THE SPECTACLE OF DEVELOPMENT:

THE SEMIOTICS OF REPRESENTATIONS OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH

by

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Abstract

The ethics of the image creation practices of modern development and humanitarian Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) exist in a complex realm of colonial legacies and historically misguided development approaches. Through a semiotic analysis of the top images on ten Canadian NGO websites, combined with an interview with a Communications Director, this research examines the underlying messages presented about people in the Global South to audiences in the Global North. In order to present legible narratives to an audience of varying perspectives, signs, symbols and allusions which have become enregistered in the cultural lexicon are utilized to present a world that is at once the same as and yet simultaneously widely different from our own. These semiotic tools, which are often used to distract from larger socio-economic inequalities, can be highlighted to not only analyze how people in the Global South are represented, but how they could be represented more truthfully and ethically.

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The Spectacle of Development:

The semiotics of representations of the Global South

"We are the consumers of the ever delightful spectacle of poverty and catastrophe, and of the moving spectacle of our own efforts to alleviate it"
Jean Baudrillard, 1994, The Illusion of the End.

Introduction

It is a hot summer day in Colombo, Sri Lanka and I am sitting at a conference room table with colleagues flipping through photograph after photograph on a projector screen. There are literally thousands of photographs of Sri Lankan youth to go through. "We can't use this one, the girl is too light skinned". "He looks too sad in this one". "Do we have enough photos from each region of the country?" The questions and considerations for each photo are never ending. I am working for a Canadian-based Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) on a youth skills development project and the communications team is tasked with selecting photos for an exhibition that will premiere in Colombo and then run throughout the country, culminating in a show in Canada to display to our central funder, the Canadian government. This exhibition is aimed at advertising the positive influence our initiative had on the lives of marginalized youth in Sri Lanka. Some of the photos have teens and young adults smiling, spending time with their families, playing sports with friends, or diligently studying in the classroom. Eventually, all the photos start to blend together. What is the big deal? Why can't we just decide?

On the surface, there are no large ethical questions to consider. No exploitative images of flies on the eyes of emaciated children, no war zones surrounding them, every subject is framed as if they are aware and consenting to being photographed. And yet, each photo carries with it specific implications that our team needed to assess before selection. What may have seemed like it would be a simple job: picking the best photographs to feature our work to our central funder, has become a painstakingly slow procedure to capture the exact message we are trying to get across. We are tasked with displaying photos that will represent the results of our work to both the country we are working in and to our government funders who have likely never stepped foot here. And through this process of deciding, not one of the subjects from any of the photos are in the room. We hold the power. We are the mediators and the storytellers. In this

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moment, choosing a photo ceases to be a neutral project, but one that is fraught with complex ideas, meanings, and branding for how exactly we as an organization and the subjects of the photos are going to be perceived.

This experience led me to reflect on similar processes that must be going on at hundreds of humanitarian organizations on a regular basis, ones working with far more sensitive material and images. While most organizations have some type of communication guidelines, did they have clearly outlined policies for what can or cannot be in a photograph used for public-facing documents? Who makes these decisions? Who is to say an image is exploitative or not? Is it ever possible to select an image that checks all the boxes; one that garners a positive response, elicits engagement and donations, respects the agency and identity of the subject of the photo, while all the while remaining truthful to the full context? Are photographs of distant suffering ever ethical?

As communication workers communication only works because of representation which can consist of letters, sounds, words, symbols, images to stand for, or represent what we are attempting to say and the message we are trying to get across (Hall, 1977). All practices of communication (images, body language, music) 'work like language', meaning that their job and role is to convey meaning despite the form that they take. Even if they are not written or spoken, the most important aspect of a communication practice is not what they are inherently, but the function that they serve (Hall, 1977). When observing images, this understanding allows us to focus deeper on not what is represented by the image, or even what it is trying to say, but what the function is. Furthermore, this research focuses on representations of 'otherness', that is how we present individuals or concepts which we may not fully understand to audiences who may not fully understand, and how this interacts with preconceived notions they may have about 'other' people. The responsibility we hold as storytellers within development work comes down to our obligation to represent the beneficiaries of our organization. We are presenting only a temporary snapshot of a beneficiary's entire identity and being, and thus only a small representation of who people in the Global South are. Representation is fundamentally about power, between those presenting and those who are being presented (Dogra, 2012; Hall, 1977). By understanding the depth and nuance to the images chosen by NGOs and to the process of selection, it is revealed how these images rely on a complex set of indexical entailments which exist in a landscape of 'acceptable' narratives. These ideological processes can obscure larger

truths in favour of individual stories, true or not, which comfort global audiences through the presentation of simultaneous oneness and difference.

Intentions, Limitations and Outline

The goal of this research is to explore the possibilities of what types of ethical guidelines and standards could be implemented for Canadian NGOs in relation to their responsibilities in the representation of the Global South.[1] This project takes a uniquely Canadian lens and perspective, understanding that this will influence not only the process but also the results of the research. In order to accomplish these analytical ends, this research will address the implied messages embedded within images used by NGOs on their websites and the intended impact on the audience. As Orgad and Seu (2014) note in their extensive literature review, "scholarship on the mediation of humanitarianism is dominated by taken-for-granted claims about what audiences do or think or understand" (p. 27). Claims about opinions and reactions to photographs of suffering without empirical research can easily homogenize experience and can be patronizing of media publics. Therefore, this research focuses more specifically on the reactions that organizations intend to provoke, not necessarily how they will actually react and feel. Essential to the field of research of NGO image analysis as a holistic discipline is equal input from a diversity of individuals including the subjects of photographs, communications workers who select images, and audiences. Together these unite with textual and semiotic analyses to interrogate the underlying messages presented to audiences and how these messages are received.

Analyzing materials that are presented to audiences in the 'Global North' and gaining perspectives from Communication Directors making the decisions of what materials to show, gives insight not only into how they view their subjects, but how they view their audience. In order to complete this project, I will focus on an overview of the theoretical foundations that draw from postcolonial , postcolonial feminist, and post-post development literatures in conjunction with semiotic theory and analyses that will inform the analysis of images in relation to representations of the Global South. I will further contextualize this research by highlighting

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[1] 'Global South' is currently the accepted terminology for most nations in Africa, parts of Asia, and Central and South America which hold interconnected histories of colonialism and neo-imperialism, and those which currently receive international aid. These countries were previously defined as 'developing', and prior to this 'third-world'. While some theorists argue such blanket terms should no longer be used at all, the term 'Global South' encapsulates the general categories without directly using problematic terms such as 'developing'.

the existing research methodologies that have been utilized, explain my own methodology, process, and justification for such methods. Lastly, I will show the data, analysis, recommendations, and areas for further research.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

1.1 Theoretical Context: The Post-Universe

      The current context in which NGOs operate is one overflowing with colonial history that impacts their attitudes and actions. Both within NGO programming in the Global South and in the communication and fundraising strategies in the Global North, the impact and legacy of colonialism is never far away from the minds of those involved. In order to interrogate this complex history and its effects on NGO work, a postcolonial theoretical lens will be used. postcolonial theory challenges the sources of knowledge and power, interrogating the ways in which individual colonizers and/or colonizing nations work diligently to reproduce existing hierarchical structures that keep the colonized subjugated (Dhanani, 2018; Fanon, 1961; Said, 1978; Spivak, 1988;). This continual colonization may be structural, individual, or simultaneously both. While the term 'postcolonial ' may appear to suggest 'after' colonialism, postcolonial theory "refers to ways of criticizing the material and discursive legacies of colonialism," rather than being a shift in time (McEwan, 2001, p. 95). The core of the Global North's power is not in economic development and technical advances, but in its power to define itself. In this way, the modern development project "has enabled the west to appropriate and control the past, present and future of the non-west, a fact that postcolonialism seeks to disrupt" (Bandyopadhyay and Patil, 2017, p. 647). For the purposes of this analysis, postcolonial theory is used to critically analyze how 'Northern' NGOs represent or misrepresent, the historically colonized. Representation of people in the Global South in the context of NGO advertisements can be an act of both speaking about and speaking for the 'subaltern'. 'Subaltern' is a term originating from Antonio Gramsci's work on hegemony and is taken further by Spivak (1988) for her use in postcolonial theory where "subaltern is not just a classy word for "oppressed" for 'The Other'…in postcolonial terms, everything that has limited or no access to the cultural imperialism is subaltern—a space of difference" (Spivak, 1988, p. 29). In this way 'subaltern' specifically refers to not only those who have been represented poorly, but those who may not have been represented at all, or those who push back deliberately on the ways they are represented. This is essential to my analysis in order to display how narratives which do not fit the typical model or narrative they are asked to fulfill are typically erased or explained away. Although modern NGO communications practices and standards encourage individuals to share

their own stories, present their own narratives, and frame their own identity, images, videos, and text are almost always edited or curated by the NGO.

The emergence of the postcolonial framework itself to analyze NGOs is also fraught territory and is exceptionally outlined by Tuck and Yang's (2012) *Decolonization is not a metaphor,* in which social justice work, which is framed as decolonization work is a "settler move to innocence" (2012, p. 17). How can one truly operationalize postcolonial or anti-colonial theoretical frameworks without appropriating them? As Carlson (2017) notes, non-Indigenous peoples in Canada engaged in anti-colonial work in Canada (for my purposes, taken further to include NGO practitioners engaged in anti-colonial work overseas) must continually address how colonial ideologies permeate their existence not only through government and institutions, but in their individual experiences of privilege. This places me as a researcher in an inherently biased positionality. While I do have the experience of working for NGOs and witnessing these processes firsthand, which I am equipped to comment on, it is important to acknowledge prior to this research that my opinions and knowledge are undoubtedly influenced by my white, heterosexual, cisgender experience.

Further integral to a postcolonial analysis of NGO materials is the use of a postcolonial feminist framework. Informed by Mohanty (2000) and Spivak (1988), postcolonial feminism critiques the ways in which first and second wave feminism did not address the concerns or priorities of women in the Global South. According to scholars working in this paradigm, feminist theory generally ignores the legacy of colonialism, the structural barriers created by free market capitalism, and negates the individual agency of 'third world women' (Dogra, 2011; Herr, 2014; Mohanty, 2000; Syed & Ali, 2011; Wilson, 2011). Much of the existing development theory and dominant feminist theory portray 'third world women' as a homogeneous group that are universally oppressed, either by the state, religion, or 'third world men', and are in need of the saving grace of neoliberal economic policies, white feminist secularism, and 'progressive' sexual liberation (Mohanty, 2000). In response, postcolonial feminist theory challenges development theories' equation of 'development' with economic development and joining the capitalist means of production, offering an alternative that can embrace cultural traditions in order to resist imperialism (Herr, 2014; Syed & Ali, 2011).

