

FAIR TRADE PROMOTION:
THE REPRESENTATION OF THIRD WORLD WOMEN IN FAIR TRADE ADVOCACY

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The demand for fair trade products stems from the economical inequalities in the system of international trade that exists between the producer, distributor and consumer. The development of fair trade products aims to support higher wages for the producers, specifically marginalized regions that are exploited through the process of international trade. For many countries export trade associated with agricultural foods, clothing, labour and services constitutes a major source of foreign exchange. However, the regions that produce and export the most goods are Africa and South and central South America and Asia. Farmers/producers continue to work in poor conditions on plantations, factories and sweatshops with inadequate wages and profit margins while the greatest consumers of their products are in developed countries. Recently awareness of these exploitative conditions for the producers have taken center stage in the advocacy of fair trade products in developed countries. Activism and ethical consumption has increased in North America due to the consistent efforts of non-for-profit organizations advocating a fair and universal economical global trading system. The question ‘why now’ have consumers began to turn to fair trade is the rationale for the importance of this study. The unequal global trading system has existed for decades, however a shift in consumer awareness and purchasing choices has amplified the need to examine the reasons why consumers are turning to fair trade, and whether the same reasons are mirrored in the way NGO’s are advocating fair trade.

The shift in consumer values may be difficult to accurately portray and so instead widening the scope of study to examine the international, political and environmental context may give an indication to why this shift may have taken place. The Kyoto Protocol was adopted in 1997 and enforced on February 2005, this agreement aimed to stabilize international greenhouse gas concentration in the atmosphere. *The United Nations Framework Convention on*

Climate Change in article two said “Such a level should be achieved within a time-frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner” (UNFCCC, 2005). Here is an indication that bridges concern with the greenhouse gas levels in the atmosphere and their correlation with food production and the health of the ecosystem. Where does fair trade advocacy fit in this frame?

With the awareness of the health of our planet becoming an international topic, the expansion of technological communication has been able to spread the message of conservation and ethical environmentally friendly living. These new communication tools, which include the internet have opened an avenue for the promotion of topics that entail the rhetoric of good ethics, good values, ‘saving the planet’ and ‘we are all one people and one planet’. This type of discourse that has circulated on the web and in communication media gives NGO’s that advocate for fair trade products the avenue to promote their message of ethical consumption through fair trade. Child exploitation, sweatshop factories, and improvised communities in underdeveloped countries may have been the opportunity for NGO’s fair trade marketing and promotion to appeal to a willing audience already concerned with the dangers of climate change.

Therefore, the question to ask is whether fair trade organizations helps international producers to achieve fair wages for their products on the global trading system, or whether NGO’s advocate helping underdeveloped regions to achieve sustainability so that they may be more dependable on their local economy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Fair trade is defined as the development of international trade that aims to support marginalized producers of goods and services to compete fairly in the international market. My research examines how fair trade promotion has been developed particularly by the media and activists and whether the increase of ethical consumers is a reflection of the promotion of the fair trade movement. The unequal global trading system has existed for decades, however advocacy against exploitative trade has become a popular discourse in the promotion of fair trade items. This literature review will specifically analyze the academic research done on the development of the fair trade movement, the structure of production and most importantly how fair trade promotion has changed and how the third world producer's image is represented in fair trade promotion.

Advocacy for fair trade products stems from a long history of humanitarian rights that can be traced back to the Atlantic slave trade. The formation of the organization 'Free Trade Society' in 1827 by a group of abolitionists called the Religious Society of Friends started a movement to promote the trade of 'slave free' products (Newman, 2008). This movement, titled 'Free Produce', aimed to address the issue of slavery as well as the promotion of goods that were produced by free slaves. The free trade society gained popularity and eventually became known as the American Free Trade Association. The organization formed a slave-free distribution channel in addition to selling 'free produced' goods (Newman, 2008). However in 1847 the organization disbanded (Newman, 2008). It is important to note that the abolition of slavery in the United States was in the year 1865. Therefore, the 'free produce' movement existed during a time when slavery was legal and open opposition difficult. This type of fair trade focused on

activism for the producer's rights rather than expanding consumer choices.

The ideals behind fair trade can be traced back to the anti neo-liberal student movements in Europe during the 1960's (Moore, 2004; Roy, 2006). It was considered a radical student movement that opposed the political ethics of neo-liberalism because the global free trade market was believed to be flawed and unfair (Moore, 2004). The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in 1964 highlighted the need for better trading relations with developing countries (United Nations, 2002). It is important to note that between 1950 to 1980 different regions of the world after World War Two started to gain independence from European colonies. New trade relations needed to be made as countries struggled to regain economic independence and compete in the global market. The success of ATOs (alternative trading organizations) increased in popularity in 1965 when OXFAM established 'Helping-by-Selling' with the popular slogan 'Trade not Aid' (Roy, 2008). The fair trade movement had taken a shift in promotion by addressing the need for an equitable trading system in the hope of helping under-developed countries create sustainable independence rather than depend on the foreign dominance of their local economy.

From the 1960's to the 1990's ATOs increased and the fair trade movement continued to advocate for peace, self-determined economic independence and the end of exploitative trading practices. Fair trade shops, titled 'Worldshops' were established in Western Europe during this time (Moore, 2004; Roy, 2008). Moore (2004) identifies that the fair trade movement during the 70's to the 90's was aided by the increase of international political activism supported by the ideals of Mandela, the Sandanistas, and J Nyerere of Tanzania and Omar Torrijos of Panama. Internationally the political atmosphere of these political groups, activists, and leaders coincided with the rhetoric of the fair trade movement, equality and social justice. However, Renard (2003)

argues that the fair trade movement started to reach a plateau in the 1980's and there was a decline in sales of fair trade items. The drop in commodity prices led the global market to become very competitive and the asking price of fair trade items no longer appealed to consumers (Renard, 2003). The promotion of fair trade items needed to change its discourse in order to sustain its stability in the global market.

A case study of the success of the fair trade organization CafeDirect, an ATO that specializes in fair trade coffee, tea and cocoa is what Tallontire (2000) argues set the model for the new promotion of fair trade items. CafeDirect, was established after the collapse of the International Coffee Agreement in 1989 (Tallontire, 2000). CafeDirect created itself as a brand that would engage consumers with narratives about the producers while personalizing the stories of coffee growers in developing countries. In addition, CafeDirect promoted its coffee as superior quality in comparison to the competition, therefore justifying to consumers that they were purchasing a fair trade item that was of the highest standards. Their slogan was "We pay more, so we can get the pick of the crop" (Tallontire, 2000). CafeDirect was able to fuse ethical consumption, high quality, and narrative which brought them into the mainstream consumer market that other ATOs were not able to achieve at the time (Tallontire,2000). However Nicholas and Opal (2005) argue that the definition of fair trade started to become segmented at this point. The 1990's struggled to define whether fair trade was about equal access to compete in the global market for marginalized producers/entrepreneurs or had become a quality brand that only appealed to a niche market, targeting consumers who had excess income (Nicholas and Opal, 2005; Renard, 2002).

