

As awareness has grown of the detrimental aspects of fashion (what human society produces and wears) has grown, so too has a global movement to diminish its harms. In all types of academic, commercial, and popular discourse, words such as eco-friendly, green, ethical, fair, and slow are ubiquitous, and meant to represent an array of ways of making and using that are said, or hoped, to be, sustainable.

This research is concerned with the social sustainability, or human development aspects, of *artisan fashion*, in the context of Textile Management. Artisan fashion is defined here as both product, such as a handwoven shawl, and as an evolving contemporary fashion system that typically employs impoverished rural artisans in the developing world to make products that are generally sold to relatively wealthy, urban, developed world consumers. Artisan fashion, which attempts to bridge old ways of producing with new ways of consuming, has come to be viewed in the fashion marketplace as a subset of so-called slow fashion, although there has been little academic questioning or understanding of how “slow” and how “sustainable” the system and its outcomes actually are.

This case study focuses on WomenWeave, a medium-sized handloomed-textile making social enterprise in a quickly-changing small town in rural India. This producer, employing about 200 individuals, mostly women with low-education and little privilege, specializes in *naya khadi*, a type of apparel or furnishings fabric whose antecedent, *khadi*, is an integral part of the grand narrative of India's independence movement. Founded by a “social entrepreneur” with deep and privileged roots in the community, the case is idiosyncratic, yet representative of a common market-based approach to human development.



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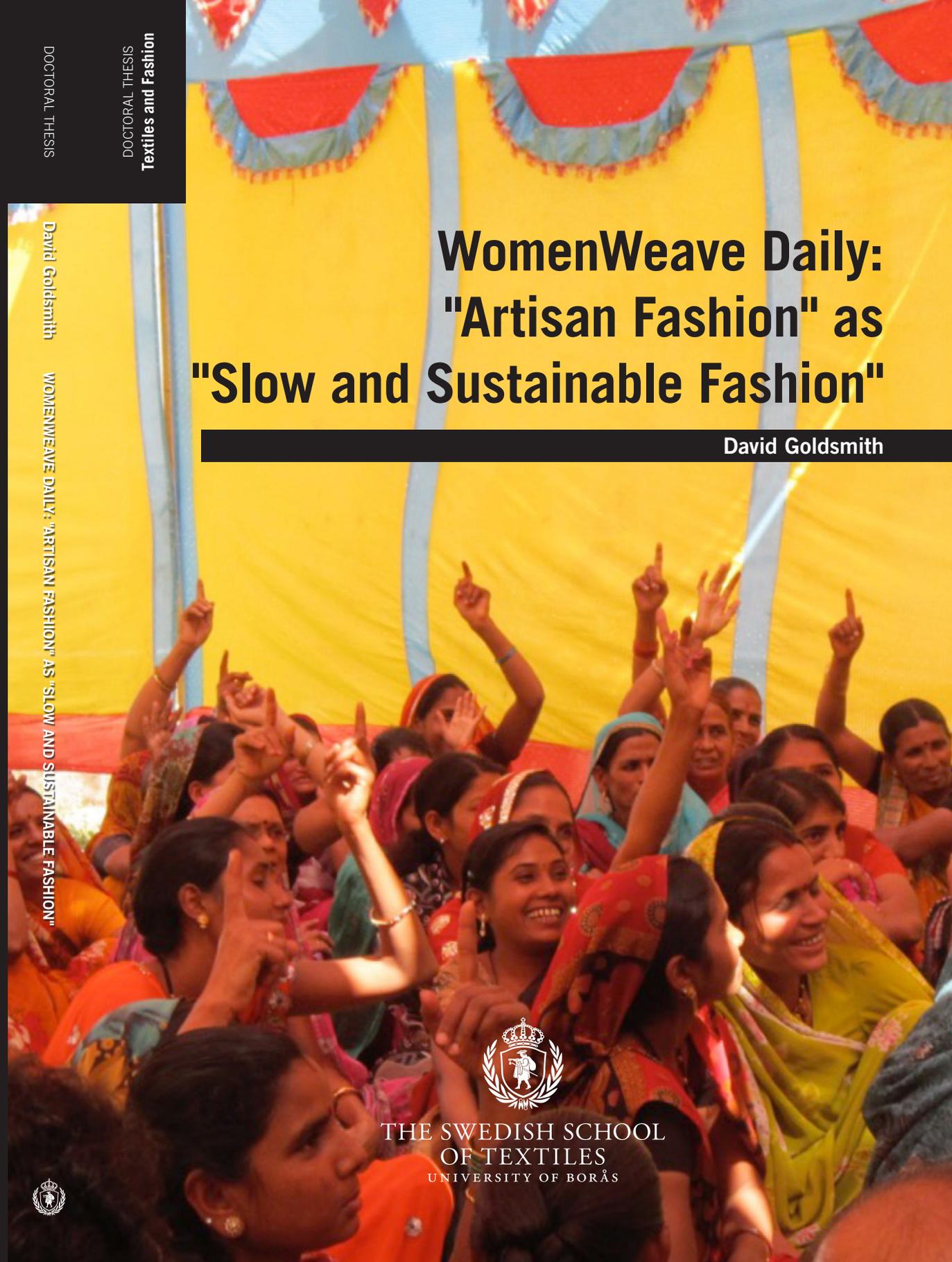
WOMENWEAVE DAILY: "ARTISAN FASHION" AS "SLOW AND SUSTAINABLE FASHION"

DOCTORAL THESIS

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Textiles and Fashion

WomenWeave Daily: "Artisan Fashion" as "Slow and Sustainable Fashion"

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