

COMMUNICATING DEVELOPMENT: EXAMINING THE TENSIONS BETWEEN
EFFECTIVENESS AND ETHICS IN THE MARKETING STRATEGIES OF CANADIAN
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT NGOS

by

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Abstract

Over the last two decades, development scholars and communication practitioners have become increasingly aware of the relevance of communications in marketing development issues, as well as the influence these approaches hold over public awareness and engagement. By turning to for-profit marketing principles, non-profits seek not only to increase revenue and influence public action, but to leverage their brands and influence. In looking to the nature and diversity of NGO marketing strategies, as well as the debates that frame current marketing and development literature, this thesis examines if and how NGO communications can influence the public's engagement with international development issues in ways that are both ethical and effective. This thesis argues that the principles of effective communications often conflict with the principles of ethical communication; however, there is very little recognition or acknowledgement of these tensions among practitioners, something which must change moving forward.

List of Abbreviations Used

CSR	Corporate social responsibility
CRA	Canadian Revenue Agency
EMB	British Empire Marketing Board
GBP	British Pound
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
IRS	Internal Revenue Service
MSF	Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
SLF	The Stephen Lewis Foundation
USD	United States Dollar
WUSC	World University Service Canada

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Citizens in the global North play a vital role in combating global poverty through the actions they take in their daily lives, including donating, volunteering, lobbying governments and corporations and purchasing ethical and fair-trade products (Darnton & Kirk, 2011, p. 5, 13). They are capable of opening up spaces for conversation and debate in the public sphere regarding political, socioeconomic and environmental issues and, most importantly, they hold and provide license for government agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to take action on global justice and poverty matters (Darnton & Kirk, 2011, p. 5; Easterly, 2006; Annan, 2000; Carr & Rugimbana, 2009). Therefore, the public's level of engagement and their understanding of international development causes plays a critical role in global poverty reduction.

Within the global North, citizen engagement with global justice and poverty is heavily influenced by the ways in which these issues are communicated and represented by media outlets and development NGOs. In recognizing the complex and varied ways that development is represented to the public, it is important to analyze the roles that development organisations play in mediating the connections between the global North and South. Geopolitical changes, the shifting roles of international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) and the rise of global social movements, all play a vital role in the ongoing and rapidly changing ways development is constructed, presented and understood (Smith & Yanacopulos, 2004, p. 657; Darnton & Kirk, 2011, p. 5). As development organisations increasingly play the role of intermediaries in shaping of these global relationships, their representations of development have a powerful impact on the public's understanding and attitudes towards the global South that can be difficult to escape and amend (Smith & Yanacopulos, 2004, p. 661). In its *Live Aid Legacy* report, VSO, a British non-

profit, found that Western audiences see themselves as the powerful, benevolent givers in their relationship with individuals in the global South, who they view as the grateful receivers (VSO, 2002, p.3). According to VSO this is due to the Northern public's confidence in "out-of-date knowledge", the basis of which lies in the one-dimensional, stereotypical images of the global South that has led Northern audiences to believe that they have all the facts regarding poverty and global justice issues (VSO, 2002, p.3). Improving these relationships between supporters in the global North and beneficiaries in the global South is a vital step towards strengthening global justice, but first a greater understanding of how to best represent development and global justice issues for Northern audiences is needed. This thesis aims to examine how the relationship between donors in the global North and beneficiaries in the global South is socially constructed by unpacking the tensions between the effective and ethical representations of poverty and development by Canadian NGOs, and the ways in which communication professionals, who work with and within Canadian NGOs, attempt to navigate them. As we will see, the principles of effective communication often conflict with the principles of ethical communication, and it is within this space that this thesis aims to find a ground for solutions to these tensions moving forward.

1.1 Background

As the public profiles and influence of NGOs has grown in the past two decades, understanding the ways in which these organisations communicate and convey development issues to their Northern audiences is increasingly important. The INGO community has often faced backlash for its portrayal of poverty in the global South. This is mainly due to organisations using negative, patronizing and demeaning imagery in the name of development to increase fundraising and advocacy outcomes, as well as public interest and awareness. Though

charities have increasingly moved away from this technique towards positive framing and storytelling, as a whole, these practices still frame development as charity for Northern publics (Darnton & Kirk, 2011; VSO 2002). The prevailing representations of the global South have reinforced the perceptions of individuals and groups in the global South as passive victims requiring assistance and has reinforced the notion of Northern donors as saviors and heroes (Smith & Yanacopulos, 2004; Dogra, 2007; Benthall, 1993).

Research conducted in the United Kingdom indicates that although such framing has led the public to become more universally aware of global justice issues, citizens “understand and relate to global poverty no differently now than they did in the 1980s” (Darnton & Kirk, 2011, p. 5). Moreover, Canadian scholar Eric Young (1997) similarly argues that although there is increased awareness, “development is poorly understood, rarely considered and not a major preoccupation for most [Northern] people.” (p. 72). These findings are further corroborated by statistical evidence from the Canadian Inter-Council Network (ICN), which found that although the Canadian public is more motivated to address development issues, 43% of survey participants did not feel personally affected by global poverty, nor did they understand its complexities, ranking concern for global poverty (15%) well below a wide range of domestic priorities such as healthcare (55%), the economy (45%), government accountability (34%) and the environment (29%) (ICN, 2017, p. 4;10). As Ian Smillie (1999) explains this is because “[the] public knows little about international development or about the connections between development there and life here” as, in general, “(northern) support for development assistance is a mile wide and an inch deep” (p. 72).

Weak public understanding of international development and support for global justice issues may be partly a product of the communications and marketing practices of the

development sector, and particularly the efforts of non-profits to push public engagement and orientation towards charitable rather than justice-based perspectives (Danton & Kirk, 2011, p. 6; Cameron, 2015; Smith & Yanacopulos, 2004). Preoccupied with maximizing donation revenue, most not-for-profits are not in the business of presenting their donors with new ideas or educating the general public, offering instead “small feel-good opportunities to ‘do something useful’ for busy people living in a crass, materialistic world.” (Smillie, 1999, p. 73). As indicated by the ICN, the most common engagement activities among Canadians include donating funds and buying ethically produced goods (ICN, 2017, p. 15). In providing the public with low level engagement actions such as donating and purchasing products, Northern non-profits are increasingly turning their organisation’s members into simple financial supporters. And although these engagement models have resulted in increased revenue, the impact these strategies have on engagement appeal more to consumer-based values and self-interest than activism and political involvement (Danton & Kirk, 2011, p. 6;7). This has led to an overall decline in public support for development initiatives, as well as a lack of understanding of global justice and poverty.

Aggravating this situation further is the increased competition between NGOs for market share. In the last two decades, the Northern charitable sector has quickly expanded (Emmett & Emmett, 2015, p. 4). For example, between 2005 and 2015 there was a net increase of 360 charities per year registered by the Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA), with approximately 2,100 new non-profits registered in 2009 alone (p. 15). Today, there are more than 170,000 non-profits in Canada, 85,000 of which are registered charities (Imagine Canada, 2012, n.p). This trend is also mirrored in the United Kingdom, where over 160,000 charities are recognized by the Charity Commission of England and Wales, as well as in the United States, where the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) recognizes over 1.5 million not-for-profit organisations (NCCS, 2016,

n.p; CC, 2015, p. 24.). Confronted with this growing competition and the weak levels of public engagement, not-for-profits are constantly rethinking, adopting and experimenting with new strategies in order to pursue effective messaging and outreach, with the primary goal of increasing donor support. This ongoing competition and innovation points to a real crisis, as although there are more NGOs constantly working on tactics to increase public understanding of development issues, the strategies and campaigns employed by Northern non-profits often encourage either paternalistic, charitable responses or indifference (Cameron, 2015, p. 276). This has led development scholars to insist that greater attention be placed on understanding the roles, strategies and techniques used by northern NGOs to engage the general public, in order to combat apathy and encourage deeper engagement with the principles of global justice (p. 276).

1.2 Research Purpose

In the interest of communicating more effectively with potential supporters and activists, it is imperative that more research examine the marketing strategies of Northern non-profit organisations and how those strategies influence public awareness and engagement with global poverty and development. Not-for-profit marketing has become more and more sophisticated since the 1970s. Throughout the global North, non-profits and development scholars have become increasingly aware of the relevance of communications in marketing global justice issues, as well as the influence of strategies on public awareness and interest with development. By turning to for-profit marketing principles, Northern not-for-profits seek not only to generate revenue and influence public action, but also to leverage their brand, products and services within this ever-expanding, competitive sector (Andreasen, Goodstein & Wilson, 2005, p. 46; Kylander & Stone, 2012, n.p).

Aiming to improve the effectiveness of their messaging in the name of development causes, non-profits have increasingly employed influential marketing techniques to motivate individuals to join and donate to their organisations, volunteer their time and alter their lifestyles (Andreasen, 2006, p.4). This does not mean that for-profit approaches to marketing are universally embraced, as some development practitioners remain skeptical about using for-profit approaches to marketing to communicate their organisation's mission and values, as well as the stories of their beneficiaries (Andreasen et al., 2005, p. 4). In emulating the money-making practices of corporations, development practitioners such as Michael R. Maude (1997) argue that organisations which employ for-profit marketing techniques focus on short-term needs rather than long-term vision. In applying the principles of mass marketing to development efforts, Ilan Kapoor (2014) contends that organisations are at risk of promoting their brand and playing to capitalist interests rather than working to ensure larger, public understandings of the global development context (p. 87-88). This sentiment is echoed in the arguments of Andre Gunder Frank (1966), who contends that it is impossible to formulate an adequate understanding of development for Northern audiences without acknowledging the past economic and social history that has given rise to poverty and underdevelopment in the global South (p.1). More often than not, NGOs focus solely on the experiences and historical representations which serve to validate the experiences of Northern donors. But instead of acknowledging poverty as a historical process, they confront it as a contemporary issue, portraying the global North as a beneficent donor rather than a key, contributing actor in the cycle of global injustice. Therefore, for-profit based communication strategies are often seen by development scholars as leading not only to the misrepresentation of poverty but serving to simplify its causes and history. This outlook is applied to their view regarding the representations of the beneficiaries in the global

South as well, who are argued to be depicted by some development scholars “down to characteristics that can be used to prove a point, elicit a high emotional response and generate profit.” (Roenigk, 2014, n.p). Marketing scholars disagree with this outlook, arguing that in order to improve relationships between the global North and South, innovative marketing and communication techniques are needed to entice donors and longstanding supporters to pay attention and open their wallets. Andresen (2006) and Andreasen and Kotler (2008) argue that for-profit marketing techniques better equip non-profits to deliver messaging that encourages a desired behaviour, insisting that campaigns which draw upon human emotions and a donor’s self-interest lead to greater overall action and lifelong supporters. They argue that donors do not need to understand a non-profit’s mission in order for it to be advanced, but they do need to be compelled to take action. For marketers, the history of development and educating public audiences is not as critical as encouraging action and capturing greater donation revenue.

As I hold a postgraduate degree in Public Relations and an undergraduate degree in International Development Studies, I have seen firsthand the potential of marketing to inspire public action as well as the failures of this field to engage seriously with ethical questions about the representation of the global South. It is within my understanding of both the nature and diversity of NGO marketing strategies, as well as the debates that frame current not-for-profit marketing and development literature, that my study examines both sides of this debate in order to uncover how NGO communications can best influence the public’s engagement with international development in ways that are both ethical *and* effective.

1.3 Ethical vs. Effective

This thesis explores the tensions between effective marketing communications and concerns surrounding the ethical representation of people and cultures in the global South. In

investigating these divides, I turned to two separate bodies of literature. First, I explore marketing and communications materials, which underscore strategies for effective communications for the purposes of increasing fundraising revenue and public engagement with global justice matters among Northern audiences. Second, I turn to the research regarding the ethics of representation, inspired by post-colonial theoretical critiques of North-South power relations. Though both camps provide strong justifications and arguments for how to best communicate development topics to Northern audiences, there is very little recognition or analysis of the tensions between ethical and effective representation within this research scope. It is within this space that I aim to find room for conversation, addressing how the scholarly and practitioner community can better understand and resolve the tensions between effective marketing communications and post-colonial concerns surround the theoretical representation of people and cultures in the global South. For the purposes of this study, I define ethics/ethical as the “moral principles that govern a person’s behaviour or the conducting of an activity” and as “morally good or correct” actions (Oxford University Press, 2004). Here ethics is based and prescribed on the standards of right and wrong and avoiding harm, and in relation to the representation of the development context, it describes portraying cultures, groups and individuals in the global South based not on stereotypes, but on their own agency and context. I then understand effective as “successful in producing a desired or intended result” (Oxford University Press, 2004). In this context, and how it applies to NGO communications, this means the ability of non-profits to capture the attention of Northern audiences in ways that increase revenue, public involvement and action.

1.4 Research Questions

The primary research question that guides this study is “*(How) can development communications be both ethical and effective at the same time?*” To address this subject, the thesis asks a series of secondary research questions:

- (How) is it possible to reconcile tensions between post-colonial critiques of the representations of development literature and contemporary practices of communications and marketing?
- (How) do development practitioners and marketing professionals recognize and navigate these tensions?
- (How) can not-for-profit development organisations increase Northern public engagement with global justice issues?

In response to these questions, I argue that the principles of effective communications often conflict with the principles of ethical communication; however, there is very little recognition or acknowledgement of these tensions among practitioners. In seeking to find solutions regarding *how* scholars and practitioners can better engage with ethical questions regarding the representation of development and poverty, I contend that although there are some approaches to marketing that cannot be reconciled with the ethical concerns of development literature, there is potential for overlap. Although this navigation may be difficult, it is something that communications and development professionals need to address if we are to ever increase the global North’s level of public engagement, understanding and advocacy with global justice matters.

In addressing my research questions, my thesis is structured as follows: Chapter 2 provides an in-depth analysis of both the representations of development literature and the

literature on non-profit marketing. In examining the current conversations surrounding the use of for-profit marketing in communicating development and poverty issues, this review will address various strategies for representing development causes, and the best practices of ethical and effective communications. Chapter 3 is an in-depth look at the chosen methodology of my study. This section will explain how I approached my research problem before moving on to outline my project's research findings. Here, Chapter 4 examines the results of my document and website content and discourse analysis and Chapter 5, discusses the findings and major themes uncovered from my semi-structured interviews with a variety of staff members at various development NGOs and marketing firms. I then conclude my thesis by discussing the ways forward, evaluating my findings as presented in Chapter 4 and 5 and through arguing that a common ground of solutions between marketing and post-colonial critiques of the representations of development must be found in order to communicate international development issues in ways that are both ethical and effective.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter examines the current debates surrounding the use of for-profit marketing principles in communicating global justice issues. In conducting an analysis of both the post-colonial critiques of the representation of development literature, as well as pragmatic marketing strategies, my review addresses the broader issue of why representations of development matters and highlights the key arguments for and against employing for-profit marketing techniques to development topics.

To begin, I will briefly touch upon representation theory before discussing the post-colonial critiques of representation in order to assess the practical and ethical risks involved in marketing global justice causes. I will then examine the marketing literature to consider the advantages of using for-profit marketing strategies to increase public engagement, action and understanding of development issues, as well as to raise funds for development organisations. In looking to the debates that frame current not-for-profit marketing and representation literature, my review will underscore the potential of marketing to inspire public action, as well as the need for this field to engage seriously with questions regarding the ethical representation of peoples and cultures in the global South. Unfortunately, what is missing from this review is a body of literature that combines the critical nature of the post-colonial critiques of the representations of development with the problem-solving nature of the marketing material to address the practical question of whether and how it is possible to communicate ideas about development in ways that are both ethical and effective. Significantly, very few critical scholars or communications specialists engage with the tensions and areas of possible overlap between these two bodies of literature. It is on this note that I will conclude my review by identifying convergences and gaps

within these two bodies, as well as avenues that better address the potential for overlap, learning and further conversation moving forward.

2.1 Representation Theory

Sociologist Stuart Hall (1997) and theorist Ronald Barthes (1972) define representation theory as the process by which members of a particular culture use language or symbols and signs, to construct significance, value and meaning of all aspects of reality, such as people, places, objects and abstract concepts (Hall, 1997). Members of a particular culture are able to interpret and express themselves in a similar fashion, sharing a code that allows them to interpret comparable signs and systems of language (Hall, Evans & Nixon, 2013; Hall, 1997; Barthes, 1972). This is known as semiotics, an approach to ‘reading’ popular culture that treats events, objects and activities as the sign or language by which meaning is communicated (Hall, Evans & Nixon, 2013, p. 21). As the basis of culture is shared meaning, language functions as its representational structure, whereby objects indicate and represent cultural views, ideas and feelings (Hall, 1997). For Hall and Barthes, language is the central process by which human cultures generate and ascribe meaning or value, as it is not things nor objects in themselves that hold any fixed or true meaning, but rather society and human cultures who “make things mean” (Hall, Evans & Nixon, 2013; Hall, 1997, p.61).

Language is a representational system, one which uses signs and symbols, to denote an object, “to describe or depict it, to call it up in the mind by description or portrayal...to place a likeness of it before us in our mind or in the senses” (Hall, Evans & Nixon, 2013, p. 2). For example, in looking to a familiar object, such as a table, lamp or chair, a word which stands for the concept of that item will come to mind (Hall, Evans & Nixon, 2013). This is what Hall calls our *conceptual maps*, defined as what we use to draw quick and consistent understandings about

the people, objects, ideas and events around us (Hall, Evans & Nixon, 2013, p. 3; Shome & Marx, 2009). This form of representation is only possible through language, the crucial medium for constructing meaning. In sharing conceptual maps, a culture shares the same way of interpreting the signs of language, allowing individuals of the same culture to communicate. As a culture is made-up of shared meanings, Hall contends that an object or code will not necessarily share equal value across every unique human culture, leading individuals to need translation of language in order to move from the mind or conceptual universe of one culture to another (Hall, Evans & Nixon, 2013; Hall, 1997, p.61). Language functions as a *representational system* and serves as the key in unlocking and translating our socially specific thoughts and representations to others outside our own culture. By allowing us to communicate our particular meanings and codes, representation through language grants us the privilege of understanding and interacting with different cultures and groups. Signifiers and language permit us the ability to find commonality and to sympathize with those outside our own society; but it also allows us to convey symbols of power and notions of moral, technical, racial and political superiority (Kothari, 2014, p. 155). In the development context, the use of representation and language is critical for those in the global North and South to appreciate the values and frames of one another; and unfortunately, it is also a key factor in further perpetuating stereotypical interpretations, otherness and power models that are difficult to break (Hall, 1997). As stated by Schroeder and Borgerson (2005), “marketing representations have the power to make us believe that we know something we have no experience of and to influence the experiences we have in the future” (p. 584). This is one of the most powerful and serious outcomes of representational practices, as “people’s perceptions, even ‘misinformed perceptions’, often have ‘the weight of

established facts” (p. 583), a dangerous consequence for North-South relationships (Schroeder & Borgerson, 2005, p. 583; Gordan, 1995, p. 203).

2.2 Post-Colonial Critiques of the Representation of Development

2.2.1 *Positive & Negative Imagery*

In looking to the history of non-profit fundraising appeals, studies suggest that up until the late 1980s, many INGOs utilized “negative imagery” and text that portrayed Southern individuals as helpless victims, dependent on heroic Western saviors for survival (Dogra, 2007, p. 161; Benthall, 1993; Lissner, 1979; Chouliaraki, 2010). For example, images of starving children with flies around their eyes, or doom-laden images depicting famine, disaster and the dire need for western aid (VSO, 2002). Though not as frequently seen today, this type of negative imagery and messaging serves to exploit Southern poverty and starvation, and to trivialize the complex, multifaceted issues associated with international development (Dogra, 2007). It reinforces ahistorical understandings of poverty, despite a surface level of advocacy that may appear to project “counter-hegemonic messages,” and reduces, essentializes and fixes difference between Northern donors and individuals in the global South (as cited in Lewis, Rodgers & Woolcock, 2014, p. 8; Hall, 1997). In researching British NGO communications of the early 2000s, Dogra (2007) found that the range of imagery and story-telling used in non-profit campaigns were mainly one-way projections and representations that consistently ignored the voices of individuals in the global South. Dogra argues that this lack of well-rounded representation shapes “existing global economic structures, power relations and the current state of poverty across various regions”, perpetuating the deeply entrenched divide between the global North and South (p. 8; Dogra, 2007). Thus, although NGOs may claim that the language or imagery, they use in marketing campaigns is designed to combat inequality, the deeper

messaging in fact often reproduces stereotypical representations of formally colonized groups and ultimately reinforces unequal power relations between the global North and South (Kothari, 2014, p.162).

