can make it to the shelves. These individuals should not be eliminated completely but simplified. For example, instead of having ten middlemen involved, the supply chain could feature only two necessary middlemen, thus eliminating redundancies and allowing for a more efficient

and effective supply chain. By eliminating unnecessary participants and steps, the network can streamline products, allowing for greater impact. In addition to simplifying the supply chain, fair trade should consider creating a more unified system and process, so that producers receive similar impact across fair trade efforts, and also so that consumers are more aware and knowledgeable about fair trade. This unified system promotes a sense of transparency and accountability within the movement and resulting network.

Educate and Inform Consumers about the Products and Culture

The belief that producers, regardless of where they might live, deserve a fair and just trading system illustrates that fair traders value producers and their products. In many ways, the fair trade handicraft network encourages an appreciation of other cultures. Still, many fair traders are misinformed and uneducated about the producers and their products. For example, many consumers are unaware of the resources and time required to create these products. Additionally, most consumers do not understand the significance of these products within their local contexts. By educating and informing the consumers about products and culture, consumers can better understand the significance and value of these products and appreciate the culture which it derives from.

This can be accomplished through many forms, ranging from informal verbal to formal written communication. Regardless of the method, organizations should not do so in a way that exploits the producers and their culture. The information should be shared as a way to educate and inform consumers about the products and culture, rather than a way to appeal and market to consumers. In doing the latter, the organization can actually diminish the understanding and appreciation of the producers and their culture.

Further Research

This research provides a core foundation for further research on the cultural implications of fair trade, especially within the context of Ghanaian basket weavers. Given limitations in resources, particularly finances and time, I was unable to travel to Ghana to speak with the specific artisans involved in fair trade (and alternative) initiatives. Instead, I spoke with numerous constituents of fair trade from organizations across the globe, who were involved in various areas of the supply chain, including verifiers, importers, distributors, and retailers. This allowed for numerous perspectives to be shared regarding the fair trade process, both within and outside of Ghanaian basket weaving. Moreover, these constituents provided valuable insights and knowledge regarding the various approaches, involvement, efforts, strategies, and impact of these organizations. Still, further research, which incorporates the artisans more directly, is needed, as I was unable to communicate with the artisans themselves.

This research essentially provides the groundwork for this additional research. Given this research heavily relied on the affinity of, the access to, and the ability of others, I recommend that further research occurs within the specific context, allowing for further connections with artisans (as well as the fair trade organizations) to be made. Furthermore, as this research involves numerous areas of study, I recommend that the research combines methods in the humanities and ethnography, allowing for the individual to close the gaps across fields of study. It is my hope that this research is a catalyst for further research surrounding the cultural implications of fair trade, so that the larger questions surrounding the impact and effectiveness of fair trade can be considered and addressed.

Over the course of six months, I conducted nine interviews. Within the report, I refer to these interviews by a corresponding letter. The following table provides additional details on the individuals and organizations I interviewed:

Letter	Interviewee
A	Microfinance Executive
B	Oxfam International
C	NGO Executive
D	The Village Experience
E	Baskets of Africa
F	Fair Trade Federation
G	Global Mamas
H	Global Gifts
I	NGO Executive

Interviews were semi-structured with open-ended questions. While each interview was unique, several themes were present in all interviews. Leading questions included:

The programs and logistics of organization
- How do you identify potential communities and then select partners to work with?
- How would you describe your organization's work and process?

The relationship between organization and the fair trade workers/artisans
- Do you provide input/guidance regarding market demand? What happens if a product is not selling at the desired rate?
- How, if at all, do you interact with the local communities to ensure success in sales and in impact? Should organizations interact with artisans, and if so, to what level?
- Do you feel there are any power dynamics, even if unintentional, between the artisans and fair trade organizations?
- How can organizations balance honoring the preservation of cultural traditions/crafts (in this case, basket weaving) with developing a profitable product?

Evaluation and impact
- What are some of the impacts you have seen through fair trade?
- Have you seen any negative consequences of fair trade or similar handicraft initiatives within Africa?
- How, if at all, can fair trade initiatives improve for the future?