Currently, most humanitarian development NGOs globally do maintain an explicit focus on 'empowering' women and identify women in the Global South as marginalized and

vulnerable in many contexts. However, as Mohanty (2000) and many others note, 'third world women's' struggles, such as lack of financial opportunity, are often portrayed as unfortunate individual obstacles to success and happiness, not requisite features of the existing hegemonic patriarchal system to continue functioning as it does. For example, a common solution utilized by many organizations for an impoverished woman to be financially successful is a microloan to start a small business. While microloans may help some women gain access to the market, the larger global economy is dependent on the exploitation of labour in the Global South in order to continue functioning to serve the needs of the Global North (Mohanty, 2000). Thus, the dilemma in terms of representation of 'third world women' in NGO materials lies in striking a balance between acknowledging the larger systemic structures of oppression and presenting women from the Global South as individuals with agency to overcome their struggles. There is a myriad of ways organizations attempt to navigate these competing ideologies in how they portray women, which will be explored further in the analysis.

1.1.1 Post-Development.

In order to understand how NGOs present their beneficiaries and their work today, it is helpful to trace the historical trajectory of popular trends in NGO communications. Further, by observing how representations of people in the Global South relate to the dominant development ideologies and discourses of the time, it allows for a deeper understanding of the complexities and context. By tracing these discourses and pinpointing key moments and events, we can draw out the themes and indexical entailments evident in communication materials. While many characteristics of the historical ideologies and trends persist to this day and are interwoven or intentionally hidden in modern development, the cultural acceptance and understanding of such traits has shifted substantially throughout the past century. While there is certainly overlap of the trends within the timeframes given, by tracing the trends in development theory we are able to highlight key communication trends and motivations. Table 1 shows a basic overview tracing dominant ideologies and key influences drawing heavily from Pieterse's (2008) *Development Theory*. This table displays how existing cultural ideologies on the Global South have certainly influenced perspectives on development and NGO work, and thus their communication styles and tactics. In order to appeal to the Global North, organizations had to utilize language and lexicon that was legible. However, this relationship is also cyclical, in which NGOs can play a

significant role in how audiences in the Global North understand and discuss the Global South, what is deemed acceptable and ethical to say or reference.

Time Period	Dominant Ideologies/ Context	Meaning of Development	Communication Examples
1900-1950	Colonialism, White Supremacy, Imperialism, Missionary Evangelism	Industrialization, resource extraction, spreading Christianity	*The White Man's Burden*, Rudyard Kipling
1950s	Modernization Theory, War Recovery, continued missionary work	Sympathy, child sponsorship model. Founding of many key International development players, Needs-based approach	'Let my heart be broken by the things that break the heart of God' - Bob Pierce, World Vision Founder
1960s and 1970s	Anti-War activism	Alternative Development	"Give Peace a Chance" -John Lennon and Yoko Ono
1980s	Neoliberalism, Global Expansion, Individualism	Human Development, Economic Freedom and Choice, Rise of Microfinance, Beginning of 'poverty porn' critique	"Band-Aid", "Live Aid"
1990s	Rise of Asia and Emerging Economies, Rise of Postcolonial theory	Human developmen,t Capabilities approach and capacity building	Celebrity Activism
2000s	'Globalization', cosmopolitanism	Millenium Development Goals, Structural Reform, Beginning of Rights-based approach	'Think Global, Act Local'
2010s	Post-development	Sustainable development, Climate Change awareness and activism	Satirical advertisements - "Let's Save Africa!"

Table 1- Dominant Ideologies and Development Theory, material adapted from Pieterse (2008)

Development Theory

Among these dominant discourses and within an ever changing cultural landscape, conversations around the ethics of fundraising advertisements came to the forefront in the 1980s. The Ethiopian famine from 1983-1985 inspired a boom in development fundraising with the creation of 'Band-Aid', and the first 'Live Aid'. Live Aid was a concert in 1985 which remains one of the largest live international television broadcasts of all time, raising over $127 million for famine relief and reaching an estimated 1.9 billion people (Lidchi, 1999). Shortly after this concert, critics claimed that Live Aid "depoliticized, dehistoricized, and trivialized the complex and life-threatening issue of famine, by making it an issue of money and food" (Lidchi, 1999, p. 89). Furthermore, there was an acknowledgement that such aid appeals were patronizing, dehumanizing, and in desperate need of reimagining in order to move forward (Bhati & Eikenberry, 2016; Hoijer, 2004; Kennedy, 1997; Kennedy, 2009; Nathanson, 2013; Radley & Thrall et. al., 2014) These critiques challenged NGOs to move beyond a 'politics of pity' and led theorists to conceive of development from a capabilities approach, such as Amartya Sen's (1999) influential *Development as Freedom* or a human rights based approach, such as the guiding principles of the United Nations Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action ("Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action", 1993).

As part of this general thrust of changing discourses Dhanani (2018) argues that the rights-based approach to development, one which is now common among NGOs, stands in direct contrast to the historical 'charitable approach' as seen in organizations prior to the 1980s. This perspective is exemplified in advertisements such as those highlighting inherent human rights to such things as education, clean water, or employment. While the rights-based model does highlight inequitable social structures and seeks to center the experience and knowledge of the beneficiary (or through a postcolonial lens the experiences of the 'subaltern'), there remains an omission of the larger structural, political, or economic changes necessary for sustainable change. Obstacles to development such as sexism, racism, and ableism are still framed as roadblocks or unfortunate circumstances, not necessary components of the global order. In order for the global economy to continue existing as it does now, it is dependent on the large inequality between the Global South and Global North and existing conventions such as unpaid labour by women. This differentiation is important because if obstacles to development (or 'human flourishing') can be solved with small scale or individual solutions there is no need to disrupt the

larger political and economic structure, and thus there will always be a portion of those who will remain in poverty.

Modern NGOs are keenly aware of the history and trends of development communication in relation to how people in the Global South and their problems are represented and seen. Organizations are thus able to use recurring icons and symbols to get their message across more efficiently and succinctly in order to use images for a specific goal. While the intended meaning is not always conveyed efficiently due to the complex cultural understandings and experiences of the audience, NGOs consistently employ semiotics by using images and icons which have been registered in the cultural imagination in order to further their cause.

1.2 'Poverty Pornography'

Beyond larger conversations about representations in media, specific conversations in the NGO community regarding 'poverty pornography', as it has come to be known, have been debated and discussed since the mid-80s. This term was first used by Jorgen Lissner (1981) in his pivotal essay *Merchants of Misery* in which "the starving child image is seen as unethical, because it comes dangerously close to being pornographic... it exhibits the human body and soul in all its nakedness, without any respect for the person involved" (para 6). While often hard to exactly categorize, 'poverty pornography' is any advertisement "aimed to induce emotions of pity and guilt on the part of potential donors through images and descriptions of material poverty and images of helpless 'others' in the Global South" (Cameron and Haanstra, 2008, p. 1476). While the term 'poverty pornography' is useful, it could be applied to a variety of photographs without considering the creation process or subjects of the photograph.

The prevalence of images of children in NGO advertisements speaks first and foremost to the base social constructions of who is an 'ideal victim', that is who is seen as the most vulnerable and innocent and thus most in need and deserving of aid (Hoijer, 2004). The 'ideal victim' concept, similar to the concept of the 'deserving poor', particularly utilizes children since they are categorized as unable to work, the ultimate value and goal in a capitalist society. Thus, children are the epitome of 'deserving' and are far easier to elicit sympathetic or empathetic emotions in a viewer (MacLennan, 2018). Postcolonial scholars have pushed this notion further to highlight how the consistent usage of images of children display the paternalism of development, that is as conceptualizing the Global South as a homogenized body of 'undeveloped' or 'underdeveloped' children (Manzo, 2008; Seu, 2015; Zarzycka,

2016). While many organizations do focus their work with children, there is often an unequal distribution of photos of children to the actual beneficiaries of aid.

One of the most popular forms of development work and advertising capitalizes on images of children by using a 'sponsor a child' model. The 'sponsor a child' model of development, while still practiced today by many large, respected NGOs, has been intensely scrutinized for perpetuating the paternalism of development explicitly, framing the donor as the 'parent' of the child they are sponsoring (Mittelman and Neilson, 2011). The effectiveness of the model in practice has been debated and discussed at length (Ove, 2018; Wydick, Glewwe, and Rutledge, 2013) and thus will not be analyzed in detail. However, it is notable that the image of a child, rarely with family present in the photograph, is presented to the donor as 'their sponsor child'.

The notable image personifying poverty pornography is a small starving African child, often with a bloated belly and flies on their eyes. Versions of this image first began to enter the mainstream in the late 1960s and early 1970s during the war in Biafra and subsequent humanitarian crises, and became further pervasive in the 1980s, specifically with World Vision's widespread 'Sponsor a Child' campaign and development model (Jefferess, 2002; Mudge, 1970). Currently, any photo of a small black child who is presented to be in Africa has become synonymous with humanitarian aid and development and NGO advertisements. While this association is now instant for most modern viewers, there are complex semiotics working to facilitate the cultural understanding of such an image. As Escobar (1995) states, "the body of the malnourished, the starving 'African'...is the most striking symbol of the power of the First World over the Third. A whole economy of discourse and unequal power relations is encoded in that body" (p. 103). This image became deeply enregistered into the cultural lexicon with Kevin Carter's 1993 Pulitzer Prize winning image "The Vulture and the Little Girl", in which a small emaciated African child lies collapsed from exhaustion on the side of the road with a vulture waiting nearby (Manovich and Silva, 2000). The photo first ran in *The New York Times* March 1993 edition and immediately "caused a sensation" (Manovich and Silva, 2000, p.151), it was quickly taken up by humanitarian organizations and used in posters and advertisements. Given the fame and accolades Carter received for this photograph, this photograph and subsequent events raised important questions about the exploitation of suffering in order to attract an audience, and marked the slow entrance of NGOs into branding techniques.