Eric Young (1997) and communication specialist Janice Nathanson (2013) characterize such negative forms of representation as ‘poverty porn’ which is defined as “any type of media, which exploits the poor’s condition in order to generate the necessary sympathy for increasing charitable donations or support for a given cause” (Collin, 2009, n.p). In using images and stories which portray the global South as a place of intractable misery, poverty porn works to generate impressions of despair, depravity and victimhood (George, 2001, p. 236; Cameron & Haanstra, 2008). Oftentimes the subject of this “shock effect” imagery is children, depicted as starving, suffering and helpless, shown with swollen stomachs, staring blankly into the camera. Although these images and stories may serve their purpose of fostering sympathy and conveying messages of urgency, Diana George (2001) argues that they mainly work to perpetuate easily-recognized and colonial representations of poverty for Northern publics. Non-profit organisations use negative representations of development to help their audience make sense of aid issues and convince them that poverty exists outside their daily lives, using highly emotional imagery and terminology to portray a dire need for monetary support. In using easily-recognizable, emotional representations of development, complex human experiences associated with poverty issues become more digestible, and long-standing perceptions of the cultural and intellectual superiority of Northern donors are reinforced (George, 2001; Cameron & Haanstra, 2008, p. 1478). In this imagery “poverty is dirt and rags and helplessness”, a material problem easily solved by Northern publics with material items and monetary donations; yet in reality, this is a problem with many faces and no simple solutions (George, 2001, p. 238; Cameron & Haanstra, 2008).

Unfortunately, this much more complex reality is not a relatable or easy sell for Northern audiences, leading non-profit groups to utilize tactics like ‘poverty porn’ because they are hard-hitting, emotional, and profitable.

Uma Kothari (2014) shows that, negative visual imagery and representations of development have been used since the early 1900s in order to promote “paternalistic relations between colonizer and colonized.” (pg. 166). In her analysis of the British Empire Marketing Board (EMB) 1926-1933 poster campaigns, Kothari asserts that the advertising strategies of today, though more advanced than tactics of the past, continue to follow similar patterns. Here, she notes that the EMB marketing techniques which traditionally served to solidify racial hierarchies between the “benevolent, colonial whites” and the “inferior, yet industrious others”, are still applied and practiced today, though less explicitly (p. 171). In utilizing patronizing and demeaning images and telling stereotypical stories of peoples and cultures in the global South, non-profit marketing initiatives are recycling traditional colonial advertising strategies, ultimately undermining efforts “to create a broader understanding of the underlying structures causing poverty and injustice.” (Smith & Yanacopulos, 2004; Kothari, 2014; Nathanson, 2013, n.p).

Today, non-profits have mostly moved away from using such negative visual imagery towards employing “deliberate positivism”, depicting individuals in the South as active, happy and optimistic (Dogra, 2007, p. 163; Chouliaraki, 2010). This shift to positive imagery has led charities away from guilt-driven fundraising pleas towards supporting positive empathy appeals in order to make donors feel good about themselves and the impact of their causes. However, Dogra argues that still within this positive approach, simplistic and ultimately negative

understandings of development are being reproduced by INGOs who benefit indirectly from sustaining the public's "sanctimonious attitude" perpetuated by their exposure to such images (Dogra, 2007, p. 163). She contends that to a large extent, this is the "lazy way out", one that allows non-profits to ignore questions regarding power and ideology by showcasing achievements, avoiding criticism and collecting greater donation revenue (p.168). Aid agencies and humanitarian organisations are "the new institutions of representation", whose use of imagery, text and audio, influence development discourse, practice and policy, and connect cultures (Dogra, 2007, p. 161; Smith & Yanacopulos, 2004). INGOs influence how development is theorized, and the faces and imagery of development created by these groups plays a critical role in how the public understands development discourse and how development is carried out in practice (Smith & Yanacopulos, 2004). In maintaining simplistic understandings of development by depicting Southern individuals as simplistic, one-dimensional characters, non-profits continue to perpetuate patronizing and demeaning stereotypes that directly benefit their fundraising efforts but undermine North-South understanding (Schroeder & Borgerson, 2005; Smith & Yanacopulos, 2004; Dogra, 2007). Such tactics continue to allow INGOs to shape experiences for their donors as participant observers, creating regimes of negative representation and signifying actions that lead to charity, rather than justice-oriented activism, by reinforcing stereotypical understandings of people in the global South as passive, incapable victims (Cameron, 2017; Dogra, 2012; Escobar, 1994; Hall, 1997; Jefferess, 2002; Kapoor, 2013; Kothari and Minogue, 2002).

Both negative and positive stereotypical representations of poverty take on the "simple, vivid, memorable, easily grasped and widely recognized characteristics" about an individual or group in the global South and reduce everything about them down to these qualities in order to

exaggerate and simplify them (Hall, 1997, p. 246). This in turn naturalizes and fixes difference, excluding what does not belong in order to maintain the social and symbolic order of ‘us versus them’ (Hall, 1997, p. 247). This type of representation typically occurs in instances of gross inequality, where patronizing imagery is used to mark power and exaggerate difference.

Oftentimes, these representations implicitly assume Western standards as the benchmark of living, perpetuating the notion of Northern superiority as reflected in the ways in which “the Third World and its peoples exist “out there” to be known through theories and intervened upon from the outside” (Escobar, 1997, p. 8). This kind of imagery is critical in shaping our understanding of the world and is the stimuli and signs of knowing that influence our beliefs regarding places and cultures in the global South (Schroeder & Borgerson, 2005). Postcolonial scholar Edward Said (1978) defines this form of representation as Orientalism. Said argues that these depictions have occurred since the Age of Enlightenment and have shaped the way Northern publics define themselves by distorting and emphasizing differences between them and cultures in the global South. Orientalism is a way to understand and represent the global South that is based on its place in the European Western experience, meaning that more often than not, the ways in which the global North represents the global South, has “less to do with the (South) than it does with “our” world” (Said, 1978, p. 2;12). Thus, whether using positive or negative representations, by using highly emotional, one-dimensional imagery, non-profit communications often exaggerate difference and reinforce inaccurate cultural stereotypes in a way that forms to the foundations of Western understanding (Said, 1978; Escobar, 1994).

Breaking away from these exaggerated depictions is difficult, as most Northern donors think about the global South in the terms provided to them by development discourse (Escobar, 1994, p. 12). Although non-profits have the ethical responsibility not to trivialize the multifaceted

issues associated with development causes in order to better support and encourage Northern awareness and advocacy. Representation scholars argue that more sophisticated stories need to be told with the support of statistics and analytical information, so that subjective, cultural understanding and the deconstruction of power hierarchies can be achieved, and issues of injustice resolved (Escobar, 1994, p. 213). Although imagery, whether positive or negative, will always have a place in non-profit communications, fuller pictures and superior representation models that appeal not only to the donors' emotion, but reason, are critically needed (Escobar, 1994; Cameron, 2017).

2.2.2 *Selling Development, Brand Image and the 'Self'*

Today's media is saturated with provocative and challenging images that continue to reproduce stereotypical representations of formerly colonized people and places (Escobar, 1994, p. 171). This imbalance is something representation scholars argue must be acknowledged moving forward in order to combat the clichéd images of unhealthy, impoverished non-whites in need of a Western savior (Clost, 2014, p. 245). According to Ilan Kapoor (2013), representations of development through NGO communications and marketing simply conforms to cultural and economic subordination by continuously ignoring the voices of those living in poverty and creating spectacles of human and environmental disasters (p. 85-86). Kapoor asserts that NGOs use specifically chosen representations and meanings in order to build brand image, increase media exposure and bring about economic return. In selecting specific imagery and language, the marketing of non-profit causes plays to the culturally produced meanings and definitions of subordination, working to manipulate Northern understanding in order to communicate messages and representations of Southern inferiority that reinforce elitist ideologies (Lewis, Rodgers & Woolcock, 2014, p. 12). As Kapoor argues, the effectiveness of organisations such as Médecins

Sans Frontières (MSF) and Save Darfur depend on “carefully planned and staged media campaigns” to build brand image and bolster public support (Kapoor, 2013, p. 85). Through carefully constructed website designs and social media campaigns these organisations utilize digital images and videos to convey notions of urgent medical distress and violence, argued by Kapoor to “construct spectacle” (Kapoor, 2013, p.85). In selling media-friendly images, news stories and sound bites, NGOs maintain relevancy in the public eye, which is vital to ensuring longevity in today’s competitive, crowded marketplace for fundraising. This better equips organisations to sell their messages and gain public trust (Kapoor, 2013, p. 88). By dramatizing humanitarian disasters and utilizing traditional, colonialized representations, Kapoor argues that non-profit marketing and communications represent development as a “permanent emergency regime” (p.93). This serves to reaffirm the basis of humanitarian missions and increases an NGO’s ability to sensationalize images and news stories to achieve maximum public and media exposure. By fetishizing and commodifying humanitarian issues, Kapoor asserts that non-profits are selling their brand to consumers in order to maintain relevancy, pushing classic hero narratives that position aid recipients as voiceless victims.

In selling development as an urgent spectacle of inequality, Kapoor argues that charities participate in “decaf capitalism” – a “humanized capitalism that manages to hold together both enormous wealth accumulation and significant global inequality” (Kapoor, 2014, p. 2-3). Organizations practice ‘decaf capitalism,’ for example, by pushing agendas of ethical shopping while using sweatshop labor in their supply chains, celebrities starring as heroes in development campaigns to serve their own self-interest and corporations partnering with NGOs to employ corporate social responsibility (CSR) campaigns to cover up brutal business practices (Kapoor, 2013; Ponte & Richey, 2014; Jefferess, 2012). Kapoor argues it is this celebrity

humanitarianism, whether the celebrity is an individual, business or INGO, that ‘decaffeinate’ development. These initiatives suggest to the public that the poverty faced by a distant stranger is solvable through sharing or liking a social media post, making a specific purchase or giving a monetary donation, which inevitably encourages completing the bare minimum, rather than engagement or political action (Brockington, 2014, p. 17;31, Kapoor, 2013, p. 4). In its 2011 *Finding Frames* report, the BOND institute, which represents British development NGOs, defines these strategies as transactional forms of public engagement, where citizen action is portrayed by NGOs as simple actions, such as sending a text message or signing a petition, in contrast to transformational forms of engagement, such as sustained political action (Danton & Kirk, 2011; Schwittay, 2015, p. 36; Jefferess, 2012). Transactional forms of engagement inevitably perpetuate apathy for development, as what is celebrated is not the supporter’s political or ethical position, but their consumer identity (Schwittay, 2015, p. 36; Jefferess, 2012). As these appeals to consumer action become more popular, aid initiatives appear increasingly simplified, manageable and marketable (Ponte & Richey, 2014, p.65). Appealing to consumer feelings of fulfilment, such forms of action rely on the “fortunate/unfortunate dichotomy” of North-South relations by positioning the solutions to poverty as charity, rather than awareness-raising and activism to confront the inequalities of the world economic system (Jefferess, 2012). Representing the structural complexities and the inconceivable magnitude of global poverty is thought to easily overwhelm an audience, leading INGOs to present poverty as a straightforward, financial problem to allow aid solutions to be understood as actionable, everyday deeds (Schwittay, 2015, p.7). In adopting a marketing orientation, non-profits place “little or no value on democratic ideals such as fairness and justice” as selling to self-interest is incompatible with accountability and advocacy (Eikenberry & Kluver, 2004, p. 138). And unfortunately, when

these branded products and selling points become the mechanisms for action, consumption takes the place of understanding, and development becomes a static, inescapable problem, with no historical or political context (p. 83-84). Representation scholars argue that the reliance of fundraising and communication strategies on the principles of commerce, rather than an ethic of responsibility or compassion, leads consumers to feel as though they are actively engaged global citizens, where their purchase of a product or sharing of a social media post directly results in alleviating development issues (Richey & Ponte, 2008, p. 711-713). This type of non-profit selling shifts attention towards the identity of the ‘self’ for Northern individuals, who are no longer are made to feel guilty about their affluence, but rather like heroes or saviors (Cameron & Haanstra, 2014).

In order for supporters in the global North to become more engaged with campaigns for global justice, marketing research suggests that non-profits need to place the everyday supporter at the center of their communication campaigns (Schwittay, 2015, p.6). Advertising and media promotions are often designed to encourage the self-imagination of the donor by placing them as the heroic actor in the fight against global poverty. Such campaigns are often associated with celebrities, who take on the role of a global ambassadors and encourage average citizens in the global North to follow suit, and be like them (Schwittay, 2015; Cameron & Haanstra, 2014). These sorts of initiatives have led scholars like Anke Schwittay (2012) to question whether individual Northern donors are simply using those living in poverty as instruments in the process of constructing their own meaningful identity (p. 6). In her study examining the microfinance organisation Kiva, Schwittay cites the organisation’s president, Premal Shah, as praising the NGO for not only empowering the poor beneficiary but also the donors, who can now “feel like Bill Gates” when offering small investments loans to impoverished, marginalized individuals or

groups (p.6). Marketing charity involvement as a way to make a difference not only allows the average citizen to feel like a hero and be like their heroes, but also fastens supporters in the global North to neoliberal actions and behaviours (Kapoor, 2014, p. 230). In playing to the hegemony of global neoliberalism, NGOs use programs like microloans and sponsorship to solidify their position as agents of capital, increasing their credibility within the capitalist marketplace (p. 107-109). Thus, such non-profit initiatives and fundraising campaigns not only function to encourage Northern audiences to make a quick purchase or donation, but also allow supporters to feel as though they themselves hold the power to effect change by emphasizing consumer actions and identity as a way of doing and being good (Schwittay, 2015, 20-22).

In appealing to Northern consumer identity, John Cameron and Anna Haanstra (2008), explore the use of sex appeal in representing and selling development causes. This marketing strategy again shifts the focus of development on to the Northern donor, who is encouraged to purchase a product, attend a particular event or post on their social media account in order to feel chic, all in the name of global justice. Real world examples of this strategy include non-profits using attractive celebrities like Angelina Jolie, George Clooney and Geri Halliwell to appeal to donors, advertisements for philanthropically tied products such as, Product (RED) Motorola cellular phones, whose on-line commercial starred bikini-clad, young, female models alongside the slogan “Saving Lives is Sexy” or even university programs, like Columbia University’s Public Health, selling merchandise to students with statements like “Sustainable Development is Sexy” (p. 1475). NGOs use sexualized representations and celebrity brands to increase their popular legitimacy, public credibility and to attract mainstream attention (Biccum, 2011). This promotes consumption, while also placing the focus on to Northern publics and charities rather than Southern individuals and the structural, political and historical causes of poverty and

inequality (Brockington, 2014; Cameron & Haanstra, 2008). In targeting the donor's sense of 'self' and their libido, Northern publics are encouraged to reimagine their participation in charitable causes as popular, sexy and chic, and to celebrate their affluence rather than feel guilty about it (Cameron & Haanstra, 2008, p. 1476; Cialdini, 1993). Unfortunately, this strategy often places the attention on the celebrities, not the causes, and serves to underscore the wealth and perceived cultural superiority of Northern publics over Southern individuals while celebrating consumption in popular culture. It also allows the Northern public to become "spectators of other people's suffering", and perpetuate unequal, global power relations (Cameron, 2017; Chouliaraki, 2013; Kapoor, 2013). By oversimplifying poverty alleviation and development issues, non-profit marketing which utilizes sexuality and stardom reinforces the Western representation of development by framing Northern public understanding of themselves as helpers and heroes, and citizens in the global South as passive, incapable sufferers (Kapoor, 2013, p. 22). Inevitably this shifts humanitarian sentiments from pity to self-gratification, thus legitimizing and reinforcing global inequality and maintaining stereotypes, while brushing aside Southern perspectives from popular development representations (Cameron & Haanstra, 2008; Schwittay, 2015, p.6; Darnton & Kirk, 2011; Jefferess, 2012; Chouliaraki, 2006; Chouliaraki, 2013).

2.2.3 *Moral Motivation*

According to a study by Ellyn Clost (2014), Northern publics may in fact recognize that NGO promotional and fundraising materials are simply used to inflict emotional or consumer behaviour to convince them that they hold the power to change the world (p. 245). Yet, these techniques, heralded by participants in Clost's study as smart communications ploys, leave some Northern donors perplexed about the morality of non-profit marketing strategies. Why then do

individuals participate in these consumer-centric campaigns and accept misrepresentations of development if they recognize these moves as cheap marketing ploys? Some scholars, such as Kevin Rozario (2003) and Susan Sontag (2003), take a cynical approach to this question, arguing that it is due to the uncomfortable pleasure that individuals gain from watching the misfortunes of others that inspires participation. Here, Rozario argues that the principle reason for Northern individuals to donate to a charity is the guilt they feel when responding inappropriately to another's misfortune, a titillation that compulsively motivates individuals to perform quick acts of virtue in order to rectify their emotional discomfort (p.425-426). Psychologists refer to this emotional discomfort as cognitive dissonance, whereby individuals find a way to reduce their psychological and emotional discomfort by changing their contradictory beliefs in order to align to their behaviours, instead of changing their actions (Cameron, 2017). For example, a citizen in the global North may believe it is important to behave ethically but purchases their favorite clothes from a company that they learn uses sweatshop labour (Cameron, 2017, p. 7). Instead of changing their behaviour, they choose to ignore this new information, seeking out justifications for their action and ways to still feel good about purchasing clothing from their favourite brand. Often INGOs appeal to these feelings in their marketing initiatives, hoping an individual's guilt will lead to a donation. Unfortunately, guilt does not necessarily translate into motivation for giving or rational behaviour, and can often trigger defense mechanisms, as "people react poorly to being told something is their fault" (Andresen et al., 2011 as cited in Cameron, 2017, p. 8). Frequently these campaigns lead Northern publics to turn a blind eye to global poverty in order to avoid shame and emotional discomfort, rather than make a change in their behaviour as desired by INGOs. In ignoring new information that clashes with their beliefs, donors not only minimize their own actions but seek out information and people who agree with and validate

their beliefs (Cameron, 2017, p. 7). As argued by Cameron (2017), psychology research indicates that people have a “finite pool of worry” (p. 12). Therefore, in continuously appealing to emotions, such as guilt, initial responses to an issue may prove to be successful, but the ability to maintain momentum will waver, as compassion fatigue and psychological numbing move in (Cameron, 2017, p. 12-13).

Guilt driven marketing pleas, such as emotional and consumer action appeals and celebrity campaigns, are also argued by representation scholars to reinforce long-standing, patronizing stereotypes of people in the global South that lead Northern donors to feel intellectually and morally superior to those in developing countries (Cameron, 2017; Chouliaraki, 2006; Dogra, 2012; Escobar, 1995; Hall, 1997; Jefferess, 2002; Kapoor, 2013; Kothari and Minogue, 2002; VSO 2000). According to studies done in the UK, NGO appeals based on guilt and emotional discomfort has led 80% of the British public to “strongly associate the developing world with doom-laden images of famine, disaster and Western aid”, and towards a poverty-and-disaster oriented understanding of the global South (VSO, 2002; Darnton & Kirk, 2011 as cited in Cameron, 2017). In Canada, studies have yielded similar results, finding that the consequences of guilt messaging has reproduced a high level of unawareness among the Canadian public of “the complexities and root causes of world poverty” and has fostered attitudes characterized by “helplessness, charity, paternalism and even racism” and a “dwindling level of political support for foreign assistance and aid” (Nathanson, 2013, as cited in Cameron, 2017). This indicates that non-profit communication strategies that seek to trigger feelings of guilt and pity among Northern publics not only perpetuate myths regarding the global North’s role in development but reinforce longstanding stereotypes of citizens in the global South as passive victims. Guilt and emotional plays may increase donations on a short-term basis, but

without engaging potential donors in processes of serious ethical reflection and their capacity for rational thinking, inequality, injustice and paternalistic understandings of the development context will prevail. Therefore, representation scholars argue that ethical, well-rounded communications which include the many voices of the development context are critical if any changes are to be made in the relationship between the global North and South moving forward.

2.3 A Case for Marketing

While the critiques presented within the representations of development literature are well-founded, there are also limitations within the research that need to be addressed. First, representation scholars must propose alternative strategies to avoid the long-standing, patronizing stereotypes which they contend are perpetuated by non-profit marketing campaigns. And second, these scholars need to grapple seriously with the insights of psychology research for public engagement and the science of human behaviour. In order for the public to remain interested in development causes, they must be persuaded, and that is where marketing techniques come into play.

2.3.1 *Marketing Defined*

Marketing is the “...activity, set of institutions and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners and society at large” (Keefe, 2008, p. 28). The main means of communication between an institution and a public audience, marketing is a process by which organisations create and demonstrate value for consumers in order to seize worth, attention and loyalty in return (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012, p. 5). Working to attract new customers by promising greater value and to maintain current relationships by delivering satisfaction, marketing utilizes social media platforms, direct selling, storytelling and earned media, with the goal of influencing behaviour to

make selling unnecessary and purchases inevitable (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012, p.4). Thus, in working to best meet socially-constructed human and social needs, marketing seeks to identify the unfulfilled wants of a particular, well-defined demographic in order to guide them towards new and attractive solutions that ease, enrich and improve consumer lives (Kotler, 2005, p. 9; Kotler & Keller, 2012).