Miscellaneous
- Is there anything I didn't ask that you think would be helpful to my research?
- Who else should I speak with? Are there any resources you recommend that I review?

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CURRICULUM VITAE

Courtney Lynn Baugh

EDUCATION

- **Master of Arts in Philanthropic Studies**, Indiana University, Lilly Family School of Philanthropy
- **Master of Public Affairs in Nonprofit Management**, Indiana University, O'Neill School of Public Affairs
  - Study abroad program in Copenhagen, Denmark
  - Study abroad program in South Africa and Swaziland
- **Bachelor of Science in Arts Management**, Indiana University, School of Public and Environmental Affairs
  - Study abroad program in Vienna, Austria
  - SPEA Honors
  - Dean's List, multiple semesters
  - IU Prestige Scholarship recipient
  - Greater Good Fund recipient
  - Dean's Council Scholarship recipient
  - Hutton Honors HIEP and PPIE Grant recipient

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

CCS Fundraising, Chicago, IL
Associate Director
Summer Associate
- Led campaign feasibility study for the Woman's Club of Evanston (WCE), conducting in-person interviews with members and donors, researching internal and external factors, and ultimately writing and presenting reports to the WCE with key findings and recommendations
- Researched prospective lead and major donors for the Lake Forest Open Lands Association $15 million capital campaign, creating donor profiles and briefing documents that outline key strategies for upcoming interactions and meetings
- Created the annual Chicago Philanthropic Landscape Report, which outlines philanthropic trends and individual, foundation, and corporate giving within the Chicago Metro Area

The Fund Raising School at Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, Indianapolis, IN
Marketing and External Relations Coordinator
Graduate Assistant
- Created and managed the first-ever podcast in school history, the First Day Podcast, highlighting current news and trends in fundraising
- Developed and managed social media pages, including Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, significantly increasing followers and engagement in all platforms

- Coordinated promotional campaign for The Fund Raising School, and created various marketing materials, including flyers, school advertisements, and bi-annual course directory

Christel DeHaan Family Foundation, Indianapolis, IN
Graduate Intern
- Reviewed grant applications for the Summer Youth Program Fund, and provided recommendations for $50,000 in awards to the Director and the President of the Board
- Participated in meetings with grantees to discuss current and potential financial support, as well as with other arts funders to discuss strategies and current projects within the Indianapolis community
- Assisted the Director with daily operational procedures, including processing grant applications and awards, researching current and potential grantees, and drafting and reviewing materials for the Board

American Red Cross, Washington D.C.
Graduate Assistant
- Served as the interim manager and primary contact for the Combined Federal Campaign for all chapters, specifically including the management of the application and the tracking processes
- Compiled donor records for the Combined Federal Campaign, which were utilized for communication purposes, including marketing and stewardship activities
- Developed national fundraising strategies for the foundation segment for Home Fire, Smoke Alarms, Biomedical Capital, and Fleet, surpassing a $9 million goal
- Analyzed and evaluated the foundation segment donor pipeline, providing monthly financial reports to the Foundation and Federated Strategy Team, which primarily outlined progress and long term strategies
- Conducted donor prospect research, and created donor outreach databases, which designated high priority accounts and targeted opportunities, for numerous fundraising programs
- Organized training for the Foundation and Federated Strategy Team, ensuring all divisions completed quarterly trainings
- Planned, organized, and presented best practices, field strategies, and funding opportunities on quarterly divisional training calls for the foundation segment

Hawaii Performing Arts Festival, Waimea, HI
Assistant Executive Director
Assistant to the Executive Director
- Researched grant opportunities and prepared application materials for private and public grants
- Solicited in-kind and financial support from current and prospective donors
- Served as the organizational representative in meetings and events, and communicated with existing and potential supporters, community groups, and private organizations

- Coordinated housing arrangements for the entire faculty and staff, resulting in one of the highest satisfaction rates
- Assisted with the planning, scheduling, and implementing of festival events, including fundraising and stewardship events
- Managed the distribution of marketing and promotional materials throughout the Big Island of Hawaii
- Directed the annual intern search by recruiting individuals, evaluating resumes, and interviewing candidates, resulting in the hire of two highly qualified interns