1.3 NGO branding and Corporatization

A further area of emerging research impacting the images that NGOs use is the influence of 'branding' and corporatization. The NGO landscape is becoming more competitive for funding every year. New organizations and causes are constantly popping up, along with a general decline in charitable giving overall ("Canada Helps Annual Giving Report", 2018). These circumstances lead to more and more organizations competing for a smaller pool of resources, or trying to reach new donors by standing out from the saturated market. In order to set themselves apart, many NGOs adopt traditionally corporate organizational management structures, hire external consultants from the for-profit world, and encourage their strategic planning team to 'think like a business' in terms of their social media practices and communications standards.

Research indicates the number one factor in the likelihood of increasing donations is not necessarily how impactful or meaningful a particular campaign is, but how trustworthy, effective, and reliable an organization appears to be in the public eye, or in other words, their 'brand' (Dhanani, 2018; Paço, Rodrigues, & Rodrigues, 2014; Vestergaard, 2008). Organizations are constantly searching for consistent, dependable funding from donors which is not designated to a particular cause or context (Nutt, 2012). The ideal situation for an NGO is one in which donors do not require detailed reports or explanations about where their money is being used, but instead trust the organization because of their brand recognition and reliability. Thus, any images an organization delivers must be in line with their general style and be consistent with their stated mission and goals, whether or not the true context behind the images aligns with this as well. As organizations look to the for-profit world for inspiration and guidance on how to effectively engage donors, new discourses have emerged which flip the dominant narrative.

1.4 Changing the narrative: Satire and alternative discourses.

Along with the rejection of and departure from the starving child images used in the 80s and 90s, there was an increase in satirical advertisements and campaigns directly addressing representations of developing countries, specifically African countries. As shown in Table 1, the distrust in many large NGOs appeared alongside a larger post-development movement which was skeptical of development entirely. In response to the skepticism of their work and advertisements,

NGOs have tried to incorporate satire as a way of acknowledging the complexity and the history of their practices. In 2011, NGO Mama Hope began the campaign 'Stop the PityUnlock the Potential' targeting harmful media stereotypes of African men as aggressive and violent (Mama Hope, 2012). Organizations such as the Norwegian Students and Academics International Assistance Fund (SAIH) created a video series entitled 'Let's Save Africa!' (2013) directly targeting exploitative advertisements, poking fun at the 'charity actors' in sponsorship ads. The ever-increasing satirical advertisements come along with the dominance of social media and Instagram, and how often short-term volunteers from the Global North post photographs online featuring children they met while overseas. 'Barbie Saviour', an Instagram account started by two former NGO workers in Uganda, focuses on the 'selfie-humanitarianism', particularly perpetrated by young white women from North America ('Barbie Savior', 2018). Barbie Saviour further addresses the overwhelming trend of 'voluntourism' as an industry and the real damage it can cause to communities (For further reading see Biddle, 2014; Butcher & Smith, 2010; Freidus, 2016; Guiney, 2018;Guttentag, 2009; Rosenberg, 2018; Vrasti, 2012)

While these satirical endeavors discuss stereotypes in all forms of media more generally, mostly of Africa and African people, many are targeted explicitly at humanitarian aid appeals and celebrity activism. Certainly, the depth of the effect and the impact of such satire on the NGO world merits further dedicated study. There has also been practical guides and contributions from several of these organizations to improve representations, instead of merely providing commentary and criticism.

SAIH had been giving out a 'Rusty Radiator' award every year from 2013-2017 to an organization that held what they deemed the most exploitative or stereotypical advertisement. In 2018 SAIH announced they would not be giving out 'Rusty Radiator' awards anymore as they feel it is now difficult to find recipients, stating they "witnessed an increase in nuanced, positive ads" and that the awards have succeeded in making themselves redundant ("No Radi-Awards in 2018", 2018). In 2017 'Barbie Saviour' and Radi-Aid (a body of SAIH) collaborated to form a comprehensive social media guide for tourists and volunteers, guided by base principles such as promote dignity, gain informed consent, and question your intentions for publicly sharing images ("How to Communicate the World", 2017). While the information in the social media guide should be and usually is common knowledge for those working in the field, with the advent of social media and constant increase in 'voluntourism', these types of guidelines must be accessible to all. The effectiveness of satire relies entirely on the ability to use the tools of

semiotics to connect to existing cultural ideas or understandings. Satire highlights and criticizes the existing acceptable narratives and the universe in which NGOs operate together.

1.5 Semiotic Theory - Indexicality and Enregisterment

While often not specifying it explicitly by name, existing studies of NGO advertisements almost always use the tools of semiotics in image analysis. Dogra (2012), Thrall, Stecula, and Sweet(2014), and Dhanani (2018) for example, highlight how select images point to certain attitudes, ideas, or concepts through signs and symbols that connect to larger cultural ideas, essentially utilizing indexicality. In order to utilize these tools properly and effectively however, they must be fully understood and defined.

At its core, visual semiotics strives to understand and explain the imbued meaning in images by fully deconstructing and analyzing the signs that make up that image; it is the "science of produced meaning" (Danesi, 2007, p. 3). An index, unlike an icon, directly points to a specific object or person or event and can incorporate a type of icon (Jappy, 2013). For example, an image of a building riddled with bullet holes (an icon signifying gunfire), becomes an index for warfare when photographed and presented within a certain context. Semiotic analysis has been used to great effect by scholars such as Roland Barthes (1977) who applied semiotic analysis to food advertisements. Similarly, NGO images on website landing pages are advertisements, organizations are selling us on their cause and their brand to encourage donations.

Barthian visual semiotics outlines that there are several layers of meaning when analyzing photographs. The two central layers are denotation, what or who is in the photo, and connotation, what are the intended ideas or values which are implied and how are they presented (Van Leeuwan and Jewitt, 2004). It is key to understand a multiple level approach in image analysis given this analysis is not able to gather what information is actually received and processed and the opinions of the audience, but only what information is intended. By this we mean image analysis does not necessarily tell us much about who or what the audience actually is, but what the creator thinks the audience to be and what they will understand or relate to.

Barthes (1977) used the term "The Rhetoric of the Image" to explain how images not only document facts or merely tell a story, but through the use of icons, indexes, and signs, are used by the creators to shape our very perspective. Therefore, through the use of images, NGOs are not only telling us stories about the beneficiaries, but attempting to mold our perspectives on who these people are and how we should feel about them and relate to them.

Other work, such as that drawing primarily from linguistic anthropology demonstrates the ways in which ideologies are linked to semiotic processes. Irvine and Gal's (2000) understandings of iconization and erasure will also be applied in image analysis. While Irvine and Gal's (2000) analysis focuses on the "shaping of linguistic differentiations and the creation of linguistic description", the process can easily be adapted to image-making. As Hall (1997) argues, all communication 'works like language', and thus language analysis can be adopted to image analysis in that they share the same goal of conveying meaning. Erasure, a critical part of ideological structuration, is defined as making "facts that are inconsistent with the ideological scheme either go unnoticed or get explained away" (Irvine and Gal, 2000, p. 38). NGOs have often used images of and rhetoric about the Global South which homogenizes difference, particularly in regards to Africa. Diverse countries, cultures, ethnicities, languages, and landscapes have been presented as a unified 'Africa', so much so that it is not uncommon for individuals to mistakenly believe the continent of Africa is one country (John, 2013). Further, linguistic semiotics relies heavily on the concept of enregisterment. Enregisterment refers to the process by which "linguistic repertoire comes to be associated, culture internally, with particular social practice and with those who engage in such practices" (Agha, 2003, p. 231). Transferring the concept of enregisterment to image analysis shows how certain images have through repetition, recreation, and continual association with one thing (NGOs) come to index that thing inherently.

1.6 Existing studies

Much has been done analyzing the usage of photographs (Bhati and Eikenberry, 2016; Campbell, 2014; Dogra, 2006; Hoijer, 2004; Vestergaard, 2008), there is some research into audience perceptions, mostly through focus groups and interviews (Seu and Orgad, 2014), further theoretical work on the concept and ethics of 'celebrity activism' (Chouliaraki, 2011, 2013) and some research interviewing communications directors directly (Orgad and Seu, 2014). However, there is limited research directly asking the subjects of photos opinions and impressions of the representations of themselves. Slowly, the approach of directly engaging with subjects has become a part of the research landscape (Bhati and Eikenberry, 2016; Save the Children, 2010; Save the Children, 2017; Girling, 2018).

Save the Children's (2017) report "The People in the Pictures*"* is a notably self-aware research project which sought to understand "how contributors and their communities experience

and perceive Save the Children's communications and its image making process" (p. 1). Through a series of focus groups and interviews with contributors (in this context meaning subjects of photographs) researchers found that while they generally were satisfied with their portrayal in Save the Children's communications, there was a significant lack of collaborative content, sensitive and effective communication before, during, and after image gathering, and understanding of how and in what contexts their images would be used (Save the Children, 2017). Save the Children's report also highlighted concerning discrepancies in the image-making process from U.K. compared to Niger, Bangladesh, and Jordan. It was found that the U.K was the only context which followed up with contributors and sharing of final photographs with them was common practice. Furthermore, while all contributors had signed 'informed' consent forms, there remained confusion or ambiguity about how the photographs would be used and for what purpose.

Following this influential report, SAIH conducted their own research with 74 participants in six African countries, presenting them with ten NGO advertisements and getting their opinions on how the images made them feel, how they felt the images presented Africa to other nations, and what types of images they would have selected and why. The findings were mixed; although the majority of respondents stated the images do show an accurate representation of Africa, they also felt it showed Africa as inferior and the images made some respondents sad or embarrassed (Girling, 2018). Furthermore, the majority of respondents noted that while they thought negative images are the most effective, it was only the majority of men and youth that noted they would use negative images, whereas women mostly indicated they would use positive images. While trends were evident, a key analysis of the variety of responses indicated that not unlike the complexities of experiences from the subjects of photos, "fundraising and communication is complex...different people are drawn to different types of images, depending on their personal experiences, values and culture" (Girling, 2018, p. 32). This finding highlights a stronger connection to semiotic theory.

1.7 Gaps in Literature and Expected Contribution

Most of the existing research, both theoretical and empirical, focusing on NGO communications has been conducted in the UK or in Europe more broadly. While using a theoretical base from French theorist Boltanski (1993), The London School of Economics

scholars Chouliaraki (2004, 2008, 2011, 2013), Orgad (2012, 2014a, 2014b, 2015), and Seu (2012, 2014, 2015), and the University of London's Dogra (2006, 2011, 2012) have worked extensively on audience research and image analysis. Nolan and Mikami's (2012) study is one of the few that centers the experiences of Australian NGO workers and addressed the dilemmas many NGO workers face when dealing with practical funding and time constraints, and ethical considerations.