With the goal of understanding the marketplace and building better customer relationships, companies and organisations employ marketing techniques to create value in the shape of sales, revenue and customer commitment (Kotler & Keller, 2012, p. 4). As argued by Kotler and Armstrong (2012), this is achieved through the *marketing process*, whereby institutions focus on creating worth for consumers through customer-focused communication strategies and engaging in public interactions. Serving to understand consumer needs, the primary goal of marketing is not only to sell products, goods and services, but to also influence the behaviour of a well-defined, public audience (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012). By understanding specific consumer wants and needs, this process works to divide the public into various, distinct subsets, known as target audiences, to better recognize their priorities, responsiveness and behaviours, and to better predict, control and target outcomes (Gallagher & Weinberg, 2006; Kotler & Armstrong, 2012; AMA, 2006). Marketing is an essential part of any well-run organisation, and is about much more than communicating offerings, it is about creating programs and services and delivering them (Leroux Miller, 2010, p. 12). Therefore, bearing in mind shifts in technology, demographics, industry and the economy, the goal of the marketing process is to influence behavioral changes by building brand awareness, encouraging engagement, improving message delivery and establishing relationships with intended target

audiences; all matters of particular interest to the growing non-for-profit sector (Keefe, 2008, p. 28; Kotler, 2000, p. 37; Andreasen & Kotler, 2008, p. xvii; 6).

In the last two decades, the not-for-profit industry in the global North has rapidly expanded (Emmett, 2005). As noted, there are over 170,000 non-profit organisations in Canada, 86,000 of which hold registered charity status (Blumberg, 2017; Blumberg, 2018). According to 2015 CRA data, registered charities generated \$251 billion (CDN) in total revenue and \$240 billion (CDN) in total expenditures (Blumberg, 2018). This equated to approximately 13.3% of Canada's overall GDP in 2015, making the charitable sector larger, as a percentage of GDP, than the following Canadian industries: real estate and rental and leasing (13.04%), manufacturing (10.36%), finance and insurance (7.1%), accommodation and food services (2.17%) and agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (1.65%) (Blumberg, 2017, n.p.). The non-profit sector has also grown to become a significant economic influence in both the United Kingdom and the United States. For example, in the UK, the Charity Commission of England and Wales registered approximately 10,000 new charities and reported an increase of 23.61 billion (GBP) in annual gross income between 2009-2017. The IRS, which recognizes over 1.5 million not-for-profit organisations, found that in 2017 the charitable sector generated \$410 billion (USD) in revenue, up 5.2% from 2016 and increasing the average 1977-2016 year-to-year change of \$8.94 billion to \$19.97 billion (USD) (CCFEW, 2018; NCCS, 2013; Giving USA, 2018). This sharp increase in revenue has been accompanied by increased pressure from Northern donors for accountability in the management of their contributions, as well as a rise in sector competition and growing public criticism regarding the lack of measurable progress by non-profits in reaching mission goals (Barry, 2017; Bennett, 2003; CAF/NVCO, 2009). Many organisations have had difficulties adapting to these new demands, as the mounting pressure for transparency and results, the

complicated nature of non-profit work and the need to differentiate from other charities has become paramount (Barry, 2017). While total donations have increased, studies in the US have found that charitable giving per household is approximately 2.2 per cent of average disposable income, and that in Canada, the total percentage of Canadians giving to non-profit organisations has steadily declined since the 1990s, with fewer Canadians between the ages of 18-35 contributing than ever before and the charitable sector depending on a quickly aging and shrinking donor base (Sargeant, Shang & Shabbir, 2010; Lu, 2018).

As competition for donor dollars increases, financial security requires that non-profits implement innovative strategies to distinguish themselves and engage potential donors. Thus, confronted with stiff competition for membership, donor dollars and support, non-profits must experiment with new strategies in order to increase the effectiveness of their messaging, reach new donors and set themselves apart (Andreasen & Kotler, 2008; Barry, 2017; Bennett & Savani, 2011). This has led to an increased interest among NGOs in for-profit marketing techniques, as the pressure on non-profits to self-generate funding, tackle new technology and to promote and influence public engagement with their causes is ever-increasing (Andreasen, Goodstein & Wilson, 2005, p. 46;48; Barry, 2017, n.p; Bennett & Savani, 2011). Though viewed by representation scholars as a manipulative tool, guilty of perpetuating stereotypical understandings and ignoring Southern voices, it is here that marketing practitioners like Katya Andresen (2006), Alan Andreasen and Philip Kotler (2008) urge development professionals to understand marketing not as an insidious and deceptive selling instrument, but as a beneficial tool. When practiced ethically, marketing is about influencing public audiences to donate. This leads Andresen, Andreasen and Kotler to contend that it is more unethical for non-profits to

waste resources and “preach to audience of one” than to use effective marketing techniques to reach as many people as possible (Andresen, 2006, p. 9; Andreasen & Kotler, 2008).

2.3.2 *Breaking Free of Non-profit Narcissism*

Andresen (2006) argues that there is nothing intrinsically immoral about NGOs applying for-profit marketing techniques to their causes, as those working in the development sector have an ethical duty to be as effective and efficient as possible in reaching their audience. Just like apparel, electronics, food and beverages, NGOs need to employ savvy marketing techniques to make progress towards countering public indifference and inspiring action (Andresen, 2006; Kristof, 2009, Fine, 1990). It is through the marketing process that non-profit organisations can influence individuals to purchase a product, donate money or volunteer their time, using communication tools to signify how these acts will lead donors to something of immediate, personal value (Andresen, 2006, p. 4-5). Much like the business world, Andresen argues that non-profits are constantly seeking out ways to motivate, influence or sell the public on taking an action that “carries a price tag” (p.5). These actions include audiences volunteering their time, buying particular products or donating money. In encouraging desired behaviours and selling and delivering services and products to their audiences that directly benefit their cause, non-profits are convincing supporters that they will in turn receive something of personal value in exchange for their time or money (Andresen, 2006, p.5; Fine, 1990). To best accomplish this exchange, Andresen asserts that development practitioners must remember that the public is not as devoted to their mission as they are, and that public perspectives and actions will not change overnight. By following for-profit marketing techniques, Katya Andresen, Alan Andreasen and Phillip Kotler (2008) argue that development practitioners will be able to think more dispassionately and objectively about their causes, allowing them to modify their messaging and better position

themselves according to the perspectives of their audience, their competitors and the non-profit marketplace. Often times, non-profits view their roles and services as inherently desirable and see the lack of motivation and support by the Northern public as the main barrier to their success (Andreasen & Kotler, 2008, pg. 56). But it is only when practitioners recognize how playing to their target audience determines their long-term survival, that they can go from focusing inward on their value propositions to facing outward, using language to shift their selling point from what donors should do for the cause to what the cause can do for donors (Andresen, 2006, Andreasen & Kotler, 2008). A donor does not need to completely understand an NGO's mission in order for it to be advanced, but they do need to be convinced to take an action. It is through a promised reward that an NGO can make this case (Andresen, 2006, p.131). In breaking free of non-profit narcissism and reaching audiences on their own terms, Andresen, Kotler (2005) and Andreasen (2008) argue that for-profit marketing techniques better equip non-profits to deliver messaging that encourages a desired behaviour, leading to fewer organisational resources being used and an increase in overall revenue (Andreasen, 2008, p. 29). Development practitioners cannot assume that their audience thinks or believes in their mission and values the same way they do. Therefore, in simplifying non-profit issues and using language to position causes from the perspective of their target audiences, for-profit marketing techniques can help not-for-profits provide their Northern supporters with clearer communications and stronger representations of what engagements and actions are needed for furthering their organisation's goals (Andresen, 2006; Andresen, 2008; Kotler, 2005).

Andresen asserts that in order to empower donor action and choice, campaigns should be designed to frame an average citizen from the global North as a critical actor in the fight against global poverty. A shared world view is not a requirement for an action to be taken, but in

providing the basic, relevant information to their audience and in making difficult development topics more digestible, non-profits will be better equipped to inspire action (Andreasen, 2008, p. 15). Non-profit organisations are funded, at least in part, by donors who believe in their causes, and practitioners must learn to influence donor behaviour through effective messaging in order to remain relevant in an increasingly crowded marketplace (Andresen & Kotler, 2008, pg. 4-6). Much like the for-profit world, non-profit messages must create a connection, offer a reward, inspire an action and stick to memory, by precisely and concisely conveying everything an NGO wants their audience to think, feel and do (Andresen, 2006, p. 164). In order for messages to be fully absorbed, non-profit communications must reach their audience's physical, mental and emotional location (Andresen, 2006, p. 186). This proves difficult as no two people interpret a single message the same way, due to limited attention and individual mental models (Andresen et. Al., 2010; Shome & Marx, 2009). Mental models, defined as an individual's understanding of their surrounding world, are formed based on "often-incomplete facts, past experiences, and (sic) intuitive perceptions", which guide a person's actions and effect what they pay attention to and how they approach situations (Shome & Marx, 2009, p. 2-3). These models serve as a filter, allowing individuals to seek and absorb the information that matches their particular beliefs and opinions on an issue quickly and consistently (p. 3). Though following these models proves to be illogical at times, Andresen, McKee and Rovner (2010) argue that irrational, selfish thinking controls the everyday decision making of any given public audience, with individuals only taking an action or receiving a message because it appeals to their mental model and emotions.

Non-profit communications and marketing practitioners are in the business of persuasion, and in winning over the hearts and emotions of their target audience, they are capable of challenging mental models and capturing their audience's support and pocketbooks (Andresen et

al., 2010). Thus, rather than pushing ideas and beliefs from a single, rational vantage point based on data or ethical reasoning, Andresen, McKee and Rovner (2010) argue that communications and marketing practitioners must use for-profit marketing techniques to appeal to a variety of human emotions that connect the feelings of their audiences to their causes. Critical development scholars, such as Lewis, Rogers and Woolcock (2014) and Kapoor (2013) challenge this notion, arguing that representations of development that seek to provoke emotional responses from donors inevitably perpetuate stereotypical depictions of global poverty and elitist ideologies that construct spectacle and sell media-friendly news stories. Yet advocates for non-profit marketing assert that instead of attempting to convert people to a cause or make them experts on global justice issues, marketing focuses on establishing a memorable connection (Andresen, 2006; Kotler). In better understanding the psychology of human behaviour, marketers suggest development practitioners should ask what influences and motivates individuals to donate and to change their behaviour. People act out of feeling and self-interest, and the more they stop and rely on their mental models, the less likely they are to donate to a cause or change an opinion (Andresen, 2006; Andreasen & Kotler, 2008; Marshall, 2014). As strong marketing campaigns are grounded in the perspectives of the audiences they intend to reach, by forming a connection and playing to the emotions of their audience, marketers argue that it is easier for non-profits to create a personal connection between an individual in the global North and a cause in the global South (Shome & Marx, 2009). Mental models are not static, they can be changed, and it through forming personal connection and first appealing to the donor's emotions, rather than sense of reason, that marketing frames development issues for Northern donors and changes beliefs in the long-run.

2.3.3 The Need for Emotional Appeal

According to research from the Center for Research on Environmental Decisions (CRED) at Columbia University, in order for non-profit messaging to engage its audience, it has to be “actively communicated with appropriate language, metaphor and analogy; combined with narrative story telling; made vivid through visual imagery and experiential scenarios; balanced with ... information; and delivered by trusted messengers” (Shome & Marx, 2009, p. 2). This is done through emotional appeal and contextualizing an issue or idea in order to capture a desired interpretation by the audience, an idea known as framing (Shome & Marx, 2009, p. 6). Framing is inevitable in communications, and how development topics and emotions are represented by development practitioners can drastically impact the success of a campaign (Stoknes, 2015). In organizing a cause’s central ideas, frames highlight ideas and complex topics for an individual which upon first glance may not have been apparent. They can also condense complex messages into short-cuts, using slogans, signs or symbols that can shift mental models, perspectives and emotional understanding of an issue (Shome & Marx, 2009, p. 1).

Framing a development-based topic as a large-scale problem using facts or figures to incentivize donors is argued by marketing scholars to often backfire. Facts and data often fail to motivate donor action, as giving is mainly done out of feeling, not thinking (Andresen et. Al., 2010 (B), p. 5). According to Andresen, McKee and Rovner (2010 (B)) “if you make people stop and think, they tend to give less,” because they are irrational (p. 5). This is where Nicholas Kristof (2007) and Daniel Västfjäll and Paul Slovic (2014) highlight the power of representing non-profit causes through emotional appeal. These authors argue that otherwise caring individuals easily become apathetic to mass suffering but are more compelled to act when they feel a direct, personal and emotional connection to an issue (as cited in Leroux Miller, 2010). In

an initial study conducted by Slovic, participants were asked to donate to help alleviate hunger in Africa one of three ways. The first was to donate directly to an individual child, introduced by name and a brief backstory; the second, to a charity that provided relief to over 21 million Africans; and the third, to help the same one, individual child, but as just one of many victims of starvation (Leroux Miller, 2010, p. 51). Slovic's experiment found that the greatest number of donations went to the individual child, though this later changed when statistical data was added to their backstory, leading donation dollars to drop significantly (as cited in Leroux Miller, 2010, p. 52). In a secondary study, Västfjäll and Slovic found that when donors were shown a photograph of two starving children, rather than one individual child, donations decreased by 15 percent, and when shown an image of 8 children, donations fell by nearly 50 percent (Västfjäll, D., Slovic, P., Mayorga, M., & Peters, E., 2014, N.P.; Leroux Miller, 2010, p. 52). Here, Västfjäll and Slovic argue that feelings towards a cause were strongest when a single person was shown to be in danger and declined steadily as the number grew (Västfjäll et. Al., 2014). This occurs due to the power of emotional connection, as individuals lose feelings of attachment when the number of those in need increases (Västfjäll et. Al., 2014). It is difficult to appreciate and understand large numbers because they often lack meaning and emotion, as "the difference between four thousand people dying and forty thousand people dying is hard for the brain to comprehend" (Västfjäll et. Al., 2014; Leroux Miller, 2010, p. 55). Relating to over a million people is impossible, but it is easy to find human connection and appreciate the plight of one individual. Slovic suggests that this occurs due to competing emotions, as an individual feels altruistic in helping one person, but when confronted with millions, they feel helpless and unable; declining to do what they can as they feel guilty about what they cannot (Vedantam, 2014).

According to Kim Leroux Miller (2010), it is not the mission statements of non-profits, but the way non-profits represent their causes to the public that get donor attention. By tapping into emotions rather than analytical thinking, non-profits can successfully raise awareness for their causes and gain greater long-term supporters (Andresen et. Al., 2010 (B)). Andresen, McKee and Rovner (2010) argue that creating emotional connection is paramount. They attest that development practitioners must recognize that presenting statistical and analytical communications to their target audiences will lead to empty actions or no action at all, and that feelings, one-on-one connections and stories are needed to inspire people to give and continue to engage (Andresen et. Al., 2010 (B), p.7). Giving is based predominately on emotion, and is not only a personal act, but a social behaviour, one that makes a supporter feel altruistic (Andresen et. Al., 2010). According to researcher Deborah Small (2007), individuals “pay greater attention and have stronger emotional reactions to vivid rather than pallid information,” and when a victim is identified he or she becomes the frame of reference, capable of receiving the greatest levels of sympathy. Therefore, Small argues that it is crucial for development NGOs to frame development topics using first person narratives and individual stories to engage their audiences, utilizing marketing to their advantage in order to maintain interest and persuade individuals to support their causes long term. This is not to say that statistical information and educational pieces cannot play a role in non-profit communications, but in order to grab a hold of new donors, and maintain relationships with long-term supporters, emotional connection between a non-profit and their audience is paramount (Small, 2007; Leroux Miller, 2010). Donors will be moved by educational information, statistics and figures only if there is emotional context to make the numbers real (Leroux Miller, 2010, p. 57). It is through creating a relationship between a Northern donor and the global South, giving them a clear set of communications, engaging

their emotional energy and representing development topics through personal connection, that individuals are likely to offer their support and open their wallets (Andresen et. Al., 2010 (B), p. 7; Andresen et. Al., 2010 (A), p. 7). Simply put, emotions, not rational thinking, is the driving force of giving. Connections, not details, will make the difference between a one-time donation and a lifelong donor (Steimer, 2019).

2.3.4 *Repositioning Development*

In moving away from traditional non-profit “spray-and-pray” strategies that focus on throwing out messaging to a wide audience in the hopes that it sticks to a few people, Leroux Miller argues that today’s not-for-profits need to work to form two-way relationships with their audiences and supporters, playing to demographics and drawing upon the self-interests of potential donors and supporters (2010). Here, she asserts that good marketing content is not in “fluff or pabulum” but in listening, talking, meaningful substance and playing to recognized representations (Leroux Miller, 2010, p. 4). As non-profits are in the business of persuading behavioral changes, if they cannot make a compelling case that prompts individuals to act and form meaningful connections, they have failed to make a difference, wasting valuable time, effort, and donor dollars along the way (Andresen, 2006, p.9). Needing to provide their target audience with the information that is immediately relevant to them, NGO marketing strategies can represent complex development issues to make them more understandable and therefore, more relatable and emotional through two-way conversations and playing to an audience’s values (Andresen, 2006, p.20; Leroux Miller, 2010). This is imperative as many non-profit marketing efforts fail as a result of poorly executed, unclear or overly complex calls to action and a lack of emotional connection (Andresen et. Al., N.D.(A)). When marketing programs fail, non-profits often blame the tactics, but marketing is much more than communicating about the

programs and services a non-profit offer; it is about effectively representing the services to supporters in ways that resonate with them (Leroux Miller, 2010). The aid sector needs to be more strategic in designing messages for specific target audiences, engaging in conversation and designing communications that appeal to audience emotions to motivate them to perform the actions that non-profits want them to take. In taking a target audience's interests, needs and values, and reframing them into specific messages that resonate with them, Leroux Miller asserts that changing behaviour can be straightforward and easy. In creating simple choices, explaining what they want an audience to do and why they think they should care, non-profits can make people feel good about what they are doing and motivate donors and volunteers to act.

Altering public interactions with development by playing to a target audience's personal interests and emotions are key strategies to engage and draw out desired behaviours and to move supporters beyond simple, monetary participation with development issues (Leroux Miller, 2010, p. 49). It is only in presenting clear, easy ideas to the public, that marketers like Leroux Miller believe NGOs will be able to influence people to take the actions they want them to take, and then building on this momentum to ask them to take further actions (Leroux Miller, 2010, p.20). Leroux Miller argues that it is much more powerful to emphasize the importance a donor is making in the life of one person and to evoke emotions, than it is to speak to one large audience using numbers and data to make a call to action. Though heavily criticized by representation scholars, in utilizing stories, emotional connection and strategically-chosen visual imagery, non-profit communications and marketing practitioners can reposition the public's relationship and approach to development, using mental models, representation and framing to their advantage. From the perspective of marketing experts, donors, governments, aid agencies and aid recipients are all stakeholders in the fight against poverty; it is a complex market that relies on cooperation

and harmonization between non-profits and corporate practices (Easterly, 2006; Annan, 2000; Carr & Rugimbana, 2009).