CafeDirect in the UK was a success and ATOs saw that CafeDirect's goal of appealing to mainstream markets and shops was the most effective way to increase fair trade revenue.

However, Hira and Ferrie (2006) identify several challenges that were met by the organizations advocating for fair trade: a) a lack of agreement to what fair trade really means and how it should be certified; b) uneven awareness and availability across different areas, with marked differences between some parts of Europe and North America that reflect more fundamental debates about distribution; c) larger questions about the extent of the potential contribution of fair trade to development under the current system, including limitations on the number and types of workers affected and the fair trade focus on commodity goods. However, Nicholas and Opal (2005) argue that the main challenge was how the fair trade movement was going to find a way to expand distribution without compromising consumer trust in fair trade products and their origins. A common point of agreement between Hira and Ferrie (2006) and Nicholas and Opal (2005) was that the product labelling of 'Fairtrade' needed to have a universal meaning in order to gain consumer trust.

The first successful fair trade labelling was for coffee export in 1989 by Max Havelarr (Hira and Ferrie, 2006). *Fairtrade* became known in Europe as an independent certification brand that ensured that the distributors and customers could at anytime trace the origins of the fair trade item; transparency was the promotion tool for *Fairtrade* (Nicholas and Opal, 2005). According to Tallontire (2000) this initiative for universal certification was extremely successful because for the first time Fairtrade coffee was sold in supermarkets and mass-retailers, therefore reaching a larger consumer segment. The success of *Fairtrade* was replicated in several other markets: in the ensuing years, similar non-profit Fair trade labelling organizations were set up in other European countries and North America, called "Max Havelaar" (in Belgium, Switzerland, Denmark, Norway and France), "Transfair" (in Germany, Austria, Luxembourg, Italy, the United States, Canada and Japan), or carrying a national name: "Fairtrade Mark" in the UK and Ireland,

“Rättvisemärkt” in Sweden, and "Reilu Kauppa" in Finland (Tallontire, 2000; Redfern and Snedker, 2003). Each of these organizations had their own fair trade standards, committees and monitoring systems (Tallontire,2000). Hira and Ferrie (2005) identified this as problematic, because there needed to be a global universal certification and monitoring system in place to harmonize the fair trade movement. Without this the fair trade symbol would become segmented again.

Another change in the development of fair trade promotion took place when the Fairtrade Labelling Organization International (FLO) was created in 1997. The Fairtrade Labelling Organization International became an umbrella organization with the mission to set the Fairtrade standard, support, inspect and certify disadvantaged producers and harmonize the Fairtrade message across the movement (Hira and Ferrie, 2006). In 2002, FLO launched a new International Fairtrade Certification Mark.



(www.fairtrade.net)

The goals of the launch were to improve the visibility of the Mark on supermarket shelves, facilitate cross border trade and simplify export procedures for both producers and exporters. Currently, the Fairtrade Certification Mark harmonization process is still in progress. All but two labelling initiatives (Transfair USA and TransFair Canada) have adopted the new International Fairtrade Certification Mark (Transfair,2010). Full transition to the new Fairtrade Mark should become reality as it gradually replaces the old certification marks at various speeds

in various countries (Transfair,2010).

The Fairtrade Labelling Organization set standards that they believed are “designed to support the sustainable development of small scale producers and agricultural workers in the poorest countries in the world” (FLO, 2010). These standards are : ensure that producers receive prices that cover their average costs of sustainable production; provide an additional Fairtrade premium which can be invested in projects that enhance social, economic and environmental development; enable pre-financing for producers who require it; facilitate long-term trading partnerships and enable greater producer control over the trading process; and set clear minimum and progressive criteria to ensure that the conditions of production and trade of all Fairtrade certified products are socially, economically fair and environmentally responsible (FLO, 2010). These five standards have been set in accordance with the requirements of the ISEAL code of good practice for setting social and environmental standards (ISEAL, 2010). ISEAL Alliance is a global association for social and environmental standards established in 2000. (ISEAL, 2010).

In addition to FLO’s fair trade standards of business, the products must be sold to consumers and bought from producers at a fixed minimum premium. In order for a producer’s goods to be fair-trade certified it must adhere to FLO’s product standards, which Mark Sidwell (2008) argues leaves many farmers in need of Fairtrade unable to participate due to their inability to meet FLO’s product standards (2008). The first of these standards is that members must be small-scale producers, “who don’t depend on hired workers all the time, but run their farm mainly by using their own and their family’s labour” (FLO, 2010). The second FLO product standard for small scale producers is democracy “profits should be equally distributed among the producers and all members should have a voice and vote in the decision-making process of the organization”. These organizations are called co-operatives. Fairtrade co-operatives can also

comprise hired labour especially for farmers who produce products that need organised labour such as tea, flowers, bananas etc.

Although FLO has specific producer, labour and product standards, Sidwell (2008) argues that Fairtrade only qualifies farmers on the basis of whether they are able to bring a buyer to the table and whether they meet Fairtrade standards, not on the basis of need. Sidwell (2008) argues that economist Tyler Cowen agrees with Sidwell that farmers or hired labour who fall outside the Fairtrade regime may then find themselves worse off, either through international competition creating a parallel ‘exploitation’ sector or because protection of one area of the market weakens the position of the rest. Cowen and Sidwell (2008) agree that Fairtrade aims to aid marginalized producers to compete in the global trading system. However Sidwell (2008) does not provide evidence of how farmers are worse off from fair trade. Rather his emphasis is on how free trade is the most effective poverty reduction strategy.

In order to understand FLO’s business standards, it is important to comprehend the structure of production (supply chain) between non-fair trade and fairtrade products. The example of coffee will be used to illustrate between the two lines of production.



(Green America Today, 2010)

In the illustration of the fair trade supply chain, it is important to note the importance of co-operatives. Co-ops must be fair-trade certified by FLO in order to be labelled with the Fairtrade mark. However, there are co-ops that exist that are not certified by FLO, yet continue to trade with other alternative trading organizations. An example is the co-op 'Just Coffee'. Just Coffee titles their coffee CAN and promotes their coffee as more fair than fair-trade in order to justify their price; as the below illustration suggests.



(Just Coffee, 2007)

Although Just Coffee aims to give marginalized farmers higher wages, the Fairtrade mark is the most popular symbol of fair trade for consumers. Alternative trade organizations must compete with the Fairtrade mark which Nicholas and Mark (2005) note hurt the fair trade movement because it only creates mistrust in the overall fair-trade message. The definition of fair trade is an important component of fair-trade marketing and promotion.

The success of CafeDirect set the model for fair-trade promotion through personalization. The only way consumers are going to purchase fair-trade products is if they were aware they exist and if consumers felt that a fair-trade purchase can make a difference to a marginalized

producer. Initiatives such as the festival ‘Fairtrade Fortnight’, by the Fairtrade Foundation in the United Kingdom, created an annual fair to increase the promotion of the Fairtrade Mark in addition to engaging consumers with narratives about the producers (Fairtrade Foundation, 2010). The Fairtrade Foundation describes Fairtrade Fortnight as :

“An annual campaign to raise awareness and promote products carrying the FAIRTRADE Mark. Every year campaigners around the country organise thousands of events such as breakfasts, banquets, fashion shows and football matches – all using or promoting Fairtrade items. By encouraging our communities to make small changes and buy Fairtrade products regularly we can trigger a positive change in the lives of producers” (Fairtrade Foundation 2010).