There is a significant gap in the literature regarding studies of Canadian Organizations and their role in the global humanitarian landscape, particularly in getting the perspectives of communications workers themselves. Dyck and Coldevin (1992) conducted a study with World Vision Canada measuring the amount of money received while using different types of fundraising appeals in letters to existing donors (positive image, negative image, and no image at all). However, this study is now quite outdated and the primary goal was measuring the success of advertisements, not addressing any underlying ethics or the impact on the viewer. As Seu and Orgad (2014) note "research into the processes of production could provide useful insights and promote better understanding of the problems related to the meditation of humanitarianism" (p. 24). By combining image analysis with interviews this research seeks to understand multiple perspectives.

Most of the existing studies which include image analysis focus primarily on print images. As many of our interactions are now taking place in digital spaces, digital fundraising is increasing at a rapid pace and is soon to become the most dominant form of fundraising for NGOs. As nonprofit organization Tech for Good found in their 2018 Global Trends in Giving report, 54% of donors worldwide preferred to donate online with a credit card, widely surpassing direct mail donations at 11% (Tech for Good, 2018). Therefore, images found in online advertisements, email newsletters, and landing pages of NGOs are utilized strategically to capture the audience's attention and draw donors in.

The landscape in which NGOs operate today and thus where this research exists is a complex, multi-disciplinary field. Furthermore, the many contexts, conditions, and experiences of each individual has undoubtedly impacted responses of individuals in previous research and will continue to impact research going forward, both around how advertisements are created and the impact they have on the viewer. Therefore, no study within this field can ever present a

complete and nuanced picture and analysis of the variety of ways in which NGO advertisements are created, disseminated, and received.

1.8 Research Methods

A non-random, purposive sample of landing pages of NGOs were selected. In order to compare data from similar contexts, organizations chosen for both the interview and image analysis were within the following criteria: international Canadian-based NGOs or NGOs with a significant Canadian presence and office, NGOs that conduct direct programming work overseas in the 'Global South' (as opposed to advocacy focused or work exclusively connecting to local partners), maintenance of a focus on children, women, and vulnerable populations in crisis situations, and lastly work both as humanitarian relief agencies and conduct long term development projects. These criteria allowed for data where organizations with similar goals and missions were compared in regard to how they try to attract the attention of the audience. Thus, the comparison of strategies and angles chosen, emotions they attempted to elicit, and particular signs, symbols, or tropes utilized would be simplified. This approach displays how organizations use similar strategies and indexicalities to convey their message which fits neatly in the acceptable and palatable narratives existing in the dominant discourse.

1.8.1 Interviews.

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with the goal of producing a deeper, more nuanced analysis. Semi-structured interviews are ideal for understanding personal lived experience and research questions, which take a descriptive or exploratory approach (Johnson & Rowlands, 2013). The goal with the interview(s) then being not to categorize how a large number of communications directors felt about the use of certain images (such as stereotypical 'poverty porn') but to understand the thought process and competing demands when making decisions about photographs. The interview subjects proved to be an inaccessible population. Most organizations contacted did not respond at all, and this may speak to the larger culture of NGOs as an insular community. While I have experience in this field and community, I had no direct personal connection to these organizations which would give me access. Furthermore, given the large impact a possible criticism can have on the organizational brand, and thus on donations, it is understandable that employees are reluctant to be interviewed regarding communication materials, even if for academic research (Paço, Rodrigues & Rodrigues, 2014). Specifically, in this context, there was a recent and relevant exposé of WE charity and how they have allegedly partnered with originations who utilize slave labour including of

their communication materials by journalist Jaren Kerr of Canadaland, which damaged the WE brand (Kerr, 2018a; Kerr 2018b), this could have also influenced respondents to decline to be interviewed. Although only one interview was conducted, it proved to be a fruitful discussion which adds depth and nuance to this project.

1.8.2 Image Analysis.

The website landing pages of NGOs are the most public facing document, the most common place for an individual to go first when researching an organization. That puts the first image they see as the 'brand' or 'face' of the organization. Data has been analyzed from the website landing pages of ten Canadian NGOs. These organizations include Canadian Feed the Children, Canadian Lutheran World Relief, CARE, MSF/Doctors Without Borders, Oxfam Canada, Plan Canada, Save the Children, War Child Canada, WE Charity, and World Vision. The organizations are household names nationally and globally when speaking of development and/or humanitarian organizations and thus are a good representation of mainstream development organizations. World Vision and Plan Canada for example are two of the top three largest charities in Canada by amount of donations, and all ten are within the 100 top rated charities in Canada in 2019, ratings determined mainly by their transparency and efficiency with donation money (Brownell, 2019). While there are other organizations which are ranked higher in terms of amount of donations or rating than the organizations selected for this study, many of those were not selected since they focus on specific issues or local causes.

Similar research has been done to analyze images in annual reports since as Dhanani (2018) explains, they are disguised "within the comforts of [the annual report's] credible and trustworthy nature as an accounting document", one which is a "carefully manipulated sales pitch that projects a particular image to the world" (p.2). Annual reports do exist as the 'face' of an organization in a way, but they are viewed mostly by existing donors or financial watchdogs, so although these documents attempt to present a unified picture of the organization, they function slightly differently than the website which must be palatable to both those who are familiar with the organization and those who may not be aware of their work at all. Thus, an analysis of the website landing pages lends a particular window into how an organization views themselves, how they want to be perceived by the public, and what they believe will attract the public.

Chapter 2: Image Data and Analysis

2.1 Introduction

Images were selected from the Canadian landing pages of ten NGO websites. This sample size was chosen so that there was a manageable number of images to still do an in-depth analysis, but a reasonable enough amount to draw comparisons and trends. All screen captures were taken between February 19th-March 10th on a desktop computer. Dogra's (2012) influential work *Representations of Global Poverty* which focused on charity appeals in 2005/6 and provides an in-depth analysis of select photographs through a postcolonial conceptual framework will be heavily used for this analysis, as she draws similar themes and analyzes some images from the same organizations such as World Vision, Oxfam, and Plan. While her research is extensive and combined with audience interviews from various countries, the image analysis section relies heavily on semiotic interpretations and approaches.

While the entire landing page is useful for a larger set of data, because the top photograph is the first thing someone will see when going to a website, it is particularly influential and thus merits a more detailed analysis. Each organization had one large landscape photograph on the top of the webpage, usually taking up most of the initial page. This layout is common as to grab the viewer's attention immediately and draw them into a unified story, rather than a mixture of messages and images that could distract their attention or over complicate their message. Organizations have been ordered alphabetically.

2.2 Analysis

Canadian Feed the Children

Figure 1: Canadian Feed the Children top photo

       The top photo of Canadian Feed the Children contains three black women in 'traditional African' garb. While one is notably smiling, the other two appear pensive and thoughtful. The caption 'Empowered Women Empower Other Women' implies that the women photographed are themselves 'empowered'. One is looking directly at the camera, her face partially obscured, while the others look off into the distance. The setting is outdoors, implying these women may be farmers or in some way work outside. The photo is darkened on the left side where the text is. These women in some ways subtly represent the homogeneous notion of a 'third-world woman', dressed traditionally and similarly. Headwear in photographs is a commonly utilized 'cultural attribute' (Leeuwan, 2004). Each of the women is wearing a different type of headscarf, perhaps to signify a level of cultural or religious diversity. They are not wrapped in the way a hijab or chador would be, but nonetheless contain cultural significance. The photo does not appear staged, a common technique used by NGOs to present their work as 'real'.

       The slogan and accompanying text underneath utilize the buzzwords 'empowerment' and 'livelihoods'. While a common trend among NGO advertisements is to take a more 'positive' approach in an effort to avoid targeting audience's pity, Wilson (2011) argues that "contemporary 'positive' visual representations of women in the South produced by development institutions are rooted in a notion of 'agency' consistent with—and necessary for—neoliberal capitalism. These 'new' constructions contribute to, rather than subvert, racialized regimes of representation." (p. 329). The women who are being 'empowered' are not fighting the political or cultural norms and structures which continue their oppression but present a narrative where they are able to participate in the formal economy and are presented as grateful for the opportunity to do so. Further, the image and text are sufficiently vague. There is no country mentioned, nor the occupation, or 'livelihood', or economic status of the women in the photograph. It is unclear what role Canadian Feed the Children plays in these women's lives.
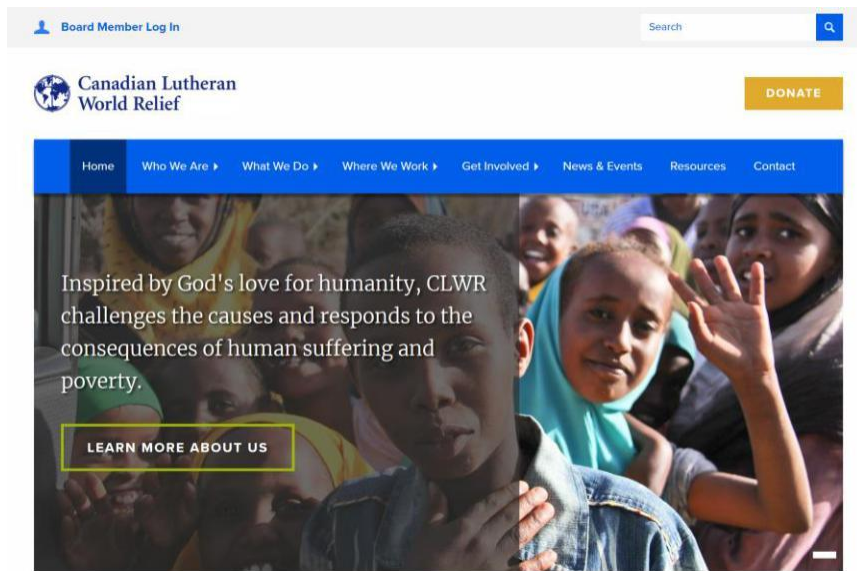
Canadian Lutheran World Relief

Figure 2: Canadian Lutheran World Relief top photo

The top photo for Canadian Lutheran World Relief features several black children looking towards the camera, on child is waving while the central subject has a hand across their chest. Their gender is not immediately identifiable, although we can reasonably assume they are male given the women in the photograph have headscarves on. The children crowding into the frame imply they are excited to be seen, wanting to be a part of this photograph. Most of the subjects are smiling, clearly aware they are being photographed. In addition, the central focus is the text overlay and not the photograph. The text contains an explicitly religious connection, something not as common anymore with many mainstream NGOs, even those who are based in religion.