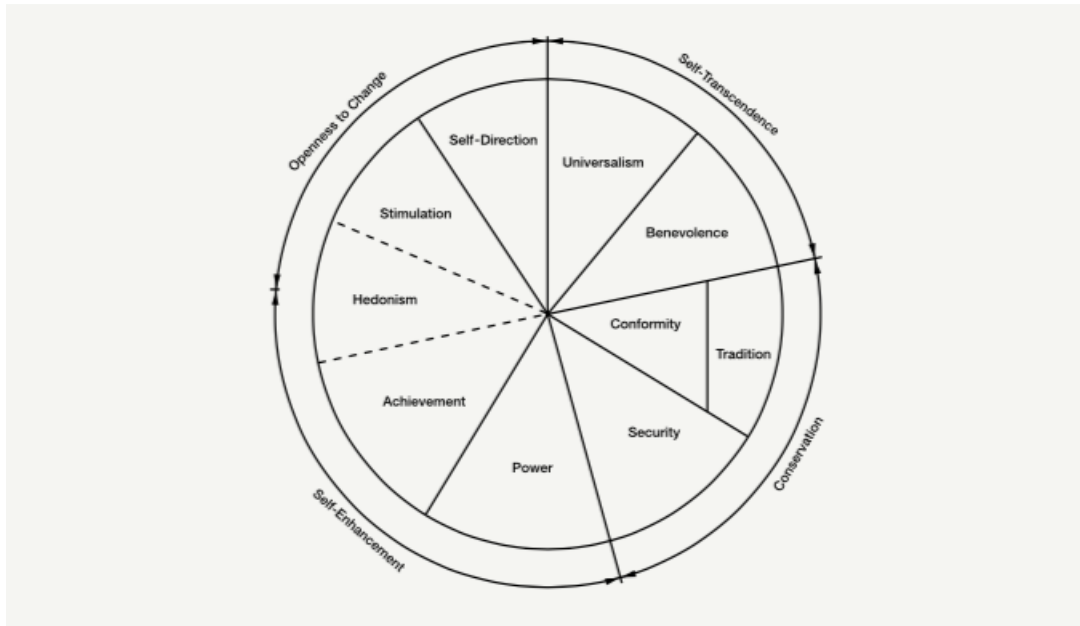
2.3.5 Re-framing Development Through Marketing and Representation

In an attempt to bridge the gap between representation and marketing literature, Andrew Darnton and Martin Kirk (2011) argue that in order to engage the public more deeply with international development issues, the non-profit sector must understand and learn to use value and frame theory. With a decline in overall public concern towards global poverty, Darnton and Kirk highlight the necessity of using values and frames to guide the public towards motivational representations and systems (2011, p. 5-7, 66). Values, defined as “the guiding principles that individuals use to judge situations and determine their courses of action” and frames, defined as “the chunks of factual and procedural knowledge in the mind with which we understand situations, ideas and discourses in everyday life”, are Darnton and Kirks solution to combatting public apathy and increasing action (p. 5-6).

In shifting NGO public engagement activities from transactional to transformational behaviour, Darnton and Kirk argue that practitioners can find positive alternatives to longstanding representations and aid-centric approaches that have dominated the public’s understanding of development issues for years. Recognizing that values are powerful guiding principles, Darnton and Kirk maintain that understanding values correlates strongly with predicting patterns of behaviour and influencing motivational systems (Darnton & Kirk, 2011, p. 7; 40). If development NGOs and stakeholders want to encourage greater public engagement, development practitioners need to use communications to appeal to the public’s self-transcendent motivations, not their self-interest, in order to encourage pro-social behaviours and engagement over a lifetime. Although Darnton and Kirk appreciate the power of approaching development

topics through emotional connection, they argue that development practitioners need to reframe the ways in which development is represented to improve the long-term relationship between development causes and Northern publics. Because Northern publics provide license for NGOs to take action on development issues, Darnton and Kirk argue that in-depth engagement, rather than slacktivism and clicktivism, needs to be encouraged by non-profit groups in order to bolster the public's interest and understanding of global justice issues (p. 71).

Frames permit individuals to understand their reality by allowing for the unconscious structuring of ideas and the shaping of reason and human behaviour (Darnton & Kirk, 2011). Founded within language, frames are easily identifiable and grounded within our long-standing mental models (Darnton & Kirk, 2011). A combination of both our moral and political outlooks and our common sense, frames work alongside one another to make sense of the world around us. Values on the other hand, operate relative to one another like a seesaw, meaning if one set of values is activated, the opposing set is diminished (Darnton & Kirk, 2011, 40). The “general belief about desirable ways of behaving”, values can be used as a motivational factor, holding influence across a variety of attitudes and behaviours (Feather & McKee, 2008, p. 81; Darnton & Kirk, 2011, p. 40). According to psychologists Tim Kasser (2009) and Shalom Schwartz (1992), it is impossible for the brain to plot two conflicting values together (Darnton & Kirk, 2011). For example, if a non-profit campaign were to amplify consumerist values, they would weaken their audience's humanitarian values, and vice versa. Therefore, if an NGO were to call upon one value, they would also be actively suppressing the conflicting opposite value. This idea is depicted below through Schwartz's Values Circumplex, a circular conceptual map created through the collection of 200 data samples from over 70 countries by the Schwartz Values Survey (Maio et al., 2000; Darnton & Kirk, 2011, p. 42).



(Figure 1) (Darnton & Kirk, 2011, p. 42).

It is critical for non-profits to understand this model in order to move from mass engagement to depth of engagement. In seeking out ways to better deliver both breadth and depth, Darnton and Kirk argue that positive values must be expressed in order for behaviours to be changed long-term. In looking to the circumplex, if a non-profit marketing campaign were to call upon a donor's self-enhancement, they would be activating their power values and directly diminishing their audience's universal and benevolent motivations. A commonly used frame in large-scale Northern development campaigns, by appealing to a donor's self-enhancement and power, Darnton and Kirk argue that non-profits perpetuate the 'white-savior' complex, representing the global North as the hero in the fight against poverty, and the Southern client as a passive, helpless victim. This often leads to cheap participation, such as one-off donations or 'clicktivism', reinforcing the public's self-interested values and weakening the values of universalism and benevolence. Though it may still be necessary to engage self-interested values a while longer, meeting the public's understanding of development issues from where they are, Darnton and Kirk argue that non-profit marketing must be used very carefully, targeting positive

values of universalism and benevolence in the long run to strengthen the public's understanding of development topics and increase long-term engagement.

When deciding upon which surface frame to call upon, many NGO practitioners choose to challenge harmful, damaging frames by attacking them head on. This can serve to reinforce and activating the public's negative perception towards that frame (Darnton & Kirk, 2011). It is therefore imperative that marketing and communications do not reinforce counter-productive self-interested values, or they will never move public attitudes beyond apathy and disinterest. For example, in continuing to use the surface frame and term "aid", the public perceives that the only way to tackle poverty is through monetary transactions, like purchasing a particular product or through giving monetary donations. Darnton and Kirk assert that the term "aid" is therefore best used to describe only emergency situations, where money is needed to quickly set-up initiatives like disaster relief funds (Darnton & Kirk, 2011). Another example is the "development" frame, which they argue perpetuates the metaphor of the global South as the "undeveloped child" and the global North as the "industrialized adult" (Darnton & Kirk, 2011, p. 91). Here, Darnton and Kirk suggest alternative positive frames and language to foster transformational change. Instead of using the term "aid", they suggest "mutual support" and "partnership", and rather than using "development" they recommend "well-being; freedom; responsibility" (Darnton & Kirk, 2011, p. 94). In changing the sign, Darnton and Kirk are suggesting that development practitioners shift the signifying language and representations of development, changing the relationship between the public and therefore, their level of engagement.

Similarly, the Gates Foundation-funded *Narrative Project* also looks to transform the way the development sector speaks about itself (North, 2014, p. 1). In finding better ways to build public awareness and change public perception, it too urges for a shift in development

language by arguing that the current engaged public audience is small and holds negatively entrenched attitudes towards global justice matters (North, 2014, p. 15). In underscoring the need to communicate to the public that the world's poorest people are capable of and desire to reach the end goal of self-reliance, both the *Finding Frames* report and the *Narrative Project* contend that the best narratives to articulate development causes are terms such as independence, choice and hard work (North, 2014, p. 22;40). Thus, development practitioners must work to reframe citizens in the global South to be seen as individuals, not as one mass group, who share the values, frames and potential of individuals in the global North, but face different challenges. In utilizing language to change the public dialogue on development in order to convince Northern citizens that they are capable of making a difference, it is imperative that development practitioners work to reframe moral wrong as “wasted potential, not helpless suffering,” and reframe those affected by poverty as sharing Northern values (North, 2014, p. 35-26). It is imperative that they change their mental model.

2.4 Gaps in the Literature

As shown, both bodies of literature have highlighted the practical and ethical risks and advantages involved in using marketing practices to increase public engagement with development issues. Nonetheless, due to the low levels of public engagement with global justice matters in the North, and the capitalist context in which they live, it is important we carefully consider whether using for-profit business principles might be a risk worth taking.

As argued by Matt Smith and Helen Yanacopulous (2004) and John Cameron (2015; 2017) the challenge for public engagement is “not to increase charitable giving, but to shift public understandings to long-term justice-based approaches,” involving both critical and political action (Cameron & Haanstra, 2015, p. 277). According to research based in the UK,

public awareness and understanding initiatives such as the Make Poverty History campaign call for critical and political action that can legitimise, provoke and perpetuate stereotypical public engagement with development matters, as well as perpetuate public disillusionment (Danton & Kirk, 2011). Here, representations of development scholars argue that in oversimplifying poverty alleviation and aid initiatives, non-profit marketing campaigns reinforce global inequality by maintaining and perpetuating colonial era, paternalistic stereotypes, while brushing aside Southern perspectives and voices from popular development representations (Cameron & Haanstra, 2008; Schwittay, 2015, p.6; Darnton & Kirk, 2011). On the other hand, marketing scholars indicate that the only way forward is to approach these topics with a for-profit mentality, playing on human emotions, appealing to the donor's sense of self and forming emotional connections between individuals in the global North to those in the South in order to incentivize new donors and longstanding supporters to open their wallets and engage in political action. They argue that donors do not need to understand a non-profit's mission in order for it to be advanced, but they do need to be compelled to take action.

Unfortunately, what is missing in all of this literature is a serious analysis of strategies to increase public engagement with global development issues from the perspective of both effectiveness and ethical representations. Although Darnton and Kirk highlight the power of reframing the terms of development, there is a tremendous lack of additional solutions provided in this literature regarding how to combine the effectiveness of marketing practice with ethical depictions of development topics. Essentially these two bodies of literature critique one another, without actually engaging with the ideas presented by the other side. Although lots of valid points are raised, neither camp helps us get towards a clearer understanding of how communication strategies for global justice might become both more effective and ethical. In the

following chapter, I will address the methods I used to grapple with this debate and navigate these tensions.

Chapter 3: Methods

This study seeks to understand the ways in which communications professionals, who work with and within Canadian development NGOs, understand and attempt to resolve the tensions between effective marketing communications and post-colonial concerns surrounding the ethical representation of people and cultures in the global South. In addressing this tension, I used a variety of qualitative research methods.

Qualitative research is argued by Jane Ritchie and Jane Lewis (2003) as a “...naturalistic, interpretive approach concerned with understanding the meanings which people attach to phenomena (actions, decisions, beliefs, values etc.) within their social worlds” (p.3). In seeking to understand a group’s “social and material circumstances”, this approach to research is “...particularly well suited to exploring issues that hold some complexity and to studying processes that occur over time.” (p.5).

In following these principles, I began my research process by conducting an analysis of Canadian NGOs’ marketing materials, such as online and print documents, and completed an in-depth analysis of 5 Canadian development charity websites in order to better understand the messages, meanings and perspectives these organisations communicated to the Canadian public over a one-year period. I then utilized the findings and the themes that emerged to craft a series of questions which I discussed in semi-structured interviews with 22 staff members at 16 different development NGOs and marketing firms. In employing a qualitative approach to my research, I was able to better address my research problem from both a post-colonial critiques of the representations of development and marketing perspective. This approach provided insights into a holistic understanding of how non-profit communications professionals in Canada

recognise and navigate the challenges of ethically and effectively communicating development topics to the Canadian public on a daily basis.

3.1 Document and Website Analysis

Tim May (2011) argues that documents have “...the potential to inform and structure the decisions which people make on a daily and longer-term basis; they also constitute particular readings of social events.” (p.192). Serving as a “reflection of reality” (p. 198), what people choose to record is in and of itself “informed by decisions which, in turn, relate to the social, political and economic environments of which they are a part” (p.199). As print and web documents are valuable for the language, imagery and information in which they contain, they are also critically valuable for what they leave out, as “they do not simply reflect, but also construct social reality and versions of events” (p.199). It is from this position that a document and website analysis served as a vital method for my research, allowing space for both a technical analysis from the perspective of marketing and communications, as well as analysis of post-colonial concerns of ethical representation. As indicated by the ICN, Canadians find the most helpful resources for learning about global poverty to be websites, social media and online campaigns (ICN, 2017, p. 35). Therefore, as citizen engagement and relationships with global justice issues are heavily influenced by the ways in which global justice matters are represented by development NGOs, it is imperative to analyze the complex and contentious ways development non-profits chose to frame development issues to the public (Darnton & Kirk, 2011). In allowing for both the examination and interpretation of elements directly addressed and missing, document and website analysis helped me to dissect Canadian development NGOs marketing materials to identify what messages are being conveyed to the Canadian public.

3.1.1 Document Analysis Sample

All documents used in this study were publicly sourced and collected through email subscription. The chosen documents include e-newsletters, fundraising pleas and blog posts. All were gathered and accessed via links in the collected emails which took the reader directly to the NGO webpage or blog. None of the materials were gathered as a result of making donations, as the public nature of these sources was imperative in demonstrating how Canadian non-profits project their image, brand, cause and mission to the Canadian public. I specifically chose to utilize email subscription as this marketing tool not only serves as a way to bring subscribers to the organisation's website, but also offers NGOs the opportunity to build brand loyalty and better interact with their supporters through idea sharing and storytelling (Baggott, ch.2). As outlined by Chris Baggott (2011), email also offer organisation's the opportunity to personalize messaging and track user engagement, allowing NGOs to "...segment customers down to an audience of one" and offer fine-tuned messages (ch.2). Email also can be sent out at roughly the cost of 2 cents per person, making them a vital tool for larger and smaller organisations alike (Baggott, ch.2).

The chosen social justice and development non-profits that provided these documents are among Canada's most nationally supported and recognized, as well as smaller, lesser-known Canadian organisations. These NGOs are: Amnesty International Canada, Amref Health Canada, Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) Canada, Inter Pares, OXFAM Canada, The Stephen Lewis Foundation (SLF), UNICEF Canada and World University Service of Canada (WUSC). It is important to note that the organisations chosen for my both my document analysis and website analysis were not necessarily among the social justice and international development NGOs that were selected for a semi-structured interview. In selecting

the INGOs for my document analysis, I placed the names of 40 registered Canadian development charities into an online name draw and chose 8 at random. This ensured that there was no bias in my selection process. I collected 186 emails over the course of a 12-month period in 2017, deciding arbitrarily to focus on 3 months (April, May and June) due to the sheer amount of data. I then conducted a discourse analysis of the chosen documents, which I will explain in greater depth below.

3.1.2 *Website Analysis Sample*

I analysed the websites of 5 Canadian-based development charities: Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières Canada, Islamic Relief Canada, Plan Canada, WE Charity and World Vision Canada. I selected these organisations based on the 2015-2017 CRA registered charity data by ranking organisations by total revenue and highest dollar amount of tax-receipted gifts. Given that the top 5 revenue earners of those years were all child sponsorship charities, I selected the top two (Plan Canada and World Vision Canada) and then moved down the list to include 3 additional INGOs that focused on other types of development programming (Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières, Islamic Relief Canada and WE Charity). In addition to avoiding bias, selecting the top 5 in this way allowed me to focus on the organisations with the largest budgets, capable of spending more on communication strategies and programming, and whose marketing campaigns were most successful in capturing the attention of Canadian donors.

To ensure consistency, I approached each website's analysis in the same way, examining each site's home page, about us page and donate page. I systematically selected these pages based on usability, in that navigating to these pages took the fewest number of clicks and were therefore much more likely to be seen by a site visitor (Zeldman, p. 97). According to web designer Jeffrey Zeldman (2001) "web users are driven by a desire for fast gratification", and in

following the “Three-Click Rule,” he stresses that site visitors should preferably be able to reach the information or page they are searching for within three mouse clicks (p.98). Zeldman asserts that web designers typically structure webpages into critical content categories to accommodate this, as it confirms to the site visitor that they have “come to the right place” (p.97). Therefore, I chose these specific pages not only because they were user-friendly and accessible, but because they also held the most vital and basic information donors need and search for regarding an NGO’s mission, values and programming.

My study of the webpages was divided up into two approaches, content and discourse analysis. I took screenshots of each of the three selected pages on the first of every month throughout 2017 in order to take my analysis as strong as possible. This allowed me to take detailed notes and refer back to the ever-changing sites months later. Upon taking screenshots of each web page, I began my content analysis which, as described by Hsiu-Fang Hsieh and Sarah E. Shannon (2005), “...involves counting and comparisons, usually of keywords or content, followed by the interpretation of the underlying text” (pg. 1277). Regarded as a coding process, I utilized content analysis to quantify the words, images and text data from each of the chosen organisation’s selected webpages (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). In doing so, I was able to compare and contrast each page to subjectively identify patterns, themes and meanings, which I used moving forward in to my discourse analysis of image and text data.

3.1.3 Discourse and Image Analysis of Documents and Website Materials

In completing a discourse analysis of both the documents and chosen websites I borrowed from the marketing and design principles of Philip Kotler (2005; 2008; 2011), Alan Andreasen (2008) and Katya Andresen (2006), to understand the chosen materials as a means of delivering ‘product’ or service value, compelling action and persuading shifts in behaviour. In

approaching communications materials in this way, I sought to understand the thinking and decisions behind these document's image and text data, analyzing them from a standpoint of brand awareness, audience viewpoint and market worth. I then also analysed the same materials by applying representation theory, as presented through the works of Roland Barthes (1972), Arturo Escobar (1995), Stuart Hall (1997), Jan Nederveen Pieterse (1992) and Edward Said (1978) to examine the discursive and semiotic meanings of the various material's image, text and production elements. As representation theory values language as a key element of forming frames and understanding, doing this allowed me to best appreciate how each document and webpage worked to demonstrate a particular meaning of development to the Canadian public, serving to shape their understanding of people and cultures in the global South.

To ensure consistency throughout my analysis, I created a 'best practice' checklist for analysing each document and website, pulling specific questions, ideas and strategies from the works of the above authors. In particular, my checklist focused on the post-colonial work of Jan Nederveen Pieterse (1992) to highlight questions regarding the relationships of power between the viewer and the viewed, Edward Said (1978) and Arturo Escobar's (1995) work regarding the construction of Self and the Other, and Stuart Hall's (2013) interpretation of Roland Barthes' (1972) work regarding the idea of myth and signification, as well as his approach to Michael Foucault's understanding of language and knowledge. I then employed the BOND Institute's Finding Frames (2011) report, to address the concept of framing, and how NGO language and word choice shape public understandings of development, before turning to the marketing and communications literature of Philip Kotler (2005; 2008; 2011), Alan Andreasen (2008), Katya Andresen (2006) and Jeffrey Zeldman (2001), to incorporate questions regarding the use of branding, audience engagement and web navigation. In setting up my analysis in this way, I was

able to ‘check-off’, and thus ensure, that I assessed each document and website consistently and objectively.

3.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

For this research I used semi-structured interviews, a technique that follows a suggested interview framework while offering space for the interviewee to discuss their own opinions, positions and thoughts (Willis, 2006, p. 144). This method allowed me to direct the discussion towards the areas which I felt to be the most important, while also providing the space for further conversation, clarification and greater rapport with the interviewees. In leading to a variation of responses and information, my use of semi-structured interviews allowed participants to shed light and make sense of my topic in a variety of ways, while offering space for further, detailed discussion of real-world positions, experience and knowledge which I may not have been privy to or considered while conducting my literature review and document analysis.

3.2.1 *Interview Sample*

Through this process, I completed 22 interviews with a variety of staff members at 16 different development NGOs and marketing firms based in two major Canadian cities. Although due to confidentiality I am unable to disclose all the reasons why I chose specific marketing firms and development NGOs, one of the main selection criteria was location. The study population for this research involved the communications, fundraising and marketing directors and relevant staff at Canadian-based international development NGOs as well as several communication officers at specialty marketing firms focused on development non-profit communications. The chosen NGOs were selected on the basis of size and budget, regional location and their approaches to public engagement and communications. Marketing firms were selected based on clientele, size, regional location and approaches to public engagement and

communications. Specific participants were chosen on the basis of their position and role within the selected organisations. No other criteria, such as age, gender or ethnicity were used in determining whether to include or exclude study participants. In ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of my participants, I will not disclose which two cities Canadian I visited, nor will I state the names or other identifying features of the organisations I spoke with.

3.2.2 Interview Process

Initial contact was made with participants in this study via email message, along with an attached formal invitation (Appendix A). Upon agreeing to participate, a follow-up message was sent to arrange logistical details of the interview and to explain the informed consent process. Here I attached a copy of my project's consent form (Appendix B) to the email as well as an in-depth outline of the study (Appendix C). This granted interviewees time to review the consent document and to ask questions, voice concerns or withdraw from the study prior to the actual interview.

Interviews took place in a location specified by the participant or, if unable to meet in person, over the phone, and lasted approximately 60-90 minutes. This included time needed to review and sign the consent form, as well as time to complete the interview itself. All interviews were recorded using a hand-held audio recording device upon receiving verbal consent from the participant. This method was utilized in assisting interpretation as recording "...allows the interviewer to concentrate on the conversation..." while also guarding against "...interviewers substituting their own words for those of the person being interviewed" (May, 2010, p. 152). Therefore, allowing me to give my undivided attention and better guide the conversation with my participants, all the while ensuring accuracy of details for future analysis.