However, Roy (2008) notes that Fairtrade is one particular mode of ethical certification, quite aggressively competing with alternative schemes with their own merits and demerits.

Fairtrade promotion uses the method of aligning the consumer to empathise with the victim/needy producer. This can be done through virtual victim-hood, the term coined by Moira Peelo (2006) refers to society inviting the public to engage and identify with the victim through a ‘human interest’ story that positions the reader to become a mediated witness to the pain and struggles of the victim(s). However these human interest stories are framed to contain the public’s emotions as well as control it, by allowing the reader to sympathise yet detach and distance themselves from the actuality of events. Although the struggles faced by third world producers may seem distant for fair trade consumers, Dieter Rucht (2000) notes that distant issues can still bridge global solidarity. Rucht (2000) identifies solidarity in social movements as the social ‘glue’ that emotionally binds people together based on various principles ranging from pity and compassion to universalistic values. This type of solidarity Rucht (2000) argues brings together the global mobilization of collective action for distant issues. The idea that the chance of success is higher when efforts are joined is how fair trade may motivate consumers to make an ethical purchase. Although Rucht (2000), notes that solidarity may be an altruistic action, that is

aid without the expectation of personal benefit, there are types of action that Rucht argues may make it difficult to gain support for a distant issue. For example one may think first of providing help and support for issues in their immediate or close environment because of future ramifications, example, homelessness and how this may increase crime in a community or cause social conflicts. However, due to the international and global interdependencies, distant issues for western consumers may still have repercussions for their environment. Rucht (2000, page 78) provides the example of textile workers in Central Europe advocating for fair wages in Asian textile industries because they knew that low wages elsewhere may affect their own wages or worse jeopardize their jobs.

To focus on the reasons why consumers opt for fair trade can not provide a sufficient explanation for an account of their actions; rather Melucci (1996) argues that an actor's belief always depends on the broader relations in which the actors are involved. Therefore it is important to examine the systems of relationships in which goals, frames, values and discourses are produced in fair trade promotion.

The promotion of fair trade products is an important part of increasing sales. Fair-trade advocates for the rights of third world producers by personalizing the stories of these producers so ethical consumers to feel more connected to the product. Fair trade organizations must frame the third world producer and their story in order to resonate with the consumer. Fair trade must provide the bridge for consumers to want to improve the situation of others, notably of underprivileged groups with few means to defend their own interest. In order for consumers to feel connected to the cause and fair trade to be successful, the frames projected by fair trade must align with the frames of participants to produce resonance between the two parties (Benford and Snow, 2000). Political communication researcher Jim Kuypers (2009) defines frames as

rhetorical entities that “induce us to filter our perceptions of the world in particular ways, essentially making some aspects of our multi-dimensional reality more noticeable than other aspects” (p 11). How a social movement is framed can determine participant mobilization (Benford and Snow, 2000). Fair trade advocacy needs the active participation of ethical consumers in order for fair trade to be successful. Therefore the frames used by fair trade discourse must operate by making some information more salient than other information. Salience is defined by Entman (1993) as making a piece of information more noticeable, memorable, and meaningful to its audience. However Entman (1993) also identifies that salience is a product of the interaction of texts and receivers, and the presence of frames in the text does not guarantee their influence in audience thinking. Fairtrade promotion uses frames to call attention to particular aspects of the reality described in order to influence consumers to make an ethical purchase.

The Fairtrade mark has become associated with the joy of helping third world countries maintain a place in the global trading market. However, the frames used by fair trade marketing select and call attention to particular aspects of consumer participation, the solution and the problem, which logically means that the frames simultaneously direct attention away from other aspects. Most frames are defined by what they omit as well as include, and the omissions of potential problem definitions, explanations, evaluations, and recommendations may be as critical as the inclusions in guiding the audience (Entman, 1993). The rhetoric behind fair trade advocacy is grounded in seeking a platform for third world producers to participate fairly in the global market, however my literature review has led me to examine the representation/image of the fair-trade third world producer. This is because the framing of fair trade aiding third world producers emphasize on human interest stories that focus on rebuilding poverty stricken

communities, providing food to feed families, the chance for an education etc. Ethical consumers may be influenced to make the choice to purchase fair-trade because of how the promotion of fair trade is carefully framed. Benford and Snow (2000) attribute how frames are pivotal in influencing social movements through “the robustness, completeness, and thoroughness of the framing effort” (pg 615) which can determine the success of a movement. This is because frames can define problems, diagnosis causes, make moral judgements and suggest remedies (Enteman, 1993) Therefore, by examining how third world producers are framed in fair trade advocacy can aid in understanding how fair trade promotion influences readers to resonate with the fair trade movement. The three core framing tasks that Benford and Snow (2000) identify as influential to participant mobilization are: a) diagnostic framing for the identification of a problem and assignment of blame, b) prognostic framing to suggest solutions, strategies, and tactics to a problem, and c) motivational framing that serves as a rationale for action. How the third world producer is framed is the next step in my analysis of fair trade promotion.

Third world producers that are on the face of fair trade campaigns are shown smiling and rejoicing that they are now given the ‘opportunity’ to be a player in the game. In order for fair trade marketing to be successful, it must frame their producers as in need of help, otherwise, why would one choose to purchase a fair-trade product? Carpenter (2005) identifies how women and children are constantly framed in terms of what he refers to as gender essentialism when the role of needy victim is used to gather support or call attention to an issue. Gender essentialism is when gender is emphasized in a frame in order for the audience to reach a specific conclusion (Carpenter, 2005). This leads me to question how gender is used in fair trade promotion and whether gender is a salient position in how the fair trade producer is framed.

Human rights advocacy must frame their victims as innocent and vulnerable in order to

make a stronger appeal for international aid. Though Fair Trade organizations state a commitment to gender equity this is likely to contrast sharply with local realities in underdeveloped countries. Zotto (2002) notes, that the woman is a subject that becomes aligned with vulnerability and weakness. Carpenter (2005) argues that while it may reproduce harmful gender stereotypes, these problems are outweighed by the gains in access to needy populations and the benefits of getting “civilians” on the international agenda. Although gender plays an important role in identifying and framing the victim, third world women produce a stronger appeal for international aid (Charleton, 1984).

In addition to Charlton’s argument that third world women produce a stronger appeal for aid because they are the most disadvantaged group economically. There are factors other than gender that challenge the historically unequal international market trading relations. Race along with gender has been at the forefront of post colonial theory that address the multiple histories that third world countries have faced in their struggle to be economically independent. Therefore, focusing on race and ethnicity when examining the representation of third world women in fair trade promotion is important in understanding how the image of the third world producer is articulated to ethical consumers.