The central subject, a young person holding their hand over their heart/chest, appears to be happy although the expression is not easily identified. Holding a hand over one's heart has been observed as the embodiment of honesty and sincerity (Parzuchowski, Szymkow, Baryla & Wojciszke, 2014). One study found that when a person was photographed with their hand over their heart, they "appeared more trustworthy" than when those same individuals were photographed with both hands down (Parzuchowski, Szymkow, Baryla & Wojciszke, 2014). Citizens place their right hand over their heart while singing the national anthem, saying the pledge of allegiance in the U.S.A, or swearing an oath in a court of law to signify loyalty and reverence.

Although the text contains a religious connection, it is intentional that the text reads 'Inspired by God's love for humanity', not that they are 'sharing' or even 'showing' God's love, as this language could imply proselytizing. In order to avoid any allusions to colonial missionary 'development' work, modern faith-based organizations use religious language and connotations carefully, even when tied to an explicit denomination of Christianity. After this the text reads 'CLWR challenges the causes and responds to the consequences of human suffering and poverty', while this statement is vague (what are the causes?) it is used to signal the organization is working on structural change as well as providing immediate aid. While this language is presented to the public in order to present a holistic approach, it further signals to those specifically with knowledge of theoretical development approaches that they do not practice a needs-based approach. This approach is mostly practiced by exclusively disaster recovery or humanitarian aid organizations which respond with the immediate needs of food, water, and shelter in response to suffering, but who do not focus on causes or longer-term solutions. It is also important to note the follow through link reads "Learn More about Us", not learn more about what we do. This plays into the role of the organization as having a branded identity, not just a collection of individuals.

CARE

Figure 3: CARE top photo

CARE's top photograph is a large group of young women, all in headscarves, looking up at the camera. The photo subjects are joyful, many raising their hands pointing at the camera and smiling. The location is not specified; however one can infer it is a predominantly Muslim community given the skin tone of the subjects and the prevalence of headscarves. However, due to the colouring of the photograph the skin tone is slightly obscured, perhaps intentionally to present them as racially ambiguous.

Van Leeuwen (2004) argues that depicting people in large groups engaged in similar activity contributes to generalizations and the homogenization of 'the other'. For example, in his analysis of photographs of the Gulf War, "allied soldiers were usually depicted as individuals, doing things like defusing bombs, writing letters home, and so on, and Iraqi soldiers as groups involved in synchronized actions like aiming guns and surrendering" (p. 96). While it could be further argued that portrayals of synchronized actions are used to indicate solidarity and unity, especially considering the text overlay "Bringing us together", the erasure of complexity of Global South identity for the sake of simplicity is a well proven trend within NGO photos and rhetoric (Dogra, 2011, 2012; Wilson 2011).

The point of view is most certainly significant as well. The photographer (and thus the viewer) is elevated above the crowd. The photo is tinted with a light orange hue, a form of branding in order to synchronize the colouring of the photograph with the bright orange CARE logo colour. Colour can also transmit feeling or mood, with orange and yellow hues often used to convey happiness and joy (Danesi, 2007). The text, "Bringing Us together to End Inequality" emphasizes the 'we are the same' type message which is so prevalent in advertising. We are being asked to empathize and stand with the subjects, relating to them as friends or comrades, without ever having met them. Ending inequality (of what is not specified) is another common goal of many organizations, and one that can be easy to get behind when it is sufficiently vague.

Doctors Without Borders

Figure 4: Doctors Without Borders top photo

The top photo of Doctors Without Borders maintains a stark contrast compared to the other images analyzed. There are no discernable people or faces, the setting appears to be a camp or makeshift medical tent, and there are no visible beneficiaries or doctors. The landscape in the background is relatively nondescript, with the specific location unclear and unspecified. Given that Doctors Without Borders is a well-known and trusted organization, they may be less inclined to use particularly impactful photographs as there is less riding on their 'brand' or need to specify what type of work they do. The subjects which are visible are black, so one can infer the location is somewhere in Africa. On the tent is a small blue logo, not prominently displayed but when observed closely can see the letters UN, very likely a United Nations logo. As opposed to displaying their own logo, perhaps they are attempting to convey their collaboration with the UN, another universally recognizable and (mostly) trusted and respected brand.

The text reads "Your gift saves lives: Help us provide lifesaving medical care when it matters most. Please give." While the text is direct and clear, asking for donations, there is no image used to motivate emotions. Compared to the other text analyzed, Doctors without Borders makes very clear what your donations will go towards. This focus on humanitarian relief and medical aid allows Doctors without Borders freedom to perhaps be less intentional or specific about their image choices as their mission and work is clear. However, there still remains a lack of context as to what conflicts they are addressing, which countries they work in, etc.

Oxfam Canada

Figure 5: Oxfam top photo

Oxfam International's top photo features a woman wearing a hijab and staring directly at the camera. It is not clear whether she is upset, or focused and determined. The image is slightly darkened with white text overlay and the Oxfam Canada logo in orange visible underlying the photo. The text font is large and bold and the central focus on the image as opposed to the woman's face.

As observed by numerous scholars, women are often the focal points of NGO advertisements as they are seen as the 'ideal victim' and most deserving of aid as they are presented as helpless (Dogra, 2006; Hoijer, 2004; Vestergaard, 2008). While modern NGOs attempt to subvert this paradigm by presenting women as changemakers (i.e "What she knows matters"), they still exist almost exclusively in the private sector. Their activities are household or agricultural, rarely political. Dogra (2012) argues this presentation is used so as to not "risk suggesting to DW[2] [developed world] audiences the presence of 'normal' democratic systems or the existence of MW [majority world] governments and leaders" (p.55). However, given the smaller text reads "put power and decision making in the hands of women affected by conflict worldwide", one could argue the implication is political.

The young woman's gaze is direct, intense, and the camera angle is direct at eye level. Often direct, head on, eye contact with the camera is avoided, as this practice breaks "the illusion that we are looking in on another world without ourselves being seen" (Lister and Wells, 2004,

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[2] Dogra (2012) uses the term 'developed world' or DW as synonymous with Global North and 'majority world' or MW as synonymous with Global South.

p.16). Further, the viewing position is 'face to face' with this woman with a black undistinguished background, providing intimacy, closeness, and urgency. Since there is one female subject in the photo and the text identifies 'she', there is no doubt the photo subject is the focus of the text. However here again the text is quite vague. Who is she? What does she know? Which conflict are we discussing? This is likely a tactic to draw in our attention as the following text under a green square background with a small arrow (a modern sign for a 'button' or link to another page) reads 'Learn More'. Given the goal of the organization is to draw the audience in, keep them on the website to keep reading and hopefully donate, it is clear images and text are often intentionally vague to add a layer of mystery. The last statement of the text reads "Join our movement to commit to aid that listens", highlighting a perceived strength and merit of their organization.

Plan Canada

Figure 6: PLAN Canada top photo

In contrast to many of the other photographs, PLAN Canada's photo contains what is implied to be a family. There are several subjects, men and women, with a young woman, arms crossed and head held high, prominently and somewhat defiantly leading the group. Most of the subjects faces besides the lead young woman's are obscured by their hats and shadows. The attire and setting give the appearance that the subjects are farmers or farm workers. While the country is not stated, the attire and ethnicity of the subjects suggests South America. The blue colours within the top logo blend well into the blue sky in the photograph, melding the image and the brand identity. Given the darker shades of skin, the perceived ethnicity of the subjects is Indigenous. Further, the accompanying text and because the subjects are dressed similarly imply they are a family.

Most images used by NGOs utilize rural settings which arguably presents a "timeless and ahistorical" Global South (Dogra, 2012, p.68). A rural setting not only indexes farming and manual labour, but arguably low-skill, or unmodern. Unlike many other NGO photographs, the PLAN top photo appears to be deliberately staged. Most photos appearing in both the news and NGO advertisements are unlike photos for corporate advertisements in that they are "characteristically marked by their lack of apparent artifice or display of pictorial convention" in order to "speak of the photography's power to provide direct evidence of events" (Lister and Wells, 2004, p.19). This photo staging then is an intentional choice. The facial expressions of all subjects are stoic or serious, however this does not necessarily signal unhappiness. While a smile may be somewhat universal, research argues that in some cultural contexts smiling can be viewed as showing low intelligence, and "that corruption at the societal level may undermine the prosocial perception of smiling—in societies with high corruption indicators, trust toward smiling individuals is reduced" (Krys, et al., 2016, p. 101).

The text "Every family dreams of a happy and safe future. Help make that possible" could imply the subjects in the photo do not currently have a happy and safe future, or they would not if not for Plan. Here again through using terms which are non-specific (what does a happy and safe future actually mean?) they are able to present a cause which is easy to get behind and support without addressing the complexities of such a topic.

Save the Children

Figure 7: Save the Children top photo

Of all the photographs analyzed, Save the Children Canada arguably has the most typical 'starving child' image. The child pictured is not only visibly malnourished, he is staring upwards at the camera and reaching towards it, implying a desperate cry for help. The photo is large with the subject placed front and center and it is clear the viewer is intended to look into the child's eyes and feel pity. There are no other objects or items surrounding the child to distract the viewer. He has his hands in his mouth sucking on his fingers, a sign of not just childhood, but infanthood.

The meaning or implication of the direct eye-contact with the camera initially seems clear, the child is pleading with the viewer to care and help them. The child's lower position, looking up at the camera, further conveys a stark hierarchy between the subject and the viewer, the child is below the audience and thus 'lowly'. However, as has been argued by some, direct eye contact can also imply trust or faith in the photographer, the subject is aware and consenting to being photographed (Dogra, 2012).

Furthermore, the arrangement of the photograph, the solitary subject whose body is naked and has been cropped further enhances the 'need' expressed in this photo. Dogra (2012) states in her analysis of a similar image from an ActionAid Advertisement "the image, cropped to hide the background, lends a quality of isolation to the child and decontextualizes her, thus adding to the overall sense of need and urgency...'cropping' is used as a strategy to enhance vulnerability" (p. 34). The focus on a sole subject, as opposed to a hospital full of dying children, for example, could be an attempt to humanize or personalize the conflict. However, the child's name, age, or any other identifying information is absent, further presenting them as a nameless victim of a never-ending conflict. Although this information could be withheld for the safety of the child, it is common to use just the first name or a pseudonym.