Each interview began with questions about the participant's education and career background in order to understand whether they were coming from primarily a development or marketing and communications background (see list of interview questions in Appendix D). This was important as their educational backgrounds tended to be reflected in their responses in the later-half of the interview. I then asked questions regarding how the participant managed the tensions between marketing tactics and ethical representations of development issues. In asking about their perspectives on communications and marketing, and to what extent these tensions resonated with them, the discussion highlighted how communication staff at different non-profit organisations and marketing groups were grappling with this debate or not.

3.2.3 *Analysis of Interviews*

As my semi-formal interviews were audio-recorded, I transcribed the entirety of each conversation to ensure that all responses were accounted for during my analysis. This was critical for uncovering details missed during the interview process and for finding commonalities among my research participants (Rapley, 2008). This process also allowed me to gain greater familiarity with my data, facilitating the process of grouping and consolidating code and themes.

Because the information collected in my study was qualitative, I utilized codes to make analytic sense of my data and create thematic categories. Used as an empirical problem-solving technique, a code is "...most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative (sic) attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (Saldaña, 2008, p. 3). In sorting, processing and conceptualizing information, researchers utilize codes to identify sequences in data "...that help explain why those patterns are there in the first place" (Bernard, 2006, p. 452). In larger datasets, this process of pattern hunting is outlined by Johnny Saldaña (2008) as "both natural and deliberate- natural because there are mostly repetitive patterns of action and

consistencies... and deliberate because one of the coder's primary goals is to find these repetitive patterns of action and consistencies..." (p. 5).

As codes label and link categories, researchers often utilize prior background knowledge of their investigation to create overarching headings and codes, "...raising questions and giving provisional answers about categories and about their relations" throughout the process (May, 2010, p. 152). As my final method of investigation, coding allowed me to utilize my knowledge from my literature review and document analysis to hunt for specific information. As one cannot easily measure qualitative data, reflection and meticulous attention to categorizing my interviews was critical in determining the overall patterns and themes of my research (Saldaña, 2008). A theme is argued by Saldaña as "an outcome of coding, categorization and analytic reflection," therefore in using rounds of coding, I was able to better highlight overarching themes in my research and draw comparison between my interviewee's responses.

3.3 Limitations and Challenges

The most significant limitations of my study are its limited scope, the biased nature of qualitative research and the lack of sources that bridge the gap between effective marketing communications and post-colonial concerns about the representation of poverty and development.

3.3.1 *Limited Scope*

The limited scope of my study can be noted in both my document and web analysis, as well as my interview process. As previously outlined, my document analysis focused on 10 organisations, my web analysis on 5 and my interviews on a sample size of 22 individuals from 16 different non-profits and specialty marketing firms. Though my document and web analysis are based on a relatively small number of development NGOs, all are among the biggest in

Canada and were chosen based on consistent selection criteria. However, I will note that because websites are consistently changing there may have been content that I missed, as I collected my materials on the first of every month in 2017. Therefore, the capacity to generalize on the basis of these few organisations is possible but still limited, and though ultimately it would have been ideal to have done a thorough analysis of every Canadian-based development non-profit, within the parameters and resources of this study, it was simply not feasible.

During my interview process, I contacted 30 organisations by phone and email, and issued a number of additional follow-ups. Of the 30 I contacted, 14 organisations did not respond or were unable to participate in my study. In addition, I was unable to interview an equal amount of development non-profits to specialty marketing firms. The Canadian marketplace has few development focused marketing agencies, and due to budget restrictions, many non-profits create their own marketing and communications content in-house. Nonetheless, I did interview a significant proportion of the non-profits and boutique marketing firms in my chosen geographical area, and while I did not interview all of them, this study includes a strong representative sample of the two groups.

3.3.2 *Bias of Qualitative Research*

Bias is understood as “...any tendency which prevents unprejudiced consideration of a question...”, whereby “...systematic error [is] introduced into sampling or testing by selecting or encouraging one outcome or answer over others” (Pannucci & Wilkins, 2010, p. 619). As qualitative research is recognized as an interpretative approach to finding meaning through observation and uncovering descriptive data “...concerned with the meaning people attach to things in their lives”, it is a method that can easily be clouded by a researcher’s own personal bias and frame of reference (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p.3; Taylor, Bodgen & DeVault, 2015, p. 7).

Throughout my own research, I sought to set aside my own preconceptions in order to receive, interpret and discover information through clear eyes. In doing so, I chose organisations for my web and document analysis based on consistent selection criteria and interpreted the materials by following a ‘best practice’ checklist that placed equal weight on specific questions, ideas and strategies from both the marketing and post-colonial critiques of the representations of development literature. Though not immune to bias, by ensuring that each organisation and its corresponding documents and website were chosen and interpreted equally, I was able to avoid selecting materials that simply supported my own personal hypotheses.

For my interviews, I sought out potential participants based on their regional location, organisation size and workplace approach to public engagement and communications. Though not as objective of a sampling process as my document and web analysis, in contacting 30 organisations and successfully meeting with 16, a natural elimination process worked to supersede this. However, due to the nature of the interview process, bias is inevitable, with participants giving answers that are perhaps not completely forthcoming or in which they consider more pleasing for other participants or the researcher. This may have occurred within my own study as my interviews were conducted at the participant’s workplace, at times in front of or alongside co-workers. In an attempt to overcome this, I chose to follow a semi-structured interview approach, which allowed me probe respondents further had I felt that a participant was reluctant in completely disclosing their opinion or belief.

It was through the coding process of the interviews that objectivity was more difficult to achieve, as the analysis was subject to my personal opinions and prior knowledge. Though I aimed to draw equally from the knowledge I gained throughout my literature review and document analysis, the nature of coding forces the researcher to hunt for specific information, to

create labels and to link categories which they believe best represents their findings. Coding is “...not a precise science; it’s primarily an interpretive act,” and while I aimed to be as impartial as possible, one cannot guarantee complete, non-biased findings (Saldaña, 2008, p. 5). However, as I have been both a student of international development studies as well as a marketing and communications, I do believe that I am well-equipped to impartially argue for both sides of this debate.

3.3.3 *Lack of Sources*

Although there are many sources that specifically address the most effective ways to market and communicate development causes or that discuss the post-colonial concerns regarding ethical representation, there is a lack of sources that bridge the gap between these two topics. This is a weakness within the literature, as both parties aim to pick apart and highlight the problems on the other side, but do not provide solutions to these issues. While both the marketing and post-colonial critiques of the representations of development literature provide strong justifications and arguments for how to best communicate development topics to Northern audiences, there is very little recognition or analysis of the tensions between ethical and effective representation within this research scope. It is this void in the literature that my thesis aims to address by identifying convergences and gaps within these two bodies, as well as avenues that better address the potential for overlap, learning and further conversation moving forward.

Chapter 4: Email and Website Analysis

This chapter unpacks the findings of my document and website analysis. In this chapter, I quantify and dissect a variety of Canadian development NGO marketing materials, such as e-newsletters, fundraising pleas, blog posts and webpages, with the goal of identifying what messages, whether intentional or not, are being conveyed to the Canadian public. Northern relationships with citizens in the global South, as well as their engagement levels with global justice issues, are heavily influenced by the ways in which development is represented by non-profit organisations. The visual imagery and text data used by these organisations constructs the value, significance and meaning of development for public audiences by driving preference and interpretation, and influencing the public's actions and attitudes (Hall, 1997; Schroeder & Borgerson, 2005). This chapter aims to unpack the real-world image and text data used by Canadian INGOs in order to better understand the driving forces behind what shapes the Canadian public's beliefs, engagement levels and relationships with communities and individuals in the global South. My objective is to analyze the various pathways to the public's engagement with development issues and the complex and contentious ways Canadian NGOs choose to frame poverty and global justice topics for Canadian audiences. My central argument in this chapter is that there is a critical need to address both the pedagogical and strategic functions of non-profit marketing materials, as well as their ethical and effective shortcomings and strengths, in order for solutions to be found regarding how to best represent development and global justice issues for Northern audiences.

Within this chapter, I will analyse both the ethical concerns regarding non-profit marketing as raised by the representations of development literature, as well as the promotional and strategic strengths and weaknesses of these materials as underscored by marketing and

communications practitioners. To begin, I present the findings of my document content analysis and detail how I quantified the visual imagery and text information found within my data sample. I then go on to provide a technical discourse analysis of my sample by placing the materials against the perspectives of marketing and communication practitioners, representation theorists and post-colonial scholars. By using my literature review and content analysis as a guide, the discourse section of this chapter will draw upon my research findings and the key arguments of the above practitioners, theorists and scholars in order to better understand these real-world marketing materials and their use of negative and positive framing, emotional and consumer appeals and engagement strategies.

4.1 Email Sample

I gathered electronic documents from eight social justice and development non-profits: Amnesty International Canada, Amref Health Africa, Doctors Without Borders/ Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) Canada, Inter Pares, OXFAM Canada, The Stephen Lewis Foundation (SLF), UNICEF Canada and World University Service of Canada (WUSC). As mentioned in my methods, these charities were chosen at random, and all documents used were publicly sourced and collected via email subscription.

My data collection process took place in 2017. I received 186 emails from 8 organisations over a 12-month period. I arbitrarily chose to focus my study on 53 email messages sent during the months of April, May and June, as this represented just over 25% of the overall sample. The number of emails sent per organisation was varied and contained a mix of value-based and relationship building emails, event invitations, newsletters and transactional asks. I began my content analysis by categorizing these emails based around this messaging, placing each of the correspondences under one of three main categories. First, ‘calls to donate’, which

asked the email recipient to either give directly to a campaign or purchase a particular fundraising package or product. Second, ‘calls to action’, which asked recipients to sign petitions, send form letters to government bodies or officials, share emails, video or media messages with families and friends or join in on various social media campaigns using particular hashtags, images or phrases. Lastly, ‘other’, which included thank you messages, invitations to events and links to educational pieces, blogs and annual reports. Among these emails, 28 were donation asks, 12 were calls to action and 13 were categorized as other. The breakdown of these email types by organisation is as follows:

Organisation	# of Emails	Calls to Donate	Calls to Action	Other
Amnesty International	9	2	7	0
Amref	10	5	0	5
MSF	1	0	0	1
Inter Pares	6	2	0	4
OXFAM	7	2	4	1
SLF	4	3	0	1
UNICEF Canada	13	12	1	0
WUSC	3	2	0	1
Total	53	28	12	13

(Figure 2)

More than half of the emails received in this sample were ‘calls to donate’. As email is a personal, effective and efficient way to ask for donations from current and perspective supporters, non-profits use this means of communication to make numerous asks of their supporters at a minimal cost. Calls to action, as well as other messaging, such as event

invitations, project updates and educational pieces, were received 26 times in this sample. However, all 26 of these communications also included at least one donation link or ask within the first two or three paragraphs of text in either a bold, colourful or large font. All 53 messages also included a thank you message, an eye-catching subject line and a number of powerful, engaging images.

4.1.1 *Use of Images*

According to Baggott (2007), visual content is one of the most powerful and dynamic elements of email and web marketing. Images are memorable, easy to digest and have the power to show audiences what is important to a brand. Capable of conveying emotions and grabbing attention, Baggott asserts that from a marketing perspective, images are paramount to forming relationships as “people associate with those whom they like, or those whom are like them” (p. 146). Therefore, I felt it was imperative to track the use of visual imagery within both my email and website sample in order to understand which audiences these materials aimed to reach, what they aimed to communicate and what stories they aimed to tell.

Within the 53 collected emails, there were 165 images. In order to recognise and address the ethical concerns and effective functions of said images, I placed each image into one of four categories: 1) ‘positive images’, which included photographs of individuals or groups either smiling, laughing or playing; 2) ‘negative images’, which included pictures of devastation and destruction or of individuals that were grieving, sick or dying; 3) ‘neutral or active images’, which included large group shots, or action photographs where individuals were neither smiling nor upset, but participating in protests, medical procedures or group and agricultural work; and 4) ‘non-applicable images’, which were photographs of landscapes, buildings, medical supplies,

staff and authors or infographics and illustrations. The breakdown of the images by category, per organisation, is as follows:

Organisation	Total	Positive	Negative	Neutral/Active	Non-Applicable
Amnesty International	37	16	7	8	6
Amref	24	4	4	16	0
MSF	1	0	0	0	1
Inter Pares	12	6	0	1	5
OXFAM	20	7	5	5	3
SLF	10	10	0	0	0
UNICEF Canada	47	32	7	5	3
WUSC	14	6	0	1	7
Total	165	81	23	36	25

(Figure 3)

Most of these images, whether positive or negative, were portraits, meaning a person or group of people were the primary focus of the photograph. The subject of these portraits were mainly women or children. Of the 165 images, 71 were female-only subjects, 11 were male-only and 40 were photographs that included both males and females. The remaining 43 visuals were 25 non-applicable images and 18 photographs of infants. Of the 53 emails, 33 contained a photo of a child, and of all 165 images, 81 included a child. 40 of the 81 images included either an individual child or a group of children, 35 depicted a mother-child relationship and 6 a father-child relationship. Of the 81 child photographs, 46 were positive, showcasing youth and infants either playing, smiling or laughing and 23 were negative, where the subject child was either

crying, ill or distraught. The remaining 12 images of children were either neutral or action-based shots.

4.1.2 Text Data

I specifically chose email subscription as my method of data collection as this tool offers NGOs the opportunity to build brand loyalty and host greater, more personalized conversations with their recipients (Baggott, ch.2). To grasp and quantify these conversations, I collected the text data and subject lines from all 53 emails and used online software to sort out the top-25 most frequently used words. In order to make the total 20,103-word sample more manageable, I subtracted commonly used words (such as the, to, and, is, on), numbers, symbols and signs, and combined similar words (such as child/children), plural words (such as gift/gifts) and verbs with their comparable nouns (such as donate/donation). I did not subtract the common words we/our/us, you/your or they/their/them as I believe they are telling in the context of my research, indicating whether the email recipient, organisation or the beneficiary was the subject of the message.

In subtracting and combining words this way, I was able to generate the clearest, most significant sample and better establish the occurrence of particular words, themes and concepts. This process left me with a new 10,506-word total. Of this, the top-25 most frequently used words were seen 2,963 times, making up 28.2% of the overall total-word sample. By quantifying the text information, I was able to better understand the meaning of what was being said and subjectively identify patterns and trends. For example, this analysis indicates that the main subject of these emails were the organisations themselves (we/our/us) or donors (you/your), and that they were mainly sent to solicit donations (Help, Support, Gift, Need, Provide, Donate, Give), all of which will be discussed at length in my discourse analysis. The breakdown of the

most commonly used words, as well as the number of times these words were used per organisation, as outlined in figure 4.

4.2 Website Sample

For my website analysis, I conducted an audit of 5 Canadian-based development charities: Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) Canada, Islamic Relief Canada, Plan Canada, WE Charity and World Vision Canada. I chose these organisations based on the 2015-2017 CRA registered charity data, ranking organisations by total revenue and highest dollar amount of tax-receipted gifts. To ensure content consistency, I approached each organisation's website the same way, examining the home, about us and donate pages. I picked these sections based on usability, in that navigating to these pages took the fewest number of clicks, and for the information they contained.

My data collection took place in 2017. On the first of every month I took a screenshot of the chosen organisations' home, about us and donate pages. This left me with 15 screenshots a month, for a yearly total of 180 screen images. For this study, I chosen to focus on the data collected in November. I selected this month as it falls roughly 6 months after my email collection sample and because it marks the mid-way point of the holiday fundraising season. According to the American-based National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS), the holiday season is the most critical period for Northern non-profit fundraising, as most Northern charities receive nearly half of all their fundraising revenue between October and December each year (McKeever & Jones, 2018). This finding is mirrored by Imagine Canada, who found that approximately \$5 billion, or 40 percent of all annual donations, is given to charities in Canada between late November and December each year (Ireland, 2016). Therefore, I felt it was critical to examine the marketing communications employed by non-profit organisations during this

Word	Total	Amnesty	Amref	MSF	Inter Pares	OXFAM	SLF	UNICEF	WUSC
We/Our/Us	419	111	83	1	55	41	8	82	38
You/Your	403	78	62	10	37	51	45	101	19
Child	218	7	36	0	3	3	4	165	0
Health	191	0	154	0	8	2	1	25	1
They/Their/ Them	165	57	32	0	17	19	5	56	9
Help	149	23	68	0	6	11	1	34	6
Mother	139	2	35	0	6	7	31	58	0
Canada	114	33	15	1	9	5	0	46	5
Life	111	12	34	0	1	9	3	51	1
World	102	23	17	0	11	11	4	32	4
Support	101	22	17	2	10	11	5	31	3
Africa	97	1	86	0	4	0	4	2	0
Gift	89	2	28	0	4	2	11	42	0
Need	79	15	16	1	1	14	0	32	0
Woman	75	4	18	0	31	18	1	3	0
Provide	69	3	13	1	1	8	2	40	1
Donate	69	3	16	0	5	4	9	31	1
Now	66	14	17	0	2	9	1	15	8
Save	53	3	16	0	0	2	0	32	0
Give	47	2	17	0	4	3	3	17	1
Learn	46	3	8	0	17	0	0	15	3
Care	43	1	28	0	0	4	2	8	0
Today	42	6	0	0	6	11	3	15	1
Action	41	29	0	0	7	1	0	4	0
Justice	35	14	0	0	18	2	1	0	0
Total	2963	460	809	16	261	246	143	927	101

(Figure 4)

period, as it is not only the most profitable time, but when non-profits typically employ their most memorable, sophisticated and influential marketing campaigns (McKeever & Jones, 2018).

4.2.1 Images

Each of the chosen NGO websites were unique, showcasing the organisation’s individual brand, mission and goals using a mix of visual media and messaging elements. Unlike the emails, the webpages did not contain much text information. Rather, the home, about us and donate pages relied on establishing brand identity through simple design elements, such as colour and font choice, and high-resolution visuals. Oftentimes the chosen sections were also used to provide clear paths to additional information, such as blog posts and news articles, or to outside sites, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube.

Within the 15 screen captures I analyzed, there were 130 images. I began my content analysis by categorizing this data, placing each of the photographs or graphics under one of four main categories also employed in my email image analysis. The breakdown of the images by category, per organisation, is as follows:

Organisation	# of Images	Positive	Negative	Neutral/Active	Non-Applicable
Islamic Relief Canada	6	6	0	0	0
MSF	17	2	6	5	3
PLAN Canada	31	21	3	6	1
WE Charity	36	22	0	3	11
World Vision Canada	40	10	2	12	15
Total	130	61	11	26	30

(Figure 5)

Much like my email sample, most of these images, whether positive, negative or neutral, were portraits. The subject of these portraits were mainly children. Of the 130 images, 52 were female-only subjects, 28 were male-only and 20 were photographs that included both males and females. The remaining 30 visuals were non-applicable images, which were mainly photographs of products for purchase, such as chocolate bars, apparel or holiday-inspired artisan goods. Of the 15 total screenshots, 13 contained a photo of a child, and of all 130 images, 71 included a child. 55 of the 71 images included either an individual child or a group of children, 13 depicted a mother-child relationship and 3 a father-child relationship. Of the 71 child photographs, 47 were positive, mainly showcasing young children and youth smiling or laughing while looking directly into the camera, and 15 were negative, where the subject child was either crying, distraught or receiving dire medical attention. The remaining 9 images of children were either neutral or action-based, candid shots.

4.2.2 Text Data

The chosen non-profit websites did not contain as much text data as my email sample, as excessive calls to action, clutter and large text blocks can easily overwhelm a web visitor and lead them to seek information elsewhere (Ervin, 2016). Research indicates that web visitors will not work for the information they need, making streamlined design, clean layouts, easy to read text and high-resolution visuals critical for capturing and maintaining attention (Baggott, 2011). Keeping in mind the user's experience, brands often rely on images and colour choice to draw a customer's eye, tell a story and bring to life the work of their organisation. Therefore, through visuals and clean design elements, rather than overly-complex text information, brands use their website to introduce themselves to an audience, telling users what they do and why it matters. This points to the significance of visual data, yet also indicates that any text used on a website is

specifically chosen and imperative to what an organisation wants to communicate with site visitors. Therefore, examining this text information is critical.

To quantify the website's text information, I collected the data from the screenshots and used online software to sort out the top-25 most frequently used words. I then subtracted commonly used words, numbers, symbols and signs, and combined similar words, plural words and verbs with their comparable nouns. As with the emails, I did not subtract *we/our/us*, *you/your* or *they/their/them*. Initially a 5,286-word sample, subtracting and combining words in this way left me with a new, 3,772-word total. Of this, the top-25 most frequently used words were seen 1,182 times, making up 31.3% of the overall word sample. As with my email sample, quantifying the text information allowed me to better understand the meaning of what was being said, and identify patterns and trends. For example, this analysis highlights that the organisations predominantly discussed themselves and their programs, mission and values online, as *we/our/us* makes up 24% of the overall word sample. The breakdown of the most commonly used words, as well as the number of times these words were used per organisation, can be found in figure 6.