The third world woman’s struggles may differ with the daily issues faced by consumers in overdeveloped countries. However, Mohanty, Russo and Torres (1991) indicate that the relationship between ‘first world’ and ‘third world’ countries is more than a hierarchal cultural and economic relationship; it intentionally foregrounds a history of colonization and contemporary relationships of structural dominance between first and third world people. Therefore fair trade advocacy aim to mobilize support by bridging different economical worlds together by framing the producer as lacking some of the basic essentials consumers may take for

granted. This type of collective mobilization is what Rucht (2000) defines as universalistic values. Loomba (1998) notes that the increasing fragmentation of and mobility of communities and people needs to be contextualized in terms of new ways in which global capitalism works today. Universalistic values transcend borders globally because fair trade advocacy aims to represent the voice of the third world 'producer' by aligning their story with common ethics that are shared by consumers (whether male, female or child). Therefore to what degree is gender used in resonating common core values to align with the western consumer and most importantly what are these values?

The image of third world women seeking a livelihood that would enable them to feed their children, access clean water and afford adequate housing is a familiar discourse used in fair trade marketing. The notion of the third world woman and the struggle she faces is articulated in different ways in over-developed societies. The rhetoric of the 'woman' and the relation to inequality are familiar themes in western academic discourse. However, the grouping of the 'woman' and women in a category of unified global struggle is where the line is drawn. The inequalities and struggles of white Western women cannot describe the global struggles of all women. Mohanty, Russo and Torres (1991) notes that in Western feminist discourse the producers of knowledge about colonized people (third world women) are embedded in the production of this particular knowledge hence leaving open the question of examining the disciplinary parameters of this knowledge. This can be witnessed through the articulation of fair trade organizations bestowing upon themselves responsibility in the production of the representation of the third world woman. Women in over-developed countries have written literature describing the inequalities faced by women; however these writings may not encompass the inequities faced by non-white feminists/women (Mohanty, Russo and Torres

1991). Therefore the rhetoric of representation of women in the western world encompasses the voices of white women while possibly giving a passive role to non-white women in over developed societies. Bannerji (1995) emphasises the importance of examining and decontextualizing patriarchy or gender from history and social organization because women are complicit and gender is implicated in both creating and maintaining class and racist domination. This is important when examining fair trade promotion because the experiences of third world women differ from other women in Western countries. However if frames in social movements are used to align the reader to identify with the text, how are the similarities of women globally used in promoting fair trade?

My literature review has led me to examine how fair trade defines the problems and suggests the solutions to consumers. I ask this question because a frame must be relevant to the participants and inform them. However relevancy can be constrained by empirical credibility or testability while it relates to participant experience, and it must fit in with existing cultural myths and narrations. Therefore how does fair trade advocacy represent the third world producer while maintaining relevancy to the ethical consumer. This is because the producer is voiceless to the consumer, fair trade organizations provide the avenue of a middle man that will address the concerns of the third world producer. I have narrowed my research questions to examine : a) how gender is used in fair trade promotion and whether gender is a salient position in how the fair trade producer is framed, b) to what degree is gender used in resonating common core values to align with the western consumer and most importantly what are these values, c) how are the similarities of women globally used in promoting fair trade?

MYTHODOLOGY

The methodology I will use to address these questions is a textual analysis of three fair trade organizations. I will examine the images and words that these organizations use on their websites. The focus on fair trade organizations online is important because the internet has become the new vehicle of expression for fair trade activism. Fair trade organizations have created an easier way to gain membership and potentially recruit more participants to get involved in a 'good' cause. This type of activism I like to call clicktism advocacy. The search engine Google is the most popular search database in North America and Western Europe (Keen, 2007). When I search on Google the words 'fair trade organizations' and click 'images', my results on the first five pages are pronominally more images of women than men. More specifically the first five pages have 18 pictures of women and 2 pictures of men by themselves. Without questioning the hierarchy of the images, a user can see that fair trade organizations are associated with third world women in comparison to third world men. Hence, the popularity of Google's algorithm perceives users to *trust* in the majority led consensus of searched information. My focus will be on how the organizations describe the third world producer and their economic situation. I will do this by using Benford and Snow's (1988) framing process of social movements which are diagnostic framing (identification of the problem or who is to blame), prognostic framing (suggesting the solutions) and motivational framing (rationale for action). In addition, I will support my argument with feminist research that examines the representation of women in under developed countries and framing analysis of media texts. The three organizations I will analysis are *GlobalMamas*, *KeoK'jay*, and *Indego Africa*. I will compare the similarities and differences amongst the three organizations. I have chosen these organizations at random through a Google search of 'Fair trade organizations women', but

specifically picked organizations that created crafts, textiles and clothes. Furthermore it is important to distinguish between activism and advocacy in Fair trade marketing. Activism is the direct action, such as a demonstration, strike, etc in opposition to or support of a cause.

Advocacy is the act of informing, pleading, recommendation in favour of a cause, such as a policy, active support, idea etc. The three fair trade organizations I am examining are advocacy groups.

INTRODUCTION TO ANALYSIS

Fair trade organizations remind us how the development of economies affects men and women differently. The after-effects of colonialism and the peripheral position of third world countries in the world economy exacerbate the effects of sexual discrimination on women. The penetration of capitalism leading to the restructuring of traditional economies often increases the disadvantages suffered by third world women. Examples can be drawn from how the modern sector has taken over many of the economic activities, such as food processing and making of clothes, which had long been the means by which women had supported themselves and their families. How women cope with unemployment, declining status, heavier work burdens and growing impoverishment is what fair trade organizations aim to address. In 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights reaffirmed the belief in the equal rights of men and women worldwide, first laid down in the charter of the United Nations. However, the progress towards equality for women in most parts of the world is considerably less than that what was promised. Meanwhile, the global village has seen technological advances, the increase of export and importation of goods and the rise of multinational corporations reaching countries all over the world. However sweatshops, child labour, and harsh unliveable conditions are still a reality for

certain parts of the world. Sixty-two years after the reaffirmation of the Declaration of Human Rights was written have we really made a change? Is fair trade the answer to rectifying the global inequality of poor countries?

ANALYSIS

. In the fair trade organization Global Mamas (appendix 1), I will discuss how the rhetoric being used by the organization's description works to undermine the third world women as passive and irrational. *Global Mamas* is a fair trade organization :

"That enhances the international marketplace with unique, high quality, handmade apparel, and at the same time provides sustainable livelihoods for women and girls in Africa. Global Mamas reduces the economic inequality of women by significantly increasing the revenues and profits of woman-owned businesses in Africa. This in turn increases employee wages, generates new jobs and improves the standard of living. We believe that helping women gain economic independence is the most effective way to reduce dependence on foreign aid."