One respondent in Dogra's (2012) study specifically noted "We wouldn't use a sort of cut-out shot of a starving child looking at the camera because that shows well, it incites from the viewers sort of pity and it's just you know begging type of image from the whole situation of images coming out of the 1980's and Ethiopia" (p.141). The enregisterment of this iconic image has had a resounding impact on which images organizations choose to use. Images such as these are rarely used for fear of falling into the classification of 'poverty porn' or attempting to manipulate viewers emotions.

Yemen, the setting for this photograph given the caption, has been embroiled in war and an environmental crisis since early 2011. While the complexities of the context would be impossible to detail in one headline, a simple image of a starving child with the words "Yemen Crisis" can be observed as depoliticizing and dehistoricizing the conflict, and thus the resulting impacts on children. The term 'crisis' is a general term that lays no particular blame on one actor and yet expresses the need for some type of intervention.
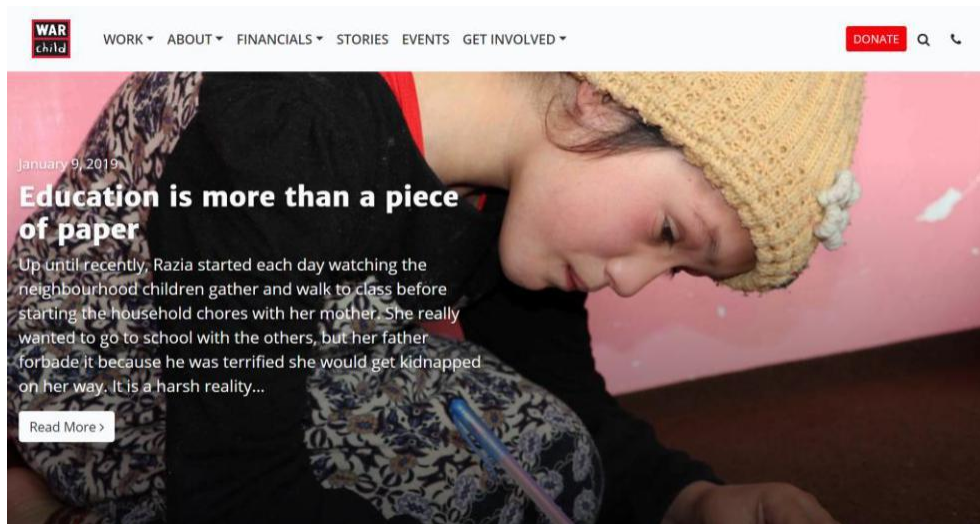
War Child Canada

Figure 8: War Child Canada top photo

War Child Canada's photo is of a young white girl, leaning over, who appears to be drawing or writing. She is not looking at the camera but instead looking down, and the photo is cropped to show only her. In the corner of the photograph it is visible there is paint chipped on the pink wall behind her. She is wearing a knit hat, signaling she is in a possibly cold climate. The caption title "Education is more than a piece of paper" contains the beginning of an article about the child photographed, named Razia.

The photo is cropped to only show the child and given the headline it is implied she is in a school or working on homework. Her expression is pensive or focused, signaling she cares deeply about the work she is doing. The headline and accompanying text is more than most have on their top photograph, giving far more information and context. The text explains "she really wanted to go to school with the others, but her father forbade it because he was terrified she would get kidnapped on her way". Telling stories of children who are desperate to go to school but are unable due to external obstacles such as their family's finances, conflict or danger-

particularly for girls, distance etc. is another common trope in NGO advertisements. So common in fact there was a documentary made profiling four children around the world and their mission just to get to school (Kenigsberg, 2015). This presentation allows children to be upheld as the pinnacle of innocence and nobility as they have little to no control over their circumstances and merely want to better their education. While this story is often true, presenting children as motivated by singular desires can erase the complexity of experience.
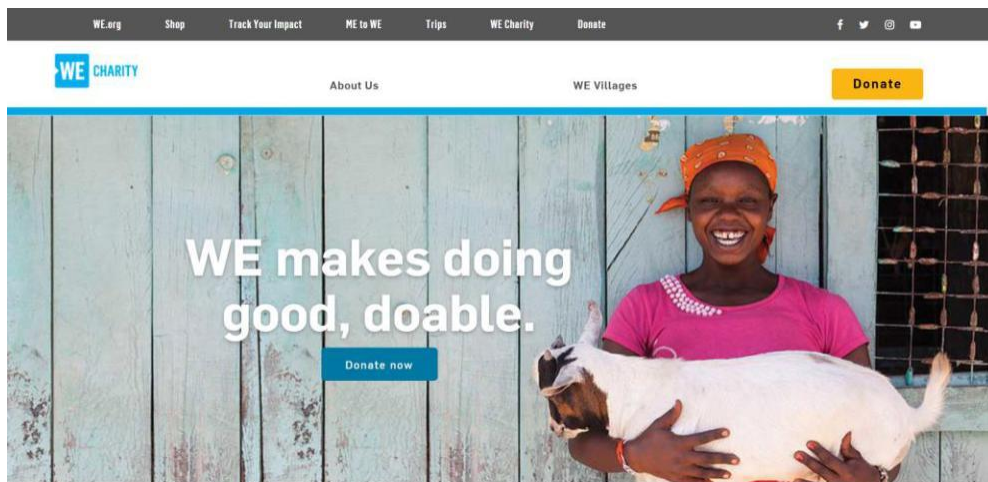
WE Charity

Figure 9: WE Charity top photo

WE Charity, formerly known as Free the Children, displays a young black woman holding a goat. She is wearing a pink t-shirt with small white detail and an orange scarf covering the top of her head. She is exuberant. The text overlays the wall beside her "WE makes doing good, doable". She stands against a light blue wooden wall. Off to the right side there is a window enclosed with wire, possibly signifying a barn window for animals, especially given the goat she is holding.

As has been well documented in development literature, modern NGO advertisements consistently attempt to simplify complex socio-economic problems and present easy and simple solutions, such as sponsoring a child or buying a goat for a family (Zarzycka 2016). Many of these interventions create "a depoliticised collective action that is completely non-threatening to the power structure and political action" (Batliwala and Dhanraj, 2007 as cited in Dogra, 2012, p.90). As Rutherford (2000) notes, organizations typically 'privatize' problems, that is "the act of converting the collective crisis into a personal problem, and the social issue into a moral ill"(p.81). The focus consistently remains on things money can buy, solvable problems in a

scalable, tangible format. While it is not explicitly stated, the woman holding the goat may have received it from the organization, and her gratitude is shown through her smiling expression.

The concept of buying a specific item (such as an animal or mosquito nets) for a particular family in the Global South fits cleanly into a consumer culture which allocates a price on every item and a clear return on investment for every dollar pledged. This fundraising technique is directly similar to child sponsorship in its patronizing undertones, one which "makes the public legitimate 'experts' on development, as they choose what is best for the MW [majority world] in terms of their personal preferences" (Dogra, 2012, p. 91).
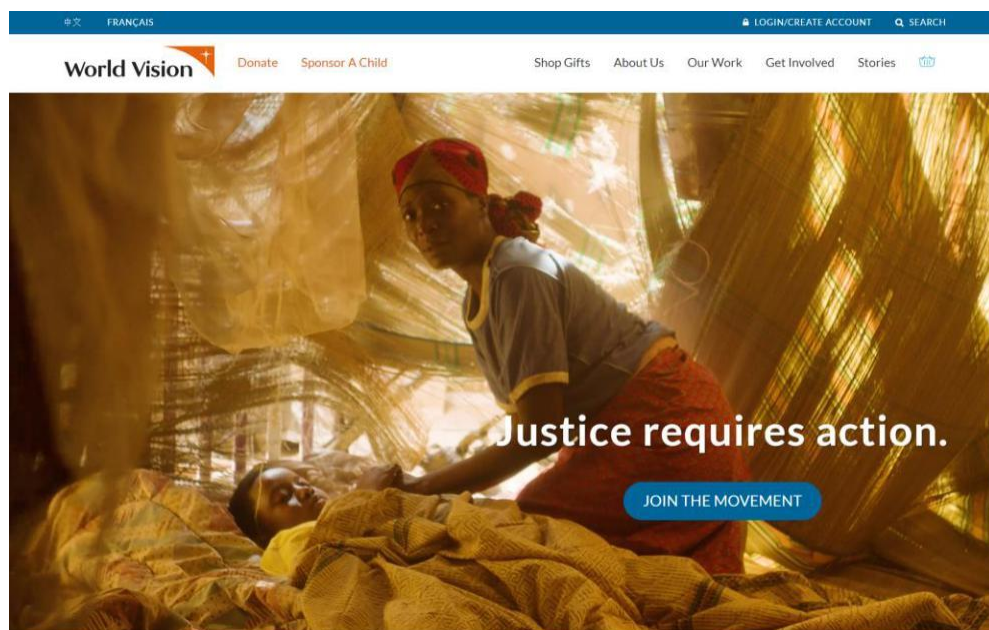
World Vision

Figure 10: World Vision top photo

The top photo for World Vision displays a child and a woman, presumably the child's mother or caregiver, looking back at the camera as the child sleeps. It is unclear whether the child is sleeping, sick or dying, but it is certainly implied they are in peril with the text reading "Justice requires action". Again here the black, presumably African, woman is wearing a traditional headscarf. She looks at the camera longingly, as if begging the viewer to aid her child. Conversely, she could be seen to be caught off guard, the photographer interrupting her while caring for the child. The room is held together by what appears to be sheets, showing a lack of walls, and therefore wealth, and giving the photo an eerie ghostlike appearance. The photo

appears to be a candid one, or one set up to appear candid, as the woman almost looks surprised she is being photographed. Whether or not this photograph was staged is unclear.

Women, specifically African women, in fundraising appeals are almost always portrayed as mothers, the second most vulnerable and deserving category of person below children (Dogra, 2012). This role of motherhood is often an essential characteristic of those deserving pity. While the text reads "Justice requires action", implying there is injustice which caused this child to be sick, the subjects of the photograph are not those to be taken to justice but the innocent victims of said injustice. However, no culprit or cause of this injustice is named.

