

**Filling up the Wardrobe: Decision Making, Clothing Purchases, and Dress Valuation in Lusaka, Zambia***Karen Tranberg Hansen*

This paper discusses wardrobes from two perspectives: as physical spaces where clothes are stored, and as assemblages of garments, worn by specific individuals in accommodation to, or conflict with, prevailing norms for proper dress. The commodity in focus is imported secondhand clothing, an important clothing source for a large proportion of the Zambian population. After brief background remarks about historical and recent transformations both in the international sourcing and local patterns of consumption of this commodity the paper turns to wardrobes. During Zambia's colonial engagement with labor migration to mines, farms, and cities, wardrobes as physical spaces for the storage and redistribution of clothing wealth served as vehicles for the articulation of new desires and lifestyles. 'Western-styled' imported new and secondhand clothing was a key commodity in local appropriations of the market and modernity. Turning to wardrobes and dress norms, the paper describes decision making processes in urban clothing purchasing, drawing both on household clothing consumption surveys, individual accounts of clothing repertoires, and situational dress practices. The valuation of dress is a product not only of economic and material considerations concerning garment cost and quality but above all of clothing display in context.