Word	Total	Islamic Relief	MSF	PLAN	WE	World Vision
We/Our/Us	278	25	33	75	112	33
Your/you	91	13	10	34	24	10
Child	89	0	2	50	2	35
Donate	88	16	13	20	25	14
Sponsor	59	0	0	44	0	15
World	56	1	4	21	13	17
Give	51	1	0	9	14	27
Help	47	3	8	14	2	20
Girl	36	0	0	33	2	1
Life	35	2	3	15	5	10
Work	30	1	5	19	2	3
Family	30	0	0	10	6	14
Now	27	0	3	7	8	9
Canada	27	8	7	10	0	2
Impact	27	1	2	8	12	4
Change	27	0	0	8	12	7
Need	26	2	8	6	1	9
They/Their	25	1	0	15	2	7
Charity	23	1	0	2	19	1
Involved	21	7	3	8	1	2
Support	20	2	2	10	1	5
Join	18	0	3	6	7	2
Relief	17	12	0	1	0	4
Poverty	17	1	0	9	1	6
Shop	17	1	0	3	9	4
Total	1182	98	106	437	280	261

(Figure 6)

4.3 Discourse Analysis

My email sample contained a combination of stories, event invitations, thank you messages, donation pleas and calls to action. Through consistent, regular outreach, these messages were used by the selected non-profits in an attempt to form a relationship between me, the recipient, and their organisations. By employing compelling, emotional content, personalized messages and friendly exchanges, these organisations sought to make me feel engaged, valued and connected. Oftentimes, these emails had persuasive subject lines (ex. “What type of donor are you?”; “Detained, beaten, starved & exploited”; “These babies need your help”) and were frequently sent by a recognizable person or entity within the organisation (ex. Alex Neve, Amnesty International Canada; Elinora Adeland, OXFAM Canada; Marketing Team, UNICEF Canada). Critical for donor outreach, each email in this sample included an emotional, inspiring or goal-oriented message with the purpose of encouraging advocacy and giving, telling stories and connecting me to the cause. I was often thanked for participating and made to feel as though I had a direct impact in delivering aid, changing lives and making a difference (although I did not donate or participate in any capacity). Although there was some overlap in the messaging and design between my email and website samples, the emails were oriented towards relationship-building, while the websites were positioned towards painting a broader understanding of each organisation’s purpose.

My website sample introduced each non-profit in a clear and concise way. Each site worked to explain the organisation’s mission and programs to a wide audience of potential and existing supporters while offering up information on key fundraising campaigns, news stories, products and events. Through the use of visually appealing and user-friendly design elements, basic information, educational pieces and clear pathways to action were easily located by users.

Because the websites relied more on high-resolution images and sleek design elements than text information, they used approximately 60% less text data than my email sample. Yet each of the five websites clearly highlighted how supporting the various organisations would not only benefit the lives of the beneficiaries, but also me as a perspective donor. All five non-profit websites also referred me to their Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram pages and encouraged me to follow their accounts, share information and join online conversations. Overall, these web pages were vehicles for brand discovery and sought out to clearly represent the various organisations' values in a positive, engaging way.

The main difference between the email and website samples were that the emails relied more on text information than visual storytelling. Written with purpose and a clear message in mind, the emails were designed to form personal connections and entice me, the recipient, into donating to a specific program or purchasing a particular product, while the websites were used to represent brand and educate viewers on the organisation's purpose. The second difference was that the emails were much more likely to include negative representations, often woven into first-person and third-person narratives that portrayed dire needs for monetary support. The websites relied more on positive representation, mainly using portraits of young children smiling directly into the camera, and characterizing the beneficiaries as active, happy and optimistic. As supporters must opt-in to receive emails, the messages were unmistakably crafted for an already engaged, loyal audience. The websites, which required a current or perspective donor to seek out information on their own, were designed with a much larger audience in mind. Therefore, in representing hope not despair, the websites were more likely to showcase the impact the organisation was already having in the life of a beneficiary, while the emails were more likely to highlight work that needed to be done.

4.3.1 *Positive and Negative Representation*

In staying to trend, positive representations were used most often throughout my email and website samples. However, the emails also relied heavily on negative depictions of development, and were often sent alongside shock effect subject lines, such as “She exposed the truth. Now she fears for her life”, “How many Syrians have to die?”, “What kills 1.3 million people per year?” and “Nobody should die for looking different” in order to gain donor’s attention (George, 2001, p. 236). Studies indicate that 35% of recipients decide whether or not to open an email based solely on the subject line, while the average open rate of emails across all industries is 20.81% (Matthew, N.D.). Therefore, by posing questions and using emotional, thought-provoking statements, these subject lines were written to compel recipients to open and continue reading. Within the emails, eye-catching, negative words and phrases, such as “horrific”, “killed”, “the children cannot wait” and “the world stands on the brink of an unprecedented disaster” were often highlighted in bold, colourful font. This was done to draw the readers eye to critical takeaway information and to make the messages less time-consuming and easier to read. This technique was regularly used throughout the long stories told in my email sample, where the key concepts were highlighted in order to provide easily scannable context to large scale, complicated development issues. For example, a story written by Unicef Canada reads:

One-year-old Khawla has her temperature taken and is examined by a doctor in the Al-Sabeen Hospital in Yemen. She is **suffering** from malnutrition and is battling a chest infection. Her mother says Khawla has been sick on and off since she was four months old. "At first it was diarrhea. She became so light that I could carry her with one hand. Then she lost appetite." She was diagnosed with **malnutrition** and put on treatment at the UNICEF-supported Therapeutic Feeding Centre. "Before the conflict, my husband had a job and his salary was adequate to meet our needs," said her mother. "When everything collapsed after the fighting started, we tried to grow vegetables in our farm but that was not safe due to bombs and bullets. **Now we are reduced to nothing.**

(Unicef Canada, personal communication, June 26, 2017)

By Unicef Canada bolding text and emphasizing particular statements the takeaways from this story were made clear, that Khawla is suffering and that her family is no longer safe or equipped to survive on their own. For representation scholars, attention grabbing techniques like this are thought to trivialize complex development issues and perpetuate sensationalism rather than advance the stories of the beneficiaries (Dogra, 2007; Gidley, 2004). Instead of representing the conflict in full, quick soundbites like this are used to make poverty more digestible for Northern audiences. This does nothing to support or encourage awareness or advocacy efforts, putting the focus on the ‘show’ of development and valuing its graphic aspects more than its long-term structural causes (Kapoor, 2013).

As shown through figures 3 and 5, my email sample utilized more negative visual representations than my website sample. Of the 165 images found in my emails, 49% were positive, 14% were negative, 22% were neutral or active and 15% were non-applicable. In comparison, of the 130 images found in my web sample, 48% were positive, 9% were negative, 20% were neutral or active and 23% were non-applicable. The negative images found within the emails were used to compel viewers and included photographs such as a distraught, young mother cradling her sick child, a dying baby wearing an oxygen mask, a thin, starving child looking off into the distance and a group of dying Syrian toddlers being helped by physicians. The framing of these four photographs, along with many others, had the subjects gazing upwards towards the camera as if they were looking for help, while having us, the viewer, look down upon them. This framing technique was also used online in a number of photographs, including that of three young mothers in a hospital waiting room holding their sick children and in an image of a villagers in Bangladesh, captioned “If this is the better option, the other must have been living in hell”. Having the subjects gaze up towards the viewer evokes sympathy, as the

beneficiaries appear to be pleading and waiting for a supporter's help. For representations of development practitioners, this is problematic as the viewer is literally looking down upon the subject/s in the frame, which serves to reinforce the notion of Northern donors as saviors and heroes (Smith & Yanacopulos, 2004; Dogra, 2007; Benthall, 1993). This strips away dignity, invokes feelings of pity, and suggests that only through the support of a donor can the subject's life be saved (Nathanson, 2013). However, for marketing practitioners, this form of representation is not negative or shocking, rather it depicts an immediate need for support as sharing photos of a mother in need, dying children or displaced groups is often necessary for capturing public attention and raising money for those in need (Warrington & Crombie, 2017). These visuals are a fundraising imperative and provoke the greatest response from public audiences and potential supporters. Photos tell stories and by emotionally enticing audiences in the Global North through alarming images or subject lines, marketers like Kotler and Armstrong (2012) argue attention is gained, and donations are received.

The positive representations used throughout both my email and website samples were very similar. The positive images used in both were mainly of children, smiling and looking directly into the camera. Rarely providing context, these images represented the subjects as optimistic and cheerful. Online, 22 of the 36 positive images used by We Charity were portraits of joyful individuals or groups, and on Islamic Relief Canada's website, all 6 of the images used were of grinning children. These non-contextual photographs were also heavily seen throughout PLAN Canada and World Vision Canada's websites, and were often included in the emails. In terms of language use, the emails continued to use eye-catching subject lines such as "The cutest babies you've ever seen" to attract attention from readers. While online, headings such as "These Gifts Change the World!" and "Love is what drives us" were used to encourage giving and donor

support. For representation scholars like Dogra (2007), these types of positive representations are considered the “lazy way out” of overcoming the long history of negative “flies in their eyes” imagery (p.168). As, rather than answering messy questions relating to the long-term, structural causes of development issues, non-contextual, optimistic photos and positive, non-educational phrasing allows non-profits to avoid criticism while celebrating their organisation’s own achievements (Dogra, 2007, p.168; Kapoor, 2013). Just like negative representations, positive representation portrays recipients of aid as one powerless, homogenized group. This eliminates the need for public deliberation and learning, encourages monetary participation and continues to frame development as charity for Northern publics (Darnton & Kirk, 2011; VSO 2002; Kapoor, 2013). However, for marketers, these positive representations are believed to uphold the dignity of beneficiaries, while reminding supporters about the benefits of their donations (Cao & Jia, 2017). Happy faces make donors feel optimistic and as if their contributions are directly bettering the lives of a beneficiary (Flynn, 2010). But rather than preoccupying themselves with maximizing donation revenue and providing feel-good opportunities, representations scholars attest that non-profits should be presenting donors with educational information and encouraging deeper levels of engagement (Cameron, 2015, p. 276).

4.3.2 *Appealing to the Donor’s Ego and Selling Development Causes*

In order to ensure longevity in today’s crowded and competitive marketplace, NGOs use branding techniques to make lasting impressions, increase public exposure and bring about economic return (Andresen & Kotler, 2008). Both my website and email samples were heavily branded and utilized logos, taglines, graphics and specific colours and fonts to set themselves apart. To increase brand awareness and legitimacy, influence donor action and capture public attention, some of the non-profits, such as We Charity and OXFAM Canada, tied celebrities like

Kelly Clarkson, Alicia Keys and Chris Martin to their brand, while others, like the Stephen Lewis Foundation and Amnesty International Canada, relied on their celebrity founders and consistent media coverage. Cultivating personal relationships, relating to the public and relying on famous faces are all strategies used to gain public trust and familiarity as, when a consumer is familiar with a brand, they favour it over its comparable competitors (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012). Therefore, in utilizing clear communications, public figures and consistent representations, these organisations aimed to form connections and personal, longstanding relationships between their organisation and their audiences.

In order for publics in the global North to become more engaged with poverty reduction campaigns, marketing research suggests that development non-profits place the everyday supporter at the centre of their cause and communications (Schwittay, 2015, p.6). Figures 4 and 6 show that the most commonly used words in the email and website samples were we/our/us and you/your. We/our/us was used 419 times in the emails and 278 times online. In some instances, we/our/us was used in reference to the non-profit's mission and values, but most often these words were used to bind the NGO to the donor by implying they were part of the organisation (ex. "Together, we are making a difference in Africa"). You/your was used most often to make supporters feel like the protagonist in the fight against global poverty and was seen throughout the emails 403 times and on the websites 91 times. Email subject lines read "Thanks to YOU, we're delivering aid worldwide!" and "Canadian professor freed in Iran -Thanks to you!", while the messages stated, "You have been an integral part of our emergency response team", "We hope you can see the impact you're having on millions of lives around the world" and "You're keeping lives afloat in South Sudan". Online, you/your language was used to make statements like, "You have helped us save over 30,000,0000 lives", "When YOU sponsor a child, you

sponsor an ENTIRE community” and “Today, you can help change a life”. Ultimately, this type of phrasing puts the onus of change onto the donor, making them feel as though their actions hold significant weight in the fight against global poverty. Thanking donors for their giving and tying them into the cause helps with donor retention, instilling pride, inspiring repeat giving and, most importantly, making supporters feel like vital members of the organisation. For representation scholars, this kind of language perpetuates unequal, global power relations and makes aid initiatives appear increasingly simplified and manageable. This ultimately leads consumers to feel like they are actively engaged global citizens, where their purchase of a product or sharing of a social media post directly results in alleviating development issues (Danton & Kirk, 2011, p. 6-7; Richey & Ponte, 2008, p. 711-713).

For most non-profits, a donor’s financial support is the ultimate end goal of any communication. Some of the most popular words used in both my samples included support, shop, donate, gift and give. The emails consistently had shopping related subject lines such as “When you make a purchase, you are changing lives.” Online, the websites centered heavily around shopping and purchasing products. For example, We Charity used statements like “WE believe one gift can change the world. Buy gifts that give back!”, PLAN Canada asked supporters to “Browse our selection of gifts that transform the lives of children and families. Shop now!” and World Vision stated, “This Christmas, give love with meaningful gifts!”. Other than Doctors without Borders Canada, each of the website’s homepages included links to shopping and gift guides. For example, World Vision shared links to a gift catalogue that “changes lives”, PLAN Canada asked supporters to “Browse our selection of gifts that transform the lives of children and families!” and WE Charity shared a celebrity holiday gift giving guide, where stars like Nelly Furtado, Mia Farrow and Olympic athlete Penny Oleksiak recommended

their favourite WE products. Oftentimes, both my email and website samples instilled a sense of urgency when asking donors to shop, using statements like “HURRY! Only 4 days left to purchase!” and “Quick, make your donations and purchases count for more!”. By encouraging Northern audiences to make speedy purchases and donate, representation scholars argue that non-profits are doing nothing but turning organisation members into financial supporters, appealing more to their consumer-based values and self-interest than activism and political involvement (Danton & Kirk, 2011, p. 6;7). Additional low-level engagements asks, including forwarding emails (ex. “Forward this email to family and friends and let them know about the reality in South Sudan), using particular hashtags (ex. “Let the refugees know you’re with them by using #StandAsOne”) and attending large scale events (ex. WE day concerts) are also argued by representations of development scholars to do nothing but offer the general public small, feel-good opportunities to do something for beneficiaries living in the Global South (Smillie, 1999, p. 73). But for marketers like Kotler (2005) and Andreasen (2008), these small asks add up. A donor does not need to necessarily understand an NGO’s mission in order for it to be advanced, but they do need to be convinced to take an action or purchase a product. By reaching audiences in terms they understand and with actions that they can easily accomplish, marketers attest that non-profits are better equipped to form relationships and deliver messages and education to donors down the line.

4.3.3 *Personal Connections*

For marketers, putting a face to development causes personalizes distant poverty, and forms personal, emotional connections between audiences in the global North and beneficiaries in the global South (Warrington & Crombie, 2017). As representations of children and women have been found to be especially powerful in capturing attention, these groups were most often

the subjects of the imagery found in both my email and website samples (Burt & Strongman, 2005). Of all the 165 images used in the emails, 71 were of female-only subjects, 81 included either an individual child or group of children and 35 depicted a mother-child relationship. The email sample also used the term child/children 218 times, mother 139 times and woman/women 75 times. Online, of the 130 images used in my website sample, 52 were female-only subjects, 13 depicted a mother-child relationship and 71 included either an individual child or group of children. The websites also used the term child or children in text 89 times and girls 36 times. Overall, most of the photos and text which made mention of women or children told stories of one individual or a small family unit. In looking to research conducted by Andresen, McKee and Rovner (2010), the more donors connect to a cause, the more likely they are to donate. This is due to the “identifiable victim effect” or “singularity effect”, meaning an individual will give more when they feel they are helping someone they can see themselves in and with whom they can relate (Andresen et al., 2010 (A), p. 6). Because people associate most with those they are like, it is clear that women and mothers were most often the target audience of these representations (Baggott, 2007). In a study by Statistics Canada, women were found to be more likely than men to donate to a cause (Turcotte, 2012). Although in general, both sexes are more likely to donate to an NGO that represents their cause as helping children, with the likelihood of giving increasing if the donor is also a parent (Wiepking & Bekkers, 2012). Therefore, in sharing photos and telling stories about children and female beneficiaries, these non-profits aimed to not only capture their target audiences’ attention, but their hearts.

In relating to audiences, NGOs often use stories to emotionally tie perspective supporters to their causes and condense complex messages (Warrington & Crombie, 2017). Stories were of particular importance in my emails, which often aimed to draw upon human emotions to inspire

greater overall action. As mentioned, women and parents are most likely to give. Therefore, stories were often told from the perspectives of a single, identifiable child or their mothers. Marketing research suggests non-profits “appeal to the heart, not the head”, which was often the case for the stories told throughout my data samples (Andresen et al., 2010 (A), p. 6). For example, this was the case in Unicef Canada’s story about Khawla, but was a technique also used in stories by OXFAM Canada, Amref Health Africa and Amnesty International Canada who told stories about 10-year old Nyaneada who was separated from her family, seven-month old Umara who was dying of malnutrition and Katherine, a sponsored child living with a disability in Honduras. Online, shorter stories were told about children and were often about a familiar face. As I tracked the websites for all of 2017, I saw many updates about the same children. This strategy served to instill a sense of familiarity, helping donors remember key takeaways and information. For example, a story by World Vision Canada read:

Get a goat give a goat: Rosemary’s gifts keep giving! You may remember that we shared the story of Rosemary, a plucky sponsored child whose life changes when her family received goats through World Vision’s gift catalogue. Well, her story didn’t end there!
(World Vision Canada, November 1, 2017)

In sharing an update on Rosemary, World Vision set out to form stronger emotional bonds between the reader and their beneficiary, while also indicating the advantages of supporting their mission long-term. Forming connections makes organisation appear trustworthy, relational and transformative, and in engaging a donor’s emotional energy, non-profits set themselves apart from similar organisations (Network for Good, N.D.; Andresen et. Al., N.D.(B)). Stories help us remember, they drive donor action and they inspire long-term support (Andresen et. Al., 2010). By focusing in on one individual, the stories told in my email and website samples about Khawla and Rosemary allowed readers to connect with particular experiences in the Global South and

bond readers to the story's characters (Network for Good, N.D.). For representation of development scholars, storytelling reinforces the perceptions of beneficiaries in the Global South as one homogenized group (Smith & Yanacopulos, 2004; Dogra, 2007; Benthall, 1993).

Emotional appeal may bring in donor dollars but, much like the other marketing strategies I have discussed, it is ultimately argued to perpetuates weak public understanding of international development issues.

4.4 Conclusion

Debates surrounding the appropriate use of visual imagery, phrasing and framing are complicated and contentious. But what both marketing practitioners and representation of development scholars agree upon is that image and text data shape the way that we make sense of our world, and whatever the message, these representations have a powerful impact on how viewers understand development issues. While both camps may agree that there is nothing intrinsically immoral about NGOs using images and specific language to tell a story and form connections with donors, it is in the *choice* of visuals and language that they often disagree. The strategic use of negative and positive imagery, branding and emotional connections can result in hard-hitting, profitable gains, but misleading representations can also have problematic implications for how development is theorized and practiced (Smith & Yanacopulos, 2004). Marketing practitioners believe that strategically chosen imagery and storylines can help shape an audience's understanding of urgent development issues and that specific representations allow non-profits to convince an otherwise disengaged public that poverty exists outside their daily lives (Andresen, 2006). Representation of development scholars contend that overly negative, positive and emotional forms of representation, reduce the complexities and nuances of peoples' experiences with poverty and development to simplified characteristics that fix and exaggerate

differences (George, 2001; Hall, 1997, p. 246). In the short-term, these techniques may increase donations, but in the long-run, these dehumanizing depictions do little more than perpetuate stereotypes (UFS, 2010). Research done by the multi-agency Narrative Project (2004), confirms that negative visuals and emotional language that invokes pity often discourage supporters, and that images and language showcasing beneficiaries achieving independence are more persuasive and credible for public audiences (North, 2014). However, the project also found that positive images of children smiling, that provide no context but seek to form personal or emotional connection, are oftentimes the least effective in soliciting donor support (North, 2014). Overall, these debates lead to tension, as by evoking feelings of pity and charity, and pushing classic hero narratives that position aid recipients as voiceless victims, non-profit marketing materials fail to capture the agency and resilience of individuals and cultures in the Global South. However, using such representations are often what works best to influence donors to open their wallets and support a cause. In the following chapter, I will continue to discuss these debates by unpacking the conversations I had with professionals in the field of non-profit communications regarding the ways in which they navigate the tensions between ethical representations of development and marketing practice on a daily basis.