As mentioned previously, much has been written on using children in advertisements as not only the perfect encapsulation of the 'ideal victim' but also directly symbolic of the paternalism within development work (Bhati & Eikenberry, 2006; Hoijer, 2004; Karlin & Matthew, 2012; Nathanson, 2013; Seu, 2015; Zarzycka, 2016). On the top bar of the webpage there is a link both to donate and one to sponsor a child. World Vision, a charity known best for its child sponsorship model, maintains that the child sponsorship model is effective not only in raising funds but in their community development work. However, this model has been critiqued many times in various research as directly contributing to paternal ideals of 'adopting' a child from the Global South (Eekelen, 2013; Mittelman & Neilson, 2011; Ove, 2018; Wydick, Glewwe, and Rutledge, 2013).

2.3 Final Analysis - Trends and Observations

Of all ten images analyzed some useful trends emerged. Every image featured people prominently, and only one image (Doctors without Borders) did not feature women or children as primary subjects. This is not surprising but illustrates the larger theory of an 'ideal victim' or 'deserving poor' which persists in NGO images (Hoijer, 2004). There was a notable lack of nuance or context, with only one image specifying the location of the image within the text (Save the Children, Yemen), this was also the one image with the most stereotypical photograph. Organizations utilize images to present a 'face' or brand to the public. This face has changed historically from a benevolent white saviour to the faces of the beneficiaries, which does signal learning from critiques of neocolonial practices and presentation. However, this 'face' is still presented as playing into viewers emotions of an 'ideal victim' and can homogenize goals and the individuality of the subjects presented. This presentation says more about what the organization sees as 'legible' to present to the Global North audience than who their

beneficiaries actually are. Particularly when it comes to the depiction of women, the barriers to their 'development' are simplified and the larger global forces or factors which prevent their success are often unnamed (Mohanty, 2000). As Dogra (2012) observes, "the desire to move away from the 'don'ts' and taboos of 'negative' messages has led to growing emphasis on 'safe' messages, even if they do not say much" (p.191). In doing so, organizations continue to rely on indexical connections to convey a compelling story, one which does not stray from the existing discourse. Through observing the current trends in story presentation, we can see not only where we have come but where we may be going.

2.3.1 Decline of the white saviour trope and 'voyeurism'.

The most significant trend and change in modern NGO advertisements compared to historical ones is the lack of a white protagonist. None of the images analyzed contained a 'white saviour' type character. While these types of advertisements do still exist, notably with celebrity activism, the public has a heightened awareness to the presence of a 'white saviour' trope and will often judge an organization harshly if their materials utilize this type of imagery. War Child did use an image of a white or white-passing child, but there are signifiers of the child's 'ethnicness' through her name, Raiza. This can also be connected to the rise of satire and critique. Dhanani's (2018) analysis of photographs used in NGO annual reports notes the absence of photos that contained both 'southern' and 'northern' constituents together, or put more bluntly, both white workers and black recipients. War Child Canada was the only organization to feature a white subject, and in this case since it is a child it is clearly implied, they are a beneficiary and not an NGO worker. Secondly, only one of the photographs analyzed (War Child Canada) featured no subjects looking at the camera. While this is certainly not a necessary condition for awareness and consent of being photographed, this can also be linked to the critiques of voyeurism of 'the other'. (Lister and Wells, 2004)

2.3.2 Lack of male or clear LGBTQ+ presence.

As was to be expected, none of the top images featured a man prominently displayed. The subject of the Doctors Without Borders image appears to be male, but he is hardly the central focus of the photograph. This further confirms the 'ideal victim' presentation of women and children. The feminization of poverty runs parallel to the absence of men; as men in the Global South, particularly black men, are stereotyped consistently as aggressive, violent, and the cause of many of the conflicts (Balaji, 2011; Dogra, 2012; Hoijer, 2004) There is a noticeable

and intentional lack of representations of men as victims, as audience research has suggested men are seen as 'less deserving' and thus donors are less willing to give money (Hoijer, 2004; Nolan and Mikami, 2012).

It is also important to note the absence of any clear LGBTQ+ individuals from all photographs analyzed, a trend found in most other NGO landing pages as well, excluding those working specifically with LGBTQ+ peoples and communities.[3] The topic of LGBTQ+ inclusion both in photographs and their visible presence within international development work at all is a complex question affected by the religious background of organizations and donors and the customs and laws of various countries, which are linked to the larger issue of global cultural heteronormativity (Jolly, 2011; Mizzi, 2013). While the complexities behind the reasons for this exclusion are beyond the scope of this work, it likely implies more about the envisioned attitudes of the intended audience (donors) than the true demographics of the beneficiaries.

2.3.3 Trends in rhetoric and headlines.

The three overlapping trends throughout the rhetoric and headlines of NGOs are the simplicity of giving, the individual responsibility or obligation, and the allusion to linear stories of economic success.

Rutherford (2000) in their analysis of charity appeals notes how often organizations claim "a simple, modest donation could bring about all kinds of marvelous things. It [The ad] constructs a token of altruism, a tangible public good which an ordinary person could purchase that would work some sort of magic" (p. 122). In both WE Charity and Doctors without Borders the text alludes to the donors' power with a small donation. "WE makes doing good, doable", implying WE can be trusted to turn your dollars into tangible, 'doable', positive change. "Your gift changes lives", again implying the small amount of money you donate can literally change a life. Organizations like to highlight the impact that one person can have, both the small amount of money required from the consumer and the influential effect of that one donation. This perspective fits nicely in a neoliberal framework of individual economic freedom (we are able to decide how we spend our money), and the power of money to bring about upward mobility and encourage self-sufficiency (a small donation can do wonders). It also plays into a donors

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[3] This does not preclude the possibility that any of subjects in the photographs identify as LGBTQ+, only that there are no visual signifiers of their inclusion, such as gender non-binary presentation, visible same sex relationships, individuals presenting queerness or gender fluidity, or any LGBTQ+ signs or symbols, such as a rainbow or trans flag or use of the term 'pride'.

perceived importance. This approach comforts rather than shames, tactics that have shown to cause individuals to ignore an appeal as it can feel overwhelming or accusatory (Rutherford 2000; Jefferess, 2002).

Even in what we may call a post-post-development age, organizations have a difficult time straying from a formulaic approach of displaying 'success' stories as following a clear economic path. Organizations are now adapting their approach to development as one that includes not only economic success but a human development and capabilities perspective, one which includes such larger issues as climate change and systemic gender inequality. This is exemplified in the 2015 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, goals that present a holistic idea of development which strays from purely economic goals. Despite these trends, individual advertisements tend to focus on single stories and economic success. For example, Canadian Feed the Children 'Empowered Women Empower other Women', there is little question around what 'empowerment' means. 'Empowerment' in a development context nearly always means financial independence and security, often through the form of a microloan to start a small business (Herr, 2014). The success stories often utilized by organizations to solicit donations tend to follow the same trajectory, and those which stray from this formula are typically erased or explained away. When given the proper tools, through a simple hand-up (such as a micro-loan, as opposed to a hand-out), we are told individuals will succeed economically. While this may be often true and positive for many, it creates a hierarchy of experiences, presenting those who did not maximize their opportunities as less deserving. Further, by excluding the stories which wander from the common narrative (specifically in order to reaffirm their model and tactics are working and money is not being 'wasted') we are presented with a homogeneity of experience and thus, a homogeneity of people.

Chapter 3: Interview Data and Analysis

The founder of War Child Canada, Samantha Nutt, has spoken publicly and bluntly critiquing the use of 'poverty pornography' and her organization's active work against it. Therefore, an interview with their Communications Director presented a unique opportunity to hear from an organization which is at the forefront of these conversations, and yet still is in the practice of raising funds. The interview conducted took place at the offices of War Child Canada in Toronto, Canada in February 2019 with the Communications Director (CD) James Topham. The interview format was semi-structured in which there was a prepared set of questions although they were not exclusively adhered to. The discussion ranged from his role and responsibility at the organization, War Child's communication guidelines and standards and how they came to be, and how other NGOs participate in, or push back against, the dominant discourse narratives and representations of the Global South.

3.1 'Guilt advertisements'

As CD, Topham makes decisions regarding photo selection for websites and other fundraising materials on a daily basis. He expressed the communications team faces serious challenges when deciding which picture to choose to represent a given campaign. When discussing the tension that often occurs between the fundraising department and communications Topham stated "there's a line and the line is very fuzzy on both sides. They don't come to me with like, the crying child pictures. Less than happy, yeah, which is sometimes fine. But there are no hard and fast rules" (Topham, 2019, Personal Communication). In his view, guilting donors through 'poverty porn' is not only irresponsible and unethical, it simply does not work the way it used to. Especially in terms of recruiting the more desirable monthly donors as opposed to one-time donations. Donors want "to feel like they are getting something empowering" (Topham, 2019, Personal Communication).

As opposed to using 'guilt advertisements', War Child has used some unique and creative campaigns in order to start conversations. One in particular Topham highlighted which attracted plenty of attention was a fake advertisement for a war training camp for children in a satirical attempt to raise awareness of the devastation and realities of child soldiers. However, the campaign gained notoriety when some of the general public saw the posters and thought it was real. Some individuals were outraged and called to complain, whereas someone actually called War Child to get more information on the training camps as it appears, they wanted to actually

send their child there for military training. This in the organization's view was a success as it led to increased media coverage and therefore awareness of their organization.

When asked specifically if there was ever a time he had chosen a photograph or ran an ad which he regretted later, Topham said he did recall one postcard of "four Sudanese kids looking sad at the camera, next to a hole in the wall, with no context whatsoever" (Topham, 2019, personal communication). While there was no direct backlash or critique of this photograph specifically, Topham emphasized the issue was not exactly the photograph, but the lack of context surrounding it.

Further interesting to note, particularly in relation to the literature review which found ample research on this topic coming out of the United Kingdom, was Topham's observation that the use of exploitative images is far more rampant in the UK. "I was kind of shocked those times that there are some campaigners running this just unbelievable [even the] big charities with safeguarding policies, but it was like weeping children...you don't really see that much of that kind of thing in Canada" (Topham, 2019, Personal Communication). Communications workers are not only tasked with finding images which are non-exploitative and truthful, but also sensitive to the cultural context with the understanding that certain images will be received entirely differently based on the cultural context.

Topham added that choosing and editing stories is often more difficult than selecting the perfect photo. Audiences are aware photographs are only a snapshot, but a story about the photograph is presented as a whole and complete narrative, which should not edit out key details, but has to still grab the attention of the audience. Especially when dealing with sensitive subject matter- "Where do you draw the line when there is a story about a girl who was raped? How do you tell that story without becoming exploitative? That's difficult. And then it's just a very long discussion" (Topham, 2019, personal communication). When faced with this type of challenge, he expressed his baseline rule is "if you think you're changing or adding stuff to manipulate emotions, you're probably doing it wrong" (Topham, 2019, personal communication).

