Western perceptions and ethnocentrism has led people to believe that one question has one answer, and it would be a fairly simple one at that. As illustrated in Prestholdt’s article, though, that thought process is grossly inaccurate. Through various illustrations about textile trade and its effects in three different continents, the importance of multidimensional perspectives, plural causality, and the pivotal interests of the periphery are put into the spotlight. Similar to the concept of the butterfly effect in which one small action can have large repercussions on the other side of the world, the fickleness and whims of the people in East Africa had massive effects in other parts of the world and on the global economy in general. The intricacies of trade in East Africa depended on the middle-men, the foreign agents or caravan leaders who dictated the terms of trade between the producers on foreign lands and native consumers and were the most important factors of trade in situations like these. One wrong judgment call could mean the downfall of an area’s industry. Coupled with these problems are the regional problems that also affect a particular trade. Ultimately, the point is the understanding of a situation depends on so many different facets that one must take a fully holistic point of view in order to be able to thoroughly appreciate the subtle and intricate knots and tangles of global ties.

Why was it so difficult for the British to replicate the merekani cloth? Less complex technology would make counterfeiting easier back then than it is now, right? If merekani was still in-demand because East Africans were comparing it to these new products, why wasn’t Salem able to bounce back after the war? Why did Bombay manage to take over the monopoly with their knockoffs?