Chapter 5: Interview Findings and Discussion

This chapter explores the findings of my semi-structured interviews. To begin, I will briefly explain my interview process, before going on to dissect participant's responses as they relate to ethical representations of development and effective marketing practice. In the global North, citizen engagement with global justice and poverty is heavily influenced by the ways in which these issues are communicated and represented by non-profit organisations. In order to understand the varied and complex ways development is signified to public audiences, it is critical that more research look at the roles development practitioners and marketing professionals play in communicating causes and mediating connections between individuals in the global North and beneficiaries in the global South. This chapter aims to understand these roles by uncovering the nature and diversity of NGO marketing strategies as told by professionals in the field. As my research aims to grasp the ways in which non-profit communications influence the public's engagement with development causes, my objective in this section is to provide insight into a greater, holistic understanding of how NGO and marketing professionals in Canada recognise and navigate the challenges of representing development topics on a daily basis. My central argument in this chapter is that the principles of effective communications often conflict with the principles of ethical representations, and while there may be very little recognition or acknowledgement of these tensions among practitioners, this is a tensions that must be addressed in order to increase Northern engagement with poverty and global justice matters moving forward.

Within this chapter, I present an in-depth look at my interview process, focusing in particular on my interview sample, the design of my semi-structured interview guide and the categories and sub-categories of my qualitative research findings. I then go on to provide an analysis of my

interviews. Here, I dissect my transcripts, making sense of this data through the help of three, over-arching thematic categories: communication purpose, engagement strategies and sector challenges. In reflecting upon the discoveries made in my literature and document analyses, I turn to my interview findings to understand how marketing and development practitioners tackle and recognize the tensions between marketing and representations of development in the real world.

5.1 Interview Process

5.1.1 *Interview Sample*

For this research, I conducted 22 interviews with a variety of staff members at 10 different development NGOs and six marketing firms based in two major Canadian cities. The study population included 15 communications, fundraising and marketing directors and relevant staff at Canadian-based international development NGOs, and seven communication officers at specialty marketing firms focused on development non-profit communications. I sought out each of my participants based on their regional location, organisation size and workplace approach to public engagement and communications. As mentioned, to ensure the confidentiality of my interviewees, I do not divulge the cities where I conducted this research or disclose the names or any other identifying factors of the organisations I spoke with.

Each of my interviews were approximately 60-90-minutes and began with questions regarding the participant's education and career background. Of my 22 interviews, 10 interviewees came from either a journalism, marketing or public relations background, and 12 came from either an economics, sociology, development or linguistics background. This information is telling in the context of my research as my participants' educational background was often reflected in their responses. Repeatedly, participants coming from a communications

background held different positions on engagement strategies, the tensions between ethical and effective representations, and the purpose of non-profit communications than participants from a social science background, regardless of whether they were working for a non-profit or a specialty marketing firm. The breakdown of the participants educational backgrounds can be found in figure 7. These differences will be discussed at length in section 5.2.

Participant #	Background	Participant #	Background
1	Social Science	12	Communications
2	Social Science	13	Communications
3	Communications	14	Social Science
4	Communications	15	Communications
5	Communications	16	Social Science
6	Social Science	17	Communications
7	Social Science	18	Social Science
8	Social Science	19	Social Science
9	Communications	20	Social Science
10	Social Science	21	Communications
11	Communications	22	Social Science

(Figure 7)

5.1.2 Interview Guide

For this research, I used a semi-structured interview approach and followed a prepared guide of closed and open-ended discussion questions (see list of interview questions in appendix D). As I interviewed participants from 11 different NGOs and five specialty marketing firms, it was imperative that I had the freedom to adapt and adjust the questions to the specific context of

each individual interview, while also remaining consistent to the key themes discussed throughout all my conversations. In following a semi-structured interview approach, I was able to focus and direct participants as needed, while offering interviewees the space to discuss their own attitudes, thoughts and opinions (Willis, 2006, p. 144). As I was able to tailor my interview questions to the context of each individual interview, this method of inquiry permitted my participants to discuss as much or as little information and understanding on a topic as they wanted and allowed for new ideas regarding my research to be brought forward.

I chose to structure my interviews by first asking participants broad, over-arching questions regarding their organisation's work. I began by inquiring about the extent to which their organisation participated in initiatives to engage the Canadian public, why marketing and communications was important for their work and the key messages, tools and communication strategies their workplace used to capture public attention. I then aimed to make the questions more specific and personal, asking about the participant's best practices of communications, the most inspiring and successful non-profit campaigns they had seen as a member of the public and whether they personally felt there are ethical limits on the types of marketing and communications strategies that international development NGOs should use. I then spent the remainder of the interview having participants discuss whether they felt tensions between the representations of development and marketing practice, about the challenges of effectively engaging public audiences and about the ways in which their organisation represents development and poverty through its communications and marketing work. By structuring my interviews like this, I offered my participants time to re-evaluate their positions, give greater, more specific details, and discuss their opinions at length. By re-introducing questions about their organisation's work near the end of our interview, I also offered my participants the

opportunity to re-examine their own work which often resulted in participants recognizing tensions that they did not initially identify and discuss at the beginning.

5.1.3 Coding and Themes

As semi-structured interviews are a qualitative research technique, I am unable to quantify this information like I did with my email and website samples. However, through the use of coding, I was able to group and consolidate common themes discussed in my interviews that provided me with significant, comparable qualitative data. To make analytic sense of my data sample, I utilized coding to create overarching, thematic categories and sub-categories. This allowed me to process and conceptualize my 22 interviews, identify sequences and patterns, and gain greater familiarity with my findings. In using a systematic coding process, I was able to confidently organize my transcripts and identify the main themes. As my participants held various opinions on the same topics and questions, coding allowed me to connect these perspectives in a meaningful way.

As mentioned, the main themes that emerged from my interviews were communication purpose, engagement strategy and sector challenges. Under these three thematic categories, came a number of sub-category findings, which include:

- Communication purpose: action, fundraising, education and awareness.
- Engagement Strategies: storytelling, emotional connections and positivity.
- Sector Challenges: competition, sustainable engagement, and accountability.

In the following section, I will discuss these thematic codes and sub-categories in regard to their relationship with ethical representation and marketing effectiveness. I will do so to uncover a greater understanding of how marketing and development practitioners understand and navigate the tensions between marketing and representations of development in the real world, and to find

solutions regarding how these two groups can better engage with these frictions moving forward. Though there may be very little recognition of acknowledgement of these tensions among practitioners, it is something that must be addressed by communications and development professionals.

5.2 Interview Findings and Discussion

5.2.1 *Purpose of NGO Communications*

The purpose behind a non-profit's communication and marketing work varies. For example, an NGO may employ a marketing campaign to alert the public about a particular issue, to inspire a desired action or to spread awareness. These communications may also be used to inspire giving, encourage social media participation or to sell a particular product. For representations scholars, no matter the purpose, non-profit communications should be used to educate public audiences about the complexities of global poverty and to amplify the voices of beneficiaries living in the global South (Dogra, 2007). Rather than convey notions of urgency and desperate need, representation literature argues that marketing campaigns should be used to spread awareness, responsibility, compassion and activism (Kapoor, 2013; Richey and Ponte, 2008). On the flip side, marketers contend that non-profit communications should serve to form emotional connections that encourage desired behaviours and incentivize public audiences to open their wallets and support a cause long-term (Andresen, 2006; Andresen, 2008; Kotler, 2005). For marketing professionals like Andresen (2006), Andreasen and Kotler (2008), donors do not necessarily need to understand a non-profit's mission in order for it to be advanced, but they do need to be compelled to take an action.

My interview participants who came from communications backgrounds, generally mirrored the arguments found within the marketing and communications literature. For this

group, the purpose of any non-profit campaign they worked on was to inspire action and to influence their target audiences' behaviours. While they recognized education as an element of non-profit marketing, the main priority of these professionals was to find ways to inspire public audiences to offer up financial support and complete specific, easily-doable actions, such as sharing social media posts, purchasing products or donating money. For participant #5 this was simple math:

At a base level, we need donors to act how we want them to and to donate money. The more money we get in from donors, the more we can help. That is essentially the calculation we do here every day. The more we can do to encourage giving and to grab and maintain the attention of a donor, the greater our outputs.

In understanding the science of human behaviour, the majority of the marketing and communication background participants that I interviewed argued that campaigns which centered around emotional storytelling and simple actions, rather than complex education pieces, made donors more apt to pay attention to their causes. This inevitably increased their NGO's outputs, allowing the non-profit to help more beneficiaries in the global South. At the end of the day, donations and results were the central concerns of these interviewees; with participants #4, #5 and #12 insinuating that the job of a Canadian-based international development non-profit is to raise money, not to spread awareness. This notion was reiterated by participant #17, who stated:

We use marketing to move people towards a specific action. So, most of the work we do differs from pure public awareness, not like we don't do public awareness, but that tends to be less important for our work. Most of our work has a purpose, either to move people to act, whether that be to join or to add their signature to a petition, or on the fundraising side, to become a supporter of the organization, either as a one-time gift donor or a monthly donor. So, for us, that's the purpose of non-profit communications. Donations and action. We are not focused as much on public awareness and educating Canadians on the complexities of development. We serve to encourage the public to complete small actions, to give money and to spread our messages. By making complex topics digestible and relatable, we can ensure change in the developing world.

Participant #17 asserted that the public does not need to know everything about a non-profit cause in order to act, they just need to know the information that will motivate them to take a small action (Andresen, 2008, p. 13). In clearly defining actions for their audiences to complete, the participants from a communications background argued that they were doing more for the global South than the organisations who used their campaigns to spread awareness, education and understanding. This is because public audiences are often more eager to engage with manageable, short-term asks and easy actions (Andresen, 2006). For marketers, if non-profits do not make development issues engaging, and their calls to action simple, they risk the possibility of losing their audience's attention and their donor's support (Andresen, 2006). Therefore, while spreading public awareness was considered part of their work, the main purpose of this group's communications were to sell specific actions, condense complex development issues and bolster public interest.

Conversely, interviewees from social science backgrounds generally viewed awareness and education, rather than action and economic gain, as the main priority of their communications work. Contradicting the opinions of marketing professionals, this notion was underscored by participant #1, who indicated that "It is a non-profit's mandate to deal first and foremost with issues of human rights. Before we can ask anyone to act, we must teach the Canadian public about what's going on in the world." While the social science participants in my sample recognized the necessity of compelling donor action, participants #2, #6, # 18 and #19 specifically indicated that the main purpose of their marketing campaigns were to teach public audiences about the complexities of global poverty and to amplify the voices of their beneficiaries in the global South. These interviewees often implied that they felt it was their personal responsibility to spread awareness about their organisation's mission and to steer

Canadian audiences away from stereotypical representations of poverty. As indicated by participant # 18, this was because:

Development is something I am passionate about. I believe that we are all duty bearers, to one extent or another, and while the public wouldn't necessarily use that language, we all have an obligation to give back and understand the world that we live in. I think more and more the public is interested in doing that and learning more. So, from a communications standpoint, I am excited about informing and shaping what people might think so they are in a position to have better informed opinions and take action on the issues they care about. Education is critical for development, and by teaching Canadian audiences about it, real change will occur.

Therefore, rather than asking a public audience to take action on an issue they know little about, participants like #18 believe that informing Canadians about the nature of development, can better inspire action, influence behaviours and create change. This theme was seen throughout each of my interviews with participants coming from a social science background, as each of the 12 participants outlined how they used non-profit communications to inform perspective donors about the multifaceted issues associated with their development cause in order to inspire long-term, donor support. By seeking to educate public audiences first, these interviewees argued that Canadians could become engaged global citizens, capable of making informed decisions and actively participating in poverty and social justice issues. Here, the social science participants argued that education would eventually lead to greater action and economic return, as the more Canadians learned about a development cause, the more invested they would be in participating.

5.2.2 *Engagement Strategies*

Where I uncovered common ground among my social science and communications participants, was in their desire to build and maintain long-term relationships with Canadian donors. Here, both parties indicated that the use of truthful information was critical for instilling trust, building confidence and engaging public audiences. However, how they chose to share these truths was highly contested. For example, as outlined by participant #17:

The number one rule in marketing is that you have to tell the truth, but you don't have to tell all the actual facts. You can still tell the truth without the facts. For example, I could tell you there is a child dying of malnutrition in South Sudan when in reality, there are 10,000 children dying of malnutrition in South Sudan. Or, I could tell you a composite story about a child dying of malnutrition in South Sudan. Are any of these stories lies? No. I am still telling the story of malnutrition in South Sudan, I am just telling you in a way that piques your interest and opens your cheque book.

For marketing professionals, the ability to tell stories and use language to position causes in a way that engages public audiences is of utmost importance. In order for messages to be fully absorbed, non-profit communications need to reach an audience's physical, mental and emotional location (Andresen, 2006, p. 186). Non-profit communications professionals believe it is an NGO's ethical duty to be as effective and efficient as possible, leading communication background participants like participant #17 to argue that the stories they tell do not need to be based in absolute fact, just truth and emotional connection (Andresen, 2006; Kotler, 2005). Because charitable giving is largely an emotional response, for communications participants #4, #9, #12 and #17, it did not matter how a truth-based non-profit story was told, as long as it motivated individuals to act and engage with the cause (Andresen, 2006). This was not the case for the social science backgrounds who, in line with the representations of development literature, argued that communications that seek to provoke emotional responses inevitably serve to construct spectacle, sell media-friendly news stories and perpetuate stereotypical depictions of global poverty (Lewis et al., 2014; Kapoor, 2013). As stated by participant #14, "...there is an overwhelming obligation for non-profits to make sure that how we speak to our donors and the community at large is 100% truthful and accurate." This is because, as participant #18 argued, "using the hook of an emotional, half-truth story may get your foot through the door, but without explaining it as part of a larger issue and bringing in the facts and figures, it does nothing but trigger short-term engagement and stereotypical understandings of development causes." For the

participants with social science backgrounds, non-profit marketing was about educating audiences, building trust and telling the stories of their beneficiaries in a dignified, respectful manner. While they recognized the power of engaging donors through impactful, truth-based stories, participants #14, #18 and #19 indicated that they preferred to rely on factual storylines, rather than emotional hooks. However, while these participants discussed the power of educational and fact-based storytelling, none of the NGO staff members or marketing professionals I interviewed highlighted the need to educate the Canadian public about their own role in perpetuating global poverty. As, rather than representing poverty as a historical process of exploitation, my participants focused on the need to promote development as a contemporary matter, one where the global North is a charitable donor rather than a critical, contributing actor.

Participants from communication backgrounds often argued in favour of using emotional storylines and imagery to capture public attention, rather than statistical information and rational arguments. As indicated by participant #4, “If you are creatively representing a real situation and trying to help people understand what it is, and you grab their attention with emotional stimuli rather than reason, that isn’t manipulation or improper representation, its effective fundraising.” All 12 participants who came from a social science background recognized the importance of storytelling but argued in greater favor of statistical understanding. Leading participant #19 to assert, “Statistics are vital. Stories can paint an intimate portrait of a development issue, but it’s the statistics that allow people to understand the vastness of an issue.” Refuting this claim, participant #11 argued that:

Statistics have shown that statistics don’t work. People respond to stories. You can give people a whole bunch of numbers, and they will just gloss over. Donors give to the causes and people they relate to. How do they relate? Through emotional connection. We are emotional beings. When we cry, we give. Statistics don’t make people cry; stories do. By tapping into this knowledge, non-profits aren’t

manipulating audiences, they are being efficient. It is only when you hook a donor through an emotional storyline, should you share numbers and stats.

Research has shown that donors give more to a cause when they identify with a single person in need (Smalls et. Al, 2007; Andresen et al., 2010 (A), p. 6). However, for participants #6 and #7, who both came from social science backgrounds, just because emotional storylines work, does not mean that non-profits should rely on them. Emotional triggers are just a base form of reaction, which as indicated by participant #7, may ignite conversations, but does nothing to maintain interest long-term. While this technique may be proven to bring in donations, participant #6 argued that “Context is everything. An emotional storyline may trigger public audiences to donate, but what does that ultimately do? If we take this money what do we ultimately gain? The donor still does not understand our cause or the issues behind this story, and that is what’s ultimately important.”

In inspiring people to act, my interviewees also discussed the merits of using positive versus negative representations of development. For communication background participants, engaging the public using positive storylines and imagery was a critical part of their marketing and communications strategies. As reasoned by participant #3, this is because public audiences respond better to solutions than overwhelming, inescapable hardships. If non-profit communications are too focused on problem after problem, the public will tune them out, shut them off or simply give up (Kotler & Armstrong, 2015). Development causes are complex, but in focusing on problems rather than everyday solutions, communications participants #9, #13 and #15 argued that public audiences often become frustrated and disenchanted with a cause. For participant #12, the trend towards positive, inspirational representations is a step in the right direction, yet whether a story has a sad or happy ending, they believed it must be honestly and truthfully represented. However, for participant #14:

...the fact that the pendulum has swung from crying kids to happy kids is ridiculous. Non-profits have only shifted towards using positive representations of development to appease public audiences. Happy stories aren't necessarily success stories, and they don't necessarily respect the dignity of beneficiaries. The stories I think we need to tell are not about the schools being built, but about the children that succeed through their own grit and determination.

In wanting to maintain relevancy in the competitive, non-profit marketplace, social science participant #14 believed that non-profits rely too heavily on overtly positive storylines, afraid to break away from the status-quo. In following current trends, they argued that non-profits do nothing to serve or honor the stories of their beneficiaries, but instead, play to their donor's interests. As public audiences have increasingly demanded NGO accountability, wanting to know where their money is going and how it is spent, this swing towards overtly positive storytelling could be a play towards maintaining relevancy in the crowded, non-profit marketplace.

5.2.3 Sector Challenges

As competition in the non-profit sector rises, NGOs are increasingly looking for ways to break through the clutter and reach target audiences in new and exciting ways. With limited resources, non-profits are doing everything they can to spread awareness about their causes, capture attention and maintain public interest levels. As stated by participant #20, competition is a big challenge for development non-profits, as:

There are 85,000 registered charities in Canada. That is a lot of organisations in the mail, online, in the streets, and in the media spreading their messaging. And I think donors are starting to ask, why are there so many charities? And why do they all seem to be doing the same thing? We know that all our work is a bit different, and that we all have different initiatives. When you are in the charitable world you know there is a lot of rhyme and reason to these differences. But I think the public is questioning this, and I think that can create some challenges for when charities get out there and try and find new supporters. There is a just a lot of competition for donor dollars and attention.

Public audiences often feel that development non-profits are doing the same things and fighting the same fights, leading to steep competition and a need for creative solutions. Within the non-profit marketplace, there is a lot of repetition and redundancy. As the charitable sector continues to grow, communication participants #4, #12 and #13 and social science participants #6, #16 and #18 argued that non-profit organisations need to experiment more with for-profit marketing techniques in order to increase the effectiveness of their messaging, reach new donors and set themselves apart. However, for communications participants #9, #11 and #17, the idea of sector competition is an excuse, used by some non-profits to justify their ineptitudes in capturing the public's attention. Instead of accepting responsibility for their failures, they believed it is easier for NGOs to blame the crowded, non-profit marketplace. Contradicting this, social science participants #1, #2 and #8 perceived these failures as having everything to do with the competitive marketplace, the public's lack of attention span and overall story-fatigue. As stated by #8:

I think we are often marketing things that aren't fun to read, we share a lot of bad news. And so, people talk about donor fatigue, in that by the end of the year people can be tired of giving to charities, but I would argue there is also story-fatigue or moral-fatigue. People grow tired of hearing bad news or hearing about news that they find really distressing and don't know how to help change, like the situation in Syria for example. And trying to change these narratives and inspire hope is tough. With today's ever-changing new cycle, it can be difficult to keep your cause in the front of donor's minds, this is the real challenge today.

For participant #8, sustaining engagement is one of the most difficult tasks any non-profit is faced with. An idea echoed by participant #2 who argued, "The public may hear about us one day, but they have moved on to the latest story by the next." As public audiences are increasingly filtering their content and choosing what media, websites and social media pages to engage in, these participants indicated that there was a real need to create relevance and reach audiences in

new and exciting ways to capture their attention and donations. For these participants, it was not the public's lack of interest in a cause, it was their fatigue and attention spans that were to blame.