(www.globalmamas.com)

This introduction to the organization is supposed to tell the reader three things; who is the victim and what we (the reader) can do to help the victim and why. This paragraph is found on the website tab 'About FairTrade' (appendix 2). The allocation of blame is not defined in the description of the organization. However, the authors of *Global Mamas* emphasize the solutions rather than identifying the problems. This is important because once a finger can be pointed at who is to blame it leaves the organization more vulnerable to question the testability of its claims which may deter consumers. The solution the website provides through the prognostic frame is the power that the consumer yields by making an ethical purchase. This is because *Global Mamas* explains the rationale for helping these women by emphasizing that "these women will become economically independent". This brings out the concept of economic independence an idea that would resonate with the western consumer. The consumer that is considering a fair

trade purchase over a non-fair trade product has the economic independence and freedom to even be in the place to make that choice. We are also told that if we do not help them their only choice is to rely on foreign aid. The framing is exceptionally important because the sentence ‘Global mamas reduce the economic inequality of women by significantly increasing the revenues and profits of women-owned business in Africa’ uses the grouping of the term inequality of ‘women’. This is important because the frame identifies the inequality faced by women. For a woman reader in the Western world, this is a point of solidarity and shared identity of gender that resonates with the issue of gender inequality.

In addition, the campaign for change through their rhetoric suggests that inaction on the consumer’s part will only provide the women the alternative of foreign aid. This also emphasizes to the reader the two choices in order to sustain a livelihood, fair trade or foreign aid. The frame does not disclose that crime and illegal labour are also livelihood choices. The organization must frame their recipient as worthy and morally good. This is important when analyzing the diagnostic frame of who is to blame for the circumstances these women are in. The website highlights the good that will come through the consumer’s purchase of Global Mama items and subtly underlines the repercussions if that choice is not made by identifying dependence on the alternative, namely foreign aid. Indirectly, one may associate fair trade good and foreign aid bad. Although this connection is not made salient, it adds to the frame of where blame may be allocated.

Fair trade organizations must compete with other fair trade organizations for the attention of ethical consumers. Every organization must frame their fair trade organization as unique to the cause in order to differentiate themselves among other similar organizations vying for the attention of consumers. Global Mamas explicitly highlights how they are different from

other organizations while still keeping the universal message of fair trade advocacy as its principal message. The last paragraph in appendix 1 outlines how Global Mamas describe their unique contribution to the fair trade movement.

“Global Mamas helps the women find export markets and assists them in managing their growing businesses by providing hands-on personalized assistance in implementing practical business strategies into day-to-day operations. In fact, one requirement of being a Global Mama is the adoption of basic bookkeeping practices which enables a business to observe trends and plan for growth.”

In the frame analysis of this paragraph the emphasis is on how Global Mamas take the extra step that the ethical consumer cannot. They provide the women with advice and hands-on personalized assistance in business strategies. In the last sentence the word adoption is used in reference to learning *basic* bookkeeping practices. This will enable the women to acquire to acquire the tools to observe trends and plan for growth resulting in a successful business. This is what Entman (1993) identified as placing the authors-organizations-advocacy groups as an extra institutional means of influence. The reader is shown that their donation will help these women towards independence through the value of business skills.

The list of items to purchase, handbags, jewellery, natural cosmetics is a good indication that Global Mamas targets women consumers, therefore aligning the frames to resonate with women effectively. In addition, who is speaking for these women? Is it the organization or is it the women themselves? The organization under the tab ‘Meet the Women’ name every fair trade worker and provides a short biography of the woman and how Global Mamas has contributed to their well being. This provides the motivational frame because it aligns the consumer with the personal story of the producer and how an ethical purchase can make a significant difference in their life. The stories of these women are even further personalized on the website by the use of videos of these women and direct email messages that the consumer can send. Rucht (2000)

identifies that distant issues can transcend trans-national borders through the identification of compassion, values, or pity. Global Mamas uses the tool of communication through video, direct messages and a biography of each worker as a way to bridge the distance.

It is important to note that the biographies of these women touch upon their children, their spouses and their contribution to their community. An example is the story of Agnes Acquah from Cape Coast (Appendix 3). Her biography begins with “ Agnes is a wife, mother of five and a seamstress. Her career adds to her husbands relatively low income as a fisherman to help support the family” (Globalmamas,2010). Her biography ends with “Agnes would like...to send all her children to college, so they can have successful careers. Agnes’s biggest loves is to sew wedding gowns... hopes that one day Global Mamas will come out with a line of dresses for brides”. In these sentences, collective values (family, marriage, children, and income) are used in this frame as salient issues that may align the reader with similar values they share. These universalistic values are highlighted beyond the scope of individual ethics of independence, dignity and pride to also encompass social values that turn into material values. These material values have been highlighted as providing an income that will stretch beyond the organization. These material values allow the Global Mamas women to also become beneficiaries. This is important because it highlights to the reader that the gift of donation will make them an ethical consumer, and results in creating the women as ‘worthy’ beneficiaries because they will continue the cycle of enriching the lives of ones around them.

Lastly, on appendix 4 is the contact page. I included this page to examine because it can be an indication of where the headquarters of an organization is based. Global Mamas has two headquarters, in Ghana and in the United States. For a consumer in the West the presence of an office in the United States adds to the frame of legitimacy and resonates that the issue and its

remedies are close to home. Familiarity is a technique that may guide the reader to feel more comfortable with making a purchase because they may feel they have closer access to the voice of the organization. This adds to bridging the distance between the organization and the ethical consumer. In addition to where the organization is located, Global Mamas does not indicate who is the head of the organization (appendix 2), or if it is run strictly by women. This information is left open.

The second organization I will examine is KeoK'jay. I will compare the similarities to Global Mamas. KeoK'jay is a fair trade organization that train and provide jobs for women living with HIV in Phnom Penh, Cambodia through the creation of handmade items out of their homes (appendix 5). The organization describes their producers as widowed HIV positive women who are unable to work due to their illness. However, through the ethical consumer's purchase of their handmade crafts, these women are able to work. The organization provides training for the women in their homes. Global mamas provide assistance to their women through the teaching of business skills. KeoK'jay trains their producers individually in the comfort of their homes. KeoK'jay justifies the in-home training due to safety for the women, or if the women fall ill.

KeoK'jay specializes in women's clothing, crafts and accessories. These items identify that the audience being targeted are women consumers. KeoK'jay describes employment for these women as a "means of gaining respect in their families and communities" (appendix 6). This fair trade organization is unique because it specifically targets widowed HIV positive women that are disadvantaged by their illness. In addition the website displays no quotes from the women, only images of women and children smiling as they are working on their handmade crafts. Although an illustration can be interpreted in a million different ways, it is

important to question the organizations role in helping these women. Feminist Oyewumi (1997) identifies how historically third world women mostly traded locally, within the town, while few engaged in interurban trade. Fair trade organizations enable women producers to trade globally, however for the women involved in Keo k'jay the chance to trade locally has been removed because of the stigma they face with being widowed, HIV positive and unemployed. Widowed and HIV must be contributing factors to why these women are unemployed.

The diagnostic framing of whom/what is to blame for the situation these women face is not explicitly narrated. However, it is stated that due to their sickness and unemployment they “suffer from being ostracized and put under pressure because they are unable to contribute to their household” and this subtly describes the stigma of HIV in their community in Cambodia (appendix 5). The question of HIV or how they may have contacted it is left open. Their status as a widow and how that came to be is not narrated in depth. The only direct indication of why these women are unemployed is due to their illness. Identifying HIV as the cause of the dire conditions the women face is strategic because illness is universal. HIV/AIDS is a global issue that affects many communities. The similarity to Global Mamas diagnostic frame is that foreign aid is also a global issue that does not explicitly pinpoint whom is to blame.