3.2 Communication Guidelines and Policies

Topham expressed, and as is mentioned extensively in the research, consent can only go so far. While obtaining specific, explicit consent is necessary, "Once you get down to 'the photo should not objectify the child' It's like, well, that's interesting subjective judgment" (Topham, 2019, Personal Communication). After sharing with me their current Communication guidelines

for their Child Safeguarding Policy, Topham explained they developed them five years ago, reevaluate these guidelines every year, and provide annual training for staff on ethical photography and storytelling. This document is two full pages expressing in detail the guiding principles in obtaining informed consent, what 'informed consent' actually means, and asks key questions to pose prior to publishing any photo or story. Questions like, "Does the story avoid objectifying or victimizing the child?" "Are we staying true to the child's own words?" or "If this was a photo of your child, would you be happy?" (War Child communication guidelines, 2019, p. 17) Framing the consent guidelines in a more nuanced way displays an understanding of the complexities of 'consent' and an acknowledgement that even proper communication guidelines do not always ensure subjects are being 'respected'. By using personal language, presenting the child as hypothetically related to you, invites the observer to intimately connect with the image subjects. This tactic connects us to the child on an individual level, viewing them as a unique person rather than the homogeneity and erasure that has been so common in NGO advertisements. However, by using language that directly compares the audience to the subject these guidelines continue the trend of presenting the Global South as simultaneously the same and yet still different from the Global North, a trend Dogra (2012) identifies as inherently problematic. Topham further explained that even when staff are well trained on communication guidelines, they aren't always the ones making the decisions. When dealing with external vendors, advertising agencies who will create and design Facebook ads for example, the conversations can be lengthy and still not deliver what the organization expects or needs. War Child will outline the child safeguarding policy and make clear their stance, and yet companies often still come back with the "worst, guilt-tripping ads…that's what they're used to and that's what they think we want" (Topham, 2019, Personal Communication).

Within communication guidelines documents the trend words always seem to be respect and dignity. Whatever photo is used, the subjects must be respected, and their dignity upheld. However, whether or not a photo subject is being 'respected' is an entirely subjective judgement. The difficulty about these types of positions is that clear guidelines cannot dictate day to day realities. As Topham expressed, they are constantly changing and adapting their communication policies and guidelines to keep up with the cultural context, creating a more nuanced way of understanding the responsibility of representation.

Chapter 4: Conclusion and Recommendations

It is impossible to lay full blame or responsibility on one organization or on NGOs as an industry for representations of the Global South throughout the world. The topic is one overflowing with larger complex issues of race, gender, history, politics, coloniality, and media representation. However, by observing overall trends and dissecting the nuance in images and rhetoric selected by NGOs, the larger cultural implications can be analyzed to challenge how organizations present and represent both themselves, and the Global South. The images NGOs use are dependent on dominant cultural understandings of the Global South which, true or not, homogenize difference in an attempt to draw viewers in and avoid alienating them, even when tougher truths may exist.

4.1 We are all the same, and yet we are not

The seemingly contradictory message which permeates NGO images and discourse is presenting the Global South as somehow simultaneously contrary to, and yet the same as, the Global North. NGOs continually operate "through a double logic of 'difference' and 'oneness' which enables them to show the global poor as distant from the DW [developed world] and yet like us by virtue of their humanity" (Dogra, 2012, p.3). This is particularly true when it comes to representations of women; they are vulnerable, distant bodies, subjected to treatment women from the Global North could never relate to, and yet almost always display the timeless and supposedly universally feminine bond between a mother and child. This use of contradiction in NGO advertisements serves both to encourage solidarity while ensuring appropriate distance between giver and receiver. This paradox is necessary to shield donors from internal criticism of how their own lifestyle or choices, and their nations international relations and dealings contribute to, or at the very least are complacent towards, the poverty and devastation in the Global South. As Lister and Wells (2004) argue, "fundamental within this is the reassurance of otherness and of our safer social and political location" (p. 28).

This message is most commonly achieved through the headlines of advertisements. "Every family dreams of a happy and safe future" (PLAN Canada), "Join the movement" (World Vision), "Join our movement" (Oxfam), "Bringing us together to end inequality" (Care) for example. While the concept of 'solidarity' is utilized in an effort to avoid paternalistic language or neo-colonial sentiment, it can demonstrate an erasure of privilege.

While War Child Canada for example does go to great lengths to critically assess their image selection and protect their subjects from exploitation at all times, the framing of their communication guidelines continues with this same trend of sameness. The War Child Canada guidelines (2018) explicitly asks "if you were the child, would you be OK for the story and/or image to be presented in this way?" This ideological perspective may simply be the latest trend in order to accomplish the goals of fund and awareness raising. It may be the lesser of two evils but can still be inherently harmful. All of this analysis begs the question: if images like these cannot be removed from their postcolonial historical and social context, consistently playing upon signs and further indexing to existing concepts deeply rooted in the global cultural lexicon, is it and will it ever be ethical to use such a photograph?

4.2 Recommendations

Most NGO communications workers are aware of some of the power they hold in the global media sphere as a marker of acceptable images of the Global South. Their use of images can shed light on the "visual boundaries of newsworthiness" (Dencik and Allan, 2017, p. 1178) and contribute to how we in the Global North think about and discuss the Global South. There may never be a perfect way to do so, but through continual analysis and reflection, trends and tropes can highlight areas for improvement.

4.2.1 Context over 'rightness' or 'wrongness'.

Generally, in image analysis, there can be a base distinction of categorizing between 'positive' and 'negative' imagery, these can be both easily identifiable primarily based on facial expressions (happy vs. sad), body language, and to a lesser extent context, clothing, and surrounding. While this would be useful for larger sets of data in order to observe general trends, these broad categories can obscure essential nuance when analyzing materials closely. Quantitative data analysis in this field can be useful to get a sense of the current atmosphere and contextualize and explain a select image, however, blanket assumptions or judgements about certain types of images which have become loaded with signified meaning is simply another form of detrimental erasure. Furthermore, while semiotics offers a depth of understanding to show what an image is trying to say, how it is achieving that goal, and where that goal may originate from, it cannot dissect the full nuance and context to one photograph. This recommendation is suited both for image creation and further research in image analysis.

4.2.2 Involvement of photograph subjects.

As research into image creation has shown, there is often little to no involvement of the photograph subjects in the photo selection process (Girling, 2018; Warrington & Crombie, 2017). Even though informed consent for photographs is now common practice, there are few to no organizations that also have subjects participate in the image selection process. The War Child Canada Communication Guidelines (2018) state that informed consent for children includes that "they have been briefed to have a full appreciation and understanding of what this [consent] actually means (e.g. being used on our website to illustrate War Child Canada's work)" (p. 17). Although this is a more nuanced understanding of consent, one which is hopefully the beginning of a trend in NGO image creation, what would it mean to have photo subjects not only aware how the photograph will be used, but to be an active participant in the selection of the photograph? Understanding that giving the responsibility to photo subjects cannot immediately solve issues of representation as individuals may select photos from a place of internalized colonial ideals, consultation into how they desire to be perceived should be seriously considered at all stages of image creation.

4.2.3 Acknowledging their power.

It may be argued that because of the plethora of information available to us at all times within the modern media sphere traditional media, and by extension NGOs, have less responsibility or power than they used to in terms of representation. However, representation is essential not only to greater society's understanding of identity of a person or community, but to their own identity as well. Bailey and Hall (1992) argue "identities are positional in relation to the discourses around us. That is why the notion of representation is so important – identity can only be articulated as a set of representations" (p.21).

Modern audiences now are keenly aware of how NGOs can use signs and symbols to reference particular stories and cultural touchstones and how they can be used to manipulate their emotions to gain funding. NGOs are becoming increasingly more in tune with not only how their message is being received, but which tactics to use to keep their 'brand' unified. The task of selecting images of someone you have likely never met, and rhetoric to accompany the image which is truthful and also effective in producing donations is not an easy one. Furthermore, studying trends in NGO photos and rhetoric can signal a larger shift in the overall cultural discourse surrounding development and humanitarian aid.

Organizations on the whole, and thus the individuals who select photos, are actively aware of the interconnected histories and complex indexicality working beneath the surface of their photographs to facilitate the goals of how they want the audience to react or feel. However, this complexity is rarely acknowledged or examined plainly in NGO communications. NGOs hold significant power in how the Global North understands and views the Global South, and by challenging dominant narratives and discourses instead of relying on existing tropes and obscuring vital context, NGO imagery can speak loudly about how the 'other' is presented.

Appendices

Appendix A

Interview Questions

Introduction Script:

      While I do have a list of set questions, I would like this conversation to be free-flowing so we are able to discuss whatever is of most interest/concern to you. Overall, my research will be an analysis of the unique challenges that communication professionals face when deciding on what types of photographs and rhetoric is used in advertisements for donations along with a semiotic analysis of selected campaigns. Please note that you many decline to answer any question, at any time, for any reason. If you have opted for this interview to not be confidential prior to the interview, you are able to change this decision at any time prior to the submission of the final report and all information will remain confidential in all documents.

Questions:

1. Can you share some information of how long you have been working at this organization and how you got into this role?
2. Do you have an organizational mandate that guides your decisions for photographs which are used in any advertisements?
3. Approximately how often are you given the task of choosing photographs for advertisements?
4. That you know of, has your organization ever conducted audience research into the types of advertisements you use?
5. Is there any existing research you are aware of that is incorporated into your organization's communications mandate?
6. Do you have any formal communication and style guide documents?
   a. Do these any of these guides explicitly discuss what should or shouldn't be in a photograph?

7. Can you tell me about times where you feel like the selection process is successful versus those areas that can be improved upon? Tell me about some of your frustrations and experiences with this either within this job or others?

8. What do you think about the role of NGO's more generally in regards to responsibilities of representation?

9. Do you think there is a problem with over-saturation of images, or is this the use of images required to gain support?

10. Do you have a personal mandate that guides your decisions for photographs which are used in advertisements? If so, what is it and how did you come to this decision?

11. At any time working for any organization, have you ever used a photograph or ran an advertisement that you felt was not fully truthful? If so, can you share the details of this situation?

12. Have you ever received critique or criticism, from within your job or outside it, for an advertisement or photo you selected?

13. In regard to photo selection, what is the biggest challenge you face?

14. Is there any other information in regard to this topic that you would like to share and/or discuss?

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