Regardless of background, participants #1, #3, #10, # 12 and #20 all discussed the need for Canadian non-profits to also engage with younger audiences in order to sustain revenue and increase their donor base moving forward. As the influence of social media continues to grow, participants #3 and #20 highlighted the push among non-profit groups to spend more time online on digital platforms like YouTube, Instagram, Twitter and Facebook. These platforms are the fastest and easiest ways for non-profits to track and understand the kinds of content their audience prefers. As stated by #3:

Digital is number one. It's the fastest way for us to communicate and reach our audiences. It's where we get the greatest response rates and it's the easiest for us to track. People are online now; it's how they expect to be communicated to. Traditionally, fundraising focused on and emphasized mailing and phone calls, but we are seeing a push for digital techniques because the return on investment is so much greater. Right now, our donors are typically 55 and older, but we need to break through to younger audiences in order to sustain donations into the future. So, digital is how we plan on doing this. We are really trying to speak to the younger generations who are used to their phones, hoping to meet them on the platforms they are using every day and encourage them to take action and donate to our cause.

Wanting to reach new donors through digital engagement and social media was a critical point raised throughout many of my interviews. Both communications and social science background participants indicated a keen interest in expanding their audiences to include younger demographics in order to sustain their donor base moving forward. However, for some of the social science participants I interviewed, there was less worry about specific target audiences, and a greater interest in a one-size-fits-all marketing mentality. Participants #8 and #18 believed it was more sustainable to spread their message in the hopes of catching the interest of anyone they could, rather than tailor target messages to specific audiences. In asking social science participant #8 about the audience they aimed to reach, they stated "Who do you have? We are

trying to get the attention of everyone, basically.” For #8 and #18, creating relevancy for all public audiences was much more important than capturing the attention of specific pockets. In following to trend, even the challenges faced by non-profits were a topic of contention between my communications and social science background participants.

5.3 Conclusion

As highlighted throughout this section, there were many discrepancies between the interview responses given by my communications participants versus those given by my social science participants. And while there was some common ground, it was mainly in regard to the need to tell truths, build public trust and engage audiences with global poverty and social justice causes. In following this trend of conflicting responses, when asked “Do you feel as though there are tensions between the representations of international development and marketing practice?” nine participants said yes, while 13 stated no. All nine interviewees that argued yes came from social science backgrounds, leaving the remaining three social science participants to assert there was no tension alongside the remaining 10 communication participants. For the social science participants that did recognize tensions between representations of development and marketing practice, they felt this was because of the ways other organisations presented development causes to the public. All nine of these interviewees indicated that they did not believe that these strains applied to their own work. For example, as stated by participant #19:

When I look at my own work, I don't feel a tension between marketing practices and the development objectives, because for me one of our objectives is to raise awareness among the Canadian public and create a better world. And so, we always try to develop communications and marketing materials that fulfill both objectives. So, it's not a tension for us, it's just parameters that we have sort of set out. But when I look at the work of other organisations, or when we have consulted with marketing firms, I have seen that there are issues or tensions around simplifying messages for both the sake of time and space, and in terms of what's reasonable to ask people to read or hear. But we don't do that.

Or, as stated by participant #10:

I think we do it right. I really do. We chose to do it differently. We try to make different choices and I get that sometimes in a campaign, when you are trying to motivate new donors to come on side, you have to present your best story first. You have to do this. But the job that I feel we have as communicators of development is to tell more. We need to show more about ourselves, the different pictures, create more understanding. So, you might have a limited one picture, one story, one country depiction to start, but then you need to tell more and figure out how do we develop our relationships with the public. I don't necessarily think other organisations do this. But we do. And that's why we are different.

For these participants, their work accurately represented and communicated social justice and development topics. While they argued that there was a serious need in the sector for organisations to consider the rights and dignity of the beneficiaries they represented, they believed that this only applied to the work of other non-profit organisations. As stated by participant #2, "My work teaches the public about the true nature of development issues. I paint the whole picture for audiences, and I teach them what they need to know. There is nothing else I can do. But I do insist that other non-profit communicators follow suit." Therefore, while these nine participants may have believed there to be a serious tension between marketing and ethical representation, they did not feel as though it was their duty to find a solution.

For the remaining 13 participants, tensions between ethical representations of development and marketing practice were either something they never felt or something they never considered. For participant #4, this was because "I don't really know enough to comment on this, but I mean, I am doing my job. I am raising money, isn't that the point?" In following this argument, 8 of these 13 participants maintained that they had never really heard of these tensions before, with participant #17 stating:

Are their tensions? I mean, not to my knowledge. I am sure there are lots of different conversations going on out there though, but I haven't heard of it first-hand, or seen it first-hand. I think it's an interesting question, but I don't think this is something I need to worry about. I mean, I am in this job to raise money. If that means telling

difficult stories to capture the attention of a public audience, then that is what I am going to do. Is this unethical? No. Is it effective? Yes. Do the lines get blurred? I don't think so. It is my role as a non-profit marketer to get Canadians to pay attention to causes happening around the world. And I think I do a great job of doing this. Wouldn't it be unethical to not do my job, to not raise money in an effective manner? I mean, that is much more unethical to me than using human emotion to raise money.

For participant #17, non-profit marketing and communications is used to serve a purpose; to raise money. Without money, there would be no programming or solutions. Fundraising is critical, and the best way to get the public to give donations is to tell stories that bring out their emotions and inspire them to act. Social science participant #22 agreed, indicating that their non-profit's storytelling and teaching abilities were nothing without the use of for-profit marketing techniques, stating:

No, I actually don't think there are tensions. I mean I really don't. I think because we have to work so closely together, it's a catch-22, or a chicken and the egg situation. And I think that on the program side of the house, we are trying to do our job and deliver programs to children, but on the fundraising side, they are trying to raise funds for these programs. Without working together, it's really difficult to do our actual job; which is help people. I can't speak for all organizations, but I know for us there is a continuous feedback loop, where one hand has to understand the other and vice versa. And I mean not at the expense of saving children's lives, that comes first, but there has to be a happy medium in between that.

The need for development causes to partner with effective marketing strategies was a critical point raised by social science participants #6, #14 and #22 as without the expertise of both sides, they believed non-profits would be unable to accomplish their goals. While these three participants did not recognise tensions, they believed there was a serious need for marketing and development practitioners to work alongside one another to capture greater results. Without both the programming and fundraising sides working together, these participants believed that non-profits would fail to capture their potential.

Important points were raised on both sides of this debate. For my participants that felt tensions between marketing and representations of development practice, they believed that other organisations needed to do better in championing their beneficiaries and teaching public audiences about the complexities of their causes. For the participants that did not recognise these tensions, they believed that it was their duty to raise as much money for their initiatives as possible, wanting to capture and increase overall donation revenue. Unfortunately, while both sides critiqued the positions of the other, neither provided solutions on how to best overcome these failings. Neither seemed to recognise the other's position as, while it is important to teach public audiences about development causes, it is also important to do whatever it takes to inspire them to take action. And while it is important to inspire public audiences to participate in a cause, it is also critical to educate them on the complexities of global poverty. It is within these crossroads that solutions for increasing Northern engagement with development and global justice matters can be found moving forward, and it is within this space that I believe tensions can be resolved.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Findings Overview

This thesis explores the tensions between effective marketing communications and post-colonial concerns surrounding the ethical representation of people and cultures in the global South. In investigating these divides, I examined two separate bodies of literature, email and website documents, and the professional opinions of marketing and development practitioners, with the ultimate goal of understanding how to best increase Northern engagement with development. Here I argue that, although lots of valid points were raised within the literature and by practitioners in the field, neither side of this debate helped us get towards a clearer understanding of how to best market development in ways that are both ethical and effective. While both camps provided strong justifications and arguments for how to best communicate development topics to Northern audiences, there is very little recognition or analysis regarding the tensions between ethical and effective representation within this research scope. Both camps critiqued the positions of one another, but solutions on how to best overcome these failings were ignored and left unanswered. It is within this space that I aimed to find room for conversation, contending that although there are some approaches to marketing that cannot be reconciled with the ethical concerns of development literature, there is potential for overlap. Unfortunately, these connections were not addressed by the literature I consulted nor by the professionals I interviewed. Yet I believe it is within these junctures that the reconciliations between the representations of development and marketing practice can be teased out, and that the global North's level of public engagement, understanding and advocacy with global justice matters can be improved upon.

6.2 Revisiting Research Questions

The primary research question that guided this study is (How) can development communications be both ethical and effective at the same time? To address this, I sought to uncover if the tensions between ethical representation and effective communications could ever be resolved, how marketers and development practitioners recognized and navigated these strains, and how not-for-profit development organisations could increase Northern public engagement with global justice issues. In attempting to answer these questions, I maintain that in order for development communications to become more ethical and effective, there first needs to be recognition within the literature and by development and marketing practitioners about their own roles in perpetuating these strains and pressures.

To provide an overview of my findings, my literature analysis found that what was missing or lacking in these materials was an analysis of the strategies needed to increase public engagement with global development issues from the perspectives of both marketing effectiveness and ethical representations; my website and document analysis uncovered a complicated and contentious debate regarding how to best use visual imagery, phrasing and framing to shape the way Canadian publics makes sense of development initiatives; and my semi-structured interviews uncovered a need for recognition and acknowledgement of the tensions between marketing practice and ethical representations of development among practitioners. Essentially, my findings revealed that while these two bodies of literature and two groups of professionals may have critiqued the positions of one another, they did so without actually engaging with the ideas presented by the opposing side. Although lots of valid points were raised, neither camp helps us get towards a clearer understanding of how communication strategies for global justice might become more effective and ethical. And while I believe that

the apparent tensions between ethical and effective communications may never be completely resolved, I argue that in order to take steps towards allowing this to happen, there must be considerations on either side of their opposing camp. Therefore, while I am unable to answer how development communications can become more ethical and effective, I stress that in order to resolve these tensions moving forward, conversations and acknowledgements of the arguments made by both sides of this debate must be heard and a fuller conversation must be had. In having tough conversations and appreciating the positions of both ethical representation and effective marketing practice, not-for-profit development organisations can increase Northern public engagement with global justice issues. Without appreciating the strategic use of negative and positive imagery, branding and emotional connections, as well as the need to teach public audiences about the complexities and nuances of global poverty and development issues, new solutions can never truly be uncovered. What we can learn from this research is that conversations must be had to help find ways to resolve these tensions.

This thesis set out to answer my primary and secondary research questions, and although I may not be able to answer all of them, I was able to find that while practitioners may not recognize or navigate these tensions in their daily lives, the only way for non-profits to increase the Canadian public's engagement and relationship with communities in the global South, is for both sides to appreciate and recognise the arguments and positions of the opposing side. Without accepting their own responsibilities and acknowledging their own wrongdoings, it is impossible to increase the Northern public's engagement with development causes. As without self-reflecting and engaging with the ideas presented by either side and appreciating their own faults in this debate, new solutions and ways forward will never be uncovered. While it is valid to critique the opposing side, solutions also need to be given on how to move forward. Therefore,

conversations need to be had before we can uncover how development can be both ethical and effective at the same time, as without appreciating and accepting fault in this debate, there will be no learning and no new understanding moving forward.

6.3 Recommendations

In the interest of communicating more effectively with potential supporters and activists, I argue that more research needs to examine the marketing strategies of Northern non-profit organisations in order to understand how they can better influence public awareness and engagement with global poverty and development issues. In order for this to happen, both sides of this debate need to appreciate the strengths of the other and provide concrete solutions on how this can happen. In needing to provide audiences with the information that is immediately relevant to them, and to communicate about the programs and services a non-profit offers, NGOs need to utilize marketing strategies and techniques. The aid sector needs to be more strategic in designing messages for specific target audiences, engaging in conversation and designing communications that appeal to audience emotions to motivate them to perform the actions that non-profits want them to take. But they also need to do better in reframing development into specific messages that not only resonate with audiences, but teach them about the development context and champion their beneficiaries. However, before marketers can capture their sales goals, and before development practitioners can capture the interest of public audiences, they need to speak to one another.

Appendix A – Email invitation sent to marketing professionals and development practitioners.

Dear _____,

My name is Olivia Kwiecien and I am a Graduate student from the Department of International Development Studies at Dalhousie University. I am leading a research project on the marketing strategies of Canadian non-profit international development organisations– with a particular focus on how NGO communications can influence the public’s engagement with global justice issues in ways that are both ethical and effective.

I am writing in the hope that I can meet with you, a key stakeholder in this conversation, to learn more about your work in _____’s non-profit communications when I am in _____ during the month of September. My schedule is very flexible during this period. I am available to coordinate with you via email or reach out to you in the next week via telephone to set a time that is suitable for you.

The research project is funded by a research scholarship from the Nova Scotia government and has been approved by Dalhousie's Research Ethics Board. As part of the research protocol, the name of your organisation will be confidential, and your identity will be kept anonymous.

Please let me know if you are willing to take part in an interview for this research project. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have about the project.

Thank you for your time and consideration, I greatly appreciate it.

Sincerely,

Olivia Kwiecien

Graduate Student
Department of International Development Studies
Dalhousie University

Email: Oliviakwiecien@dal.ca

Phone: 902-292-1726

Appendix B – Consent Form

- Project Title:** Communicating Development: examining the tensions between effectiveness and ethics in the marketing strategies of Canadian international development NGOs
- Lead researcher:** Olivia Kwiecien
Department of International Development Studies
Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
- Supervisor:** Dr. John Cameron
Department of International Development Studies Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
- Contact info:** oliviakwiecien@dal.ca / (902) 292-1726
john.cameron@dal.ca / (902) 494—7011

I have read the explanation about this study. I have been given the opportunity to discuss it and my questions have been answered. I agree to take part in this study. I realize that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to leave the study at any time.

For interviews:

- I agree that the researcher may audio-record the interview with me: **Yes** _____ **No** _____
- I agree that the researcher may re-contact me for a follow-up interview: **Yes** _____ **No** _____
- I agree that substantial direct quotations from my interview may be used in reports and publications provided that I am not identified in any way: **Yes** _____ **No** _____
- I would like to be informed about the results of this study through email: **Yes** _____ **No** _____

Signatures:

Researcher Name: _____

Researcher Signature: _____ Date: _____

Interviewee Name: _____

Interviewee Signature: _____ Date: _____

Email: _____ Tel: _____

Appendix C – Study Guide

- Project Title:** Communicating Development: examining the tensions between effectiveness and ethics in the marketing strategies of Canadian international development NGOs
- Lead researcher:** Olivia Kwiecien
Department of International Development Studies
Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
- Supervisor:** Dr. John Cameron
Department of International Development Studies Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
- Contact info:** oliviakwiecien@dal.ca / (902) 292-1726
john.cameron@dal.ca / (902) 494—7011

Introduction:

We invite you to take part in a research study being conducted by Olivia Kwiecien (MA), under the supervision of Dr. John Cameron from the Department of International Development Studies (IDS) at Dalhousie University. Taking part in the research is up to you, and is entirely your choice. If you do decide to take part, you may leave the study at any time, for any reason. The information below tells you about what is involved in the research, what you will be asked to do and about any benefit, risk, inconvenience or discomfort that you might experience. Please ask as many questions as you like. If you have any questions after the interview, please contact Olivia Kwiecien.

Purpose and outline of the research study:

This research project poses 3 central research questions:

- (How) can development communications be both ethical and effective at the same time?
- (How) is it possible to reconcile tensions between post-colonial critiques of the representations of development literature and contemporary practices of communications and marketing?
- (How) do development practitioners recognize and navigate these tensions?
- (How) can not-for-profit development organisations increase Northern public engagement with global justice issues?

In the interest of communicating more effectively, it is imperative that more research looks at the marketing strategies of Northern non-profit international development organisations. Used by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in an attempt to differentiate themselves amongst their peers, the field of non-profit marketing has grown in influence since the mid-1970s. NGO and development scholars have become increasingly aware of the relevance of communications in

marketing global justice issues, as well as the influence these strategies hold over public awareness and engagement with development issues. By turning to for-profit marketing principles, non-profits seek not only to maintain revenue and influence public action, but also to leverage their brands within the competitive charitable sector. In looking to the nature and diversity of NGO marketing strategies, as well as the debates that frame current non-profit marketing and development literature, my research project will examine if and how NGO communications can influence the public's engagement with international development issues in ways that are both ethical and effective.

As I hold a postgraduate degree in Public Relations and an undergraduate degree in International Development Studies, I am interested in pursuing this topic as I have seen firsthand the potential of marketing to inspire public action as well as the failures of this field to engage seriously with questions about ethical representations. In addressing both sides of this debate, I aim to conduct semi-formal interviews with communication officers from NGOs and specialized non-profit marketing firms and to complete an institutional ethnography. In doing so, I will draw upon knowledge from the marketing and development literature to discuss with practitioners in the field and discover firsthand how these tensions are managed on a daily basis and to what extent ethical development concerns are or are not reflected on in communication practices.

The research will involve three components: 1) analysis of secondary material (documents, reports, non-profit communication campaigns and academic development and marketing material) produced by Canadian non-profit organisations and marketing firms, academics and communications and development practitioners; 2) interviews with the communication directors and staff of Canadian NGOs and specialty non-profit marketing firm; 3) observation of communication workplace practices, focused on strategies for public engagement work and marketing global justice issues. The research project aims to interview approximately 30 people for Canadian NGOs and non-profit marketing firms (directors and staff).

What you will be asked to do:

Interviews for this research project will take approximately 60-90 minutes and will take place in the location of your choice at a time that works for your schedule. With your consent (indicated at the end of this form), the interviews will be audio recorded. You are free to not answer any questions or to withdraw from the interview and project at any time. With your consent (indicated at the end of this form), you may be invited to participate in a follow-up interview to clarify any issues or questions that could not be discussed in the first interview.

Possible benefits, risks and discomforts

The risks connected to this research are minimal. Your participation in this research project should not pose any risk to you that is greater than regular activities within your organization. There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this research. The goal of the research is to generate information that will help to improve the understanding and practice of communications to engage Canadians in thinking and acting on issues of international development and global justice matters, so there may be some indirect benefits. None of the participants will be paid to take part in this research project. If you spent money on parking or to take a taxi to the interview location, we will refund you the cost of your travel expenses.

How your information will be protected:

Your name, position and organization will not be revealed in any communication (written or verbal) about this research and will not be repeated to anyone outside the research team (Olivia Kwiecien M.A. and Dr. John Cameron). Interviews will be audio recorded upon your consent, and a written transcript of the interview will be produced, with your identity indicated only to the researchers through a special code. The researchers are obliged to keep the transcripts from interviews (with names in code) for 5 years following the completion of the research project. The researchers will make every effort to protect the confidentiality of the information you provide: the audio recording and transcripts will be stored in password protected computers and locked filing cabinets. However, it is always possible that some people will figure out that you are the source of the information which you provide in the interview.

If you decide to stop participating:

You are free to leave the study at any time. If you decide to stop participating at any point during the study, you can also decide whether you want any of the information that you have contributed up to that point to be removed or if you will allow us to use that information. You can also decide for up to 2 months afterwards if you want us to remove your data. After that time, it will become impossible for us to remove it because it may already be published.

How to obtain results:

You can obtain information about research results by including your contact information at the end of the signature page or by contacting the lead researcher Olivia Kwiecien (M.A.) at Oliviakwiecien@dal.ca.

Questions / Comments / Concerns:

We are happy to talk with you about any questions or concerns you may have about your participation in this research study. Please contact Olivia Kwiecien (M.A.) (at 902-292-1726 / Oliviakwiecien@dal.ca) or Dr. John Cameron (at 902-494-7011 / John.cameron@dal.ca) anytime with questions, comments, or concerns about the research study (if you are calling long distance, please call collect). We will also tell you if any new information comes up that could affect your decision to participate.

If you have any ethical concerns about your participation in this research, you may also contact the Director, Research Ethics, Dalhousie University at (902) 494-1462, or email: ethics@dal.ca.

Appendix D – Interview Questions

Interview Guide:

Please note, some questions may be adapted, and some additional questions may be added to elicit more detailed responses.

- To what extent does your organization engage in initiatives to engage the Canadian public with international development and global justice issues?
- Why is communications and marketing work important for your organization?
- What are the key messages that your organisation tries to communicate through communications and marketing strategies?
- What are the most important tools / mechanisms that you use in communications and marketing work?
- How would you describe the strategies of communications and marketing that your organization uses?
- What are the ‘best practices’ of communications and marketing that you try to follow?
- What are some of the most inspiring or successful communications or marketing campaigns that you have seen in recent years?
- Are there ethical limits on the types and strategies of marketing and communications that you think international development NGOs should use?
- Do you feel as though there are tensions between the representations of international development and marketing practice?
- What are some of the biggest challenges of effectively engaging the public through communications and marketing tools?
- How would you describe the ways in which your organization represents development and poverty through its communications and marketing work?
- Does your organization have any specific guidelines on the how to represent those issues in images and text?
- Do you have other colleagues with whom you recommend I interview?

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