The focus of the organization is in the prognostic framing of providing the remedies and solutions to the women. Again, parallel to Global Mamas, the focus remains on suggesting the solution rather than the salience of pointing fingers of blame. The prognostic frame and motivational frame intertwine because it is through the solution that the rationale for supporting KeoK'jay is highlighted. For example KeoK'jay (appendix 6) describes how employment for these producers will enable their children to go back to school. The same value of family, education, and income that was used in the framing of Global Mamas is being used to resonate

with the reader for KeoK'jay. These frames align the reader to possibly similar values in the Western world. Furthermore, the website describes the individual value of respect which will be given to the women because they will be able to work through the ethical consumer's choice to purchase their items. This ethic/value is important because these women are HIV positive, an illness that is incurable. One can only assume how the stigma of being HIV positive in their third world communities may have left these women with the presumption of a bleak future. In addition to the organization emphasising the illness of these women, the reader is reminded that the women are worthy recipients because they are widowed. The challenge of not having a husband in addition to being HIV positive frames the women as worthy recipients of aid. Furthermore, by making the women able to work, which will enable *their* children to go to school it is also framing them as worthy beneficiaries. This type of altruistic movement communicates with the consumer that the benefit of bringing change is not to the ethical consumer alone rather it extends as a collective benefit to the recipients family.

Furthermore, the organization highlights at the top of the page that KeoK'jay works in conjunction with "HIV home care social workers from Sihanouk Hospital...provides healthcare services for these women and their families free of charge" (appendix 6). This is important because it guides the reader to interpret that a donation will go beyond providing a fair trade and will enable the women and their families to receive healthcare for free. What is missing from the frame? Although health care will be provided, the organization does not explain if one must *only* be HIV positive to receive the care. This is because KeoK'jay works with *HIV home care social workers*, therefore it may leave the question open to the reader if the rest of the family must also be HIV positive in order to receive care.

KeoK'jay does not explicitly explain if the organization is run strictly by women. The

only name given is Rachel as a contact for the Cambodia location (appendix 7). The organization's headquarters are in Cambodia. The contact page provides the name of stores where their items can be purchased, however the information on who or how many people run the organization is left open. Global Mamas also did not identify who ran their organization or even provide a contact name.

The third organization I will examine is *Indego Africa*, established in 2006, which aims at “empowering hundreds of women in Rwanda to lift themselves out of poverty (appendix 8). The diagnostic frame of whom is to blame or the identification of the problem is outlined in the statistics of poverty in Rwanda and the emphasis on the 1994 Rwanda genocide. The website quotes on the front page that “76% live on less than \$0.50 per day yet support an average family of six” (appendix 9). This clearly outlines to the reader that the women in Rwanda are in poverty. Statistics also highlight to the consumer ‘why’ these women are worthy of aid providing more reason to believe in their cause. The website does not account for why specifically poverty continues to exist in Rwanda or who is to blame for its existence. However, Indego Africa in comparison to Global Mamas and Keo K’jay, is the only organization of the three that provides statistics on poverty. In addition to providing statistics, Indego Africa gives a history of Rwanda, with emphasis on the Rwandan genocide’s impact on the country and the reform measures that have been implemented by the Rwandan government (appendix 10). This is important in the diagnostic framing of identifying the problem because the Rwandan genocide was an international issue where the finger of blame was not simplistic. Therefore, Indego Africa’s highlighting the genocide in relation to poverty and why the women are worthy recipients avoids assigning the blame to a single person, organization or entity.

Similar to Global Mamas and Keo’K jay, Indego Africa emphasizes the prognostic

framing of providing the solutions for alleviating the women out of poverty. This is done through the detailed description of how an ethical purchase will enable the women to

- (a) partner with **cooperatives of world-class artisans** in Rwanda, made up entirely of women;
- (b) sell their masterful **fair trade handicrafts** – from stylish **yoga bags** to vibrant **wine coasters** to exquisitely hand-crafted **baskets** – at high-end **retailers** across the U.S. and on Indego Africa’s **WebStore**;
- (c) pay the women a fair wage, including 50% in advance of production;
- (d) return 100% of the profits to its ***Hand Up* program** for culturally-tailored training programs in Financial Management, Entrepreneurship, Literacy, & Computers; and
- (e) harness local talent to conduct the training programs through a **ground-breaking internship program** with *Orphans of Rwanda International* (ORI), a nonprofit that provides university scholarships to high-achieving orphans (appendix 8).

The organization narrates how an ethical purchase provides the women with a variety of opportunities from training programs in business, academic scholarships and most importantly a fair wage for their hand crafted items. The prognostic frame highlights how helping these women will provide a collective benefit through Indego Africa’s agreement with Orphans of Rwanda (scholarship program) and Hands up (financial management program). The motivational framing (rationale for action) intertwines with the prognostic frame because Indego Africa emphasize how their “business model helps the women in our partner cooperatives to take care of their immediate needs, diversify their income-generating and entrepreneurial skills, and cultivates self-worth and confidence” (appendix 11). This highlights the material values of entrepreneurship, business skills and economic independence as beneficial to helping the women out of poverty. This is important because Global Mamas and Keo K’jay place emphasis mostly

on the universalistic values of family, children, dignity, and respect.

Similar to Global Mamas, Indego Africa provides some videos of the women producers. The video on the 'About Indego Africa webpage' (appendix 11) is narrated by the resident of the organization, Matthew Mitro, and senior vice resident, Benjamin Stone. Although the women are the focus of the organization, their voices are excluded from the commentary. The only woman that speaks is on the 'Investment in your action' webpage (appendix 13). In this video the woman is speaking in her native tongue translated into English subtitles. The focus of the video is the woman's description of how she survived the genocide. At the bottom of the video is a 'donate now' button with options of specific amounts a donor can make and what their donation will buy. The video is part of the motivational frame because it gives the reader a chance to hear one woman's story, with an emphasis on survival and a glimpse of how the genocide affected women in Rwanda. This frame focuses on how the women of Indego Africa are worthy recipients because of the struggles they have faced in relation to being a survivor of the genocide.

Indego Africa specializes in hand crafts, clothing and home décor that targets women consumers in Western countries. Wine coasters, Yoga bags, greeting cards etc indicate their target audience. However, the president of the organization, senior vice president, and chief financial officer are men (appendix 12). All three men hold law degrees from prominent American universities. This legitimizes to the consumer the appropriateness of authority because lawyers in North America hold a significant status. One may wonder why women are not heading the organization, however in comparison to Global Mamas and Keo'K'jay, Indego Africa is the only organization to provide the details of who runs the organization and why they are in that position. The appropriateness of authority is important because Indego Africa makes

it a salient issue. The identification of authority may leave a reader to question whether the presence of men running the organization gives legitimization or an emphasis of importance to the issues facing women in Rawanda. Is the status of men in Rwanda significantly higher than women? Furthermore, identifying the contact information and name of every board member for the various offices in North America and Rawanda provides the image of transparency and bridges the geographical distance of the issues faced by the women in Rawanda and the ethical consumer in the West (appendix 12).

ANALYSIS OF ALL THREE ORGANIZATIONS

All three organizations (Global mamas, Keo K'jay and Indego Africa) are competing for the attention of the ethical consumer. However, individually each organization must create a unique identity to set them apart and provide reasons for *why* a consumer should purchase from their organization. An organization must make the consumer a) believe in the cause b) care about the issue and c) act. In addition, the consumers must also *trust* the organization to be truthful. '*Trust*' that these organizations present an accurate and democratic portrayal of the third world women is important. One may trust that these organizations are founded on the principal to serve the interests of the third world producer. Consequently, one may trust that these fair trade organizations aid in rectifying the economic and social injustices faced by the women in under developed countries. How each organization creates trust with the reader depends upon the bits of information made more salient by placement or repetition, or by associating them with culturally familiar symbols to the consumer (Entman, 1993).

The use of gender is salient in all three organizations due to their target audience being women. However, gender is used differently in each organization, whether it is health related

(Keo K'jay), genocide survivors (Indego Africa) or simply providing a means to sustaining a household (Global Mamas). Each organization frames its third world producer as worthy recipients of aid and worthy beneficiaries because the women will have the opportunity to provide an income that will enable their children to go to school, contribute to their community or reaffirm the value of respect and self-worth. Although each organization focuses on how its goals will be achieved through fair trade, the organizations appeal to universalistic values that resonate with female Western consumers. These values are family, education, economic independence, respect and dignity. Indego Africa was the only organization that emphasised entrepreneurship and the development of business skills as a foreground issue. Although Global Mamas highlight that their organization will teach the women business management skills, it was not foregrounded through emphasis, repetition and placement like the framing used in Indego Africa.

Keo K'jay focuses on health and its relation to poverty. This shows how fair trade organizations have to specialize in more than one issue in order to compete with other organizations for attention. The issue of health and poverty coupled together create a strong case for how the women in Keo K'jay are worthy recipients of aid. However, Keo K'jay did not give any statistics or any numerical account of how poverty is a prominent issue in Cambodia. Rather the social problems associated with HIV were the salient issues in the foreground of the frame. Indego Africa used the Rwanda genocide as a salient issue that emphasized why the women were unique. Bosk and Hilgartner (1988) identify that due to the large number of social problems that compete for attention, there is a high premium on 'drama', encouraging operatives to cast social problems in dramatic and persuasive ways. What Bosk and Hilgartner note is important because poverty in third world countries is not a new issue, therefore the three

organizations must provide a narrative of the women that will also resonate with the reader in an unforgettable, persuasive and dramatic way.

The three organizations are framed strategically to target consumers to make the choice to *act* by appealing to readers to make purchases. Indego Africa is the only organization that provided a variety of ways for the reader to donate or participate in their organization. Indego Africa displays website links to their Facebook page, organization newspaper (named the Indego Africa Guide Star) and awards received. Indego Africa also includes a list of people and organizations that have donated to their organization. Although this adds to the image of success for Indego Africa it may also deter an ethical consumer from joining, donating, or participating because the reader may interpret success as a reason to find a more needy organization.

Although the emphasis is on fair and equitable trade, the notion of consumption or over consumption is left out of the frames of all three organizations. This is important because global warming and environmental sustainability have become a prominent global issue. Therefore, the fair trade discourse may purposely choose to omit the question of the environmental carbon footprint caused by fair trade. The carbon footprint associated with fair trade runs counter to fair trade advocacy of ethical trade, because trade nonetheless contributes to the carbon footprint. The option of local trading within their third world communities or neighbouring countries is omitted from the frame of all three organizations. Even though the fair trade movement emphasizes bridging the inequalities between third world producers and consumers from overdeveloped countries, I raise the question about local trade because of the carbon footprint associated with global trade.

In addition to questioning environmental issues, why does the representation of the women in the different organizations differ? I ask this because in the name of 'fair trade or aid'

the organizations tend not to go beyond a direct description of these women's personal experiences or how our privileged living in the western world has constructed their experiences as different from ours. Bannerji (1995) argues that the concept of viewing the other side of the world as 'different' is not simply a matter of diversities, which are being suppressed arbitrarily, but a way of muting at the same time fundamental social contradictions. An example is the social contradictions that are not being addressed in Keo K'jay. The producers are HIV positive women and providing employment for these women may not remove the cultural stigma associated with HIV or being a widow in Cambodia. However, the only representation of these women that we have is through our 'benevolence' as we are able to help these women gain respect for them and provide for their families. I am not disagreeing with the notion of providing aid to the women of Keo K'jay rather I am questioning what is left out of the frame. The question of the oppressions that these women face, even by the men in their communities, is never an issue that is made salient.

Another social contradiction is how Indego Africa appeals to the North American consumer by showcasing items for sale that even further emphasise the privilege the consumer has in residing in North America or Europe. For example an item for sale is described as :

“ The trendy Indego Africa fair trade Yoga Bag – the perfect addition to your yoga gear. Hand-crafted by the remarkable women at Cocoki cooperative in Rwanda, using nothing but their own creativity and foot-powered sewing machines, Indego Africa's fair trade Yoga Bag is handcrafted from Dutch wax cloth and has a zipper all the way up the side for easy packing” (Indegoafrica, 2010)

The idea of a trendy yoga bag further overwhelms the issues that women in Rawanda face. In the West we are priveleged to have the option of yoga as a lesiure activity, yet these women through fair trade subtly contribute to our priveleged positions. I acknowledge that the target audience is Western consumers, hence the frames that will align with the desires, ethics, values

and culture of the audience. However in the same frame of resonating with the cultural values of the consumer, the organization highlights the focus of helping the women out of poverty. Poverty in comparison to what standard of living? The ethical purchase of a fair trade handbag may enable the women to provide education for their children, yet what quality of education? In the words of Mohanty (2003)

“If we pay attention to and think from the space of some of the most disenfranchised communities of women in the world, we are most likely to envision a just and democratic society capable of treating all its citizens fairly. Conversely, if we begin our analysis from, and limit it to, the space of privileged communities, our visions of justice are more likely to be exclusionary because privilege nurtures blindness to those without the same privileges”

This powerful quote is what has led me to question fair trade representation of third world women because often we do not question our privilege positions in the West. When we do question our positions it is through our own limited perceptions of the realities of what third world women face. Although fair trade aims to give equal access to producers to compete in global trade, we must not dismiss the real narratives that are constantly being subjected to a space that is sometimes distant; a space that continues to ignore many issues that third world women face. According to the 2009 report of the International Labour Organization (ILO), adult women’s employment-to-population ratio increased from 48% to 49% between 1998 and 2008. Despite this increase, gender inequality is still a major problem for women in the labour market. There are still more women out of work than men, and facing constraints in improving their conditions at work and to finding work that they like (ILO, 2009). Gender inequality in third world countries is a prominent issue, however none of the organizations highlighted the inequalities faced by being a woman in their communities.

Another question pertains to how Global Mamas, Keo K’jay and Indego Africa frame the issues in terms that are assumed to be identifiable to the target audience (Western

consumers). This is fundamental to any analysis of the promotional framing of fair trade, because the frame is aimed at particular audiences that are different from the intended beneficiaries of action that might result when the message is successful. Therefore is a particular representation of the women aimed only at resonating with the audience? Does the framing of these third world women omit particular values that may be important to the women, but not important to the audience?

Although the list of issues affecting third world communities is extensive, these three fair trade organizations emphasize the problems of poverty as being at the forefront of why these women are in need of aid. However, fair trade advocacy recommends solutions and remedies that if successful hypothetically will enable these women to be economically independent. Hence, the need for fair trade would no longer need to exist and fair trade organizations would be out of business. My question is whether fair trade is a means to an end? Hilgatner and Bosk (1988) note that problems and solutions need each other in order to exist because social problems exist in relation to other social problems and “ they are embedded within a complex institutionalized system of problem formulation and dissemination” (55). Therefore the social problems identified by the three fair trade organization are part of a dynamic process of competition among the members of a very large population of social problems (Bosk and Hilgatner, 1988). Fair trade may provide a bandage solution to the third world producer, however the paradox remains that these social problems may never cease.

In examining the representation of the third world producer for the organizations GlobalMamas, Keo K’jay and Indego Africa, one may ask what is there to gain from enabling specific representations of third world women (through promotional frames), other than an ethical purchase that will alleviate their poverty. The image of the needy third world community

is an ideology often assumed to refer to political ideas alone. However, Loomba (1998) identifies that ideologies manifested through colonization or post colonization are a distorted or false consciousness of the world that disguises people's real relationship to their world. This is important because the definition of poverty may differ between third world women and the western consumer. For example, fair trade may enable third world women and their families the opportunity to afford two meals per day, rather than one. By North American standards this constitutes poverty. I acknowledge that two meals per a day is better than one, however it is important to question whether fair trade can ever rectify the discrepancies that exist between the different definitions of poverty. The production of knowledge is a part of what Bannerji (1997) notes is a social production as a whole, and as much attention must be paid to the social relations of knowledge as to its contents.

Fair trade advocacy has become a prominent issue globally. There are many fair trade certified organizations competing for the attention of the ethical consumer. Global Mamas, Keo K'jay and Indego Africa despite the geographical and other differences, these three organizations share important similarities. The three most important similarities in their discourses is the use of universalistic values to align the reader with the producer, the omission of who or what is to blame and the emphasis on human interest stories. These three things are important because values bridge distant issues between the reader and recipient. The use of human interest stories personalizes the producer to the consumer which can also bridge the gap between geographical locations. The emphasis on solutions rather than directing blame closes the organization to open criticism from the reader so the focus remains on helping the women.

The prominence of universalistic values of family, children, independence and health bridge the differences between the western consumer and third world producer. These values

create a story that will help the reader identify themselves in these women. This is important because in my literature review I examine the success of CaféDirect and how they were able to engage consumers with narratives about the producers while personalizing the stories of coffee growers in developing countries. Global Mamas, Keo K'jay and Indego Africa use human-interest stories to engage their readers. I believe these stories also help to frame third world women producers as 'worthy' of aid. I use the word worthy because the reader must believe in the cause in order to act upon it. If the recipient is not worthy, in the eyes of the reader, it is easy for the story of the producer to become lost among the many organizations competing for their attention. Furthermore, the three organizations go beyond creating a 'worthy' recipient and frame the women as worthy beneficiaries. The organizations create more reasons why a consumer should care because their donation or ethical purchase goes beyond the scope of helping one victim.

The other important similarity between the three organizations is the omission of directing blame. These are advocacy organizations and framing the messages with an emphasis on solutions and remedies is beneficial to the organization's goal. To focus on blame or identifying the cause would leave the three organizations vulnerable to criticism which may hinder the focus of making an ethical purchase. This is strategic because fair trade organizations must keep their frame within the discourse of advocacy, rather than activism. This is important because all three organizations focus on third world countries where the solution to rectify poverty is not simple. Therefore the salience of universalistic values and successful human interest stories become the focus.

The introduction to my paper raised the question if fair trade organization's advocate helping underdeveloped regions to achieve sustainability so that they may be more dependable

on their local economy. This question could be paradoxical because fair trade is simply ethical global trade, hence the emphasis on the three organizations to appeal to western consumers. For the women to depend on their local economy for trade or income would remove them as worthy recipients of fair trade. Therefore the question is raised whether the producers will ever be in position to no longer need fair trade. This is a question that has many complex answers but it is through my theoretical discussion on fair trade promotion that led me to raise this question. This is because the three organizations emphasize on how an ethical purchase can provide an ‘opportunity’ for these women to live better lives. However the lives of these women will be better in relation to how severe the poverty is in their country, hence the term ‘better’ may be a lifetime apart from the standard of living in developed countries.

In the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights, it was voiced that all avenues would be made possible to eradicate inequality and elevate the status of women. Sixty two years later have we made a change? Technology has made a change as a global village we are more connected through telecommunication than ever before. However, we need fair trade organizations to represent third world women because they continue to be subordinated. As human beings we have elevated ourselves with technology, yet the fundamentals of our values are constantly being called into use by fair trade organizations to recognize the polarization of the economical worlds that continue to exist. My examination of fair trade promotional discourse has left many questions open to further research. I would like to examine organizations that focus on children or men and compare with the three organizations I examined. I would like to hear from the third world producers and how they identify themselves with fair trade. Lastly, I would want to speak to the organizations and ask how they generate self identification in relation to their positions as advocates and beneficiaries residing in developed countries. Although these questions require

extensive research, I hope my examination of the promotion of fair trade and its representation of third world women will allow readers to read among the frames the next time they come across a fair trade organization and ask themselves how the frames resonate with their own cultural production.

Appendix

Appendix One (1) : <http://www.globalmamas.org/Info/3-FairTrade.aspx>

Appendix Two (2) : <http://www.globalmamas.org/MeetTheWomen.aspx>

Appendix Three (3) : <http://www.globalmamas.org/Producer/133-AgnesAcquah.aspx>

Appendix Four (4): <http://www.globalmamas.org/ContactUs.aspx>

Appendix Five (5) : <http://www.keokjay.org/file/Home.html>

Appendix Six (6) : http://www.keokjay.org/file/about_our_producers.html

Appendix Seven (7): http://www.keokjay.org/file/Contact_buy.html

Appendix Eight (8): <http://indegofafrica.org/aboutus>

Appendix Nine (9): <http://indegofafrica.org>

Appendix Ten (10): <http://indegofafrica.org/rwanda>

Appendix Eleven (11): <http://shop.indegofafrica.org/pages/about-us>

Appendix Twelve (12): <http://indegofafrica.org/team>

Appendix Thirteen (13): <http://indegofafrica.org/donate>

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